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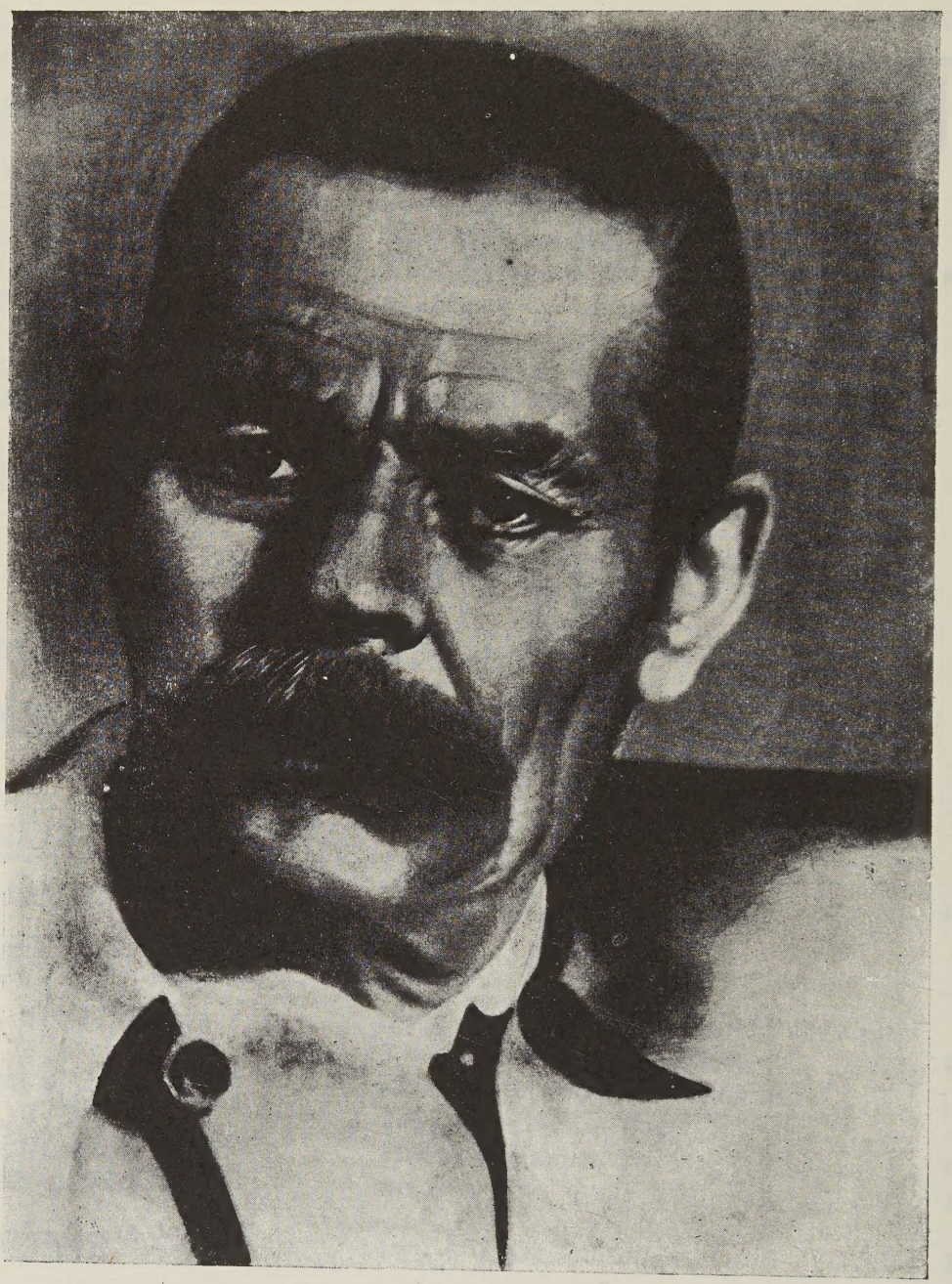

*MAXIM GORKY — Noted Soviet writer who presided at the recent Writers Congress held in Moscow.*

**Gleb Alexeyev**

# The Return

*A Soviet Story of Changing Life on the Collective Farm*

The carpenters' work on the new buildings was coming to an end. Winter was approaching and Stepan began to prepare for his return to the village. Thinking of home he felt a gnawing at his breast and a desire to drink himself tight. He had not been home since the spring, the flour had not lasted even until Christmas, so he had been obliged to go away to work.

There were four hungry mouths to be fed: the eldest was only just turned fourteen. The day before he left Stepan had sold his wife's shawl, and having sold it, spent a long time considering what he should buy with the money to keep his family going till the autumn. Salt, perhaps, or matches? In the end he bought nothing, but came home roaring drunk and beat his wife almost to death. After he had slept it off, the first thing he saw on waking was his wife's blue, bruised face and arms, conjuring over the pan of potatoes, the children had climbed on to the stove to be out of the way of their father's rage. Stepan began silently to pack up his tools. His saw he wrapped in rags first; then examined his plane, took down his axe and packed his things in an old canvas bag as stiff as birch-bark. The age-old fury of the peasant against his own kind came over him that morning. He could not bear to look at them, could not bear to think of his own poverty, of his hungry children who feared their father worse than death, could not bear to think that he was going away now with never a kind word to the wife with whom he had lived sixteen years.

When he had finished packing up his tools Stepan wanted to leave some last instructions, as master of the house, he wanted to say, "Now I'm going away to work till autumn, and I'll bring you a better shawl than the one I drank." But as he gazed around the miserable room and saw the squalor of his dwelling, the chipped pots on the shelves, the dirty table covered with cuts, the lean cat creeping out from under the stove—he only shook his head and got into his sheepskin coat.

"You might eat a few potatoes, at least, before you start out, Stepan Petrovich," said Anissia.

"So, she's forgotten already, the bitch!" Stepan thought. "Gave her a lesson only yesterday, and she's forgotten by today!" and again that blind rage—black as a peasant's night mounted to his throat. He wanted to strike her between the eyes, "the bitch, she'd know her place, then!"

But aloud he said:

"I'll be back, maybe, by the holidays. And you watch out and see to things here, else!. . . !" Then he spat by way of farewell and left the house.

It was not until later, when he was working on the new buildings, that pity for his family awoke in Stepan's heart. He saw that people lived quite differently in the houses of the Chemical Combine industrial town. And while he was in this mood he pictured to himself how, given time, he would make a bit of money this summer, perhaps enough to buy flour that would last till spring. In this softened mood Stepan acquired a Savings' Bankbook

and put all his wages in it. While there was money in the book it kept Stepan in an exalted frame of mind. He became better-natured. Recalling his parting with his family, he could only shake his head. "Pity there was no one to beat me for it!" The curious thing was that this feeling for his family had an effect on his work, and made it go better: he got through much more—as if his heart worked in unison with his axe. It seemed as if work was conscious when a man had good intentions towards it and towards folk who tried to encourage him. During the second month work went so well, that the carpenters' brigade made Stepan a shock brigade worker. Ah, those sleepless nights in the barracks when the bugs tormented him—what ideas came into his head. Ideas that dazzled him like illuminations. He had seen how many a man who had come like himself to the new buildings with no more than an axe, mere unskilled workers who had not even a trade, had suddenly grown up like the houses the carpenters were busy on. Well, he was only a carpenter yet. But supposing he started going to classes and got to know more! Supposing he attended the classes in the Workers' Institute! Then he would no longer be a carpenter but might become a trade union organizer or even a brigade leader. Supposing now he had learned to read plans and was working in the assembling shop and wore brown boots, and a collar and tie instead of a Russian blouse. When thoughts like these came to him it seemed as if fate itself was gazing straight into his eyes like a mother; but not everyone has the courage to look into his mother's eyes even with the best of thoughts in his head.

And then suddenly and quite incomprehensibly everything changed. All he had done was to drink half a litre of vodka with someone and the man turned out to be a very sharp fellow at politics. He explained everything to Stepan: why the food was so bad in the dining rooms and why the Soviet government promised all sorts of things in the future but troubled very little about the present. This faithful friend bought up all the nails, too, that Stepan began to steal from the buildings. And again a curious thing happened: though the sale of the nails brought him in additional money, Stepan's wages seemed to melt away. Soon he ceased to be a shock brigade worker and his Savings Bankbook disappeared. As the money melted so did his pity for his family, the feeling that had made his axe work so well. He thought no more of his family. "They'll manage somehow," he consoled himself.

There had always been a shortage of land in the village, they had never had enough bread and the women—for very few men remained there—had generally gone about begging for a crust. A neighbor of Stepan's a young fellow who came to work on the new buildings that summer, informed him that it had been decided to organize a collective farm at home and that Anissia had joined it. On learning that they were all alive and well, Stepan swore a while and asked no more questions.

Now the time had come when he would have to return. What, empty handed? He had not even been able to buy himself a pair of boots! He had lost everything for what? It seemed as if Anissia was to blame that he had nothing left after six months' work on the buildings. And who else, he would like to know? The day of his departure for home he found he had not even enough money to buy his railway ticket. He was obliged to sell his saw. Fury rose again to his throat, the same black fury that had almost choked him on leaving home and of which he never seemed able to rid himself.

## 2

At Tula Stepan changed into a train on a narrow guage railway, and in the carriage collided with a neighbor, old Tikhon Yegoritch. On arriving at the town, and sniffing the old familiar smells of his native country, Stepan began to feel uneasy; to be six months away working and to return without his saw! Stepan however, could not feel himself to blame; if it had not been for those five hungry mouths, would he have returned empty-handed? No. He would have shown them what sort of a fellow he, Stepan Petrovitch Salomatin, was! Didn't he know the value of his clever hands, his golden hands? But o-oh—it was terrible to think of Anissia.

When he came face to face with Tikhon Yegoritch, he said in the assured, business like tone of a man just returning from the fair with his purchases:

"Tikhon Yegoritch, my respects! Where are you careering off to in your old age? Or have you been up to town to order your coffin?" And Stepan gave vent to a roar of laughter that could be heard all down the train, and glanced triumphantly over his shoulder at the other passengers, waiting for encouragement from them. The old man was no longer able to work in the fields, so his daughter-in-law set him to watch the chickens and keep the crows and cats away. What better subject could Stepan find for his jokes than this old good-for-nothing?

"Who are you asking about his coffin, I'd like to know?"

"You, of course. Who'd you think?" Stepan smacked his lips in anticipation. He would make a fine fool of the old fellow before the other passengers.

"Why, I'm not thinking of dying yet," Tikhon Yegoritch replied in a serious tone. "It seems to me that maybe I'm just beginning to live now."

"Who's just beginning to live?" cried Stepan mimicking the old man's voice and waiting for the roars of laughter that would be sure to follow: they'd see what a clever fellow he was, this Stepan Petrovitch Salomatin!

"I am!" replied the old man. "I've just earned thirty-two poods of grain for my working days—why wouldn't I live? I'll be living better than ever I did. But what about you, let me ask?"

The old man's beard stuck up challengingly and his eyes fastened themselves on Stepan's face like crabs. Not only the expectation of the laugh that would now be turned against himself, but also a foreboding of something evil, something irrevocable that would happen this very minute, turned Stepan cold.

"Allow me to ask you, my man," the old fellow continued slowly, dragging out the suspense, "what you've done with your saw? What have you done with your saw, if you'll allow me to put such a question? What, you don't want to say? Ha—funny, eh? I suppose it's a new one and you've sent it in the baggage car?"

Now there was a roar from the passengers as if a torrent had broken loose. The old man proved well able to sustain the merriment and waited till the moment when the passengers paused for breath before continuing his gibes. At every new sally the laughter burst forth again in a wave that swept away Stepan's pride.

"In the baggage car, don't you know. You can see at once he's just the sort to send his stuff in the baggage car. He's sure to have collected four or five trunks of things—been working for six months in the town. That's the right kind of boss to have about the farm."

Stepan attempted to answer back but it was clear that the old man had the crowd on his side. So Stepan scratched his head indifferently, as if the

conversation did not concern him and spat on the floor, hitting the old man's boot, which happened to be brand new and stuck out challengingly from under the sheepskin coat. Stepan was defeated by the sight of the boots. He climbed to the upper berth, and black despairing rage rose to his throat again. The old man's eyes reminded him, sickeningly, of Anissia's. He wanted to bite his own hand till the blood came, just to make himself forget everything for a minute.

He lay there in a sort of stupor, trying not to listen to the storm of talk raging below. The old man, inspired by his easy victory, went on communicating all sorts of news about the collective farm at the top of his voice. Stepan had heard all this before, but now—how he would like to put the lid on this old croaker, finish him off for good! Twice Stepan was about to stick his head over the side of the berth and get even with him, and each time his eyes fell on the old man's brand new boots sticking out insolently from under his sheepskin coat—and Stepan's tongue clove to the roof of his mouth. So he dozed as far as the small country station where he was to get off.

"Are we there already?" he asked in a business like tone, pretending that he had been asleep all along and awakened just in time, like a man who knew what he was about. But there was no reply.

## *3*

After stopping at the station Stepan set off homewards by a track along the edge of the precipice. It would have been shorter to go through the hazel-wood, but the old man and some others from the village had gone that way, and after the affair of the train, he felt he could not face going with them. The fields had been reaped, the ground was already in the grip of morning frosts, but some signs of vegetation remained. The white flowers of the wild horse-radish peered out from the ditch, late cornflowers drooped to the frozen earth, here and there a lonely dandelion bloomed—the first flower of spring and the last of autumn's dying glories. The sad, familiar picture of the shorn countryside, which arouses in the townsman thoughts of decay, and gladdens the heart of the peasant who sees that the earth has given up her last blade and knows that the barns and graneries are full.

Stepan involuntarily quickened his steps. It seemed to him now as if he had never left home for the town last spring, but was returning now from the fallow field, which he had been looking over with a farmer's eye. At home the samovar would be awaiting and the cabbage cakes—they were always thick and buttery in the autumn.

The path led him out into the open field, to a little hillock still covered with bright, almost blue-green grass, as if summer had forgotten to draw away its covering. Below it lay the village serene as ever in the autumn, with the smoke rising from the chimneys, with clusters of blood-red berries on the rowan tree and the bluish, frosty lilac bushes along the fences. Why was it that one breathed so much more freely in one's own village? And felt as light as if someone was blowing air into one's sleeves! "As soon as I have my tea I'll go and dig up the potatoes!" His thoughts turned to familiar things—they knew what they had to do, his thoughts, they wouldn't fool him, oh, no!

Stepan caught sight of his own house from a good distance. There were the rowan trees he had known from childhood, the barn with wood roof silvery from age, the mound of earth which in winter was pushed up against

the wall almost as high as the windows for warmth, and the wooden porch with the crooked roof. Stepan had been meaning for a long time to straighten the rotting supports, but somehow never got round to it. "As soon as I've had my tea, I'll put the porch right," thought Stepan to himself. Then he remembered the saw. What a carpenter, to be sure! He'd been intending to do up that porch for years and never got round to it and now he wanted to do it and had no saw.

A boy of about thirteen was standing near the barn dressed in a huge peaked cap that came down to his ears and a woman's threadbare jacket, belted with a bit of reins. He was trimming some boards with an axe and did not notice Stepan, but Stepan recognized his son Vassyatka and his own axe at once.

"Are you making something, young carpenter?" he called out, coming up behind the boy and slapping him on the back.

"I'm mending the corn-bin," replied Vassyatka, without letting the axe out of his hand.

"The corn-bin, eh?"

"Yes, Mamka told me to mend the corn-bin."

"Have you got anything to put in it, though?" cried Stepan ironically. Then his attention was caught by the awkward way the boy worked. He was trimming the boards badly, they would never fit into the grooves. "Here, hand over that axe. You're no carpenter! Is mother in?"

"No."

"Where is she—it's getting on for evening now?"

"In the threshing yard, working with Brigade Number 3."

"Look at that now!" Stepan chuckled. "At the threshing yard with the Brigade. . . . Go on and tell your mother that father came back. And give me that axe. I'll finish this job."

Vassyatka handed him the axe and Stepan began to trim off the board easily and smoothly. Work went well under his hands and Vassyatka loitered by the barn to watch his father. He used the axe as if it was a toy. Engrossed in his work, Stepan did not notice that his son was still there. The encounter with his son, the process of trimming the boards for his own cornbin drew him back among familiar things again and it seemed as if he had never been away, that nothing had happened: that he had never squandered the money for the shawl, nor his wages, nor sold his saw.

"Why don't you go and fetch your mother?" he demanded, noticing the boy at last when the board was ready. He passed it through his hands with the habitual gesture admiring the edge, which was as straight as a plumb-line.

"Fetch Mamka?"

"Yes, Mamka!"

Now that his mind was soothed even Anissia appeared to Stepan in a different light. The woman hadn't been idle, then, if she was having the bin in the yard mended. A sort of comfortable warmth, a homely something stirred in Stepan's soul.

"Run off quick now, boy," he said kindly thinking: "When I came in just now I never even asked him how he was; haven't seen him for six months, and couldn't find a kind word to say to him." Stepan stretched out his hand to pat the boy on the shoulder but Vassyatka recoiled swiftly and stood a little distance off, ready to run for his life. Stepan understood: he had never stretched out a hand to his children except to strike them or seize them by the hair, and now his son mistrusted a caress.

"I'm not going, Dad," said Vassyatka.

"What do you mean, you're not going?"

Again his rage rose to his throat, a terrible hatred of everything: of his family, wife, himself; it swelled like a snow-ball.

"You brat, clear out!"

"Yes, but!" Vassyatka suddenly burst out blubbering, wiping his nose in the sleeve of his mother's old blouse. "It's her day for being on duty. . . . She told me I hadn't to call her for anything."

But Stepan was already beside himself. Wasn't he the master in his own house then?

"Quick now!" he roared, purple in the face. "Clear out!" And with the force of that shout Vassyatka was blown away like a withered leaf by the autumn storms.

*4*

Anissia did not come home until the evening. When he had trimmed down the boards, Stepan picked up his bag of tools and went into the house. The younger children had already climbed up into their accustomed hiding place, out of reach of their father's wrath. They drew the curtains and lay still, holding their breath. A small boot stuck out from under the curtain; it belonged very likely to Aksiutka, the youngest. She had put them on hoping to be able to run out of the house in time, but she had been too late. Stepan entered the house and then stood still, listening: maybe the little ones on the stove would stir, or let out their breath. But no, there was never a sound, never a stir nor a sigh out of them. He had not seen them for six months, but they remembered! Father had come home—the master of the house!

In a deliberate, accustomed manner, as befitted a man in his own house, Stepan threw off his sheepskin coat, washed his face and hands and took down the towel from the nail by the door: it had no right to be hanging there. He hung up in place of it the thongs of a horse's collar that lay on the bench. The nail by the door was the proper place for them. Then he sat down on the bench by the window. This was the place he usually occupied when he returned from the fields and sat waiting for dinner or supper, while Anissia was busy with the pots and pans on the stove. But there was no Anissia here now. Stepan gazed about him idly. The room looked the same as ever. Its interior had taken on that look during the first year of his life with Anissia. Things had assumed their rightful places, and ceased to be noticeable, like one's leg or arm. There was the table, the top of it all covered with knife cuts, dirt lay in the cracks like grimy wrinkles. The ikon hung in the corner. There was a shelf with bowls on it, a little cupboard that held the tea things, a samovar by the stove, a tub for rubbish, a long tongs and a bed with dark, greasy looking coverlet, which had once been a patchwork quilt. Now the colors and patches were indistinguishable—like his life, which had once seemed colorful and gay when for the first time he had lain down under this quilt with Anissia. Still, in spite of the familiar look of everything, there was something new about the house, something disturbing although it was not noticeable at first glance.

"What a time the woman takes!" Stepan was thinking as he turned to the window. Then he remembered that the woman was not in the yard. The new, unfamiliar thing that had been disturbing him suddenly came into his line of vision. The window was hung with white muslin curtains, a geranium in a pot stood on the sill, and over in a corner under the ikon

lay something that looked like the beginning of a new patchwork quilt. Stepan rose to look at it closer and was startled by a short exclamation of alarm from the region of the stove.

"Who's that?" he cried. Then he noticed the little boot sticking out, and remembered the children.

There was a poster nailed up in the corner. It bore the legend "Morning Exercises for the Pioneer," "Cleanliness is the Companion of Health," and a picture of a Komsomolka driving a tractor. Her face looked familiar to Stepan but it wore a smile so broad that it seemed to Stepan she was ready to swallow him.

"Where's that woman of mine? What's she doing messing about till this hour of the day?" thought Stepan. He felt suddenly chilly; it wasn't a man's business to fiddle about with stoves. Ha! It would be a joke wouldn't it, if he, the master of the house, had to go and get his own food from the stove?

What sort of nonsense was this, anyhow! He had come home—he—the man of the house. And the woman was not in. The children were up on the stove, too terrified to stir. And he wanted his dinner, and there was no one to serve it up to him. And twice as soon as Stepan showed his face at the window, a shadowy little figure in a woman's blouse much too big for him, had whisked out of sight behind the barn.

Stepan did not recognize that shadow as his own son. He leaned back against the wall and waited. He lost count of time, he knew nothing, he wished for nothing—he just waited as he used to wait for the train at the little station. A dull irritation mounted to his throat.

## 5

"So you're back again?" said a deep, familiar voice. Stepan opened his eyes. Anissia stood before him. She was wearing the same old greenish-black blouse, as strong as leather; her sleeves were rolled up to the elbows, exposing her thick sunburnt arms covered with golden down. Round her head she wore a piece of red calico tied in a new way with the ends on the back of the neck, and her smile was like that of the Komsomolka in the picture. There was something about her that was very pleasant, it caught your eye at first glance or did every woman look new to a man after having been away from home a long time. Stepan looked her up and down with a feeling of pleasant surprise. Imagine that! She wasn't such a bad looking woman, after all, when you came to look at her.

"It was still light when I came, and where you've been all this time I don't know. Her husband's come home and it's all the same to her—she doesn't bother her head a bit about him!" said Stepan, drawing his brows together, just for the look of the thing. There was the matter of his saw to be explained yet; and then, every woman expected presents from her husband when he'd been away.

Anissia rattled off an explanation all about how they had to hurry up with the threshing, as it was time to give in the grain already. The women in Number 3 Brigade had challenged Dunka Karnakova's brigade to compete with them—and what sort of a trick had Dunka played on them, did he think? Yesterday evening when they left off work both brigades had gone home together, but as soon as Number 3 Brigade had broken up, Dunka's brigade stole back to the threshing yard, and put in four more hours of work. What a dirty trick to play on anyone! If you're going home to bed,

why, you should go straight home like any other honest, decent housewife! . . . . Stepan had heard talk like this about brigades and competition when he was working on the new buildings, but to hear it from the lips of his own wife seemed to him so unnatural that he was quite bewildered.

"But I've kept my eye on her!" Anissia went on quickly. "I never let her out of my sight! She's had it in her mind a long time now to do our brigade a bad turn. And there she was going along as calm as you like and never letting on. 'Well, Dunka,' I says to her, 'we're going out together tomorrow, aren't we?' And out she goes that night! And we caught up to her all right. How could she hope to beat our brigade, anyway?"

"We-ell!" was all Stepan could find to say.

"Sure as I'm standing here she won't! How can she, when she's only got Mitrevna and the Widow Piskarikha, and out of the young girls only the two Panteleyevas and that Anyutka who's having a baby already. And out of our six, four are girls and two young married women. And then Mitrevna caught her finger in the threshing machine yesterday.

"Maybe she takes me for somebody else?" thought Stepan, but this idea was as strange as Anissia's story. He glanced about him in bewilderment and noticed for the first time that the children had slid down from the stove and the youngest, the favorite, Aksyutka was standing clinging to her mother's skirts. Vassyatka had taken off the woman's blouse he had been wearing and was now trimming the lamp. When the timid flame cast its yellow light over the room, it outlined the whole family as if in a picture. It seemed to Stepan as if he had never been away at all, never sold his saw for the price of a railway ticket—but was just back from the fields. Something caught at his heart strings, something that had never been there before, or perhaps, it had simply faded, lost its color—like the bits in the patchwork quilt.

"You must be hungry, waiting so long?" Anissia said kindly, as if she guessed his thoughts. "Just a minute now, the stove's still hot. Vassyatka, put the basins on the table, will you?"

She busied herself at the stove with an easy, capable air. Stepan went on watching her, and his astonishment grew, and drove out all other thoughts, even that vague sensation of being to blame, the feeling that had been crushed down in the train by his rage, and mounted almost to his eyes while he waited for Anissia. What had happened to her? She used to move about lightly and softly as if barefoot, and if he had been sitting on the bench waiting for his supper, she had felt his presence with her whole body, with her hands as she clutched the pots, with her shoulder that always stuck out sharply towards him; she remembered that he her husband and master, was sitting there. And this consciousness had made her movements clumsy, awkward; she would drop a pot, or bump the side of the samovar. . . . Why were her movements now so deft and sure like those of the girl she had been the first year they were married, before she had got used to him? She had often sung about the house in those days.

And just at that very moment Anissia burst out singing.

"Is she drunk or what?" thought Stepan suddenly frightened. He ought to ask her how she had managed and what about the flour? True, he had not been working at home the whole spring and summer, but the place was his, after all, the land was in his name, every nail in the house had been hammered in by him, and she—she wasn't just anybody either. She was his wife, his—and the children were his, too. But Anissia's unexpected behavior and the manners she had acquired in his absence knocked him

clean off his feet. With his far-seeing peasant cautiousness, he resolved to wait and see. He would have plenty of time to cross-question her, and find out everything and show who was boss. First let the woman show herself up, let her tell everything; if he said anything now, she'd hold her tongue and you wouldn't be able to get a word out of her even with your fist.

Yes—he'd like something to eat of course!—and at this point he could not resist asking. "But what's there to eat? Soup with nothing in it, I suppose?"

"Why shouldn't there be anything in it?" Anissia retorted. "Today we've got potatoes with sour cream, and a lot of mushrooms the children collected not long ago. And then there's millet porridge baked in the oven."

"Well, I never! You might think it was a wedding, I declare. Only the vodka's missing."

"I'm afraid there's not a drop in the house."

"You didn't get any in then? You knew your husband was coming home and you couldn't get a drop of vodka in? Maybe I'd better send Vassyatka to the Widow Pisharikha for it?" and he dived into his pocket for his purse, as he usually did when he returned from his work in the town. He would flourish it before her eyes and take out a ten ruble note as much as to say, "Why shouldn't I treat myself at home when I come back after my hard six months' work?" But now he remembered—and pretended that he was only fixing his trousers.

Had she guessed! Devil only knew, either she guessed or it was just pure accident, but she said:

"Piskarikha hasn't any vodka nowadays, she hasn't been keeping it since the spring."

"Why, how's that?"

"She's in the collective farm."

"The collective farm be damned," Stepan grumbled, although relieved to find that he would not have to bring out his purse after all. She might think now it was lying in his pocket full of money, and he just wasn't going to pull it out on purpose, to tease her, so she'd respect him more.

At last he inquired:

"And are you in the collective farm, too?"

Anissia slammed a basin of steaming potatoes down on the table and wiped her hands on her apron. Stepan was watching her out of the corner of his eye. The real conversation was only just beginning, and neither he nor she would be able to avoid having this conversation. What was the collective farm, after all? He had really nothing against it. But that wasn't the point. It wasn't the collective farm itself but the fact that Anissia had joined it without asking his permission, acted independently, as if she was on an equal footing with him and could do as she liked. That was the main point!

Stepan expressed none of these thoughts aloud. A great heap of potatoes stood on the table. How could a fellow argue on an empty stomach? Stepan moved his basin nearer to himself and glanced round at the children who were sitting on the bench. He wanted to tell them to come up to the table, then thought better of it and ate all the potatoes himself. Anissia sat down on the bench, too, but kept silent, like all peasants do during meals. This pleased Stepan. "She's shy," he thought to himself.

He left off eating potatoes at last, gave a loud hiccough and asked:

"Are these the new potatoes?"

"Yes."

"Where'd you sow them? Down near the wood?"

"These are from the collective farm, Stepan Petrovitch."

"The collective farm again?" he grumbled. "It's all the collective farm with you, it seems."

But he kept himself well in hand. The yellow lamplight crept up the wall like scorch stains, the languorous autumn stillness in the room and the heavy supper he had just eaten made him want to stretch out his legs and rest, feel himself at home once more, feel that everything in the house was alright. Every man has a family that he works for. What did it matter that he had come home empty handed from the buildings, he woulnd't come empty handed another year, and who was he working for? That was the question! He'd been born into the world and begotten children in his time, and now he was over forty. And there it was. And if the woman had made a mistake, well, it wasn't about anything a woman should know, and that couldn't be put right. How could one expect a woman to understand a man's business. Only give him time and he, Stepan, would put everything straight. Just now he wanted nothing except this peace and quiet and the satisfaction that the spring and summer had not gone for nothing as far as the woman was concerned. The food had warmed his stomach, and the glow of his warm stomach set all sorts of thoughts stirring in his head. The children were growing up, and the woman—why she was as attractive as a girl today.

Stepan looked at his wife through his eyelashes and saw her with a new eye, a male eye.

And she wasn't really a bad looking girl, after all. A fine handful of a woman, he would say.

"Time you were getting the bed ready, wife, isn't it?" he said.

"I'll get to know everything now. Women can't keep their pride long in bed. I'll find out everything!" The thought cheered him and he felt audacious and light-hearted again. "I won't have to ask a thing, she'll tell it all herself, same as if she was at confession."

Anissia rose from the bench at once and cleared the table. The children clambered silently on to the stove altogether.

"Oof!" Stepan hiccoughed with satisfaction, waiting while the woman would make the bed. Almost against his will, his eyes fastened on her sunburnt arms. It was good to be home! How quiet and happy he felt now, as if he had never been away! The whole world was in his house now, nothing of himself remained outside. What more could a man want?

Anissia lowered the flame of the lamp and the room took on a still more homely cosy air from the long, dim shadows creeping from the walls along the floor, and the table with the dark knife cracks that resembled a peasant's wrinkles. Stepan started to kick off his boots. They were old ones. He generally came home in new boots when he had been away working. Now he took fright and drew back his feet under the bed for fear Anissia should notice his boots. Just at that moment her voice rang out—fresher it seemed, from singing. She was standing by the door thoughtfully, scratching her head with her comb before going to bed—the old familiar gesture he remembered.

"You lie down and go to sleep, Stepan, and I'll run down to the threshing yard for a minute—I must just see what Dunka Karnakova's doing."

And once again her words came as such a shock to Stepan that he lost his head and could find nothing to say. When he looked up again to give her a right down good scolding for this freakishness Anissia had left the house.

## 6

When he had taken off his boots, Stepan put out the lamp altogether, so as not to waste kerosene and flung himself down on the bed. To the devil with her then, if she has taken it into her head to behave in this idiotic way. She'd come back, of course, she couldn't have gone out for the night, surely? The best thing to do would be to go to sleep. The black country night shut out everything like a soft pillow. The children on the stove were quiet. Peace. Warmth. What more could a man want of life? And still, why couldn't he sleep?

Thoughts kept coming into his head, thoughts that had something insulting about them, that lowered him in his own estimation and alarmed him. Most of all he had feared that people would notice the absence of the saw, but no one had noticed it yet, no one had thrown it in his teeth. Anissia had not screamed at him loud enough for the village to hear, like the year before last, when he returned empty handed. It was not Stepan's fault that time, either, someone had stolen his purse on the way home. But Anissia would not believe him, she howled as if the cow was dead. This time she had not even asked him any questions; she had met him just as if he was a visitor, and fed him well and then gone away to the collective farm. Perhaps, after all, a husband's home coming was not the most important thing in a woman's life? And then—the song she had sung a while ago by the stove—as if she was a girl again? And that picture in the corner of the woman smiling as if she was going to eat a body alive. Anissia's face had taken on that smile, too.

"Vassyatka!" Stepan called out when his alarm became unbearable.

The regular breathing of the children on the stove ceased and a silence like that of the trenches descended on the room.

"Are you asleep, Vassyatka?" Stepan asked and there was yearning in his voice. This ghastly silence could kill a man. It was as if a corpse had been carried into the room and kept swelling and swelling—it would soon fill up the whole room. "Sonny, you're not asleep, are you?"

"No."

"Come down from there quick. I haven't seen you for six months!" Stepan ordered, delighted to hear the boy's response out of the darkness.

"It's time to go to sleep!" Vassyatka replied shortly.

"How can we go to sleep? Mamka hasn't come in yet."

"Mamka won't come back till morning."

"What for?"

"I know what for alright."

"Come over here, sonny!" Stepan begged. He was thoroughly discouraged now.

Vassyatka jumped lightly down from the stove and appeared like a white ghost by the bedside.

"What d'you want?"

"Listen, I've got something to tell you!"

"Oh, we've heard all those tales before!" replied Vassyatka in an unexpectedly deep voice.

"Well, anyhow, sit down and listen to me."

"I've no time. Soon as ever it's light, I've got to go gleaning."

"Gleaning? What for?" Stepan could not understand.

"Why, naturally," came the same manly voice which held a note of pity

for such obvious stupidity as his father showed. "Some ears are bound to drop out, aren't they, while the binders are working?"

"Well, what about it? If they drop out they drop out; it's the usual thing."

"Well, should they be wasted then, d'you think? You've a head and so has a pin!" cried Vassyatka scornfully.

"Just wait till I get you, by the hair!" thought Stepan turning cold with the sudden rage that rose in his throat like a hiccough. But aloud he merely said:

"That's nothing. It's not worth doing—work like that!"

"Oh, that's what you say!" retorted Vassyatka, seating himself on the bench and throwing one leg over the other. "I've done five working days, gleaning. Maybe you don't know how much a working day is worth, do you? I don't suppose you do. Six kilogrammes and two hundred grammes—that's what it's worth. Just think of that now!"

Stepan sat on the edge of the bed and rubbed his eyes. It must be a dream, surely this conversation with his son. It was all some unreal nonsense.

"Five working days," Vassyatka went on. "And Mamka has done a hundred and four—so that's a hundred and nine altogether. And if you count up how many times six kilos two hundred grammes of grain is—well, it'll come to round about forty-eight poods of grain, not counting potatoes and cabbage."

"What's this forty-eight poods, you're talking about?" Stepan could not grasp it yet.

"It's what Mamka and I'll get for our working days. Well, anyhow, Dad, you'd better go to sleep now. I've no time for talking to you. I want to go and have a look at the cow now, she's a bit lame lately—our cow. It may be she's got something in her foot—or else they've been giving her too much to drink. I'll just have a look at her and then it'll be time to wake the kids. It'll be daylight soon."

And, as lightly as he had jumped down from the stove a while ago, Vassyatka got into his clothes, whistling under his breath. He paid no further attention to his father except to turn on the threshhold and say:

"Well, see you later, Dad."

## *7*

Left alone, Stepan could not sleep. He went out into the yard and sat down on the steps. The dawn was raising the heavy autumn clouds in the east, and the black willows, the fences black with rain, and the black wet road were growing grey. Autumn garbed the land in black, maybe a man's soul turned black too because of this. He would have to think everything out. It had been the same other years, hadn't it, when Stepan had gone away on work, and his wife had managed his allotment. And now something new had burst in and knocked over the old moujik order of things as easily as an empty jar and it was impossible to understand anything. There was no individually owned land, the woman was earning her bread on the collective farm, earning it—not with the same harness Stepan had mended, nor with the harrow for which he had made a new top in the autumn. No, she was earning now in something the same way as he earned or could have earned in the town, but—he had earned nothing.

"It can't be that I'll have to eat her bread?" The thought made Stepan shiver. He had never been in such a position in his whole life. All the habits

of a lifetime, the whole philosophy of his life and destiny were turned topsy turvy.

But this must be all nonsense! Stepan actually rose from his seat at the thought. He must be a fool! All he had to do was to give her one across the mouth there a while ago and she'd have known her place at once, and he wouldn't be sitting waiting for his own wife as if she was a visitor. It was his own fault. If he'd only had money to come home with. . . .

"That's not the point," he interrupted himself aloud, shivering with a horrible cold that seemed to get under his collar. Yes it looked as though he would have to think though, to face life as it actually was. Stepan remembered once at a meeting in the barracks hearing people talk about socialist competition and shock brigades. One orator said that once to every man on earth the revolution would come and look him in the eyes and ask: "What sort of a man are you?" And not one man in the world no matter how backward or beaten by life he might be, would dare to turn away without giving a reply. Best of all—that the man should go out to meet the revolution with an open heart, instead of waiting until it approached and demanded an answer of him sternly. While the mood was on him Stepan had gone and signed up as a shock brigade worker. When he heard plain simple talk like this on the buildings, he understood it perfectly well. But he had never thought of it in connection with the village. That was a long way off still. The village was quite a different thing; if the new life growing up around the factories turned bitter there was at least always somewhere to hide—the village. And now look at it!

"Maybe though, it'll all pass. . . ." thought Stepan. Perhaps he could get around it somehow. He would try to behave better, would keep off the drink and as for his wife—well—he'd be nicer to her in the future. Yes, and it was time to think of the children, to stretch out his hand in loving kindness to the little souls and not drag them by the hair. It wasn't with the weight of his fist but with kindness and caresses. He'd tell Anissia when she came in! Let bygones be bygones, he'd say—now everything's going to be different. He'd get an allotment from the village Soviet and sow earlier next spring. . . .

Stepan stood up and looked down the street. In the pale milky light now slowly flooding the village, signs of awaking life became apparent. A bucket creaked at a well. A voice rang out behind a fence. The cocks were crowing. Should he go and repair the barn?

The thought of it produced a comfortable glow and Stepan turned into the house for the axe. But right on the threshold a dreadful notion came into his head and he stood turned to stone. "What if she should refuse to leave the collective farm? What sort of a home could he have, if his wife stayed in the collective farm?"

And the warm, comforting thoughts of how a man should build his nest with kindness and not with blows and of how it was time for him, Stepan, to take a proper good look at his life as a whole—all went whistling down the wind—away into the black abyss that gurgled somewhere near his very throat.

## *8*

"Aksyutka!" he roared, making a grab at the pathetic little boot that stuck out from under the curtain on the stove. The boot had no time to slip away and Stepan found a little soft bundle trembling in his hand like a bird. Instantly a thin, piercing wail rent the dark silence.

"What have I done?" the thought came from a great distance as if it was not he, Stepan, but someone else who was thinking it. But the rage that came bubbling up in his throat would not let him stop. And since he could not quell the pain in himself he had to vent it on someone else. He dragged the little girl down by her leg, saw her closed eyes, her bitten lips. It reminded him of Anissia's face when he used to beat her.

"God Almighty! What have I done?" cried Stepan, coming to his senses.

"Don't cry, silly little thing! Don't cry girlie! It's I! It's your daddy!"

"I—I—I'm frightened!" squealed the little girl, as she gasped and squirmed in his hands.

"Now, God help you! Aksyutka, what's with you at all! What is it!"

Petka and Egor slithered down from the stove. They were twins about six years old, both fair and bearing a strong resemblance to each other. They both began in silence to pull on their worn-out felt boots.

"Fighting again!" shouted Egor, making for the door.

"You dirty Herod, you!" the other flung back, loyally supporting his brother. "I'll tell them all about you at the nursery. They'll show you what! They will!"

And both children dashed out of the house. Stepan let go of the little girl's leg and dropped heavily on to the bench. The child lay on the floor like dead, without breathing, as a lady-bird lies motionless on a man's palm. But when Stepan stooped to pull down her little skirt that exposed her body, too immodestly as he thought, the child leaped up and was gone in a moment.

"Look what I've done, chased them all away!" said Stepan aloud, and with a bitter chuckle he sat down on the bench again. The cat crept out from under the stove, and rubbed itself against his legs. The slow autumn dawn began to peep in through the steamy window and touched the man's bitter, hopeless hands as they lay on his knees.

What was it for then, this earthly life? The thoughts turned heavily like wet sods in his head. He had gone away to work. And come home empty handed. He had chased them all out of the house. Supposing they did not come back—he, Stepan, would be left alone—alone in a cold house with the heavy daylight coming in, alone under that terrible white toothed smile on the poster.

Then he dashed out of the house as the children had done a little while before.

*9*

Life awoke slowly in the street. On the fences, on the unexpectedly green, bald spots of grass that had somehow survived the autumn, the grey morning frost still clung. Cows lowed in the yards, sheep bleated anxiously as though afraid that the morning would never come and they would never hear the shepherd's shrill pipe. The world lay before Stepan's eyes just as it had lain many a time in the course of his long life, but as he burst out of the house he pulled up sharp. He had run up against the world as against a wall. All his life he had felt himself the master, not only of his house but of the street that was now awaking to its working day, of the village—silently awaiting the pipe of the shepherd, and of the whole world beginning from his own fence.

And now? Why did the neighbor's windows lower at him like that? Who were they guarding? At whom were they winking so warningly, those yellow lamps in the windows?

Bewildered, he leaned against the palings and gazed curiously at his own street. It looked exactly the same, and yet—not exactly! Across the road from his own mean hovel stood the house of the village's richest man, Tarass Yegorovitch Cherepkov. It had gates carved with cocks, and iron bolts on the wicket. Tarass Yegorovitch had possessed plenty of things to guard from the envious eyes of the village. Yet now the gates stood ajar and right across the carven cocks of the gateway, the words, "Public Nursery" were written.

Remembering his small son's threats Stepan gave a bitter little laugh and moved away from the fence. Even in his own house it seemed a man was not safe. And that snotty nosed little brat of a son he had begot could bring down about his ears the whole of the world now on its guard against him.

Stepan went down the street in the direction of a machine vibrating in the melting air, and the thin cry "Ai-ai-yai-yai" as if someone far away beyond the river was screaming without stopping. He recognized it as the cry used to drive the horses on the threshing floor, where they trotted round and round in a circle, dragging the shafts after them. The regular throb of the machine and the cries sounded nearer. The light was put out in someone's house just as Stepan got up to it and the cry "Ai-ai-yai-yai" could be heard close at hand. Stepan stood still a moment and his feet turned cold with indecision. The darkened window-pane was flung open as if by the blow of a hand from within. Stepan shrank back from the fence, fearful lest he might be suspected of something.—Ah if he could only go back now into a warm home, and his woman would come in after milking, smelling of the freshness of a frosty morning and new milk. And, shivering slightly from the coolness she brought with her, he would crush her as he lay dozing and look into her eyes, and catch the old familiar glint in them. And she would yield and be submissive, a moment; and a great contentment, a feeling that everything was alright with the world, a consciousness that he was a man with his own place in the world, with a full day before him of peasant cares and a peasant's satisfaction in autumn. Why should he be creeping about his own village like a thief, fearful of every window opened on life? Why did his legs seem to weigh a pood each and every step of the street seem a mile? When and how had he managed to lose all his possessions?

"I'll just go as far as the threshing yard, and call out Anissia—come along home!" Stepan decided, as he came out by a barn hardly distinguishable in the shadows. He caught sight of his wife at once. Rye was being threshed in the barn. About ten women were dragging up the sheaves of grain, hoary with the morning frosts, and Anissia with quick, deft movements, was directing them into the threshing machine, which like a great open greedy mouth, swallowed them one after the other. From its other end the grain poured out in a yellow stream and swelled into a huge pile on the floor, where two women were raking it over and combing out the ears. Outside the barn four horses were going round and round and in the centre of the grey circle that spun slowly on its axis, old Tikhon Yegoritch was dancing.

The stream of grain poured on with a noise like rain. Above all the sounds of the threshing yard, only the patter of the flying grain reached Stepan's ears. It was the sound of bread. And how should a peasant not hear the sound of bread?

"Ai-ai-yai-yai!" yelled Tikhon Yegoritch, spinning round in the circle. "Hey, girls! Come on warm up a bit!"

And the women's voices, slightly husky with the dust, responded gaily to his rather coarse joke. And whether it was at the old man's joke or the

dense creaking flight of the grain—Anissia's voice rang out loudest of all in that challenging burst of laughter. Here it was, this marvellous ease and concord in work that Stepan himself had known on the buildings while he was in the shock brigade. When every muscle and every thought and even the furthest, deepest stirrings of the soul were knit up with progress of the work, when you felt not only the whole of yourself, but of your comrades, too, where there was no weariness, could not be any weariness and work itself lived in your hands, work became sublime, an exalted feeling, knit up into a wonderful wholeness with people, with machinery and horses, when a song arose of its own accord to the lips, ready to burst out simultaneously from the breasts of scores of people. How could he call Anissia away? She would not hear anything now: neither the imperious voice of her husband nor even the cry of her own child.

The grain flew on in a splendid golden stream and Stepan heard nothing else. It was the sound of life itself, beautiful like the song he had heard Anissia sing long ago. Thus do the memories return that have been lost in the years of care and mountains of sorrow, memories of the springtide of life that can bring light and warmth in old age, if people only know how to care for them and guard them like the dearest of possessions. And this feeling, this unison with all that is beautiful in horses and machines and the entire world of labor would not allow Stepan to remain a bystander even now. It summoned him, and with this solemn feeling in his heart Stepan raised his eyes to his wife and suddenly knew why her face wore the smile of the woman on the poster, the smile that had frightened him and seemed so terribly familiar. Anissia had smiled at him like that when she was still a girl, before Stepan had wiped that smile from her face altogether.

"God Almighty!" he thought, and the blackness welled up again in his throat. But it was not boiling with hatred now, but with tears—sudden and terrifying to a peasant of forty.

"Is that you, Stepan?" a neighbor's voice said close by.

And Stepan saw the smile vanish from his wife's face, saw the hands that were directing the sheaf into the open mouth of the threshing machine suddenly tremble; the sheaf was flung aside by the machine. His wife's eyes were fixed on his and her empty right hand stole out, unconsciously, to the bared hungry teeth of the machine.

"Nissia!" he cried. He had not called her by that name since she was a girl. He rushed forward just in time to catch her fingers and twitch them away from the whirling teeth. Then he thrust in the next sheaf that was flung at his head; the teeth caught the sheaf and the whistling golden grain, after a moment's pause, poured down in a glorious shower.

*Translated from the Russian by Anthony Wixley*

**Theodore Plivier**

# On the Beach

*A German Seaman Writes from His Experience*

The car is swaying on its springs.

The sound of the wheels running on the endless track, the continuous pulling apart and clashing together of couplers, the locomotive racing under the high pressure of steam fill the air with a metallic din.

Some fifty figures are cooped up together with me in this section of the car—broad brimmed hats, rough spun shirts and trousers, faces grey with the dust raised by the train racing over the land. The air is heavy with the exhalations of close packed humanity. Balls of paper, orange and banana peel, lie foot high on the floor.

On a ticket for natives which I had wheedled out of an agent of the Antofagasta railroads, I am on my way back to the coast. After unsuccessfully roaming the mines high up in the mountains I am on my way to the terminal, the saltpetre port with its many sailboats on which one may get a bunk with the help of that old rascal, Slimmy, the shipping-master. Out of the mass of dust covered cheeks and melancholy eyes one face stands out, more rigidly tense and harder lined than those of the Indian laborers and its eyes have the wide, ranging look of the seafarer. I had noticed this man before when he boarded the train at the forsaken little Niter-Pampas station.

"Hello Johnny! On the beach too?"

"Righto. On the beach!" he answered.

He comes closer and makes room for himself near me.

"Long on shore?"

"I got my discharge papers from a windjammer a couple of months ago and undertook a little tour of the Pampas. Painting railroad bridges, splicing cable!"

For a night and half a day long the din of the train is in my ears. But the idea of rushing through scorching deserts at a speed of more than one hundred kilometres an hour, of climbing sky high passes and swooping down dizzy precipices is exalting. And when the sea suddenly rises before me through a rift in the rock curtain, when the sheer wall of the Pacific Ocean seen from a great height seems to dispute sky and space I lose my equanimity. From my empty stomach a feeling of majestic exaltation rises that amounts almost to megalomania.

In the deepest part of the curve of the bowl, where the ocean touches the shore, I see the smoke and dust covered port looking incredibly small and frail. This city is as good as in my pocket. Old Slimmy can shanghai men to as many boats as he pleases. I won't do him the favor. I am not in the least inclined to sail around Cape Horn for a dog kennel and a dinner of salt meat.

"O'Neil's my name!"

"And I am Ted Perem!"

That's how we seal our friendship. O'Neil scrapes the bottom of his tobacco pouch. There is just enough for two pipes full—one for him and one for me.

The locomotive is now running ahead of the train without steam. The cars roll down the steep grade with a continual screeching of brakes. The sea collapses upon itself. Behind us the mountain chain towers with ever more oppressive weight.

The exaltation I experienced a while ago sinks with amazing rapidity.

"We'll get a ship together!" O'Neil ventures.

"But we must steer clear of Slimmy!" I add.

"We might try Milly!"

"Yes, Milly. . . ."

"She has given Slimmy the gate and is running the boarding house herself!"

What an apt word "running" when referred to a boarding house for sailors! The shipping-masters' accomplices are always on the run. From the mole to the saloon, from the saloon to the fandango-house. They are always on the alert, always on the lookout for sailors coming off ships, captains in want of crews.

The sailors call them landsharks.

Slimmy had been Milly's "runner."

She owns the "Bon Voyage" boarding-house. After she gave him the gate he began working on his own hook and his methods are distinguished for their confounding simplicity.

We get off the train and make our way among the freight-laden passengers to the water-front. The streets, the houses and roofs are all covered with niter-dust and are a disconsolate grey like all the surrounding country. The sand under our feet glows with the merciless heat of the sun. The brittle leather of my shoes feels like burning tinder on my feet and my head feels as if it had dried out.

"Like an empty cocoanut!"

"That comes from an empty stomach!" is O'Neil's opinion.

In bright daylight things we pass turn to shadows and disappear suddenly. Big two-wheeled wagons rasp through the sand behind heavy treading mules. A man is carrying two pails of water on a bar. "Agua!" he shouts into the street.

"Agua!" I can hear for a long time after he had vanished. A pail of water costs twenty centavos in the city.

We came upon a group of people on the strand. Some lay prone on their back looking very thin and emaciated as if dried out by the sun. Others sat about and stared out over the sun-glazed water to the ships at anchor. All were in rags and neglected looking—sailors on land: Slimmy's human reserves.

One of them raised his head.

"Back again, old man!"

"Yea!" answered O'Neil. "Couldn't stand it up there all alone among the Dagoes!"

Beyond this short greeting no one paid any attention to us. Every day the faces in the group change. All, however, have the same story to tell—off the ship, wages drunk up, everything sold—on the beach!

For a drink and an occasional meal at a Chinese joint—in debt to Slimmy. And one must concede—the fellow knows how to hold his men together until he needs them. He even protects them to some extent. They can sleep peacefully on the street corner or in the railroad car he points out to them. Slimmy has connections.

"What do I want a boarding house for?" he once said to a policeman. "My business is much more profitable conducted under an open sky. And this way you get something out of it too!" Three pounds per head and a month's wages of the man—seven pounds sterling for each man signed up is what he gets.

The men are talking about a sail-boat that can be seen at anchor among the ships there. It has discharged its cargo and is lying high on the water rocking lightly with the surf.

"Damned starvation boat!"

"It is going to the Guano Islands!"

"The entire crew has vamoosed!"

"*Alpha Cruzis* is the name of that box!"

Everyone takes part in this conversation, which is not at all an idle one: Slimmy is on his way here. He is steering straight for the group. He is almost a full head taller than the people he passes. A surprisingly well grown specimen with hefty long reaching arms!

"He is a classy slugger!"

"But we don't go!"

"The boat is going to the Guano Islands!"

"Not a man for the *Alpha Cruzis!*"

"We all stand together against Slimmy!"

They have nothing against Slimmy getting the head money. And although they have had no roof over their heads for all the time they have been on shore, they will protest against the shipping masters getting their wages for one month. Even the starvation part some of them would swallow—but they will not load guano.

"I loaded guano once!" O'Neil declares. "Never again! When we were approaching the islands the stench met us hours in advance. Then we anchored and had to trim cargo below. Up to our bellies in the filth. And one can't run away—nothing but birds and bird droppings on the land! Eight weeks it lasted. Towards the end I was vomiting nothing but gall!"

The men are all on their feet. Alarmed they form a close compact ring as they await Slimmy. Two tall Scandinavians are in front. They look like two bears just come out of their winter lethargy, ragged and hungry, skin and bones.

Slimmy is in good form. He really looks like a shipowner except that he wears no collar and has no excess fat. The stiff hat he wears over his bronze-like neck is slightly dented.

He musters the group almost benevolently and no one, perhaps, notices the calculation in his eyes: two I can knock down, perhaps more. But then I'll break up the gang and I need twelve for the *Alpha Cruzis*. I am standing near O'Neil. All are tense as if ready to jump. Fists ready, eyes on Slimmy, on his jaw, his stomach pit. . . . The falling of an anchor chain sounds from the harbor.

"Yens, I was looking for you!" Slimmy calmly turns to a Norwegian, the heavier of the two. "You can take your buddy with you. I have discovered one damned brand of whiskey. You have to try that!"

He sees the ring hesitate but still alert. With a laugh that exposes his strong teeth he hits the notebook in his bosom pocket: "The office is closed for the day. No one is signed up or shanghaied any more today. The holiday has begun! I'll send you dirty sons of guns a can of that stuff!"

He lets a half look glide over me and O'Neil. Then he walks off arm in arm with the two Norwegians. They look like three of a race of giants among

the darkhaired natives that are now coming from the Mole, the docks or offices streaming towards their huts.

"And Slimmy will keep his word!" O'Neil remarks as the two of us go away. "Not today but tomorrow, before dawn the entire crew will be on the *Alpha Cruzis!*"

A number of men are gathered about the open fire of a fisher woman roasting fish. They grab the fish with their fingers and wipe the grease on their clothes or naked feet.

"One chaucha a piece!" the fat fisher-woman shouts.

"One chaucha-twenty centavos! I pool with O'Neil and we buy one. He lets me have the head part, taking the tail end for himself. Then we trudge on. It is quite dark by the time we get to the boarding house, "Bon Voyage. Board and Lodging for Sailors."

There is no lamp in the pipelike hallway. From the door of the sleeping room, whose floor is on the ground level, a stale odor of dust, sweat and old sea weed mattresses strikes one. Out of the dark in the room a half-dressed figure comes towards us.

"One can get to sleep only when drunk!" the man curses and opens the door to the bar-room. That is crowded with much too many people for the small room. A single smoky kerosene lamp hangs down from the ceiling. We sit down. Near O'Neil there is a man with his head on the table.

"Another litre!" another one opposite us roars.

A short squarely built fellow they call "Bully" brings a pitcher of wine. With a heavy hand the man pours out drinks for everyone at the table. Bully turns on the phonograph. A dozen hoarse voices bleat out the song:

*When the sunset turns the ocean blue to gold. . .*

O'Neil and I order a whiskey apiece and lay the money we have reserved for the purpose on the table. Before my eyes the shadows appear that had swallowed mule carts and passersby in the daytime. I should perhaps have ordered a piece of bread instead of the whiskey. But then we should have had to give up the idea of board and lodgings in this place. The man near O'Neil raises his head—a broad Slavic face, a Russian. There is another man at our table. He is untying a parcel.

"She devil!" he curses, having in mind Milly. "I got a bunk. Tomorrow I go aboard. . . . Brisbane, Queensland. Four months I spent in this lousy dump, ate four dinners and suppers. She swallows a month's wages for that. 'Milly,' I says to her, 'the account don't gee. Four pounds for four days! I ought to get some change!' 'Right!' she says, 'Bully, a bottle of whiskey and a tropical voyage package!' Here is the package. A straw hat, a cake of sunlight soap, half a pound of tobacco, stem tobacco. She is a devil!"

"She's a boy-baba!" says the Russian.

The table opposite ours is in commotion.

"Six litres!" yells the Dutchman who has ordered the rounds.

"You've had eight!" shouts Bully.

"Six!"

"Eight!"

The women are holding on to the table and clinging to the Dutchman's arms. One of them runs away, flings the rear door open and calls up the stairway:

"Milly, Milly. . . ."

Bully hops about like a dog, boxing with his fists and hard head. Until

he succeeds in getting a grip on the neck of his opponent and drags him to the "sweat box."

Suddenly the door opens.

"That's Milly!" says the man at our table.

She stops in the middle of the room:

"Bully. . . !"

Bully loosens his hold and waits snorting.

"Let go! Is that the way to treat people in a respectable boarding house?"

The Dutchman, his shirt collar torn open, stands there keeping an eye on Bully.

"The mistake will be adjusted! We'll get together on it!" Milly says soothingly.

"Bully, a round of wine! On the house!"

I am in a peculiar state. That's the way it must feel when a fainting spell is robbed of its tempo, when it is seen developing through a time glass! I am still sitting firmly on my chair. But the things and the people in the room have lost their moorings. I see everything as through a mist. I can feel the course of the wine through my stomach and its convolutions. I must be thoroughly empty inside.

O'Neil fills my glass again.

The Dutchman won't let himself be outdone.

"A round on me!" he had opened his clothes bag and thrown a pair of sea boots on the table to pay for it. The Russian pulls out a raincoat, lays a southwester and a pair of mittens on top: "Bully a roomful!"

Milly is a little over average height, plump, but nothing soft about her. She is well balanced.

"She comes from a German village, from Dusseldorf!" the Russian says. "She was with a circus before. Artist or some such thing. A boy-baba! Even Slimmy lost his teeth with her!"

Milly looks at me. I see her face through a mist. She sits down at our table.

"Bully is no good for this business!" she says.

Does she think the stems are the best part of the tobacco leaf asks the man with the sunlight soap and straw hat. It is a mistake on her part, he takes the liberty to remark. Yes the ship is a good one, it is going to Brisbane. Tropical voyage!

Milly turns directly to me:

"A good runner must have muscles and bones, but also something else. Bully has no imagination and is short of breath!"

Bully is vexed. He has taken up an accordian and is playing like one possessed. But perhaps it is altogether different, perhaps Bully was boxing against my empty head and I am lying somewhere dreaming unreal, twisted things.—"Excuse me, I am coming right back!" Milly said to me.

I see her set a full bottle of whiskey, Three Star Whiskey, before Bully. "Let's be friends again!" she said. The Dutchman's sea bag is shrinking. The Russian is finally under the table.

*And when my money's gone with drink*
*We'll go to sea again.*
*O Susanna, you beauty Anna. .*

I am really dreaming. A girl sets a big plate of food before me on the table. But it is a real steak and real fried potatoes. O'Neil has also got a portion. Then comes wine, more and more wine. And I see no one any more, know

nothing. . . . Soft and far away sound the chords of the accordian. There is a strange smell. Not the smell of the mattresses below in the sleeping room. I am beginning to recall. I went up a stairway—I was led up a stairway.

Now a light is made, a candle is lit.

Milly! There is really no soft meat about her. It is her hair that smells that way, that fills the room. It is all very strange. I have no idea how I came to this room, how I got into this bed.

"You must have a lot of sleep, eat regularly. No fighting the next few days! I have gotten rid of Bully!" she says.

"Bully—that's the square fellow below that serves the whiskey!"

"He was my runner. I have shanghaied him on to the *Alpha Cruzis!*"

From below another line of the song comes weakly and monotonously, suddenly cut short:

. . . *Susanna, you beauty Anna!*

I lie still, staring at the ceiling without thinking or wishing anything. Milly has thrown a shawl about her and gone out. After a while she comes back and brings a cup of coffee.

"Here, drink!" She sits on the edge of the bed with her feet under her. She is silent and supple in her movements. There is something of the large cat in her. That I noticed before. I have shanghaied him on to the *Alpha Cruzis*: how simple, how self evident!

"What will happen to me?" I spoke this aloud.

"You are my runner now! Tomorrow you'll go and get yourself a new suit of clothes!"

She went over to the night table.

"Here are four notes. One of them, signed by O'Neil, belongs to you! You brought him to the house!"

O'Neil—I had forgotten all about him!

"O'Neil—what happened to him?"

"On the *Alpha Cruzis*! Together with Bully, the Dutchman and the Russian. A simple business: all four of them dead drunk. Slimmy will spit."

O'Neil on the *Alpha Cruzis* and I get the head money! He was my friend! A curse chokes me, some furious, terrible word. I haven't the strength, can barely withstand the self assurance with which Milly envelopes me. She is not yet thirty.

"We must look for a quick turnover. Slimmy operates with much less overhead expense than we do. But he has no imagination, he'll stay a shipping master until younger forces displace him and it will be too late for more solid business!"

Milly has imagination and also what she calls a long breath. I am beginning to understand. O'Neil on the *Alpha Cruzis*—I the land-shark! And he gave me the head part of the fish!

"Then what. . . ."

"Have a good sleep. Tomorrow we begin!"

But I get up and jump out of bed. I am very weak, can hardly stand on my feet and don't know what to say.

"I haven't eaten much for three weeks. The supper was too much for me!" I finally say.

"Your clothes are outside, near the door!"

She goes and fetches my trousers.

"Downstairs, first door left! To the right is the bar-room," she calls after me.

But I opened the door to the right. Thick, stagnant air. Weather-browned faces framed in black hair and lit by the kerosene lamp. They sprawl over tables or lie on the floor, dead drunk.

Milly is not watchful, she sticks in her private room and makes all sorts of plans. Here is a carload of men that one only has to load and dump on the *Alpha Cruzis* or some other sud ship.

I feel my way through the hall and get out on the street. The sand is cold now. A wind comes from the heights and flows down the beach to the sea. The houses stand like charmed ones in the pale night. That supper was really too heavy for me. The air presses on my stomach and sends everything upward. I have to steady myself against some piling. By stages I finally get to the strand.

Blue breakers throw themselves at the land and break in thunder against the stone wall. The spray strikes my face. My trouser legs flap about in the wind. I still hear the seething sea near me when, slowly and heavily, I fall asleep in a sand hollow. And I hear it again as I wake.

The day is blindingly bright. The sun's rays are of terrible power; they split into vibrant sparks against my head. Broad and heavy the bay spreads under me. The place where the *Alpha Cruzis* lay anchored is clear. There is a sail-boat on the horizon which must have set sail during the night. With full sails it is holding a course due north towards the Guano Islands.

In the sand near me a shadow appears. I don't have to look up, I know the silhouette—it's Slimmy!

"The saloon on the corner is open, already. Come on, have a drink with me."

I get up and drag after him in the sand.

*Translated from the German by S. D. Kogan*

**Ramon J. Sender**

# One Red Sunday

*From the New Spanish Novel* Seven Red Sundays

Voices, tumult. The Puerta del Sol is like a gulf in the ocean, always agitated. At times I have seen all the intersections occupied by troops. The square completely empty, then suddenly, men, born of the asphalt itself, were struggling and yelling. Soon a shot. Rebellion is here, in the shadow of the lamp posts and in the exits of the subway. What is happening in the Puerta del Sol is happening in all Spain. The good thing about our tactics is that the Government never knows where to find the enemy. And this is not so much our tactics as it is the Spanish temperament. They say the monarchy fell like this too. There comes a moment when the air is infested with passion and you can't breathe and the most extraordinary things occur without anyone making use of the resources that had been prepared. We ourselves decided on the general strike. Apparently we ought to content ourselves with making as complete a strike as possible. But when we go out on the street and see a guard, we feel that he is our enemy. The organization is backing us, always ready to go forward. We may say: "This far!" and a thousand voices cry: "Farther!" Among those voices are workers and women, well dressed people and beggars. We advance farther and soon see that our forces are in danger. We stop a little and again say: "This far!" The air, the pavement, the light and the buildings cry: "Farther!" We consult the Local and the answer comes signed and sealed: "Farther!" We go to the Regional and they say: "Farther!" The Regionals consult the National Committee and the groups of the Peninsular. All answer, almost without words, with a single password, the password of yesterday and of tomorrow. Always the same Always "Farther!" This time the first incident has happened in Madrid. At other times it is in Seville and in Barcelona. The whole organization, without consultation or previous telephone conferences—without discipline and without real organization, we have undermined the defenses of the State—comes with us. Where? We don't know. Comrades Progreso, Espartaco and Germinal! Sunday night they closed our syndicates, displayed force against us, but the strike was decided and according to what Samar told me in the secret meeting that night, everything necessary was arranged so that orders would reach all parts. We would not have gone farther than the 48 hour strike, but in driving us to secrecy, to the shadows, they have brought us into our own element and we shall see what happens. The National Committee has already launched its password, without need of orders or telegrams. The countersign is always in the air: "Farther!" We already know it: "Farther!" Always farther! Sleep peacefully, murdered comrades. We are going where you wanted to go. The sky is blue, and the old beggars are fearfully waiting in the atriums of the churches, the smell of powder scenting the air.

To get to the meeting place I should pass by the Puerta del Sol but on seeing the precautions they have taken, I go back and around through a laberinth of alleys. I am "on commission" and must deprive these people of the pleasure of putting me in jail. Two newsboys shout this morning's *Hoja*. There is no other paper except this bourgeois and semi-official sheet.

In the alleys too the strike can be noticed, because the doors of the small shops are closed or only half open. The sun and the silence gives them a somber aspect. Red Sunday, real Sunday. It is not like those Sundays for me alone—when I was without work—when ideas wearied me, nor like the bourgeois Sundays when the rich don't rest because they haven't worked and we can't rest, except mechanically, because the desire to struggle burns within us. These are not individual Sundays, black with shameful hunger, or white with church bells and holiday clothes, but genuine Red Sundays, our own. Sundays with no taxis, no street trams no aimless bourgeoisie in the streets. Sundays when the street and the open air are a delight and we are going to conquer these Sundays with bullets, to steal them from the patent leather guards, from the mournful police who have slept badly. Now I am in the Plaza Mayor (Main Square). Porticos, 17th and 18th century houses, Philip IV. Filthy history. Municipal archives. Dwarf trees and giant trees. Again Philip IV. We are not interested in history, nor in art. Neither the history of the kings nor the decorative art of the court. Away with all that. . . . They say this is a very beautiful plaza. It represents an epoch of the court of the Asturias. That doesn't interest us. We live by our strength, and we struggle for ourselves, not for the past but for our own ideas and for the future.

Nobody knows how it happened but the fact is that suddenly the three coffins appear wrapped in the red and black flag. The Socialist leaders come forth and place themselves at the head of the demonstration. Their presence is enough to make all this seem subject to their initiative, a thing which to me at least is intolerable. Nevertheless we are tolerant enough, although we may not seem so. Samar (the Communist) says no:

"The truth is that we have no talent for triumph. We can't take advantage of our own success. We only know how to make use of our defeats."

"That is a good deal."

"But it is not enough. . . ."

We walk a while without speaking. . . . I look back. The human river is lost in a curve of the street. Seeing the multitudes thus in cross section, one feels their purpose. All think the same: "What are the Socialists doing here? Why are we following them?" Others reply respectfully that there is one Socialist among the dead. . . . Now they are giving out a little leaflet. Another Socialist manifesto promising to share responsibility and giving the itinerary of the funeral. (It is the united front.) They say: "It will follow the Paseo del Prado to the Plaza de Castelar and there the automobiles with the coffins will leave for the cemetery and the demonstration will be dissolved." It is a decree. They are confident that they have a majority. It is three thirty. The afternoons now are long—in May the sun sets at seven—and the demonstration ought to turn at the Plaza de Neptuno and go up to the Puerta del Sol. That is what was secretly told those who are carrying the coffins. Samar concludes:

"The bourgeoisie must see our martyrs. When Pablo Iglesias died the Socialists had the casket exposed to the public for three days."

Ahead and behind us the manifesto creates an atmosphere of uneasiness. The police from the side streets watch us anxiously. The events of the morning have given us a formidable moral victory. On entering the Paseo del Prado the demonstration increases three times in volume. Red Sunday, color of hot ashes, with the city trembling and the three coffins rolling like ships over the multitude. The red of the flags challenges all the bourgeois purples.

The coffin of the Socialist follows behind and has no flag. Samar is thinking that he hasn't had time to eat and adds:

"If they shoot me in the belly or in the stomach, I can be cured much easier."

We begin to hear songs. . . . Without noticing it, we are following the rhythm of the *International*. A group surrounding the coffins is singing *No more traditions chains shall bind us, Arise ye slaves*. . . . and the sky seems to come down and the air grows thick and it is difficult to breathe. The demonstration continues and the front must be already near the Neptune. There are probably more than 70,000 workers around us. The bourgeoisie will tremble in their lairs. I say this to Samar.

"If we were real revolutionaries, we would overwhelm everything tonight. How easy it would be to take power . . . !"

This is the comment of a Communist, but I don't say anything. We follow the *International*. From their horses the guards look at us like shepherds at their flock. We feel no hatred now. We are strong and we can do everything. Forward, behind Germinal, Espartaco and Progreso who are walking slowly to infinity like ourselves. We are going to the infinity of liberty and justice. Samar interrupts:

"Liberty is not a goal. It is a banner."

Bah! We are strong and nothing will turn us aside. The coffins of Progreso, Espartaco and Germinal follow the path of the orthodox. Victory or death. All the rest is a concession to the bourgeoisie, reformism.

Farther down they are talking about the dictatorship of the proletariat. I say to Samar:

"You're not an anarchist."

Samar shrugs his shoulders:

"Anarchism as a negation of the State is all right. Integral anarchism is a religion which does not interest me because like all religions it is based on superstition and borders from above, on utopia. Anarchism has nothing to do with the revolution. Our revolution will not be made on the basis of the spirit. The spirit today—including our own—is bourgeois. The revolution will be made in spite of the spirit."

I don't understand this very well but Samar's sincerity convinces me. . . .

Here and there come anxious voices. "Through the Puerta del Sol!" In view of the orders of the Socialist chiefs, the multitude has reacted and seizes upon the password. Through the Puerta del Sol. The voices swell. The coffins have now arrived at the Plaza de Neptuno. Samar and I again go forward and have soon regained our first position. On the way we have spread the password and behind us the voices rise like flames. The sky continues grey and indecisive. The faces are whiter and the trees are the green of the market. "Puerta del Sol!" Only the last word of the phrase can now be heard: "Sol!" repeated by thousands of throats. "Sol!" The coffins have stopped and the first begins to turn. The presidium must be 400 meters ahead, in the Plaza of Castelar. The coffins want to be released. The entrance to the San Jeronimo road is totally occupied by troops mounted and on foot. . . .

The demonstration has been cut off. Our own people are massed around the coffins and the others have gone on to the Plaza of Castelar. Among the Socialists there is an expectant alarm. Our people are now roaring: "Sol!" And they are threatening. Almost all of us have our hands in our pockets and the coffins have turned toward the Road. The guards sit on their horses and look at one another anxiously. Their first feeling is fear; fear after the

attacks of this morning. The impulse has been converted into action and the multitude has changed its roar for the Communist *International*. We walk firmly and confidently toward the troops. They have closed the street but they will open it. On one side is the Palace, on the other the Ritz. Here, tourists and international bourgeoisie, are our three dead. They have put the other one in an automobile and disappeared. Don't be frightened. We know that you will say that it is in bad taste but in Spain and in our camp bad taste is not a reason. Here are Progreso, Espartaco and Germinal. The three coffins form a good commemorative obelisk. Fallen, that is clear. But they are our obelisk. We have the same right to show them to you that the bourgeois have when they show you that other obelisk of the "2nd of May" among the trees. Progreso, Espartaco and Germinal. Oh, Samar! look at the gaunt afternoon moon. THE MOON. Three new planets: Progreso, Espartaco and Germinal. . . .

Sing, sing. Our voices will go everywhere, comrades. Our ideas will enter like bulletheads. . . . Sing, sing!

A shot. Then two more. The multitude is quiet and the coffins sway over the heads. The cornet sounds again. It is the law. The law is first and then the deed. So it is in the old civilizations. In those which are being born—like ours—the deed will come first and afterwards the deed and after that nothing and much later the law. With the last note of the cornet sounds a volley. The guards have raised their rifles to their faces. Each volley is followed by a deathly silence. Who will fall? Why have I not fallen? The coffins continue to advance, undaunted, over the heads. The crowd has fallen back, but the comrades who carry the coffins advance. They are left alone. Shots come from our side in a spattering fire whose echo is lost in the borders of the square. The guards have broken their line and formed groups along the two walls. One has fallen. The horse of another is rearing, wounded. Now we are shooting, fleeing, seeking a tree, a stone from which to continue shooting. They answer with closed volleys. Toward the Retiro, toward the Cibeles, thousands of demonstrators are running. The volleys pursue them. Black spots on the light pavement are left or crawl along or groan. The flight becomes general. The coffins continue to advance. An official approaches the first and with a pistol in his hand orders it to go back. In the invisible warp of bullets two of those who are carrying the first coffin have fallen. The coffin rolls, creaks and falls. . . . The wounded drag themselves away and the others take out their pistols and retreat shooting. I have taken refuge behind a bench and am firing. Samar with his hands in his pockets is cursing and looking up and down. The square is a pattern of running people. We shoot. Another coffin is on the ground. The bullets mow down the flowers in the gardens and strike the pavement hurling splinters of stone. Soon people come running up from the Cibeles. There and through the San Jeronimo Road more troops are coming down. We have to run away or die. We run, because we cannot die: the night is filled with committee meetings.

THE MOON. Three new planets: Espartaco, Progreso and Germinal. . . .

Samar and I have managed to reach the grating of the Retiro and there we meet Urbano Fernandez of the Federation committee. Without stopping he says:

"At ten at Cuatro Caminos. . . ."

*Translated from the Spanish by Lucy Knox*

**Robert S. Carr**

# Six Week Soldiers

*An American Short Story of Citizens' Military Training Camps*

Lieutenant Rorty hitched up his Sam Brown belt, heavy with its dangling Colt .45, and surveyed the company of raw recruits with a critical and slightly blood-shot eye. They stood awkwardly, in their ill-fitting new uniforms, and watched him as he swaggered up and down.

Something about their homely faces annoyed him. Damn them, didn't they know that a soldier doesn't stare his commanding officer straight in the eye, minute after minute? Gotta get these babies licked into shape, so they won't forget their six weeks here. Gotta get the jump on them the very first day, because there are some tough eggs, grown men, in this bunch—not the little snot-noses this camp was lousy with three-four years ago.

He continued to swagger up and down, scowling ferociously. Give no command. Work up some suspense, till one of 'em makes a move, a sound—snickers, whispers, farts—any kinda disturbance. Then tear into 'em, get the jump on 'em right now, this first morning. Got to.

The incandescent July sun bore down with an almost tangible pressure on the wide parade ground. Faintly to them, muted by the open air and the distance, came the barks and roars of other officers drilling other companies of citizens. Beyond, shimmering in the heat like a mirage, stood row on row of pyramidal khaki canvas tents. At one side was ranged a family of tanks, beginning with a baby whippet-tank, mounting a single machine-gun, then going up step by step, ton by ton, to a tank as big as a three-room bungalow, and bristling with ordnance. All were vastly leprous with crazy mottlings of camouflage.

Lieutenant Rorty's jaw protruded. Not a peep out of 'em. Wise rookies. All they did was stand there and watch him as he swaggered back and forth. Eyes—brown, blue, grey, black—on a level with or higher than his own, moving steadily back and forth, from side to side, squinty, in hard brown faces.

Their goddam adam's-apples! he thought furiously. Could tell by looking at them that they were a bunch of hicks, mostly. Only farm-hands had necks like that—sun-baked, cracked leather in the back, in front a knob as big as your fist, bobbing up and down.

"Attention!" bawled Lieutenant Rorty. Then he remembered that he had already called them to attention five minutes before, and hastily added, "Right dress!" He dressed the line, bawling "Suck up your guts!" counted them off by squads and began to drill them. They marched heavily with a flat-footed, half-slouching elastic tramp, as if mud and clods were their natural element. He marched them clear to the camp limits, through a creek, across the maze of artificial hummocks that had been piled up for the tanks to wallow in like huge obscene steel pigs. A lanky red-haired recruit tripped on his own feet and fell down, but got up quickly; no one dropped out of line. On the first day, in these citizens' camps, Rorty reflected angrily, somebody always drops out fagged. His own knees shook with fatigue. "Double time, march!" he yelled.

He let them jog-trot all the way back to the company street, giving the command "halt" from a distance in the rear. When he came up to them

they were scarlet-faced, their shirts dark-splotched with sweat. Silently they licked the dust off their lips, looking at him. He kept them at stiff attention for two minutes before he finally snapped. glancing at his wrist-watch, "Company dismissed."

He stood still and watched them tramp back to their tents, slapping one another on the back. Husky bastards. Funny how they stuck together, moved in a bunch even after drill was over. Soldiers didn't do that.

Lieutenant Rorty was detailed to mess-hall that evening. He kept his eyes on them, his own men. Christ, how they ate! As if they'd fasted through Holy Week. Wiped the bean-gravy out of their tin pans with the last hunks of bread. And too damned quiet, talking low among themselves. When one spoke, the rest all listened to him till he was through. Then another. No horse-play, no hollering. Something unnatural about it.

The days ran on, hot and clear. The parade ground blazed. There were no cases of insubordination. They were too well-behaved. Rorty grew vitriolic. "It's a rifle, see, not a pitchfork. You hold it thataway, see?" Shove, jerk. The man was taller than Rorty, with quick blue eyes. Perhaps he had darkened his hair a little, with something home-made, around the temples. In the exact center of his forehead he had a scar, not the pucker of a stitched cut, but the straight red line of a split. He grasped the rifle eagerly, obediantly presented arms. Shoulder. Kneel. Aim. Prone. Attention. Over and over, tirelessly, better each time. He panted, his eyes bright.

"Fix bayonets." A rattle along the line as the cold steel flamed out of scabbards into the sun, clicked over rifle-muzzles to stick out like fantastically elongated belligerent undershot jaws.

From an inverted L frame a straw dummy swung on a rope, like something lynched. "You lunge, see?" Rip, twist, extract bayonet. "Then up with the butt, if he isn't finished." With a vicious lurch the instructor brought the stock of the heavy Army rifle under and forward in a quick arc, terminating with a thud under the hypothetical chin of the straw dummy. Rorty stood aside, a lump of sarcasm, and watched his men plunge one by one.

He spit out of the corner of his mouth. The bastards were getting good. Must be the pitch-fork training. They put real steam behind their lunges. When their turn came, they were on the run with no urging. In fact, they were not like any recruits Lieutenant Rorty remembered. In bayonet drill, in these civvy camps, somebody always used to get sick and ask to be excused. "Pardon me sir, but I can't stand the sight of the knife going into the dummy, sir. I'm sick at my stomach." A pale-faced little puke, his soft white hand trembling in salute. A clerk, he said he was. But that had been two years ago—these bozos, this summer, had a nasty way of grinning as they sent the bayonet zipping in up to the hilt. It was about the only time they ever cracked a smile, it seemed to Rorty.

In the third week they began to study the machine-gun. Black-board drill, learning the parts, scratching their heads and squinting, holding up their hands like kids to ask questions. So damned many questions. Now start on a model. Take her down. Name her. Oil her. Assemble her. Now out on the range. Ninety seconds to get set up. Then turn her on and let her sing, clutching the twin grips with vibration-numbed hands, deafened, shaking like ague, hammering the hell out of a target two hundred yards down the line. The trick of raking her back and forth, on multiple targets, not just straight back and forth at one elevation where you might miss something, but with

a wavy, up-and-down sweep that would pepper a cavalry charge from hoofs to helmets.

"Now she's jammed. Now you gotta do this—" The instructor pushed the lanky, red-haired recruit aside and tried vainly to force the smoking-hot ejector. Rorty shouldered in. Machine-guns were his specialty. But the recruit's hand darted into the breach. Deftly he pulled the release pin, the ejector straightened, and the belt moved up with a neat click.

"How do you know so damned much about machine guns?" demanded Rorty.

The recruit looked at him. "I used to be a mechanic," he said, tardily adding, "Sir."

They swarmed into the tanks, the fifth week, as into wagons for a hay-ride. They'll get over it, Rorty chuckled grimly—inside a tank is the hot corner of hell, plus being rolled in a barrel. Three days later he was watching with grudging admiration a ten-tonner crash through the 'tanglements into the creek, come out on the other side like some prehistoric monster dripping slime, waddle skilfully through the maze of hummocks, and draw up smoothly in formation. The tall, oldish-looking recruit with the quick blue eyes and the scar popped out the hatch like a jack-in-the-box, wiping his neck.

The others clanked and snorted in. Rorty lined the company up and shouted, "Fall out for fifteen minutes." He and the instructor went over and sat down under a tree at a field-table. The men went to the far end of the tank line and sat down in the shade of the ten-tonner. It cast the biggest shadow. They snuggled their spines against the paint-mottled steel and began to roll Bull Durhams.

The tall recruit came back from the latrine, passing the table. The instructor looked up and smiled. "You're getting the hang of it, Anderson. You handle her fine."

The man stopped and swallowed, his adam's-apple knotting like a fist. He did not come to attention. "I ought to," he said quietly. "I've run a Caterpiller over half of Nebrasky—when them things were still bein' used." He went on, joined the others.

The instructor was a plump, enthusiastic corporal who had been in YMCA work. He told off the scores, the progress, man by man, reading a big loose-leaf leather-covered note-book, stamped with a golden eagle strained in a soundless scream. He was proud of the showing they were making. And the discipline, usually so troublesome in the civilian camps, was excellent. He diverged, in his enthusiasm, from his report. "These men are developing into first-class soldiers," he said. "It certainly pays the Government to train them—"

Rorty looked up and silenced him with a gesture. The men were getting up and slipping around to the other side of the tank. Out of the shadow into the sun—wasn't right. They were hiding, Rorty realized. He visualized a jug of booze sloshing from mouth to mouth. Gotta look into this. Maybe they were a bunch of queers. Maybe that was why they acted so screwy, not like soldiers. But hell, these guys weren't nances—

Rorty got up. Dodging among the parked tanks, he made his way close. He swore as a warning whistle sounded—they'd planted a look-out inside the tank, watching out the peep-hole over the aft machine-gun. He leaped into the open and broke into a run. He swooped around the corner of the tank and found them sitting in a circle on the grass. His eyes searched their

hands. Nothing. Then he caught a quick motion as the red-headed one stuffed something into his mouth and began to swallow hard.

"Stand up!" Rorty bellowed. He pounced on the red-head. "What you eatin', huh?"

The man's adam's-apple bobbed rapidly.

"Open your mouth."

The recruit gave one last gulp and opened his mouth. Rorty peered, reached in gingerly, extracted a scrap of paper from between the man's teeth. It was white, about the size of a postage stamp, ragged torn. One side was blank. The other bore an exclamation mark and part of a capital letter which might have been R or P, at the end of a sentence.

Rorty glowed wildly. "Eatin' paper, huh? Whatcha eatin' paper for?" He whirled on the youngest of the recruits, a freckle-faced boy with white fuzz on his upper lip. "What did he put in his mouth?"

"Nuthin'," said the boy.

Rorty glared around at their faces. They all looked solemn, and were standing respectfully at attention. Jesus, how they had filled out, fattened up in five weeks. Some of them were real gorillas, now that their faces had lost that drawn, peaked look. They must have gained ten pounds apiece. And they stood easily, balanced, alert.

Rorty turned on his heel and left them. The lobes of his ears prickled with flush. His bowels griped him. Something was rotten. He walked rapidly across camp to the latrine.

When he came out, he looked for his company. They had of their own accord moved over to the bayonet practice ground. They had gotten hold of one old bayonet and were taking turns with it. Lunge. Rip. Twist. Extract. They swung the butt forward and up with cool, expert murderousness. They must be crazy, Rorty thought. He had told them to fall out. By God, it was almost insubordination. Whoever heard of soldiers drilling when they had gotten the command "Fall out."

He started to hurry toward them, biting his lips, but changed his mind half way and sat down in his chair at the field-table under the tree.

The ones waiting their turn with the bayonet squatted on the sidelines and coached, like at a baseball game. A shift in the wind brought Rorty a scrap of their talk. . . . "Get that 'ar twist right, Hi—we only got a week left."

They were all crazy as hell, Rorty decided. Eating paper, the sons of bitches. His Sam Brown belt felt unusually heavy. He unbuckled it and laid it on the table. He wished he had re-enlisted in the Marines. China. The captain said yellow gals were swell. The fifteen minutes was up. Oh what the hell, give 'em fifteen more.

Lieutenant Rorty lolled back in the folding chair and tried to doze, but even after the wind had shifted again and was blowing in their direction, not his, he could hear too clearly the scuffling rush of their heavy, hurrying footsteps, the zipping thud of the bayonet impaling, ripping, destroying the dangling man of straw.

**Vassili Grossman**

# Glückauf!

*From A Soviet Novel of the Donbas Miners* [1]

## PART I

Senka Prudnikov had finished his first shift. He pulled off his pit overalls in the bath-house, washed himself and went home to the bachelors' barracks.

As he tramped along swinging his bundle of pit clothes, he glanced about him, thinking:

"So I'm a miner now . . . . Well! If only the lads could see me!"

He had faced more new terrors in this one day than in the course of his whole life. From early morning he had been kept running from one window to another of the colliery office. At one of them a curly-headed but stern young woman had given him a slip of white paper. At another window this was exchanged for a blue paper. With the latter he was sent to the hospital. There a shock-headed doctor ordered him to undress and listened through a black tube to what was going on inside his chest. Then the doctor made Senka read the letters of the alphabet, and afterwards kneaded his stomach till it ached. From the hospital Senka was sent to the manager of the pit. The manager was a sturdy, grey-haired man, dressed like the rest, but his voice and his whole manner indicated that he was at the head of things here. As he put his signature to the paper Senka held out, he asked:

"How old are you?"

"Twenty," replied Senka.

"You're lying, you're only sixteen."

Senka got an awful fright. He was, as a matter of fact, just turned seventeen, and boys had to be eighteen before they were taken on in the pits. But, to his great relief, the manager handed him back his paper, merely saying:

"Go on, then."

At last Senka was given a blackened, triangular disk with the number 28904, and attached as sled-boy to Yurenko's group. Then he was given some pit clothes—canvas trousers with thick patches on the knees and after that he had nothing to do but wander about the yard till it was time for the next shift to go on. He was nervous and excited, and made frequent visits to the wooden structure with the tall chimney just behind the lamp-room.

But at length there came a deafening blast from the siren and the deserted yard filled rapidly with miners.

Senka found himself standing in the queue before a heavy, iron bound door. It opened, admitted twenty men and closed again with a grinding like that of iron jaws. Then it came to Senka's turn and he, too, entered the pit-head building. The miners' lamps gleamed like bright eyes in the damp twilight. The majority of the men carried heavy, twenty-five pound accumu-

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1 The title *Gluckauf!* for this Soviet novel meaning "Luck to you!" is taken from the German and is used by German miners leaving the shaft.

lators resembling great one-eyed owls. The pony-men carried their accumulators hanging on the side, the lamp itself being attached to their caps by a long cord. The older miners and the ventilation foremen carried indicator lamps in their hands. Pale tongues of flame glanced through the double safety nets like prisoners behind bars. And here and there shone the special lamps borne by the engineers and head miners; "search-lights" as the miners called them.

Stone walls could be made out in the dim light. Senka glanced at the notices hanging on them. "No smoking in the mine—Gas!" and "Don't go to sleep in the mine," were the inscriptions under a poster that showed columns of flame, people running for dear life and the skull that denotes death. The cage rose to the surface out of the black depths. The barred gate slid back with a rattle. Out of it issued coal-black people, laughing and pushing one another. Their eyes glittered, their teeth looked dazzling white. They talked in loud tones and called out to each other, boldly shattering the silence of the pit-head and of those who were about to go down to work.

At last the new shift entered the cage.

Each man glanced as he entered at the quivering steel rod, gleaming with oil: supposing it was to snap this time? Senka stood motionless, clutching the iron railing till his fingers hurt. Without looking up, he tested the floor with his foot. Three heavy blows were heard; it was the signal for another cageful of men to be let down. The cage slipped down smoothly and slowly into the bottomless gloom.

"Why, there's nothing very terrifying about this after all," Senka was thinking joyfully.

Just at that moment the cage sprang from the rope and swooped downwards, creaking and groaning. Tepid streams of water trickled down on the men; the wet stones of the wall-facing melted into one another as they rushed past. His eyes were screwed up tight and he swallowed convulsively. The speed set up a roaring in his ears and stopped the very heart in his breast.

The others glanced at him knowingly and smiled.

"Should have been given the windy ride," someone said regretfully. (Until quite lately the custom of giving novices the "windy ride," that is, letting them down in the cage at a forbidden speed, was practised regularly.)

The cage slackened speed, but still Senka remained standing there with his eyes shut. Someone gave him a dig in the ribs.

"We're there, get out! What, has it knocked you silly, you mug," the miner concluded with a chuckle.

Senka found himself underground. Breathless, striking his head every moment against the timbering, he scrambled after the others, who were making for what they called "The Far East."

He longed to turn and flee—to the cage, to get out into the daylight once more, to run home to the country without looking back . . . . But he knew he would never find his way out. So, whether he liked it or not, he was obliged to follow the others as best he might. He ran, crouching, and scrambling over the wet, slippery stones. Memories of home—of the quiet, sunlit farmyard, and the old dog Palma lying under the cart filled with golden straw suddenly became so tormentingly sweet that Senka felt like bursting out blubbering and screaming "Mamma!"

The miners ahead of him raised their lamps, turned them on his white face and jeered:

"Well, boy, feeling the heat?"

"You're done for this time, there's no doubt about it. You'll never see

daylight again," said the head of the gang, who carried a benzine lantern instead of an electric one. "Pug-nosed chaps always get killed off the first shift, sure as fate."

And although Senka understood well that they were only laughing at him and trying to frighten him for their own amusement, still, a cold shiver of fear passed through him.

They arrived at some kind of a door, where the miners stripped themselves to the waist and crawled along a very low corridor.

Before them now was a steep incline; the air was hot and suffocating. In some places the weight of the rock had broken down the timbering, and big lumps of rock obstructed the way. Senka felt that he would drop with fatigue in another moment. His limbs trembled, his heart beat madly, his back ached.

As a rule the miners made a couple of halts on the way to "The Far East." This time, however, on account of the new boy, it had been decided to go the whole way without a single halt. By the time they were near their goal the miners were pretty tired, too. They were beginning to breathe heavily, but after a glance at the panting Senka, they winked at each other and kept on their way.

When, at last, after many twistings and turnings, the gang arrived at their section, they flung down their tools and sat down to rest. The lamps cast their light over the shining layer of coal. From time to time a bit of rock would detach itself and rustle down; there was a monotonous drip, drip of water somewhere. At every rustle the men would glance upwards to see if the rock was about to fall in.

The gang consisted of two miners, two truckmen, Senka and another sled-boy. The latter was a young fellow of twenty, evidently as strong as a horse. For some reason or other they all called him "Uncle Sarai." He looked Senka up and down for a long time and then said in a sleepy drawl:

"You'll find those sleds heavy for you, young fellow."

"He'll manage alright!" said Yurenko, the head of the gang.

The truckmen laughed and joined in the conversation.

"What do they call you?"

"Prudnikov."

"And what name do they curse you by?"

"Simeon."

"Sweated a bit, didn't you, before we got here?"

"I was nearly done for. I thought I'd never get here at all, in fact."

"He ought to be put on Number Three Bremsberg," said the second miner, Versetilov. They burst out laughing at the idea of it.

Senka had scarcely had time to get his breath, but he was already bursting with curiosity. Everything interested him; where the coal was, and where the gas came from, and whether Yurenko had been working here a long time or not. But he did not like to ask, for fear that they would laugh at him: the truckmen were, in fact, just waiting for the chance.

"What did you come to the collieries for?" one of them asked.

"To get work."

"That's clear! But what was the idea, that's what I want to know. Haven't you got enough work to do at home?"

"I came because I had to."

"Needing money, I suppose?"

"That's it."

"That's what we all need, my lad. We can't get along without the damned thing . . . . Now what would you be wanting money for in particular?"

"Money?" repeated Senka. "I'd like to buy a suit of clothes and some boots, maybe." Here he was interrupted by a loud burst of laughter.

"There you are! You want to buy a leather jacket with fifty straps and belts on it and a pair of shiny top-boots!" they shouted triumphantly, imitating his accent.

It was their favorite way of ragging the country lads who arrived.

At length Versetilov gave Yurenko an inquiring look and asked:

"Are we going to do some timbering first?"

"Have to have a look."

Yurenko picked up his lamp and crawled into the drift, which was so low that although he lay on his stomach, he struck his head on the roofing. He tapped in several places with his finger, listened and then tapped again. One of the truckmen remarked with a jerk of his head in Yurenko's direction:

"Careful old devil, isn't he? Nothing'll happen to him. He knows all about this mine."

"Better do some timbering," said Yurenko, creeping back again. "The roofing's good for nothing—ready to fall in any minute."

"Alright. Now, you there, fetch those timbers along."

Senka picked up a few boards as he was told and crawled with them into the drift. Terror came over him once more. The drift was a long one, about twenty metres, and not more than sixty centimetres high. Every moment it seemed as if the smooth black roof was curving, ready to break and squash the man under it as flat as a pancake, crush him into the earth. With a great difficulty, Yurenko squeezed his sturdy body into the upper part of the drift. Selecting his props and boards carefully, he hammered them well between the roofing and the soil. Below Versetilov's axe could be heard.

Senka crawled from the one man to the other, handing them the wood. He broke off a bit of coal with his fingers, and put in his mouth. He crunched it a second and then it seemed to him that it must be poisonous, so he spat out vigorously several times.

"Let's start," said Yurenko.

He fastened his lamp to a board and stripped naked. Versetilov did the same. Soon it grew quite dark from coal dust as fine as the finest flour. The lamps could not be distinguished. Dense black clouds came belching forth from the drift. Senka felt as if he would choke and go blind at the same time. The dust got into his mouth, his nose, his eyes, mingled with his sweat and poured in a sticky stream all over his face and body.

He fixed the strap around his waist, passed the chain of the sled between his legs as Uncle Sarai showed him. Uncle Sarai crawled ahead with the lamp in his teeth. The sled was very heavy—he had to strain with all his might to drag the thing along the uneven floor of the haulage way. The heavy lamp made his teeth ache, knees and hands scraped along the ground, the sweat poured down into his eyes and hindered him from seeing clearly. Several times before he got to the rails, Senka's limbs refused to act with the strain.

The work made him forget his fears. The feeling of tension and anticipation of something terrible about to happen had left him. He dragged the sled up and loaded it feverishly striving to reduce the pile of coal thrown out of the drift. If he loitered even for a second, a stream of the lowest curses imaginable, uttered in a hoarse unearthy voice, issued from the drift. The pile of coal blocked the passage of fresh air into the drift and the miners began gasping for air if it was not cleared in time.

About the middle of the shift two people entered the drift. One of them wore spectacles and carried a bright "searchlight" lamp. They took queer looking glass things out of a black case and began to let water out of them, now holding them aloft to the roofing, now close to the soil. Yurenko crawled out of the drift, glanced at them disapprovingly and said in low tones:

"Come round to measure the gas again, I suppose? You might as well try measuring our troubles."

The newcomers made some reply or other, sat down for a few moments and then went away. Yurenko watched them go and called out loudly so they could hear:

"Damned idle spongers!" Then turning to Senka, he said in a friendly tone:

"Aye, laddie, laddie, they live on our sweat, everyone of them!"

A few minutes later Versetilov crept out of the drift and flung himself down on the ground with his legs apart. The truckmen ran up with their "empties" and sat down, too.

"That's labor for you!" said Yurenko, looking at his work-worn hands.

"Ah, what about it? It's all the same to us," rejoined Versetilov.

And the truckmen took up the strain:

"What does it matter? We've nothing to lose in our lives, anyhow!" This phrase was in frequent use in the mine. Whenever anything happened or someone gave account of an accident, or sometimes simply for no reason whatsoever, a miner would make a gesture of hopelessness and say:

"What does it matter! We've nothing to lose, anyhow."

"The jobs I've been on in my life!" Yurenko continued. "I was a shepherd back home in the country. I was a yard-man in Kiev. Then I worked six years as a hall porter in a big private boarding school for young ladies at Simferopol. Then I was a clerk in the District Land Office. Had a shot at everything! Then the war broke out: I came over here to get out of being mobilized,—and here I stayed. The war's over and done with, and I'm still rotting here."

"Oh, well, you can get used to this place in time," said one of the drivers.

"Well, and I can't, see. Fifteen years I've been in the Don Coal Basin and I haven't got used to it yet. Every day I hear that buzzer screeching, I feel as if my whole inside were being turned inside out. I hate to think of going down into this grave again."

"Yes, it's a rotten life," the drivers said cheerfully.

"Never mind, you'd tell us better about the young ladies in the boarding school and how they went off to see their fellows at night," suggested Versetilov.

But Yurenko seemed upset. "Better be getting back to work, hadn't we?" he muttered and crawled away into the drift. The coal came tumbling down again and the dense black dust arose.

Senka realized that a miner's work was much heavier than his own, and he did his very best not merely out of fear of the miners' wrath but also from a vague desire to lighten their labors. At last the shift was over.

"It's a good drift," Yurenko remarked, as he was putting on his shirt.

"It's the right kind of drift," Versetilov agreed. "We always manage to do over the norm here. On East Number Two you might wrench the guts out of yourself and not get up to the norm."

Andreyev himself can't always do the norm there," put in one of the drivers. Yurenko was highly offended at this.

"Well, and did you think Andreyev was something special? If he was put on Number 10-B, he wouldn't be able to do a thing. I know that seam! You have to keep strengthening the roof all the time there and even then you have

to run out of the drift two or three times in a shift. The coal's as hard as iron. . . . You'd curse the day you were born if you got in there! The miners sometimes don't earn a ruble-fifty on it."

"The worst of our pit is that it's so damned hot!"

"Yes, the heat takes it out of you. Well—it's nine hundred metres down, you know. That's no joke. In Number Six the men work in their shirts and here—after about an hour you're ready to tear the hide off yourself, you're baked through, damn it."

"Have you had a smoke?" asked a driver.

They all laughed.

"What'd happen if you did smoke?" asked Senka with some misgiving.

"Try it and see," said the drivers.

"Stop that, you fool! Don't you start those sort of jokes down here, putting country lads up to things!" shouted Versetilov. "Else I'll bash your mug in for you!"

The miners dressed themselves, picked up their tools and began the endless crawl back again to the center. Other miners joined them. It looked as if the stars had fallen from the skies and were floating drunkenly down a swift and winding river.

When Senka got out to the pit-head, he forgot his weariness for joy at being above ground once more.

He drank in greedily great draughts of the wonderful night air; it seemed like life itself to him. He straightened his shoulders and, throwing back his head, stared at the distant stars. The sky was vast, august, serene. It bore up without timbering or props; it did not crack or threaten to crash down about his ears every moment.

"A-a-ye!" Senka exclaimed, and swung his lamp over his head.

*2*

Before going down the mine, Sharin, the director of the trust, changed his clothes in the baths reserved for the technical personnel. The watchman brought him a lamp, tested it and set it down at the door of the cabin.

The bath-house was quiet and deserted. Some of the taps had not been turned off properly, and kept up a hollow, melancholy dripping on the cement floor.

The walls were covered with a slimy brown coating. The dim light that crept in through the dirty window deepened the impression of mournful peace. Year after year, day and night, engineers and technicians had changed their clothes in these cabins before descending the mine. Sometimes they exchanged a few words with each other in lowered voices; then picked up their lamps and went through the low doorways into the pit-yard. Perhaps it was not the damp and the twilight, but the gloomy thoughts of these people, that had covered the walls with the layer of brown mould and made them so different from the cheerful Russian bath-houses with their clouds of dense white steam, loud laughter and jokes.

As Sharin stripped off his underclothes he looked at his bare arms and chest, stood listening awhile to the sound of the dripping taps and sighed: "So I'm fifty-two."

He shivered a little at the touch of the damp air on his skin, and drew on his overalls.

Now he was ready, but he did not hurry out of the cabin. Instead, he sat down on a stool and fell into deep thought. His face looked tired, his eyelids drooped, his head began to nod imperceptibly.

"Yes," he suddenly said out loud, and rose. The watchman was asleep in the passage with his head on the table. Sharin went out into the yard and walked in the direction of the pile-drivers. With an accustomed gesture he opened the heavy, iron-bound door. The damp breath of the mine blew in his face.

"How do, Misha!" he said to the cager.

Ah, it's 'Lexei,' it's the chief!" cried the old man, fussing about.

Three heavy blows resounded hollowly through the silence and the cage glided up slowly like a ghost.

"Well, how are you getting on, Misha?" asked Sharin.

"Pretty much as usual."

"Where's your son these days?"

"Oh, he's in Leningrad now, a commander, got a whole regiment under him," replied the old cager in his high sing-song voice.

"He is, is he?" was all Sharin said as he entered the cage.

He descended alone. The cage swung down rapidly, creaking. Water poured down the shaft. When the cage stopped, Sharin got out and started down the main track with the elastic, measured stride of the old miner. The high vaulting gave back the rapidly swelling resonance of wagons now somewhere near at hand. Streams of oily black water oozed under the planks by the side of the rails.

Sharin halted for a moment at the crossing and listened to the threatening roar of the current of air. Then he opened a broad, low door that led to the gangway of the eastern slope.

A wave of hot, moist air enveloped him. He made his way along the steep winding track as easily and rapidly as a snake. "He's a nimble devil," they used to say of him when he was still only a foreman and would crawl through airways and corridors without once stopping to rest.

Now he turned into the Number Seven western haulage tunnel. With his head in the manner peculiar to people who have tramped hundreds of miles underground, he ran along the sleepers and jumped over pools. Bits of shale rustled down like frightened mice. A deafening roar like distant thunder issued out of the bowels of the earth.

"Must be a pony-boy coming," thought Sharin. He chose a convenient spot and flattened himself between two props. His lamp he covered with the hem of his wide trousers so as not to startle the horse.

The horse came nearer. The animal's back bent under the strain, his breath came heavily, with a whistling sound. He panted so loudly that it drowned the clatter of the wheels. The poor beast moved his legs slowly; they seemed to bend and plant themselves in the earth with the effort; his head nodded convulsively quicker than his legs could move.

The panting young driver noticed Sharin and asked him the usual question all pit-men ask:

"Hey, what time is it, mate?"

"Getting on for six."

Sharin went on down the haulage way. Before the gaping black mouth of the airway he took a deep breath as if he was about to dive. Holding the lamp straight out before him, he crawled on his stomach along a winding track that looked as though it had been made by a mole. Shaft Number Four! The deepest, the hottest, the most suffocating and difficult of all the shafts in the Don Coal Basin. His shaft. Here he had trodden the long road from door-boy to head foreman. He remembered to this day every little detail of the

tracks, and slopes and Brembsbergs although it would be six years since he had worked here.

He crept through the airway into the upper part of the drift. The coal brigade was resting. Breathing heavily after his long walk, he sat down beside the miners to rest.

"Hello, Comrade Sharin," a half naked giant greeted him, holding out a great black palm.

"Hello, Andreyev," responded Sharin. "How goes it?"

"It doesn't go at all," Andreyev said with a sigh. "We won't be able to turn out anything like what we ought; we'll never get off the black list. You know this yourself though I suppose."

"Seventy per cent we got yesterday, and sixty-eight the day before," said a Komsomol named Manekin, and laughed scornfully.

A brigade from the neighboring drift came up just then. The leader, a Chinese called Li Fu-chang, expressed his view of the matter in broken Russian, which revealed however, an amazing command of curses.

All the mine workers joined in the conversation now.

"It's all the fault of those damned empties. You never can get them in time."

"No, it's the seasonal workers, mugs they are—fly-by-nights, curse 'em," said the foreman.

"It's the engineers' fault, more like," declared the Komsomol.

"How can anybody work under roofing like this?" complained the timberman. "It rots away no matter what you do! Might as well try to keep it up with your head."

"There's no order, that's what it is," suggested Shchukin, the other miner. "It's always either the boring that's burst, or the rock's not been cleared away, or there's no timber for strengthening, or the tools are blunt. . . You get an order to do a drift and then the whole brigade's got to sit and wait while the timbermen get through with their job."

Someone plucked Sharin by the sleeve and said: "You listen to me, Alexei Antonovitch, I've been turning this over in my mind a long time now. What's wrong, in my opinion, is that today they put you on to one drift and tomorrow on another that's quite different. Here's one kind of roofing, say and there's another. Here the coal goes one way, there another. You just get used to one today and tomorrow you've got to start on the other."

"And I can tell you straight," a new voice broke in, "it's all a dead loss. The fellows look at it this way—'If I'm not going to be on this drift after today, what the hell should I strengthen it for? I'll manage till the end of the shift with it as it is, maybe it won't tumble down yet!'—and next day a different gang comes round—and the roofing's sunk in the night. Well, and it comes to this: that you've got to spend half your time timbering before you can get anywhere near the coal."

"Yes, and then you can't turn out your norm."

"What we need is a third sled-boy in our gang. Forty yards we've got to crawl on our bellies, it rips the very hide off you."

"Alright!" said Andreyev. "This critizicing is all very well in its way, but who's going to work?"

He rose to go into the drift, but the others held him back.

"What are you in such a hurry for? The next shift's a repair gang, anyway. We'll have plently of time to do the norm, let's sit a bit longer. This is a sort of underground production conference, as you might say."

Sharin sat there hunched up, his attentive glance flitting from one to the

other of the faces. And, knowing that the director was not losing a word of their conversation, they were all anxious to say their say this time.

The old lamp bearer grumbled in his straggling grey beard:

"Shouting and gabbing—all of them—you'd think they were going to be paid for it." He sighed, "Aye, these shock brigadiers!"

"You're right, mates," said Sharin at length. "You've all hit the nail on the head, some from one side, some from another. It's a simple enough thing. If work doesn't seem to go right—doing it the old way, we've got to try a new way. And if we've got to do that, then we'd better start. Reorganization's only just begun. We'll have to arrange everything on new lines. We've talked of it more than once at the Party meetings and the Mine Committee and other meetings. But we must bear one thing in mind—that without the support of the mass of the miners we won't be able to do anything. It's a big business, introducing machinery into a mine."

He stood up suddenly and with a nod of farewell, disappeared into the lower part of the drift.

"He's gone along Number Four haulage tunnel," someone guessed. "The way he dodges along—all through the airways—he's a lively chap."

And, quite irrelevantly, another added:

"Yes . . . mechanising—that's the stuff, boys."

"We've got to work the long drifts," said a third with quiet conviction. "That'll be worth while!"

Sharin was already in another drift. Here the talk was of supplies, of norms, and of bad housing conditions, which forced two families to live in one room. A sturdy elderly man was gesticulating emphatically and saying:

"If you happen to have a day off—you get a bad mark against you. And how can you do without a day off now and again on a job like ours? To hell with a life like this, I say!"

Sharin asked him if he had noticed gas ready to explode in the drifts, whether there was plenty of wood for props, whether the empty trucks always arrived in time, and if the head miner visited them often—and so on. The surly miner was glad to tell him: Yes, there was gas ready to explode in the drift every day; and the wood for props had to be dragged from the slopes. There were never half enough empties; as for the head miner of that section, he only showed up once in a month of Sundays, and even then he had no time for anything—just crawled into the airways and snored his head off.

It was evident that the miner got certain satisfaction out of giving these replies; they confirmed his principal philosophy, which he expressed at least twenty times a day in the sentence. "To hell with this life altogether!" Sharin went on further. His piercing glance noticed every little detail of the life of the mine. Here was a door that shut badly and allowed a precious stream of air to drown in the fetid exit passage. Here, for want of strengthening timbers, the gang was sprawling about idle all through the shift, spitting and entertaining each other with startling and dreadful stories. . . .

Next day the Mining Office of Works would receive a list of defects, big and little, and the engineers would be astonished at Sharin's vigilance, and Vassili Ivanoviteh would say;

"The old devil! Pity he's not a mining engineer!"

Sharin returned by the main track. It was easy going. A cool and powerful wind refreshed his face and dried his perspiration. Here he could walk upright and straighten his aching back and shoulders.

He tramped the three kilometers without noticing. His thoughts did not

soar very high, nor could they be called quite earthly; "underground" would perhaps be a better name for them. He was thinking about the mine.

"Oh, hell!" he said to himself. Forty years ago he had been working as a door boy on the eastern Number One Bremsberg. It had lain neglected for a long time now; the roofing had fallen in, and only a rotting door squeezed into the rock showed the place where once men had labored. Number One Bremsberg had died years ago, but the thoughts that had been born in the skinny young stripling—"the pop-eyed chap" as the drivers used to call him—were still fixed as firmly in the head of the fifty year old man with the broad cheek bones and the close clipped, stubby grey hair.

What were the thoughts that entered the round head of "that pop-eyed chap," while he was squatting on his haunches, alone for twelve endless hours with nothing to do but listen to the derisive whistling of the air through the cracks of the wooden doors and gaze at the dim yellow eye of the smoky lamp known as the "God-help-us!" He had thought of how he would one day become the master of the mine—of how he would buy his mother a purple silk dress, and his little sister new chrome-leather boots that squeaked, and drive his old grandad about in a carriage like in a glass house, in the middle of a great big garden. And every man before going down the mine would get free a glass of vodka and a pound of ginger biscuits in the lamp room. At Easter they would each get an accordion or a red shirt as a present. . . . His childish dreams of a wonderful life of course were doomed. But the man had carried them with him through all the long dreary years, and still went stubbornly on, cutting his way to his goal as an ice-breaker cuts through the tall ice-bergs.

His fancies grew and flourished like a magic tree out of tiny seed. He firmly believed that he would live to see them realized. That with his own eyes he would one day behold something ten times more wonderful than "the pop-eyed chap" had ever dreamed of. He was strong as an ice-breaker. There were thousands, hundreds of thousands working along with him. And the strength of the dreams of these people, who were building up their own lives, was more powerful than all the dynamite on our planet.

The watchman was lying asleep on a black sheep-skin coat spread out on the floor of the bath-house. Sharin roused him and returned the lamp.

Once more he stood, a tired elderly man, naked in the twilight of the cabin. "Yes, if we could have a proper ventilator," he was thinking, "that would reduce the heat by six degrees. It would be all much easier then. . . . And that old devil Lashkin—what a time it took to persuade him to send for the German engineers! Dead set against it. The main section won't allow increasing the current. And now it's alright, he agreed to it at last."

It was time for Sharin to dress.

"Of course the ventilator isn't everything," he went on as he pulled on his trousers. "The ventilator's only the beginning. We're going to mechanize the whole of Number Four shaft. You'll see yet, my lads, we'll mechanize the damn thing!" As he talked to himself his eyes shone. It was difficult to believe that this was a man of fifty-two, tired out with his four hour tour of the mine.

It was quite dark when he stepped out into the yard. The sky was red with the reflection from the metal-works, and when the slag was tipped out, the clouds turned a dirty pink. The lights of the neighboring mines glimmed like white stars, which over the pit-heads, melted into a milky radiance, and trailed along the streets in glittering necklaces—every lamp a precious stone.

The door of the Mines' Party Committee was locked already, but several men were seated on a log outside, talking in low tones. Sharin stood still.

"Is Lunin here?"

"Yes, here he is," came several voices in reply. A man rose from the log.

" 'Evening, Alexei Antonovitch," he said, gripping Sharin's hand in his own hot one. "I knew your voice first thing."

They moved off together.

"Well, what did the doctor's treatment do for you?" asked Sharin.

"What treatment?" asked Lunin in astonishment. "I wasn't needing any treatment. I didn't stay out my time in the sanatorium."

"Is that so? Well, and what about the wife?"

"Oh, the wife—you know about that, though, don't you? They took her to see a specialist in Kharkov. A case of incurable psychosis, he said it was. She's not human, hardly. Sits all night at the window, laughing."

"And the children?"

Lunin sighed.

"You know what, Antonovitch, I work all day in the boiler-room, and of an evening I come home and,"—he looked round furtively and continued in an embarrassed whisper—"I wash the kids' clothes! That's the honest truth. I've rigged up a washing board and a tub. . . . If they find out it'll be terrible. I'll lose every scrap of authority here. The miners will have the laugh of their lives! Imagine the Secretary of the Miners' Party Committee washing the kids' pants. . . . But what can I do?"

They tramped along in silence for a while. Then Lunin laughed and coughed, holding his hand to his chest.

"It's funny, really," he said. "I was thinking just now—what is it keeps me up? To see my family life—you'd think I'd want to hang myself, and still I go about feeling quite sort of satisfied, somehow."

"Well," said Sharin, "you know what the task before your shaft is, don't you?"

Lunin stood still and took him by the arm.

"I know alright! I think about it often now of nights. And would you believe it, I get so excited I can hardly sleep."

They went on again quickening their steps without noticing. Lunin talked enthusiastically, punctuating his sentences with lively gestures. Sharin was silent most of the time, listening. "Yes, that's it," he would agree from time to time, but these monosyllabic replies did not sound anything like the way he uttered them when listening to the reports of the chief engineers.

They skirted the settlement and came out again by the Mines' Office. There was no one about now. "Well," said Lunin, "let's say goodbye!"

They shook hands. Lunin coughing as usual, went off in the direction of his home. A few minutes later he heard the toot of a car; it was Sharin driving away to the town.

*3*

"It was certainly a grand birthday party that Kubanetz gave," was the general opinion.

There was undoubtedly an abundance of food and drink, more than the tables could hold; a stock of wine and food was kept ready in the kitchen and on the floor of the store-room.

A mournful looking black cat which had evidently been severely punished for an attempt to steal a piece of sausage, gazed with indifference, if not

disapproval, at the tempting array of dishes and cast an occasional glance towards the cook who was busy at the stove. Once their eyes met; the cook threatened the cat with a thin and dreadful looking knife. The cat closed its eyes convulsively and turned away.

It was gay and noisy in the dining-room.

Varvara Yakovlevna broke off her conversation every now and again to run into the kitchen with a terriffied expression on her face. Her mother, who had been almost suffocated by the fumes of the Russian stove that had been closed too soon, was lying on the couch like the wounded King Charles of Sweden in Pushkin's description, giving orders in a weak voice.

More than thirty people sat down to the table. Nearly all the pit-managers and head miners were present. They were thin, stringly looking men with close cropped hair and harsh grey faces. Living in the mines as they did, their eyelids were thickly rimmed with coal-dust, which gave them a mournful and somehow tragic look. They made good headway with the vodka and carried on business-like conversations between themselves.

"What about timber for Number Ten horizontal?" one of them asked. "You'll see, Pimen Kuzmitch, it'll sink and then we'll have to answer for it."

Pimen Kuzmitch, who was already underway, winkled slyly as much as to say that he knew just what his companion was thinking and that together they would fool somebody or other very easily.

"Let it just dare to sink!" he said blissfully; then, suddenly sobering down, he added in a business-like tone: "We'll get the timber tomorrow, it's in my store-room, as a matter of fact."

"And they've not turned out the right amount for me again, devil take them!" a third man was whispering.

"Anatol Tikhonitch," shouted a fourth across the table. "Do you think I don't know that you've given orders for an empty truck of mine to be sent up to you in the west?"

The engineers and their assistants from the ventilation department looked much more cheerful than the section heads. Among them was Arkhip Ivanovitch, the manager responsible for hoisting, a man whose strength was proverbial. It was said of him that if the boilers should fail, he would be able to drag the cages up and down himself. He had spent twenty years in America, and generally broke into English when he was drunk. At present he had not got up to his usual mark and was simply sitting with a vague smile on his face as though he had just been awakened and found himself surrounded by extraordinarily pleasant and charming people.

Many of those present were known as "responsible mine foremen," that is, technicians who had risen from the ranks after having gone through a hard school as workers, graduated from the courses for mining foremen and passed the "responsibility tests." Then there were the "aristocrats" of the mine: the be-spectacled long-nosed, sharp-tongued Soloviev—Vassili Ivanovitch's assistant; Reit, the ventilation manager and Shatalov, the circuit geologist and engineer—a tall, dark, handsome young man, very self assured and well dressed. He was so silly that even Nikisha, the cabman who drove him on his rounds, remarked on it. The ladies, however, all over the hundred and eight pits, were crazy about him. "What a handsome fellow! What marvellous eyes, my dear!"

There were, of course, plenty of ladies present at the birthday party. The wives of the head miners eyed those of the engineers with disfavor, discussed their clothes in whispers, exclaimed about the high prices and remarked that now, thank God, meat was to be allowed every other day to those who

had underground ration cards. The engineers' wives cast offensively good humored glances at the wives of the promoted men, complained in drawling voices of the awful existence they had to lead here in the mines, and described the wonderful life they had led in Kharkov, Dniepropetrovsk or Kiev. As they talked they opened their eyes very wide and called each other "my dear" and "my precious one." At the same time, all the ladies kept their weather eye, so to speak, open for the quantity and quality of the food and noted the slightest sign of disorder.

Vassili Ivanovitch dropped in about ten o'clock. He kissed the hand of the hostess (which gallant gesture evoked general admiration), drank off a glass of vodka, refused food on the grounds that he was on a strict diet, hummed and hawed and began to recount an incident that happened to him thirty years ago when he was a student at the Mining College. Then, suddenly, assuming an expression of alarm, he said to Soloviev:

"Ivan Andreyevitch, come into my office for half-an-hour, will you?"

They tried to detain him, but it was no use.

"It's an urgent matter, gentlemen," he said in his deep, commanding voice. "Very urgent; we've been called upon to accomplish what's called a storm task," and went out.

Kubanetz wanted to treat everybody; he was filling glasses all the time. He himself ate and drank an incredible amount, and was known all over the Don Basin for his drinking capacity. This evening he set down a gallon bottle of vodka beside him and amid general laughter, embraced it and announced:

"Down with disorganization! Long live team work." He laughed a great deal and kissed and embraced everybody. But he was not drunk. Sometimes his little eyes became fixed, and a watchful expression came over his face; his nose seemed to be sniffing something, and through the noise he caught the conversation going on at the other end of the table.

The first half of the evening was rather dull. Gradually, however, under the influence of vodka and wine, the company began to recall old times and amusing incidents.

Petty intrigue and the unpleasant incidents of the day served as pretexts for a flood of reminiscences. They all swapped yarns about the way they had worked formerly, the enormous bonuses that had been given, the rewards and punishments that had been dealt out by the French and English mine owners.

Old Kokhanetsky, the manager of a small shaft—Number Three—now took the floor. His rosy cheeks and bushy moustaches quivered.

"Those were days!" he cried. "I kept horses and had a beautiful house, then, with a conservatory, and fresh flowers on the dinner-table every day. . . . Olga Simyonovna—remember how we lived then?"

Old Olga eyed her husband's red neck with anxiety. He was obviously drinking too much.

"Don't upset yourself, Anton Dominikitch, it's very bad for you," she said.

But Anton Dominikitch waved her aside.

"In the summer the whole family would go for four months to Switzerland," he shouted. "And in the winter time we'd go off now and again for a spree to Kharkov, or Ekaterinoslav—Dniepropetrovsk as it's called now. And if I wanted the garden weeded or a ditch dug out in the yard, all I had to do was to write a note and twenty men would be taken off their jobs at once. They'd dig and weed and do whatever I wanted. I was God Almighty in the mine then. If I signed an agreement with Balfour to supply so much coal there was

an end of the matter. In the mine the gangs would stand at attention when I came by and report how things were. And didn't they turn out coal in those days? I should just think they did! Yes, those were good old times."

"And what respect you got then!" the others chimed in. "An engineer was really God Almighty then, that's a fact."

"Yes, there was some work done in those days!"

Only the men who had been recently promoted seemed rather doubtful; they did not sing the praises of the olden days so warmly as the others. Before the Revolution most of them had been mere miners with no earthly chance of going to Switzerland for their holidays. Some, it is true, had belonged to artels or gangs. They sighed as they remembered the money that had passed through their fingers.

"Yes," chuckled an old head miner named Yerazhka, "those were the good old days, that's a fact! I remember I was working on the western slope. I used to make lots of money then! I often played tricks on Vassili Ivanovitch, too. I'd come to him, I remember, and say: 'Vassili Ivanovitch, the water's flooding that slope, we need more men.' 'How many?' he'd say, all of a flutter. 'Ten,' I'd say. Well, I'd take on ten men—on paper, of course. And Vassili Ivanovitch would be that anxious, asking me every day, 'Well, what about the water, Yerazhka?' 'Oh, we're pumping away at it, Vassili Ivanovitch, day and night, fair worn out we are.' And what d'you think? He drove over once to have a look for himself. Now what was I to do? The slope was dry as a bone, not a drop of water. So I had to open the irrigation pipes. The water poured out two hours, a regular flood. Then Vassili Ivanovitch arrives, sees us standing up to our knees in water, and the men pumping away for dear life, with sweat pouring off them. He came round, looked about and asked: 'Sure you don't want any more men?' 'It wouldn't do any harm,' I said. 'These chaps are nearly done for.' 'Alright.' He gave me five more men. Fifteen men pumping for a month! They were all working in different pits as a matter of fact and I was pocketing the money for them. At last I thought to myself, that's enough—and I went to Vassili Ivanovitch and said, 'Well, we've finished that job.' 'That's fine, I'm much obliged to you, Yerazhka,' and takes out ten rubles.

" 'That's for vodka for the workers because they had to stand in water all the time."

"And does Vassili Ivanovitch know about this now?"

"Yes, I told him last year."

"Money was easy got then," someone remarked.

"And easy gone," Kubanetz chimed in. "I remember we'd go off to Yuzov with our pockets bulging. And we'd get into one of those Armenian wine-cellars and what a spree we'd have!" He glanced at his wife and mother-in-law suddenly and bit his tongue. Then he made a desperate gesture as if dismissing them and burst out laughing. "Yes, and what bonuses we used to get at New Year—some a hundred rubles, some five hundred, some even a thousand."

Then the conversation turned on the present and Kubanetz grew visibly nervous.

"That'll do now, that'll do!" he cried, waving his arms about. Something occurred at the moment that drew their attention away and amused them all. The mine foreman Bukov's wife, a big fair woman, noted for her lively but rather difficult character and love of drinking parties, suddenly declared in the hearing of everyone:

"And do you think I haven't suffered through this Five Year Plan business?

Haven't I just? I was thinking of going up to Moscow to complain to Stalin. My Peter Lavrovitch was working so hard that he'd forgot all about me. He'd go out at six in the morning, run home for a bit of dinner in the middle of the day, and work till eleven o'clock. He'd just be able to stagger over to the bed, and before he had time to take off his boots he'd fall fast asleep sitting there as he was. And I'd wake him in the night and ask him: 'Petya, am I your wife or not?' And he'd say in his sleep: 'Hand over those empties, else I'll have you arrested!' Just fancy that!"

Bukov muttered in embarrassment: "Shut up, Lisa, for God's sake!"

There was a roar of laughter that shook the curtains at the windows, and Kubanetz dropped his head on to the table and kept repeating:

"Och, Peter Lavrovitch! That's Peter Lavrovitch for you!"

The cook appeared on the threshold and began making mysterious signs to Varvara Yakovlevna. The latter went out.

August was standing in the middle of the kitchen holding a big box of chocolates tied with ribbon. Both he and Varvara felt a little embarrassed.

August murmured something in German and she replied in Russian. She was silent a moment, looking into his face through half closed eyes. Then she roused herself and tossed her head, and, laughing, led him into the dining-room.

August felt his heart beat fast. His face was burning. "I must be in love, surely," he thought to himself in astonistment. He was given a place at the table beside Reit.

"I've never taken this before," said August doubtfully, eyeing the large brimming glass set before him.

"Votka," he pronounced, raising it carefully to his lips.

He sought out Varvara Yakovlevna. She was sitting at the other end of the table, listening to her neighbor and smiling a little. As soon as she felt August's eyes on her she looked towards him. Her smile faded and she met his eyes almost sternly.

August began to drink, slowly, without taking his eyes off her. The vodka burnt him. He spluttered and leaned over the table. Tears rose to his eyes. He saw nothing, he lost his breath, his throat and chest seemed aflame. "Have I poisoned myself!" he thought for a horrible moment. He recalled having experienced the same feeling when he had accidently swallowed some of the acid from the accumulator. Then the burning sensation passed and a feeling of pleasant warmth pervaded him. He snapped his fingers for no apparent reason and raised his eyes to Varvara Yakovlevna's face once more. She had been watching him and was waiting for his glance.

"Probably Maria is thinking of me now," occurred to him unexpectedly as he tossed off a second glass.

He felt very gay.

*Hier gibt es keine Not,*
*Weisses Maedchen, schwarzes Brot,*
*Morgen in einem andern Staedtchen*
*Weisses Brot und schwarzes Maedchen,*

he recited to Reit.

"Yes, I noticed," remarked Reit humorously. "I see you're a specialist on other things besides mine ventilation. But you ought to have something to eat, you know. You've drunk two big glasses of vodka; it may not be good for you."

August glanced at him in alarm. Could Reit have noticed his exchange of glances with the hostess? he wondered. But Reit's face wore its usual bored expression and he yawned softly through his teeth.

Kubanetz was sitting at the other side of the table. Every time he caught August and Varvara Yakovlevna looking at each other he muttered: "Och, you skunk you!" He had not taken his eyes off his wife since the young German arrived.

When August rose to go Kubanetz saw him out to the gate and locked it behind him, although he knew that he would have to open it after a while to let out the rest of the visitors. As he turned back to the house, he said to himself:

"And what the hell did we need this German ventilator for? It beats me, by God!" And glancing up at the sky, added indignantly: "These office chaps!"

Soloviev, who had drunk less than the rest, suddenly began in an undertone:

"Vassili Ivanovitch tells me that Lunin has been to see him and asked if he intended to mechanize the shaft. Just imagine! Dropped in one evening at Vassili Ivanovitch's home and had tea with him and all that. Of course, Vassili Ivanovitch has refused to mechanize. But one may suppose that they intend to carry out this mad idea. Imagine mechanizing Number Four shaft!" He turned sharply towards Reit.

"Leo Heinrichovitch, what's your opinion? Is it possible or not?"

Reit raised his eyebrows.

"I don't know, I'm not interested," he replied and taking up a spoon began to pick out a tune on the rims of the empty glasses before him.

Soloviev listened a moment.

"That's from *Prince Igor*," he remarked. "I must say this question not only interests me, it disturbs me. I know perfectly well Lunin wouldn't start going round on visits like that just to say 'how do you do!' It's evident that he must have made up his mind about this thing—worked it all out."

"You're mistaken, this isn't from *Prince Igor*," Reit broke in decisively, throwing down his spoon.

"Oh, well, alright, what if I was mistaken?" cried Soloviev, throughly irritated. "I'm telling you, the mine can't be mechanized."

"You see," said Reit very quietly, "this is an aria sung by the Nadir in *The Pearlfishers*—true to a note, I can assure you. Yes and by the way, a new ventilator is to start working soon. I believe there was a time when you said this was madness?"

"I still say it! We don't need the ventilator, do you hear? Don't need it at all."

"Perhaps you're right, Ivan Andreyevitch," said Kubanetz, in such a sober and serious tone that everyone looked at him. "But the way I look at it is—that this mechanization is a grand thing, a thing you should be ready to lay down your life for." He shook his head. "As for those sleds, curse them! —I used to drag them after me fifteen years ago and even to this day my very bones ache when I think of them."

Kubanetz screwed up one eye, and fixed the other on the ceiling meditatively as if he was multiplying some large figure in his head.

"Then you think the mine can be mechanized?" Soloviev persisted.

"I?" he asked in a loud, astonished voice. "What do I think, you want to know? I think we should all have another glass each," and he started to fill the glasses.

Reit rose abruptly.

"Excuse me, won't you? I've just remembered that I must be getting home," he said to Kubanetz, and, without listening to what was said to him in reply, went quickly to the door.

"What a boring evening!" he muttered. "Cripes! how sickening it all is! What shall I do with myself—where on earth shall I go?"

He roamed, stumbling in the dark, down the broad, deserted street of the mining settlement, where he hardly ever walked except to work. Far, far above him on the hill-top, an electric light was burning. Reit looked at it a moment and then went on ahead.

The birthday party ended up with a row after all. Peter Lavrovitch found his wife, Lisa,—probably because he was looking for her—in the nursery where the three little Kubanetzes were slumbering peacefully. She was sitting on the handsome Shatalov's knee in such a position that everything went black before Peter Lavrovitch's eyes. "Explanations" followed. Peter Lavrovitch struck Shatolov with his powerful fist, upon which that young man shouted:

"You'll answer for this! Don't forget I'm the district geologist!"

At last, after a particularly heavy blow Shatalov himself forgot that he was a geologist and dropped to the floor, screaming:

"Help, I'm being murdered!"

The children awoke and howled desperately. Kubanetz rushed in and tore Shatalov away from the irate Peter Lavrovitch and carried him back in his arms to the dining-room.

On learning what had happened, the ladies eagerly surrounded the victim and administered to his wounds. Peter Lavrovitch stood apart with his friends, and drank off three glasses of vodka which he bore to his lips with trembling fingers. Then all of a sudden he burst out crying, and snuffling desperately.

"That's an evening out for you," he sobbed. "And tomorrow morning I've got to get up and go to the mine again . . . . Aye, Lisa, Lisa!"

After this scene the guests began to drift away. Those that had fallen asleep Kubanetz roused with such vigor that they expected to see a mad gorilla when they opened their eyes. But it was the round good natured face of their host that smiled down on them as his pleasant voice said:

"Time to go bye-bye, Andrei Andreyevitch. Maybe you'll stay the night with us? Do! It'll be a bit cramped, but we'll manage."

The guests all left but one, an engineer's wife, who felt really ill.

Kubanetz cast a disgusted look around the dining-room at the broken crockery, the cigarette ends in the vases and on the floor, the overturned armchair and the wine-stained table cloth. Then he gave a bitter little hiccough, cursed the guests in the lowest terms and went off to bed.

Then the black cat, with one eye on the kitchen door, worked its will on the table.

*4*

Reit came home at last. The big clock on the wall ticked out the seconds loudly as if gloating over him. It was about one o'clock. "My life's all out of joint somehow," said Reit, looking round the room. It was in disorder. There were cigarette stubs everywhere. A half empty bottle on the writing table. Books lay on the floor. And a piano stood like a fine black blood mare eyeing with dismay the dirty stall into which she had been led.

Like many lonely people, Reit had developed a habit of talking to himself. He paced about the room now flinging out an angry phrase or two, and it seemed as if it was not actually Reit himself speaking, but someone else who knew him through and through.

"So it's vodka, birthday parties, and a lot of talk about the good old times," he mused.

He glanced at his pale face in the mirror and said very slowly and distinctly:

"Well, go on as you have been doing, Leo Heinrichovitch. You're thirty-two, thank God."

He chuckled and smoothed his heated white forehead with his hand. For a minute or two he stood quite still, then, in a quiet, derisive tone went on:

"Clowning again. You didn't have enough to drink, my lad; have another half tumbler of vodka."

A minute later he was sitting at the piano, playing.

A century and a half ago, the tender and terrible soul of a genius sought to express itself in a marvellous landscape of sounds. A placid, transparent lake lying amid mountains. A breeze rippled the surface till it broke into flaxen curls under the golden comb of the sun's rays. Now shreds of cold, grey fog drifted lightly down. Soon the fog swallowed up the mountains and the sun. The wind howled. It grew dark and terrifying. The pines moaned in misery, striking their ragged tops against the sharp crags. Their trunks crashed with the force of the hurricane. Heavy boulders crashed against the rocks. The lake was churned into fury by the storm. The waves dashed against the stony shore. The world was a chaos of rage, madness and gloom. And amid this chaos of sound the plaintive voice rang out of a man wandering in darkness. The man went ahead. He shrieked aloud with fear and pain as he groped his way and climbed up the mossy crags. He could see nothing in the darkness! His hands bled, but his voice never wavered. On the contrary, it rang out bolder and stronger than ever, like a challenge to this hell of sounds. He pressed on. Soon his voice swelled to a mighty hymn of struggle and subdued all other sounds. Once more the lake rippled tranquilly amidst the crags washed clean by the thunderstorm, and the sun smiled again through the vanishing shreds of fog.

Reit finished playing and he rose from his seat. Then he gave a start of surprise. On the chair by the door a man was sitting with his face buried in his hands.

Reit stared at him in silence; he could not understand where the man could have come from. "I must have a touch of fever, surely?" he thought.

Unconscious of his glance, the man sat on in the same pose, until at last Reit said hesitatingly:

"Is it you, Comrade Lunin?"

Then the man let his hands fall from his face and smiled in a bewildered way. A fit of coughing attacked him as he looked up at Reit, but he managed to say:

"The door was open and I just came in to listen. . . . Excuse me, won't you? What music is that?" he went on to ask in a hushed tone.

"It's Beethoven," Reit answered. "Like a drop of brandy?"

"What?" asked Lunin, not understanding for a second. "No, no, I don't drink . . . Maybe you'd play something else for me, would you?" he looked towards the piano.

Reit sat down again and began to play. When he had finished, Lunin

paced up and down the room in evident agitation. He laughed, shook his head, and rubbed his hands as if he was washing them.

"That's the stuff! Yes!" he said. "That's the real thing. It's Beethoven, you said, didn't you? Well, I never thought, by God! Makes you feel you could march on Warsaw leading a company of barefoot soldiers. He was a Frenchman, I suppose?"

"German," replied Reit.

"Listen," said Lunin, taking a more intimate tone. "I've been wanting to talk to you for a long time. You ought to be one of us, you know. And you're neither with us nor against us—just messing about."

"One of you?" said Reit in bewilderment.

"Yes, one of us. And whose then? We need you most of all now—we fighting for the mechanization of the shaft, you know. We ought to have an engineer of our own on the job. You know what sort of a job it'll be? Something like music," and he pointed to the piano.

Reit looked attentively into Lunin's face, but kept silence.

"Alright," said Lunin at last. "We'll have a more serious talk some other time. It's too late now. . . ."

He shook Reit's hand in his own dry burning one, and went towards the door.

"May I drop in one evening to listen to the music?" he asked.

"Of course you can!" Reit almost shouted with an eagerness that he could not comprehend.

After Lunin went out Reit paced up and down the room for a long time, rumpling his hair, talking to himself, suddenly sitting down at the piano and smiling to himself. His playing, his talk with Lunin and the man's transfigured face, made a profound impression on him after the fumes of the drunken party, and remained in his memory forever.

*5*

Andreyev had been working a long time in shaft Number Four. Year after year he had gone out on the morning shift.

He tramped along with a firm, important step—through the brightness of spring mornings, through the deep slush of the grimy settlement in the mournful November twilight, and in winter through the snow blackened by coal-dust. And always he looked far ahead of him and every step he took seemed to say: "I tread the earth with assurance, for I am the mainstay of Life."

When the old folks gathered for gossip, they would often say:

"He's a bad tempered fellow, Marei Mikhailovitch. But he knows his job, he's a good miner."

"Why is he always trying to turn out more than his share of coal?" the women would wonder. "He's a single man, after all. Maybe he's thinking of getting married?" But the women respected him, too. If Andreyev happened to drop in at the cooperative after work, the women would always let him get served out of his turn, although they themselves were standing in a queue. "You get served first, Marei Mikhailovitch," they would say— and this was no small sacrifice on their part.

"You're a Sullivan coal cutting machine—not a man, Marei Mikhailovitch," the sectional foreman would remark, as he wrote down the number of trucks at the end of a shift.

"Alright, call me a Sullivan if you like," Andreyev would reply with a smile, freeing his beard of coal-dust.

It so happened that once, the year before, the secretary of the group nucleus met Andreyev when he had just ascended from the pit and was crossing the yard with his pick over his shoulder. The whites of his eyes glittered in his face; he looked huge, black, Satanic and terrifying.

"Where are you off to, Comrade Andreyev?"

"To the baths."

"Just drop into my office for a moment, will you? I've got to speak to you about something."

The secretary went straight to the point. "We're thinking of appointing you chairman of the shaft committee, comrade."

"Nothing doing."

"Why?"

"I'm not going to be chairman."

"What do you mean? Just think—it's the biggest shaft in the Don Basin. Four thousand workers! You'll put the whole show on its feet. The masses have a great respect for you."

"I'm not going to do it."

"Why not?"

"I show how to work with this thing," said Andreyev, shaking his pick. "But I wouldn't be able to work with my tongue at all."

The secretary flared up at that. "We'll make you—we'll make it a point of Party discipline."

"See that!" said Andreyev, making the traditional gesture of contempt.

The secretary, however, was not a touchy fellow.

"The same to you!" he said, returning the compliment.

They both laughed.

"Well, I'm off to the baths," said Andreyev.

"You'll have to come before the Committee tomorrow," the secretary called after him.

But the thing fell through, and Andreyev remained working in the coal drift. There he lay, day after day, on his side, hacking out his eight tons of coal and afterwards climbing out black, sweaty, silent and calm.

And if a casual visitor should pass through the settlement and observe the dingy houses, the pink underpants and blue shirts drying on the fences, the dusty little trees by the barracks, the miners themselves, he would think, "How in the world do these people go on existing year after year without any brightness in their lives, without a single ray of hope? From the day they're born till the day they die they see nothing but collieries, collieries, collieries."

The casual visitor would, of course, get into the train and be carried away to Moscow. Andreyev, sitting on a stool before his door in the evening, called out to the old woman who kept house for him:

"Listen to this, Nikitishna! The paper says, 'Every brigade must catch up to Andreyev's!' "

Nikitishna peered over his shoulder.

"God save us, it's written right across the front page! And look at the size of the letters! What do you think of that? My goodness me! Well, you're the best miner in the collieries, Marei Mikhailovitch. Ask anyone you like and they'll tell you!"

Andreyev's brown eyes softened suddenly, grew somehow childish, but he said severely:

"Oh, that'll do now! What about it? We work as we should, the whole country depends on our coal."

A stuffy enervating evening; Andreyev is having his dinner. Nikitishna brings the soup. Then she stands leaning against the wall, her arms folded under her breast, and starts her usual rigmarole.

"Is that the sort of soup a man who works like you should be eating? Why, I remember the soup I used to make for my husband—that's dead-and-gone—that rich, it was,—it'd be just swimming with fat—it'd shine like a looking glass with fat! And then I'd fry him about a pound of bacon fat, and set him down the iron pot full of potatoes with sour scream . . . ."

Andreyev frowns.

"Yes," he says, "they put me on the far eastern drift today. That's a nasty spot. You hack away with the sweat pouring into your eyes and you hardly see where you're hitting."

"God help you! it's awful!" sighs Nikitishna. "My husband that's dead-and-gone, I call to mind—eighteen years he worked in the shaft and I never could get used to it, never. Whenever a woman would come in and tell us—that one's been injured by falling rock, or this one's smothered with gas, my heart would sink, and I'd throw down whatever I was doing and run off to the mine. Everything would go black before my eyes—I couldn't see my way—flying along as hard as I could . . . And it was worse still when he was working on the night shift; I'd be tormenting myself all night long, thinking every minute someone was knocking on the window—'Get up, Nikitishna, your man's been hurt in the shaft.' And the black day came, Marei Mikhailovitch, sure enough! I remember I went to a neighbor's to take back the sewing machine and they came running after me—'Your man's been brought home.' I rushed back to the house—and there he was lying and not a stir out of him and his lamp burning nearby. . . ."

Nikitishna begins to whimper.

"That's enough, now, what's the use of upsetting yourself?" says Andreyev. "Got anything else to eat there?"

Nikitishna goes out to get the buckwheat porridge and returns in a calmer frame if mind.

"We've got new neighbors now, if you want to know," she says in a mysterious whisper. "Bukhar and his wife."

"You mean the borer?"

"Yes, the borer, Marei Mikhailovitch, the borer. Mark my words, he'll have trouble yet—his wife's thinking of leaving him. He beats her something terrible. It isn't as if he was always drunk, either, he does it when he's sober. As soon as he starts beating her, it's all up. When they used to live in the other flat I used to run in sometimes. He'd thrash her, the Anti-Christ, and then shout: 'Do you love me?' And she told all the women she was going to get a separation from him, the brute. She has a mind of her own, that one."

Andreyev finishes his dinner and lies down to sleep. In the daytime he sleeps on the floor: it is cooler and there's more room. Nikitishna moves softly about the room like a grey mouse, clearing away the dinner things, and driving off the flies with a towel. Then she sits down on the stool and sighs.

"God help me, I'm an unfortunate creature," she whispers. "I've four grown sons and still I have to work for strangers in my old age. . . . Och, my laddies, what a way you treated your poor mother, then! How much strength I spent on you, how many tears I cried over you, how I fed you

and reared you and married you off. . . And that's all the thanks I get in my old age, is it? The silly lads you are, have you no sense at all that you don't know how a child should behave to his own mother that reared him?"

In his sleep Marei Mikhailovitch's fist strikes the floor with a sound like an angry man stamping his foot in a heavy iron tipped boot.

Nikitishna begins to croon over him:

"Och, and you, you poor child, left an orphan, what a miserable life you have of it, to be sure." Having crooned and mourned her fill she goes out into the yard to gossip with the other women.

Peace and quiet reigned over the circle of family barracks. The shift was resting. Miners in underwear of pink or striped calico, lay barefoot, on the sparse grass, enjoying their respite. Women were pouring out their husbands' tea from big, sooty teapots and smiling as they watched how the men, puffing and blowing and wiping the sweat out of their eyes, drank off glass after glass of the boiling, yellowish-green liquid.

Some were singing lazily and softly, reading newspapers and books, playing with their children. But there were others who had a different way of resting. In a calm, unhurried way, they were fixing, making, planning something for themselves. And their unhurried movements, each of which was accompanied by long and weighty consideration and looking about, evidently afforded them great satisfaction.

A man came over to the house where Andreyev lived.

"Is he in?" he asked.

"Yes, he's in alright, Comrade Lunin," Nikitishna replied. "He's asleep, though. I'll be waking him soon now. He's got to go to the nightschool today." She laughed at the idea of it. "It's comical to think of it! They've all gone crazy—one's learning how to read the newspaper, another how to read a book. Going to school in their old age. And as for the women, why, I don't know how some of the old ones aren't ashamed—they actually go to the classes for beginners."

"Well, what's wrong with that?" asked Lunin, laughing and coughing at the same time. "I'd be glad to go to the nightschool, but I've no time."

"Oh, it's another thing for you, son," Nikitishna rejoined. "You're a Party man. But for that fellow over there with the big belly," she indicated a neighbor sitting under a tree, "it's a shame for him. He works in the coke furnaces. Getting to be a real terror. Yesterday he nagged his wife something awful because she tore some paper of his."

"Let's wake Andreyev up," suggested Lunin.

As Nikitishna went into the house, a short, broad-shouldered man came up to Lunin. His head was covered with dark hair of a reddish tinge and his smiling grey eyes were screwed up quizzically.

"How do, Lunin!" he said, stretching out a broad palm, black with coal-dust. "Going in to see Andreyev? I've come to see him myself."

"How are you getting on, Doronin?"

"Oh, I'm boring away as usual. Boring for water, boring for coal,—till I wear myself out boring, I suppose."

"No, not a bit of it, you'll not wear yourself out so easily," said Lunin with certainty. "I thought you'd left the shaft altogether. Haven't seen you for ages."

"I've been in Number One shaft at Gorlov. They were doing deep boring there. I showed them how to do it and came back." He burst out laughing, "You didn't suppose I could leave Number Four, did you?"

Andreyev appeared in the doorway just then, drying his face with a towel. Wet locks of hair fell about his forehead.

"Come in," he said, rubbing his neck and stuffing the towel inside the collar of his shirt to catch the wet drops that were running down his back.

They sat down. Lunin looked solemnly from one face to the other and said in voice that trembled a little:

"I've come to talk to you about mechanizing the shaft."

"Is that so?" said Andreyev, falling in with Lunin's mood at once. And for a long time they looked each other in the eyes as if asking and responding to thoughts that could not be put into words.

"There are many difficulties to be got over." Lunin burst out at length. "The engineers won't support us, the conditions in the pits are against it. Our groups of skilled workers are nothing to write home about yet. And then there's this gas—that comes out all of a sudden."

"We'll do it," said Andreyev with assurance. "Why shouldn't we, I'd like to know," and as he bent his arm the great knotty muscles of his shoulder stood out.

Doronin yawned, grinding his teeth, and stood up.

"I'm off," he said in a determined tone. "I'm fed up with you and your plans," and he hurried away as if fearing they would hold him back.

"There's a lot of the village about him still," remarked Lunin, following him with his eyes.

"No," said Andreyev. "He's a miner alright."

They went on discussing the affairs of the shaft. Out in the yard Nikitishna was entertaining the other women.

"Thirteen rooms he had, all full of trunks and trunks and trunks of gold—right up to the brim they were filled—true as I'm sitting here—may I never rise from the spot if he hadn't!"

"Tell us about the engineers you sometimes work for, Nikitishna—the Germans—tell us about them," said Pavlovna, the timberman's wife.

"What do you want me to tell you about them? They're just like any other folks."

Then the wrinkles scuttled over her face like tiny lizards and collected around her eyes that suddenly gleamed with cunning.

"Well," she began in an important tone. "The young German was at home all the morning."

She glanced about mysteriously and dropped her voice to a whisper. Her audience gasped with delight.

"It's a lie!"

"By the Cross of Christ, it isn't!" Nikitishna vowed.

"And what were they doing?" one of the women asked.

"Praying, of course."

"And are you sure you saw them?" the stout Pavlovna persisted.

"I didn't say I saw them, but I heard everything," replied Nikitishna and they all burst out laughing again.

"What's up?" inquired Lunin, coming out at that moment with Andreyev.

"That's our business," said Pavlovna who was shaking with laughter and holding her great stomach. Then suddenly she became serious.

"When are you going to collect the delegates, Comrade Lunin?" she demanded. "There you were—hurrying us all, and I left my man two days without his dinner all through you, and now see how you're dragging it out."

"We'll collect you tomorrow. See, I've got it all written down—at six o'clock in the evening."

Pavlovna took the notebook out of his hand, and started to read it. Her lips moved, her face twisted as if she had the toothache.

"Oh, you nightschool folk!" exclaimed Nikitishna who was reluctant to part with her gay mood. She glanced around the women and repeated softly:

"Yes, I heard everything!" and they all burst out laughing again.

Andreyev and Lunin went down the street together. The one strode along serenely, the other's gait was full of excitable movements; he swung his arms, coughed and talked all at once, the torrent of words overtaking his hurrying stride.

"There's so much to be done, oh—so much still to be done!" Lunin said as he was parting from Andreyev at the door of the Workers' Evening School. "It's getting close to seven now, and I have as much work as if I was just starting the day."

*6*

That night Andreyev had a dream. He saw himself going down to the shaft with a brigade made up entirely of women. They were marching through the gangways—full breasted young women in new boots that squeaked. Now they had come to the workings. Andreyev started to prop up the drift, thinking: "I'll start cutting from the top of the vein, and then change over to the lower part along the vein." And just as he started to take off his shirt, so that he would be free to work, one of the women caught him by the arm and said: "Marei Mikhailovitch, chuck working, let's sing songs instead." He tried to wrench his arm away but could not. It all seemed strange and somehow intolerable to him; he had been working the whole winter in that particular drift—it was quite familiar to him—and now for the first time he noticed that high, rich grass was growing there. They all sat down on the grass and hung their lamps up above. A girl as dark as a gypsy flung her arm around his neck and began to sing. Suddenly a man appeared from the gangway. He had a "searchlight" lamp in his hand. The women stopped singing and sat smiling. Andreyev felt embarrassed. The man came close up to him. It was Yefteyev the foreman, with whom Andreyev often had arguments regarding the Soviet system of government.

"Aha," said Yefteyev. "So that's your shock brigade, is it? The dog's doing his shock work among the bitches!"

Andreyev jumped to his feet, and hit out with his pick, shouting angrily—and awoke.

"Ugh, what a dream! I never saw one before and—now to see such a damned fool one!"

All of a sudden it seemed to him that he heard a scream. Could he be dreaming? No, it was someone actually screaming on the other side of the wall. Andreyev listened and soon made out some words.

"What are you tormenting me for?" wailed a woman's voice. A confusion of sounds ensued; heavy articles falling, boots clamping about. "He's chasing her!" thought Andreyev. A piercing cry penetrated through the wall, and immediately afterwards came the sound of blows and the thud of a human body.

Andreyev had seen many a fight in the mining settlement. From his earliest years he had been familiar with women's groans and cries, with the hoarse swearing of drunken men. If he closed his eyes for a moment, the usual horrible picture would rise before him: a bruised and beaten woman

with straggling hair crouching in a neighbor's barn: the village folk all running out of their houses to look and then standing silent, watching a bleary-eyed man who stood in the center of the yard yelling, "Come out, you bitch, I'll kill you no matter what!" . . . And the miners would stand there shaking their heads gloomily and wondering if they, too, looked like that at times. And the women would sigh: "Och, what they do with us when they get drink in them, the brutes!"

Andreyev had witnessed many such scenes and had never got used to them. Once he had acted as social prosecutor in a case in which a cager named Bezzubov had been made an example of. The old man had broken his wife's arm. Andreyev frightened him out of his life by demanding that the severest measures should be taken against him.

. . . Nikitishna awoke and listened. "Och, God have mercy on us, what's happening?" she said in an undertone. "The dirty dog, he'll do up the poor woman yet. Anti-Christ! May you drop dead this minute!"

The woman on the other side of the wall gave a more piercing scream than the last.

"Is it Bukhar?" Andreyev asked Nikitishna.

"It is, Marei Mikhailovitch. It's Bukhar, and may the limbs wither off him this very minute!"

Andreyev threw on his clothes and went out into the yard.

The stars were burning as steadily as coal in the chilly depths of the heavens. The earth was not asleep. For ten miles around the roar of the bellows could be heard pumping the air into the furnaces. The shrill whistle of locomotives rent the air. A train of loaded cars grunted somewhere. Nearer at hand a Diesel motor rapped hurriedly and angrily along feeling for a place where a new shaft might be sunk.

Andreyev glanced up at the sky and listened to the woman's weeping. Then he knocked at the door.

"Who's there? What do you want?" came a man's voice.

"What are you doing there? Stop it at once. It's a disgrace," said Andreyev.

A stream of curses was the only reply.

"Help!" cried the woman.

"Ah—you've started complaining, have you!" roared Bukhar. "I'll show you what, you bitch!"

The woman screamed again.

"Heh, stop that, do you hear!" Andreyev's voice suddenly went hoarse. He could feel his heart beat swifter and a blind fury mounting to his brain.

"Help!" cried the woman once more.

"Aye!" Andreyev groaned out and gave the door a heave with his shoulder. The latch yielded. On the floor amid bundles of things lay a woman, half dressed. Her face was streaming with blood. She was clutching her head with her hands and her eyes looked as though she was going crazy. Bukhar was standing over her. He was a fair haired young fellow with a face as white as a sheet. He screwed up his eyes insolently and stared at Andreyev.

"Ah, the shock brigadier," he said calmly. "You answer to me in the militia tomorrow for breaking down the door." Then seizing the stool all of a sudden, he shrieked: "Clear out, you—!"

Andreyev took a step forward. He had control of himself now. He could feel the strength in his arms. He glanced towards the woman, saw her face, her bare white arms, shoulders and breasts, and surprised himself by saying:

"Get up, Marusia, and come along with me."

She got up, drew her blouse together over her breast and started to put on her skirt.

"Where to?" shouted Bukhar and turning to Andreyev again, "Clear out, you—or I'll knock your damned head off!"

He raised the stool over his head, and Andreyev put up his arm to guard his face.

"Don't play the fool, Bukhar, I'm no woman for you to beat," he said. "Times are different, you can't knock folks about and get away with it nowadays. And I'm not going to let you beat your wife."

"Let's go, shall we?" Marusia asked softly.

"Where to, you bitch, where d'you think you're going? I'll give you 'let's go!' "

He flung the stool on the floor with a crash and went for his wife. He struck her in the chest. She shielded herself with her hands. He forgot Andreyev and started to beat her again, trying to get at her face.

Andreyev grabbed him by the shoulder and tore him away. A knife glittered for a moment in Bukhar's hand.

"I'll kill you!"

Andreyev recoiled swiftly and then sent the full weight of his terrible fist into the man. Bukhar dropped to the ground. The woman watched him tensely a moment.

"You picked a good husband." Andreyev observed.

She made no reply, only clung to his arm. They went round by the workers' quarters and got up to Andreyev's door.

"Go in, will you? Nikitishna will give you a place to sleep and I'll sit here."

Marusia entered the room. "Nikitishna," was all she could say; then she broke down and wept loudly and bitterly like an ill-used child.

Andreyev sat down on the bench outside, thinking things over. He thought of Marusia, and wondered how she would be able to go on living with Bukhar. He remembered his own mother—a sallow, sharp-nosed woman of the mines—and how his father used to beat her.

## PART II

In the big hall of the Rescue Station a meeting of the engineers and technicians was being held. The engineers and superintendents of the shafts were sitting round a great oaken table, Kubanetz's pride. Whenever there was a disaster in the mine the rescuers would fling on to it the heavy cases containing their apparatus and throwing open the lids and bending their backs over the table slip the straps over their shoulders. Cages of canaries hung in the windows. The little yellow birds sang their simple songs and glanced about them with curiosity. The men called them "indicators." During a disaster they were used to test the gas in the atmosphere. At the faintest suggestion of gas that would pass unnoticed by a man, the canary would drop down dead like a warm yellow snow flake. The books of the Rescue Station showed a special item—"Bird seed for canaries." And as if conscious of this official information of their status, the canaries looked down upon the people with a peculiar air of condescension.

The instructor on duty of the first aid brigade was sitting by the telephone. There was an extremely pained expression on his face as he watched the people smoking unintermittently, throwing the burnt-out matches on the floor

and putting out their cigarettes on the black, varnished table. The floor was filthy—that same floor of which Kubanetz remarked to him every day:

"You ought to have it shining like a bird's eye!"

"Look at that Mityukhin—he does his worst, I declare," the instructor was thinking indignantly as he watched the safety technician. The latter cleared his throat frequently and thoroughly and spat in the direction of the spittoon, usually hitting either the wall or the floor. "They call themselves educated people, and behave like pigs." He was longing to go up to the table, curse them all roundly, calling them particularly insulting names and then conclude:

"Get to hell's blazes out of here!"

But it was impossible; they were all bosses sitting round the table. And although the question they were discussing was an interesting one, the instructor was so full of his grievance that he could not grasp a word of all the clever angry, spiteful, hot, straightforward and calculating speeches that were given there.

This united meeting of the engineers, the Party nucleus and the shaft committee had been arranged by the Party nucleus. There was only one question on the agenda: the mechanization of shaft Number Four.

Among the people present only a few had come with a definite solution of the question, a solution which they were prepared to defend. The rest were incapable or perhaps, disinclined to consider anything so general, anything which did not appear to have a direct bearing on their own affairs.

Lunin felt in his pockets, got out a yellow pencil and then raised his head and gave them all an attentive, rather surprised look.

"I declare the united meeting of the Party collective, the shaft committee, the engineers and technicians of shaft Number Four open," he said solemnly.

The instructor glanced at Lunin and thought: "Go on, Pavel, show them what, let them see what a driver's really like!" Just then, however, he noticed Mukhin, the technician from the west slope, thoughtfully pressing out the smoking stub of his cigarette against the leg of the table.

"You son of a bitch! If it wasn't that you're one of the staff, I'd knock the stuffing out of you!" he whispered to himself.

"Well, comrades," Lunin was saying, "the only question before the meeting is—mechanization. Have you any to add?"

No one spoke.

"Then there's nothing to add? Very well, we'll regard that as settled."

It so happened that Lashkin and the rest of the engineers and technicians were ranged on the opposite side of the table to Lunin, the shaft committee and the men from the Party nucleus.

"The successful carrying out of the Five Year Plan," Lunin began, "depends upon the supply of fuel. Our principal fuel is coal. Everyone here knows all about coal, so there's no point in talking about it. But in case anyone has forgotten, I must repeat—the successful carrying out of the Five Year Plan depends on coal. That's how the matter stands, comrades. And we aren't turning out enough coal." He glanced at a paper before him. "Last year the output of the Don Basin was five million tons in arrears of the plan. Five million tons!" he repeated in a peculiar tone, as if he wanted to force all the people sitting there to appreciate the importance of this not only by the figure he named but by his voice as well. "Now let's take our own shaft. The figure for our output was set by the mine management. It was not established arbitrarily, as some say, but was fixed according to the area of

the workings. We've turned out fifty percent, sixty, and even up to seventy but further than that we've never been able to go, no matter how we tried. Then what's the matter, comrades? I've talked the thing over with Comrade Lashkin more than once. He says our failure's due to reasons outside our control. The seasonal worker is supposed not to be interested in his work; formerly he worked to buy himself a horse or something and now he's in the collective farm and there's no point in his trying to make money. Alright. You're an engineer, Comrade Lashkin, a specialist in your line and we do our best for you and give you all advantages, so as you'll tell us the way out of this difficulty. Yesterday a hundred and fifty men left us and a hundred and seventy-two new ones were put on. And you just look hopeless and say: the shaft can't possibly work normally in conditions like these. The skilled men are nearly straining their guts, the shock brigade workers are turning out a hundred and twenty per cent, the whole Party collective from the surface have been mobilized for the bottom and still the output is just eight hundred and fifty tons and not an ounce more! So it appears there are other reasons!" said Lunin, and there was such a note of doubt in his voice that the shaft committee and Party bureau men fidgeted on their seats and glanced at him in surprise.

Vassili Ivanovitch coughed. He had caught a vague sympathy in Lunin's last words and wanted to say, "You're quite right, Comrade Lunin!" but he was not in time. Without raising his voice and this gave his words greater force, Lunin took a different tone.

"Comrades," said he, "if the shaft cannot work full speed in these conditions, we ought to alter things completely. The shaft has got to be mechanized. Mechanization will give us everything we want at one blow; first and foremost—output; it'll do away with this impermanence of labor and enable wages to be raised. If you take, for instance, the Vyetka shafts at the Maxim Gorki or Number Five, Kossior—they're ahead of the rest now and last year they were at the tail-end. How did it come about? Because they began to work a new way. And the question is decided for our Party collective, too. Our shaft is the only capital one that hasn't touched mechanization yet. There's no other way for us—so we're going by that way."

He was getting excited now, but he spoke very softly so as not to lose his breath and bring on a fit of coughing. "The Party collective has called this meeting today to discuss all the questions bearing on mechanization. The groups of skilled workers and the shock brigade workers have been asking us about this at all the shift and general meetings." He took a deep breath and then, frowning a little, pronounced the concluding sentences—evidently prepared beforehand—of his speech. "I appeal to you comrades engineers, in the name of the skilled workers, the shock brigades, the shaft committee and the Party collective of our shaft. Give us your opinion on this question."

Soloviev repeated Lunin's concluding words angrily in an undertone.

"In the name of the skilled workers, the shock brigades and the Party collective," adding "There's absolutely no point in discussing mechanization. It's a purely technical question."

Reit, who was sitting beside him, looked at Soloviev attentively. "Where did I head those words before?" he was thinking. "I'm certain I heard them somewhere. But who was it said them?" And thereupon in the effort to remember he took to calling up in his mind dozens of situations.

"Does anyone wish to speak?" inquired Lunin in his ordinary voice.

"Let me speak, please," said Vovalevsky, the secretary of the shaft committee. He broke into a torrent of explanation. "Mechanization is a question

of primary and fundamental importance for us. Take for instance, a longwall. What sort of work is it in a twenty yard longwall? You can't get a cutting machine into that! The only thing that remains to do is to dig out the coal with the blunt side of the axe and drag the sleds along on your stomach . . . That's why we've determined to reconstruct the shafts. The skilled workers and the shock brigades will support us to a man. They raise the question every day. We got into a blind alley, that's clear. Our shaft's a rotten one, the very worst for depth and heat, the work's heavy, terrible you might say. It's almost impossible for a miner or a sled boy to work in the lower longitudinal seams. And we've decided that unless we tackle this now from the other end, we'll never raise the output. Look here, I've been chosen by the shaft committee to struggle with this impermanence of labor question. Why, I've even lost my voice making speeches!" and for greater emphasis Kovalevsky clutched his throat.

There was general laughter. Kovalevsky's figure had been familiar to them for the last month at shift meetings. From daybreak onwards until the night shift his powerful figure was to be seen towering over the heads of the miners. His voice boomed out over the other sounds in the pit-yard; only the buzzer itself could drown that voice. He spoke five or six times a day, so that no matter where you were you heard his loud sonorous voice and saw those steady grey eyes that remained serene even when he was gesticulating most wildly.

"You can laugh," he continued. "But it's no laughing matter at all. On the contrary, it's a very important question. Do you think my words have any effect on the seasonal worker? I can tell you straight, they haven't the slightest effect. I appeal to his conscience, I tell him that impermanence of labor is a bad thing, that he should put his shoulder to the wheel and try to raise the output—but supposing somebody comes up and says to him, 'What are you doing here, you fool, messing about and dragging the sleds along on your belly? Come on to Lidievka, it's been newly mechanized; they'll teach you to be an electrical fitter there. Well, and what do you think? My words go in at one ear and out at the other, even if I pour them out a thousand at a time, but those few words about the mechanization have done their work; the seasonal worker packs his box and goes off to Lidievka or Amerikanka or some other shaft, where the work's easier and a fellow can learn a trade . . . . That's one thing," said Kovalevsky, counting it off on his right hand which he held out to the meeting, as if to convince them that it was really only one thing and no more. "How can I convince them?" he demanded—and immediately replied, "only by acting! And there's only one way to act—to put the whole business on new lines. If it doesn't go one way, it'll go another. I get sick to death of hearing people say there's something wrong here and something wrong there. Long coal panels are what we want, and cutting machines, it's a different thing. And we've got to take this up at once and carry it out in real shock brigade fashion, so as to raise the output at once and free the workers from this back-breaking, abominable labor." He ceased speaking for a moment and then all of a sudden burst out so loudly that Lashkin winced and the canaries twittered in agitation and one of them, probably more nervous than the rest, beat against the bars with its wings. "The shaft committee and the Party collective swears to strive with all its might for the mechanization of our shaft! And we'll manage it altogether!" he concluded, banging the table with his fist.

The instructor on duty shook his head disapprovingly. "Dowdy devil—always was. You'd do better to copy Pavel Lunin, my lad, he talks as quiet

as a lamb and hits the nail on the head cleaner than any of them," he said to himself.

Lipov, the chairman of the shaft committee, was about to lean to Lunin and ask for permission to speak, but when the latter turned to him with, "Did you want to speak?" the old man's wrinkled face reddened and he said hastily, "No, no, not at all." He was no good at talking in meetings! He couldn't do it and he hated doing it and worst of all—he was terrified of doing it. His head was crammed with ideas, but as soon as he began to speak—he forgot everything. The more ideas he had, the more muddled his speech got. It was the same now. He had been on edge all the time the others were speaking. He had worried no end over this question, throughout every little detail, arrived at it himself without any ouside help. At all events he was better qualified than the other two to explain clearly and in a few words what mechanization meant to the shaft. But he was easily embarrassed and took fright. The suggestion that he should speak he waved off with his hands as if the others were trying to drag him away somewhere. With people of his own circle he could have talked freely and poured out all his miner's soul. But before the engineers whom he had strongly disliked in the old days and still disliked and distrusted, he could not utter ten words.

Engineer Lashkin, who, on account of a defect in his speech, also avoided coming forward at meetings, leaned over to his assistant, Soloviev, and whispered something. Soloviev nodded and turned to Lunin with a request for permission to speak.

"Oh, I've just remembered now!" Reit exclaimed aloud and laughed with satisfaction.

He felt something of what a man feels when he sneezes at last, after his nose has tickled him for a long time. When Soloviev angrily repeated Lunin's words, "In the name of the shock brigade workers, the Party collective and the shaft committee," it vaguely reminded him of a similar sentence. Ah, now he knew. It was in Tolstoy's *War and Peace,* where during the war council at Fili, Kutuzov angrily repeats the words of General Beningsen, "Russia's holy ancient capital!" Reit closed his eyes with pleasure. The council of war at Fili! The generals in their gold-laced uniforms, the old field marshal, talking about the armies, batteries, infantry and cavalry . . . . Over a hundred years had passed and here at shaft Number Four, a council of war was being held by Communists in leather jackets and wadded coats, by engineers and technicians—to the sound of a long drawn out buzzer, the noise of the water being pumped out of the mines, and the talk was all of coal output, of the Five Year Plan, and of freeing man from killing labor.

"What brilliant colors, what splendid people, what glorious words," Reit was thinking of the council of war at Fili. "Russia's holy, ancient capital, our Sovereign, the Life Guards." And here—? Everything was so dull and ordinary—dreary as a grey autumnal day. Then suddenly he realized with mingled trepidation and alarm that this dull meeting of today held a greater significance for humanity than the banners and laurels of Sedan and Austerlitz, or the thunder of the battle of Borodino.

In something the same way perhaps, our forefathers gazed at the first piece of coal they acquired—with a vague guess at the significance this apparently useless chip of black stone might have for him, "A new epoch is being born," Reit thought to himself. "Yes, a new epoch is being born."

Meantime Engineer Soloviev, with one eye on Lashkin was declaring in low, lazy tones that it would be quite impossible to mechanize shaft Number Four. His voice sounded monotonous and assured—like that of a professor explaining to his students rudiments of science which he had long since wearied of repeating.

"The question of mechanization came up before the former administration in 1913. The biggest foreign engineer was invited to work out a scheme, and he declared absolutely against it."

"Roofing, soil, gas," Lashkin prompted in a rapid, angry undertone.

Soloviev proceeded fluently:

"It's difficult to manage the roofing of our seams even working with short props and a twenty yard drift. What would happen, I wonder, with a hundred yard drift? There would be endless crashes, the roof would sink, the output couldn't possibly be kept up and hundreds of people would be crippled for life. Handling a roof is no joke!" he said, shaking his finger at Lunin. "And what about the faults? And what about gas? This shaft's outside the category as regards gas. How would it be possible in conditions like these to send a strong current through a drift or set up cleavers."

They all kept silent. Lunin sat there with a sleepy, bored expression on his face. Lipov nodded his head in time to Soloviev's words and smiled to himself. It was a gratification to him to see that Soloviev confirmed his own private opinion of the general unreliability of the engineering species.

When Soloviev had finished speaking, Lashkin coughed, rumpled his grey hair and said:

"Yesterday I was handed a certain paper. Sharin suggests that we should work out a scheme for mechanization without delay. Now, here we have today's meeting. . . . Well— The obstacles are too great, as Soloviev has just said, to be got over, I regard the mechanization of the shaft as out of the question," and he scribbled with his finger on the table as if he imagined himself signing a report.

"Anyone else got anything to say?" asked Lunin.

Lipov was boiling by this time. He could control himself no longer.

"Obstacles! Obstacles indeed! There are obstacles to everything, aren't there? The working class'll get over the obstacles. That's not the way to talk, we want to know how to do the job!"

There was an instant uproar. All the tongues were loosened. Some said that it was necessary to mechanize the shaft others that it couldn't be done, while a third party held that it was worth trying.

Lashkin grew excited again, thumped the table with his fist and declared that he would take no responsibility for it. Then the secretary of the Young Communist nucleus thumped the table with his fist and shouted:

"We start it ourselves then!"

"Do as you like, of course," said the safety technician, "but if you're going to electrify the drifts, I'm not going to work there. I'd rather go into a detention cell straight off."

"Let the Coal Trust appoint a commission. We can't decide this question here," said Soloviev.

Lunin replied, smiled:

"There's nothing to decide, the question's decided already, comrade."

Lashkin flared up and shouted:

"Who has it been decided by, I'd like to know? Who is the manager of this shaft—you or I?"

"This is a political matter decided by the Central Committee of the Party," said Nassetchkin, the editor of the shaft newspaper. Soloviev replied with a tearful expression:

"But you must understand, it's not political, it's technical! I'm telling you, you can't manage the roofing, and the soil is bad—and you talk to me about the resolution of the Central Committee of the Party!"

As often happens at such meetings, many of those who spoke did not listen to the others, and only crouched impatiently on their chairs waiting for their turn. There were some who sat silent, declining to speak at all. "I know nothing but my own affairs," their bored expressions seemed to say. Perhaps they really knew nothing or they thought the chief thing was to avoid quarrelling with anyone. If they supported any definite opinion they were naturally bound to oppose some who supported the other side.

When the argument was at its height the hoarse bark of a motor horn was heard and a moment later Sharin, the general manager of the Mine Office, entered the room. He was dressed in an old coat, evidently not made for him. His big, heavy wrists and hands hung out awkwardly from the sleeves. He came across the room without greeting anyone and sat down on a stool behind Lunin.

Lunin bent over to him and began in an excited whisper to tell him what had taken place.

"They're dead set against it," he said. "Particularly Lashkin, foaming at the mouth, the blackguard!"

"Is that so?" said Sharin, and moved aside a little, the better to listen.

"As the general manager of the mines is present, now I should like to take the opportunity of expressing the opinion of the technical personnel of the shaft," said Soloviev and for the space of five minutes pointed out very cleverly and conclusively that the shaft could not possibly be mechanized.

Lunin glanced at Sharin. "Now, you see," his expression said. But Sharin was not looking at Lunin.

After listening to a few more opinions, Sharin spoke up himself, glancing from one face to another as he did so.

"In the objections of our colleagues," he said, "I seem to hear not only the fear of difficulties, but fear of something new. But that's not the point just now. It's time to leave talking and make some concrete suggestions, and and then get to work. I suggest selecting an experimental section on the east wing where the roof is fairly strong, start a drift and begin to mechanize it. To mechanize a shaft will be very difficult, I don't deny. But it's got to be done. That's all about it."

He was silent. Almost immediately Reit's voice rang out, breaking all the sacred, unwritten laws of engineering solidarity.

"I take it upon myself to prepare the plan and specifications for this and direct the mechanization of the new experimental drift. I have some experience in this; I directed the mechanization of shaft Number Three in the Shcheglovsky Group."

"And I request you to appoint me assistant to Leo Heinrichovitch!" cried Pospelov, a young engineer, reddening to the roots of his hair with embarrassment.

These three speeches rounded off the long discussion so swiftly and completely it produced the impression of a well thought out theatrical effect.

*2*

Four men were selected for work on deep boring in Number Twelve longitudinal seam of Eastern Slope Number One.

Besides the borer, Doronin, there were his two assistants, Senka Prudnikov and Zemliak, and the gas foreman Prokofiev, a small, thin man with a sunken chest. He was regarded as one of the best experts on shaft ventilation. His black eyes, narrow as those of a Japanese, could distinguish the slightest trace of disorder even in the dusk of the mine. His long, slightly hooked nose seemed always sniffing for gas in the drifts. The miners told tales of how he could detect fire damp without an indicator lamp, and could feel an almost imperceptible change in the temperature and the methane given off by the coal.

Drift Number Twelve was a widening of a narrow room that extended for two hundred yards from the slope. The roofing had been torn away by dynamite, so that it was high enough for the miners to stand upright in it. The props were as sturdy as telegraph poles, but in places they were splitting under the weight of the rock. A vein of coal a metre thick gave off an oily gleam in the lamplight. What lurked in those depths? Was it some fierce beast ready at the steely touch of a drill or a pick to spring and crash down on a man in thousands of tons of coal.

The rays of a pale sun shining through the wind, rent clouds, penetrated the ground; the dry leaves of the forlorn colliery trees rattled like rusty iron to the ground. Above ground life was wonderful. The wind howled and whistled gallantly, the white clouds raced along, jackdaws flapped their wings and scolded each other roundly and impudently. But in drift Number Twelve the air was still and moist. The men threw off their shirts. The lamps were hung up aloft. The heavy drilling machine set its head at the coal with a sort of gloomy concentration. The men, wearied from the long tramp, sat down by it to rest. It was very still, and this stillness was more disturbing than the rattle of a forty centimetre gun. The oily gleam of the coal layers was somehow furtive, unpleasant.

Prokofiev glanced round the drift and said in a low tone:

"Sixteen men lost their lives in this drift."

"And we'll make it just up to twenty," said Doronin in the same tone.

The others were silent, casting alarmed glances at a great cave in the coal out of which two hundred tons of coal-dust were blown the year before.

Prokofiev got up first. He picked up his benzine lamp, lowered the flame until it was no more than a tiny blue star and began to measure the gas. As he went over the vein with great attention, he now raised the lamp close to the roof, now stooped and held it to a crack in the seam. When he had finished he said:

"There's up to five per cent of gas." Doronin jumped up.

"Come on, let's start," he croaked cheerfully. "Screw the thing up, Zemliak."

"We've got to set up a shield," said Prokofiev.

"Just a second, then, while I knock one together," Doronin wielded his axe rapidly and in a few minutes, out of three props, several thick boards and long nails he had made a shield between the seam and the drilling machine. The sure blows of his hammer drove ten inch nails through the boards at one go. The noise dispersed the silence and with it the men's depressed mood. Doronin forgot that only five minutes before he had been telling himself what a fool he was to come.

The shield was ready and the drill set to work. Doronin took his place at the lathe—it was he who had to direct the steel crown of the drill at the lurking beast.

Prokofiev, whose duty was to get the men out in time, should it prove dangerous, took his place beside them. Zemliak and Senka took the wheels.

"Go!" said Prokofiev.

The lads began to turn the wheels. For the first three yards the boring went on quite easily. Doronin kept the drill very carefully all along the seam. If he should slip ever so little he would come up against the hard rock—and then he would have to drag out the bar and start all over again. He managed, however, to spare time to keep up the lads' spirits with jokes and jeers and good natured curses—of which he had the most extensive knowledge of any man in the pits. Every word issued from his mouth like a king surrounded by a rich suite of curses. And just as a gay procession is followed by little street urchins shouting and turning somersaults, so was Doronin's more weighty cursing accompanied by lively obscenities.

Four lamps hung in different places like moons shining through threadbare clouds lighted up the little group. But the dimmer the lamps burned, the more dramatic the picture became, the black caves, the beams, the rocks, the lean wet backs of the lads. Doronin's back broad as a door with the corded knotty muscles standing out on it, and Prokofiev's yellow, puny face, calm as a Japanese idol. . . And although these were real, live people with sweating bodies and ruined teeth, although the roof that hung over them, the props and seams of coal were real, too—the effect was that of a picture painted by a clever artist. And there was no one to admire it.

"Someone's coming," said Senka, nodding towards a light bobbing along the gangway.

It was Reit. He came up, glanced at the shield and asked:

"Have there been any bumps?"

Doronin did not reply.

Reit took off his canvas shirt, spread it on the ground and sat down on it. Yielding to the solemnity of his surroundings, he lowered his voice when he spoke to Prokofiev.

"When we get over that rock we'll start in good earnest. This Number Twelve has been tying us down all the time."

"The panel runs downwards evidently," Prokofiev observed.

"Why?"

"The veins break all the time."

And now the lulling murmur of the water washing through the chinks suddenly ceased. A rustle came from the depths. Instantly the men got on their guard. Another half yard of boring and a loud crack was heard. A spout of water struck the shield of boards. The boys ceased winding and looked at Doronin inquiringly.

"What are you gaping at, you bitch's whelps!" he roared. "Turn it quicker else the thing will catch."

He was the only one of them who spoke in his ordinary voice, like a surgeon during a complicated and dangerous operation. The nearer grew the danger, the more exuberant Doronin became and the louder he shouted.

"Aye, what miners we've got here, to be sure!" he said laughing, but never taking his eyes off the drill. "Would you believe it, Prokofiev, yesterday Zemliak says to me: 'I'm not going to work in the mine, Comrade Doronin, I'm ruining my health here. I'm going to the hospital, they can write me out a certificate and let me go.' Didn't you, Zemliak?"

Without raising his head, Zemliak asserted gloomily:

"That's what I said and that's what I'm going to do, too. . ."

"Did you hear that, Prokofiev?" Doronin laughed. "Where'll you go to? Back to your mammy in the collective farm? Scratching up the ground with a tar-actor? No-o-you won't," he shouted but whether it was to Zemliak or the lathe, which was beginning to catch was not clear.

While jeering at Zemliak, Doronin kept a sharp eye on the boring. The drill was going deeper and deeper into the thickness of the seam, and the beast in its depths was stirring. Evidently the sharp drill was disturbing it a good deal.

At five yards in, the beast awoke. There was a sharp crackle and a shower of coal-dust. The workers were drenched from head to foot in dirty water. The young assistants started back and watched the shield in terror.

Doronin was now worked up into a species of delighted frenzy. Wiping the mud and water splashes from his face, he shouted:

"Go on turning, you bloody little wet seals! Turn the thing, you dirty little spiders. What are you standing there for with one leg up like a dog by a fence? Like a dog at a fence, I declare to—My God!" he repeated and imitated Zemliak and Senka hopping about as they twisted and turned to escape the shower of coal-dust.

The boys were terrified. They had to turn the handles, standing with their backs to the boring. They felt something like a man who is forced to stand under a tree in which a lynx is hiding, ready to spring on to his shoulders. He cannot see it but hears its howls and its stealthy movements in the branches.

The wheel was going tighter now, the bar was beginning to catch.

"Heh! Leo Heinrichovitch," shouted Doronin. "Give a hand here, else we'll stick in the rock in a minute!"

When deep boring was going on, there was no one stronger or more capable of leading than Doronin. Whoever came on the scene would fall into this man's power, which was practically unlimited. Reit took his place by Zemliak and started to turn the wheel. It gave a little, just a few degrees.

"Surely we can't be stuck in the rock already?" Senka was asking himself. He was almost in tears and had forgotten all about his fear. Doronin flung himself forward and pressed on the bar with all his might, striving to change the direction of its movement.

"Come on, come on! he ordered softly in a strained voice that sounded inhuman.

Prokofiev put his lamp down carefully and took his place at the wheel alongside Senka.

"Come on, harder!" Doronin repeated as if in his sleep, and the four men at the wheel put all their weight into it.

The wheel went smoother. Evidently the drill that had caught in the rock was boring into the coal now. Reit bit his lip and threw himself on to the metal handle. He strained until he felt as if his skin would burst and the blood spurt forth.

"Harder!" Doronin's voice sounded like an echo in his ears.

Then they all gave a sigh of relief; the wheel was turning easily. The bore was in the coal again. They were all ready to throw themselves on the ground, and, letting go of the wheel, they laughed with relief.

"So that's what's meant by struggle," Reit was thinking proudly to himself. He wanted just as the other did to get his breath back and enjoy the

feeing of having overcome the resistance of the stone. But Doronin roared out, "Turn the wheel, you whelps o' blazes!" and they all threw themselves on it once more.

It seemed to them as if the spinning of the wheel was not due to the movements of their hands, but to the short, imperious shouts. The bore penetrated the coal freely and easily. Doronin had done another yard in a few minutes. The danger had passed.

Only then Doronin remarked quietly and with perfect good humor:

"Imagine leaving off boring! The rod nearly caught again. You thought because it went easily you could leave off, did you?" He gave Reit a sidelong look and added: "You did fine, Leo Heinrichovitch, you made about eight rubles on that bit of work today."

"It's going in clean as a knife!" Zemliak was muttering. He forgot that he had intended leaving the shaft. He felt only relief that they had not stuck in the rock.

And Reit, as he turned the wheel, glanced sideways at Doronin, and thought to himself: "What a lot of splendid people there are in the world, after all! Take this chap Doronin for instance, what strength there is in him, what daring and grandeur." He remembered now that he had seen Doronin nearly every day in the office, and yet never once had he noticed the astonishing force there was in this red-headed fellow who lisped a little when he spoke.

"We'll honeycomb the coal face and let the gas out and then the pick miners can come and work it," he said thinking aloud.

"The gas is nearly ready to explode," said Prokofiev, lowering his lamp almost to the ground.

The flame, usually tiny, now started into a great yellow tongue that leaped restlessly upwards and strove to escape through the close double netting.

Just then there was a noise like coughing in the rod, through which the water reached the boring. The water gurgled hoarsely, the gas drove it back. Suddenly the gurgling ceased. Doronin drew in the air through his nose as if he was sniffing an enemy.

When the ninth yard was reached in the boring, a hollow roar was heard, and the stout boards of the shield were smashed and flung back on the gangway. The roar was so loud that the miners in distant workings heard it, they left off and ran out on the gangway to learn what had happened and if it was time to clear out.

Zemliak and Senka ran full pelt in the dark, forgetting even their lamps. Reit and Prokofiev followed them at a trot, the latter carefully shielding his lamp with the tail of his canvas shirt. Now and again they looked back. When they reached the turning they stood still.

The boys who had run ahead turned back, too. Out of breath they leaned against the pillars and watched what was going on in the drift. It was almost dark from the damp coal-dust. Lumps of coal, mixed with water, dust and dirt, flew from the boring as if from a volcano, and were borne out to the gangway by the whistling gas.

Doronin was standing at the lathe in a cloud of water-dust. He could scarcely be made out in the light of the overturned accumulator lamps. He was trying to protect the machine from the flying coal with the remains of the broken shield. Sharp bits of coal struck his bare chest and shoulders; he tossed his head, jumped about, swore, and even then gave vent to deafening roars of laughter. At last he succeeded in squeezing the boards in against

the face of the lathe. Then with a queer, bearish yet easy stride he ran from the drift.

"What do you think of that!" he said, glancing round at the dark coal storm whirling in the drift. Then he burst out laughing. "See! it's playing hell! I bet it's frightened them all over the slopes!"

He was covered with a thick coating of dirt from head to foot. Dark streams of water trickled down his body. His red head was matted into a dark paste and looked like a rusty iron pot that had just been dug out of the ground. His eyes gleamed like two bright emeralds in his grimy face.

"Yes, that's drainage!" said Reit. He felt awkward at the thought of how he had scampered out of the drift, although he had not actually deserted but only run out of harm's way. After all this was necessary and natural. Yes, and then he had run no further than any bold man would—if Doronin had only run away with him it would have been alright. But Doronin had remained! It followed that Reit should have remained, too.

"That's nothing," Zemliak was saying to Senka. "Some of the old miners were telling me that when that other thing exploded, there wouldn't be a sound to warn you, it would just blow up—and that's all there was to it."

"The folk are blown up to nothing. That's a real fact, they say."

And Prokofiev was saying to Reit:

"Well, what do you think—was all this noise necessary?"

"Of course it was. The more gas escapes now, the less risk there'll be for the pick miners, too. There's enough for everybody in there."

"Still, we've got to get the better of this rock," Reit replied in a stubborn, argumentative tone.

Prokofiev thought for a moment.

"Alright then," he agreed. "Let's get the better of Prudnikov. Will you come back and do some more drilling now?"

"Come on."

"Won't you be afraid?"

" 'Course I will," replied Sanka with great conviction. "Why wouldn't I?"

Doronin was holding on to the framework and gazing into the drift, which was lighted by the forgotten lamps. The gas tore through the boring with a piercing whistle, a dark cloud of coal-dust still hung in the air, but Doronin was creeping forward as if in a dream.

Reit overheard Prokofiev's conversation with Prudnikov. "Of course, we'll get the better of the rock," he thought delightedly. "We're going to mechanize it. Lashkin's a fool, and Soloviev's a damned official, that's all. They just don't understand anything. It's us, these people and I, who'll decide this question."

"Doronin," he said going up to the borer, "give us your hand."

Doronin looked at him in astonishment.

"We're going to mechanize it," said Reit, gripping the man's hand. "Here's my hand on it."

"We'll bore through it!" replied Doronin, a little taken aback. "Of course we shall. And now we'd better be moving, there's no sense in standing about."

"Better measure the gas first," said Prokofiev.

He went cautiously into the drift, so as not to cause an explosion, and crawled away for a long time into the upper and lower airways, testing the ventilation doors.

"Wouldn't it make you sick the time he takes?" Doronin burst out impatiently, watching Prokofiev's wise, deliberate movements.

At last Prokofiev returned and announced that the gas had been carried away by the ventilation stream.

"We'll start boring afresh over by the upper airway," said Reit.

"We've done ten yards, anyhow," said Doronin as if in justification. Then he croaked cheerfully: "Now, colliers, stand to," and the boring began once more. Cracking could be heard in the seam again, the gas burst out with a whistle. Again Doronin joked and swore and subdued the rest to his will. It was getting on towards morning when the party started for home. Four borings had been made; everything was ready for the pick miners to begin work on.

"Nice job we did today," Senka said proudly, glancing back for the last time. Now they were leaving it, the drift did not seem at all terryifying: it was as harmless as an enemy who had been caught and taken prisoner that night. They all tramped silently along. After this period of intense physical and mental strain, an overpowering weariness came over body and brain and clogged their movements. Doronin yawned convulsively, picking bits of coal out of his hair.

They had got to the third main, when Prokofiev halted and said:

"No. I'm going back to measure the gas once again for fear of anything happening."

"Now look at him, you two mugs, there's an old pitman for you! Fusses more over the shaft than a woman over a sucking pig," Doronin took the opportunity of pointing out to the boys. Then he yawned so violently that he almost got lockjaw.

"This night has been one of the most wonderful of all sleepless nights I ever remember," Reit was thinking. The fog, the roar, the whistle of the gas and the laughing, black Doronin—it all lived again in his imagination and he seemed to be living through it.

The cage took them up to the surface.

It was about five o'clock in the morning. A profound stillness reigned. Here and there a few tender clouds like geese, fled across the blue sky. The pit yard was deserted and quiet. The pile-drivers of the distant shafts slumbered on the horizon like great drowsy owls.

Could there have been such a silence only an hour before, during the boring?

"Well, how'd it go?" Lunin asked excitedly.

"Everything's all right, the boring's justified itself," replied Reit.

"That's good. I couldn't get away: something went wrong with the orders. I had to sit up all night over them," said Lunin. "Come in, I've got something important to say to you, Comrade Reit."

They went into the office. Later in the day, Reit sat at his desk, tearing up letters, and shrugging his shoulders with a smile over some. Then he took an exercise book with a stiff black cover out of his drawer and began to read it.

"No, I'm no Byron, I'm a poet of another kind, as yet unrecognized," he quoted mockingly.

He seemed to be arguing with someone as he turned the leaves of the book.

"Splendid," he said reading a page. "But what use is it to my noble, enigmatic, inimitable and only friend."

He closed the book with a bang and said very slowly and distinctly, punctuating every word:

"I hope you understand me. Anatole France's mockery, Byron's demonism, Wilde's cloak and scornful lips—have nothing to do with strength. They're the result of weakness. Of fear. Of lack of assurance and self-respect. And that's that, sir. Life, devil take it!" he said half angrily, half gaily. "It took you thirty-two years to find it out. Work. People. Simple, hard work. Simple, amazing people. All alive. All perfectly real."

He yawned with a kind of vicious satisfaction.

"Deep boring has justified itself," he said and smote his forehead. "We'll manage that longitudinal panel now." Then he stretched himself out in an armchair, yawned again and fell asleep.

*3*

The lights of the surrounding mines glimmered coldly in the darkness. Sirens shrieked. Sounds of singing came from the barracks. The sky glowed and trembled in crimson smoke.

They were sitting out in the steppe. Andreyev was holding the woman's hand in his and gazing into her dark eyes. Then they began to talk. He spoke of the future, of their life together.

"You'll go to school, Marusia," said Andreyev. "You'll be an engineer someday and draw up the time table for my work."

The little woman with the blue eyes clung closer to him. She did not want to go anywhere. What was the Workers' University to her? Why should she be an engineer? What did she want with anything in the world except to be his wife? She felt instinctively his inward strength, felt that huge, quiet, good natured man whom everybody respected and feared, was the true master of this country of coal and steel.

How many funny, towsled words he poured into her ear! They laughed over them together and then hand in hand walked over the dark steppe. How dull it was to think now of Bukhar; that very day he had come by her window—drunk—and threatened to kill her if she did not return to him. And the other women? She had heard them murmuring as she had passed down the street. Old Chernoyarikha—who was a Baptist—had said in a dreadful whisper:

"It's a sin for you, Marusia! Don't let yourself be led into temptation."

To which Marusia replied boldly and loudly so that the whole queue could hear:

"My body's no concern of yours; I'll do what I like with it."

. . . Andreyev felt such a buoyant strength in himself that his head swam as he walked. A wave of joy flooded his heart. He held her hand as they watched in the gloom a stream of stars moving over the hill.

"The repair shift is just coming off Number Seven," Andreyev said softly.

The stream of stars swept across the steppe. They moved from one spot to another, pursuing each other, and the curses that were carried on the breeze indicated that the moving stars were not heavenly planets but the lamps of irritable men.

Marusia threw her arms around Andreyev's neck. Her breath was hot as she whispered in his ear:

"Marei, let's clear out of this shaft, you'll get killed here. Don't go to that cursed Number Twelve drift. They say that once a miner goes there, he never returns. . . I won't let you go, do you hear?"

Andreyev sighed. "Number Twelve," he was thinking; then began to tell her how important it was that they should manage these difficult workings.

"So you're going tomorrow?" Marusia asked, bewildered.

"Yes. I'll be going about two—for the second shift."

She threw back her head in despair and stared at the sky.

"Marusia, Marusenka, what are you crying for?" asked Andreyev, embarrassed now. "What are you so frightened of—why they've done a lot of boring down there, and there's no gas left."

He was both disturbed and delighted at the thought that she was crying because of her anxiety about him.

"I'm not crying about that," Marusia explained through her tears. "You don't care about me, that's what it is. You think more of the shaft than of me."

"The shaft's a different thing altogether," Andreyev replied awkwardly. "Now if you . . ."

He attempted to embrace her but she flung off his hand impetuously:

"Go away!" she cried furiously. Then, suddenly throwing her arms around him, she said through her tears, "I'm terrified! I'm terrified. You'll be killed down in Number Twelve!"

"But Marusia, I've got to go, you know."

"You haven't got to, there's no need," sobbed Marusia.

## 4

Before going down the mine Andreyev had the following conversation with his brigade. The youngest pick miner, Shchukin, hesitated a little and then said rather shamefacedly:

"Marei Mikhailovitch, the lads are doubtful about going to work in Number Twelve."

"Well, I'm not forcing you, am I?" said Andreyev. "If anyone's afraid, he needn't come."

"It isn't that we're afraid, exactly," chimed in the cheery sled boy, Manekin. "But—wouldn't it be terrible if anything happened?"

"Supposing the roof should crumble?" a flaxen haired giant named Belikov muttered. Petka Gudkov snuffled loudly and said in a hollow voice that seemed to come from his stomach:

"And I've sent for my wife; she'll be here some time this week."

"Well, boys, as I said before, I'm not forcing anyone.'

"Yes, but you tell us how you look at it!" Gudkov begged.

"Alright, I will then. I look at it this way. If you were at the front, for instance, and you were told to go over the top and attack, would you say, 'No, it's dangerous. I'm not going?' No—you'd just go, wouldn't you?—because it's war. The pit's just as much of a front. You were sent—you've got to go. At least, that's how I look at it."

"You mean we're deserters if we don't?" said Manekin, laughing.

"So that settles it," said Belikov.

Reit came up at the moment and spoke to Andreyev about the timber frame work and warned him to watch for gas. He had scarcely slept for the last few days. The wave that had lifted him the day of the meeting at the Rescue Station swept him along with it. But there was nothing of the helplessness of the swimmer who has lost control of himself in this feeling. On the contrary he wanted to move still quicker. The more intense his work became, the keener and more delighted he felt. Sometimes weariness struck him down like a club and he slept for an hour or two, either on the floor of

the Main Office—in spite of the conversation, shuffling of feet and clatter of boots around him—or in his own room.

"Lunin's like a teacher with his class," he chuckled to himself. "First thing when I open my eyes, I see Lunin—'Comrade Reit, there's something urgent I want to speak to you about.' I'll have to try hiding from him down the mine."

"I'm sure, he never sleeps at all," Reit went on, following his train of thought aloud. "Who wakes him I wonder? Or rather who keeps him awake?" It was beyond his comprehension the source of this man's strength. Always racked by a cough, he had a genius for appearing the moment he was needed. And he was always needed. In the office, at technical consultation, down the mine, during the discussions in Lashkin's office; as soon as ever his thin, grey face showed itself round the doorway, people would smile and say:

"Here's Lunin at last!"

Lunin appeared just now from somewhere beyond the southern shaft.

"So you're off, are you?"

"Yes," said Andreyev.

Lunin gave an attentive look at the faces of those standing around.

"I was going to make you a bit of a speech," he said. "But I see there's no need." Then lowering his voice, he inquired of Andreyev: "And what about—her? Crying away, I suppose?"

"Yes, she's terribly upset."

"That's nothing. It'll be alright," Lunin muttered hurriedly, and then added aloud, "I've ordered a board of honor. All those that go through Number Twelve will be put on it—your brigade and Doronin's. And we'll hang it up in the yard."

"That'll be grand," Manekin exclaimed. "It'll be a red one, I suppose?"

"No, green with spots," Lunin replied with perfect seriousness, and as he was going away, called out: "A safe return, colliers!"

Shchukin, who had formerly worked in the Marten furnaces, remarked:

"He's made of the right sort of metal, that fellow! Those are the kind the commune stands on. There's not a scrap of conceit in 'em. They're not just living for themselves."

"Yes, Lunin's a regular good secretary," Andreyev agreed.

They stood there in the yard, gazing at the lowering grey sky and letting the cool rain drops patter down on their faces, until Belikov ran back breathless from the queue in the lamp room. The big eyes of the loaded accumulator lamps gleamed a soft yellow in the foggy daylight. Every man wiped the glass of his lamp and tried to open it, although they all knew the lamps were magnetized. Andreyev examined his benzine lamp, which served for testing gas. It appeared to be in good order, the flame did not quiver, the insulating bands were new, and the screws turned the wicks easily.

"Did they blow it while you were here?" Andreyev inquired of Belikov.

"Yevteitch himself blew it," the latter replied. "The pressure is two atmosphere—no more."

They stood a second, hesitating. There was nothing left for them to do on the surface. They had passed through all the stages—instructions, bathhouse, office, lamproom. Now they had to go down. And just because there was nothing more for them to do above ground, they were reluctant to leave.

"Come on," said Andreyev and moved ahead.

"Hey, what about the board of honor! Standing there with your mouth open!" Manekin called out to Belikov who was looking thoughtful. Then Manekin followed Andreyev, singing in a falsetto voice:

*The collier doesn't plough the land.*
*He never takes the plough in hand.*
*The collier hacks the coal all day*
*And underground he goes his way.*

Lunin was already on his way to the meeting of the Bureau of the Party Committee.

As he was passing Andreyev's house he saw Nikitishna.

"Is Marusia at home?"

"Of course she is. Where else would she be?" Nikitishna snapped.

"Should I drop in and tell her not to worry?" thought Lunin and turned in at the gate. "Sour old hag," crossed his mind as he looked at Nikitishna. "She's jealous I suppose, or else afraid of losing her job."

After a chat with Marusia, he went slowly down the street. "Yes," he thought bitterly, "that woman sits and cries and my wife's grinning to herself." And a terrible longing for something as simple and necessary as common black bread swept over him with such force that he moaned aloud.

A minute later his mind was running on quite different things. "After the meeting I'll go to see Sharin and then I've arranged to go to the shaft with Reit about eight o'clock. I'll just be in time." He always managed to find time for everything except his dinner.

After Doronin's day of boring, the drift was quite ready for the miners to begin work.

"We're the chaps, for you, by God!" Pospelov told Reit with a laugh.

"The haulage tunnel has been strengthened, the railway track repaired, the airways cleared, the empties are all ready and the timbers for the props have been left handy. . . . And you know, Leo Heinrichovich, it was all done by the timbermen, the fitters and the carpenters themselves. I was only hanging about there as a decoration you might say."

When Andreyev's brigade arrived in the drift, evidences of the work that had been done could be clearly seen everywhere. Fresh props lay piled up and white patches of new wood shone on the dark, half-rotting ventilation doors. The pick miners did not have to experience the forlorn, neglected feeling that had come over the borers when they first arrived in Number Twelve.

Andreyev and Shchukin, having undressed clambered about the place to look at the coal. Gas was still issuing from the borings. Andreyev examined one of them by the light of the accumulator lamp, and the tiny dust notes could be seen dancing madly in its rays.

The men held their breath as they looked closer at the seam. The gas continually dislodged bits of coal and this called out a faint hard sound like the scratching of emery paper.

"Can you hear?" asked Andreyev.

"Sounds like live crabs rustling about in a basket," Shchukin suggested, laughing.

"There's plenty of gas here anyway," Andreyev said in a serious tone. "And the coal looks queer. The streaks are broken, can't understand how the cleavage should go. If you go by what Reit says and hit it that way it goes wrong and there's no cleavage at all, just a mess. I've worked on all sorts of coal in the Don Basin, but I've never seen the like of this."

It annoyed him that the seam in Number Twelve should be "the wrong kind." In the beginning he listened attentively to the rustle of the coal. His first blows with the back of the axe were rather uncertain. But soon he grew

accustomed to it and wielded the axe with such force that the metal rang complainingly, and the long, stout handle quivered in his hand.

Great wedges of coal flew off one after another like a flock of crows rising from the trees. The heavy coal-dust poured down with an alarmed whisper. The light of the lamp was drowned in a dense cloud of hot dust. The big, black bearded man labored on. At every blow the cords of his muscles stood out on his back. Dust, mingled with perspiration covered him with a shining, dark skin. He resembled a living statue. It was not merely the strength of his hands that he was putting into the work. His forcible, accurate movements roused him to think, and he thought of things that had probably occurred to few before him in shaft Number Four. It seemed to him that he was fighting with some unknown powers of darkness, that he was at the head of a vast crowd cutting out a way. With every blow the wall dividing him from the future grew thinner, although he could not clearly see what sort of a future it was. It would be very bright, there, he thought, the sun would be glinting through the green leaves of the trees and there would be a mingling of cheerful sounds. All he had to do was to get the better of this rock. And it seemed to him that Marusia was following him admiring his strength. His conquest of the coal delighted him, the thought of the cunning resistance and the tricks of the shaft amused him. He put the fury of a warrior and the wild joy of the rebel into his work.

The brigade worked like devils to clear away the growing pile of coal.

"At it boys!" Manekin roared hoarse with excitement. He stood knee deep in the broken coal, flinging it madly out of the drift. "We've got to break the back of this coal!" he shouted, contriving at the same time to wipe his perspiring face with his wrist.

"At it!" panted the sled boys, dragging their loads to the railway track.

The drivers drove their wagons to the slope and shouted to the dumpers:

"More empties! We're going to beat the whole shaft today!"

Tense figures responded from the twilight. A black torrent poured down the shaft. The drift retreated further and further from the slope. They were making progress. Inch by inch Andreyev cut into the thickness of the seam, and the others felt the slow movement. It was the hardest, the dirtiest and the most dangerous work: eight hundred metres below the surface of the earth, these people felt as a sculptor feels, as a scientist in his laboratory, an artist in his studio or a writer in his study—the terrible joy of creative struggle.

During the rest hour they looked at each other attentively as if they were seeing each other for the first time.

"And work's going on grand after all!" said Shchukin in a slightly surprised tone.

"Ten days more and we'll get to where we want to be," said Andreyev with certainty, looking at his hands. "And at the meeting in the office they gave us eighteen days."

"Well, Marei Mikhailovitch, we've plenty to keep us going when we're working alongside of you!"

"You'd think he had two pairs of hands instead of one," said Manekin, and they all laughed at that.

*5*

Yarenko's brigade was working on horizontal Number Twenty-Two of the second western slope.

It was the hottest and most out of the way section of the colliery. The workings were more than a thousand metres under ground. The air was more stagnant than water in a bog. It filled the lungs with something resembling wet, hot cotton wool, enervated the body, clogged its movements and lulled the senses.

The norm for this drift was set at almost half that of the upper horizontal.

After working a little, they all lay down to rest. But even this did not ease them. Their heads swam; they began to nod sleepily; the longer the men lay down the feebler grew their desire to rise and move about. The stillness was as heavy as the air. It hung over and oppressed them like thousands of tons of rock. From time to time they tried to fight against it by exchanging a few half hearted words.

The thin, naked timber man was stooping and leisurely beating out a hollow in which to set a prop to support a pendulent ridge of shale. The men lying by the boring followed the movements of his hands lazily. The socket was ready at last. The timberman chose a suitable prop, nailed a flat piece of wood beween it and the pendulent shale and fixed it with a few blows of the hammer. There was no longer any danger of the rock falling. The timberman straightened himself, wiped away the perspiration, yawned and glanced up at the massive roof hanging over him. Then he went slowly over to the others and sat down beside them.

"That's work for you!" said Versetilov, with his eye on the rock.

"It could easily crash down on us," said Yurenko thoughtfully.

The timberman said nothing. He yawned and wiped his wet black face.

"Lord, how hot it is!" one of the dumpers complained in a tearful voice.

"There's no getting away from this heat," the timberman rejoined in a livelier tone. "Believe me, Yurenko, I find it harder to put in one frame here than timber two yards of airway in the Number Three horizontal."

"Aye!" sighed Yurenko, yawning loudly. "In the old days before the Revolution, I'd work eleven hours at a stretch, now a shift's only six hours and it's misery just the same. Although the norm's a low one the heat would kill you."

"The air doesn't circulate," the dumper explained. "It stagnates here."

Silence.

The walls, the roof, the darkness—all silent and rigid. The men were subdued by the immobility around them. After a rest some sharp stimulus was needed to break this drowsy state. This was usually supplied by a shout from Yurenko, who would jump up with, "Now then, colliers, let's get to work!" But today he could not summon enough strength to give that shout. He had drunk a good deal the night before with some people who had arrived from his own part of the country. His head ached and he did not want to break this drowsy spell.

And then—all of a sudden—it seemed as if an electric current passed through the drift. They all stirred, raised their heads and began to look about them. The coal, the rock, the timbering were just as before. The accumulators shone, and the stillness lay over everything like a soft, thick lambskin cap. All was as it had been, yet something had changed.

Yurenko sat up and passed his hand over his eyes. The colliers felt nervous, and vaguely alarmed. Their breath came quickly and heavily as they sat listening with strained attention to the surrounding stillness. Something had happened; perhaps they were in a delirium, perhaps they were dead. A sort of incomprehensible lightness had come over them. They did not know what to do with themselves. Should they run away or stay where

they were? The first to guess the reason for the change was Versetilov. His discovery astounded him; there was a sharp joy in his tone as he cried out:

"The new ventilator's started working and the current has come down to us!"

They all jumped up and began talking and laughing and slapping each other on the back.

Yes, the air in Number Twenty-two had begun to circulate. The black powdery coal-dust was in the cones of light. Somewhere far above them steel lungs were sucking up the fetid air. It's touch no longer drove out tiny drops of sweat on the skin. The timberman slapped his stomach, passed his hand over his chest and said with quiet surprise:

"I must have dried up, surely? There's no sweat on me now. . ."

"Yes, we're all dry!" cried one of the drivers. "Put your pants on, boys, else you'll catch cold!"

"So it's a rotten life, is it?" Versetilov asked Yurenko, taunting him. The latter looked bewildered, seemed about to speak—and said nothing. But this silence was so expressive that Versetilov cried as if in response:

"See, and you said we'd have to have a bath after this."

Up on the surface there was a dense crowd of men around the ventilator, which buzzed like an angry bee the size of a bear. This tense buzzing drowned all the other sounds in the pit yard—the voices, the orchestra, the laughter and the songs.

Before the switchboard inside the building stood the engineers, the members of the shaft committee and the men who had been working on the building. The German technician, Besold, red as a tomato and perspiring hard, pointed to the scale of the vacuometer and said to Reit:

"Comrade Reit, the depression in the canal is forty millimetres. You can easily calculate then, that if the diameter of the shaft is 6.5 it must mean four thousand two hundred cubic metres of air a minute."

He paused and then, pronouncing each word distinctly, concluded:

"The conditions of the agreement have been fulfilled."

"Yes," said Reit, "congratulations! You've done brilliantly."

August stood there, saying nothing at all. His heart thumped hard in his breast. He looked at Reit, at the colliers, listened to the buzzing of the motors. A new heart was beating in shaft Number Four, a new ventilator. And he had constructed it. He was quite overcome.

Only two people were absent at the trial of the ventilator: Vassili Ivanovich and Sharin. The former had been taken ill the night before with a heart attack. And where Sharin had got to—no one could guess. He had arrived two hours before, his car was standing outside the office, now, but he himself was nowhere to be seen.

Lunin looked about in astonishment. "Where the devil is Sharin?" he said to Kovalevsky in an undertone.

He wanted to enjoy the starting of the new ventilator along with Sharin: they had both thought a great deal of building it. He remembered now how Sharin had replied, when asked if it would not cost too much:

"Whether it will cost a lot or not, we're going to do away with the heat in shaft Number Four. I suppose you've sweated yourselves before now, you know what it's like, don't you?"

Lunin decided it was no use waiting for Sharin, so he came out on the step of the new building and, endeavoring to shout above the roar of the motor, said:

"Comrade colliers, this is a big day for us. . ."

Meanwhile, down in horizontal Number Twenty-two, one of the miners was saying: "Looks like someone creeping in here!" and sure enough, in a few minutes a man black with coal-dust appeared. He looked about him, breathing heavily.

"Well, comrades, is it any cooler?" he inquired. Then, noticing that most of the men were working in their trousers, he asked:

"How's that, Yurenko, how long ago is it since your brigade put on their pants?"

He began to laugh long and softly. And then they all laughed.

"By God," said Yurenko, "I can hardly believe it!"

"And you said we'd have to have a bath!" jecred Versetilov.

*Translated from the Russian by Anthony Wixley*

**Tatsuo Murata**

# The Prison Van

*The prison van was wheeling in the streets of twilight*
*It was a hearse with blackened windows and horses*
*Blindfolded .*
*The prison van was crowded with indignation*
*And the* Red Flag *was the song we heard:*
*It penetrated our hearts.*
*We were a mass formation in the wake of its passage*
*As sleet, falling in March, was a rigor for our brows.*

*Three years have passed and still the prison van*
*Is an assault on the boulevards:*
*The emaciated faces of comrades are hidden therein.*
*O remember, you who have taken cells for a home,*
*That the party is rooted into the factories*
*Like tentacles of oak:*
*You are its withered branches.*
*But we organize in the Kyushu district of Japan.*
*Remember that we are your hope!*

Adapted from the Japanese by Norman Macleod and Masaki Ikeda.

W. Carmon

# PHIL BARD: American Artist

*About A Revolutionary Mural Painter*

From the very beginning of the New York John Reed Club of American revolutionary writers and artists in 1929, the artists group was most active. The most talented artists made timely drawings for the *New Masses, Daily Worker* and other revolutionary publications. They conducted meetings, held exhibitions of their own, showed their work in leading American galleries. It was not a large group then, but among them were such well known artists as William Gropper, Louis Lozowick, Hugo Gellert, Jacob Burck, Fred Ellis and others. One of their first public meetings was in answer to the "religious war" then being conducted against the Soviet Union.

The meeting was attended by a very young, struggling artist, born and still living on the East Side of New York. He had been debating within himself the road he was to take. This meeting provided the final impetus. Phil Bard soon came to the *New Masses* with his first drawings which promptly appeared in print. He joined the John Reed Club.

Since those days of the crisis of 1929, the American John Reed Clubs have grown to over 30 in number, in the leading American cities from New York to San Francisco. Meanwhile the artists group of the New York John Reed Club grew many times larger. It has become a genuine art center of New York, where leading American artists are proud to have their work hung and to hear it discussed at public meetings. As an artist of the club writes: "The Left turn of the intellectuals is now a full blown reality. All derision of 'Propaganda in Art' has been replaced by talk of 'Revolution or Fascism in Art.' "

The artists group, holding lectures, debates, exhibits,—and a successful Art School, now in its fourth year,—grew even faster than the rapidly growing revolutionary press. The huge swing of the American artists to the Left created a situation where the revolutionary press was unable to absorb all its art talent. The artists of the New York John Reed Club turned to the trade unions: to assist workers in every way possible, drawing for their newspapers, holding art exhibits at their headquarters, and especially—painting murals.

The first assignment was a competition for designs for murals to be painted at the headquarters of *The Daily Worker,* organ of the American Communist Party. Out of the sketches of some 20 artists those by Phil Bard were chosen.

Phil Bard is still in his early twenties. He has matured rapidly as a revolutionary artist since those days of the New York John Reed Club at the beginning of the American crisis. He began work at once.

The murals cover more than 500 square feet of space. The artist spent three months at work on them. He made his own frames, mixed his own paints, and as he writes, "acted as my own model."

He used a tempera medium, the yolk of an egg mixed with pigment and water on a paste paint preparation over beaver board. The preparation was "Sunflex," and the artist is under the impression that he has been the first to use this medium for mural painting. A very simple color scheme of earth colors was used.

The murals are painted in an "L" shaped room. One entire side of the room is devoted to "Capitalism in the USA." The other picture is of "Hunger, War and Fascism." A separate wall holds the panel "Building Socialism in the Soviet Union."

From the very beginning these murals began to attract attention. Workers came to watch the artist at work and to offer criticism. The artist writes of those days:

"A worker came up one day and told me that the Sam Brown belt worn by the officer in the third panel was incorrect. Since I was at work on another panel at the time I did not feel it was necessary to make the change just at that time. The next day I was surprised to see the same worker again. This time, to make his criticism effective, he came with a delegation and demanded that I make the change at once. I made the change!"

Another occasion: "A young student felt that the priest in the second panel was much too thin. I disagreed with him. He left and returned an hour later wtih two other workers. He shouted to me on the scaffold: 'Hey, Phil! These two are industrial workers. Let's see what they have to say!' Then he turned to them and asked pointedly: 'Don't you think, comrades, that the priest is too thin?'"

The completed murals attracted widespread attention in art circles and the press, far beyond the revolutionary movement.

These murals by Phil Bard are a part of the interest among other revolutionary artists in mural painting. In St. Louis, the murals of Joe Jones and his pupils (*International Literature,* No. 2, 1934) drew a demonstration. The work of Walter Quirt, also a member of the New York John Reed Club (*International Literature,* No. 4, 1934) is receiving warm praise in art circles. Other artists, in Los Angeles, and other cities, have completed revolutionary murals in public buildings while engaged on government projects, to the consternation of the bourgeois press and conservative groups.

The American artists, and very prominent among them Phil Bard, are taking active part in the class struggle at the side of the American working class.

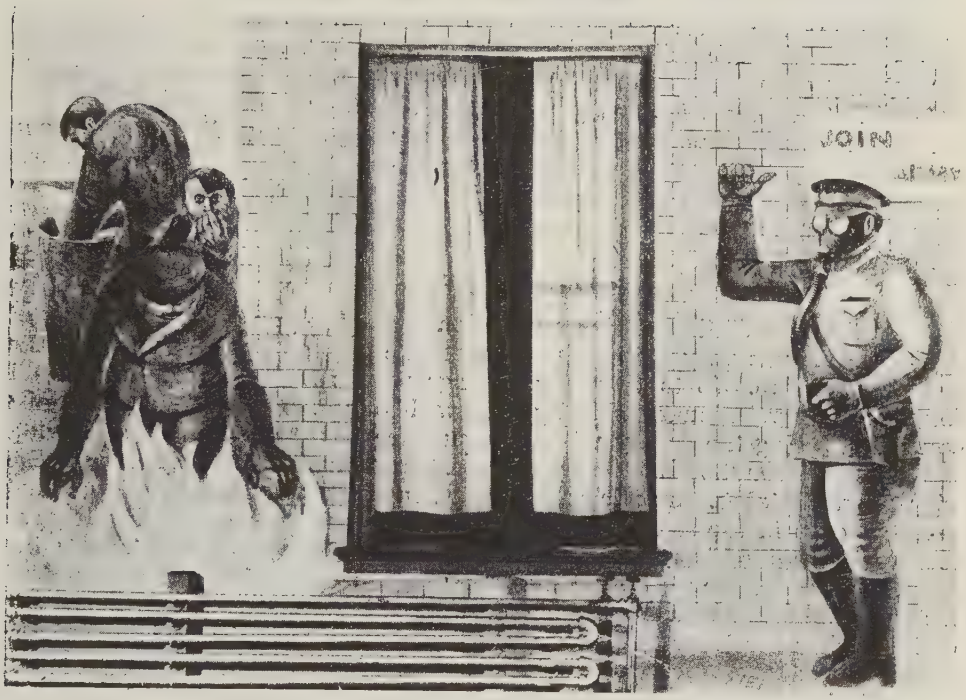
**MURALS BY PHIL BARD**

# AMERICAN MURALS

*Capitalism in the USA*

*The Revolt of the Farmers*

# BY PHIL BARD




*Hunger — and War*

*Building Socialism in the Soviet Union*

# Where We Stand

*In two preceding issues we printed the answers of American, English, French and Danish writers to the following three questions asked by the secretariat of the IURW:*

*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 print the answers of the leading revolutionary writers of Spain.*

— Editors.

## Ramon J. Sender

*Author of* Seven Red Sundays *and other novels*

1. At the time of the October revolution I was too young to have ideas of my own. That is why I could not appreciate this glorious episode of the world revolution. Up to then my feelings were revolutionary. Later on I fought as a revolutionary side by side with our anarchist and communist comrades, facing the enemy with an assurance based on the fact of having conquered a stronghold of the rear-guard. This formidable conquest was the triumphant October. In articles, in books, in trade union and political discussions, even in the struggle in the streets, the existence of the USSR gave us serenity and self-assurance. My ideas and writings were naturally influenced thereby. It was not a question simply of dreaming but of counterposing to the dreams the reality attained. That is why after the achievement of the Soviets my ideas acquired a greater specific weight and equilibrium.

2. Perhaps, I do not know Soviet literature well enough to have an opinion. I admire whatever is born of the proletariat in its struggle for freedom. It is quite far from the sensitivity of the decadent European bourgeoisie. That is why *The Armored Train* seems to me to be a good book. I also appreciate the pages of L. Seifulina and Gladkov, in spite of the handicaps of translation. The creative zest of revolution is remarkable in its literary products provided the zest is genuine and not simulated. If in a Soviet work I find some of the bourgeois estheticism of the West I feel somewhat cheated. I want everything to be new and different.

3. Some phenomena of capitalist culture struck me especially. For example, in politics, the bankruptcy of the League of Nations, this instrument of balance between the imperialist interests of the different powers. The fact that the economic need of these powers is superior to their means of organization, that organs capable of maintaining peaceful relations between capitalist powers can not be created and at the same time war is feared as an adventure the outcome of which is doubtful,—after the example of the Russian revolution—this fact, impressed me as a most striking symptom of capitalist decay in the general European panorama.

During the Goethe Centennary all periodicals of the world dedicated their pages to the author. I was surprised not to find a real understanding of Goethe in any of the studies written by bourgeois authors as erudite and

documented as they were. On the other hand Goethe's figure appeared clearly in the analytical criticism of revolutionary writers. One can not grasp Goethe entirely by metaphysical means; with dialectics on the other hand one can explain him entirely. Metaphysics vanishes from these studies like fog melts from a rock when sun shines. Bourgeois culture has no adequate explanation for the understanding of its best works. In bourgeois genius there are zones which the bourgeoisie never will enter with comprehension.

One more episode: the books burned in my presence in Berlin. The Nazis had a gruesome and superstitious look in the light of the flames. I remembered an arson at which I was present as a child, in a village. A house "possessed by demons" was emptied of its furniture. A pire was built in one place and lit. Those villagers believed that the demons left with the smoke. These incendiaries had the same superstitious and redoubtable look. As to Goering who made a speech, he reminded me of the priest reciting his prayers. It was the new Middle Ages.

## Joaquin Arderius

Having been ill for the last twenty days I could not answer your letter promptly and with all the particulars as I desired. I am still ill but I do not want to answer your questionnaire with silence and since I fear to be late, as you need these lines so quickly, I shall write concisely.

Comrades, formerly I was a rabidly individualistic writer, a Nietzchean. But the successes of the Russian Revolution have changed my pessimistic and individualistic outlook. Today I am a collectivist writer, strong and living with enthusiasm. My love of life has taught me that to struggle successfully one has to make use of Marxian weapons. What more could I tell you of the effects the Russian Revolution has had on me and on my work? That today I have a genuine class-consciousness.

Soviet literature seems to me to be the basis of literature useful to humanity and to provide the means for giving writers freedom.

As to capitalist civilization, I may tell you frankly that it never had much influence on me. Nothing else dear comrades.

## Cesar M. Arconada

The existence of the Soviet Union where socialism has triumphed has naturally had an influence on my attitude. It still has it and will have it always. However, I can not say that it was decisive. Without the practical demonstration of the fact that communism is possible I would be what I am today: a communist. Asking for proof is equivalent to mistrust. The history of mysticism is full of such cases, because faith is nothing more than a lack of certitude in our beliefs. I understand the value of suggestion, of practical demonstration, of tangible evidence and in another realm of ideas of the political reality brought into being by the existence of the USSR and by the progress of this country. It might well be that intellectuals need the victory of socialism to believe in socialism. However, neither Marx nor Lenin, nor the many who either fell or attained their end, nor the many others who have struggled without knowing any other reality than the scientific idea—which for an intellectual should be exactly as convincing as practice—could have existed for the revolutionary cause. Those who serve as an example to others cannot hobble at the tail of childish pedagogy.

If I believe in the communist future of society it is because I am in principle an intellectual who has been led to a steadfast belief in the future at large. It is not a small thing which is projected. Intelligence is like astronomy and the intellectual is a kind of astronomer. Those who do not look ahead look backward and one can infallibly predict at this moment that all men looking backward will become intellectual fascists. On the other hand all those looking forward towards the future if not yet communists can and will become such. In the northern latitudes through the many shadows which obscure the view one always comes to see this star. I want to say that my convictions are prior to my acts. But why deny that the existence of a country where the victorious proletariat accomplishes the task of building socialism has exercised an influence upon us and exercises it continuously every minute, not so much in the intangible realm of ideas as on the pulsation of our feelings which are thereby fortified in the hours of weakness, steeled in hours of trial, alive and full of hope in moments of hesitation or defeatism from which nearly all of us suffer.

2. It would be senseless to put in one category my remarks on this subject. We are ill acquainted with Soviet literature and what is worse in a haphazard way depending on biased and utilitarian choice of our publishers. The literature of the Soviets seems to me to be what it should be: a part of a whole, a part of a great complex of psychological, moral and material problems which all relate to the building of socialism. In contrast to the literature of capitalist countries yours appears in a kind of constantly renewed and rich fluctuation. We often hear in our circles that Soviets writers do not create great works. The concepts of certain critics about great works as well as the nostalgias they suffer from are open to question. As for myself I believe that in the field of the novel you have produced writings as beautiful in expression and as perfect in their composition as Dostoyevsky or Tolstoy did in their time.

I admire the seriousness with which your critics analyse Soviet literature; I admire especially the method, precision and scientific approach with which they study literary and cultural movements in capitalist countries and diagnose the symptoms of decay. Undoubtedly these are historical studies which are especially wanting among us.

Discussing these problems we state that everything has to be redone. Using Marxist methods could we newly interprete literature, science, art, philosophy and history? In Russia—we say in our discussions—they probably accomplish this great work. However we know little of it.

3. Really, we, who developed after the war, owe little to capitalist civilization. We grew up in an atmosphere of hostility and we separated from it as easily as young twigs separate from a tree—without suffering. Such was not the case with Gide and Romain Rolland and other writers whose change in attitude meant a crisis for them and a cause of great anxiety to the bourgeoisie. We began our lives as writers in that afterwar period when a revival of capitalism inspired in youth a certain confidence in the rennaissance of art. This was only a passing illusion. We soon realized the futility of these phenomena; there was nothing to be done in a capitalist culture. On the contrary we perceived new paths before us leading towards the future. To leave the capitalist world and to take a new road was for us as simple a thing as taking a new step. If one does not carry a big load of the past on one's shoulders a change in direction is easily accomplished and it is not important enough to be recorded as a historical event in our biographies.

I applaud the success of the Soviet Writers Congress.

## Arturo Serrano Plaja

1. The October Revolution, the existence of the Soviet Union is not and can not be a fact on which one has an individual opinion. For us, we were born twenty or twenty-five years ago outside of the USSR, the Revolution is a given fact, a point of departure, in one word, an event of indisputable importance.

Only by subsequent readings and study of the pre-revolutionary situation does one come to realize clearly what the revolution means in the world. More concretely: in the world in which we spent our childhood: indoors, in the bosom of the petty bourgeois family and outside (seven years for a baccalaureate at the Royal College of Alphonse XII, at the Escurial and with the "reverend Augustinian fathers"). Naturally, if once in a while one heard of the "Russian chaos" it was only in order to convince us as to where lack of religion and irreverence to the authorities would lead one: to anarchist impiety, to the perversion or morals, etc.

Doubtless, the events had to have a great importance if in spite of this propaganda, even in spite of itself, the revolution attracted the eyes of all young men whose consciousness assumed definite form: either a revolutionary fervor—fervor and not fever—or else a dumb hatred, troubled and immoral.

Thus the importance of the October Revolution for our generation was unquestionable. Only an idiot could deny it. Actually the capitalist world admits the importance of the revolution.

The automobile or the electric light was a great event in the life of those who witnessed their appearance, however, they are only matters of fact for those who are born later, because they understand it without being puzzled by it. Thus, for us the revolution is a fact: it is already a part of us, for its concept was born with us and in us.

It goes without saying that I do not presume to say that all of our generation is or must be revolutionary. On the contrary, because they have a good understanding of the revolution—perhaps too good an understanding—those who in any other time would have remained inactive, today endeavour to organize reaction against the inevitable danger which threatens them.

As for the rest of us who regard the revolution as definite fact and not only a definite, but a positive fact, although so to say we occupy a position on the fringes of politics, we have learned through the example of the Soviet on the one hand and through the fascist danger on the other the necessity of our taking part in the revolutionary reality in proportion to our capacity.

But undoubtedly this is only the process. We give a rational form to an intuitive process, prior to and more important than its dialectic rationalization. This is an inner enthusiasm which one feels but can not describe, perceiving the cosmic significance of the salvation of the individual, on feeling with assurance a world capable of fullness and conscious of this fullness which gives it the measure of its new harmony, of its new total integration, where man returns prodigally like a living individual; to being capable of realizing and living in actuality and through this to change, to transform this concept of man-individual alive in a living and ardent community. To create at his side as from a part of him, a comrade in his political and philosophical ideas which this world of comradeship implies.

The idea of companions, of comrades is not simply a substitution for the catholic brother, but still more and unhoped for and of vaster orbit, traced

around man and characterized by a larger dimension; which is that of his responsibility, his deep critical responsibility.

Then the revolutionary fact determines in us a simultaneous and reciprocal duality of perceptions, starting as it were from a general and minimal understanding of the revolution (which is given to us ahead of time, empirically, perhaps in order to place us in our time), our participation is made practically necessary, since a fundamental part of our existence, such as our will to find ourselves has been committed to it. But the point is reached when this activity which in the beginning was only regarded as moral necessity is transformed into a wider understanding and, as a direct consequence, it immediately broadens our perspectives to which it is thereby revealed including the necessity for greater revolutionary activity.

This is, briefly, the summary of the process which the existence of the Soviet Union as the consequence of an organized revolution has wrought in us. It is in keeping with this process that our aspirations change constantly and are always affirmed in this new direction.

2. Our enthusiasm knows no limits. We want to state right away that Soviet literature seems fine to us. Although the question as literally formulated does not take in the whole importance which Soviet literature in fact includes. If we consider hellenic sculpture the purely esthetic phenomenon does not seem to us to be the most important meaning of hellenism; likewise if carefully contemplated Soviet literature can not be the same in relation to the USSR.

Thus indeed I am anxious not to detach even a part of the cosmic and total success which the USSR means today. Literature as well as industry, the economic and cultural standards as well as the sciences there, far from the total decadence of capitalism, cannot by us be taken separately except through the effort of speculative abstraction:

It is because each in itself is cause and effect, consequence and complement of all other aspects under which the USSR appears today.

How would the creation of this literature been possible without the previous events of universal importance: without the October Revolution?

All literature more or less depends on the universal political principle. However: in the USSR the creative revolution and the literary works are indivisible to such an extent that it is impossible to differentiate them.

It is impossible to read an essay by Lunacharsky or a novel by Gladkov, to see photographs of the Meyerhold Theatre or a film of Eisenstein without immediately recalling Lenin and the October days.

In this sense, what does it matter whether we personally can get enthused by reading a Soviet book, if in general we see the unity and continuity of the fundamental human and vital effort, realized today by the Soviet Union.

To summarize our opinion of this literature we should manifest our admiration not only before the contents but before the container, before the splendid renaissance which has dawned in the USSR.

3. To determine the phenomena which most struck our intelligence is really a difficult task. Each moment which occurs in our lives is nothing but a logical effect of a new influence, of a new impulse.

But since this is the case, all our life is a continuous process where each moment is a consequence of the preceding and at the same time its anterior necessity. All instants of our future constitute an exact value because without one of them another could not be acquired and necessarily the following implies all its precedents.

Indeed in order to be able to answer in a categoric fashion we should

view the moments of our own life and find those of the universal life which correspond to them and which left the profoundest traces in our intelligence. After having thus determined the stages of our own revolution, we can affirm that they have corresponded to the religious mysticism and the new Spanish picaresque, to the nihilism derived from anarchist nihilism, to the human and earthly sentiments of Nietzche.

As for this moment, although it might seem strange if it appears to us as a forcible and natural consequence of those preceding, it is the poetic sentiment in its greatest human significance that we perceive in the political and revolutionary act: Lenin.

## Angel Lopez Obrero

1. In fact, they played a decisive role. They made me change my path, they convinced me that there is only one way to regenerate all values of civilization: the proletarian revolution.

This fact—the October Revolution—has influenced my ideas, it has more than influenced them: it converted them into different ideas. My reasoning has changed in its entirety, and from the moment when I arrived to this point I can no longer admit anything of my previous convictions. I consider the world and art from an entirely different standpoint, I conceive, I think, I act only through and for the Revolution.

2. I can not express my opinion on Soviet literature. I have only had an opportunity of knowing isolated things. However, if I might say so,—and I gladly use the opportunity—from all the books I read since I learned to read, the one which gave me the greatest esthetic pleasure and which has impressed me most is *The Soviet Primer* by M. Ilyin.

Nobody, not even Rabindranath Tagore who interested me much has touched me as deeply. Have I to add that this wonderful book could not have been written without the October Revolution? Not because its general line is indicated by the Five-Year Plan, but because what lends it its high literary value could not have appeared outside an intelligence nourished by new forces which transform the world.

3. As far as painting goes I was startled the most by the vanguard movement. It was in the moment when after the death of impressionism the painters of Europe tried to create a new art. For a long time I believed in this art and dedicated myself to it up to the present. I did not abandon it for the revolution but the disgust which it inspired pushed me torwards the ranks of the revolutionaries in search for new arguments to nourish my intelligence which had lost its faith in all values of civilization and consequently in the art which made me "blaze." I needed to renew myself, however, I did not find anything new before myself, including the living art which I served. Before penetrating into the revolution, I did not feel the impulse towards a new life which was formed before me without my seeing it. Today a new horizon appears before my eyes.

**Joseph Kalar**

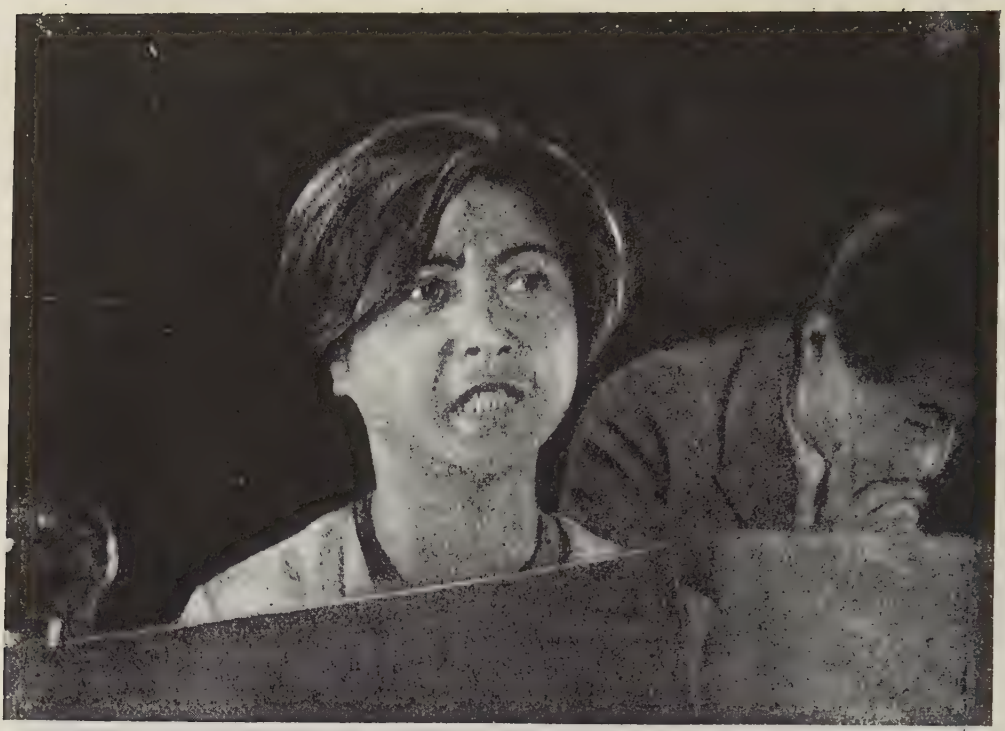
# Proletarian Night

*Now that work is done, the whistle blows,*
*its scream harsh as laughter out of steel,*
*piercing through the fat, pushing aside*
*the fur, the sleep, the dream,*
*finding each sad little cringing nerve*
*twitching in its cell of tired flesh,*
*while from the stack and the round mouths*
*of black dripping pipes, smoke puffs,*
*puffs, and sound dies, and giant wheels*
*cease their grinding, and pistons find rest*
*in the slimy clutch of oil and grease.*
*Now that work is done, the mill no longer*
*with a drone grinds gold out of flesh,*
*but with the night and its quiet dark*
*and sleep that presses on the eyes,*
*the tumult and the drive persist, and we find*
*remembrance in each nerve and bone and cell*
*of the grating sharp insistence of each wheel,*
*the slap of belts, tumultuous din of steel,*
*the insolent commands, the curses and the sneers,*
*(with humility such a poor veil to hide*
*the hate that flames electric into the eyes);*
*though the body cries for rest, writhing*
*with aching flesh throughout the night,*
*and sleep descends with its blind crazy dreams,*
*stuffing the mind with rags that dull,*
*conviction, still inviolate, remains,*
*that sleep will not hail victory in,*
*remove the steel thumbs of the mill*
*that gouge into the temples (here and here),*
*return one beam of lost forgotten day,*
*or drive one foe into the avenging street.*

# THE SOVIET WRITERS CONGRESS

*Maxim Gorki Opens the Congress*

*Soviet Workers before the Hall of Trade Unions, where the Congress was held, waiting for a glimpse of their favorite authors*

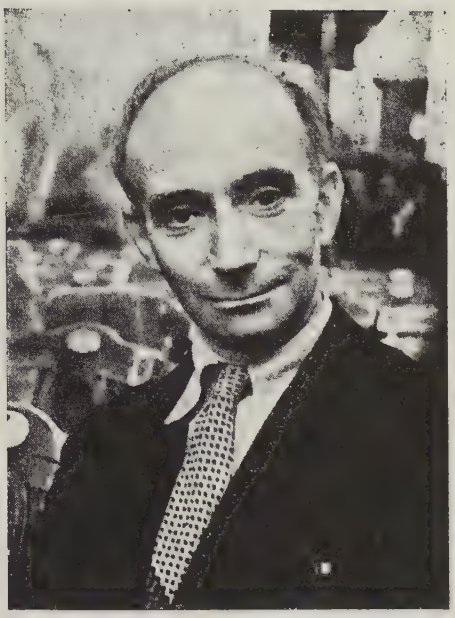


*Hu-lan-chi, Chinese revolutionary writer*

*Leonid Leonov, Soviet novelist, discusses problems of Soviet writers with the English author, Amabel Williams-Ellis*

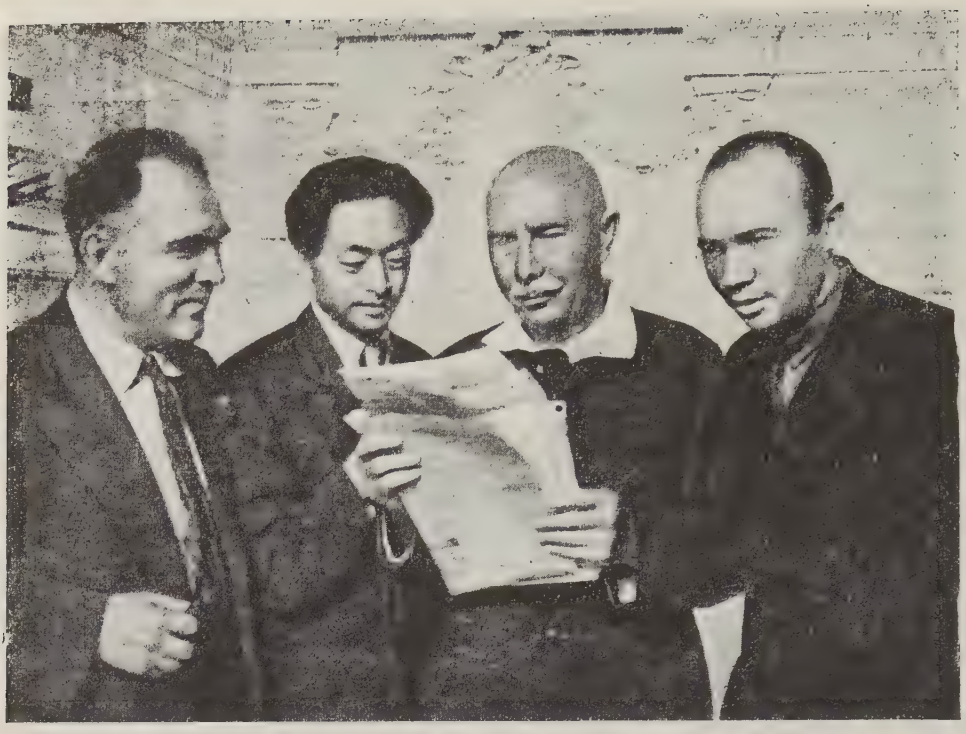
# IN PHOTOGRAPHS AND DRAWINGS

*Martin Andersen Nexo, noted Danish writer*



*Jean Richard Bloch, French revolutionary writer*

*The Foreign Section at the Soviet Writers Congress*



*Left to right: Tengurin, Tartar writer; Emi Siao, Chinese Poet; Serafimovich, Soviet novelist, author of* The Iron Stream; *and Tulumbaisky, Tartar writer*

*Oscar Maria Graf, German novelist (in Bavarian costume) — (Theodore Plivier at his right) at a Literary Meeting at the Park of Rest and Culture*

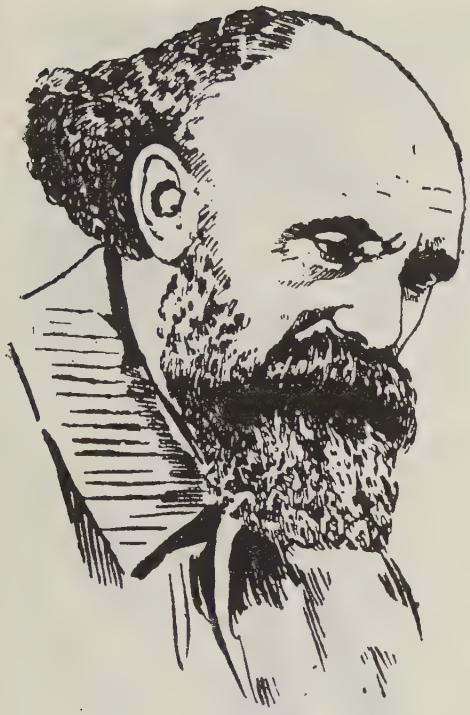
*Left to right: Bubnov, People's Commissar of Education; Alexei Tolstoy, Soviet novelist; Michael Koltsov, brilliant journalist*

*First Row, left: Antal Hidas, Hungarian poet; Fourth and fifth persons: Suleiman Stalski, Daghistan poet, and Maria Teresa Leon, Spanish writer; Second row: Germanetto, Italian novelist; Bela Illes, Hungarian novelist; Martin Andersen Nexo, Danish novelist; Rafael Alberti, Spanish poet*

*Ilya Ehrenburg, Soviet novelist, author of* Out of Chaos *and other books*

*Nordal Grieg, Norwegian writer and playwright*

*Aini, Tadjik, poet, and Lahuti, noted Persian poet*



*M. Prishvin, novelist*

*A. Veséli, novelist*

*Alexei Tolstoy, novelist*

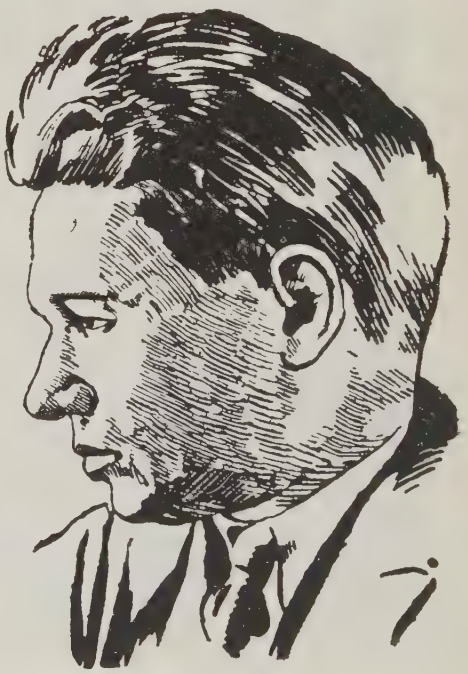
*Leonid Leonov, novelist*

# SOVIET WRITERS, CRITICS, PLAYWRIGHTS

*Sergei Dinamov, critic, editor-in-chief of* International Literature

*Valentine Katayev, novelist*

*F. Gladkov, novelist*



*N. Pogodin, playwright*

*N. Tikhonov, novelist*

*Isaac Babel, playwright, short story writer*

*Vsevolod Ivanov, novelist*

*A. Novikov-Priboy, novelist*

## THE NEWSPAPERS

On the day of the opening of the Soviet Writers Congress, the front page of every leading Soviet newspaper was devoted to it. Every day following, all speeches, details of procedure, and photographs were printed. The press fully reflected the importance of the writer in Soviet life. On this page are reproductions of the front pages of three prominent Moscow newspapers on the opening day of the Writers Congress.


Moscow Daily News

GREETINGS TO THE FIRST ALL-UNION WRITERS CONGRESS

A LABORATORY OF SOVIET LITERATURE

*The English daily newspaper in the Soviet Union, M. M. Borodin, Editor*


ПРАВДА

ВОЗВРАЩЕНИЕ СОВЕТСКИХ ЭСКАДРИЛИЙ.

Pravda (Truth) *leading Soviet daily, issued in Moscow*


Литературная газета

Literary Gazette *of Moscow, issued every two days*

# LETTERS and DOCUMENTS

## Marx and Engels On Art and Literature

*Excerpts from Letters and Books*

... Following Garnier, Storch was first to take the new position in the polemic against the distinction made by A. Smith between productive and non-productive labor.

From direct goods, which are the component parts of material production, he distinguishes "internal goods (biens internes) or components of civilization," the laws of production which should be investigated by the "theory of civilization."

With Storch himself, the theory of civilization does not go beyond trivial phrases although one comes across several witty remarks like, for instance, that the division of material labor is a condition prerequisite for the division of spiritual labor. To what extent this had to be so and how little capable he was to even put the problem, not to speak of solving it, is clear from the following. In order to investigate the connection it is first of all necessary to consider the last not as a general category, but in its separate historical form. Thus, for instance, another form of spiritual production corresponds to capitalism than to the mode of production of the Middle Ages. If material production itself is not taken in its specific historical form, it is impossible to make any definite inferences with respect to the spiritual production which corresponds to it and with respect to their interaction. Beyond empty phrases there will be no result.

So much for the phrase on "civilization."

Further: a definite form of material production is a prime condition first, for a definite analysis of society, second, for a definite relation of man to nature. Both the one and the other determine his system of government and his world philosophy. Consequently also the nature of his spiritual production.

Finally, by spiritual production Storch understands also all kinds of professional activity of the ruling classes, the fulfilling of definite functions as their trade. The existence of these estates, as well as that of their functions can be explained only from the definite historical structure of their production relations.

Since Storch regards material production not from the historical point of view, seeing it as the production of material goods in general and not as a given, historically developed and specific form of this production, he, by the same token, removes the ground from under his feet standing on which only one can understand both the ideologic component parts of the ruling classes and the free spiritual production of a given social formation. He can go no further than general, empty phrases. And these relations are not at all as simple here as they seem to him. For instance, Capitalist production is inimical to some fields of spiritual production, like art and poetry. Not understanding this, one may come to the invention of the French of the 18th century which Lessing has ridiculed: since we have gone so far

in mechanics, etc. ahead of the ancients, why not go in for the creation of epics? And so we get the Henriad instead of the Iliad!

KARL MARX—*Theory of Surplus Value vol. I*

*Artistic Work in the Era of Communism*

...Here as everywhere Sancho (Stirner - Tr.) has no luck with his practical instances. Thus he thinks that "no one can compose for YOU YOUR musical compositions, execute YOUR plans in the fields of painting. No one can substitute the work of Raphael." Sancho might have known, however, that not Mozart, but another musician composed the greater part of the Mozartian *Requiem,* that Raphael "executed" only an insignificant part of his frescoes.

He imagines that the socalled organizers of labor want to organize all the activities of every individual, while it is they exactly who make the distinction between directly productive labor, which must be organized, and labor not directly productive. With respect to these last forms of labor they do not at all think, as Sancho imagines, that anyone may work instead of Raphael, but that anyone in whom there is a Raphael should have the opportunity to develop unhindered. Sancho imagines that Raphael created his paintings independently of the then existing division of labor in the Rome of the period. If he had compared Raphael with Leonardo da Vinci and Titian he would have seen to what an extent the artistic work of the first depended upon the flourishing of Rome at the time with its Florentine influence, the work of Leonardo upon the circumstances in Florence and the work of Titian upon the entirely different development of Venice. Raphael, like any other artist, depended on the technical achievements in art before his time, the organization of society and division of labor in his locality and, finally, on the division of labor in all those countries with which his country came in contact. Whether an individual like Raphael will succeed in developing his talents depends entirely upon the demand which, in its turn, depends on the division of labor and the resulting condition of enlightment among people.

Announcing the individualness of scientific and artistic labor, Stirner sinks to an even lower level than the bourgeoisie. Already it has been found necessary to organize this "individual" activity. Horace Vernet would never find the time to produce one tenth of his paintings if he should consider them work which "only the 'individual' can perform." The tremendous demand for vaudeville and novels in Paris has called out an organization of labor for their production,—an organization which produces something better, at any rate, than its "individual" competitors in Germany. In astronomy such men as Arago, Herschel, Encke and Bessel, found it necessary to organize for collective observation and only then got some tolerable results. In historiography the "individual" is absolutely unable to do anything whatever and the French have long ago outstripped all other nations in this respect due to their organization of this labor. It is, by the way, clear that these organizations, based on contemporary division of labor, produce still far from adequate results being a step forward only in comparison to the lackwisdom disorganization existing up to now.

It is necessary, in addition, to call special attention to the fact that Sancho mixes up Communism with the organization of labor and then wonders why "Communism" does not answer his doubts with respect to this organ-

ization. Thus the Gascon village lad wonders why Arago cannot tell on which star God lives.

Exceptional concentration of artistic talent and the wide impression upon memory connected with it is a result of the division of labor. Under definite social conditions if even every individual were an excellent artist this would not at all preclude the possibility of each one being also an original artist so that even here the distinction between "human" and "individual" labor is reduced to a mere absurdity. In any event, with a Communist organization of society the subjection of the artist to local and national limitations which follow entirely from the division of labor fall aside, as does the forcing of the artist into the limits of some definite branch of art on account of which he becomes a painter, sculptor, etc., so that the very name of his activity points clearly to the limitations of his professional development and to his dependence on the division of labor. In Communist society there can be no painters, only people who also occupy themselves with painting . . .

KARL MARX and FRIEDRICH ENGELS—*German Ideology*

*Explanation of Literary Phenomena from the Point of View of the History of Culture and Historical-Materialism*

. . . Individuals working in a society—consequently socially determined work of individuals—such is the natural starting point. The single, separate hunters or fishermen with whom Smith and Ricardo begin, belong to the unimaginative inventions of the 18th century. This is Robinsonism which does not at all express—as the historians of culture imagine— only a reaction against excessive subtlety and a return to falsely understood nature. Just as Rousseau's *Social Contract* which establishes relations and contact between naturally independent subjects by means of a contract does not in the least rest on such naturalism. This is an illusion, and only an esthetic illusion of big and small Robinsonades. It is, on the contrary, an anticipation of "bourgeois society" for which the 16th century began to pave the way and which in the 18th century made gigantic steps towards maturity. In this society of free competition the individual steps out freed from natural ties, etc., which, in previous historical eras, made of him an appurtenance of a definite, limited, human conglomerate. To the prophets of the 18th century on whose shoulders Smith and Ricardo stand completely, this individual of the 18th century, a product on the one hand, of the dissolution of the feudal social forms and on the other, of the new production relations which developed beginning with the 16th century, seems an ideal whose existence refers to the past, not a result of history but its starting point. . . .

*KARL MARX — Towards A Critique of Political Economy*

*ENGELS on Carlyle*

Thomas Carlyle is the only English writer upon whom German literature has exercised a direct and very considerable influence. Out of sheer politeness a German cannot fail to give some attention to his work.

From Guizat's latest work we could conclude that talented people among the bourgeoisie are becoming scarce. In Carlyle's two pamphlets now before us we note a decline of literary genius met with the sharpened historical struggle to which he attempts to oppose his unacknowledged, direct, prophetic inspirations.

To Thomas Carlyle belongs the credit of having come out in literature against the bourgeoisie at a time when the latter's views, tastes and ideas filled all official English literature; and his work was occasionally of an even revolutionary character. This refers to his history of the French Revolution, his apologies of Cromwell, the pamphlet on Chartism, *Past and Present*. In all these works, however, criticism of the present is intimately connected with a remarkably unhistorical apotheosis of the Middle Ages, which, by the way, is often to be met with among English revolutionists as, for instance, in Cobbett and one section of the Chartists. While in the past he is enthused by at any rate the classic periods of definite phases of social development, the present brings him to despair and the future frightens. Where he recognizes revolution and even apotheosizes it, revolution, to him, is concentrated into one person—a Cromwell or a Danton. To these persons he dedicates that same cult of heroes which he preached in his "Lectures on Heroes and Hero Worship" the only salvation from the hopeless present and as a new religion.

Carlyle's style is like his ideas. It is—direct, violent reaction against modern-bourgeois English sanctimonious style whose pompous banality, careful verbosity and morally sentimental everlasting boredom has spread over all English literature from the original creators of this style—the educated Londoners. Contrary to this literature, Carlyle began to treat the English language as entirely raw material which he transfused anew. He hunted up archaic turns of phrase and words and composed new ones in the German fashion; particularly modelling himself on Jean Paul Richter. The new style was often forced and lacking in taste but also occasionally brilliant and always original. And in this respect *Latter Day Pamphlets* show a notable regression.

It is characteristic that out of all German literature the greatest influence on Carlyle was not by Hegel, but by that literary pharmacist—Jean-Paul.

The cult of genius, which Carlyle shares with Straus, has in these pamphlets been abandoned by genius. Only the cult is left.

*MARX and ENGELS—Collected Works, Vol. VIII, pp. 281-282*

*MARX on Carlyle*

At last the voice of the oracle sounded, of Mr. Thomas Carlyle, about whom I already wrote in 1850: "In the cult of genius . . . genius has disappeared, the cult is left." In a short sermon he reduces the only great event of contemporary history, the American Civil War, to the circumstance that Peter of the North tries with all his might to crush the brain of Paul of the South because Peter of the North hires his workmen "by the day" and Paul of the South "for life." (*Macmillan's Magazine*. August 1863). Thus burst the pompous bubble of Tory sympathy to the city—but by no means the village! —hired laborer. The kernel of these sympathies is named slavery.

KARL MARX—*Capital*, vol. 1

*ENGELS on Heine*

Since I have already gone so far, I shall, in conclusion, inform you that (Heinrich) Heine is here again and I was in to see him the other day together with Ewerbeck. The poor fellow is very much run down. He is as thin as a skeleton. The softening of the brain is spreading and also the paralysis of the face. Ewerbeck says that Heine may die suddenly from

paralysis of the lungs or from a stroke, but may linger on for another three or four years. He is, of course, in a somewhat depressed state and, what is most remarkable, very charitable (not in the ironical sense) in his judgements. In general he has preserved all his spiritual energy only his physiognomy—the grey little beard he has raised because he cannot shave, lends him an even stranger look—can dishearten anyone that looks at him. It is very painful to see such a fine chap die piecemeal.—Engels to the Brussels Communist Committee, Communications (No. 2) September 16, 1846.

*Marx-Engels Correspondence, 1844-1853*

Old Horace reminds me at times of Heine who learned much from him, and with respect to politics was just as great a scoundrel. Imagine this honest man throwing the challenge of *vultus instantis tyranni* and crawling on his belly before Augustus. Otherwise the old profligate is at times very lovable. —Engels to Marx, December 21, 1866.

*Marx-Engels Correspondence, 1861-1867*

*MARX on Heine*

I now have three volumes from Heine. Among other things he tells a detailed fib about myself and others coming to console him when the *Augsburg General Gazette* "jumped" upon him for receiving money from Louis Philippe. Good Heine purposely forgets that my intercession in his favor dates to the end of 1843 and could therefore have nothing to do with facts which came out *after* the February revolution of 1848. But let it pass. Tortured by a bad conscience, the old dog has a marvelous memory for all such nasty things—he tries to flatter.—Marx to Engels, Jan. 17, 1855.

*Marx-Engels Correspondence, 1854-1860*

By the way: saw Heine's will! Return to the "living God" and "repenting before God and man" if he has written anything "immoral."—Marx to Engels, May 8, 1856.

*Marx-Engels Correspondence, 1854-1860*

*MARX on Carlton*

Since my arrival here I have seen no newspapers and read nothing generally except *Traits and Stories of the Irish Peasantry,* first volume, by Carlton. It was very difficult to read the first volume, the second I am putting off for better times. These unconnected tales show the life of the Irish peasantry from various angles, written not to be swallowed at once. It is a book, therefore, which everyone may pick up and use to enjoy now one, now another dish. Carlton is neither a good stylist nor a good writer, but his originality consists of the truthfulness of the tales. Being himself an Irish peasant he knows his subject.—Marx to Engels, August 14, 1879.

*Marx-Engels Correspondence, 1868-1883*

*ENGELS on Balzac*

What can one say about a man who upon reading for the first time a novel of Balzac's (and the *Cabinet des Antiques* and *Pere Goriat,* at that) speaks with great and haughty disdain as of something common and banal. —Engels to Marx, October 4, 1852.

*Marx-Engels Correspondence, 1844-1853*

*MARX on Bodenstadt and F. Fisher*

The cancan hero Bodenstadt and the representative of water-closet esthetics Friedrich Fisher are Wilhelm I's Horace and Virgil.—Marx to Engels, March 8, 1882.

*Marx-Engels Correspondence, 1868-1883*

*MARX on Pushkin*

In Pushkin's poem the hero's father can not understand at all that commodities are—money. That money, however, represents commodities, this the Russians have long understood, which is proved not only by the export of grain to England in 1838-1842 but also by the entire history of their commerce.

*KARL MARX—Towards a Critique of Political Economy*

*MARX on Chataubriand*

I have taken up Spanish in my free time. I began with Calderon, with *Magico Prodigioso*—the Catholic Faust—from which Goethe has taken for his *Faust* not only individual bits but entire scenes. In addition I have read in Spanish what to read in the French would have been impossible—*Atala* and *Rene* by Chataubriand and a little of Bernardin de Saint-Pierre. I am now reading *Don Quixote.*—Marx to Engels, May 3, 1954.

*Marx-Engels Correspondence, 1854-1860*

*In the next issue: "Lenin on Tolstoy," a classic analysis in three brief articles*

# ARTICLES and CRITICISM

**N. Bukharin**

## Crisis of Capitalist Civilization and Cultural Problems of the USSR

The proposition that we are living in a period of the greatest historical cataclysms, sharp, most radical changes in the entire life of society, the collapse of all systems of material existence and world philosophy, is now generally admitted. War, Fascism, the breath of new wars, the heroic struggle of the Austrian workers—these are all facts of extremely evil omen to capitalism.

The tenseness of contradictions continually strained in the unbearably close atmosphere of the capitalist world threaten to burst out any minute into some new—and even unexpected, in its concrete form—catastrophy. Through the cinematographically rapid and varied changes of events the basic historical "trends of development" are, however, outlining themselves. This concerns, first of all, the exceptionally intensive process of polarisation of the classes, the great segregation of all social forces and social ideologies, the sharpening of the struggle between Fascism and Communism, as between two class camps, two world philosophies, two civilizations. If one were to define tersely the entire historical situation from this point of view, one could say that great social forces are ranging themselves into military order for pending battles, for battles really final (in a world historical sense) and really decisive. That is why Fascism should be carefully studied in all its aspects, from its economics up to its philosophy. And all this is already here, because the reforming of the bourgeois ranks is proceeding with great rapidity both in the form of so-called "national revolutions" and in the forms of "dry Fascism": there is considerable variety but their singleness of historical tendency and socio-political class meaning are indisputable.

Once, long ago, before a whole series of bourgeois revolutions had taken place, Feudalism brought about the absolute monarchy. Tsars, emperors, kings, in alliance with petty-baronial nobility, supporting themselves on the cities, smashed part of the great feudal barons and—strange as it may seem—thus stayed the historical doom of Feudalism, strengthened it, centralised its basic forces, tying them into the single knot of absolute monarchy which was finally overthrown by the bourgeois revolution. Under entirely different conditions and in an entirely different manner another world-historical paradox is enacted on the stage of history: finance capital and Prussian landlords supporting themselves on the petty-bourgeoisie, part of the intelligentsia, even some sections of duped workers, by "national revolutions," anti-capitalist slogans, preaching "National-Socialism," even sacrificing part of their class colleagues (Jewish capital, "foreign born" generally), strengthen capitalism, or rather try to strengthen it, gathering all forces for its defence and declaring a preventive war against the working class, Com-

munism, Marxism. The "order" of Fascism, the "order" of a military-politico-economic barracks is military capitalist order of the "extraordinary" situation or "state of seige." This is shown by a host of the most important facts: in the tendency to State Capitalism, in the "national," "corporative," etc. dictatorship with the suppression of a number of internal contradictions, the realisation of various "mono" systems: "mono-nation," "mono-party," "mono-state" (total state), etc.; in the organization of mass reserves of men from the petty-bourgeoisie and partly even workers; in the whole "unified" ideology, stretched according to the string of finance capital interests; finally in the creation of a material and spiritual war base. The so-called "national revolutions" of Fascism with their anti-capitalist slogans are in fact a speeded-up reforming of the ranks of the bourgeoisie with the destruction of the parliamentary chaos and the system of competing parties, introducing a unified military discipline along the entire front and organizing mass reserves.

Petty-bourgeois philistines of the "center" will say: but you Communists also do a lot of these things. Or, as the Social-Democratic philistine formulates it: a dictatorship there and a dictatorship here, both "equally disgusting." Or: there is Bolshevism "from the left" and Bolshevism "from the right" but there is no difference in principle between them. These miserable people (who get it from the left and from the right) do not understand that the formal side of the business only ("dictatorship" generally, and that incorrectly understood) does not settle anything: what is important is the class meaning, content—material and spiritual—the dynamics of the developments, their correlation with the general stream of world-historical development; only the "blessed in spirit" may not understand that the dictatorship of the proletariat and the dictatorship of the capitalists are diametrically opposite things with totally different contents and historical significance. Whoever does not understand this—or does not want to understand it—will inevitably be crushed by history and sunk in Lethe as the inglorious refuse of history.

*II*

Fascism, by itself, in its own being, is the product of the general crisis of capitalism as was emphasized by Comrade Stalin. But it follows from this, that while bringing with it something new (reactionarily new) into the system of capitalist relations of life and thought as previously built, the coming of Fascism could not but be accompanied by a profound crisis in some important orientations of the bourgeoisie. It must be said that not all sides of this complex reorientation were equally profound or equally permanent: there is no doubt that much is being changed and will be changed according to the trend in the curve of the economic cycle. Much however, will, of course, remain until the development and conclusion of the class struggle will put forth problems of an entirely different nature.

The sharp turn in the principles of the Fascist bourgeoisie in the field of material civilization and the ideologic fields proximate to it finds its appropriate expression and reflection also on the higher rungs of the ideologic ladder. Here also a rapid reorientation is taking place and customary categories already prove ill adapted to the new situation. We are faced by a profound crisis of bourgeois "spiritual" culture as a whole, which is very indicative. We shall stop here only on some of the most clearly defined manifestations of the crisis:

1. *Crisis of the idea of development.* With disappointment in the progres-

sive advance of capitalism there is a logical tendency to express this disappointment on a universal scale. The first stage is well formulated by Walter Eucken.[1]

Marx thought, he informs us, that "the law of life of capitalism is a continually broadening dynamics and that the end of development also means the end of capitalism itself. . . . Modern political economy has proved that Marx's theoretical arguments with regard to necessary dynamics are false." The second stage of the universalization of the negative attitude to the idea of development we find in the "universalist" O. Spann.[2] In his Theory of Categories the professor informs us of the following shocking truths: "Darwin and Marx," he writes, "have brought our culture great harm by their mechanistic conception of development. Because this conception of development robs every activity of its value since every day is overcome by the morrow. And this gave birth to the utilitarianism, materialism and nihilism which are characteristic of our times." In other words, the only thing valuable is conditional "dynamics," marking time, while successful real struggle and real transformation of the world awakening the pride of man turns him away from God and is therefore sinful. What was once the glory of the progressive bourgeoisie, what Bacon yet, with reserved inner passion, formulated as the flourishing of mankind, the modern somber men of God step on with Fascist boots. The bourgeoisie to whom the way for further development is closed, shouts: Down with development! Down with the very idea of development!

2. *Crisis of the ideology of liberal-Christian "humanism."* The era of liberalism is associated with the pink waters of "normal human relations" raised to the ethical standard of a Kantian categorical imperative. This ideology was, generally speaking, entirely suitable to "honest competition": in both the fields of inner relations and foreign trade, "honesty," "equal rights," "respect," etc., under the loose heading of sufficiently-hypocritical "humaneness' were the official ethical doctrine in connection with real human behavior and the lower classes were formally included in "human." The semi-feudal romantics and philosophers of reaction—to speak of the recent, primarily F. Nietzche—began to undermine this ideology. "Whom do I hate most among the modern rabble? The Socialist riff-raff, apostles of the mob, who undermine the instinct, peace, feeling of satisfaction of the worker in his little existence, who make him envious, teach him vengeance."[3] Socialism is "mostly a symptom that the lower orders get a treatment too human, so that they already taste a happiness forbidden to them with the tips of their tongues. . . . It is not hunger that makes revolutions but the fact that people get their appetites whetted while eating."[4] Modern ideologists of the bourgeoisie, soaring back to the Middle Ages, on wings of their thought, without any stops on the way, have raised the banners of a really zoological hatred to other nations and, as a matter of fact, to the lower classes. Their practice in this respect is well known.

Madame Omer de Gelle, queen of adventuresses, whose memoirs were recently published could have envied the pathologically sadistic passions of Messrs, the Fascists. But it is interesting to note that this finds its open admitted and valued, nay philosophical expression. Mr. Spengler's apology of the beast of prey is well known. It is worth while to recall the tirade expressing the "cultural self-cognition" of this philosopher in praise of the

[1] W. Eucken—*Staatliche Strukturwandlungen und die Krise des Kapitalismus.*
[2] O. Spann—*Kategorienlehre.*
[3] F. Nietzche—*Will to Power.*
[4] *Ibid.*

gorilla like primitive man. Mr. Spengler is charmed: "The soul of this Lonely-one is militant throughout, suspicious, jealous with respect to its power and its acquisitions. It knows the stormy excitement when the knife cuts into the body of the enemy, when the smell of blood and the cry of mortal agony evoke the feeling of triumph. Every real man, even in the cities of late civilizations feels within himself at times the latent fire of this primitive soul." The Fascist dramatist Johst demands priests "that spill blood, blood, blood," and declares: "When I hear the word culture I cock my revolver." Mr. Herbert Blank [1] thinks that Bismarck was worth all the university faculties and that character should be formed at the military barracks: Frederick the Great, the officers' corps, the barracks—there is the ideal trinity of "philosophy." Nationalist madness is rampant: even from the so-called "New Testament" the humane passages are deleted as "Eastern influence": Christian names are taken out of the almanach and substituted by Teutonic ones ("Back to Wotan!" is the slogan). "Race theory"—with analysis of "Blood and sperm" is raised to a "scientific" doctrine, the basis of all policy. Mr. Rosenberg explains even the October Revolution as a victory of "Mongoloid forces" over the "big, stalwart" blonds of Germanic origin.[2] Mad anti-Semitism, incredible disdain of colonial peoples (see Hitler's *Mein Kampf*)—all this has taken the place of the liberal, Christian orientation which, though the clergy rebel, does not prevent the Vatican from giving its blessing to the above "things and processes."

3. *Crisis of the idea of formal equality.* From the remotest corners of reaction, from Josep de Maistre and Company, is dragged the idea of hierarchy, a hierarchy eternal and not a temporary historical phenomenon, as a great universal law of nature (see the old book by Mr. Belyaev, *Philosophy of Inequality.)* Hitler simply declares the rule of the aristocratic idea in nature and society. Mr. Araki, in his "famous" speech: "Problems of Japan in the Era of Siowa" brings amusing philosophic arguments which are supposed to prove the everlasting superiority of the Japanese race (he compares people to various breeds of dogs useful "for different purposes"). The philosopher of Austro-German Fascism, Spann, (also Sociologist, also Economist, etc., etc.) constructs an entire theory of society and the state on the basis of an hierarchic delimitation of "noble" and "ignoble" members of society, returning to ancient biologic theories and theologising them. The idea of hierarchy plays a similar decisive role with the Italian Fascists (see Gentile). One of the most prominent ideologists of Italian Fascism, Rocco, has built up an entire theory of the state and the law ("reflectioned law") which is a thorough theory of enslavement of ignoble castes, feudal slaves of the corporate state at the head of which stand the "elite," "chosen ones," "aureoled" trust officials, bankers, and their spiritual and secular servants. The idea of formal equality has collapsed along the entire front. The flag of the bourgeoisie now bears the inscription Hierarchy (read domination of Capital).

4. *Crisis of rational cognition.* Disappointment in the efficacy of technical progress inevitably called out disappointment also in the powers of rational cognition. This subject is worth detailed treatment. In order to get the flavor of the new principals at once we shall quote the above mentioned H. Blank. In his work he asks plainly: What need has "the German nation of the science of Darwin, Virchow, Du Bois, Raymonde, Heckel, Planck and

[1] See the anthology: *Wir Suchen Deutschland.*
[2] A. Rosenberg: *Future Course of German Foreign Policy.*

Einstein which have torn the ties between the soul and God . . . ?" "We rather want," he answers, "a world philosophy which is reproached with being barbarous, because, be it noted, we consider one of our best fighting calls the one 'back to barbarism!' proclaimed in recent years." Science and rational cognition are exchanged for theological and teleological-metaphysical and mystic ravings, wild 'intuitions,' occultness, telepathy, astrology, etc. The new literature is simply incredible in content: vitalism and Jeans' "mathematical God," these are innocent playthings compared to the scholastic and mystical nonsense which is now being printed in Fascist countries: verily it seems as if the ichthiosaurus, dinosaur and iguanadon have again populated the earth

*So insane is every shout*
*That the torn and shattered tones*
*Rise incapable of sound*
*And can only circle rising and*
*Shriek, shriek, shriek.*

Such is the roughly sketched picture of the cultural crisis in capitalist countries. This picture is not by far complete, it is much "poorer" than reality. Its sub-base is however, clear. This Spengler formulated very well: "To stand to the end on a lost position without any hope, without being saved—that is our duty. To stand to the last like that Roman soldier whose bones were found before the gates of Pompeii and who died because upon the eruption of Vesuvius they forgot to relieve the watch." In this there is greatness, this means the glory of race. This honest end is the one thing a man cannot be robbed of. This is the intimate side of Fascist psychology at its height. The "knight" in a loin cloth of skin does not, however, at all stand watch. He manipulates the club forcefully. But that he cannot come out the victor is proved, by the way, also by our growing Socialist culture.

## *III*

The crisis of capitalist culture sets off very sharply the tremendous growth of material and spiritual culture in the Soviet Union. It is very young yet this culture. Everything is still in a ferment here. But the dynamics of development, its trend, its unfolding inner forces, its beautiful unity, the creative enthusiasm that has captured millions of people—all this makes the Soviet Union the genuine and firm hope of the world proletariat. This hope is so much firmer in that the dictatorship of the proletariat has built the reinforced concrete base of Socialist economy, made world records of speed in construction work, has manifested itself as the greatest creative force and that at a time when "trouble flaps its wings" over the capitalist world and it is covered by the sombre clouds of the crisis.

The development of the culture of Socialist society, progressing in spite of systematic disparagement by the class enemy, raises a number of questions and problems which must be dealt with. Of the tremendous number of such problems we shall choose only some of the fundamental ones, those that are the subject of discussion in the camp of our enemies.

1. *The problem of Socialist machineism.* A host of Fascist and semi-Fascist "scientists" and "theoreticians" attack us for a presumably peculiar to us fetishization of the machine. We are reproached with making an icon out of the machine, that we are "machine worshippers," that we are on the road of creating mechanical and depersonalized people, a "soulless" civiliza-

tion where the human being is only a number, a paragraph, which is the end of everything creative, etc. These attacks base themselves on the criticism of "machineism generally," machines as a bare technical principle. It is, however, easy to see that whatever truth there is in such ideas about machinery this truth refers to the capitalist utilization of the machine exclusively and immediately turns into its direct opposite, that is into a lie, when the question is of the application of the machine in a Socialist society. It is one of the basic paradoxes (one of the fundamental contradictions) of capitalism that the increase of machinery does not help the masses but turns continually greater sections of them into unemployed and hungry workers, that for the worker, the machine in the hands of the capitalist is a means of robbery, that it turns man into a "detail worker," into a soulless and dull (dulled by fatigue, monotony, narrowness of interest in work, etc.) part of the machine, that the dead machine rules over the live being, that man becomes nothing but "a hand" etc. This has all been brilliantly explained by Marx and no one has given us such a fiery criticism of capitalist machineism (with all the credit due to its relative-historical, up to a point, progressiveness which has also not turned into its exact opposite) as did Marx. But Socialism changes all relations radically. And the development of Socialism in our country brings the weightiest and fullest proofs of this. The machine with us plays a tremendous emancipatory role: the seven hour day, lightening of labor, the creation of definite leisure, the increase in productivity of labor, the increase in the material well-being, increase in literary, technical civilization, growth of personality (udarniks—shock workers)—all this is due to the mechanization of the production processes. Instead of unemployment—the shortening of the working day; instead of increasing the rate of exploitation—the increase in well-being; instead of cultural depression and narrowing of personality—the heightening of culture and personality. One has only to compare the previous "mujik" with the present kolkhoz tractor operator to see the entire absurdity of the claims of those capitalist weepers. Under Socialism the machine is a tremendous factor towards the growth of culture. Under capitalism technical improvement makes machines out of workers, i.e., deadens them; under Socialism such improvement humanizes the machine, i.e., makes of it a tool in the hands of the laboring masses.

2. *Modern technique and the classless society.* The fact remains, however, that there has been a sharp increase in the relative weight of technique in the sum total of our social life together with a tremendous leap forward of all branches of culture increasing art, social science and philosophy, on the basis of an altogether exceptional growth of Marxian political education. This, by the way, is expressed in that exceedingly popular slogan of Comrade Stalin's: "Technique—during the period of reconstruction decides everything." But there is in this formulation of Comrade Stalin's both an explanation of this phenomenon and a definite prognosis, i.e., an adumbration of future development. First a few general preliminary remarks. There is no doubt whatever that the technical phases of civilization play an exceptional role with us and that the consciously regulative and organizing apparatus is at present devoting much attention to this. There is a certain "onesidedness" in our educational "economy." If we should take, for instance, our new proletarian intelligentsia, we shall easily discover that the vast proportion of it falls to technicians, engineers, agro-technicians of all sorts, etc. The "humanist" principle (art, philosophy, history, etc.) is far in the background. There is evidently a sharp trend to technical science, invention, to practical organizational work. One may often meet people now excellently informed

in all the branches of the exact sciences but that have no idea whatever of Greek tragedy or of "Young Germany," often having no knowledge of the most basic elementary facts of history. In a word, not a trace has been left of "classical" education. The hero of today is the inventor, the technician, the worker-udarnik. The "cultural style" of the current period, in the narrow sense of the word, is that of distinct technique. It would be entirely wrong, however, to suppose that a onesided development must be characteristic of Socialism as a whole and for the classless Communist society. What is more correct is rather something else: the historically-limited roots of technique consist of the objective tasks of the moment, of the necessity of completing technical reconstruction, mastering the great variety of new technical installations, raising the skill of the city and village workers to the heights required by the new machinery and apparatus. Hence—the enthusiasm for mastering technique. But hence also the great purposefulness of all the active and creative forces of the revolutionary class, the proletariat, the purposefulness directed to mastering technique and inevitably—considering the shortness of historical time—"onesided." There is, as Hegel would have said, a certain "craftiness of historical mind" in this necessary and historically inevitable onesidedness: it is the anthitesis of the old "culture" with its slow ways of doing things, with its slavelike, Asiatic habits of working: with its apologetics for the Russian "dubinushka" proudly compared to the "machine" of the "sly Englishman": with its Oblomovs and its audacious sluggards: with its Solovyevs, Dostoyevskys, Tolstoys, i.e., Aphrodites and Godmothers, pathologic degeneracy and non-resistance, with its famous "Slavic soul" which served as the object of not a few serio-comic West-European "investigations." This sharply defined technicism reflects ideologically the class struggle of the proletariat for the mastery of technique and the operative skill connected with it, finally uprooting the ideological "cultural" relics of the "dubinushka" all along the line. But with the very growth of technical civilization in the country and the widening of all horizons, beginning with the political one, grows also the need for development in a number of other directions. In this respect, the spontaneous movement that sprang up from the midst of the very hearts of the technical schools for the so-called "universities of culture" is very characteristic, by which the growing young technical youth demands certain correctives to be applied to the entire system of their education in terms of "free" lectures on days off in philosophy, history, art, etc. But the same can be said of the much wider social circles, of the proletariat as a whole and the mass of kolkhoz farmers. The development of technique in our country carries within itself the germs of the conquest of its own limitations. The time is coming for the flourishing of science and culture in all their variety.

*IV*

3. *Centralized Socialist economy and the problem of bureaucracy.* If the word technique is to be taken extensively (as the technical side of "one's business" generally and not purely industrial technology) then the technique of management is assuming tremendous significance for us. One must only stop to think of the tremendous apparatus of our government which builds and develops our Socialist economy and manages it in a centralized way. It is a tremendous "machine," such as humanity has never yet seen in any period of its existence. Such an apparatus, in definite historical conditions, has latent in it the danger of bureaucratization: intermediate links

of the apparatus, serving as a "partition wall" between the direct requirements of life and the management, or management by report account from below and orders and directions from above with all passing a number of hands: "office bureaucratic methods," the prevalence of paper formalities over the real vital contents, an insufficiently individualized approach to problems and the bureaucratic stamp, trite, dry, lifeless decisions, faceless official levelling of all questions and so on—these are all evils which undoubtedly exist and against which the Party is conducting a relentless struggle (see the decisions of the 17th Party Congress on questions of organization). For victory in this field of our life there are separate reasons, very important ones. These are mass initiative, the gigantic expansion of the "field of choice" from which come new active proletarians, leaders of technical fields, culture, the art of organization, leaders on the endless number of vital construction points which, spread out in a broad front, take an active part in the administration of our government. That is why the criteria with which that cleverest of bourgeois ideologists—Max Weber—operated are by no means applicable in our respect. He foretold the rise to domination of a bureaucratic machine when "the bureaucratic-monocratic method of management by document" will assure maximum "accuracy, continuity, discipline . . . and reliability" being "technically most rational" and this will in its turn lead to a rule of bureaucracy in the "style of ancient Egypt" when all the rest will become fellahs (see Max Weber: *Wirthschaft und Gesellschaft,* also, *Parlament und Regierung*). As a matter of fact this is the utopian extreme of state capitalism under the dictatorship of finance capital where the transformation of the worker into a "detail worker," a "hand" and the element of "cost of production" grow into the total enslavement of numbered and impersonalized laborers while the agile commercial or industrial individual turns into an official of the magnates of finance capital. The dynamics of development in the Soviet Union, on the contrary, are proceeding in the direction of the greatest development of mass energy and group initiative, the most various forms of and methods of Socialist competition, pushing forward ever wider circles of fresh people of initiative. This is a basic process and is as far from the tendencies to monopolistic ossification and sclerosis which the greatest bourgeois ideologists contemplate with fear and horror as they investigate "modern capitalism, as heaven is from earth. Our Socialist centralization does not deaden human relations, does not freeze them by separating people into frozen castes but assures the ever more rapid development of all potentialities, capabilities and powers latent in the broad masses of the proletariat, active participants in and builders of the proletarian dictatorship.

4. *The problem of hierarchy and the surmounting of it; hierarchy and equality as problems of culture.* Fascism puts forward, as we have seen, the idea of hierarchy as its central unifying idea. The thing however, is not at all to register differences in ability, temperament, talent, etc.—which will always remain. For Fascism this is only a means of more firmly establishing class rule, turn this into an eternal category in order to secure the rule of capital of a definite great power nation over colonial peoples, turning this rule into an eternal mockery and exploitation. Nietzsche wrote in his *Anti-Christ*: "The order of castes, hierarchy, only formulates the highest law of life itself." The most odious feudalists and obscurantists of Tsarist Russia, like the person mentioned by Vera Figner (see her *Engraved Labor* 1932, page 125) who "considered harmful for the people any knowledge except that of a few prayers and the list of members of the Tsar's family,"

held fast to the idea of the permanence of the exploiting ladder of caste with which the ideologists of Fascism are so enchanted. The ex-empress of Russia, that godfearing friend of Rasputin's claimed, after the punitive expeditions of December 1905: "One drop of kingly blood is more valuable than millions of dead serfs" (see *Days Gone By*, No. 1, 1927, page 16). Communism, interpreting equality not in the vulgar utopian-rationalistic sense of the absolute levelling of individuals, where all are alike like sheep in a herd, but in the sense of abolishing classes, abolishing oppression and creating the material conditions for the development of all and everyone (see *Critique of the Gotha Program, Anti-Duhring, State and Revolution* and the report of Comrade Stalin to the 17th Party Congress), sets itself the task of abolishing class society by means of the dictatorship of the proletariat. The entire period of proletarian dictatorship which raises the previously oppressed and culturally crushed masses to the level of real masters of life, breaks up old relations, raises the masses both materially and spiritually and defines the course of further development in an entirely new way. In the lap of the transition period with its rigid state power, its dictatorship of workers, its certain inter-class "hierarchy" evincing itself in the structure of the state apparatus and single authority, mighty trends unfold which will—in the class struggle and the process of cultural maturing of the masses of millions—lead to a special type of relations where the fact of the dying away of the state will bring with it also the abolition of socio-political hierarchy generally. This is a course of development diametrically opposed to the one the messrs Fascists have in mind when they repeat, after Nietzsche, words on the necessity of "pathos of distance," where a mere mortal is only a tongueless stone which must stick forever and a day in the same place. Inequality of talents and the color of hair, passions and temperaments, social role and significance of certain people in the most diverse branches of culture—these are categories of an entirely different order, that do not in the least interfere with the gigantic upward swing generally. We are witnessing a great flourishing in the USSR of mass energy, creative labor based on proletarian democracy, the tremendous growth of mass culture, an entirely new self realization of the masses, an extraordinary urge for further development. Before all this the present order of Fascist capitalism stands like some castled rock pile of the Middle Ages.

*V*

5. *Specialization, physical and brain labor, planning and the problem of integral man.* The tremendous increase of culture and mass culture at that, culture that penetrates into the very thick of the people, is indubitable. But are we not, together with the spread of technical knowledge, together with the growth of specialization and the breaking up of the old "know-it-all," proceeding to further disfigure the working person, to make exceedingly one-sided which the unforgettable Kosma Prutkov[1] has fixed in the aphorism: "a specialist is like a swelling: his fullness is onesided?" Will not development in such a way lead to further alienation and dissociation of professional groups of people among themselves and to wretched "business" which in its turn might lead to a wretched culture altogether? Such an enquiry can be answered with a categorical no. Even now, that is at a time when Com-

[1] Kosma Prutkov—a pen-name under which several authors of clever satirical works wrote in the eighties, so that the pen-name became identified with clever satire.—*Tr.*

munism has not unfolded itself, a period to which an historically inevitable onesidedness is peculiar, which is being overcome in the very process of development, the growth of specialization is not a growth of specialization in its capitalist form. And really, the worker-activist in a plant takes part in the planning of production within the plant, takes part in the making and executing of the plant's technical production and financial plan, thus already stepping out beyond the bounds of his own specialty; but more than that, he must "coordinate" the problems of "his" plant with the problems of the industry as a whole, inter-industry problems, and those of general economic and political significance. Any kolkhoz-activist, brigade commander of any specialized brigade, takes part in working out the plans of the kolkhoz as a whole, in calculating the fundamental elements of the entire process, in its analysis from the technical and economic angle. The technician or engineer, whatever the minor specialty he trained himself for, operates with an immeasurably greater radius of technical interests and principles. The research scientist is now compelled to consider his work a link in the chain of divided social labor where one discipline is connected with another and all serve the technical-economic structure of the growing Socialist society. Thus the tendency is indicated to wipe out the difference between physical and mental labor. This tendency is particularly evident in the very foremost posts of the struggle for Socialism: one can frequently observe at social technical examinations (as, for instance, of workers on the electric operated blooming mill at the Dzerzinsky plant in Kamenskoye) technical skill together with a high theoretical level. Or, take another example, in Kabarda all workers of the administrative type take part in the material labor processes. In general, the mere fact of the creation of a tremendous stratum of a new proletarian intelligentsia speaks for itself. What is characteristic here, is that this proletarian intelligentsia is increasing continually and is drawn from the working class as a whole. The actual "emancipation" of working women, that is the doing away with all differences between male and female labor, is developing as fast as the material base for this develops. The drawing in of women into the process of social labor, from factory to the highest managing apparatus on the one hand, and the growth of social dining halls on the other, produce a radical difference from the Fascist culture of the West where woman has been reduced to the status of a domestic slave and a bed appendage, while the homebuilding "family virtue" of the Middle Ages is amplified by rapidly growing prostitution of both sexes. Thus the basis is laid (in the Soviet Union—*Tr.*) for the creation of the integral personality—the workers of Socialist society. The principle of planning is the objective guarantee against a splitting up and disfiguring onesidedness. With social life growing more and more complex, planning means more and more synthetizing data from the most diverse "practices" and the most diverse scientific fields. On the other hand, the plan is not something dead and passive: it is a system of operative principles on a scientifically elaborated basis. That is why the Socialist planned type of economy inevitably unites knowledge and operative activity, intellect and will. While previously the capitalist market-economy split people, tore man into wretched, disfigured, onesided, narrowly specialized parts, Socialism produces a new integral man, produces him in labor and in the class struggle against all conservative traditions of the slavelike past. This type of the new integral human being—a worker in whom intellect and will, mental and physical labor, theory and practice, knowledge and activity, concrete specialization and universal orientation tend to the highest unity—is arising for the first time in history on

the richest and most diversified material basis. This, of course, leaves its imprint on all phases of social life from "manners" to the "higher" phases of socalled "spiritual culture."

6. *"Society," "individuality" and the problem of creative liberty. Individualism and collectivism.* One may, however, ask: does not the growth of this universal planning principle in itself become a tendency to squelch initiative, originality, creative liberty and joy by "planning" life's functions in the way Schedrin's Ugrum-Burcheev did? We have already met this problem earlier. But let us take a look at it from some new angles. One "explanation" of a fundamental nature is required here. Let us assume some separate individuals, say X, Y and Z, of the old qualified intelligentsia do not "believe" in the Socialist cause, and prefer capitalism in principle so that they see the "perishing of culture" in say even only the liquidation of socalled "classical education." Then all the measures adopted for building Socialism seem to them altogether absurd; and the tasks which fall to their share seem to them coercion and the constraint of the creative spirit generally when, as a matter of fact, it is a conflict of two irreconcilable classes, world-views, orientations. Of course, no "freedom" for counter-revolutionary "measurement" of culture can be proclaimed. But the subjective effect of this process of reining in counter-revolutionary and restorational tendencies in the minds of the persons who harbor those relics of the former order does not and cannot negate the tremendous world historical fact that this freedom has a continually growing and a continually more permanent material basis; that a tremendous process of differentiation of personality is going on (compare for instance, the "grey cattle" of the Tsarist army and the individuality of the Red Army fighter; the drab mass of Mujiks of the past, socially segregated, with the modern process of singling out the udarniks and activists not to speak of the proletarian masses and the coming out of leaders, heroes of labor, udarniks, whose names ring over the entire country). Here the fulfilling of the country's plan is not a rein on "free creation" because there is no fundamental conflict because the realization of "the plan;" it is a personal, inner "principle" with these people, because their free creativeness can develop only on this basis. Hence the whole system of labor relations both in the field of material production and in the field of "spiritual" production is developing on one basis (the building of a classless society, the general line of the Party), which expresses most rationally the interests and aspirations of the tremendous masses of the people. This is what determines to a great extent the collective style of the culture being created and growing. This does not by any means mean the abolition of individuality. But it does mean the abolition of individualism. Here the flourishing of individualities, and on a mass scale at that, is the death of individualism which is a principle that disunites people, separates them, prevents their understanding one another: individuality and being individualistic are different things. True the tendency to bureaucratization and rubber stamping tries to lay its withering hand on our cultural development. But, the powerful fundamental trends cut the fingers of that withering hand and come out the undoubted and categorical victor in the tense mass struggle. Thus the new Socialist culture combines unity and diversity, collectivism and development of individuality, mass cultural enthusiasm and a very diversified process of selection of leaders. And this selection does not proceed as the polarization of a dull, squeezed-into-the-toils, exploited caste on one hand and a parasitic decadent flowering of a capitalist oligarchy on the other, but as a growing ascent of a differentiated and complex collective,

an ascent that does not proceed uniformly throughout but is nevertheless certain, lasting and powerful.

7. *Ethical orientations of Communism.* Realizing the material base of the allsided development of human needs, Socialism and Communism, as the highest phase of society, represent an era of the extraordinary and many-sided development of all human capabilities, talents, passions, which are modelled along the line of the definite peculiarities of style of Socialist culture. Here also, one must keep in mind the trend of the historical process and the peculiarities of the given period of time in the stream of events. Socialism is an economy orientated on the satisfaction of mass needs. Nevertheless we have lived through a phase of development when all forces were concentrated on the production of the means of production; only after this problem had been solved was it possible to go over to the most rapid development of production of the means of consumption. Communism is a world philosophy embracing all the fullness, diversity, richness, many sidedness of material and spiritual life. It is far from the asceticism of the misers of the period of primitive accumulation, from the ideology of eunuchs, castrates, weak-minded devotees, the poor in spirit and the silly-blessed. But it would have been absurd to preach Epicureanism in the period of socalled military Communism and a certain "Spartacism" for that limited period of time was a rational thing as it ensured the solidarity of the fighters. Communism struggles for the greatest fullness of life. The struggle itself, however, requires expenditures and the heroism of this struggle, raising the masses in solidarity, assumes standards breeding disdain of death, the greatest lavishness in spending life if necessary for the achievement of the fundamental aims. The niggardliness and cowardliness of philistinedom are completely unsuitable to Communism. Great ends require effective heroism which unfolds as the "natural" social trait of the great class and its great Party. Communism is the embodiment of all human brotherhood. It's realization however, assumes a victory in the fiercest class struggle, a victory which in its turn presupposes the international solidarity of the proletariat, the most profound revolutionary internationalism on the one hand and their universal class hatred of capitalism on the other. Hence the standards of all human Christian love, including the enemy, standards of non-resistance or running away from life, are considered by Communism as its worst enemies. Such is the dialectics of the ethical standards of Communism based upon a scientific analysis of the process of history.

## *VI*

8. *Rational knowledge and optimism.* Communism is at the present time the only force consistently defending the fundamental progressive tendencies of history beginning with technical development and ending with the more subtle precincts of rational knowledge. While the *fin de siecle* bourgeoisie, disappointed in the powers of reason turned face about towards unreasoned intuition, the mystic "voice of blood" and diverse forms of quackery, rational thought in the USSR, perfecting itself in form, establishes its sway more and more both in breadth and depth. The growth of culture generally and its technical side, particularly the mass scale of and planned application of science to the production process, the rationalization—together with the triumphant progress of the principle of planning, of the basic vital processes of society,—all this strengthens the position of rational thought, exact science, dialectic materialist philosophy which is becoming more and

more the only method of scientific thought altogether. What we have in mind, therefore, is not abstractly-schematic rationalism of the type of the period of learning with its anti-historicism, its immobility of the once and for all time pronounced "rational truths." Here we have in mind the historical process which has no barriers that cannot, in principle be removed. To our culture a creative optimism is characteristic to a high degree, a profound assuredness in the reality of the process which is verified by the powerful practice, the tremendous constructive work, the great transformation of the country. We recognize no "we shall not be able," no "we shall not know" and in Dubois-Raymonde's famous "ignorabimus" we put no stock in whatever. The entire intellectual and emotional tone of our culture is an entirely different one: the compass of the entire historical process points in the other direction.

9. *Europe, America, the USSR.* And now we can answer also the general question as to the whole style of our growing culture compared to what is taking place in Europe and America. Europe and European culture differed from the specifically American one in being more spiritual: this is what gave some theoreticians the cue to distinguish between the "inner" culture of Europe and the "external" civilization of the United States of North America. There is, undoubtedly, a difference in the cultural dimensions: in America, in spite of a mighty technical development there is no such cultural sublety among the ruling classes and their ideologists as was observable in Europe and which was one of the most characteristic traits of European cultural development. On a closer study of the matter, however, we can say that there was also a "spirituality" observable in Europe (and can be observed today) whose roots came from the depths of the feudal economic and cultural heritage (nobility, junkers, metaphysics, theology, scholastics, ritual of the category "holy," etc.). On the other hand, American culture (bourgeois) had to strike new trails independently and hence, perforce to "deepen" questions. The United States knew almost no feudalism. Energetic men of affairs and adventurers who rapidly spread over the country took the cream off European civilization and at once took hold of the very prosaic levers. The classical features of capitalism—including its "cultural" traits—the power of money, anonymity, impersonality, "soullessness," commercial cynicism, together with the feverish urge for profit and just as feverish a businesslikeness, alertness, agility, here developed to the highest degree. A technicism, soulless and watered only by the sap of greed, became one of the cornerstones of this civilization, extending similar European tendencies, putting forward instead of philosophy—street quacks and preachers of a charlatan type and instead of the complicated system of duping the masses—the "yellow press" with its circulation of many millions, boxing and lynch law. The material shell of society, however, technical science, monopolistic organizations of experiment and invention, American capital really raised to head turning heights and it would be foolish not to note this. The latest development as we have seen, evolved new tendencies: oligarchy, "leaders" of the bourgeoisie, state capitalism, military barracks, mysticism, the revival of tendencies of the Middle Ages. In this respect Europe is moving backwards with greater acceleration than America and the "feudal" elements of the farmer's culture are coming to the forefront.

With respect to the types of these cultures, our, Socialist, culture must exert a special force. We are the heirs of everything really progressive. We are, at the same time, the grave diggers of everything outlived and reactionary. The tremendous technical development nurtured by America, its "sci-

entific organization of labor" we, after transforming critically, take over and develop. The feudal ideologic strata of Europe—religion, theology, scholasticism, ritual, philosophic popery, etc. we cut out. But, introducing more and more widely dialectic materialism, we continue the great traditions of science, the scope of theoretical thought, the investigation of large problems—all that in Europe itself is now under the heel of the new Pretorian soldiers. We have destroyed the exploiting basis of culture and created a new base for it, so that the emancipated millions of workers discover gigantic latent forces and lend a totally exceptional acceleration to the historical process as a whole. The soullessness of capitalist machineism we turn into the emancipating role of Socialist machines; for the frittering away and enslavement of the personality of the worker we substitute its flourishing development; for the parasitic nature of capitalist culture we substitute creative labor; the movement backward and decay is replaced by a forward movement along all fronts; seggregation and individualism in life, the state capitalism of the Fascist barracks are replaced by the harmonious plan and the collective nature of our entire culture; the zoologic craze of Fascism is replaced by—international effort and brotherhood of the proletariat; oscillation between city and village is replaced by an integral new Socialist culture; the miserable meowing of mystics is replaced by rational thought; senile pessimism—by the beautiful young optimism of proletarians. Our culture is still very young and carries many a birthmark inherited from the past. But it is growing rapidly and incessantly, penetrates hundreds of millions and, becoming a universal historical emancipatory force, cannot but triumph.

*Translated from the Russian by S. D. Kogan*

**Emi Siao**

# Chinese Revolutionary Literature

*A Survey of the Last Fifteen Years*

Up to now there has been a Chinese wall between Chinese and international literature. Chinese literature is still "Chinese" to many readers, notwithstanding the fact that the Soviet revolution in China has become an important factor in the world revolution. An acquaintance with Chinese revolutionary literature will aid in understanding life in China today, the China of wars, intervention and revolution.

Some historical dates: The last twenty years or so in China have been full of important events: the revolution of 1911; the movement of May 4, 1919; the movement of May 30, 1925; the great Chinese Revolution of 1925-27, its subjugation and the new rise of the revolutionary movement. Finally, the establishing of the Chinese Soviet Republic and the frequent victories of the Chinese Red Army. And now we have in China, the revolution, war and intervention.

All this is, of course, reflected on the literary front. In order to throw some light on the literary situation in China today, it is necessary to make a short survey of the historical stages of the development of Chinese literature.

During two thousand years, from the Ts'in and Hwang dynasty feudal literature in the main did not change. Confucianism dominated it. At the beginning of the 20th century, however, the incursion of foreign capital broke this tradition, putting forward the slogan of enriching the country and strengthening the army. The first representative of bourgeois ideology of that time was Liang-Chi-chao. Bourgeois novels begin to appear alongside the feudal novels of Shou-Hu (*River Pirates, Travels in the West, Dream in the Red Pavilion,* etc.).

The most vivid expression of the national bourgeoisie on the literary front is the movement of the 4th of May, 1919.

*May 4*

Feudal ideology became a hindrance now to the development of the Chinese bourgeoisie. A struggle grew at first against the old literary language "Weng-Yang" which only a small group of the upper intelligentsia had mastered, for a more nearly colloquial language—"Bai-Hua." This movement gradually grew into a struggle against feudal ideology, against old Confucianism. Then, under the influence of the October Revolution and the Leninist views on the national and colonial questions this developed into an active political struggle and took the form of the Peking student demonstration of May 4, 1919. Later, when the proletariat raised its head and rapidly moved forward, the 4th of May went down to its historical grave.

The magazine *Sin-Tsin-Niang* (*New Youth*) put forward the slogan "against feudal, aristocratic literature, for a popular, realistic and social literature." The slogan was, however, purely a formal one. No program for the creation of a new literature existed, while the term "popular" should really

be read "bourgeois"—many slogans like, for instance, "for Bai-hua," against the employment of old historical names and book themes, etc. were only put out formally. While verbally demanding realistic literature Professor Hu-Shi, one of the main fighters for "Bai-hua" frequently wrote: "My heart writes with my lips," a metaphor typical of feudal romanticism. Arguing with all their strength for "pure by objective" analyses of social phenomena, i.e., for naturalism, the adherents of Hu-Shi never defined this naturalism clearly. This indecision was not accidental. While the French romanticism of the thirties of the past century was a militant, optimistic trend, because the French bourgeoisie was at a progressive stage of development, the new Chinese bourgeoisie was itself contradictory, vacillating, compromising, torn by contradictions. In literature this was expressed by a vacillation between naturalism and romanticism. The immature Chinese bourgeoisie found itself facing resisting feudalism, the attacks of international imperialism, the growing movement of the international proletariat, a rift in world capitalism and the threat from the giant—the Chinese proletariat.

What literary work did the period of the 4th of May produce? One must admit the literature of this period was very poor indeed. However, since the 4th of May there is a continuous growth of bourgeois literature, although there isn't a particle of optimism or firmness in it, only sadness, vacillation and decadence.

The only exception, perhaps the only militant book of this period is Lu-Sin's *The Cry*. This book played an historic role in the struggle against feudalism and was of tremendous influence in the further development of this struggle. It would be no exaggeration to say that this book has not lost its revolutionary significance to this very day. By stretching a point one could also mention Kan-Bai-Tsin's book *The Herb* as having some militant traits of bourgeois romanticism, but after May 4 this "Herb" rapidly dries out.

As far as the collection of Hu-Shi's poems *Attempts* is concerned, written in the new style, they are a mirror of Hu-Shi himself in which a glint of the bourgeoisie was reflected, but was quickly extinguished.

During this period there also appeared not a few satirical literary works criticizing the bourgeoisie and glorifying the workers (mostly poetry). The criticism of the bourgeoisie from its own ranks is usual and did not even attract any attention as it represented no danger to it; this is the so-called freedom of thought of the petty bourgeois intelligentsia.

*From the 4th of May (1919) to the 30th of May (1925).*

The 4th of May was defeated. The feudal militaristic government exists as before. A new ideology is not developed at once. For a few years from the "4th of May" 1919 to the "30th of May" 1925, there was a certain stagnation and uncertainty on the Chinese ideological front. And this condition was, of course, reflected in literature.

"Wen-Sue-Yangtsuguy" (Society for the Study of Literature) was the first literary organization in Shanghai. Their demand "literature of blood and tears" was directed against the slogan "art for art's sake." But this was a petty bourgeois intelligentsia with a very vague idea of the "blood and tears" of the oppressed, and they had very little influence on the young generation, the only consumers of literature at that time. In addition the society produced nothing but critical articles expressing their literary views. To counterbalance it a new society arose—"Creation." The members of "Creation"

studied in Japan and were closely connected with Japanese decadence, but far from the mass movement at home.

In 1924, after ten years of existence of the "Creation" society there began a differentiation which drew part of its members closer to the proletariat, giving rise to the slogan of a "literature of the fourth class." This group of writers were the pioneers of revolutionary proletarian literature in China. The other part of the membership of "Creation" went over to reaction.

At first the most prominent representatives of the "Creation" society were Go-Majo, U-Dafu, Chen-fan-u and Chjan Tsi-pin. On May 1, 1920 they began publication of their monthly magazine *Creation.*

During this period much foreign literature of the most diverse tendencies was translated. Here were impressionism and decadence, naturalism and realism, expressionism, in a word—chaos. Decadence was most popular. European decadence assumed a characteristic slant in Chinese literature. Go-Majo's books for instance, his *A Woman's Soul, Fallen Leaves,* etc., bear evident traces of decadence. Even the illustrations to the books were under its strongest influence.

But, while under conditions prevailing in Europe decadence corresponded to a period of decline, under conditions prevailing in China the peculiar angle decadence assumed was of revolutionary significance and played a revolutionary role with respect to the old feudal literature.

*Go-Majo*

Go-Majo is a talented writer of poetry, prose, drama, essays and an excellent translator of foreign literature. His literary activity falls into three periods.

The period from the "4th of May" 1919 to the movement of the "30th of May" 1925: During this period he stood for romanticism and decadence. The book *A Woman's Soul* depicts the formation of the bourgeoisie. In poetry he was an urbanist. In his play *Three Rebellious Women* he exposed feudalism and urged women to rebel against Confucianism.

The second period of Go-Majo's literary activity covered the entire period of the Great Chinese Revolution. During this period he wrote a number of essays and took part in the revolutionary movement by working on the staff of the then national revolutionary army. After Chang-Kai-shek's treachery to the revolution Go-Majo wrote a sharp satirical proclamation against Chang-Kai-shek which he published in the urban press, upon which Chang-Kai-shek issued orders for his arrest and he emigrated from China.

Another brilliant representative of "Creation"—U-Dafu—was also an exponent of romanticism and decadence. A great craftsman, U-Dafu at one time put forward the slogan "suffering proletarians of all countries must unite" . . . without ceasing to be the sombre singer of pessimism. It is held in China that if Go-Majo is the representative of the foremost part of the young generation of the "4th of May"—U-Dafu represents the rest of them.

The Chinese proletariat and poor peasantry played a decisive role in the national emancipation struggle of 1925-27. Among the intelligentsia the differentiation continued. This also told on "Creation." Go-Majo came continually closer to the proletariat. U-Dafu, on the contrary, capitulating, left the group and began to come out against it. The magazine *Creation* became so revolutionary that it was prohibited by the Kuomintang on February 9, 1929. Since then there has been a strong growth of revolutionary literature.

As far back as 1926 Go-Majo agitated for the creation of a class literature

of the proletariat. He wrote: every class has its singer. Our literature must be permeated by the proletarian spirit. "You," Go-Majo addressed the young writers, "must go to the masses, the army, the factory, into the thick of the revolutionary ranks. We must achieve the creation of such a literature as will reflect the hopes of the proletariat, be a realistic literature of the proletariat."

*Tsian-Guan-Chi*

After Go-Majo another adherent of revolutionary literature appeared in China in the person of the poet and prose writer Tsian-Guan-Chi. From 1922 to 1924 Tsian studied in Moscow. On returning to China, Tsian began his propaganda for the creation of a revolutionary literature.

In Moscow Tsian wrote on Lenin, on October, on the Pioneers—all this was later published in China in a collection of poems *New Dream.* In China he wrote a book of poems *Woe to You, China!* Of his stories the best are "Young Wanderer," "On the River Yalu" (Korea), "Party of Short Pants," etc.

Tsian's further development showed that having risen on the wave of the revolution to truly great heights he was able to depict the best aspirations not only of the bourgeoisie but also of the proletariat. He gave to Chinese literature the figure of Lenin, depicted the Soviet Union. Later Tsian-Guan-Chi left the revolution. For refusing to take part in practical work entrusted to him by the Party and for depicting the life of Whiteguards in China in a light giving a wrong conception of the Soviet Union he was expelled from the Party.

In 1931 he died of tuberculosis.

*For a Revolutionary Proletarian Literature*

Since the Spring of 1928 a number of new literary organizations sprang up: the society "Sun," "We," and others which published their own magazines—*Sun, Literary Critic,* etc. These organizations and magazines came to one common slogan: "For a revolutionary proletarian literature." They built up the theory of revolutionary and proletarian literature. In 1929 the literary movement was firmly established. A number of new magazines were published: *New Trend* published by the society "Sun" was prohibited after the third number, then renamed *Tofanje* (*Pioneer*). The magazine *In-Tsin* (*Energy*) conducted an ideological struggle against bourgeois literary theory. There was the weekly *Hai-Iun* (*Wind from the Sea*) which was also prohibited after 17 numbers. All these magazines called the toiling masses to the struggle against reaction and printed much international and especially Soviet literature. During this period there were translated and published in separate volumes: Sinclair's *Oil, Jimmy Higgins, King Coal,* etc.; Jack London's *Iron Heel*; Gorky's *Mother;* Serafimovich's *Iron Stream;* Gladkov's *Cement;* Libedinsky's *Week*; Sholokhov's *Quiet Don;* Ognyev's *Diary of A Communist School Boy;* Furmanov's *Mutiny*; Lavrenev's *Forty-first;* and many others. At the same time translations were made of Marx's *Capital* vol. 1, and individual works of Marx, Engels, Lenin, Plekhanov, Lunacharsky, etc. This all had a great influence on writing circles. Chinese literature now watches Soviet literature with tremendous interest.

Chinese revolutionary literature grew steadily. There appeared Go-Majo's *1911* and *My Childhood,* Gun-Binlu's *Miner,* Dai-Pin-wan's *Night in the City,* Hun Lin-fey's *Home,* etc. Even bourgeois magazines and conservative pub-

lishers for commercial reasons were compelled to take up the writings of revolutionary authors because of their circulation.

At this time the magazine *Tofanje,* illegal since 1930, appeared; the magazines *Danjun-Weng-i* (*Mass Literature*), the organ *Ishu-Tsuishe* (of the Society of Artistic Drama), which was really the successor of *Creation* but with new forces. In addition there was the magazine *Mun-ya* (*Embryo*) in which the translation of Fadeyev's *Debacle* was published and later issued in book form; the magazine *Partisan* the nature of which corresponded to the title; the magazine *Niang-Go* (*Southern Country*) continued to be published under the editorship of the well known dramatist Tiang-Hang; the magazine *Ishu* (*Art*), later renamed *Siren,* etc.

What was characteristic for the end of 1930 was the tendency for the union of all forces to common work. The Shanghai club of proletarian art and literature reorganized itself into the Society of Proletarian Art and Literature—Hammer and Sickle.

The by-laws of this society are interesting. Here are some excerpts:

"The aim of the society is—the study of proletarian literature and art, the study of the life and manners of the working class, the furthering of proletarian literature among the masses and the bringing up of new proletarian writers from working class circles.

"Membership in the society is open to anyone wishing to conduct in practice the propaganda of Marxian literature among the masses.

"Structure of the society:

"The society consists of circles of five members in each. At the head of each circle there is an elected elder. Every three months a general meeting of members by districts is called.

"For new members short courses in Marxism-Leninism are instituted.

"The literary work of members of the society is published in the workers' paper *Shanghai-Bao* in the 'Club' department and also in separate brochures.

"Preference is given to workers from the shops in the applications of new members. Members of the society must keep close contact with the masses and work in some labor organization, go to work at some factory wherever possible and there, in the process of the class struggle, hand in hand with the working class, forge their world philosophy."

### *Organization of the League of Left Writers in China*

In the Spring of 1930 there was a preliminary meeting uniting all left literary groups at which the work done until then was summarized and the problems facing the contemporary literary movement indicated.

Three fundamental tasks of the new literature were formulated: a relentless attack on the old society and all its ideologic manifestations; propaganda of the idea of the new society and work for its most speedy realization; working out the theory of the new literature.

The League of Left Writers of China having completed its organizational work announced its existence on March 20, 1930. It is now the only left, literary organization of revolutionary minded writers in China.

On the initiative of the League the All China Confederation of Left Culture was created in September 1930, which unites workers in all fields of art. At a unity meeting the following organizations were represented:

The League of Left Writers
The League of Left Artists
The League of Left Theatrical Workers

The League of Sociologists
The Union of Book Store Clerks
The Society for Research in Social Problems
The Literary Research Society

At this meeting the main question was of a common struggle for a new revolutionary culture, against the false, counter-revolutionary bourgeois landlord culture and against the White terror.

The Kuomintang imperialists are fully aware of the power of this left cultural movement and are trying to crush it by the severest measures, not stopping at mass murder. At present the movement has been driven underground.

*Lu-Sin*

A great victory of the League of Left Writers was the attraction to its ranks of a number of great artists, their enlistment in the struggle of the proletariat and poor peasants against international imperialism and its agency the Kuomintang, and for a Soviet government for all of China.

One of the greatest and most authoritative of Chinese writers, Comrade Lu-Sin, called the Chinese Chekov, for a long time doubted the necessity of creating a proletarian literature in China and during the entire revolution of 1925-27 kept aloof from the revolutionary movement. At the beginning of 1930 he came completely over to the proletarian side and became one of the founders and leaders of the League of Left Writers of China. Notwithstanding the persecution and hatred of the Kuomintang which have driven Lu-Sin underground he enjoys the same respect and authority in China as, say, Maxim Gorky in the USSR.

His famous book *Truthful History of the Life of A-Q,* translated now into English, Japanese, French and Russian, vividly and concisely describes the life and psychology of the Chinese peasantry and shook all China in the period of the "4th of May" 1919.

Lu-Sin has written more than 20 militant, artistic creative works, mostly stories. Here he appears as leader of the modernization of Chinese style and the pioneer of the small form—the militant short story, which previously did not exist in China.

Lu-Sin was the leader of a group in the magazine *Ui-Sy* (*Verbal Thread*), editor of the revolutionary literary magazines *Mon-Ya* (*Embryo*), *Partisan, Crossroads,* etc.

During 15 years Lu-Sin has written numberless militant satirical feuilletons. These are publicistic articles and notes reflecting every current event of importance in the life of Chinese society and reflecting the whole process of the struggle on the literary front for this period.

*The League of Left Writers Grows Stronger*

Only two months after its organization, on the 29th of April, 1930, the League called its first conference at which a number of decisions were arrived at. The principal ones were: a program for the publication of a weekly organ; to establish connections with Japanese organizations of proletarian literature; to take part in the First Conference of Chinese Soviets; to struggle against liquidational theories in literature; to organize meetings, lectures and

discussions on literary subjects for the broad masses. Thirty members of the League took part in this conference.

A representative of the League of Left Writers took part in the Second International Conference of Revolutionary Writers in Kharkov. At the same time the League became a member of the IURW.

The organization of the League called out great alarm among the ruling classes. Along with the severest repressive measures against the League—confiscation of books, magazines, arrest and execution of revolutionary writers, the Kuomintang subsidized the so-called "national" literature. The League had to conduct a relentless struggle against this "literature."

After strengthening its central organization, the League unfolded its activities in the provinces. A number of branches of the League were organized in the North and Central regions of China and Japan. Under the influence of the League various literary organizations of young writers arose in many places.

The League of Left Writers did a great deal to create a mass literature. Within the League itself a sector of mass literature was organized.

In November 1931, there were already 12 literary circles in Shanghai with a membership of about 200.

The mass sector works to develop worker-correspondents. In 1932 there were in Shanghai four workers' circles with from 20 to 40 workers in each. Ten members of each produced worker-correspondence regularly. Wall newspapers were organized at factories. In 1932 there were such wall newspapers in Shanghai in 12 enterprises and they were issued from two to three times a week, and occasionally daily. The wall newspaper played a great role in the bus strike of 1932 in Shanghai.

During the campaign of protest against the Japanese occupation of Manchuria, the sector of mass literature issued a number of agitational-artistic productions—brochures, leaflets, songs, poems,—which are widely read and are convenient for distribution. All this was written in the form of folk songs, dear to the Chinese worker.

For the anti-war campaign on August 1 the League organized a competition on an anti-war work and a number of meetings where revolutionary writers spoke, conducted a symposium among Chinese writers on the subject: "What will be our position in the case of an attack of Japanese imperialism on the USSR?"

The League took an active part in the anti-war conference which took place in Shanghai underground in 1933, attended by the noted French writer Vaillant-Couturier.

The authority of the League among student youth and the intelligentsia grew steadily. The foremost intellectuals went to the left. In this the publications of the League played a great role. In 1931 the League created its central organ *Outpost,* changing the name with the second number to *The Literary Leader.* Altogether nine numbers were issued. The magazine paid much attention to anti-imperialist mass literature and led a firm struggle against the so-called "nationalist" literature, calling it a "literature of executioners."

The examples of mass literature printed in the magazine deserve attention. Some of them—songs, folk songs in form and anti-imperialist in content, songs against the Japanese occupation of Manchuria. These songs are interesting not only for their popularity but also for their having two texts differing neither in content nor in form but in the dialect—one text in the Shanghai dialect, the other in the Northern one. This bears witness to the

fact that the League of Left Writers seeks and finds the way to the masses of worker and peasant readers.

*The Literary Leader* was suppressed by the Kuomintang.

*On The Literary Front 1931-32*

In 1931-32 several more revolutionary literary magazines and newspapers appeared in China.

*Crossroads*—a satirical newspaper with sharp feuilletons, songs and serious critical essays. This newspaper was very quickly suppressed.

*Literary and Art News*—a weekly giving much information on questions of revolutionary literature and art. It was usually well illustrated with photographs and drawings. In June 1932 the weekly was confiscated and soon after that one of its editors, Comrade Lou Shi-yi was kidnapped by the Chang-Kai-shek "blue shirts."

On June 20, 1932 the first number of *Weng-Sue-Uebao* (*Literary Monthly*) appeared. After only four or five numbers the magazine was suppressed.

*Bei-Dow* (*Great Bear*) was a solid monthly magazine devoted to art and literature whose editor was the highly talented woman writer, Comrade Ting-Ling. The first number appeared on September 20, 1931 and in September 1932 the magazine was prohibited.

The general situation on the literary front in 1931-32 was as follows:

The fascist "nationalist" literature was bankrupt.

Vacillating writers published essays on subjects like: "Study is Fruitless," "Repent by Study"—reflecting their lost feeling and the impasse to which they had come. They did not produce a single notable work during these years.

Revolutionary literature grew in spite of the fiercest White terror, confiscation of books and magazines, arrests and executions of writers.

It was natural to expect anti-imperialist and especially anti-Japanese literature during these years. In this respect the "nationalist" scribblers gave absolutely nothing except formal declarations and some empty verses, while the chauvinist writers followed the line of the Nanking government of "non-resistence to the Japanese," and against the principal enemies of the country . . . the "Communists and Russia!" Hou-Yao's book *Death of Hang Guandi* describing the events on the Chinese Far Eastern Railroad is a vivid example of such literature.

The revolutionary writers produced many anti-imperialist plays: Tiang-Hang wrote *Alarm, Sao-She, Seven Women Storming, Friend at War,* etc. Lou She-yi wrote *Life's Way, SOS,* etc. These plays were produced in all large cities in China attracting great attention and calling out great enthusiasm in the public. Appearances of theatrical troupes on the streets were organized.

To this literature should be added the work of the so-called "fellow travelers": Chan-Tian-yi, Mo-Shi-yin, Shi-Chu-tsun. They produced a number of things describing the life of the petty bourgeoisie, soldiers, peasants, clerks and workers. Unfortunately they wrote only from the point of view of an onlooker.

The book of the well known journalist Hu-Yudji, *Moscow Impressions* must be mentioned. This book gives an artistic description of what the author saw in Moscow in seven days and gives a fair idea of the Socialist construction going on in the Soviet Union. The book is now in its seventh edition.

In the revolutionary art and literary magazines much valuable work appeared: Short Stories by Ting-Ling—*Water, That Night,* on the shooting of some Communists, fragments of Mao-Dun's novel *Midnight,* short stories and essays by Low-Shi-yi, *Unemployed in Tokyo,* by E-Lin, *In the Village,* (on the Shanghai war), Chjen Botsi, *The Spy, News, General Retreat,* (on the Manchurian events), etc.

The appearance of translations of Fadeyev's *Debacle* and Serafimovich's *Iron Stream* produced a tremendous impression in China.

*April 23, 1932*

The historical decision of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union of April 23, 1932 on the reorganization of literary and art organizations was of world significance. The old methods of work of the IURW were the methods of RAPP and this was reflected in all sections of the IURW. After the liquidation of RAPP there was a radical change also in the policies of the IURW.

During the summer of 1932 the Chinese League of Left Writers, after looking over its work, began to readjust itself.

As a result of a persistent struggle for obtaining the right of a legal existence the influence of the League on the literary front in China became much greater. The works of the members of the League penetrated into many bourgeois magazines, to the literary pages of general magazines and even into the daily newspapers. These works vividly reflected the proletarian world philosophy and exposed the cruelty and deceit of the ruling classes and their inevitable doom, hinting thus to the masses how to find the way out.

With the winning of legality began a real struggle against feudal literature. Among the students and the intelligentsia the League gradually displaced the influence of White literature. Members of the League became permanent contributors to various magazines.

The radicalization of the masses of readers compelled not only the colorless commercial magazines to acquire a somewhat "left" bent, but even the official White magazines (issued by yellow writers bought by the Kuomintang) tried to fool readers by pseudo-left articles. Here the Trotskyite and anarchist writers joined hands with the White magazines. The "New Moon" group led by Professor Hu-Shi, also joined them. However, although the Kuomintang spent large sums on general and literary magazines, these found no readers. For instance the *Literary and Art Monthly,* a magazine published under the immediate auspices of the Central Committee of the Kuomintang still comes out regularly but no one reads it.

The group of Wong-Tsing-Weh, utilizing several lumpen-literateurs, began publication of several art and literary periodicals in Shanghai; they put out the slogan "for a democratic literature," and hid behind the sign "Art above all," trying to deceive the reading public by all available means. Their efforts also came to nothing.

The colorless magazine *Modern Age,* stands on a liberal platform. But it has to obtain the work of League members in order to attract readers.

This does not mean, however, that the ruling classes of China have let the literary arms slip entirely from their hands. Not at all! Orthodox art and literature of the Chinese ruling classes, i.e., feudal literature, still has tremendous influence both among the city population and among the peasantry.

One sort of feudal literature—the so-called "Saturday literature" is still more popular among the city population than any other sort of literature.

This literature consists mainly of "illustrated short stories." Booths where these illustrated books can be obtained are widely spread in all corners of every Chinese city and even penetrate to distant villages. In comparison to this literature the mass literature of the League is much weaker. An underestimation of the power and influence of feudal literature by the League of Left Writers—is a great mistake of the past.

The main task of the League, therefore, in its campaign for the growth of the worker and peasant correspondent movement is the emancipation of the laboring masses from the poison of feudal literature.

*What 1933 Brought:*

Mao-Tun's novel *Midnight*; a collection of short stories by Mao-Tun—*Spring Silk Worms*; Ting-Ling's book *Mother*; a collection of short stories by Ting Ling *Banquet*; a collection of the writings of the young author Sha-Tina *Line Beyond the Law*; Li Hweh-ing's book *Wangbao-Shang*; a collection of short stories by Chan-Tiang-yi—*Bee,* and his novel *One Year;* a collection of short stories by Pu-nusy Short Shadow; three volumes of Lu Sin's collected works.

The arrival of Bernard Shaw in China was utilized for anti-imperialist propaganda. The League issued a brochure *Bernard Shaw in Shanghai.*

In 1933 two collections of short stories by Soviet writers were published under the editorship of Comrade Lu-Sin who also translated most of them.

*Mao-Tun*

Mao-Tun is one of the most prominent writers of modern China. After completing a three year course at the Peking University, together with Chen-Chow, and organizing the "Society for the Study of Literature," he was for some years editor of the literary magazine *Short Story Monthly,* published by the Commercial Press, where he spoke for naturalism in literature. Since 1924 Mao-Tun has been in the revolutionary movement and in 1926 he was a political worker at Uhan in the national revolutionary army.

In the Fall of 1927, that is, after the defeat of the Great Chinese Revolution, Mao-Tun began work on his *Three Books of Life's Experience (Vacillation, Disappearance, and Refound*) depicting in part the events of 1926-1927, which at once put Mao-Tun in the ranks of the greatest Chinese writers. Then Mao-Tun wrote his unfinished novel *Rainbow,* two books of short stories, *Wild Roses* and *Sumun,* the book *Three Persons, The Road,* and in 1932 he published his best novel *Tsan-E* (*Midnight*). This last book, on the background of the civil war, deals with Chang-Kai-shek, the Northern generals, the competition between Chinese capitalists and industrialists and between Chinese and foreign capital, a strike of the workers in a silk mill and the role of the Communist nucleus in it, a peasant uprising and the rout of the landlord in the villages. The book is distinguished for its great power, high artistic craftsmanship and is considered the greatest achievement in Chinese literature for the past ten to fifteen years. Another work of Mao-Dun's—the story *Spring Silk* describing the effects of the crisis on the peasant in the distant villages is also of great artistic value and has been filmed in Shanghai. (This story appeared in *International Literature*, No. 4, 1934—*Editor.*) *Fall Harvest* is the sequel. There the old peasant dying realizes that his son, who leads a peasant uprising is right.

*Ting-Ling*

The young, most talented woman writer Ting-Ling was kidnapped by the "blue shirts" at the foreign concession in Shanghai, handed over to the Kuomintang and after the cruellest torture was secretly done to death by the Kuomintang executioners in the summer of 1933. She was then only 26 years old.

Ting-Ling was one of a large ruined family. In 1924 she entered the University of Shanghai which played a leading role in the movement of May 30th. Ting-Ling studied literature at the University, but left it after one year.

She began publishing her work in the second half of 1927. Her first story, *The Dream*, appeared in the *Short Story Monthly*. After this Ting-Ling wrote *Sophie's Diary* which also appeared in that magazine. *Sophie's Diary* is an expression of the women's rebellion against the feudal yoke.

Then Ting-Ling wrote a novel *Weh-Hei* (1929-1930) on the then fashionable theme of "Love and Revolution" which shows an advance in Ting-Ling's ideological development. The subject of Ting-Ling's next book *Shanghai, Spring of 1930* is the mass movement in Shanghai in which the heroine of the book solves the conflict between "revolution and love" in favor of revolution. This book is similar to *Weh-Hei* except that Ting-Ling's position in describing the foremost fighters became clearer. Soon after this Ting-Ling wrote her *Village of Tiang,* a description of the cruel class war in the village. The heroine—the daughter of a landlord—becomes a Bolshevik. From *The Dream* to the *Village of Tiang* Ting-Ling went a long way from individualism, anarchism, to the worker and peasant masses, to the new society.

Up to that moment Ting-Ling did not become a member of the League of Left Writers although her husband Hu-Eping was already active in the League. Ting-Ling answered the execution of Hu-Eping and four other revolutionary writers by going completely left and took the bloody road of the five revolutionary writers.

Beginning with the summer of 1931 Ting-Ling became one of the most active fighters of the League—a member of its executive committee. At that time all left magazines had been suppressed. The League issued a new, semi-legal magazine, its only organ, *Weh-Dow (Great Bear)* whose editor was Comrade Ting-Ling. Her important book *Water* appeared in this magazine. *Water* shows the further development of Ting-Ling as a revolutionary writer. The murder of Ting-Ling is a great loss to Chinese revolutionary literature.

*China's Literary Rostrum After the Shanghai War*

U-Dafu. If previously U-Dafu represented individualism, decadence, which still was of the nature of protest against feudal and bourgeois culture, his work now shows a total capitulation to feudalism (thus, for instance, U-Dafu writes sympathetically of the village gentry addicted to opium).

E-Lin-Dung. City writer. His book *Girls of the Age* deals with the psychology of the petty bourgeoisie.

Ba-Tsin writes of the transition of the intelligentsia from sadness and grief to revolution. Psychological studies.

The "New Moon" group. After the death of the "sainted" poet Suy-Chjimo, Liang-Shi-tsu and Hu-Shi are its main leaders.

The special literary page of the newspaper *Shenbo (Free Speech).* Prints patriotic historical novels and poetry in ancient classical style.

The literature of "three principles" or the "Sun-Yat-Sen" literature is the literary policy of the Kuomintang. Announcing a competition it proposed six conditions, the fulfilling of which assures a prize. The main condition is: develop the national spirit, show the glory of China's past history. The competition brought no results.

The special page of the newspaper *Mingoje-bao* prints "anti-imperialist" stuff by the "reorganizationists" (the Wang-Tsin-Weh group).

The "New Era" group, headed by the scribbler Tsian-Tsing-Ko. The magazine and individual publications of this group show its conservativeness and the extremely low level of its ideology and literature. Literally not a single significant work.

*The Revolutionary Writers and the Theatre*

The work of the revolutionary writers in the field of the theatre and the movies deserves special note. The theatre and the movies are especially significant for China in view of the illiteracy of the majority of the workers and peasants.

The first revolutionary play was *A-Chen* by the dramatist Gun-Binlu. *A-Chen* reveals life in the modern Kuomintang village.

In the past the League of Left Theatrical Workers limited its work to "Blue Blouse" appearances. The performances of the left theatre only began to be a factor among the broad public in 1933. In the Spring of 1933 Shanghai bourgeois circles inaugurated a month of grand concerts the proceeds of which went to aid the refugees from the North East province (Manchuria). The dramatic parts of these concerts consisted almost completely of plays sponsored by the League of Left Theatrical Workers. The plays of Tiang-Hani *Friend at War* (on the subject of Japanese intervention in Manchuria on September 18, 1931) were performed many times. The performances attracted tens of thousands of people who always responded warmly to these plays.

That year S. Tretyakov's play *Roar China!* was performed in Shanghai. The play was twice translated into Chinese, but up to now it has been played only in Canton in 1930, and in Shanghai in 1933 where it made a big furore, and the name of the play became a favorite title for magazine articles.

*The Cinema*

Lately, a good many of our things have been filmed. The work of Comrade Tiang-Hani and others in this field has been very successful. The oldest and largest movie company "Min-Sin" ("Star") used to issue exclusively feudal, religious or adventure films, but this year they began to accept ideologically more progressive scenarios. The reason is, of course, the same as in the commercial magazines—the attempt to attract a wider audience. The most important film of the "Min Sin" company this year is the picture *Stormy Stream* on the subject of the flood in China of 1931. The scenario for this picture was written by a member of the League. Recently Mao-Dun's story *Spring Silk* was made into a scenario and filmed by the "Min-Sin" Company. Lu-Sin's *Truthful History of the Life of A-Q* is scheduled to be filmed soon.

Another movie company "Liang-Hua" has issued a film on a scenario based on Tiang-Hani's *Three Modern Girls* which attracted much attention.

This year this company has filmed *City Night* and *City Morning*. Both pictures tell of the evils of cities putting forward the reformist slogan "back to the village." The League of Left Writers and the League of Left Theatrical Workers are offering strong resistance to such propaganda.

The talented story by Low-Shi-yi *Salt Field,* published in the magazine *Pioneer* in 1929 and describing the uprising of the workers in the salt fields, the exploitation of the workers and peasants by the landlords, owners of the salt fields and their Kuomintang government, has been made into a film. Low-Shi-yi's play *SOS* (on the theme of anti-imperialism) has been produced by the workers of the radio-broadcasting station.

**A. B. Magil**

# They Are Ours!

(*On the Scottsporo Boys*)

*They are ours; we claim them and we claim*
*what they have suffered, upon our backs is laid*
*the stone of their dark days, and we have made*
*their name our name.*

*These are the nine black boys, the stubborn fruit*
*sprung from a sour soil manured with blood;*
*these are the lives covered with lynchers' mud,*
*withered at the root.*

*But withered root becomes seed, and death becomes birth,*
*and oover all the Southland, on every farm*
*the nine black boys are planted, rise ripe and warm*
*through the bleeding earth.*

*You who have lynched three years of their lives, who have taken*
*the sun from their sky and buried their young strength away,*
*see: on our shoulders we bear a new sun, a new day*
*that shall not darken.*

*Though you have drawn your noose around their throat,*
*we come, the millions that do not beg or haggle,*
*to bind them to us with the flesh of struggle*
*and revolt.*

**Paul Nizan**

# French Literature Today

*An Account of both Bourgeois and Revolutionary Trends*

France watched from afar the ruin, the catastrophies, the conflicts, the revolts which beset other nations of the earth. She was spared. Business was booming. Incomes continued. There was, of course, some unemployment,—lazy people, they were called. The subscribers to the *Temps* read in a corner of their paper the lists of failures:—adventurers, incompetents. The ladies of fashion went to the Bois. The writers wrote only for them. There were some people who foresaw less tranquil times—they were Communists, enemies of the state. And also a few intellectuals.

France experienced the world crisis as something other than a tragic event which wouldn't ever directly concern her. She had long remained sleeping in her vanity, and so she had a rude awakening. The atmosphere changed more suddenly in France than anywhere else. France experienced fear. That is to say, France in the sense of those who rule France—the French bourgeoisie. Every activity of bourgeois France bespeaks this fear. What a host of things, suddenly threatened, must be rescued! Capitalism itself is at stake! They all take a hand. It's the united front of the owning classes of France. Democracy, the crowning jewel of France, disintergrates with unheard of rapidity. The bankers lay their plans. The statesmen support the plans of the bankers. The industrialists seek ways to rescue France at the expense of the workers. Since the workers militantly make known their will to resist, their will to victory, these plans are Fascist plans. The intellectuals do not remain neutral. It's a question of knowing whether capitalism will succeed in its new plans or whether the proletariat will defeat the plans of capitalism. It's an issue of force. The intellectuals hesitate. Either capitalism or the proletariat. Fascism or Communism. Events have moved so swiftly that even before they have had time to think about it they find themselves faced with this alternative. Since most of them have been the parasites of the bourgeoisie, since they have lived off the little favors which the bourgeoisie grants, since they are grateful for the sake of their stomachs, since above all they tremble to see the end of this pleasant life of parasitism, to see the end of this little bourgeois world where, in the long run, despite romantic declarations, they have made a place for themselves, they almost all choose the side of the bourgeoisie. The positions became clarified. Even the blindest will understand the meaning and the consequences of this political transformation of the French writers.

The transition of writers to Fascism is not accomplished in one single way. There are several paths that lead there and many kinds of writers who must be enumerated and classified.

There were in France writers of a certain type who were like makers of luxury articles which the culture, the tastes and the leisure of the bourgeoisie required. These were the writers who, like the cooks and the artists whom Plato speaks of, practiced the arts of flattery. They flattered the bourgeoisie. They gave it the impression that it was refined, intelligent, skeptical,

that it was truly elite. The sort of elite there had been in the early days of the bourgeoisie in the little towns of Italy, where according to Madame Stael de Stendhal one truly "lived." They were people who wrote books full of allusions which only cultivated bourgeois with leisure time at their disposal could understand and enjoy. They constructed a literature full of sophisticated secrets, totally disconnected from the real important problems which faced the world. Their clientele were familiar with their private adventures, their vacation trips, for the literary journals which flourished after the war gave much space to these subjects. These writers were Andre Maurois, Paul Valery, Jean Giraudoux, Paul Morand. They took no interest in politics, they lived in the clouds of literature, above the earth and its social questions. They analysed pure thought; or travel, or love. Their interests, their relations, made them the authors of the big bourgeoisie. But behold them at the present time suddenly taking sides, taking the very side one would have expected them to take. Paul Morand writes in an article in the Fascist revue, *1933,* that we need a blood-letting, thus clearly foreshadowing the coming imperialist slaughters. The day after the Fascist disturbances of February 6, he joyfully proclaims that this Fascist blood will regenerate France. He publishes a book, which, taking as its pretext an attack on the sordid themes of the capitalist film enters the lists of the anti-foreign campaign. Andre Maurois holds Fascist conferences on the "Reform of the State." Paul Valery, discovering in the salons which he frequents that the *Spirit* is threatened, voices his famous declaration: "We of this civilization know now that we are mortal." He speaks of the welfare of the Spirit at meetings of that farcical "International Institute of Intellectual Cooperation," where esthetes like Aldous Huxley, demented reactionaries like Count Keyserling and the hacks of petty bourgeois French thought make plans for the civilization of a Fascist Europe.

Jean Giraudoux published *La France Sentimentale* and, in *Le Combat avec l' Ange,* he exalts the diplomats of the Quay d' Orsay, the women of fashion, the French ministers of foreign affairs and girlishly romantic generals. A reactionary mass defines itself in literature where the "refined" thinkers like those just mentioned play their part in a chorus which likewise includes the writer-policemen of the type of Beraud, Kessel or Bonardi and old writers of the category of Gaston Cherau. The subtle methods are merged with the gross, in an environment of fear and corruption carefully attuned to the political atmosphere where the Stavisky affair and its sequels have brought to the French morass. They go to join the authors traditionally devoted to the political and moral defense of the capitalist regime, of the world as it is.

There were also some writers in France, who at times seemed more French than all the others, who seemed marvelously adapted to the sensibilities, to the ideas, to the wishes of those petty bourgeois who have ruled France or who thought they ruled France for about the past thirty years, ever since the time of the Dreyfus affair. For these Frenchmen even the war itself had been a second Dreyfus affair. There hadn't been any imperialist fight between temporal interests, but a spiritual conflict whose aspects were sometimes tragic and revolting, between French culture and German barbarism, between French justice and the German rule of might. The writers for these people had many of them received a petty bourgeois training before the war, and this training usually carried with it an individualist education, an education which the youthful exhuberance made appear as anarchist. It was, briefly, the apex of bourgeois ideology taken seriously, the high point of bour-

geois democracy regarded as something other than political deception. These men defended the idea of the individual man. They made man the supreme value. And there were few critics and readers who were capable of discerning that they were defending not the eternal man, not even the man of the future, but simply the man of the petty bourgeoisie, just as their fathers, the jurists and the thinkers of the eighteenth century had done before them. They were the writers of humanism. They sang of "Man," in singularly different tones almost all of which, for instance, included a denunciation of war, which destroys man. But the misfortunes of the times struck these men with particular violence, a violence which divides and overwhelms them, which compels them to make on the cultural plane, the choice which their social group is compelled to make on the plane of social action, on the political plane. There are some who lose their footing and their are others who transform themselves. There are some who give up and others who right themselves. The position of their class of the petty bourgeois is unclear, less clear than ever. Always suspended between the big industrial and financial bourgeoisie and the proletariat, this urban and rural petty bourgeoisie, made up of merchants, of landholders, of notaries and doctors, has ever been the class of duplicity. Always attracted and repelled simultaneously by each of the classes which, above and below it, were the key pieces of the political game, the main forces which the class struggle placed in opposition to each other. This petty bourgeoisie felt itself destined to a private role. It felt that it had a mission. But now the crisis threatens it, the crisis condemns it. It suddenly perceives its own mortality, it takes fright. It is being ruined. It feels itself destined to impoverishment, it sees itself heading towards cataclysmic social experiences for which nothing in its history up to now has prepared it. It feels pressed for time. Its thinkers and its writers have to make the choice which their class is faced with. Shall they save themselves by hooking onto the big bourgeoisie, by surviving for a while in the bosom of a state artificially yanked out of the course of history, by Fascism? Or shall they consent to die as a class, and go to swell the proletarian ranks, sharing its struggles and its future and work for a society where there no longer will be classes but men working together?

This alternative presents itself. It is a simple one; it becomes simpler every day. A differentiation takes place among the writers of this social group: some put aside the ideological screen which hid the real content of their concept and their defence of man, they let it clearly be seen that fundamentally in defending man they were only defending the man of the petty bourgeoisie, the small producer, the small artisan, the small landowner, the small thinker, the small profit, that they only defended a civilization of individual comfort, of avarice, of the small proprietors. The others examine their consciences: they perceive that they have defended a concept of man which was extremely narrow and limited, that if they wish to continue speaking of man, and to call themselves humanists, it is necessary to divorce the destiny of man from that of the petty bourgeois, it is necessary resolutely to center the problems of man around the proletariat since every petty bourgeois solution of the question is doomed before hand by the lack of any future. The type of writer of the first sort is G. Duhamel. The type of the second sort is R. Rolland.

Duhamel was the very writer who is the name of "man" protested against the war, against tyrannies, and who at times the revolutionaries could have mistaken for one of themselves, being deceived by his rhetorical accents. He had written *Civilizations, Vie des Martyrs* and more than one revolutionary

had confidence in him. But now the protestor transforms his protests. It is quite true that a petty bourgeois might sincerely protest against the war and all the tyrannies. The radical philosopher Alain could well characterize his philosophy as the theory of the "citizen against the powers." The petty bourgeois citizen protested in fact, but one thought his protest went infinitely further than it actually did in reality. One believed that it went to the roof of the question and that having protested against the war and against the tyranny, the petty bourgeois would end by protesting against the reasons for the war and the roots of tyrannies, that he would end by protesting in a revolutionary fashion. But one believed all this because one did not suppose that the petty bourgeois would cling fast to his existence as a petty bourgeois. From the moment this existence is threatened, the petty bourgeois protests in the name of this existence, logically. Just as Duhamel protested against the war he now protests against mechanisation, because the progress of mechanisation progressively excludes his class. He protests against the revolutionaries, because the doctrine of the revolution supposes the ultimate disappearance of his class. He defends the values of his class. He upholds its permanence, its way of life, its pleasures. At the same time anti-capitalist and anti-Marxist, like the Hitler propagandists, he becomes the theoretician of a class condemned to death and which doesn't want to die, even though its death as a class is the condition of the rebirth of its constituents as individuals. He becomes in the true sense of the word a reactionary writer. Everyone of his latest books protests against the future, against the revolutionary solution and is a yearning for and a defense of the past. It is precisely this longing and this defense which the Fascist policy exploits to draw into their struggle the petty bourgeois whom the Fascist dictatorship then keeps from dying. Duhamel is no less the dupe of Fascist demagogy than the small grocer who has a grudge against the big stores. And like Duhamel, J. Romains extoles these values and enters the war against Marxism; L. Werth declares he prefers the police of Chiappe to those of Stalin; and so all the others. Of the writers of the second sort we shall speak further on.

The war and the emotional upheavals of peace, the exciting years between '19 and '25 had produced new writers: they were young people whom the events of the times had temporarily isolated from their class, giving them a youth bereft of stable moorings. Just as in the case of the young Englishmen and Americans of their age, these writers, for a period of five or six years, gave themselves over to the quest for new values and often wrote merciless criticism of the values which their fathers had lived by. A violent romanticism was born, which wanted to submit everything to questioning. It assumed many forms. These writers lived in the midst of the fetid prosperity of the twenties in a great confusion of emotions and ideas. It was a period when rich women made a fuss over poets, when books and revues reaped the benefits of an extraordinary boom. An age of disorganized endeavour, many of these writers in the quest for new values seemed to approach revolutionary solutions and aimed violent accusations against the ideas and ways of life of the bourgeois world. They were the writers who destroyed so many of the old bourgeois values. It then seemed as though they were doing it for the exclusive benefit of revolutionary values. Today it is apparent that they often did it for the benefit of new capitalist values, even for the benefit of Fascism. The generation of men between the ages of thirty-five and forty in France presents the most remarkable spectacle of the revolutionary bankruptcy of the intellectuals of the post war period. Drieu la

Rochelle, after some years of hesitation, decisively chose the side of money and brings grist to the Fascist mill. Jean Prevost, Alfred Fabre Luce, Pierre Dominique, issue the Fascist review *Pamphlet*. E. Berl, who wrote some tracts against the bourgeoisie now goes wherever the Fascist wind blows and writes articles for the *Revolution Nationale*. B. de Jouvenel directs a Fascist revue: *La Lutte*. Philippe Soupalt leans in the same direction. These writers who were uncompromising at twenty, have experienced the pleasures of bourgeois life: the ease of the twenties has ill equipped them for hardships of the thirties. They disguise under ideological trappings their desire to continue to enjoy the bourgeois pleasures. They also want to be leaders. Their ambition has lost patience by ten years of waiting. Fascism offers them opportunities. They tell themselves that all they have to do is take advantage of them. Since they are closely connected with the Fascism of the "Left" they express on the intellectual plane the Fascist tendencies of the young radicals, the neo-socialists, men of their own age who have too long awaited a power which failed quickly to materialize through the slogans of democracy. They tie on to these movements because they have learned their lesson well from the German and Italian Fascists, hence they know that any Fascism must have a revolutionary masque, that a Fascism must come from the "Left." As far as they are concerned this follows naturally in such a country as France, where the word reaction still arouses violent antagonism in the provinces.

Last there are new arrivals, young men as yet unknown, who swell the volume of essays of a "revolutionary" Fascist ideology. They publish revues where they put to the test the numerous theoretical themes of all possible varieties of Fascism in France, where they invoke the names of various great men. What a welter of confusion! And the Fascist myths of the earth and of race are brought in through these channels along with other monstrosities of the Fascist bag of tricks. These revues spring up every day: *Esprit, l'Ordre Nouveau, La Revue Francaise, Reaction, 1934* and others. The academician Mauriac, the Catholic philosopher, Maritain bring these young people the benediction of the church and the political doctrines of St. Thomas Aquinas.

Thus does the notable upsurge of Fascism which makes itself felt in France express itself on the plane of ideas. Here it is still in the stage of experiment, of groping. It has not yet developed a common systematic ideology or even a theoretical program of action. The connection with the material forces of of Fascism, the ranks of the Right, which have the arms and the ideological efforts has not yet been established. But events move swiftly. The unification of forces and of ideas can occur suddenly.

An equally strong movement, however, draws other writers towards the revolutionary pole. The revolution has a power of attraction fully as strong as that of Fascism. We come to the time when every day more and more men realize that the destiny of all they are interested in, is now bound up with the victory of the proletariat. The paths which lead the intellectual to the revolution are many. There are the paths of the intellectuals who come from the big bourgeoisie, the paths of the petty bourgeois, the paths of the young people. No uniformity of development is required. Every day some writers grasp the profound and dire consequences to culture of a Fascist victory. They see the state of Italian culture, they see the butchers. In all of them undoubtedly a violent struggle takes place. Each one of them must choose between Fascism and anti-Fascism, which is not simply a negative attitude but a demand which rapidly becomes positive, an attitude which

obliges them forthwith to take positive action. But the struggle is quite often an internal one. In whose favor will they finally decide? In favor of their social status, their bourgeois attitudes and ways of living, their family and social ties, or in favor of their true capacities, in favor of the man who has a calling, of the man who is essentially an artist, a representative of human culture, who is a part of a progressive tradition? Duhamel, for example, sacrifices his legitimate function, which would consist in the advancement of culture, for the sake of the tastes, the habits and the interests of the bourgeois. Others sacrifice the bourgeois. No example is more significant in this connection than that of Andre Gide, member of the big bourgeoisie, in whom the interests of the writer ended by killing the bourgeois side. Gide chose Communism at the moment when the development of his thinking ran into an essential contradiction between the very progress of his thought and the static nature of bourgeois society. This is an instance of a man who had at this very moment the historic sagacity which according to Marx himself, in the *Manifesto,* characterizes the passage to the side of the proletariat, of intellectuals who have raised themselves to the point of understanding the course of history. When, throughout one's whole life, one has defended a certain concept of man, of the development of man, and when one sees that the realization of this man is impossible and that capitalism continues, the only alternatives are either to renounce all that one has previously stood for or else take the step to revolution. Gide took the step. Never was there an evolution more convincing than his.

The savage forms which capitalism assumes in the final stage of its history suddenly clarify the most clear sighted spirits of the times, the clearest as in Gide's case or the most honest as in the case of Rolland. The evolution of Rolland made less noise than that of Gide, it seemed less like a rupture in the eyes of those who were not forewarned, less like a leap forward. It seemed simpler. By no means is it certain, however, that such is the case. Rolland, before the war, during the war and after the war was the most *generous* representative of humanism, of the liberal conception of man which characterized the French petty bourgeoisie. The books of Rolland after *Jean Christophe* and the *Life of Beethoven* went out to move the French teachers, lost in country schools, to the very depths of their souls where they were the very embodiments of petty bourgeois idealism nurtured by the heroic memories of the 18th century, of the revolution of '48 and of the Dreyfus affair. Rolland, like those who read him, believed in the omnipotence of the democratic will and ideals which would end by establishing the Reality of man. In his convictions he mixed the heroes, and the saints, Beethoven, Michael Angelo, Ramakrishna, Gandhi. He was a pacifist and an individualist. He foresaw the future through partisanship, taking part in a collective endeavor. He had been above the struggle of war, he entered the struggle of classes. He gave a decisive answer to the fundamental question posed by Maxim Gorky "what side are you on, masters of culture?"

The year 1933 was an important year in this course toward the revolution of writers from widely different sections of the literary horizon. Fighters came to join the little group of revolutionary writers who had first started the French Association of Revolutionary Writers: Rene Blech, E. Dabit, Jean Richard Bloch, Rene Maublanc and still others. An ever widening circle of sympathetic writers took part in the activities of the association: A. Malraux, A. Gide, R. Rolland, J. Guehenno, L. Durtain, J. Cassou, Leon Pierre Quint. At length the political events which have piled up in France during the past few months have accelerated this movement. Two extreme-

ly significant new supporters have come to the association. The first is Jean Giono, the second is Ramon Fernandez.

Jean Giono was the foremost representative of peasant literature in France. He articulated on an almost entirely poetical plane the dignity and the values of the peasants; the contact with the primitive strength and joy of the earth, the rural aloofness in the face of the world's cities, of machines, of technique. There was a profoundly mystical element in this idealization of the natural and lyric capacity of the peasant. It was a particularly dangerous literature, one could easily see how eventually if it continued to develop in the same direction it might lend itself to an anti-rational, anti-urban, anti-technological mysticism of the "earth and the race." One well could see the possibility of what must be termed Fascism. But Giono, in the mountain solitude, where he lived and meditated, thought of the experience of the war which had killed so many peasants. He expressed in his work *le Grand Troupeau* the spontaneous revolt of the majority of French peasants against the war. He oriented his thoughts around this problem of resistance to war and at the end of this period of meditation he announced that his choice was made, that in order to struggle effectively against war he must take the side of the proletarian revolution. He joined the Association of Revolutionary Writers. This conversion is significant of a time when the peasantry, like the intellectuals, is faced with the necessity of choosing between an alliance with the bourgeoisie and an alliance with the proletariat, either Fascism or the Revolution. The decision of Giono takes on its full significance when one adds it to the anti-Fascist peasant demonstrations which are occurring everywhere in France and the formation of peasant committees for struggle against war and Fascism.

R. Fernandez has, during years recently passed, played an important role as critic. He was one of the most far-sighted representatives of the humanist movement which undoubtedly constitutes the principle class current of French literature. He was, like many others, a man of the Left, who had some sympathy for the revolution but who reserved, for he was a clerk, the right to question it and to judge it, who reserved, for example, the right to make favorable and unfavorable observations about Marx. He was a man whose eyes were opened by the attempted Fascist *coupe d'etat*. The enemy was closer, more threatening than he had hitherto suspected. The comfortable humanist critique ran the risk of seeing itself brusquely interrupted by the establishment of a regime which would be the very negation of all human culture, of every human step forward: Fernandez was awakened, as it were. He knew that it was no longer time for long subtle analyses. The need was to struggle and leave analyses for better times. He wrote, and these sentences undoubtedly express perfectly the state of mind of all men who today rally to the revolution.

"The fierce and insane turn of capitalism which we witness today has the following consequence: Marxism, like it or not, has become automatically an argument of the truth. Now, it seemed to me infinitely more important to defend those who are hungry than to be correct as opposed to Marx. So let us rally, as quickly as possible and leave arguments for better times. . . . When one defends as I have a certain humanism founded on the belief that man is for man, the highest value, and that humanity will never be equal to itself as long as all men are not human, one could not allow people who think the very opposite to prevail without incurring a philosophic dishonor, which would be, perhaps, the most bitter of all dishonors. . . . I was one of those who hoped for a number of years for the possibility of an ethic

of rights. After the 6th of February this hope is definitely no longer tenable. There is nothing, at bottom, behind their big words, but purses which are being deflated. Marx was more than right, I choose the empty purses . . . for us, to join the proletariat means to experience a well understandable egotism, it is an act of purification, it means gaining the right to a sure course and a steady look. It is, in the religious sense of the word, to save ourselves. . . ."

This evolution of writers towards the revolution is not, however, an automatic process. There are various obstacles which must be surmounted. These obstacles are of two kinds, exterior and interior.

One must keep in mind that the bourgeoisie does not watch with an indulgent heart the passage of its best hopes to the service of the proletariat. These "traitors," whom it will know how to punish unrequitingly tomorrow, just as it does the militant workers, it tries meanwhile to retain. Its stratagems are by no means coarse; the bourgeoisie reserves the slanders of the powerful press of the "Comite des Forges" and of the Havas agency for the ears of the public at large. With the intellectuals it resorts to more subtle methods and instruments. These instruments of the bourgeoisie, the function of which is to interpose themselves between the intellectuals and the revolution, are the opposition groups to the Communist Party and the Social Democracy. There is in France a small accumulation of human rubbish and provocateurs who call themselves the opposition. These are the groups of Trotskyists or Souvarians, groups of the Left and the Right composed of expelled Communists, adventurers of Communism who have failed, and intellectuals. These intellectuals are generally the extreme representatives of the decomposition of bourgeois thought who did not come to revolution at the time when they might have come, former Surrealist poets, former young people whom the women used to make a fuss over but whom the women no longer make a fuss over because times are hard. Men singularly obsessed by sexual questions, men of the type of Bataille, Bernier, Baron, together with Laurat, and Souvarine, conceited intellectuals isolated from life, university graduates without success, these bands have an intellectual tactic: they generally revise Marxism, they complete Marxism, they explain how Marxism is not a sufficiently materialist doctrine and they summon Freud to the rescue. In fact there is set up, in the furthest corners of bourgeois putrefaction, a new doctrine, which revises Marx and slanders the USSR, which it calls the "Stalinist police state." This doctrine proclaims itself infinitely more subtle than Marxism and Leninism. It denounces the intellectual obtuseness of those whom it terms the "Stalinist bureaucrats." This doctrine multiplies its subleties, the latest capitalist discoveries for seducing the intellectuals by appealing to their worst instincts. Of course for them there is no longer any question of actually preparing the revolution. The revolution is all over for these amateurs the minute they even think about it. In the review of the Souvarinians: *La Critique Sociale* Jean Bernier formulates the plans for "A planned economy of the libido." This doctrine offers intellectuals the means of calling themselves revolutionaries without running any of the risks which the revolution involves. This is why Fascist reviews like *Esprit,* extol the Souvarinians the same way as they extol the declarations of Victor Serge. The only chance of sucess which these adventurers might have had in winning the intellectuals was in the negligence of theoretical work on the part of revolutionaries. The theoretical progress of the French revolutionary movement destroyed this only hope. This was

clearly evident from the rage which seized these elements in the face of the fierce attack of J. Politzer against their "Freudo-Marxism."

The Social-Democracy does not look very attractive to writers when they are developing towards revolution. They are easily repelled by the ignoble treachery of the Socialist leaders, by the mixture of deceit and demagogy, which characterises the Socialist Party. They are equally repelled by the fact that the French Socialist movement has been incapable of evoking any autonomous cultural movement. It is altogether too apparent that the French Socialists have placed themselves in tow of the most out and out bourgeois theoreticians like E. Durkheim. The "cultural" reviews of the Social-Democracy display an almost incredible intellectual poverty. The only virtue one can find in them is the heavy literature of bourgeois professors. This party includes many university people. The Socialist Party holds no attraction for the writers who seek to escape from bourgeois ideology. The writers are well aware that in it they will only find the very things they wish to avoid. But there is sufficiently known, among a certain number of writers, an attitude, for example, of the Poulaille group, whose intellectual ties are with the cultural movement which revolves around the Belgian Workers' Party. It consists in regarding the proletariat "objectively." It consists in describing it in the sentimental fashion, calculated to arouse pity, the proletariat appears as the symbol of misery, of crushed submission.

Never is any appeal made to its revolutionary potentialities, to its political capacities. This literature is entirely passive, whining. It is no more militant than Social-Democracy itself. It whines, it complains. It doesn't know hatred. It contents itself with flabby description. It rejects "slogans," and politics. It plays deftly on the old prejudices of those writers who don't want to "subject" art to anything that isn't art. And Poulaille and his friends do in fact prevent a certain number of writers from reaching the revolutionary movement. Even those who have overcome the obstacles which faced them have long remained under the influence of this movement of the *Nouvel Age,* of *Proletariat:* E. Dabit and L. Paul for instance.

This literary attitude is further supplemented by a policy which consists in slandering the USSR, in attacking the intellectuals who support the proletariat, accusing them of having a narrow working class outlook. This is why the Fascist paper *Rempart,* which was subsidised by Stavisky praises *Proletariat,* the revue of Poulaille. Poulaille and his friends have taken active part in the anti-Soviet campaign engineered by the friends of Victor Serge and have dragged after them one man who had made decisive steps in the direction of the revolution: C. Vildrac.

The sur-realists constitute an obstacle. An obstacle which dwindles every day. The sur-realists have lost the sanest elements of their movement, those who joined the proletariat without reservations; who criticised their own former positions, and who have begun to transform themselves: L. Aragon, G. Sadoul, P. Unik. The others publish revues supported by the dealers, and become publicity agents for speculators in paintings. Others continue their sterile pleasures, their dreams and the analysis of their dreams. They cut themselves off more and more from the real world where war and Fascism threaten. They allow the reactionary elements within themselves to take the lead, elements which sur-realism, final form of bourgeois poetics always had latent within it. They lose themselves in their world of fancy. A Breton barely wakes up to sign a confused united front appeal along with the radical philosopher Alain. They came to the AEAR and the AEAR expelled them. For the revolutionary movement has no use for saboteurs

and for people who regard the revolution as all over. Every day they play more and more into the hands of the opposition. The movement of history flings them without reservation back into the corners where the last remnants of the bourgeois intelligentsia are rotting. Barely do they manage in Belgium to seduce a few young people. Their last weapon is psychoanalysis. And already, looking backwards in history, they re-discover the philosophy of Fichte. Perhaps the shock of events will rescue some of them from this bourgeois death, the others are the future prey of Fascism.

There are also some inner obstacles. . . . The writers of the petty bourgeoisie who orientate themselves towards the revolution have to free themselves of a very big weight of their old prejudices. The discipline which the service of the revolution requires seems rigorous to them. The cruel antagonism of the bourgeoisie and the proletariat seems oversimplified: they have been accustomed to the finest subtlety. They must relinquish so many things, so many fond hopes. They have behind them centuries of liberal, moral and moralising traditions, centuries of faith in the power of ideas. The rudeness of the revolution, this game devoid of morals, between opposing forces one of which must prevail, and the inevitable violence upset them. They love peace, fraternity. The requirements of the struggle disturb them: how shall they stomach the pitiless criticism of the Socialists, of the Radicals? They still dream of a great front of the men of the Left against the reaction. They think the way people did at the time of the great republican struggles. The symbol which they love is the Triumph of the Republic, that famous celebration which Peguy describes. Even today it hurts them to open their eyes. They still believe in the virtues of the individual effort of every man to transform himself. They do not easily forego the traditional policy of the petty bourgeoisie. There were those petty bourgeois who chose Fascism. There were those who chose the revolution. There are also those who don't care to choose, who would like things to keep on going the way they have been in the habit of going. The representative of these writers is undoubtedly the editor of the revue *Europe,* Guehenno. But this species numbers many specimens. . . . It's the type of the Conciliators. Their conscience never gives them any peace. They are uneasy. They have little time in which to make up their minds, the time for quibbling will not last forever. Are they going to commit the mistake of those German writers who banked on liberalism and lost out? It is for the revolutionary writers to convince them and bring them over.

*Translated from the French by E. Stevens*

# An Interview With Andre Malraux

## *The Author of* Man's Fate *Answers Some Questions*

You ask what are the reasons that a number of the most prominent French writers and artists, many of whom had previously taken a very adverse attitude to the revolutionary class struggle, are now coming over to the proletariat in order to fight for a Socialist society and defend the Soviet Union.

We should really distinguish two sorts of writers: sentimental writers turned revolutionary and the so-called "pluralist" writers who consider individual happiness impossible without contact with the surrounding world, having become Marxists. The first and fundamental reason that both changed their previous views was, of course, the crisis which gripped capitalist countries. True many of them are still refraining from taking decisive steps to the proletarian side, but under the pressure of economic disaster which has struck the whole world much of what they previously believed is seen by them in a different light.

The second reason, inevitably following from the general economic crisis, is the growing threat of Fascism everywhere.

*What is still restraining many of our writers from decidely going over to the side of the proletariat and the positions of the class struggle?*

It seems to me, primarily the desire to retain the cultural values generally of bourgeois society—only these values have also grown shaky, they are also threatened by Fascism. Before the intelligentsia a new problem somehow seems to have risen: it must now make its choice not between Democracy and Communism but between Fascism and Communism.

In this respect the activity of the "Vigilance Committee" in France is extremely symptomatic and significant. The Committee has over two thousand members from different intellectual professions: literary, artistic, academic. The fundamental task of this Committee is to assist proletarian organizations as only in these organizations does the intelligentsia see a force which can offer real resistance to Fascism.

As far as defense of the USSR is concerned, this is, to the intelligentsia abandoning the ideas of liberalism, a direct result of the very existence of the USSR which is the living embodiment of their hopes. Add to this, that while the first Five-Year Plan successfully fulfilled opens up the way for a general rise in the level of material well being and general cultural level of the broad masses of the USSR, in Europe we have the monstrous appearance of German Fascism. Our intelligentsia cannot but see the tremendous diffrence between such vastly different worlds, cannot but note the results coming from two such vastly different socio-political systems. And really, while in the USSR the number of scientific and like institutions is growing, the circulation of newspapers and books increasing, new libraries opening all the time, German Fascism burns thousands of books in the public squares.

*What contemporary fundamental problems (in literature, science, general culture, politics, economics, etc.) are of greatest significance to human society today and what, in your opinion is the role of the revolutionary proletariat, particularly in the Soviet Union, in the solution of these problems?*

I should like to single out the significance of the so-called exact sciences. Their role and problems in the fields enumerated in your question are self evident. As to the problems involved in the questions of general culture it would require a book to only attempt to answer your question. Briefly formulated, I should say: the main, the most characteristic trait of the present state of mind in the West is the *perishing of individualism* in its established bourgeois form. From this, it seems to me, the answer to the second, no less complex part of your question, naturally follows.

*What interests me most of all in the Soviet Union both with respect to my literary work and my interests in archeology?*

With respect to archeology, I follow very attentively everything done in this field by Soviet scientists in Central Asia. I am very much interested in their broad projects and plans for the future.

I think that the progress of our knowledge in the field of Greek-Buddhist and Persian Buddhist culture will to a great extent depend, at least in the nearest decade, upon the results of the work of these scientists.

I am following with no less interest all that is brought to light by the discoveries connected with the plastic arts, the objects of fettishism of antique periods, with the art of the Scythians. I do not wish to go too deeply into this subject. I should only like to emphasize that the art of the Scythians

*Andre Malraux, noted French writer, at the recent Soviet Writers Congress held in Moscow*

is now the main source for obtaining an insight into the life of the peoples of ancient Asia. It seems to me that it found forms of expression which exerted a tremendous influence on the art and culture of China and Persia at certain periods. I am more than ever convinced of this by the magnificent collection of objects of Scythian art in the Hermitage in Leningrad.

And finally, I must add, that the excavations about the tombs that hold tremendous wealth have been as yet insignificant. We cannot help being glad that the greatest part of them are on the territory of the USSR.

With respect to my literary work what interests me most in the USSR is the origin of a new culture, the birth of a new man in your country.

The Communist man, the man of the classless society, coming from proletarian surroundings and taking shape here, with you, is as different from modern bourgeois capitalist society as the latter is different from the man of Christian culture of the society of the Middle Ages.

The creation of a new society based on values for which many of us are also fighting, is of extraordinary interest to me. And, if you wish, even more precisely, all my attention is absorbed by the new, forthcoming personality in this society, the new man.

I follow attentively the books and articles which tell me to what extent the newborn culture is already beginning to grow conscious of itself. The fact that the peasant is reading Tolstoy and Gogol is one thing—what he is reading them for is quite another matter. But the very fact of mastering the cultural heritage of the past is in itself already a creative act, just as the mastering of the cultural heritage of feudal society was once for bourgeois society. But a cultural heritage enriches the heirs only when they work over anew the cultural values that came down to them from the past.

Thus the Socialist society will undoubtedly utilize in its own way the amassed capital of bourgeois society and turn it into new cultural values. The form which the future new world culture will take depends upon this working over.

*What is the role, in your opinion, of the philosophy of the writer in fine literature and what is the cognitive value of fine literature?*

Your question evidently refers mostly to the artistic depiction of life, as in other fields the role of ideology is evident.

I think that in the field of fine literature the role of ideology and the very choice of it may be conscious or unconscious. I consider that the fundamental thing in art is not so much the reproduction of anything as the uncovering of some one. Every great

art, like that of Balzac, for instance, is exactly the exposition of some one by means of the reproduction of something, *i.e.*, the events of one's time.

The assertion that the artist is entirely subject to the world surrounding him—is a meaningless assertion. The world by itself is formless and the first task of the artist is to find a form, select the material he needs. This selection is determined by his ideology which, in this case, plays the role of spectacles through which the artist sees.

Thus by means of an ordinary binocular, having a definite disposition of lenses, do we see well a person a hundred meters away, see him poorly ten meters away and can make out nothing of him at all at a distance of ten kilometers. By the aid of field glasses we see nothing at a distance of ten meters, see poorly at a distance of a hundred and well at a distance of ten kilometers. Ideology determines our field of vision.

The impersonal photographic prints of the period when photography first appeared had none of the qualities of socalled artistic photography—we found no signs there of artistic individuality. They were however distinguished for their style and we now value them as Byzanthine frescoes.

And if there is no exact coincidence of the model (the object of observation) and its artistic execution the will of the artist however, his endeavors to achieve this coincidence are of artistic value and a perfectly real conception. In our knowledge of the world through art it is necessary to distinguish the methods of lyrical embodiment of reality from the methods used by psychological literature. Lyricism does not aim to understand things—its task is rather emotional influence, it stirs us. The task of psychological literature is knowledge. And this is a special artistic knowledge. It opens up for us in its own way the inner world, the world of naked feelings, or the interrelation of these complex experiences. And into this system of experiences it is impossible to penetrate by means of logical judgement, it cannot be opened up by means of only reasoned conceptions. Psychology, in its artistic expression always goes beyond the bounds of logic.

Let us take an example: in Tolstoy a bad cold kills love, in Dostoyevsky love and hate are not contradictory, in Stendhal the birth of love is connected with the loss of a critical attitude to the object of love. Logic, however, teaches us that cold and love have no connection, love and hate are contradictory, etc.

The lack of coincidence of life and our ideas of it discovered by means of logical reasoning calls out in us a disquietude, almost a morbid condition—and only the artistic reproduction of life brings about a reconciliation of these contradictions, removes the logical differences. An artistic reproduction of the world gives rise to a feeling of ease which is common to the author and to the reader.

From this it follows that the more idealistic, that is, abstract, the ideology the keener are the logical contradictions.

Materialism, that is, a vital perception of the world, reduces the discrepancies between logic and psychology to a minimum.

We see an altogether different sort of psychological knowledge in literature when the laws of one or another phenomenon are sought, when it is sought to show the process of evolution itself, of feelings as, for instance, love in Stendhal or ambition in Balzac. This sort of psychological research in fine literature is peculiar to French and English literature while the method mentioned before is peculiar rather to Russian literature.

*Could you briefly outline the prospects of French literature in its further development and point out what subjects and what problems of form are at present mostly engaging the attention of French writers?*

It seems to me premature to engage in a prognosis of French literature. It will depend a great deal on political changes in the life of France in the near future. All that one can now say is, that the esthetic literature coming from Flaubert and Mallarme is dying out and form seeking is being more and more replaced by literature with a definite social content.

The second part of your question can only refer to the novel, i.e., our theatre is very feeble and promises very little for the near future, while poetry has returned to the period of laboratory research. The problem which mostly engages French novelists at present is—to find a new form and simultaneously return to the novel with social content suitable to a broad circle of readers, which it has lost since Balzac and Zola.

In France there is a desire to both retain and overcome individualism.

# TWO WORLDS


*Hitlerism—an old world dying*

# PAINTINGS BY HEINRICH VOGELER

*Soviet Karelia — a new world in birth*

# CHRONICLE

*USA*

*For Whom Do You Write?*

In the second number of the new American magazine *The New Quarterly,* edited by Jay du Von, forty American writers playwrights and editors answer a symposium on the question: "For Whom Do You Write?"

The editor explains that the symposium follows along the lines of one conducted by the French revolutionary magazine *Commune.* This magazine wanted to make a comparison of the attitudes of writers today, with the attitude of 1919, when another symposium was conducted by the Dadaist magazine *Literature* on the question: "Why Do You Write?-" There were many foolish answers then, not the least of them being one by Knut Hamsun, Nobel Prize winner, who answered "I write to kill time." It was Andre Gide who answered that the question should be worded: "For Whom Do You Write?"

From the answers in *The New Quarterly* it is obvious the question is far from being solved by the bulk of American writers. The editor groups them in three categories:

First, "Those who write for themselves." In this group, with the exception of William Carlos Williams, well known writer, the rest, surprisingly are young writers. Like the editor of *The Little Magazine* (perhaps this explains why it remains 'little'?) who writes:

"I write for all those who believe that my work is excellent. At the moment I am writing for myself."

The editor continues: "The second group of answers includes those of writers who feel that they write for an extremely broad and more or less undefined audience, or, at least, that their work is intended for and directed toward such an audience. Sherwood Anderson, for example, denies that the question has any validity and declares that he writes for anyone who wants to read." The editor adds pointedly, "This includes apparently and justifies his fairly regular contributions to *Today . . .*" a publication of clearly fascist tendency.

The answers of the third group were entirely different. The editor states they are "characterized by a very definite and confident tone, a sureness and vigor that the replies in the other groups have failed to convey. One feels that these writers know very much what they are about, that the question . . . has given them another opportunity to state in no uncertain terms their intentions, the conscious direction of their work, and their awareness of its possible results."

This group included the most prominent of the younger American writers: Edwin Seaver, author of *The Company;* Edward Dahlberg, author of *Bottom Dogs* and other novels; the noted playwrights John Howard Lawson and Virgil Geddes; and others.

These are typical answers: Granville Hicks, well known critic and author of *The Great Tradition,* writes:

"The group for which I principally write is made up of those intellectuals, professional men and women, brain workers, whatever you want to call them, who have moved or are moving to the Left. This group I can write for because I belong to it, speak its language, understand its problems.

"I also write for intellectuals who are only beginning to question the existing order. I have no idea how many of these I reach or what effect I have upon them, but I hope that I can help to win some of them over and to neutralize others.

*A scene from* They Shall Not Die; *the play on the Scottsboro case by John Wexley, produced by the New York Theatre Guild*

"Finally I write for class-conscious proletarians. I do not think I write well for them, for I do not speak their language nor fully understand their problems. In time perhaps I can really write for them. At present they have to meet me more than half way. Many of them can and do this, but I wish I could reach more of them."

Jack Conroy, a worker-writer, editor of *The Anvil* and author of the popular novel *The Disinherited,* writes:

"I should like to think that I am writing for the proletariat; I know that I am writing at them. The slow growth of revolutionary magazines (there are now 14 revolutionary literary magazines in America—*Editor*) and the comparatively small sale of the few proletarian novels as yet published may cause discouragement, but I find cheer in a letter from a friend in New York: 'The workers may still be buying *True Story* and *Western Story* if they have the money, but more and more of them are listening and quite a few are reading. The Workers' Bookshop is unusually busy. The other day a Negro came in an asked for literature on Indo-China. It takes time, oh, lots of time, Jack, but our side will win in the long run. I've been reading Gorky a lot recently and he makes me think we are now having our 1905.—"

*Other American Revolutionary Magazines*

Meanwhile the other American revolutionary publications continue their steady growth to higher standards. *Partisan Review* organ of the New York John Reed Club has just issued its No. 4, its best issue to date. In it are a splendid account of the San Francisco strike by Tillie Lerner, and stories (sections of forthcoming novels) by Nelson Algren, Murrell Edmunds and others. There are short stories and poems of unusually high standard by Isidor Schneider, Edwin Rolfe, J. S. Balch, Kenneth Fearing, Alfred Hayes and many more. William Rollins, author of *The Shadow Before* and Alan Calmer national secretary of the John Reed Clubs lead the Review Section. On the international field are the translations by Samuel Putnam of Louis Aragon's poem "February" and Ramon Fernandez's article "I Came Near Being A Fascist." All told, a number of exceptionally splendid material.

Writing in the New York *Daily Worker* Isidor Schneider acclaims the continued growth of *The Anvil.* Among the revolution-


FÉVRIER

Mon Camarade

JOURNAL POUR ENFANTS

LES AVENTURES DE PIPE FLUTE ET POMME

ENFANTS DE PROLETAIRES

VIL CONE CORRECTION BIEN MERITÉE

*Organ of the young Pioneers of France*

ary group of magazines in the United States, he says,"*The Anvil* holds an honorable place. It was among the first in the field, and has maintained a high rank since its inception. It has developed talents of first rate importance, that of Jack Conroy, its editor, being an outstanding example. It presents, as well as any periodical I know, the literary perception of the class struggle."

In this number (July-August 1934) the critic finds stories where the writers' "personal participation in the class struggle gives their writing a convincing reality and immediacy." Stories by Alfred Garrick, by John Alroy (from his new novel) and others.

Kenneth Fearing, author of the volume of verse *Angel Arms,* finds equal virtues in the latest (Summer, 1934) issue of *Dynamo,* "A Journal of Revolutionary Poetry." He writes:

"The enlarged summer issue of *Dynamo,* its third number, continues this magazine's slow improvement in strength, restraint, and variety of its contents. The only revolutionary journal devoted exclusively to poetry,—out of the many, though not enough, Left publications concerned mainly with prose,—*Dynamo* has a difficult and necessary job to perform, that of offering itself as a proving ground for the newer forms of poetry, and the newer poets, that will continually appear. And at the same time, it is the magazine's task to publish the best revolutionary poetry written in more familiar moulds, not only as a means of comparison, but for its wider appeal. Both these jobs *Dynamo* discharges within the limits of the material from which it has to draw."

The reviewer finds in the current issue poems worth special mention by Ben Maddow, W. H. Auden (of England), Orrick Johns, Isidor Schneider, Andre Spire (France) and Joseph Freeman. There are also essays and reviews in this number by Wallace Phelps, Charles Newman and Herman Spector.

### *And* New Theatre

Hardly any American revolutionary cultural publication has made such a rapid and pronounced improvement as *New Theatre.* The September number, enlarged, with contents of a much higher quality, illustrated with well chosen photographs and drawings, is packed with not only interesting analytical articles on the theatre, cinema and dance, but also with a wealth of information on the activities of this growing revolutionary cultural field.

In this issue are articles by Joseph Freeman, writer and editor; George Sklar, co-author of both *Peace on Earth* and *Stevedore,* successful productions of the New York Theatre Union; Robert Forsythe, most

*Langston Hughes, American poet and novelist, whose latest book,* The Ways of White Folks *a volume of short stories, has just been issued by A. Knopf, publishers*

able American commentator on the cinema; King Vidor, noted Hollywood movie director; Lee Strassberg, director of the Group Theatre; Virgil Geddes, playwright and director; and a number of others.

The field of both revolutionary and bourgeois American theatre, cinema and dance is presented ably and interestingly. In the international field are articles by Strassberg on Meyerhold; by Bela Balasz on the Bourgeois Films; and a review of *International Theatre,* issued in Moscow.

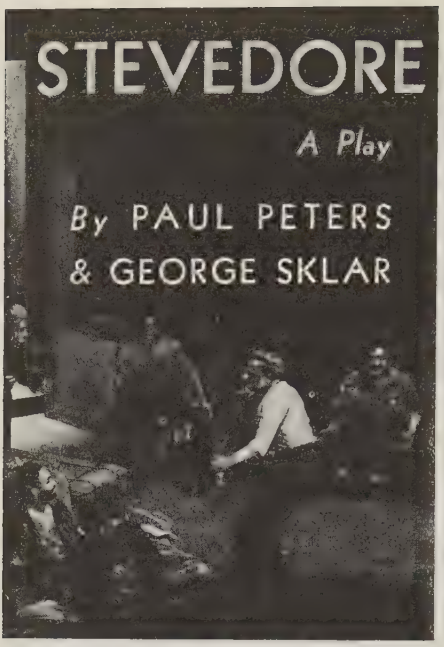
It is a well planned and stimulating number. The steady improvement of *New Theatre* easily explains its steady growth in circulation.

*New Theatre* is now being edited by Herbert Kline whose play *John Henry* is to be produced in New York this winter.

### *A Great Artist Is Honored*

One of the important events held recently in New York was the 50th anniversary of Robert Minor, great American revolutionary artist and political leader.

Over a thousand workers, artists, writers and political and trade union leaders gathered to honor him.




*The jacket of the successful play of the Theatre Union in New York, now issued in book form by Covici-Friede, publishers*

Earl R. Browder, secretary of the Communist Party said: "It is a special event not only because we take the pleasure of greeting Bob Minor but also because we are celebrating the 15th anniversary of the Communist Party. So it is not an ordinary affair." From which point he stressed the important role of Robert Minor in the development of the Party.

The artists Jacob Burck and Hugo Gellert; Michael Gold, novelist, and Orrick Johns, poet; Ben Davis, Negro writer and editor of *The Liberator* were among the many who spoke in honor of Robert Minor.

Among the greetings received from many countries, as well as from all sections of the USA, were those of Tom Mooney, from a California prison. This famous class war prisoner remembered warmly the efforts of Robert Minor in his own behalf since 1919.

In answer to many appeals of the speakers that he return to his art (Minor has stopped drawing since 1926) he said:

"I am a good sign painter. I'm a carpenter too. I've always been a trade union member. There was no other course for me to take than to put down the crayon and go out where the events which I was attempting to depict on cardboard were taking place. I had to go out where the clubs were, go out and become part of the strong muscles that we were trying to draw."

The New York *Daily Worker* prints the greetings of the American John Reed Clubs which read in part:

"To revolutionary cultural workers, Bob Minor is an inspiring figure. As editor of *The Liberator* during its most militant years (*The Liberator* which succeeded the suppressed *Masses* in 1917—predecessor to the present weekly *New Masses*—not to be confused with the present *Liberator,* weekly organ of The League of Struggle for Negro Rights—*Editor)* Minor was one of the first intellectual leaders of his generation to join the Communist movement. As a proletarian cartoonist, he created a new style that represents a definite contribution to the art of the proletarian cartoon. His work is a model for many artists of the John Reed Clubs." Tributes came from Jacob Burck, Minor's co-worker for a number of years . . . the tribute, still of "one in his twenties." Fred Ellis, American cartoonist on the staff of *Trud* (*Labor*) greeted his former co-worker from Moscow. Joseph Freeman, in an article pays a long tribute to the artist and revolutionary leader. Orrick Johns, writing in the *New Masses* recalls the artists' early days. Meanwhile the editors reprint some of Robert Minor's best work which today carries all the working class power and call to struggle which it had when it appeared.

The editors of *International Literature* add their comradely greetings to this great American revolutionary artist.

## *ENGLAND—USA*

### *Sholokhov In Two Countries*

Sholokhov's *Tikhi Don,* published in both England and America under the title *And Quiet Flows the Don,* has been somewhat of a minor literary sensation. And it is finding a large number of readers.

What is of interest is the reception given to the book in the bourgeois journals.

The leading publications in both countries found the novel an artistic work of high merit. The *New York Times* called it a novel "of great scope," while the *London Times* wrote:

"Sholokhov has produced in *Tikhi Don* . . . a vast, extraordinarily powerful picture of Cossack life in the years of peace, war, revolution and civil war."

On both sides of the Atlantic there was a great deal of praise for this work of a Soviet writer. On the same sides of the ocean there was also extreme care that the reviewers' praise for the book should by no means be confused with a support of its political opinions.

Many of them wanted to be sure to indicate that Sholokhov also revealed "the filth, the misery, the horrible life of Russia." The

*At the Soviet Writers Congress: at left in the foreground, Ilya Ilf, co-author with Petrov of* The Golden Calf *and other volumes*

critic of the British *Daily Express* goes lyrically patriotic on this point:

"I hope readers will not run away with the notion that I praise the book because of pro-Russian sympathies or such-like nonsense. Indeed I feel faintly disgusted with many of Sholokhov's characters. . . ."

Babette Deutsch, esthete-poetess, writing in the *New York Herald-Tribune* reveals a sharper class-bias:

"It is easy to account for the enthusiasm of Communist critics," she writes, "for this enormous and somewhat clumsy novel. It is the epic of a group of Don Cossacks . . . told from the Bolshevik point of view, and occupied as much with the movements and reactions of the mass as with individual drama."

But what concerns her is that "such popularity as the book has enjoyed outside of Russia is less intelligible." She offers the only "possible" explanations: "It may be due in part to the impressiveness of mere bulk (the book runs to 755 closely printed pages), more probably to the fact that it introduces the foreign reader to the unfamiliar society of the hard riding, hard working, hard living Cossacks, and largely, one fancies, to the frank naturalism with which the author treats adultery, incest and murder, as well as the more homely details of life."

But these opinions by no means reflect the general view of the critics. The liberal weekly *The Nation* praised the book highly. In *The New Republic*, Edwin Seaver calls Sholokhov's book "an extraordinary novel." He further writes:

"History might be said to have given Sholokhov the symphonic structure of his novel. Or, more properly speaking the Marxian interpretation of history, for without the aid of such interpretation a contemporary author could hardly have reconstructed so logically, so realistically, events whose cataclysmic nature might have taken another novelist several generations to see objectively."

Josephine Herbst, author of *Pity Is Not Enough* and other novels, found only the highest praise for the book in the weekly *New Masses* which is becoming one of the important American journals.

In *Partisan Review,* William Rollins, author of the widely praised novel *The Shadow Before,* reviewing Sholokhov's novel takes occassion to offer this book, picturing Soviet life in realistic, unvarnished fashion, as the answer to Max Eastman and other critics who speak of Soviet "Writers In Uniform."

*Johannes R. Becher, German revolutionary poet and short story writer whose work has appeared in earlier issues of* International Literature

He concludes: ". . . *life* flowing, undistorted, exciting, is the material of the Soviet writer, whereas only a dazzlingly-clothed, putrefying body is given as material for the writer in present-day Germany—is not that the simple explanation for there being no Sholokhov's appearing in Nazidom?"

Meanwhile the provocative discussion of the critics is helping to find thousands of new readers for the book in all the English speaking world.

*USSR*

*The Pushkin Centenary—1937*

Pushkin, great Russian poet with Negro blood in him, is not being forgotten in the Soviet Union. *The Moscow Daily News,* English newspaper in the Soviet Union reports in a recent issue:

"The celebration of the centenary of Pushkin's death to be held in 1937, will be one of the grandest tributes ever accorded even to a major poet. The preparations are already well under way.

"It is proposed to issue a series of volumes with facsimiles of all the poet's manuscripts extant. The first volume, devoted to one of his copy books kept in the Leningrad Institute of Russian Literature, is in the hands of the printers and will be on sale by the end of this year.

"The Academy of Sciences is sponsoring a definitive edition of Pushkin's works in de-luxe format. This publication, to consist of 18 volumes, will include everything the poet wrote, with all his letters and unfinished fragments.

"Of popular releases on which work has been commenced mention may be made of a six-volume edition of the poet's writings to be put out by the State Publishing House of Literature and a nine-volume pocket edition sponsored by the 'Academia' Publishing House.

A special study is being made of all Pushkin's manuscripts with emphasis on the different stages of his work on his best known poems and stories. Museums and archives all over the country are being scoured for possible new finds. Results of this work will be embodied in a series of monographs. Their value to living poets will be inestimable.

"A Pushkin encyclopedia in several volumes will be issued by the 'Academia' publishers, which is also to bring out a definitive biography of the poet on Marxist-Leninist lines.

"It is further proposed to restore several places where the writer lived.

"A congress devoted to Pushkin will be held either in Moscow or Leningrad. This gathering will sum up the results of Pushkin's studies and outline future work in this direction.

Other measures include the organization of an exhibition of all extant manuscripts, portraits and personal belongings."

*Anglo-American Commission Meets*

The same journal carries the following report of a meeting of the Anglo-American commission of the IURW:

"The Anglo-American commission of the International Union of Revolutionary Writers heard reports on England and America at their meeting on Sept. 11. Carmon, Elistratova, Startsev and Barkova represented the Anglo-American commission at the meeting. Pearl Binder and Jeffrey Innes reported on the literary situation in England; Henry Simons, Francis Perry, and Ben Field reported for America.

Pearl Binder's report showed that the new revolutionary magazine, *Left Review,* organ of the Writers International, would need no forcing. The situation was ripe for a fighting revolutionary magazine, a monthly which might be turned into a weekly like the American *New Masses* if the response from the working class and Left intellectuals was such as to warrant it. Binder stressed the importance of getting immediate help from the IURW for the magazine. She explained some of the difficulties facing the establishment of the magazine, the fight on two fronts—against fascists like the poets J. C. Squire and the Sitwells, and against sectarians who wish to keep out of the magazine


*Jacket of a new volume issued in English in Moscow by the Co-operative Publishing Society of Foreign Workers in the USSR*

people who, though not Communists, are anti-fascists.

"Francis Perry discussed the bimonthly with which she is connected, *The Magazine,* published in Beverly Hills. The other writers present suggested plans whereby real blood could be pumped into the editorial board of *The Magazine* to make it a periodical to which revolutionary writers would contribute. Henry Simons of the Chicago John Reed Club showed how the arrest of their member Jan Wittenber, for helping to organize miners in Hillsboro, Ill., had helped to activize the club. Ben Field spoke about the *Partisan Review,* magazine issued by the New York John Reed Club.

The meeting ended with proposals to knit together the work of *Left Review* and the John Reed Club magazines by the establishment of a central clearing house under the IURW for all Soviet literary material which might prove of help to the English and American magazines."

*Two New Books in English*

The Cooperative Publishing Society of Foreign Workers in the USSR has just issued in English two new books of special interest.

The first, a novel, *I Love,* by A. Avdeyenko hardly needs any introduction to readers of *International Literature.* A large section of this book appeared in the No. 6, 1933-34 issue. It is a first novel written by a locomotive driver still at his work in Magnitogorsk. In the Soviet Union this novel leaped into immediate popularity. It has since appeared in a number of countries where it also drew wide attention. Its publication now in English gives us a further opportunity of not only seeing the rapidly changing life on one-sixth of the globe, but also the rapidly developing Soviet literature born of this life.

The story of *I Love* deals with the miserable conditions of steel workers in pre-revolutionary days; the development of a typical young Soviet worker through revolution, civil war, days as a homeless waif, his gradual absorption into Soviet life and development into the new Soviet individual. The story is engrossing, the style simple, fluent. The author is still attending evening classes in literature at the local university and working on his second novel.

The second book issued in English by the same publishers is *The Moscow Theatre for Children.* It is composed mostly of photographs with a brief informative text. The introduction is by the now world-famous director of the theatre Natalia Satz, who organized this theatre 15 years ago, herself

*Sergei Tretyakov, Galin, Agapov and Prishvin, well known Soviet authors at a conference of sketch writers, preceding the full All-Union Congress of Soviet Writers*

then only 15 years of age. Since then she has become an Honored Artist of the Republic.

In her introduction to this book she advises of the growth of this institution:

". . . The Moscow Theatre for Children has produced 42 different plays, given about 4,500 performances and played to over 3,500,000 children. . . . The Moscow Theatre for Children is first and foremost a theatre. Like every other theatrical organism, it has a permanent company, which consists of 50 actors, playwrights, composers, stage managers, artists, an orchestra, stagehands, dressmakers, administrators,—in short, all the various people that there are in every theatre. About 175 grown-up people are united by one aspiration—to create for children. And that is why the staff of our theatre also includes teachers, specialists in group games, and professors."

How this theatrical institution works is an unusual story. There are many photographs of the various productions, leading actors, directors, designers and of most interest—the Soviet children themselves, the audience for whom this great institution was organized.

*The Moscow Theatre for Children* is a highly readable, attractive and informative volume.

*More New Books in English*

*The Soil Upturned* by Michael Sholokhov, author of *And Quiet Flows the Don,* and *Red Flood Over China* by Agnes Smedley head the list of novels just released in English in the Soviet Union by the Co-operative Publishing Society of Foreign Workers in the USSR.

The list also includes *Memoirs of a Barber* by Giovanni Germanetto (excerpts of this book have appeared in *International Literature*); *Men of Siberia* by Hugo Huppert (impressions of a trip through Kuzbas); Volume I of Lenin's Selected Works (vols. II, III and IV are scheduled to appear before the end of the year); Vol. I of *Leninism* by J. Stalin, and two volumes of *Outline History of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union.*

English-speaking foreigners can now obtain *Marx-Engels Marxism* by V. I. Lenin, *Ludwig Feuerbach* by Frederick Engels, *The Class Struggle in France* by Karl Marx, and *Twenty Years in Underground Russia* by Cecilia Bobrovskaya.

The Society is contemplating the publication of a workers' library of classics of English and American literature.

*300 Per Cent Increase in 1935*

The State Literary Publishers are planning a 300 per cent increase in output of fiction for 1935 as compared with the current year.

A large part of this increase will be devoted to the classics, of which five times more will be published in 1935 than have hitherto appeared. Even this will be far

from satisfying the huge demand for the great works of Russian literature, said editor I. K. Luppol, commenting on next year's program.

Publication of the classics will take various forms. The already begun "Academia" edition of L. Tolstoy is to be continued and "Academia" editions of Gogol and Turgenyev are to be started. By the end of 1935, 11 volumes of the collected works of the great satirist Saltykov-Shchedrin will be in the hands of its subscribers.

In an attempt to meet the almost incredibly rapid development in taste and demand for books on the part of Soviet readers, popular one-volume selections of the works of Gogol, Lermontov, Leskov, Ostrovski and others will be put out in editions of 25,000 to 30,000. Even larger editions, running from 100,000 to 300,000, will be printed of Pushkin's prose and poems, Lermontov's poems, Gogol's tales and some of L. Tolstoy's novels.

Translations of foreign classics on the 1936 list includes seven new volumes of Balzac, additional editions of Goethe, five new volumes of Flaubert, and large editions of one volume works of Byron, Goethe, Hugo, Dickens, Mark Twain, Anatole France and others. *Faust, Gulliver's Travels, Oliver Twist,* and Balzac's *Old Father Goriot,* will be added to the so-called large edition popular library series.

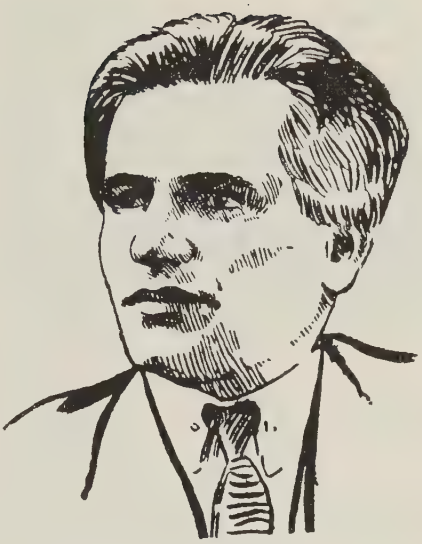
The circle of contemporary foreign authors to be published in translation is also extended, their selection being determined on a basis of artistic merit and social ideology. Among the translations will be writtings of bourgeois authors best characterizing, from a social point of view, the capitalist West. Thus we have Fallada's curious novel *Who Once Tasted the Prison Soup?* and Etina Vittorini's *Merchants.*

Other writers better known to Soviet readers include Pearl Buck, whose *The Good Earth* will be reprinted in a large edition, together with its sequel, *Sons.* Malraux's *Man's Fate,* Remarque's *The Road Back,* new novels of Heinrich Mann, Theodore Dreiser, Sinclair Lewis, Jean-Richard Bloch's . . . *and Company,* Ernst Toller's *Youth in Germany* and works of Oscar-Maria Graf, Friedrich Wolf, Bredel, Johannes Becher and others are also on the list.

Works of contemporary Soviet authors are to be put out in larger editions than formerly and a number of modern books will be reprinted in editions of 30,000 to 150,000. Sholokhov has promised to have part two of his *The Soil Upturned* finished by December and this will be printed in an edition of 300,000.

After studying reports of the national delegations to the Writers' Congress, the publishers have decided to arrange for extensive translations of national literature into Russian. Translations of classic and contemporary authors of Armenia, Georgia, White Russia, the Ukraine and other regions will be supplemented by anthologies of Abkhasian, Northern Ossetian, Kabardino-Balkarian, Checken-Ingush and other national literatures.

The editor promises considerable improvement in paper, format and general appearance of the books, particularly of the cheap editions.



*F. Panferov, Soviet novelist, author of* Brusski *and other volumes*

## *SPAIN*

### *Sender and Arderius*

Writing in a recent issue of the American liberal weekly *The Nation,* Anita Brenner comments on the popularity of two revolutionary novelists who are members of the Spanish section of the IURW. The article is on "Spanish Literature and the Republic." The author writes:

"Ramon J. Sender is probably the most widely read among the younger Spanish novelists. His books are often issued in cheap pulp-paper editions, of the sort made popular first by the Anarchists, who have long been writing and publishing pamphlet-stories vaguely political in character and of scant literary merit. Nowadays these editions—to be seen in newsstands, market booths, and workers' hands on holidays—have enlarged to include translations of Remarque, Zweig, Dos Passos, Sinclair, the classic and modern Russians, and popular

histories, as well as native novelists and poets. Sender, however, is published also by the higher-priced houses, as is another writer of the same sort but of less permanent consequence, Joaquin Arderius.

"Arderius, like Baroja, writes chiefly about peasants, but in a strangely morbid, nightmarish mood which in some books acquires power comparable to Faulkner. Sender's canvas is larger. Also, his books are plainly revolutionary, though a note of defeat runs through them. The most famous, *Iman,* is the story of a private in the Annual disaster—when the Moors under Abd-el-Krim drove back the Spaniards and slaughtered some ten thousand; the result, it was later revealed, of sheer irresponsible pretentiousness in the higher commands. A more recent and also widely popular Sender story, *Los Siete Domingos Rojos* (*The Seven Red Sundays*) is written around a strike during the republic, and is *surrealiste* technically. In it symbol and mood as much as action run into, underlie, and help to determine events, and different types are used as screens through which the reader sees newspaper facts in emotional settings."

(An excerpt from Sender's *The Seven Red Sundays* appears in this issue of *International Literature.—Editor)*

CORRECTION

Due to typographical error in the article "BELA ILLES: Novelist of the Hungarian Revolution," in our preceding issue (No. 4, 1934, Page 142), one paragraph was unfortunately distorted. This paragraph should have read: "Illes also portrays the leaders of the Hungarian Party, Bela Kun and Landler, contrasting the growing courage of these active Party workers, with the despicable behaviour of those "heroes" who, in spite of "left" phrases became opportunists and betrayers after the downfall of Soviet Hungary."

Editor-in-chief SERGEI DINAMOV

## IN THIS ISSUE

*Gleb Alexeyev*—is the son of a lower-grade school teacher. He worked as a newspaper man, served in the world war. For six years following the war, he roamed through various countries, finally returning to the Soviet Union. He is author of the novels *An Inhabited House, Shadows of the Future,* and the unfinished novel *Overcoat.*

*Theodore Plivier*—German writer, who has been hailed by critics as "The German Jack London," recently attended the Soviet Writers Congress in Moscow. He is author of a number of volumes of novels and short stories, including *The Kaiser's Coolies,* and *The Kaiser Went but the Generals Remain,* issued in many countries.

*Ramon J. Sender*—is one of the leading younger Spanish writers. He is author of *Seven Red Sundays, Iman* and other novels.

*Robert S. Carr*—American writer, is on the staff of *Soviet Travel,* in Moscow. He has contributed to leading American publications, was a scenario writer in Hollywood. A section of his second novel, *Last Crossing,* which he is now completing, appeared in *International Literature* No. 3, 1934.

*Vassili Grossman*—contributes to this issue from his first novel. He is a Soviet engineer now working in the Donbas coal mines.

*Walt Carmon*—former managing editor of the American *New Masses,* is assistant editor of the English edition of *International Literature.*

*Phil Bard*—revolutionary political cartoonist and mural painter, is a member of the New York John Reed Club. A short account of his work, with reproductions of his murals, appears in this issue.

*Joseph Kalar*—American worker-poet, contributes frequently to *The Anvil, The New Masses,* and various American revolutionary journals. He is one of the authors of the volume of verse *We Gather Strength,* published last year.

*Tatsuo Murata*—is one of the younger Japanese revolutionary poets.

*N. Bukharin*—is author of *Historical Materialism* and other volumes of political writing issued in many languages.

*Emi Siao*—Chinese poet, now living in Moscow, is editor of the Chinese edition of *International Literature.*

*A. B. Magil*—was one of the American delegates to the second international writers' conference in Kharkov. He has contributed prose and verse to all American revolutionary publications. For the past two years he has been active, as editor and organizer, among the automobile workers in Detroit.

*Paul Nizan*—French novelist and critic, is author of the novel *Antoine Bloyè,* from which a section appeared in a recent issue of *International Literature.* He is a prominent member of the AEAR, Association of Revolutionary Writers and Artists of France.

*Heinrich Vogeler*—is a German painter. His work has appeared in earlier issues of *International Literature.*

## IN INTERNATIONAL LITERATURE NO. 6

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INTERNATIONAL LITERATURE

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*Editorial Assistant WALT CARMON*