Workers of the world, unite!

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The War Prisoner—By L. Griffel

Illustration for The Rifle *and other stories by the Hungarian novelist Bela Illes. Other cartoons and illustrations by the Hungarian artist L. Griffel, with a brief biographical note, are included in this issue.*

A. Avdeyenko

I Love

From a New Soviet Autobiographical Novel

Ostap got to the blast furnace before the bell rang. He hoped that the head foreman or the engineer would notice him. He went in search of the foreman, Butylochkin.

"Feeling a bit better now, Mikola Mikolaevitch?" he said, looking into the foreman's face and shaking hands. "That's fine!"

He ran about the foundry light and quick as a two year old. They nicknamed him the "awl" for the way he darted everywhere. He did not long remain a smelter. The head foreman liked the way this young fellow with the knotty muscles and open shirt turned the heaps of cast-iron scrap single handed. It was work that took several men to do as a rule. Ostap was promoted assistant to the blast furnace man.

The toothless furnace man, known to everyone as Garbuz, threw down his crowbar and gloves, thrust out a great warm hand and said with a faint smile:

"That's fine, old chap, fine!" He felt Ostap's biceps and then gave him a familiar dig in the chest. "Why, you're as hard as a stone. You've got muscles there like iron. Look out, or the bosses will take it out of you yet, they'll grind you down to nothing. Look after yourself. Tomorrow's a holiday—what about coming round to my place for a cup of tea, eh?"

That evening, after work, Butylochkin waylaid Ostap and held out his hand.

"I've got to tell you what I think of your promotion, son," he said. "I'm glad, damned glad you're getting on so well. You're climbing fast now, thanks to me. Good work, son!"

He hesitated a moment, twisting a button on Ostap's jacket.

Ostap was silent, not guessing what was expected of him. Then Butylochkin remarked casually:

"I could go out with you tonight if you liked."

"I've no money, Mikola."

Butylochkin turned away with a shrug.

"Oh, well, if you haven't, you haven't, that's all—only—I'm afraid you'll have to go back to your old job tomorrow."

"Mikola Mikolaevitch . . ."

That night they visited the drink shop again. Sitting behind the muslin curtains of the partition listening to the orchestra wailing out the sad strains of *The Seagull,* Butylochkin sobbed on Ostap's neck. The cockroaches rustled along the wallpaper, the crabs lay on the table, rolling their white eyes at the cloth.

Ostap drank out of sheer desperation. A fly settled on his cheek. He brushed it away. It flew off for a moment, returned to the charge once more and began to tickle him. It maddened him, he grabbed at a corner

of the cloth to cover his face but he pulled too hard and there was a ringing crash of glasses on the floor. Ostap's irritation increased. He brought his fist down on a plate with a bang. The bits flew about like broken biscuits. Butylochkin, was startled: he hugged Ostap nervously.

"Make a bit less noise, son, will you, I can't hear the music."

Ostap glanced at Butylochkin's huge Adam's apple and struck it a blow with his fist.

"Oho, want to fight, do you? So you hit your boss, did you?" shouted Butylochkin. "Hit me for making a man out of you—you, a bit of shepherd lad. You dirty dog, you! Hit me then, hit me!"

Ostap swayed. He had suddenly sobered down. "What have I done?" he thought, despairingly. He made his way out to the street, holding on to chairs and tables as he went. The wind lifted his hair, flapped his shirt, open on his heated chest, and drove out the effect of the vodka.

He moved along slowly, and then leaned up against a fence.

"What'll happen now," he heard his own despairing whisper.

"I'll get fired, surely!"

He wandered about until it grew light. As soon as a faint streak of blue appeared in the sky beyond the socalled "Belgian" forests, he made his way to Butylochkin's house.

Ostap tapped timidly with his finger nail on the shutters. Then he heard a sleepy voice:

"Who's there?"

Ostap was silent, wondering how to begin.

"Who's there?" a note of alarm sounded in the voice this time.

"Mikola Mikolaevitch,—I'm sorry—I was that drunk, you know—I— —"

No sound came from behind the shutters. Then the voice mumbled doubtfully:

"See you in the morning about it."

That morning, as Garbuz was passing the bench occupied by Ostap and his wife in the barrack, he heard a woman's voice wailing out reproaches. Ostap was sitting on the bench with his head on his drawnup knees. Garbuz touched him on the shoulder.

Ostap raised his head. He wanted badly to share his troubles with someone, so he told Garbuz everything. The older man listened calmly and then said with a sigh:

"Aye, my boy, don't think you're the only one! All the new lads get taken in like that and robbed."

Three days went by. Ostap had been quietly sent back to his old job of smelting. He tried to see the director about it but was not admitted.

"What's this mean anyway,boys?" Ostap complained. Garbuz came up to him, bent over and said:

"It means that those dogs of bosses have begun to worry you like many another, that's all, young fellow."

It was then that this man found his way to Ostap's heart, entered his thoughts and his life without waiting to be asked.

When the rolling mill went on strike and delegates came to demand that the furnace men should cease work, Garbuz ran first of all to Ostap and ordered him:

"Down tools this minute!" Then he ran off to the moulders, the rollers and the gasfitters.

"Down tools!" thought Ostap. "And what'll my boy Kosma and my wife Garpina eat, I'd like to know? No, I'm going on working."

Garbuz returned suddenly, snatched the crowbar from him, took him by the arm and led him up to the growing crowd of furnace men.

The crowd tramped out through the works silently without any singing or shouting. When they arrived at the barrack where they lived, Garbuz stopped, collected all the people around him and shouted:

"Let's go on strike, lads! Let's refuse to go back till they treat us like folks, until they stop sucking our blood and worrying us like dogs, as they're worrying Ostap now."

2

Grandad Nikanor, Ostap's father is still a miner after all these years. He turns out as much coal as three miners, but the hopes he had when he built the mud cabin over Rotten Gully for himself and his family have not been fulfilled.

Nikanor is still waiting. He has not lost faith yet.

He gets a ruble seventy kopeks for a load. Life is a little more comfortable. He has his own mud cabin, and sleeps in a wooden bed instead of on a bench. He does not have to munch mouldy pickled cabbage as in the old days. There are potatoes and even salt herrings at times.

His tribe has multiplied. The eldest of us, Kosma, is twenty now. I am the youngest. I do not understand yet why the settlement where we live is called the "Dog Kennels" nor why it should be an insult.

We live better than anyone else in the Dog Kennels. Grandad is a miner, Dad is a furnace man, my eldest brother an oiler in the rolling mill, my sister Varka a moulder in the foundry. Mitka, Niurka and I collect scrap iron on the slag-bank and my father sells it. We never know what it is to want bread.

I run down to the bottom of Rotten Gully with a lump of bread in my hand and feel the envious gaze of my playmates fixed on it. They stop splashing about in the muddy stream and seat themselves all round me, watching every movement of my mouth greedily. I break a little bit off for each of them and we munch at it in silence. Thanks to this I am never beaten by my playmates.

It is partly thanks to Grandad, too, that they never touch me. He is greatly respected in the Dog Kennels. The Dog Kennels envies Nikanor his strength and bows down before him as a man who can keep his own and his children's bellies full.

Grandad strides about the Dog Kennels as straight and unbending as ever. The mud cabins seem only up to his knee.

Almost all the inhabitants of the Dog Kennels drop in to see us. They come to him with their joys and their sorrows. Nikanor is invited to every christening and every funeral. In both cases there's a great deal of drinking, a great deal of laughing and crying goes on. Grandad has a stock of strength and kind words for everyone.

There is always most disturbance on paydays for then the Dog Kennels goes on a spree. All offences are forgotten for two or three hours. Even the fights that start in every corner of the place turn out to be of no consequence. By daybreak the settlement is quiet once more. Only the dogs snarl over the carrion in Rotten Gully.

Once the furnace man, Garbuz came round to our cabin. He asked for nothing and complained of nothing. He sat down under the lamp and the light peered into his toothless black mouth. Garbuz read the paper to us. It was all about mutual-aid funds and trade unions. When he had finished he passed some sheets of ruled paper to Dad and Grandad.

Grandad laughed good-numoredly:

"You want dues, I suppose?" he asked. "What do I want with your union? I'll manage to live without it, thank God. I'll work for my own living, thank you, as long as I can, and then we'll see."

Garbuz flared up.

"And what will you do if some day you can't turn out so much coal as you're doing now? You've got your belly full now, have you? Don't tell me! I know your Marina cooks anything but mashed potatoes! Look out, Grandad Nikanor, you'll be sorry when it's too late!"

Grandad was never frightened nor indignant. He just went on living in his own way. He was friendly with everyone. He even used to help Agenesov—the owner of the drink shop and the common lodging house. Agenesov would run over for him every time there was a row in his domain.

In cases of that sort Nikanor put on his canvas gloves, took a stick and went to Agenesov's. He would beat the drunken tramps, thieves, and prostitutes there until they quietened down.

He did all this with the greatest good humor and conscientiousness, without any unnecessary noise or fuss. He never swore either. He was just the same at home. He did not even make a row when Kosma announced that he had given up part of his pay to the Mutuad Aid Fund and the Trade Union, and intended doing so every month now. Nikanor listened to him quietly, his head drooping slightly. Then he stood up, tall and bristly, picked up a lump of bread from the table and thrusting it under Kosma's very eyes, said:

"You'll see yet, young fellow, whose bread you'll be eating!"

3

Kosma came into the cabin. He looked white and somehow dry, as if he had been cooked in a thick solution of lime. He walked through the Dog Kennels in his white linen hospital suit with nothing else to cover him. The empty sleeve of his long shirt dangled challengengly in the playful breeze. He waved it defiantly as he staggered through the settlement.

He walked quietly past the huts of the metal workers, the miners, the carpenters. His shoulders were stooped. He seemed to be watching something on the ground.

My brother came slowly into our hut, his empty sleeve dangling. I watched him closely. I knew why he walked so slowly and solemnly.

He strode into the middle of the room and dropped down upon a bench. He panted for breath. I could see his purple, swollen tongue. It looked like the mouldy gills of a fish. His single arm hung down in a lonely way the whole length of his body: it seemed extraordinarily long. It did not even finish at his feet. The nails on the fingers scraped the yellow clay with which the floor of the cabin had just been freshly smeared.

There was deep silence. Grandad Nikanor raised the tin cup to his own thirsty lips, but did not drink. The cup remained poised in midair. The needle in my mother's hand seemed to have become a part of the patch she was sewing. Niurka, Mitka and I began to snuffle. The heads of Indian corn crackled and burst on the hot stove. The precious white beads rolled down to the floor and no one bothered to pick them up.

Kosma stretched himself and hiccoughed as if he had been shouting or crouching over his work a long time.

"Give me a drink!" he said at last.

The tin cup rattled plaintively in Grandad's hands, Mother roused herself and began to bustle about. We children gained a little courage and slid down from the stove. Niurka was the most daring. She went right up to her brother, groped inside the empty sleeve and cried out:

"Kosma, where've you hidden your arm?"

He started. For a moment it seemed as if he was ready to strike the little girl, but he only drew her to him and hid his wet eyes in her hair.

Grandad raised himself in his bed. The twisted lips tried to say something. He shook all over with the effort, fingered his beard, but could not utter a word.

I have been more fortunate than Kosma. I was quite a big boy, seven years old, when I first went to the rubbish heaps of the works to collect old iron. He was not five years old when he went to steal straw for mattresses from the slaughter house and collect coke. When he was twelve, my father took him to the foreman's house, treated the man, rustled some notes, and—next day the boy started work in the rolling mill.

The foreman made him oiler of a two hundred and eighty calibre mill train that turned out long, swirling iron ribbons, rods, and stout wire.

For five years he worked as an oiler, five years without the smallest raise in wages or the least promotion. He went about always greasy and dirty.

Kosma grew up illiterate like the rest of the Dog Kennels. He would very likely have remained in that state had it not been for Garbuz, the furnace man who put him into a study circle for illiterates. The teacher was a student on practice at the works, a tall, roundshouldered fellow with large red ears and double spectacles.

It was about that time Kosma lost his arm. It happened like this:

The bell just rang in the rolling mill. The night shift men were washing their hands. The new shift of rollers, welders, assistants and laborers took up their tongs with their gloved hands, trying to shield their faces from the fire.

A little to one side away from the noise, behind the workmen's tool cupboards, the oilers sat smoking on a cool pig. They looked about them nervously: Kosma bent over to the lads and said:

"See you don't give in, lads — — — Here he is."

The head foreman ran up panting and mopping his brow with a large check handkerchief. He was a short man with a bullet head thrust deep down between his shoulders like the cork in a bottle.

"Why are you sitting here doing nothing? The mill trains are going rusty for lack of oil. Get to your places at once!"

Kosma calmly crossed his legs and settled himself more comfortably Someone spat loudly and scraped his wooden clog along the iron slabs of the floor.

"Oilers!" shouted the foreman, looking closer at the lads as if he recognized them for the first time. He darted towards Kosma, who was sitting a little in front of the others, seized him by his shoulders and pushed him towards the mill train.

"March, you little son of a bitch, and quick about it! Get to your places! You'll all get the sack tomorrow!"

Fifteen boys rushed to the aid of their comrade. Lame Kolka went for the foreman's legs. Phetka Koval jumped on his back. Kosma clung to the foreman's throat, and the rest of the boys pulled and tore at the little fat man till he collapsed on the iron floor.

The news ran like wildfire through the works — in the blast furnaces, the mills, the store-rooms, the presses:

"The kids have gone on strike!"

"The oilers?"

"They've beaten the head foreman and oiled him instead of the mill trains!"

"Ha-ha-ha! Oh, ha-ha-ha-"

"They've stripped off his pants!"

The oilers lined up behind the tool cupboards. Then Kosma, his lips twitching nervously, issued his directions:

"Give us a song, boys!"

"Come on to the director!"

"To the director!"

They clattered over the iron floors in their wooden clogs.

The rollers let the fiery strips drop on the floor. The metal ribbons turned blue and cooled off. The welders closed the oven doors suddenly. The fresh iron whitened as it grew overheated.

The oilers passed through the ranks of their fathers and brothers who made way for them. More or less encouraging remarks followed them.

"Don't give in, kids!"

"Wipe your noses before you go!"

"Don't cry for your mammas though!"

The mill trains slowed down. The engineer and the head foreman, who had now recovered a little, ran about the department in a panic, shouting to the rollers:

"Hey, oil your machine there, get your oil-cans!"

But the rollers turned away with a sneer.

"Hey, bring the oil-cans over here and do some oiling!" shouted the engineer and foreman to the welders. The welders slammed the oven doors loudly and apparently heard nothing. They moved their blue goggles carefully so as not to see the bosses.

"Hey — oil the machines!" the voices, now hoarse, sounded close by the assistant furnace men.

The latter were standing near the water vats. Throwing back their heads, they drank long and noisily from their tin mugs.

"Hey," and the shouts died down to a croak. The bosses had started oiling the machines themselves.

The oilers were marching through the works.

They tramped bolding down the broad alley leading to the head office. Under the trees people stopped to stare at them. Small boys appeared from nowhere and, thinking there was some kind of a game in the wind joined their ranks.

When they filed up before the director's shining writing desk, they were overpowered by the atmosphere of marble, nickel-plate, copper, leather, red upholstery, the smell of cigars and sweets. They began to shuffle their feet and sidle towards the door.

Kosma stopped them. He stepped forward, planted his left foot firmly in front of him and began:

"We've been working here a long time." Then the boys behind him pushed forwards, encouraged, and began to shout their claims.

"I've been working in the rolling mill three years and I'm still an oiler and never had a single raise."

"So have I."

"I have, too."

"I've been here four years!"

They were all shouting at once now. The director, a dark, heavily moustached man, with gold teeth and a hard, stiff collar, covered his ears with his hands, and frowned.

"Please don't make such a noise, there's no need to get excited."

"It's time we were promoted!"

"We should be assistants by now."

"I want to be a welder."

"And I want to be a roller."

"We don't get half the money we should. Give us a raise!"

"Very well, children, I shall do my best to settle things for you."

The strike lasted several days. No one wanted to take the place of the oilers. Their demands were yielded to eventually, since they were very modest ones. But the student on practice work who had taught them to read and write disappeared next day.

Seventeen year old Kosma took his place by the mill train with the tongs in his hands. For six years he caught the flaming ribbons and passed them to the assistant. He did not lag behind the older men, but received a third of their wages for all that.

Kosma needed money very badly. Although he lived apart from his family he knew that poverty and hunger were a part of his old home. He had to help the little ones, at least. He attended school, too, and needed money for books. Then he had to pay for food, clothes, washing and his corner in the barrack. He needed money for tobacco and for his dues to the trade union, the Mutual Aid Fund and the Party.

In the department of small rolled products there was a mill called Boucherat, which turned out materials in their primary state. The work was not complicated but was such as would almost make a worker sweat blood. The foreman always put new, strong, broad-chested fellows on to it. Work on the Boucherat was highly paid, but those who volunteered for it were few. There were scarcely ever any night shifts.

Garbuz, the furnace man needed money badly. His family was being supported for the most part by charity. Both he and Kosma made up their minds to earn a bit extra now and again on the Boucherat. Garbuz would spend the day at the furnace and go of a night to the rolling mill with Kosma, who had hardly time to wipe his hands after the day shift.

There they stood side by side. They were given long tongs with huge jaws. Their tired knees trembled a little inside their canvas overalls. Their gums had had neither meat nor bread to exercise them, so they dried up, and felt parched. There they stood, half embracing each other. There were still a few minutes before the bell. Leaning their chins on the tall tongs, they rested a few moments.

"Well, shall we start?"

"Yes," replied the younger man, moving his tongs cautiously and planting his feet more firmly.

High up in the interlacing steel vaulting of the rolling mill pigeons fluttered their wings.

The welders drew out of the oven the first milky white piece of metal and flung it carelessly on to the waiting hooks of the rollers. They in their turn passed the delicate white metal into the narrow throat of the mill train and thought no more of it. They were already alert to receive the next piece from the welders. The first piece dived into the guage of the mill train directed by tongs that were gripped in hard, strong hands.

"Go!" said the young man.

"Go!" assented the toothless one. They bent over the black gulf, their backs twisted and dry as horn. Their shirts flapping in their excitement. They stretched out the grinning jaws of the tongs towards the opening of the guage; their hands trembled as they awaited the rush of the metal. Garbuz hurried, spun round, jumped from side to side, hardly in time to catch the iron strip as it came from one guage and into another.

The welders brought up ever more and more pieces of metal. The two men were dying for a drink. They felt like after a long drunk. Kosma began to yawn a little and dream of freedom, forgetting his home and his poverty.

He would have liked to have flung down his tongs, stepped over them and dashed off to the tap, to throw himself down on his back and let a stream of water beat down into his throat, cold and searing through his dark inside.

No chance. The bell did not ring yet. Kosma threw himself into his work in a frenzy, he beat the metal, danced with it, spun around on his own axis, as it were. He grabbed the white hot strips one after another greedily. How many? He tried to count. The figures ran into scores, galloped along a deafening crowd. There was no end to them.

Kosma stretched out his tongs to the hole, waiting for the fiery snake to appear.

Waiting an hour — no, a whole night, a whole eternity woven of pitch darkness — sticky, heavy darkness.

Waiting — — —

His hands shook like jelly. The tongs drooped towards the iron floor.

Waiting — — —

The black guage of the mill train was cold and empty. Kosma moved his lips. They seemed to be covered with a crust of glass, dry and sharp.

Waiting? What, still more waiting to be done? He dropped the tongs from one hand. They seemed to have grown heavy and clanged hollowly on the floor. He had no time to notice the toothless man's alarm. He lifted his broad palm to his face — he only wanted to wipe his perspiring forehead, to straighten his head, protected with a handkerchief. But the evil sting, sharp, poisonous, leaped out and caught him unawares. He

lost his head in his fright and raised the hand that held the tongs. He stooped and stretched out the other to steady them but the strip of iron knocked the tongs clean out of his hand. The metal struck him like a flaming wing, cut like a knife through all the obstacles in its way and chopped the arm clean off above the elbow. At Kosma's shrill cry the pigeons fluttered in the vaulted roof and the flame in the ovens started. The strip flashed between his legs, got mixed up with them. The canvas overalls smoked with the heat.

The force of the blow knocked his legs from under him and he dropped on his knees. With a low moan he stretched out his other arm to the mill.

The toothless furnace man gave a gasp of horror, lifted his tongs and struck the hand that was reaching out automatically to its own destruction. Kosma raised it to his bitten lips and blew on the bruised fingers.

The workmen rushed up to the Boucherat. The mill train was stopped, the welders took off their goggles, the rollers threw down their tongs. The head foreman ran up. The crowd shouldered him away. The bell rang.

Kosma lay huddled up, flabby. Garbuz bent over him timidly.

"Still alive?" he asked.

"Yes, he's still alive," came a murmur from the others.

Then Garbuz raised his head, picked up his tongs and leaned on them heavily.

"No," he said, "he's finished!"

They all turned to him.

"A cripple!" added the toothless furnace man.

The welders, the rollers, the assistants, the oilers, the laborers — they all stood there silent, waiting, begging him with their eyes to say something more. The toothless man suddenly shook his tongs and began to speak:

"He'd been working for twenty hours. He was wanting something to eat. And when a workman wants something to eat, he's knocked down and choked to death. Look at that."

The head foreman, the foreman, the technicians and the engineers did not want either to listen or to look. They beat the gong, and shouldered the welders and the rollers out of their way. Then the unskilled laborers, the assistants, the welders and the rollers went after the head foreman.

"Go for them!" shouted the toothless man, raising his tongs.

"Knock hell out of 'em!"

"Knock 'em into pulp, the bastards!"

The strike came to an end only when safety nets had been fitted up on the Boucherat, when wages had been raised, and milk was given out during the night shift.

When his wounds were healed, one armed Kosma returned to the works as a metal worker. He had grown old, had sunk deeper into his canvas overalls. His cap came down almost to his cheekbones. His lips were never opened.

4

Terror came over my father. He was afraid to stay alone with us in the cold mud cabin. He would come home from work and hesitate in a lost kind of way, on the threshold. The heavy canvas gloves weighed his

hands down. His back was humped, his head hung, his eyes seemed furtively searching for something.

He used to go out to the drink shop and spend all his wages. He drowned his sorrows in Agenesov's den, forgetting that there were three starving children at home.

We were left to ourselves. The day always began with a fright. Mitka used to wake up before the rest, slip on my father's rags, the only jacket left to us and try to steal quietly out of the cabin. Niurka, who was all arms, would haul him back by the scruff of his neck. She wanted the jacket to wear herself when she went out to dive about in the crowds around the market stalls, to beg a bit of bread, there a kopek. The jacket meant food, and for this reason was fought for every day. Locks of Niurka's coarse black hair remained in Mitka's hands and her nails were red with the blood of his torn cheeks. Then, whoever had most strength left got the jacket. It was nearly always Niurka who, pouting her lips triumphantly, covered herself from head to foot in my father's rags and went out with a bag over her shoulder for her prey.

Mitka would sit licking his wounds and overcome his hatred sufficiently to beg:

"Listen, you dirty little runt, you'll bring us something though, won't you?"

I hated them both, hated them because they were so much stronger than I was and never let me have the jacket, never even divided their scraps with me.

There was a slaughter house near Rotten Gully. Its yard was divided into sections for oxen, calves, pigs, and birds, and surrounded by a high fence. The calves, the pigs and the birds were being fattened for killing in the yard.

I crawled into the goose pen through a hole in the fence that had probably been made by dogs. In the center of the yard there was a long narrow trough. The man who looked after the animals was pouring a mess of hot mashed oil cake into it. The long legged geese gathered in a noisy crowd, gobbling greedily at the food for probably the last time in their lives. I stole up to the trough without any prickings of conscience and reached for the mess. The geese flew at me, nipping me with their strong bills. They did not want to share their meal with me at all. Still I managed to gobble down a handful. It kept me going till next day.

I could not go further in search for food anywhere else or I would have frozen. I could only run as far as the slaughter house half naked and barefoot as I was.

Soon I had to get enough food for two. Mitka would not let me into the house of an evening without paying.

I brought him some of the oil cake. Finding it was rather a profitable way of living he began to demand payment from Niurka, too. Then she joined forces against him with me. We used the jacket in turns. I brought home the bread and she opened the door for me; we left Mitka to starve.

My father never brought a single kopek or even a crust of bread into the house. As a matter of fact, we had to feed him. He often begged from us.

"Niurka," he would plead, "haven't you got a bit of bread for me?"

Niurka was not greedy. She nearly always had something on hand. She would fetch out her bag and share with him.

Once I managed to get hold of a big piece of tripe in the slaughter house. We washed it in the stream at the bottom of Rotten Gully, cut it into big flabby lumps and boiled it somehow. When our stomachs were full at last, we sat deciding about the remains.

At last Niurka said: "Sanya, take the rest to the furnace to Dad." I dressed myself in the family rags and took it to him.

5

There was no change in our lives after the death of my father. The days went by as before. We did not leave our mud cabin. From time to time the kindhearted women of Rotten Gully would visit us and bring us turnips. Niurka took possession of all our gains, as before. But she was not greedy. She would let us have a lick of the turnips.

We crouched day and night inside the big Russian stove, where, in my mother's life time, bread used to be baked, great cauldrons of cabbage soup cooked and the lice steamed out of our clothes.

From the socalled Belgian woods the lazy breeze brought the twittering of birds, the mouldy scent of last year's leaves the coolness of summer air before a thunderstorm, the freshness of pine and willowcatkins. The steppe was yellowing, fading. Mitka and Niurka crouched in the stove, their blue knees drawn up to their blistered chins. Their coughing racked them and tore the layers of ancient soot from the walls of the stove.

For several days now they had given up the gifts of turnips to me. They lay there without attempting to rise, only begging me to warm them a little. I lay between them. I felt very hot, but they kept on begging me, even in their delirium, to warm them.

Once at dawn, I awoke with a shiver. On one side of me lay Niurka, silent. On the other side lay Mitka. His ears were still warm, but the nails on his outstretched arms chilled me. His blue lips were silent.

The intense silence terrified me. I wanted to get out of the stove, but I could not find its dark, narrow throat. The walls and the stiffened legs of Mitka and Niurka blocked my way. Then I shrieked, but the sound was swallowed up in the low arch of the stove.

When I awoke the smell of the slaughter house was in my nostrils. I opened my eyes and saw a grey canvas over me. I threw it off and sat up.

I was on the police cart on which corpses were carried away. My brother and sister lay beside me. All around me was the usual every day crowd of the market. It recoiled at the sight of me. No one as yet had ever risen from that cart. Not even in the annals of the Dog Kennels.

The people thought then that perhaps Niurka and Mitka might be brought back to life, too. It was too late. Their arms were already bent away and black spots showed on their wasted cheek bones.

The cart creaked on its way. I was taken back to the mud cabin. The emptiness of the cabin terrified me. The ceiling seemed so far away. Such great expanses of wall. And I was so little. The table reached just up to my throat.

I ran away from the mud cabin, into the world where I had not a soul belonging to me.

6

In those days the railway stations were crowded with deserters from the front, detachments of soldiers, and war profiteers who carried the food they bought up in sacks. Our railway station was for long months my new shelter. One night when I was very hungry I crept up behind one of the food smugglers who was dozing on the cistern of a train.

I made a slit in the three thicknesses of his sack and was holding my pocket under the stream of millet that trickled out like gold, when suddenly the profiteer opened his eyes and caught me by the arm. He called his comrades and six pairs of fists kneaded and thumped my body to a pulp. I lay still after the first few blows. My punishment had been swift. I hardly had time to regret that I would never know the feeling of the millet grains cracking under my teeth and squirting their milky juice against my gums, before I lost consciousness.

The profiteers were afraid to leave a dead body on the rails so they dragged me off to a field near the station and threw me into the nettles there.

But as it turned out, I was still alive. I managed to crawl over to another part, opened my eyes and groaned. It was then that I met Krylaty.

He found me among the nettles on the deserted field near the station, where he had brought a heavy, shiny suitcase. He was just tapping the nickel plated lock with a bit of iron when he heard a low moan right beside him. He put the iron back carefully in his pocket, pushed the suitcase out of sight, looked around him and caught sight of me sprawled out on the ground a yard or so away.

I saw a black gypsy beard, felt a hand raise my head tenderly and put a bottle to my lips. He took me to his room and rubbed ointment on my bruises. He fed me on milk, changed my poultices constantly and sat at my bedside by the hour.

Beside him I saw a boy about my own age, who craned his neck to peer at me with evil little eyes. The dark man called him Luna. I turned away from the boy's unfavorable stare and stretched out my hand to the man with the curly black beard. He put his hand on my hot forehead and asked me who I was and where I came from.

I closed my eyes and told him in a faint whisper the story of Grandad Nikanor and of life in the Dog Kennels.

"Well now you've got to get better as quick as you can. There's plenty of work waiting for you when you get up."

He went out after a while, leaving me alone with the wicked looking boy. Luna sat down on the edge of the mattress and asked in an unexpectedly friendly tone:

"How old are you?"

"Eleven," I replied, welcoming any change for the better in him.

"I think I'm about that too, I've been living a whole year with Krylaty."

"Who's Krylaty?"

The small boy looked at me mistrustfully and the evil expression returned to his face.

"Mean to say you don't know? That big black fellow who just went out."

Then he bent over and whispered:

"We go in for swiping, you know? From houses and flats. Never been caught once! He'll show you how to do it, as well. He's a swell boss."

Krylaty was impatient for me to get well, and learn the trade. A particularly well trained assistant of his had run away from him only a few weeks before.

7

Night. . . . .

Silent, pitch dark night in the swamp in the scrub around the fighting zone.

A green armored train, The Don Basin Proletarian, is rushing along the rails. Not a whistle is heard from it; the signal lamps are covered with black discs. The steppe, the four-armed windmills, the low hillocks have all been left behind. Before us and all around us lies the forest. It stretches out its branches to the train. I can hear the leaves brushing the armor plates of the engine.

A breath of cool damp air comes up from the swamp. I button up my shirt collar and crouch closer to the boiler. Bogatyrev, the engine driver, comes up to me. He strokes his black moustache with a broad rough palm, screws up his eyes and grins, showing his close white teeth.

"Shame on you, Sanka. Feeling chilly, are you? Want a nice warm bath? Maybe the Poles are afraid to come out, eh?" I am just going to reply when the telephone rings. The commissar on duty picks up the receiver, listens a while, tapping his heel on the floor and gives some orders to Bogatyrev.

The commander of the train is the former Don metal worker, Garbuz. He knows no pity, gives no mercy. He cannot laugh — this tall, toothless, slightly bent man dressed in black leather. He does not even raise his eyes when he speaks. He has forgotten how people shout. His orders are given in almost a whisper. The Red Army lads say that if he gets angry and shouts he will have a stroke that will keep him in bed for several days.

I am used to the armored train now. I love the constant alarm that fills my nights and days. I have a great deal of work to do. I help them in the kitchen to peel the potatoes. Together with the engine driver's assistant I help to oil the engine and do trifling repairs. I fetch water to the Red Guards as they lie naked by the machine guns. They call me Sanya, and if they want to be extra kind, they say:

"Come over here, Sanya boy."

I have learned to laugh. There is a red star as big as my forehead on my green cap. I dream of having a sword one day. Garbuz says that as soon as ever we beat the Poles, I am to have a sword.

We shall probably fight the Poles today. The men on our train say there is to be a battle, a frightful battle. Never before has the armored train made so many preparations or rushed along so fast.

8

The armored train is running through Eastern Bokhara. We have been transferred from the Polish front and are now on our way to put down the bands of raiders, the Basmachi, who have raided the whole of this

country and turned it into a desert. There are no ploughed fields to be seen, no camels, no sheep. Now and again we catch the glimmer of a canal, its sides trampled down. The entire irrigation system has been ruined.

Fedorov, a shaven headed Red soldier is lying beside me, resting between the shifts. He gazes mournfully through the loop hole at the desolation of the stricken fields. Then he turns away quickly, gives a heavy sigh and begins in a complaining tone:

"Yes, Sanya, and I shouldn't wonder if it isn't something awful now in our country, in Gambov, after Antonov's gangs have done their dirtiest."

He jerks his head in the direction of the bare steppe. He is silent a moment and then adds softly:

"And what will the people eat, I'd like to know? Oh, the blackguards!"

He stretches his arms to their full length, clasps them over his head, seizes his broad, smooth brow and almost falls on to the machine gun covers. There he lies for a long time in silence, moving his sharp shoulder-blades across his powerful back. Then he hugs me with his fleshy arms and whispers:

"I've got a wife in the country and three children, a good cow, and a young bullock, too. It's five years now since I saw them. Springtime — time to be sowing — and there's no one to do it. Oh — "

I do not feel sorry for him. I cannot understand his longings. I stretch myself, and open the neck of my shirt to the evening coolness.

The armored train cuts through space. The wind sweeps along the plating and streams softly in through the loop hole; its touch is light and cool and lazy.

I am lying by the loop hole and now no one drives me in out of the evening freshness. I wear the same star, stripes and jersey as the others. No one calls me a child now. Not long ago my position in the detachment was legalized. Garbuz, the commander of the train, entered my name on the official list for new uniforms. I have not been crossed off the register of the Political Education Course.

Nowadays when I draw myself up sharply and salute the commander he does not laugh, but returns the salute gravely.

On the armored train I am Engine-driver Bogatyrev's recognized assistant.

9

Bogatyrev kept himself in hand and drank nothing from the time that we left the Polish front. Here, in Asia, he could hold out no longer. When I found out about the vodka, I said to Bogatyrev immediately:

"Uncle Misha, if you'll throw it out, I won't say anything to Garbuz."

The engine driver seemed very upset.

"Sanya, my boy, may my eyes drop clean out of my head and may I die tonight if I break my word to Garbuz and do anything counter-revolutionary like smashing up the train. No, no, don't you think it of me. I'm just keeping this vodka as a standby, you see. When we've given these Basmachi a dressing down, we'll need a drop to celebrate and even the toothless chap'll have the sense to turn his back then. And where will we get the vodka, son, when we want it for the great occasion?"

"Uncle Misha, chuck it out!"

"Curse you, you little devil, what do you come bothering me for? I'm keeping it as a medicine in case I catch malaria, I tell you!"

"Chuck it out!"

"Oh, Sanya, you've soon forgotten our friendship, haven't you? And I let you mess about with the engine, a kid like you, taught you all sorts of things and now you —"

"Oh, well, Uncle Misha —"

"Listen, Sanya, when we're through fighting, I'm going to adopt you as my own son. I'll take you home to the Don Basin. There are goldy-colored fish in the Donetz river — they're called crucian — we'll go fishing —."

"Uncle Bogatyrev, you mustn't drink, you know you mustn't. Garbuz will kill you!"

"You little fool, you, he won't know — I'll only take a little at a time, a mouthful. I'm used to it, Sanya, for twenty years; ever since I was a stoker, I've had a small glass at breakfast time, another one with my dinner, and two if I was to drive a train somewhere. You can't go on at our job without wetting your whistle now and again."

"You mustn't —"

"Shut up, now, shut up for God's sake! I'll only take a thimbleful and you can keep the bottle if you like and give it me on the q. t.."

Bogatyrev shoved the cold bottle into my hand; I stood there puzzled, wondering what to do. At that moment a door banged. I pushed the bottle down the back of my trousers, in a sweat.

Garbuz passed through our Pullman. I wanted to pull up my jersey, drag out the bottle and hold it out to him. But I felt Bogatyrev's eyes on me, begging me not to give him away.

Next morning, when the damaged train left for repairs without me, Garbuz expelled me from the detachment without saying why. But I knew why. It was all because of that cursed vodka bottle. I stood there alone on the platform, watching the twisted, crumpled train disappear from sight. My eyes were wet. Around me lay the steppe—and strangers.

10

At a remote little railway junction where the International Express stopped to take in a fresh supply of water, two new passengers boarded the train.

They had appeared from out of the steppe, waited under the cars in the darkness until the train started and then scrambled, quick as lightning, up the iron ladder to the roof, to enter, uninvited, the dim, silent sleeping cars.

It was the burglar Krylaty, and I, the Saint—his disciple. I had made friends with him once more in Central Asia that spring. When I was left behind by the armored train, I thought I would go back to Krylaty for a while. Then I did not know what to do next and so put off leaving him until something better should turn up.

Now we were "working" the trains. To search the pockets of the sleeping passenger's clothes, hanging up in the car, and to pull down the most solid looking of the suitcases from the shelves is easy for me. I go

back the same way as I came to the little platform between the cars, where Krylaty is waiting for me. We fling the suitcase into a snowdrift and drop off the train.

Behind the alley of high white snowdrifts we open the case. There is a pile of beautiful books, a rubber hotwater bottle, a Turkish towel, a fine collection of toothpastes of all brands, a set of magazines and a box of chocolates.

The snow is falling thickly, the wind flutters the pages of the magazines. We sit there without speaking, on our guard, beside the open suitcase. I glance furtively at Krylaty. He is kneeling in the snow, his curly uncombed beard blowing in the wind, the long lids dropped over the deepset eyes, the lips drawn in tightly or perhaps bitten away. He seems to be waiting for something.

He leans over to me and without even opening his eyes, asks softly:

"Nothing else, Saint?"

I have a couple of watches, a heavy silver cigar case and a thick packet in my pockets, but I shake my head calmly.

"And you didn't find anything in their clothes?"

"Not a thing."

Then Krylaty gives a spring, digs his claws into my throat, splutters into my eyes and hisses out:

"You stinking carrion, you! Started to pinch for yourself, have you? Want to get rich, do you?"

All of a sudden he lets me go, tears off his fur cap and demands:

"Hand over my share."

I call to mind all my old dealings with Krylaty. Once we "picked up" a fibre suitcase full of gold and silver candlesticks in an International Sleeping car and all I got out of it was a whiff of cocaine and a couple of cakes. Krylaty took all the stuff for himself. I draw out a watch and dangle it before his eyes, saying spitefully:

"I'll give you nothing this time and you can find someone else to do your dirty work for you in future."

Krylaty shows no alarm. He just stretches out his thin, shining fingers. He is used to swiftness, he has lived by it for twenty years. It has kept him out of many a scrape and made his name the glory of the underworld. But I am swifter and I am fighting for my freedom, while he is only defending himself. I have been waiting for this chance for weeks, for months. I have kept my long knife ready to my hand. And he thought he could live at my expense forever.

Krylaty uses thieves' tactics. All of a sudden he crouches down, catches my legs and jerks me towards him, calculating that I would fall backwards and crack my skull on the tree stump. Then he would have got on top of me and done whatever he pleased.

We fall together. Something deafens me. I cannot see Krylaty. I must have fallen asleep. It seems to me that he groans and tries to raise himself from his hands and knees. His strength fails him. He creeps forward on his chest, measures off the distance between us with his chin and head, raises a long curved, snake-like white ribbon and strokes my throat, ribs and groins with it. It tickles me so, I could almost laugh aloud.

11

Life is dull. I am sick of this white marble house with the lions at the head of the stone steps that lead up to high doors of polished walnut. The order of the place makes me sick. In the early morning, while the clotted darkness is still hanging from the branches of the firs, I am aroused by a blast on a brass trumpet. I have hardly time to yawn, and get my eyes well open before my neighbors from the other cots are already on their feet, have aired their beds and made them and, with towels over their shoulders are already running off shouting and laughing to the washroom. I am only just washed by the time they have finished their morning exercises and are going up to the dining room. Formerly I never lagged behind, it was all a novelty to me—but now—the rising at the same hour every morning, the same exercises, the breakfasts, the workshops, the social evenings in the club—everything so regular, so exactly the same as the day before; God, I'm sick to death of it, I could cry out of sheer boredom.

I would have run away long ago but the pity of it is nobody would stop me from doing it. We seem to be the freest of the free. No locks, no bars, no roll call. I walk slowly out of the white house, stroke the manes of the stone lions and then stroll down to the gate. There it stands, the great tall gate with sharp spikes at the top that seem to pierce the clouds. I lean against it: the iron sears me like ice. I stick my head out through the wrought iron curves. I can feel the windows of the house behind me, shaming me. I suppose those slimy little pets of the commune are watching me, with their noses flattened against the glass.

I stroll along the railings as if I was just going for a walk. They all come running out of the house at that moment and scatter about the garden. Boris, a tall thin boy, who occupies the next cot to me, runs up. He flings a snowball in my eyes. I give him such a good one in the teeth that the red blood spurts and spreads like a red poppy on the snow. The swine does not even shed a tear. He only laughs and shouts to the rest:

"Not enough playing—come on, some more of you!"

The boys rush up, pelt me with snow, roll me over, drang me into their midst. We all tumble about together in a heap. Such laughing and shouting! I give way at last and laugh myself.

Boris and I are friends from this moment. He is the eldest in the Commune. It is he who teaches me how to read and write. Now I can spell out the golden words over the gate: "The Commune for Former Waifs and Strays." He helps me every morning to make my bed. He whirls about everywhere—he never has a moment to spare, he is always in a hurry. During morning exercises he sticks to me, grins cheerfully, shows me by a glance that I have a leg or an arm in the wrong position. It is he who decoys me into the workshop so cleverly.

The Commune is under the patronage of the railway workers. They have fitted up the workshops for us. There are seven pulley lathes for sharpening parts of steam engines. Boris has been working there over a year already and seems quite satisfied. I have been working there two weeks and see nothing in it. I just get more and more bored. The motors buzz like flies over a dung heap, the belts go clop, clop. I warm my back against the casing of the electric machine and stand there poking

my nose. My lathe is forgotten. There it stands in the far corner of the workshop, small and humpy. Its mounts are broken-toothed, smeared with oil, dusty. There is only one bright clean spot on it—the red plate bearing my name. But how can it be mine when I only work on it about once a week?

Well, it's all the same to me now. I'll get out of this soon. I can't make up my mind, that's all. I never seem to choose the proper night for it. It looks as though I might try tonight, though. I lie in bed, fully dressed, my boots hidden under the blanket. The room is empty. The windows look as though thick tar had been painted over them outside. Voices float in from the Red Corner. Some sort of classes are going on there. I pretended to be sick, groaned a bit, and left them; the wolf's thought still sticks in my head. I'm going to leave this miserable Commune once and for all. It seems as though the right opportunity has come at last. There is not a sound, the voices in the Red Corner have ceased. Not a rustle in the parqueted corridor. Now I must get up, strip the bed, tie up the blanket and the sheet in a tight bundle, cut the nickname that the thieves gave me "The Saint" on the white wall above my bed and then—away through the window into the silent garden, to the woods beyond, the road, the warning shriek of the engine as the train comes in—liberty!

Alright, then. But why doesn't my head want to raise itself? It seems a bit heavy. Maybe I'm really sick, after all? I jump out of bed in a fright, and look about me. Then it suddenly dawns on me, why I did not want to get up just now. I am sorry to leave this room. I must have got used to it evidently. There is Boris' bedside table with books on it. Whenever I feel lonely or bored, he reads to me. I doze off with his voice buzzing gently in my ear. Often in my sleep I feel him shut the book, tuck the blanket round me and go back to his bed in his stocking feet. At dinner time I gobble down my share before anyone else and start licking the plate and Boris, although he is as thin as a rake and needs three times as much as he gets, Boris gives me half of his dinner and says:

"You can have my glass of milk at breakfast every day, Sanya, it's bad for my bowels."

I drink it and forget even to thank him. I thought at first he was just trying to get round me, the skiny cuss. Just now, I feel I'd like to have another look at him, see the two rows of teeth, shining like maize grains, stroke the thick brows, arched like wings.

I am sorry, too, to leave all the freshness and cleanliness that struck me first when I was getting well and lay wrapped in bandages—and the man that sat in the armchair in a kind of golden shower of sunshine, watching me. My lathe among the spider's webs in the corner of the workshop seems lonely, too.

The mood lasts a moment. What rubbish! I dash over to the nearest bed, tear off the blanket, flap it in the air like a banner and then come to a dead stop, thinking—"But that's Boris's bed, and he'll be cold without his blanket."

I go over empty handed to the window, slide back the bolt, and let in the cold wind and the snow. The frost clutches at me like a hand. I shiver and then step out on to the window sill. A powerful hand draws me firmly back.

I turn and see Antonich's bristly moustache.

He lets go of me and whispers confidentially:

"Why through the window, Sanya? Go out through the door. The lions are only stone, they'll let you pass alright, and there's nobody else to stop you."

The electric switch clicks. Antonich and the whole Commune, headed by Boris are standing there. The electric light dazzles me.

Antonich turns to the boys and says:

"Go and see Sanya down to the gate, boys."

That is enough for me. I make a dash for the door and run full speed down an endless corridor.

No one chases me. I can just hear a thin voice, far away:

"Chuck him out, we don't want his kind."

It is pockmarked Petka's voice. I hide in the washroom and sit down on the window sill chipping out bits of the frame with my nail. The salt tears smarted in my eyes.

12

I burnt myself with the hot soup this dinner time. I was in such a hurry to get up to bed and rest after our long run on the skiis. But when the rest hour came round I lay there with wide open eyes, thinking about Antonich.

He came up quietly and sat down on my bed. Then he drew out an old newspaper with worn looking edges and laid a thick blue packet on his knees.

"Read it, Sanya."

I tried to spell out the words, stammering with embarrassment. Then I laid it down, hid my face in the pillow and said in an apologetic tone:

"I've forgotten how to read, Antonich."

He picked up the paper, laid his heavy hand on my back and leaning over to me, read slowly and distinctly into my ear:

"On October 12 between the Wolf's Lair and Forest Railway Stations the body of a man was found by peasants. The man had apparently been killed by a frightful stab in the back. The knife had penetrated to the chest and remained in the wound. On the hilt, which was made of expensive bone, the nickname "Saint" had been cut.

"That same night somewhere between these stations two passengers were robbed in the International Sleeping car of the Far Eastern Express. Inquiries made seem to point to a connection between these two occurrences. The robbers evidently quarrelled over the division of their booty and one of them paid with his life."

Antonich's voice ceased. The rising wind could be heard beating against the glass.

I buried my head deeper in the pillows. The feathers began to scorch me, the bed seemed plunging into darkness, and a heavy hand weighed on my back and heated it unbearably. The quiet voice began to speak again and I raised my head to listen:

"The money is in this packet. We found it on you the time you were rescued. Take it to the postoffice, send it back to the address you see written on it, and mind you're not late for tea."

I took the packet, a big, heavy thing. I raised my eyes to Antonich's. I did not want to drop them. I was afraid that my eyelashes might

hinder me from looking at things clearly, mercilessly, although in my blood, and in my brain there was a whirling storm like that beating against the window panes.

13

I had wanted to forget my last meeting with Krylaty, and the worn corners of the old newspaper, and the bone handle of the knife; I had thought to outdistance it all on my flying skiis.

Today Antonich had arranged that I should come face to face with my old life once more. Why had he done this?

The blue packet bulged like a malignant growth under my sweater. I wanted to forget it, but it burnt me and hindered me from moving freely. I swung my sticks slower and slower as I skiied down the slope. My clothes felt damp on me, my legs were as heavy as lead.

I stood still at last. The sticks fell from my hands. I wiped my forehead. The packet kept on burning into me. I pulled it out, laid it on the snow awhile to cool, then stuffed it under my jersey again. I picked up my sticks and swung them more and more powerfully and tore down to the station without pausing for breath.

I walked up and down under the window for about an hour. I was in no hurry to give up the blue packet. The face of the official behind the grating did not appeal to me; he had watery eyes and no teeth in front. I was waiting until some other face should come to take its place. None came. People began to gather and a queue formed at the window. I still fidgeted in the narrow corridor. I was very nervous. If I could have just one look at this money that was not mine. I drew out the packet. One corner was damp from my perspiration. I tore it open a little and felt the firm, new notes. Suddenly the Commune, and Antonich's eyes, the cleanliness, my lathe and an unfinished cylinder on it arose before my eyes — one after the other. A fierce jealousy came over me when I thought that someone else would finish my job instead of me. I glanced about me in a fright and ran up to the grating, pushing the people aside. Then I flung the blue packet at the toothless clerk as if it had brunt me. He fingered it for some time, wondering either at the address or the color of the wrapping. I immediately regretted having given it to him.

The whistle of an engine sounded not far away. I started. So we had met once more after my long captivity. It brought back memories of my wanderings, of nights spent in the dirty cattle cars, of the women peddling food at the stations, of the agreeable drowsiness produced by cocaine and the heartburn that followed on home-brewed vodka, of the armored train and the engine.

The whistle sounded nearer. All at once, with a deafening rattle and a shower of sparks, the train ran past the postoffice windows and pulled up sharp just opposite. The snow blew into my eyes, my head swam. I leaned against the wall for support. The new green carriages shone tantalizingly. Perhaps they were the same that had once, a long time ago, taken me to Batoum, where I had peeled the tender skins from tangerines and sucked their aromatic flesh. I shouted to the conductor nodding drowsily over his table, to give me back my packet. His misty eyes stared at me in bewilderment for a moment. He covered his ears

with his bony hands while the parting shriek of the train lasted. Then he held out a bit of grey paper, the receipt for my packet and dropped his heavy head helplessly on to a pile of papers.

I ran over to the window and pressed my face to it as the shadow of the train vanished into the dusk.

14

The Commune was celebrating its third anniversary. We had polished the floors, hunted the last spider from its corner, changed the curtains and the bed linen. Antonich had polished his leather coat till it shone and clipped his moustaches. The walls of the Red Corner were covered all over with posters, diagrams, and photographs of life in our Commune.

Our patrons, the railway workers from Wolf's Lair Station, came to the celebration and brought us presents. The Commune was giving up some of its boys to the patrons. The Soviet of the Commune had chosen five candidates, and the selection had been criticised and approved at the general meeting. In the evening these five former criminals would be set on the path to a new life.

I had been recently elected as the head of the Commune Soviet and took the chair at the meeting that evening. It was my turn to speak after Antonich had read out his report. But I felt bewildered — I did not know how to begin. I had read out the list of boys and recommended them on behalf of our Soviet, as candidates for the Young Communist League. I glanced down at the paper and caught sight of my own name heading the list in big letters.

Antonich noticed my embarrassment and taking the list out of my hand, walked over to the far side of the stage. He stood there, resting his foot on the low rail and leaning on his knee.

"Alexander, eighteen years of age, turner. Wants to learn to be an engine driver. Knows something about steam engines already.

"Boris Koudelya, eighteen years of age, turner, also wishes to be an engine driver.

"Nikolai Dubrov, eighteen, finished apprenticeship as a turner, wishes to be a master turner.

"Vanya Zolotukhin, first rate fitter, wants to be a moulder.

"Peter Mokrushkin, turner."

He stopped speaking, and rolled up the list. Then he raised his head. His eyes were cold, his lips drawn in, till they were invisible, his cheeks set like stone. Even his moustache seemed blacker than usual. His voice sounded stern and challenging.

"You're taking a new road, now boys, and you've got to step out bravely. Keep your eyes wide open, see you don't stumble on the way. Keep us in mind always. You grew into a Commune of your own accord, you brought yourselves up, too. No matter where you go, to Moscow or Tashkent or just to the station, think of yourselves as being still in the Commune and try to preserve your own characters, your own principles."

He turned and came up to the table where the presidium sat. He looked at me and his eyes were burning as he said:

"Be a good engine driver, Sanya — the best."

He was silent awhile, staring at me fixedly, remembering something. He stretched out his arm and bent over. I had time to notice that his eyelashes were quivering.

We hugged each other hard. The papers fluttered from the table, the glass rolled on to the floor, all the folk jumped to their feet and still we could not part. I could feel the tobacco scented moustache on my eyes, my cheeks, my lips, warmth seemed to rise from my heart and envelop my head.

Our tears mingled. We were not ashamed of them before our comrades, nor before the patrons, nor before the great statue of Lenin who seemed to have a twinkle for me in his soft, kind eyes.

Antonich straightened himself at last, dried his eyes and said in a broken voice:

"It's hard to let you go, Sanya. You were hard to win. Well, there — Goodbye, then, Sanya, go and win the life you want for yourself. And you, our dear patrons, accept these gifts from us and value them, be responsible for them. The whole Commune recommends these boys for the Young Communist League."

It was something to be glad about. The patrons had come and brought a band with them. How the brass of the instruments shone; it promised fun and jollity in the scented August garden and yet we —

Pockmarked Petka sat on the front bench. His full lips quivered. The glitter in his eyes lighted up his disfigured face. I would have liked to hug everyone, to stroke all the corners of the room, all the hundred and thirty heads, to call out to each one of them a promise that I would win through to the life I wanted, win through for certain.

15

I can see the sun every day now when I gaze at the cataract of molten iron falling from the furnace into the burnt ladles. I can find no other comparison for it. I have seen the pouring of the metal thousands of times and never tire of it. I can look at it without winking, without turning away. I watch it greedily till tears of pain come into my eyes. What strength and certainty there is in its solid, calm waves. I drive my engine up as close as I can to the ladles, and the strange sun draws me on and on.

There is no shame in such a frank love and pleasure. I am not the only one who feels it and it is not the first time that it has been awakened in this valley. When the first spade of the laborer's struck the bosom of the bitter, stone hard earth, untouched for centuries, then for the first time joy spurted from Borisov's lips.

And the fitters knew the same joy when they freed the pneumatic hammers from the last rivet and prepared the furnaces for those who were to use them.

Kramarenko, the furnace man and Bogatyrev the engine driver felt the same joy when they received the first load of pig iron. And last of all, there was the joy that was felt when the American furnaces were made to exceed their capacity guaranteed them and turned out two thousand two hundred tons of ringing metal in twenty-four hours!

I keep my engine waiting while the ladles fill, so as to be able to transport them to the pouring machines. I watch the metal cataract through my window. The dewy breath of early spring blows from the mountains.

I feel the hot head of Borisov, my assistant, leaning against my shoulder. He says thoughtfully:

"It was winter, Sanya, when we first started the furnaces. It was so cold that our spit froze on our lips. The American engineers said that we'd have to wait till spring to start — 'You can't go against nature,' they said. It's true the water pipes burst and we had to dig up the ground, cold as a grave. We mended the iron pipes and kept them warm with our sheepskin coats and our overalls! And we pulled through! And now there's more pig iron being turned out than the plan reckoned on. See it running, Sanya, bright as a tear!"

At the foot of the furnace I can see the furnace man, the smelters, the foremen, the furtive alertness of my assistant, his jealous glance.

I know that they have been waiting for this moment a long time. The furnaces boom with a three thousand cubic metre hurricane, the furnace men, the foremen and the smelters touch the sand softly. They do not joke or get angry or nervous. They just watch jealously over the breathing of the furnace, its moods and its life.

I am a certified engine driver already. I have passed my examinations and been given an imported engine to drive. I drive the trains with pig iron as well, and teach Borisov, my trade. Without taking his eyes off the molten metal, he whispers to me:

"Just think, Sanya! I was only an ordinary laborer here, I used to run about with a wheelbarrow and slept among the weeds there."

It grows dark outside the engine window. The people at the furnace have lost their calmness.

The pig iron cataract flickers, is interrupted, throws up a shower of sparks, overflows the full ladle. It loses its direction, splashes over onto the ground, onto the damp earth, flinging up a storm of sparks and flying splinters at the contact.

There is a shortage of ladles to hold the extra metal. Ladles there are in plenty but the engines can not place them under the iron stream. Not because the engines are no good. No, they are splendid ones, supplied by the best German works. They are not a year old yet. The varnish still shines on some of their parts. But the trouble is that the people who run them do not fully understand their possibilities, and have not yet mastered the complicated machinery.

And just now the pig iron is overflowing, beating into the ground the work of thousands, and we engine drivers can do nothing: there are brake shoes on our engines. They have been forgotten.

I can see the chief of the blast furnace now. He takes off his worn leather cap and stamps on it, tears his untidy hair and shakes his fists at the heads of the engine drivers, calling them thieves and criminals.

He runs past my engine. My youthful, beardless face inspires no respect.

I open the regulator and drive full speed into the fiery steam. My engine is no better than the rest. I have no brake shoes either. I have only taken over the engine today.

I race it along the rails and give the signals: under the wail of the siren I try to hide my pride in having control of this complicated engine, in my great responsibilities, in being the cynosure of thousands of eyes, in taking the life of the furnace in my hands.

I ride into the storm with open eyes. The funnel of the engine is already swallowed up in flame. It is very hot, my hair is wet. I could

light a cigarette in the air without drawing on it. I am waiting for the jerk, for the coupling of the ladle.

At last through the roar of the explosions I hear the steel of the automatic couplings kiss. Forward now, forward a centimetre at a time!

The narrow neck of the ladle must catch the stream of molten iron. I creep on through a whirlwind of stars, I am afraid to breathe, I see nothing but the stream of iron and it seems as if it is my life blood running to waste.

Through the ruddy fog I can see the furnace men, the foremen, the smelters crowding on the steep stairs falling, fighting for each step. They have ground and set their ears to it, striving to look at it from below, to find out its whereabouts by the sound. Over there Kramarenko is feeling the low wheels, is on his knees pressing his skinny back against the hard, heavy wing of the ladle and twisting his head round towards the wasted metal sun. Terror looks out of his eyes. The furnace man's assistant, Lesniak, comes running up, shielding his eyes with the wide sleeve of his jacket. The chief of the blast furnaces, another foreman and some smelters follow him. Further than that I cannot see. The ladle has penetrated to the very heart of the disaster, the storm has caught it in its embrace, something spatters against the iron sides of my engine.

The furnace men and the smelters are shouting.

I would like to go back now — back to where I can see and hear, and feel sometimes the breath of the dew on my face.

I am just turning the lever, so as to rush away out of this darkness and flame, when all of a sudden I catch sight of the flaming cataract, once more soft and obedient, pouring down like rays of eternal sunshine.

The engine is standing in the shade of the Cowpers. Scales of the metal rain are cooling on its sides.

I feel ashamed, painfully so. I would like to tell them all that I have fooled them, that my engine is an invalid, too. I might have been responsible for a still worse disaster; it is pure accident that I was successful this time. It was they who helped me to win.

The chief of the furnaces shouts something in my ear: I think it is praise. I look at his gold teeth, at the scarred temple, at the wound on the right cheek: I recall his name and its painful associations. I dare not utter it.

He hurries off to the furnace before I have time to tell him that I recognized him. It is Garbuz, my father's old friend, once the commander of an armored train.

I do not run after him. The furnace man, Kramarenko, strolls up at that moment and says, looking over my engine a little enviously:

"It's a nice engine. You did well, lad, keep it up. You know what, you should always hang around accidents."

"And you furnace men shouldn't allow accidents to happen, then I wouldn't have to hang around."

"You ought to, though, Sanya! Look here, let's make an agreement. You've got to feel as if the furnace was your own, and I'll feel like the master of your engine. Mutual responsibility, see?"

We signed the agreement in the noisy office after changing shifts.

Next day the district newspapers issues a special page with our agreement. I see my name in it, feel terrified and slightly giddy. How clearly it is written! You've climbed high, Sanya. See you don't have a fall!

16

Hans Brande came to our depot as consulting engineer from the engine works of the largest German firm, which had supplied Magnitogorsk with a hundred machines of the very latest pattern. He never permitted himself any tactless remarks. His business was to deliver the engines and return to Germany.

One day he came to ask me how the engines were working. He walked around them a long time, shook his head over a dinge in a rail here, a cracked buffer there.

He scraped a bit of dried mud from the side of a tender with his nail, rubbed at a scratch on the crimson varnish of one of the parts with his cambric handkerchief.

Then he dived into the room where the boiler fittings were being cleansed in salt, pointed to them with a gold ringed finger and said something very quickly. He was obviously upset.

I did not know German but I could understand an engineer's agitation. He was indignant at finding those beautiful engines damaged and dirty.

I wanted to tell him that it was not my fault. That day we were going to start and wash the boilers out. But I could not speak to him.

In farewell he raised two bony fingers and said:

"The Russian will never have more than a bowing acquaintance with the more complicated German machinery," and he stalked out, lifting his long legs proudly.

I kept his words in mind.

That day I happened to be in the foreign department of the Building Office. Someone translated Brande's words for me. I forgot for the moment that it was only an interpreter in front of me: I was ready to strike him.

"Oh, the snake, the thin-lipped blackguard, going about stinking of scent! Then I'm a barbarian, am I? And Boris and Bogatyrev, as well? We're ruining their industrial civilization, are we? Just wait, you lop-cared swine, we'll show you!"

It was not the German, of course, who provided the impetus we needed, but the agreement we had signed with the furnace men.

We started cleaning up the engines in the depot.

I collected my brigade and told them how the engineer had jeered at us all.

"Look here, comrades, let's make a good job of repairing the engines ourselves."

We resolved to publish a wall newspaper and elected an editorial staff. By morning, when the fitters were taking out the first rivet, the first number of the paper came out on the engine. The articles challenged us to keep our engines in first class condition at Magnitostroy. Every engine driver and his assistant should be answerable for keeping a particular part of the engine in good repair.

For three days we never went home to our barracks. We were busy returning the strength and freshness of youth to our engines. The furnace man, Kramarenko, helped, too. The engines were to be put into action next day. All that remained to be done was to set up the steam turbine and do the electric wiring. Unfortunately the only electrical fitter in the

depot had burnt his hand and was laid up in the hospital. We had either to wait for him to get well or to start work with kerosene lamps.

We started out to solve the problem of electricity.

Another sleepless night.

By morning the engine was ready. My assistant, Borisov, released the steam into the turbine; the moonlike eyes of the engine lamps lit up. It was a sunny day, but we seven men looked into their glowing white hearts with pleasure.

A few days later I saw Brande. I waved my handkerchief to him from a distance and called him to look at the engine. He came up, peered into my face as if he had never seen it before, glanced at the number of the engine, and still did not seem to understand. The fact was the German did not recognize it. I jumped down, reminded him of our last meeting and took him all over the engine. He examined it closely, felt it, rubbed it with his handkerchief. The spotless cambric handkerchief stayed spotless. Then he came up to me, seemed to want to say something, but only moved his lips in an embarrassed way. He was not forcing himself, however, but waiting until his fit of shamed giggling should pass. Then he spoke. I did not need an interpreter that time: I knew that Hans Brande was apologizing for his mistake.

17

Not long ago I became a student at one of the evening institutes. I was very lucky at the examinations. The committee happened to put questions that I could answer quite easily, and I was entered for the Russian Literature Course. After the first lecture I realized that I should have had put in years of preparation between attending the Factory and Works School and this first lecture.

I replan my working day. Eight hours, no more, on the engine. I have as much faith in my brigade as I had in myself. Together we had worried over the life of the engine, had won it back to perfect health, raised production to an unheard of pitch of efficiency. So, then, I have eight hours of pure production work, two hours for meetings, editing the wall newspaper and having a shower, two hours for meals—breakfast, dinner and supper—four hours for study and the institute, and a whole eight hours for sleep.

I want to knock something off the last period. Half is too much to take. I know I shall become a bad engine driver then. I shall probably develop neurasthenia, yawn at my lectures, do my editing in a slovenly way. But six hours' sleep is ample for a healthy young fellow, all that is good for him in fact. The two hours thus gained will go for my preparation work. And holidays I shall devote to the theatre, the cinema and climbing the Urals.

Two hours every day I sit over my mathematics, chemistry, physics. When I begin to confuse co-efficients with the common denominator, and square root with something else, I close my book, put my notes together and go off in search of my comrade, Lena Bogatyrev, who graduated from the Factory and Works School not long ago.

She leads me along the pages of the algebra and says quietly:

"To reduce a fraction, you must first divide the numerator and denominator by their common multiplier."

The words are now firmly impressed on my mind and when I leave Lena I am perfectly capable of reasoning things out clearly, instead of being lost in a mess of figures, rules and formulas.

18

I met Bogatyrev who has just been elected secretary of the Party local.

He shakes hands with me and, smiling enigmatically, leads me up to a big poster on the wall of the depot. I read in huge print:

"Today, August 8

The Heroes of Magnitogorsk,

Engine drivers from Engines Nos. 20, 100, 2455, etc.

To be Transferred to the Party."

The whole of my brigade, the masters of the six foreign engines, have come to the meeting.

Bogatyrev is standing behind a long table looking at the meeting over his glasses. He waves my application and says:

"Well, comrades, here we've got an application from an engine driver who says in his autobiography that he used to make a living by thieving, that he took cocaine and was in prison more than once. What do you think about it?"

The audience sits silent, staring at the ground.

The shriek of the engines can be heard through the open window. The wind catches the corner of the poster, and it flaps like a broken wing. And people are glad of it, it distracts their attention and they can turn their puzzled glances on it. They all listen eagerly to the rustle of the coarse paper and are sorry when it catches on a rusty nail.

Then engine driver Garkush rises with a determined air.

He strides over to the table, buttons up his jacket tightly, and, stroking his silvery hair, begins leisurely:

"I've been driving a Soviet engine for fifteen years, and been an engine driver for forty and a bit more. Well, and for thirty years, comrades, I did my share of thieving, too. I'd pick up a brass tap, a ring or a bit of wood in the depot and off with it to the market to sell. I took the coal that was meant for the engine, and stole wood for fuel for myself and for other people as well, and got paid for it. And I wasn't a bit ashamed, either. Why was that, eh? Because I was hungry. I had a family to feed and the railway company paid me next to nothing. And then they knocked off something for the rent of the flat they gave me to live in and for light and water. And who of you, I ask, would have the nerve to judge me now for stealing in those days? No one. And why don't I steal nowadays? Any child could answer that question. A man doesn't steal from himself."

Bogatyrev says nothing. Garkush's place is taken by Fedorev, the man who does alternate shifts with me.

"I'm a non-Party man. I've known Sanya for over a year now, and I must say that I envy him the way he learns everything there is to know about engines."

Then Andrusha Borisov addresses the meeting nervously:

"I was just an ordinary laborer, when I came here. Now I'm preparing for my engine driver's certificate. And it's all due to Sanya; it's he who helped me to do it."

Garkush interrupts Borisov and stretches out his hand.

"We, the whole community, Sanya, send you to the Party local. Step out, boy!"

The secretary of the committee of the Young Communists' League, the chief of the depot, the engine driver, the assistants come up to the table. It is gratifying and, at the same time, hard to listen to such high praise. And yet I must listen to the end, that is the proper proceeding. Today I have to listen, tomorrow another will catch up with me and have to listen to me.

Bogatyrev does not seem to know what to do with his spectacles. He twirls them in his fingers, hangs them on his ears, blows on the glass. He wants to calm down, to close his lips, control his trembling hands and knees.

Someone cries out:

"Let's vote!"

Bogatyrev remembers his duties and gets to work, forgetting to remind the meeting that only Party members have the right to vote. And, against the regulations, non-Party members and the Young Communists all vote.

19

Every time our rest day comes round, Lena and I go for a day's trip to a sanatorium hidden away in the pine forests on the mountains that fringe the shores of Hot Lake. I wake her before it is light. I bring flowers and sprinkle them over her while she is asleep.

We tramp in the dawn over the dewy steppe. The dew is chilly. In her light summer dress Lena looks like the blue, pale sky at daybreak. She hugs me close. I can feel her warm body through the cloudy material.

"My dear, my dear, how good life is!"

We meet the sunrise on the cliff. Here Lena shows me how to dive into the morning lake, touched with faint blue mists.

"Strain every muscle, make your body as hard as iron and jump. Now!—"

I clutch at an imaginary bar with my two hands, crouch and spring from the rock when Lena gives the word. I catch glimpses of sky and rocks in the water as it rushes up to meet me. Andrusha Borisov and Misha Bogatyrev are by the shore. Their hands are full of the shimmering silver of crucian, just caught in the lake.

I cut the surface of the water and the lake opens its depths to make way for me. Lena waves congratulations from the rock. The fishermen have thrown down their rods and are shouting something.

They are probably congratulating me on my dive.

I mount the path to the rock. My thighs are scratched, my burnt chest is covered with dew. Lena lies at my feet. She catches the cold drops with her lips as they fall, rubs my muscles dry with her warm fingers and with no attempt to hide the light in her eyes, whispers;

"Sasha!"

Evening comes and we are still in the mountains. The Magnitogorsk valley is visible below like a starry sky. The glare from the blast furnace covers the dark clouds. It looks like the real sunrise. We sit down on stones. The moon showers us with a white rain.

We sit there for ages.

We go back to the sanatorium by way of the crowded beach. People stop and stare at us curiously as we stroll along with our arms wound tightly about each other, our faces aglow from the sunshine, our eyes full of singing happiness. When we have to part for the night, Lena lays her soft hand on my hair and whispers with her eyes closed:

"Sasha I suppose it isn't good for me to climb rocks now."

I cannot understand at first.

She puts her hot lips close to my ear and adds:

"My dear, you must love him even more than you love me."

Then she runs away from me up the marble staircase to the women's dormitory of the sanatorium.

And I rush back to the men's dormitory, stride up and down, throw my arms around old Bogatyrev and my new friend Kolya Bogatyrev, fondle the walls, the bed, the mirror. I beg the radio to be silent.

Then I run through the sanatorium, now making its preparations for sleep, and seek out old Garbuz, the engineer with the gold teeth. He takes my hands and says, laughing:

"I understand, my lad, I understand. Now go to bed."

Translated from the Russian by Anthony Wixley

Michael Sholokhov

Broken Virgin Soil

Excerpts From a New Soviet Novel of the Don Cossacks

The night that Polovtsev, ex-captain of a hundred Cossacks, paid a visit to Yakov Lukich Ostrovnov, they had a long talk. Yakov Lukich was regarded by the other farmers as a clever fellow, a man of careful habits and great caution, yet he had nevertheless not been able to keep out of the struggle that was raging in the village just then, but had been drawn in, willy-nilly, by the course of events. From that day onwards Yakov Lukich's affairs took a dangerous turn.

That night, after supper, he got out his tobacco pouch, sat down on the big trunk with his legs in their thick woolen stockings curled up comfortably under him, and poured out all the bitterness that had been gathering in his heart for years.

"What's the use of taking, Alexander Anisimovich? Not much pleasure in life nowadays. A few of the Cossacks started to get things together and were doing well. In nineteen twenty-six—or was it twenty seven—the taxes were — well, comparatively speaking, not so heavy. But now things are all topsy-turvy again, it seems. Have you heard tell of this collective farm idea in your village yet?"

"We have that," replied his guest tersely, licking down the edge of his cigarette-paper, and observing his host closely from under his brows.

"Oh so that means they've all got the same grievance everywhere? I'll tell you about myself now: I came back after the retreat in nineteen-twenty. I'd left all my goods and two pair of horses down by the Black Sea. I came back, the village was bare. From that time on I've worked day and night. The first thing that happened to upset me was the way they divided up the crops—all my grain was taken away from me. Then I lost count of the things that happened to upset me. Although I could count them up maybe, if I liked: when they do take anything from you they give you a receipt for it, so as you wouldn't forget."—

Yakov Lukich stood up, groped about behind the mirror and, smiling a little, drew out a wad of receipts.

"Here they are, the receipts for what I gave up in nineteen twenty-one: the grain, the meat and butter, leather, wool, fowls, whole oxen I took to the Collecting Office. And here are the tax-forms for the farm tax, the Personal tax—and more receipts for insurance. Even for the very smoke out of the chimney we had to pay, and for the cattle to stand in the back-yard.—I'll soon have a whole sackful of these bits of paper. To cut a long story short, Alexander Anisimovich, I managed to live and to feed myself and others off the land. And although they skinned me more than once. I grew a new skin every time. First I got myself a couple of bullocks. They grew up, and I gave one for meat to the Office, bought another instead of it by selling my wife's sewing-machine. Time went by, and in nineteen twenty-five my cows had brought me another pair. So now I had a couple of cows and a couple of bullocks. I wasn't deprived of my right to vote, but I'm to be registered as a well to do farmer, a *serednyak.*"

"And have you any horses?" asked the visitor, interested.

"Just a minute, I'll tell you about the horses, too. I bought from a neighbor a young filly out of a pure-blooded Don mare (there was only one left in the whole village), and this filly grew up—well, as clever a youngster as you'd wish to see. Not very high, it's true,—she wouldn't have been taken in the old days for the army, but lively—I never saw anything like it. I got a prize and a diploma for her at the Circuit Exhibition, as she was a stud filly. I began to listen to what the agronomists had to say and to look after the soil as if it was a sick wife. I had the best maize in the village, and the finest crops. I used the chemicals the agronomists advised on the seed, and tried to keep fields covered with snow longer. I sowed summer crops straight after the winter ploughing, without waiting for spring ploughing. My fallow-fields were always the first. To put it in a nutshell, I was getting to be what you would call a real up-to-date farmer and I've got a certificate from the Circuit Land Office saying so. Look there—"

The visitor's eyes followed the direction of Yakov Lukich's finger to a sheet of paper adorned with a large seal that hung in a wooden frame between the ikon and the portrait of Voroshilov.

"Yes, they sent me a certificate and the agronomist even took a bunch of my best wheat to Rostov to show them there"—Yakov Lukich went on proudly. "The first couple of years I just sowed five dessiatins, then I put my back into it and sowed twelve, twenty, sometimes up to thirty dessiatins. I worked, my wife worked, and my son worked, and we only had hired help about twice, when harvest had to be got in quick. What did the Soviet Government say in those days? 'Sow as much as you can,' they said. And I did. I sowed till my guts were hanging out, nearly. I declare to God, I did. And now, Alexander Anisimovich, I'm frightened, believe me, frightened out of my life. They'll haul me over the coals for those thirty dessiatins, call me a 'kulak' maybe and deprive me of everything. It was the chairman of our village Soviet, Rasmetnov (he used to be a Red partisan, you know), Andrusha, as we call him, led me into this mess, curse him. Says he—'Sow the maximum, Yakov Lukich,' he says—'Help the Soviet Gover'ment by sowing as much as you can, the Gover'ment's in terrible need o' bread.' I was bit doubtful at first, and now I'm thinking that there maximum is going to be the ruin of me. God help me."

"Were any of the folk here signing up for the collective farm?" his visitor inquired. He was standing near the wooden bench, his hands behind his back, a big-headed, broadshouldered, fellow, as solid and as tightlyfilled as a sack of grain.

"Signing up? They haven't got many yet, but there's going to be a meeting of the poor peasants tomorrow. They came round to tell us just before it fell dusk. They've been bawling it into our ears since Christmas—Join the Collective farm. But folk were dead against it and no one joined up. Who's going to be fool enough to rob himself. I'd like to know? They'll try and get round us tomorrow at the meeting, I suppose. They say some worker from the District town has come over this evening to try and drive us all into the Collective-farm. It's the end for us, I'm afraid. We've just earned a few corns on our hands and a hump on our backs, and now we've each got to throw all we have into the one pot—our cattle, our grain, our fowls and, I suppose, our houses,

as well? It's the same as if you'd say go find a street-woman for yourself—that's the way I look at it, anyhow. Look here, Alexander Anisimovich, supposing I give a couple of oxen to the collective-farm (fortunately I just had time to sell the other couple to the Meat Trust), and a mare with her filly, my plough and the rest of my things, my grain, as well—and another chap brings nothing but a headful of lice to it?—Well, and so we are to add everything together and divide up, so as everyone gets an equal share are we? Do you think, that's fair to me? Maybe that fellow lay by the stove all his life thinking of how he'd get something for nothing, while I—ah, well, what's the use of talking? It means just this for me," and Yakov Lukich made a motion as if to cut his throat. "Well, that's enough about that, now. Tell us, how you're getting on? Are you working in some place or following a trade?"

His guest came close up to Yakov Lukich, sat down on the wooden bench and began to roll himself another cigarette. He stared fixedly at the tobacco-pouch for a time, while Yakov Lukich stared at him, at the tight-fitting collar of his old blouse, that seemed to cut into the full weather-beaten neck where, on each side, below the Adam's apple, the swollen veins stood out.

"You served in my company, Lukich. . . You remember how once, I think it was at Ekaterinograd, when we were retreating, I had a talk to the Cossacks about the Soviet Government? I warned them then, you remember? You're making a mistake you'll regret bitterly,—I said. The Communists'll give you a lesson yet—They'll skin you, mark my words. You'll be sorry when it's too late." He sat silent for a moment, his blue eyes narrowed till only a pin-point of light showed. Then he gave a sly smile.

"Hasn't it turned out just as I said? I couldn't get out of Novorosisk with my men that time, I had bad luck. The Volunteer Army and the Allies betrayed us. I joined the Red Army then, and was given command of a squadron on its way to the Polish front. . .—But there was what they called a 'filteration' commission for dealing with officers who had been in the Tsarist Army. . . This commission arrested me and sent me up before the Revolutionary Tribunal. They would have sentenced me to death, I suppose, or sent me to a concentration camp, for certain—because—do you know why? Some blackguard of a fellow from my own village informed on me and said I'd taken part in Podtelkov's execution. I managed to escape while we were on the way to the Tribunal. I lived in hiding a long time under a different name, and didn't turn up in my own village till 1923. I'd managed to hang on to the paper saying that I'd been a commander of a Red squadron once, and I fell in with rather decent fellows,—so, well, in a word I kept going. At the beginning of course I was called up to the Political Bureau of the Don Cheka, but they couldn't find anything against me and I got taken on as a school-teacher. I was a teacher until quite lately. Well, and now—I've got something else to do. I'm on my way to Ust-Khoperskaya on business and I just thought I'd drop round and see an old pal from my company."

"So you were a teacher, were you? Aha. You must have a deal of book-learning, then,—now tell me this, what's going to become of us? Where are these collective-farms taking us?"

"Straight to Communism, old chap. Real, downright Communism, I've read this Karl Marx and his famous *Communist Manifesto*.—And do you know what'll come of this collective-farm business? First, there'll be the

collective farm, then there'll be the commune—and that means the end of private property. They'll not only take your oxen from you, but your children, as well, and they'll be brought up by the state. Everything will be common property: your children, your wives, your crockery, even your spoons. You may want to have noodles with goose-giblets, and they'll feed you on kvas made from sour black bread. You'll be a serf, and nothing more."

"And supposing I don't want to be?"

"You won't be asked,—you'll have to be."

"How's that?"

"You'll all be in the same state."

"Ha, that's a nice trick for you."

"You bet it is. And now I'm going to ask you a question. Can things go on like this, or not?"

"Of course they cant."

"Well, if they can't, then we must do something about it, we've got to fight."

"What are you talking about, Alexander Anisimovich. We tried it once, we fought—It's no use. I couldn't even think of it."

"You might try, at least," the visitor moved closer to him with a glance at the closed door into the kitchen. The blood ebbed from his face as he whispered: "I tell you straight, I'm relying on you in this, the Cossacks in our village are going to rise. And don't you think they'll be as easily put down as all that—It'll be no joke when they do rise. We're all connected up with Moscow, with the old generals who are serving now in the Red Army, with the engineers working in the factories and mines, and what's more, I can tell you, with our people abroad. Yes, that's as true, as I'm here. If we organize and stand by each other and strike now, this very minute, by Springtime, with the help of the foreign powers, we'll have the Don clear of Bolsheviks. You'll be able to do your winter sowing with your own seed this year, yourself alone—. Wait a minute, let me finish, you'll tell me afterwards. There are a lot of people from your district on our side already. They've only got to be organized and collected. It's about this that I'm going to Ust-Khoperskaya now. Will you join us? We've already got more than three hundred Cossacks, from the old army, in our organization. We've got fighting groups at Dubovsk, Voisk, Tubyansk, Little Olkhovatsk and other villages and we must collect a group like that here in Gremyachy Log. Well, come on, speak out."

"Folks are discontented, of course,—and they do grumble about the collective farms and against giving up the grain to the Collecting Office—"

"Wait a minute. We aren't talking about folks in general, now, but about you. I'm asking you, what about—what I've been telling you?"

"Oh, but you can't make up your mind on a thing like that, all at once. After all, it's as good as putting a rope round my neck."

"Now just think a minute. Say the order's given, and we attack from all the farms at once. We'll first occupy the central village of your district, get hold of the militia and the communists in their homes, one by one, and after that—the fire will burn without adding much fuel to it."

"And what'll we fight with?"

"We'll find plenty of arms. You probably have something by you, haven't you?"

"God knows—there was one, I think, lying about somewhere. The Austrian pattern, I think it was—"

"What we've got to do is to start the thing and in a week's time foreign ships will fetch us all the machine-guns and rifles we want. Aeroplanes too. Well?"

"Give me time to think, Cap'n. Don't drive me, all at once—"

His guest, into whose face the color had not yet returned, leaned over to the bench and murmured in a hollow voice.

"It isn't a collective farm we're driving you to join, we're not going to force anyone. Do as you like, only mind your tongue, Lukich. There are six here for you, and the seventh—" and here he curled his finger around the revolver that bulged in his pocket.

"You needn't worry about that. I'll not tattle. Yes, but it's a risky business, this of yours. It really terrifies me, I tell you straight. Of course, there's not much else left for us in life—" He was silent a moment—"If it wasn't for this hounding down of the rich, I might have been the best-off man in the village, now, by my own efforts. If we were free to do as we liked I might even be keeping my own motor car now." Lukich went on bitterly after a momentary pause. "But to go into a thing like that—all alone—They'll make mincemeat of me if they catch me."

"Who's asking you to go into it alone?" interrupted his guest impatiently.

"Ah—well, that's just in a manner of speaking—but what about the others? What does the village think? Are the other folk willing to go?"

"The other folk? They'll go like a herd of sheep. All that's necessary is to lead them. Well, what did you decide?"

"I was telling you, Alexander Anisimovich."

"But I must know definitely, if you've decided, or not?"

"I've no chance to do anything else, I've got to decide. You should have given me more time to think it over. I'll tell you what I've got to say to it in the morning."

"You'll have to draw in some other reliable Cossacks that you know. Find some who have a bone to pick with the Government." Polovtsev was already issuing his orders.

"Everyone has a bone to pick, with things as they are,—you can be sure."

"What about your son?"

"He's a chip off the old block. He'll do what I do."

"Is he a determined sort of fellow?"

"He's a good Cossack," replied his host with quiet pride.

The guest was given a grey sheepskin to lie on in the middle room, and a fur coat to cover him. He took off his high boots, but did not trouble to undress. He fell asleep as soon as his cheek touched the cool pillow that smelled of feathers.

Before daylight Yakov Lukich roused his octagenarian mother who slept in the little back-room. In a few words he informed her of the purpose of his former captain's visit. The old woman sat listening, her legs, black-veined and crippled with rheumatism dangling from the bench, one hand behind her yellow ear, pushing it forward.

"Give me your blessing, Mamasha?" Yakov knelt down.

"That's the way, go and beat the enemy, my child. And God bless you. They shut down the churches—They worry the priests out of their lives—Go, my boy, and God be with you."

The kulaks, or rich farmers, who had been driven out of their villages, found temporary shelter with relatives or with old friends. Frol Rvany, after sending Timothy to complain to the Public Prosecutor of the district, went to live with his friend Borshchev, the man who had declined to vote at the meeting of poor peasants. The active kulaks assembled in Timothy's tiny two-roomed house.

To avoid being noticed and overheard in the daytime, they would usually drop in at Borshchev's by ones and twos, creeping round by the threshing-yards and the back yards, so as not to meet anyone who might draw the attention of the village Soviet to them. David Gaev came often and so did that old crook, Lapshinov, who, after the dispossession of the kulaks, had taken to going about, as village idiot, or "one of Christ's afflicted", begging. Sometimes Yakov Lukich came to see if the time was ripe. A few of the *serednyaki* or fairly well-to-do farmers who were against the collective-farms, called in at "head-quarters," from time to time. Nikolai Liushnya was one of them. In addition to Borshchev himself there were two other poor peasants: a Tall eyebrowless Cossack called Vasili Atamanchukov, who was always silent, always as smooth and clean and hairless as an egg, and Nikita Khoprov, who had been in the artillery together with the dead Podtelkov. During the Civil War Nikita had persistently avoided service, and turned up in 1919 in the punitive expedition led by Colonel Ashtymov, a Kalmyk. This had determined the course of Khoprov's life under the Soviet Government. Three of the farmers: Yakov Lukich, Ostrovnov, his son, and the elder Lapshinov, had seen Khoprov during the retreat in 1920. He was then at Kushchevka with Ashtymov's punitive expedition and wore the white stripe of a lieutenant. They had also seen how together with three Kalmyk-Cossacks, he had driven the workers from the railway depot up before Ashtymov to be questioned. This much they had seen. Khoprov lost much sleep over this, when he returned to Gremyachy Log from Novorosisk and learned that Ostrovnov and Lapshinov were still alive. Terror had haunted the broad-shouldered artillery man during those years of fierce reprisals against counter revolutionaries. This man, who could shoe any horse, holding it up by the hoof of its hind leg, trembled like a late oak leaf touched by frost whenever he saw Lapshinov's sly smile. The latter he feared more than all the rest.

"Grandad," he would mutter hoarsely, scarcely able to move his lips for fear. "Grandad, you wouldn't ruin one of your own Cossacks, would you? Don't give me away."

"What, I give you away, Nikita? For the love of Christ, what are you talking about. Don't I wear a cross on my breast like every other Christian? And wasn't it Our Savior himself who said 'Love thy neighbor as thyself.' Tell on you, why such a thing would never enter my head even. I'm not that sort. If you would help me a bit now, and again, in case of anything, I'd be glad. Supposing anyone was to bring anything up against me at a meeting or the Soviet turn on me, say. You be ready, in case. People should help each other, I always hold. 'He that draweth the sword shall perish by the sword.' Isn't that so? Oh,

and do you know that I wanted to ask you if you'd mind helping me with the ploughing now. My son's no help, he's a bit touched, and I can't afford to hire anyone."

So Nikita Khoprov went on helping Lapshinov from year to year; he ploughed, he stood by Lapshinov's threshing machine pouring Lapshinov's wheat into it. All for nothing. Then he would go home, sit down at the table and bury his broad, red-moustached face in his iron hands and think.

"How long? How long shall I have to go on like this? I'd like to kill him."

Yakov Lukich Ostrovnov never threatened him, nor begged anything of him. Yakov knew that if he wanted a bottle of vodka or even something more, Khoprov would never dare to refuse. He often went over for a drink to Khoprov's of an evening and unfailingly acknowledged it with a "much obliged for the treat."

"Hope it chokes you," Khoprov would say to himself, clenching his great fists, each of which must have weighed a few pounds, under the table.

Polovtsev was still staying at Yakov Lukich's, in the little back-room where the old woman used to sleep. She had moved over now to the shelf of the stove in the big room. Polovtsev would lie smoking all day on the bench. It was too short for him so he stuck his base, sinewy feet against the back of the warm stove let into the wall between the rooms. Of a night he often walked about the sleeping house. Not a door creaked, their hinges had all been well-oiled with goose-grease by the careful master of the house. Sometimes Polovtsev would throw on his wadded jacket, carefully extinguish his cigarette and go out to see his horse, hidden in the barn. The animal fretful for want of exercise would meet him with muffled, quivering snorts of delight as if he knew that this was no time for giving full expression to his feelings. His master stroked him, felt the muscles of his legs with stiff iron fingers. One pitch-dark night he led the animal out of the barn and galloped away over the steppe. He returned before daylight. The horse was in a lather, carried himself askew and was taken with a heavy uneven shivering. That morning Polovtsev remarked to Yakov Lukich:

"I rode over to my own village last night. They're looking for me. The Cossacks are ready and only waiting for the word."

It was at his instigation that Yakov Lukich, when the second general meeting about the collective farm was called, made a speech appealing to the farmers of Gremyachy Log to join. Davidov was delighted with his sensible speech and its results. After listening to the appeal of such a highly-respected farmer as Yakov Lukich and learning that he intended joining, thirty more farmers applied at once.

Yakov Lukich had spoken well and sensibly of the collective farm. Next day, however, as he went round to the more reliable of the *serednyaki*, known to be against the new idea, and stood them vodka out of Polovtsev's money, he took a different tone:

"You're crazy, my lad, to think of it. I need to be in the collective farm much worse than you do, and I dare not speak against it. I've always lived well you see and they could very easily come and take everything I have away from me. But you, why should you go messing about in a collective farm? Did you never see a yoke in your life, then? When they get hold of you, my boy, you'll never be able to so much as straighten your back to

look at the light of day again." Then he would begin to tell of the rising that was soon to take place, of the socializing of wives and, if his listener proved interested, and easily led, he would implore, persuade and utter dark threats of a terrible punishment when "our own folk" should return from abroad. In this way he usually got what he wanted, the promise of support for the "Union."

Everything was going smoothly. Yakov Lukich had recruited about thirty cossacks. They had been warned not to speak to anyone of the "Union" or of his conversation with them. One day he went off to the kulak headquarters to finish the job. He and Polovtsev had always taken it for granted that the dispossessed and their sympathizers would need practically no persuading and had, therefore, left them to the last. It was here, however, that he got his first set-back. . . Yakov Lukich closely wrapped in his cloak, arrived at Borshchev's just as dusk was falling. They were all gathered in an unused room, now heated by a stove let into the ground. The master of the house, Timothy Borshchev, was kneeling down stuffing bits of twigs into the opening of the stove. All around on the benches, and piles of pumpkins striped orange and green like the ribbons of the Order of St. George, sat Frol Rvany, Lapshinov, Gaev, Nikolai Liushnya, Vasili Atamanchukov and Khoprov. Frol Rvany's Timothy, who had just returned from the district town that day, was standing with his back to the window. He was telling them how stern the Public Prosecutor had been with him, how, instead of listening to complaints he had wanted to arrest Timothy and send him back to the district center. When Yakov Lukich appeared, Timothy stopped speaking, but his father encouraged him, saying:

"It's one of ourselves, Timosha. Don't be araid of him."

Timothy went on with his story; his eyes glittered as he concluded:

"Things have got to that pitch now, that if I knew of some gang I could join in with, I'd up on my horse and knock hell out of those Communists."

"We're in a tight corner, there's no doubt about it," Yakov Lukich agreed. "And if there was no worse to come it would be alright."

"What else is there to come, then?" Frol Rvany caught him up angrily. "It's alright for you, you have an easy time of it, but take me for instance instead of eating my own bread, it's eating me. During the Tsar's time me and you lived about the same and now you're as fat as a pig, and they've taken the last pair of boots off my feet."

"I'm not talking about that. I'm thinking—what if something was to happen. . ."

"What, for instance?"

"Well, if a war was to break out—"

"Godsend it will. May the good St. Egori the Victorius send us a war. As soon as you like. The Gospel tells us—"

"We'd go to it with sticks and poles, if we had nothing else, like they did in '19."

"I'd tear the guts out of them alive, o-o-h, I would that."

Atamanchukov, who had been wounded in the throat at Filonovsky, said indistinctly:

"People have turned into devils now. They'll fight tooth and nail."

Yakov Lukich threw out a hint or two that things were by no means quiet in the neighboring villages, that in some places the Communists were being taught their place after the Cossack fashion in the old days of the atamans. Those who had made themselves undesirable by showing favor to Moscow had been taught their places by a simple enough method—a sack over the head and a push into the water. He spoke in slow measured tones, weighing every word. The whole of the North Caucasus, he hinted, was disturbed, in the villages down the river the women had already been socialized, and the Communists were the first to have slept with other men's wives openly. In the Spring, he implied, the landing of foreign troops might be expected. He had been informed of this by an officer, an old acquaintance, who had passed through the village a week ago. Yakov Lukich did not mention, however, that this officer was still living with him.

Then Nikita Khoprov, who had been silent up to then, demanded:

"Yakov Lukich, tell us one thing: let's suppose that we rise and we finish off the Communists, and then what? Supposing we do get the better of the militia, and then the Red troops arrive and march on us, what then? Who's going to lead us against them? There aren't any officers about here and what do we know—we're ignorant folk, we have to find our way by the stars still. . . And in a war troops don't march just anyhow, they've got to have it all mapped out for them, that's why they draw plans at headquarters. We'll have plenty of hands to fight with maybe but no heads."

"Won't we, though," Yakov Lukich replied hotly. "The officers'll turn up alright, and they know more than the Red Commanders. They went through the old military colleges that turned out real officers, they've got all that book-learning behind them. And what sort of commanders have the Reds got? Take our Makar Nahulnov, for example. I don't doubt he'd be able to chop off a head alright, but could he lead a hundred Cossacks? *Never* in your life would he be able to do it. He'd know a lot about maps, wouldn't he?"

"And where are the officers to come from?"

"Out of their mother's bellies," Yakov Lukich retorted crossly. "What are you sticking on to me for Nikita, like a burr to a sheep's tail—'where are they coming from, where are they coming from?' How do I know?"

"They'll come back from foreign parts, of course, sure enough," said Frol Rvany encouragingly. In an ecstasy of anticipation, tasting already the sweetness of a bloody revenge, he drew in the smoke-laden air with a snort through his one whole nostril.

Khoprov rose, kicked a pumpkin aside and, stroking his big red moustache, said impressively:

"Yes, it sounds alright, of course. . . Cossacks are wiser nowadays, though. They got a mortal beating at the last rising. They'll not go this time. The Kuban'll never stand by us, either . . ."

Yakov Lukich laughed in his greying moustache and declared obstinately:

"They'll rise like one man. And the Kuban will be afire, too. In a battle it's like this: one moment I'm underneath digging the ground with my shoulder-blades, and before you know, where you are, I'm on top, pinning down my enemy."

"Alright, lads, you do as you like, but I wouldn't go into this for anything," Khoprov exclaimed. A chill of determination swept over him. "I

wouldn't like to rise against the Government and I don't advise anyone else to do it either. And as for you, Yakov Lukich, you're doing no good stirring up the people like this. . . That officer that came to spend the night with you, for instance, he's a stranger to us. What do we know about him? He'll just stir up the mud and clear out, and it's we who'll have to drink it again. Remember that time they drove us against the Soviet Government. They gave the Cossacks stripes to wear, made half-baked officers out of us to do the dirty work, while they themselves stayed at the base, at headquarters, playing about with bits of spindle-legged young ladies. . . And when it came to paying, you remember, who had to pay for all this? At Novorosisk the Reds cut off the Kalmyk's heads on the wharves, while the officers and the rest of the fine gentlemen sailed away to foreign countries. The whole of the Don Army herded into Novorosisk like sheep, and where were the generals then? Eh, oh, yes, and what I wanted to say to you was this: that 'gentleman' that stopped the night with you a week ago—he's still hiding in your house, isn't he? I've noticed you once dragging water to the barn, and I wondered to myself—'what would Lukich be taking water there for, now, what sort of a beast would he be watering' and then once I heard the neigh of a horse."

Khoprov observed with satisfaction how Yakov Lukich's face faded to the color of his greying moustaches. A tremor of consternation and alarm ran through the company. A fierce pleasure flared up in Khoprov's breast; he flung out his words as if from a distance: it seemed to him as if a strange voice, not his own, was speaking.

"There's no officer at my place," Yakov Lukich said at last in a hollow voice. "It was my mare you heard; and I never took water to the barn, sometimes I take the slops there for—er—. I've got a boar in there, as a matter of fact."

"Oh, I know your mare's voice, you can't take me in like that. It's nothing to me anyhow—I'm not in this business, with you—you can guess what that means—"

Khoprov clapped on his sheepskin and with a last glance around him, made for the door. Lapshinov barred his way. His grey beard shook, he spread out his hands and made a sort of curious curtseying movement as he asked:

"Going to inform, Judas Iskariot? To sell us? And supposing we were to tell that you were in the punitive expedition with the Kalmyks?. . ."

"Don't you worry, Grandad Lapshinov"—Khoprov blurted out in a cold fury as he raised his iron fist to the level of the old man's beard. "I'm going to inform on myself first of all. I'll tell them straight: I was in the punitive expedition and was made a lieutenant, 'send me up for trial if you want', I'll say, but remember, the rest of you here can look out. And as for you, old son of a bitch—You—" Khoprov drew in his breath till he wheezed like a bellows, "You've been sucking my blood for many a year. I'd like to give you just one for that."

Without swinging his arm, he thrust his fist into Lapshinov's face and went out, banging the door behind him with never so much as a glance back at the body of the old man. Timothy Borshchev brought up an empty bucket, and Lapshinov knelt down beside it. Black blood spouted from his nostrils as if from an opened vein. The only sounds that penetrated the tense silence came from Lapshinov sobbing and grinding his

teeth, and the drops of blood pattering down the sides of the bucket from his beard.

"Now we've been caught redhanded," exclaimed Gaev, who had a large family and was now dispossessed. Nikolai Liushnya jumped up at that and without waiting to put on his hat or say a word to anyone, rushed out the house. Atamanchukov followed without haste, remarking in his thin, husky voice:

"We'd better clear out without waiting for anything else to happen."

Yakov Lukich sat silent for a few minutes. He felt as if his heart had swollen and risen to his throat, choking him. He could hardly breathe. The blood throbbed in his head, a cold sweat broke out on his brow. He stood up after a good many of the others had gone out, and carefully avoiding Lapshinov and his bucket, said softly to Timothy Rvany:

"Come along with me, Timothy."

The latter put on his jacket and cap in silence. They went out. The last lights were being extinguished in the farmhouse windows.

"Where are we going?" asked Timothy.

"Home, to my place."

"What for?"

"You'll see, come, let's make haste."

Yakov Lukich went home round by the village Soviet. There was no light in it, the windows looked blind and dark. At last they got to Lukich's. He halted on the doorstep and touched Timothy's sleeve.

"Wait here a minute, will you? I'll call you."

"Alright."

Yakov Lukich knocked at the door. His daughter-in-law drew the bolts.

"Is that you, Dad?"

"Yes."

He shut the door behind him and going through the passage tapped at the door of the little back-room. A husky bass voice called out:

"Who's there?"

"It's I, Alexander Anisimovich. Can I come in?"

"Yes, come in."

Polovtsev was sitting writing at the table before the window, which was covered with a black shawl. He covered the paper with his broad sinewy palm and turned his head.

"Well, how are things going on?"

"Badly. . . There's trouble coming."

"What? Out with it, quick. . ." Polovtsev sprang to his feet, stuffed the paper he had been writing into his pocket, buttoned up his blouse feverishly and bent forward, livid, alert, like some great beast of prey, ready to spring.

Yakov Lukich told him jerkily what had happened. Polovtsev devoured his words. His bluish eyes glared out of their deep sockets at Yakov Lukich. He straightened himself slowly, clenching and unclenching his fists and at last with a horribly distorted face stepped close up to Yakov Lukich.

"You bla-a-ckguard. What, you want to ruin me, you old scoundrel? You want to spoil the whole business? You've already half ruined it with your stupidity and carelessness. What did I tell you to do? What—were—my—orders, I'm asking you? You were to test each one separately. And you—went and knocked the whole thing on the head." His muffled, gurgl-

ing whisper drove the blood from Yakov Lukich's cheeks, and he became still more confused and terrified.

"What are we to do now? Has this Khoprov informed yet? Eh? No? Speak up, you old rascal. Where's he gone? Did you follow him?"

"No, I didn't. Alexander Anisimovich, we're done for now, it's certain." Yakov Lukich clutched at his head in despair. A tear trickled down his brown cheek and into his grey moustache. Polovtsev only ground his teeth.

"You damned fool. You should be sitting tattling to the women, instead of doing men's work. Is your son at home?"

"I don't know. . . I brought a fellow along with me."

"Who is it?"

"Frol Rvany's son."

"Aha. What have you brought him for?"

Their eyes met and they understood each other. Yakov Lukich was the first to drop his. To Polovtsev's question: "Can he be relied upon?"—he only nodded his head. Polovtsev snatched his short wadded coat from the nail, pulled his revolver from under the pillow and examined it carefully. As he buttoned up his coat he rasped out his orders as curtly as during a battle:

"Take an axe with you. Take me the shortest way. How many minutes' walk is it?"

"Not far, about eight farmyards away."

"His family?"

"Only a wife."

"Any neighbors near?"

"No, there's a threshing-yard one side, and a garden on the other."

"And the Soviet?"

"That's a long way off."

"Come on."

While Yakov Lukich went to the woodshed to get the axe, Polovtsev squeezed Timothy's elbow with his left hand and muttered:

"You must do nothing but what I tell you, remember. When we get there, you'll say you're the man on night duty in the Soviet—alter your voice a bit, so's he won't recognize it—and say you've brought him a paper from the Soviet. You'll have to get him to open the door, mind you."

"Yes, but you know, comrade—I don't know your name—this Khoprov is strong as an axe and if you don't get in at him just in time, he'll smash you up so with his naked fist that—" Timothy rambled on casually.

"Shut up," Polovtsev interrupted him and stretched out a hand towards Yakov Lukich. "Give it here. Lead on."

The stout ash handle of the axe was hot and wet from Yakov Lukich's moist palm. Polovtsev took it and stuck it inside his belt underneath his coat. Then he turned up his collar.

They tramped along in silence. Alongside Polovtsev's big, solid figure Timothy looked a mere stripling. As he walked beside the officer, who staggered rather than strode along, he kept peering into his face, but the darkness and the high collar prevented him from seeing anything. . .

They climbed over the fence of plaited twigs into the threshing-yard.

"One behind the other, so's there'll be only one trail," ordered Polovtsev in a whisper.

They passed over the virgin snow in single file. By the wicket-gate leading into the yard Yakov Lukich pressed his hand to his left side. "Lord help me," he said in an agonized whisper. Polovtsev pointed to the door.

"Knock." Timothy saw rather than heard the word. He gave the latch a rattle and at the same instant heard how the stranger in the white sheepskin cap, who had moved over to the right side of the door, tore feverishly at the fastenings of his coat. Timothy knocked once more. Yakov Lukich was gazing with terror at a dog creeping out from the shadows. But the half-frozen pup only made one voiceless attempt to bark, whined a little and moved off the cellar half-hidden under reeds.

Khoprov had come home thoughtful and preoccupied that day. He had quietened down a little on the way. When he came in his wife was getting the supper ready.

He ate with reluctance, and said ruefully:

"I'd like a pickled melon, for once, Maria."

"What, to sober down on?" she asked, smiling.

"No, I've not had a drop this day. Tomorrow, Maria, I'm going to confess that I was in the punitive expedition. I can't go on living like this any longer."

"Mercy. What next will you think of. What's the matter with you today, you're so upset-like? I can't make head or tail of you."

Nikita smiled and pulled his broad red moustache. When they were lying down to sleep, he said once more in a serious tone:

"Get me some rusks or some pies ready tomorrow. I'm going to prison for a bit."

After that he lay awake a long time, taking no notice of his wife's wailing and complaining. "I'll tell them all about myself and about Ostrovnov also, let the others go to prison as well. And as for me, what can they do to me, anyhow? They won't shoot me, surely? I'll spend two or three years in prison, cutting down timber in the Ural Mountains and then come out clean, without a single blot on my record. Nobody'll be able to throw my past up at me then. I'm not going to slave any more for anyone because of my sins. I'll tell the truth, how I came to be with Ashtymov. I'll say: 'I saved myself from going to the front, that's all—who wants to make his head into a target for bullets, I ask you?' Let them bring me up for trial, they can't be so hard on me now, it's so long past and gone—there's a law about long-past offences I believe. I'll tell them everything. I never shot anyone myself and as for beating—Well, maybe I beat a few Cossacks for deserting and a few others for Bolshevism. I was ignorant then, I didn't understand half what I was doing nor where I was going."

He dozed off. A knocking at the door awakened him out of his first sleep. He did not move. "Who could that be now?" The knock was repeated. Nikita, with a grunt of vexation got up and was about to light the lamp, when Maria awoke and whispered:

"Calling you to a meeting again, I suppose? Don't light the lamp. No peace, either day or night. . . They've gone clean out of their heads, the curse of God on them."

Nikita went out barefoot into the little passage.

"Who's there?"

"It's me, uncle Nikita, from the Soviet."

A child's voice, unfamiliar to him. . . Something faintly like disquietude came over Nikita and he demanded:

"But who is it, What do you want?"

"It's me, Nikolai Kujenkov. I've got a paper for you from the chairman of the Soviet. He told me to bring it to you at once."

"Shove it under the door."

. . . A moment's silence on the other side of the door. Meeting a threatening glance from under the white sheepskin cap, Timothy, who had been floored for a moment by Nikita's demand suddenly found a way out:

"It's got to be signed for though, open the door."

He could hear Nikita moving impatiently, shuffling over the earthen floor in his bare feet. The bolt shot back. Khoprov's white figure appeared suddenly in the black rectangle of the doorway. At that moment Polovtsev stuck his left foot inside the door, swung the axe and struck Khoprov with the back of it above the bridge of the nose.

Like an ox stunned by the butcher before the slaughter, Nikita slumped heavily to his knees and rolled over on his back.

"Go inside. Lock the door after you," ordered Polovtsev inaudibly. He fumbled for the door-handle without letting go of the axe, and pulled it wide open. They all went into the little cabin. From the bed in the corner came the rustle of the sack-cloth cover, and a woman's alarmed voice:

"Did you knock something down? Who's there, Nikitushka?"

Polovtsev threw down the axe and rushed at the voice with outstretched arms.

"Heh. Good people. Who's this? Help." Timothy struck his head on the lintel of the door as he rushed into the cabin. He heard wheezing and sounds of a struggle in the corner. Polovtsev had fallen on to the woman and was holding her down with a pillow over her face while he twisted a towel about her wrists. His elbows slid over the woman's slippery, elastic breasts, her diaphragm bent under him. He could feel the warmth of her strong body beating and tossing in an effort to free itself, and her heart, fluttering, fearful, like a bird's. There was a moment of poignant flaming desire, but he only groaned, groped furiously under the pillow for the woman's mouth and tore it down. It resisted his twisting finger like rubber at first: then the torn mouth slipped down and his finger was wet with warm blood. The woman's muffled, long drawn out screams ceased: he had stuffed her shirt into her mouth, right up to the throat.

Polovtsev left Timothy beside the bound figure of the woman, and went out into the passage.

He breathed wheezily like a horse suffering from glanders. In a moment he returned.

"Light a match."

Yakov Lukich did so. By the flickering light Polovtsev bent down to Khoprov on the floor. The former artillery-man lay with his legs twisted awkwardly, his cheek to the earthen floor. He was still breathing; his broad, lumpy chest rose and fell unevenly. Every time it sank an end of his red moustache dipped into a pool of red. The match flickered out. Polovtsev fumbled for the place where the blow had fallen, on Khoprov's forehead. The crushed bone creaked at the touch of his fingers.

"You'll have to excuse me. . . My heart gets bad when I see blood. . ." whispered Yakov Lukich. He was shivering with fever, his legs seemed

to be crumpling under him. Polovtsev did not answer, but simply commanded him:

"Bring the axe. It's over there, by the bed. And some water."

The water brought Khoprov round a little. Polovtsev pressed his knee into the man's chest and hissed out.

"Did you tell on us yet, you bloody informer? Tell us. Hey, you there, light a match."

For a few seconds the match illumined Khoprov's face, his half-closed eye. Yakov Lukich's hands trembled and so did the tiny flame. Yellow spots of light flickered over the brooms of reeds hanging from the roof. The match burned down, scorching Yakov Lukich's fingers, but he felt no pain. Polovtsev repeated his question and then began to break Khoprov's finger joints. Tme man moaned, suddenly turned on his stomach and began slowly and painfully to raise himself on his hands and knees. Polovtsev, groaning with suspense, tried to throw him over on his back again, but the man was as hefty as a bear. He struggled to his feet at last. With his left hand he seized Yakov Lukich by the belt, with his right he grasped Polovtsev around the neck. The latter hunched his shoulders, striving to hide his throat from Khoprov's cold, searching fingers, and shrieked:

"A light there. Curse you. A light, I'm telling you." He felt for the axe and could not find it in the dark.

Timothy poked his head in out of the kitchen, and without suspecting what was the matter, whispered loudly:

"Hey, you. Go for his throat. Give him the sharp side of the axe on the throat, then he'll tell you."

Polovtsev had now got possession of the axe. With a mighty effort he wrenched himself free of Khoprov's deadly embrace and struck at him with the sharp edge of the axe once and once again. Khoprov fell, catching his head against the bench as he did so. The bench rocked and a bucket clattered down from it. The sound shattered the silence like a shot. Polovtsev ground his teeth and proceeded to put an end to the man lying on the floor; he felt for the head with his foot and hacked it off. He could hear the blood, freed at last, gurgling and gushing out. Then he gave Yakov Lukich a push into the room, and shut the door behind him, saying:

"You bloody slobbering swine. Hold the woman's head, we've got to find out if he had time to tell anything or not. And you hold her feet, young fellow."

Polovtsev flung himself on his chest across the woman. The sharp smell of sweat came from him. Then he spoke pronouncing every word clearly and distinctly.

"After your husband came home this evening, did he go to the Soviet or anywhere else?"

In the faint light inside the cabin he could make out a pair of eyes mad with terror, swollen with unwept tears in a face black from the choking gag. He was almost beside himself with horror, he wanted to get out of here as quick as he could, into the air.

In a fury of disgust he pressed his fingers behind her ears. She struggled convulsed with the fearful pain, and then lost consciousness for a few moments. When she came to herself, she managed to push out with her

tongue the wet, hot gag. She did not scream any more, but in a thin, quavering whisper begged:

"Dear, save us, dear hearts—have pity. I'll tell you everything." She recognized Yakov Lukich,—why he was a relation of hers, they had stood godmother and godfather to her sister's son seven years ago. She strove, inarticulately, to move her torn, disfigured lips.

"Yakov Lukich, dear. One of my own family. Killing me. For what?"

The people at Voisko were waiting for them. At the house of one of Yakov Lukich's acquaintances about twenty farmers, for the most part elderly men, had assembled. Polovtsev shook each by the hand and then moved over with one of them to the window, where they stood whispering for about five minutes. The rest observed Polovtsev and Yakov Lukich in silence. The latter sat down near the door. He felt awkward and lost among all these strange Cossacks . . .

The window had been muffled in sackcloth, the shutters were closed. Despite all these precautions, however, Polovtsev spoke in an undertone:

"Gentlemen Cossacks, the hour is at hand. Your slavery is about to come to an end. We must strike now. Our militant organization is ready. We shall attack the day after tomorrow, at night. A company of fifty horse will arrive in Voisko, and at the signal-shot you must make for the houses of these . . . agitators. Not one must escape alive. I have appointed Lieutenant Marin to command your group. I advise you to stick a white ribbon in your caps beforehand so as to avoid confusion in the dark. Every man must have his horse and whatever arms he may possess—a sword, a rifle, or even a fowling-piece, ready together with a sufficient stock of food to last three days. After you have finished with the agitators and the local Communists, your group must join the fifty men who are coming to assist you. The command will then be taken over by the commander of the fifty, and you will follow him wherever he may lead you," Polovtsev gave a heavy sigh.

"Here is Yakov Lukich Ostrovnov, a Cossack you've all heard of and know, very likely. He was in my regiment in the old days and has just come with me from Gremyachy Log. He can tell you, too, that the majority of the Cossacks in Gremyachy are ready to join us in our great fight to set the Don free from the Communist yoke. Now you tell them, Ostrovnov."

A hard look from Polovtsev brought Yakov Lukich to his feet. He rose slowly, his limbs seemed weighted down, his parched throat burned, but he was, after all, not called upon to speak. He was set aside by the oldest of the Cossacks present, a member of the church committee, and before the war one of the permanent members of the Board of Guardians of the parish school. He stood up at the same time as Yakov Lukich, and giving him no chance to open his mouth, began:

"You didn't happen to hear, Captain, about this. You see, we held a council among ourselves . ... There's a very interesting bit in the newspaper . . ."

"Wha-at? What are you talking about, Grandad?" Polovtsev demanded huskily.

"I'm saying, there's a newspaper just arrived from Moscow, with a letter printed in it from the chairman of the whole Communist Party . . ."

"The secretary," one of the men standing near the stove corrected.

"That's to say, the secretary of the Party, Comrade Stalin. Here it is, the paper, it's for the 4th of this month," the old man went on unhurriedly in his thin, quavering tenor, drawing out the paper carefully folded in four from the inside pocket of his jacket.

"We read it aloud among ourselves a bit before you came and it appears from everything in this paper we're coming to a parting of out ways. There's going to be a different kind of life now for us farmers, it seems . . . We just heard about this paper yesterday, and early this morning I got up on my horse and old as I am, I galloped off to the place where it was to be found. I had to cross Levshov Gorge to get there and it cost me something of an effort, but I got across. I begged a fellow I knew in the village to sell me the paper for the love of Christ, and paid dear for it. Fifteen rubles I paid him, and when I looked I saw it had five kopeks printed on it. Well, no matter, the folk won't let me be the loser of fifteen rubles, they're going to make a collection, ten kopeks from each house—we've agreed to this already. But the paper was worth that and ever more, for—"

"What are you talking about, old fellow? What are you rambling about? Have you gone cracked already? Who gave you leave to speak on behalf of all those present?" demanded Polovtsev in a voice quivering with indignation.

Then a short stocky Cossack of about forty, with clipped golden moustaches and a flat nose, came forward in front of the wall of men, and spoke in an angry challenging tone:

"As for you, comrade ex-officer, don't you think you can come and shout at our old fellows; you did plenty of that in the old days. You played the fine gentleman then, but that's the end of it. Now you've got to learn to be a bit more civil. Since the Soviet Government came in we're not used to it, see? And our old chap here was quite right in what he said about us having held a council and decided that on account of this article in *Pravda* we shouldn't make a rebellion. So our ways part here. The people who acted for the government in our village made fools of themselves, maybe drove a few into the collective farm against their will and dispossessed a lot of the *serednyaki* instead of sticking to the kulaks. The government didn't understand that though you may be able to court one woman and fool her, you can't get round everyone the same way. The chairman of our soviet held us on such a tight rein that you couldn't open your mouth against him. He drew the bellybands so tight on us that we couldn't breathe, while a proper good master loosens his horse's saddlegirth when he's going through sand or over a bad road, and tries to ease him up a bit . . . Well, and of course, we used to think that it all came from the center, the order to squeeze the last drop out of us; we were sure that the Communists got all this propaganda from the Central Committee, we used to grumble and say 'The windmill won't work without the wind.' It was on that we decided to rise and that we joined your 'Union.' See? But now it seems that Stalin is going to sack these local Communists who drove the people into the collective farm against their will and closed the churches without leave and he's going to give them hell. So now the farmer'll be able to breathe easier again. The saddle girth's been slackened. We can go into the collective farm if we like or we can step out and farm as we always did. And so we decided to part peacefully from you . . . Give us back the papers we signed out of foolish-

ness, and clear out where you like, we are not likely to do you any harm since we're not blameless ourselves . . ."

Polovtsev retreated to the window and leaned against the sill. His voice rang out hard and crisp as he said, looking around at all the faces:

"What does this mean, Cossacks? Treachery?"

"Just as you like," replied another old man. "Call it what you like, but we're not going to follow you this time. If the master himself is on our side, why should we go against him? I was wrongly deprived of my right to vote, they wanted to send me away from the village, and me with a son in the Red Army—but I'll get my right back now. We aren't against the Soviet Government, we're only against the lack of proper order in our villages, but you wanted to turn us against the whole government. No, no, that wouldn't suit us at all. Give us back the papers we signed, while we're asking for them civilly."

"Lord, if he should take it into his head now to jump out through the window, I'll be left in a nice fix. What a mess I got into . . . God save us, I wish I'd never been born. What on earth did I mix myself up with this fellow for? The devil's had a hand in this mix-up surely," Yakov Lukich was thinking to himself as he fidgeted on the bench, never taking his eyes off Polovtsev. The latter remained standing quietly by the window. His face was no longer pale, but covered with a dark, purple flush of indignation. Two thick veins stood out on his forehead, his hands gripped the window-sill convulsively.

"Well gentlemen Cossacks, it's just as you wish, of course: if you don't want to come with us, we're not going to ask you any more or bow down and beg you to come. I can't give you back your signatures because I haven't got them with me, they're at headquarters. But you've nothing to be afraid of, I'm not likely to go to the O.G.P.U. to inform on you . . ."

"That's true enough," one of the old men agreed.

"And in any case it isn't the O.G.P.U. you've got to fear now . . ." Polovstev, who up till then had been speaking quietly, suddenly shouted at the top of his voice:

"You've got us to fear. We'll shoot you down as traitors. Out of the way there. Stand clear. Make way. . ." and clutching his revolver in his outstretched hand, he made for the door.

The Cossacks recoiled, startled, and Yakov Lukich, who got up before Polovtsev, burst open the door with his shoulder and shot into the passage like a stone from a sling.

They untethered their horses in the darkness and cantered out of the yard. The hum of excited voices came from the house, but no one appeared at the door, not one of the Cossacks had attempted to stop them.

There was not a soul to be seen on the spare ground. After he had seen Razmetnov off, Davidov went up to the nearest ploughed field. The oxen, still in harness, were grazing nearby. The ploughman, Akim Beskhlebnov, who was evidently too lazy to go over to the spare ground, was lying down in a furrow, covered with his coat, and lulled to sleep by the lisping of the raindrops. Davidov roused him.

"Why aren't you ploughing?"

Akim rose reluctantly, yawned, and smiled:

"You can't plough in wet weather, Comrade Davidov. Didn't you know that? An ox isn't a tractor. As soon as the hair on his neck gets a bit wet the yoke'll rub it till it bleeds and then his working days are over. It's the truth I'm telling you," he concluded, more energetically noticing a certain incredulity in Davidov's glance.

"You'd better go and keep those other fellows from killing each other." he went on. "Kondrat Maidannikov has been at Atamanchukov since morning. They're fighting just now, you can see, over in that field. Kondrat wanted to unharness the oxen and Atamanchukov says: 'Don't you dare touch my team, or I'll break your head for you.' There they are, got each other by the neck again, I'm sure."

Davidov glanced towards the corner of the next field and caught sight of something that looked very much like a fight. Maidannikov was waving an iron spike in his hand like a sword, while big Atamanchukov was pushing him away from the yoke with one hand, keeping his other fist clenched behind his back. Their voices were inaudible. Davidov hastened towards them, shouting:

"What's up here?"

"Well, look here, Davidov. It's raining and he wants to plough. He'll rub the skin off the beasts' necks in no time that way. I told him 'Unharness them while it's raining' and he keeps cussing and swearing and saying 'It's none of your damned business.' Whose business is it, then, the sonofabitch? Say whose, croaking devil." shouted Maidannikov, turning to Atamanchukov and waving the spike dangerously.

They had evidently had their hands on each other already that day: Maidannikov's eye was decorated with a black bruise as big as a plum. Atamanchukov's shirt collar was almost torn away, and blood trickled from his swollen, clean-shaven lip.

"I'm not going to let you ruin this collective-farm," cried Maidannikov, encouraged by Davidov's arrival. He says: 'They're not my oxen, they belong to the collective farm.' That means, then, that you can take the skin off their backs, does it? Get away from those oxen, you louse."

"Don't think you can lay down the law to me. You've no right to strike me, either. If you touch that yoke I'll shove your face in. I've got to do my share of ploughing and you keep hindering me," croaked Atamanchukov, now very pale, and fumbling for the fastening of his torn shirt.

"Can you plough in wet weather, tell me that?" Davidov asked him, taking the spike out of Kondrat's hand and flinging it down under his feet.

Atamanchukov's eyes glittered. He twisted his thin neck uneasily and said in angry husky whisper:

"Not if it's for a master, but if it's for the collective farm you've got to."

"What do you mean, got to?"

"So's to be able to do as much as they've planned out. Whether it's rain or shine, you've got to plough here. If you don't, Liubishkin will be at you all day, chewing the rag."

"Stop that talk... Did you do your share of ploughing yesterday?"

"I did as much as I could." Maidannikov tittered.

"A quarter of a dessiatin, that's all he did. Look at his oxen, fine big beasts, you couldn't reach to their horns; hardly, and how much did he

do? Look here, Davidov?" He caught Davidov by his wet coat-sleeve and led him along the furrow; hardly able to get out his words properly in his agitations he gabbled: "We were to have ploughed no less than eight inches deep and—what's this? Measure it yourself."

Davidov stooped, and thrust his fingers down into the soft, clinging soil. From the bottom of the furrow to its mossy ridge was no more than three or four inches.

"Call that ploughing? That's just scratching the soil, not ploughing it. I was waiting to give him a whack or two this morning for his trouble. You can go the whole length of the field and you'll find it all just the same."

"Come over here. Hey. I'm speaking to you."

Davidov called to Atamanchukov, who was reluctantly unharnessing the oxen.

The man strolled leisurely towards them.

"Is that the way you plough?" asked Davidov softly, opening his gap-toothed mouth.

"Well, what do you want us to do, plough eighteen inches deep, eh?" Atamanchukov's eyes narrowed evilly. He swept his cap from his shaven head and made a mock obeisance: "Much obliged. Try to plough deeper yourself. We're all very good at talking, but when it comes to doing something—"

"We'd like to kick you out of the collective farm, you scoundrel," cried Davidov, turning livid, "and we shall, too."

"I'd be very much obliged, indeed. I'll go of my own free will in fact. I'm not a slave to have the life worried out of me by the lot of you... I don't know why I should work myself to death for no reason whatever," and he walked away whistling.

That evening, as soon as the brigade had collected on the spare ground, Davidov said:

"I'm going to put one question before the brigade: what would you do with a sham collective farmer, who was cheating both the farm and the government; instead of turning eight inches of soil, spoils the field and only turns up three or four? What would you do with a man who wanted to injure the oxen by working them in the rain, and only did half his share in fine weather?"

"Throw him out," said Liubishkin

The women in particular supported this suggestion with considerable warmth.

"There's a sham collective farmer among us. That's him," Davidov pointed to Atamanchukov who was sitting on the shaft of a bullock-cart. "The brigade's all here. I'm putting the question to the vote: who's for kicking out Atamanchukov the idler who's trying to spoil our farm?"

Out of twenty seven hands, twenty three were for it. Davidov counted them, and then remarked coldly to Atamanchukov:

"Clear out. You're not a collective farmer any longer. We'll see in a year's time if there's any change for the better in you, and if there is we'll take you back. And now comrades, I've got something important to say to you. You nearly all work pretty badly,—in fact, very badly. Nobody except Maidannikov does his full share. It's a disgrace, Comrades of the second brigade. We may all fail that way. Work like this is enough to get us on the black list, and we may stick there till we rot.

Imagine having such a state of things on the Stalin Collective Farm. There's got to be a big change."

"It's a terrible big share we've each got to do. Beyond our strength. The oxen aren't up to it," said Akim Beskhlebnov.

"Beyond your strength? The oxen aren't up to it? Rot. Then why are Maidannikov's oxen up to it? I'll tell you what. I'm going to stay in your brigade and take Atamanchukov's oxen and show you that a man can plough a hectare and even one and a quarter in a day."

"Sure, Davidov, you're a clever one. You're funny when you're mad" laughed Kujenkov, clutching his short grey beard. "With Atamanchukov's oxen anyone could plough. I could plough a hectare a day myself with those beasts."

"And couldn't you do it with your own?"

"Never in my life."

"Well, let's exchange then? You'll take Atamanchukov's and I'll take yours."

"We might try it," said Kujenkov in a serious tone, after thinking a while.

Davidov spent a restless night. He slept in the shed in the field, and was often disturbed by the wind rattling the iron roof, and the cold that penetrated his damp coat and the fleas with which the sheepskin coat under him seemed to be thickly populated.

Kondrat Maidannikov roused him at daybreak. Kondrat had already roused the whole brigade. Davidov rushed out of the shed. In the west the stars were still shining faintly, and the golden sickle of the new moon lay on the steely blue mail of the sky. Davidov bent over the pond, and scooping up some water in his hands, washed his face. Kondrat stood by him, biting the end of his yellow moustache in evident vexation.

"A whole dessiatin and more, in one day, that's a lot. I'm afraid you went a bit too far yesterday, Comrade Davidov. We'll have to come down off our high horses yet or I'm mistaken. . ."

"It's all in our own hands. What are you so afraid of?" said Davidov to encourage him. To himself he thought, "May I die in the field if I don't plough as much as I said. I'll plough at night by lamp-light, but I'll do my dessiatin and a quarter. Otherwise it'll be a disgrace to the whole working class. . ."

While Davidov was wiping his face on a corner of his linen jacket, Kondrat harnessed both his own and Davidov's oxen and shouted:

"We're off."

To the creak of the ploughs Kondrat explained to Davidov the rudimentary principles of ploughing with oxen as he had understood them during his ten years' experience.

"The best plough is the Sakhov. The Aksai isn't bad, either, but it can't come anywhere near the Sakhov. It's not built that way. We've made up our minds to plough like this: everyone's given an allotment and he can do what he wants with it. At first Beskhlebnov, Atamanchukov, Kujenkov, yes—and even Liudishkin joined in with them at the beginning, started to plough one behind the other. Since it's a collective farm they said, 'we should go one plough after another.' And they did. And I saw it wasn't going to turn out right. If the first plough stopped, all the rest had to stop. If the first man ploughs slowly, the rest must do the same. I couldn't stick it: 'Either let me go in front,' I said, 'or else

give each one his own allotment to do.' And Liubishkin saw that it'd never do to plough like that. You couldn't tell one man's work from another. So he divided the land up into allotments. I left them, I could do six times as much as they could. Every allotment is a dessiatin—three hundred and twenty yards in length, and thirty yards across."

"Why don't you plough across the field, then?" asked Davidov, looking along the side of the ploughed allotment.

"It's like this: you've finished the long furrow, say, and you want to turn your beasts. If you turn them sharp around, you'll bang the yoke on their necks and then—your bull's no more good for ploughing. That's why you've got to go the length of the field, turn and then go thirty yards for nothing. A tractor can turn sharp, so that the wheels are all in front and then goes back in its tracks, but do you think you can turn three or four team of oxen that way? They have to keep on the straight and you've to turn with the left one so as to plough properly at turning. That's why oxen are no good for big stretches of ploughing. With a tractor, the longer the furrow the better, but with oxen, I make the three hundred twenty yards, the length of the field, and then I have to creep back, not turning up a single sod, across the field. I'll draw it for you here." Kondrat stood still, and with the sharp end of his rod drew a long field.

"Here, say, there's four dessiatins. Three hundred twenty longways and a hundred twenty across. Supposing I plough first longways, now you see that for one dessiatin, I have to waste time going thirty yards across without ploughing, and if I do four dessiatins, that means a hundred twenty times across. A lot, eh? See what a lot of time we lose."

"I see. You've proved it very clearly."

"Did you ever do any ploughing?"

"No. I never had to do it. I know something about a plough, but I don't know how to use one. You show me, I'm pretty sharp at these things."

"I'll fix the plough, and go a couple of furrows with you, and then you'll manage somehow yourself."

Kondrat got Davidov's plough ready for him, fixed the depth at eight inches and explained on the way:

"Now we're off, you'll see how it goes and if it's too hard for the oxen, give a turn and a half to this thing. We call it the barrel, you see, it's on a loose chain, and the furrow chain is a tight one. You turn the barrel and the ploughshare will slant a bit and go, not the full eight inches width, but six, and that'll be easier for the oxen. We're off. "Tsob, there, baldhead, tsob. Don't spare yourself, Comrade Davidov."

Davidov's driver, a young lad, cracked his whip and the leading oxen pulled with a will. Davidov put his hands on the bars and followed the plough. He felt some excitement as he watched how the layer of black soil turned up by the ploughshare, slid along the smooth mould board and turned over on its side like a drowsy fish.

At the end of the furrow Maidannikov ran up to Davidov, calling out:

"Keep the plough to the left, and go slow, then your mould board won't have to be cleaned. Look." He leant on the right bar, pulled the plough the way he wanted it, and a heavy layer of earth came sliding closely and obliquely along the mould-board seeming to lick up the dirt that clung to it.

"That's the way." Kondrat upset the plough, and smiled. "This is technical, too. If I hadn't done that with the plough just now, you'd have had to scrape the mould board clean while the oxen were going across the field. Now your plough's as clean as a new pin and you might as well have a smoke and enjoy your rest. Here you are."

He handed Davidov his tobacco pouch, rolled himself a cigarette and with a jerk of his head towards the oxen, said:

"See how my old woman's getting on. That plough's a good one, it rarely goes askew, she could manage it by herself really. . ."

"Is that your wife driving the oxen?" asked Davidov.

"Yes. It's easier with her. If I shout at her once or twice, no matter, she doesn't fall out about it, and if she does, it's only till night. At night she'll make it up, it's all in the family after all."

Kondrat smiled and strode away with ploughman's swing, over the field.

Before breakfast Davidov had ploughed about a quarter of a dessiatin. He ate his porridge unwillingly, and could hardly wait till the oxen had finished. With a wink at Kondrat, he said:

"Let's start?"

"Alright, I,m ready. Anyutka, drive 'em out."

It began again, furrow after furrow of slotted, black soil, pressed down for centuries; the dead knotted roots of grasses turned up by the ploughshare lay on top the mossy top layer hid in the black furrows. The soil on the mould board heaved, turned, as if floating. The damp odor of the black earth was invigorating and sweet. The sun was still high when the sides of the oxen were dark with sweat. By evening Davidov's feet were skinned by his boots and his back ached. Stumbling a little, he measured his allotment and his dry lips black with dust, spread painfully in a smile: he had ploughed a whole dessiatin that day.

"Well, how much ground have you turned?" inquired Kujenkov spitefully with a faint sneer, as Davidov hardly able to drag his legs after him got to the spare ground.

"How much do you think?"

"Did you get round half a dessiatin?"

"The hell you say, a dessiatin and one furrow over."

Kujenkov, who was rubbing some fat into his leg where he had cut it on the tooth of the harrow, gave a grunt of astonishment and went to measure Davidov's allotment himself. In about half an hour, when the dusk was falling thickly, he returned, and sat down a little away from the fire.

"What happened to you that you can't open your mouth?" asked Davidov.

"My leg's bad. You ploughed alright, there's nothing to be said about that. Worked hard," admitted the other reluctantly, as he lay down by the fire and pulled his coat over his head.

"Aha, that's stopped your tongue a bit, hasn't it? You've nothing to say now?" laughed Kondrat, but Kujenkov pretended not to hear.

Davidov lay down by the shed and closed his eyes. The smell of wood-ash came from the fire. The soles of his feet burned from tramping the fields, his legs were heavy and aching; no matter how he adjusted them, they felt uncomfortable, and he kept changing his position. And then, just as he had settled down, waves of black soil came floating before his eyes, the white blade of the ploughshare glided silently and

along its edge, altering the outline of it, crept the black mould, boiling like pitch. Davidov felt sick and dizzy. He opened his eyes and called to Kondrat.

"What is it, can't you sleep?" asked the latter.

"No, and my head's going round. I keep seeing the soil under the plough."

"It's always like that," judging by his voice, Kondrat was smiling in sympathy. "You keep watching the ground under you feet all day and that gives you the dizziness. And then there's the smell of the mould, fresh-like, it makes you kind of drunk after a while. Tomorrow, Davidov, don't you watch the ground too much, keep looking about you."

That night Davidov did not feel the fleas biting him, never heard the neighing of the horses, nor the cries of the belated wild geese on the far ridge of the pass. He slept like a stone. Just before dawn, he awoke and saw Kondrat, wrapped in his coat, coming towards the shed.

"Where were you?" asked Davidov, raising his head a little, but still half asleep. "I've been looking after your oxen and my own. They've been eating a lot. I drove them into a place where the grass was extra good."

Kondrat's slightly husky voice receded to a great distance and died away. . . Davidov did not hear the last words. Sleep weighed his head down once more to the sheepskin coat, wet with dew.

By the evening of the second day Davidov had ploughed a dessiatin and two furrows: Liubishkin, a dessiatin, Kujenkov a little short of a dessiatin, while Antip Gratch, who up to then had been one of the group of what Davidov called "weaklings," came forward unexpectedly into the front rank. He was working with lean halfstarved oxen. When midday came, he said nothing as to how much he had done. After dinner, his wife, who was acting driver for him, fed their team herself. She had gathered six pounds of the special concentrated food allowed for the oxen into her skirt. When Antip collected the breadcrumbs remaining after dinner, and threw them into his wife's skirt for the beasts, Liubishkin remarked with a chuckle:

"Trying to catch up, Antip?"

"Yes, and I'll do it, too. We aren't the worst of the lot," Gratch flung back at him. His dark face was burnt a deep brown with the spring sunshine.

He caught up. Night was coming on when Kondrat Maidannikov drove his beasts to the spare ground and in reply to Davidov's question "How much?" croaked out:

"A dessiatin and a half, less one furrow. Give me a bit of tobacco, I haven't had a smoke since noon." His strained but triumphant eyes sought Davidov's.

After supper, Davidov took stock of things.

"Socialist competition, Comrades of the second brigade, is coming on grand with us. In fact, we're going at quite a decent rate. The management of the collective farm is grateful to the brigade for some real good ploughing. We're not behind any longer, comrades. How could we be behind, we've proved able to finish our share. Now we'll have to put our weight into the harrowing. We've got to thank Maidannikov particularly, he's what you might call a real, first rate udarnik."

The women washed up the pots, the ploughmen lay down to sleep, the oxen were driven off to pasture. Kondrat was just dozing off when his wife crept under his coat to him, poked him in the ribs, and asked:

"Kondrasha, what was that Davidov called you—praising you, he seemed to be—what's an udarnik?"

Kondrat had heard the word many a time himself, but he could not have explained it for the life of him. "I'll have to find that out from Davidov," he thought, vexed at his own ignorance. He could not confess to his wife that he did not know, she might lose all respect for him, so he explained as best he could:

"An udarnik? You are a fool of a woman, anyway. An udarnik—it's, well—How can I explain so's you'd understand? For example, you have a thing in a rifle, that makes it shoot—that's called an udarnik, too. It's the chief thing in the riflle. You can't shoot without it. It's the same with the collective farm: the udarnik is the chief one, see? And now go to sleep and don't bother me."

Translated from the Russian by Anthony Wixley

Johannes R. Becher

The Resounding House

A Story of Germany Today

Zinke was a compositor at Scherl's, an old trade unionist. He had been a trade union member since 1894.

He was 58 years old.

1

In 1917 he wanted to resign from the trade union. Shortly after the beginning of the war he had been recruited as a digger. In the north of France he dug mass graves, great quiet pits into which the corpses were dumped in flocks. In the patriotic courses he came into conflict with a trade union official who had been sent by the chief command and who said that Karl Liebknecht was a very rich man and alone owned over a dozen houses in Berlin. Zinke couldn't control himself and he yelled out "Lies! Lies! Lies!" three times, one after another. The delegate reported the incident and Zinke got no leave of absence.

In November 1918 he came home. His wife told him: "Give yourself time, man, you can always resign."

The two children had grown up. Potatoes and cabbages had made them tall and thin. When Zinke saw his wife again, he was astounded: how could one grow so old! He shuddered. During the war she had been forced to take a job in a garage as a scrubwoman—her hands had become as hard as wood, she walked as though she were trailing her arms over the floor.

He clung tightly to his organization. He let the matter rest after he had filed a petition and remained. The petition in which the details of those "scandalous events" were presented was immediately answered: the unpleasant things had become matters of the past. He saw, as an old trade unionist, that the trade unions had gone along the right path. Now he himself would. . .

The trade unions worked in peace. The Republic was declared.

Zinke found a job at Scherl's as a compositor.

He threatened his son who at that time was 18 years old and sympathized with the Spartakists:

"Hermann, another word against the trade unions and out you go. . ."

When, on the street, he accidentally met the official who had reported him, he greeted him with a friendly "Good day, comrade!" and admitted that in the end things had wound up all right and that you shouldn't dwell on unpleasant details.

2

If you were to review the life of such a man as Zinke, you wouldn't notice anything unusual in the scene. All the lines ran in rather orderly fashion, smoothly. Yet this seemingly quiet course was only superficial. Childhood, school, work, marriage, your own children growing up, each

one of these steps was involved and complicated. The apparent daily life of this "ordinary" man was an intricate puzzle.

3

Zinke saved.

He gave his wife his wages and took pocket money that was just enough for carfare and for a cigar on Sundays. He did not have any friends. In the department in which he worked there were chiefly younger fellows who either sympathized with the Communists or else were interested in sports.

The "old, experienced trade unionist" deliberately held himself aloof.

When he was nominated to the factory committee, he consulted his wife. She advised him to keep his hands off and so he declined the election.

It was enough for him to cast his vote and to read the trade union paper regularly.

Hermann the Spartakist brought enough trouble into the house.

He asked his father questions that were hard to answer; it was a shame how inconsiderately he drove his own father into the corner. When it came to a cross-examination and old Zinke did not know what to say any more, he struck the table with his fist.

"Who do you think I am, anyhow?" he asked angrily. His son answered: "A lackey of the bourgeoisie." The result was a row that could only be stopped through the interference of the tenants.

4

"Lackey of the bourgeoisie" kept Zinke awake nights and woke his wife.

"He's not all there" she soothed him and told him that she had again dreamed of a little house:

lying outside Berlin, at the edge of a wood, at best a two-story one, four rooms, with a little garden in front, a glass-encased veranda on which one could so comfortably drink coffee—what eyes the relatives would make!—Kurt is a bookkeeper and making money; so is Hermann, crazy as he is, but competent in his work: they had a sure income. . .

"That crazy. . ." Zinke interrupted and wanted to throw himself at Hermann but the dream of his own little house also overtook him. He figured out that they had to save at least two more years in order to make the initial payment, then you pay only rent and in 38 years the house is yours.

"Such an insane . . ." he called his son as he fell asleep and dreamed: he lay in his own little house as in a cradle—the walls, freshly painted, hung with lithographs, smiled back at him—a piano stood in the room below, Kurt sat at it—above on the second floor the radio played—a little garden was hedged in just a short while ago he had put up a new fence in front of the house, near the street, he had discovered another patch of grass, a fence before it: then the thing would first really become his property.

He had learned a lot about fences since that time when, as a traveling journeyman, he had remained hanging on a fence while stealing apples and had torn his pants.

There were many kinds of fences, and by fences you could judge the people that lived behind them.

One person fenced himself in with a wooden fence, another with barbed wire. By his fence Zinke wanted to show the world that here it was a question of his own plot of land.

In his dream he stroked the fence that enclosed his property.

From the nice apartment up on the second floor the clock struck 12 times. A deep and festive sound. It was the clock that he had given his wife on her birthday; the clock struck like the Cologne Cathedral, deep and resounding. . And the visitor stood in front of it and wondered that Zinke took no admission fee for the inspection of his work—long after the chimes had struck there was something festive and resonant in the house, as if the walls had absorbed the sounds and gave them back slowly as an unusual, vibrating silence.

5

1923.

The inflation shattered Zinke's dream of his resounding little house. His savings melted; to think of having your own house was out of the question.

Hermann became a member of the Communist Party.

Many a time old Zinke purposely remained alone with him; he wanted to get something out of him, he himself did not know what, but Hermann evaded him. Then the old man attacked the Communists, defended the policies of the trade unions, said of himself in order to tease Hermann: "I, as a lackey of the bourgeoisie—" but thought at the same moment: "Should I not resign—" for he could not refute Hermann's opinion that the inflation—with the help of the trade unions—was nothing more than a profitable maneuver to plunder the small fry.

"Stay!" said his wife. "You'll regret it yet, you just wait . . !"

But he no longer joked when his wife chaffed him about his looking quite like Hindenburg. Zinke's hair was cut short, like a brush. He also had that pompous walk.

6

The inflation was over.

Hindenburg had been elected president.

Zinke was content with the election; it was constitutional.

When one of his fellow-workers remarked on his resemblance to Hindenburg, he acted as though he were angry but still he was a bit proud of it.

7

Zinke could not allow himself his glass of beer after work.

Zinke went on no excursions with his family on Sunday.

Zinke soled his shoes himself.

Zinke spent no more money on cigars.

8

"Save!" said his wife in the morning when she prepared his lunch. "Save!" she greeted him when he came home from work in the evening. "Save!" called his supper and "Save!" left him with no desire to ask for a second plate of potato soup. "Save!" rumbled his stomach, empty and morose. "Save!" cried the much darned socks rubbing his feet. "A thrifty man!" his worn to death clothes cursed him. Zinke walked three-quarters of an hour to work in order to save on carfare.

Stories of economy were related to him. Frau Zinke eagerly told of men who had become millionaires because of their thrift.

Thrift was a necessary and recognized thing. Everywhere there were savings unions, savings banks, savings boxes. The trade unions also made savings deposits in the banks, and every trade union official had a savings account.

Zinke saved, and the others who did not save were to him spendthrifts, even when they didn't have a cent left over to save. He thought it wrong of the unemployed to attract so much attention; he himself had always had work, whoever looked for work always found it. When a worker in his department was given notice, he felt estranged, almost antagonistic to the discharged man as he parted with him. The fellow belonged to those who stand outside the plant and want to arouse the gang to wild strikes. "Outside the plant"—how cut off from his interests was the fired man—all at once he became contemptible and bad. "I haven't the least idea of it" fumed Zinke when a fellow-worker came to collect money for the fired one.

Often he was sorry he had to save. He had to drag himself away by force in order not to simply run into a tobacco shop and get himself a package of Prima Havanas. A delicatessen store which he had to pass daily disturbed him; it seemed to him as if he could jump through the window into the full display and absolutely clean it up, so great was his appetite. Maybe all the money, the precious little sum, would disappear at once, five years of his life scratched out—and a new savings book begins.

9

The day came.

It was a Saturday when Zinke deposited the rest of his initial payment. His entire family stood around the bank book as if stirred by a festive act; they pointed at the figures, felt them with their fingers.

Even Hermann did not want to disturb them.

10

Zinke was full of praise for his union, for the union had built his house.

11

It cost money to furnish the house.

He didn't read the trade union paper any more—"No more time, even with the best of desires"—he subscribed to the *Small Gardener*. In his

free time he puttered about in the garden. The fence must be set up, much too little fence, also in front of the house towards the street another fence must be set up.

He saw before him a task that was tremendous.

To buy such a house (with a garden) and then to furnish it (out of your own savings)—that required gigantic powers.

Stone upon stone, beam upon beam—the door and window frames, latches and nails, all came from him, were himself. Now it cost money to fill up the house as the harvest fills the barns. Again it meant being thrifty, saving, saving without end, in order to gather the many pieces of furniture and bring them in.

The empty house, it semed to him, groaned. It was hungry—it swallowed tables, cupboards, statues, covers and pictures and remained empty, empty, it was not satisfied with it all, it was insatiable.

12

Finally came the day when it seemed to Zinke that the house blessed him and he could say:

"The house is ready."

13

The sun shone warm. Zinke's family was assembled on the veranda. They drank coffee. Zinke blessed the house. Kurt who had become a devoted bookkeeper and already was always wanting something better, sat down at the piano. Zinke turned on the radio, hurried up the steps: the clock struck deep and resonant four times. It was at four o'clock in the afternoon that he let the Cologne clock strike for the first time.

Tears gathered in Frau Zinke's eyes.

A pity that Hermann had already gone away.

The whole house resounded . . .

14

Visitors came. Zinke let his house resound.

Again visitors, and the house resounded.

The neighbors called it: the resounding house.

Children stood in front of it, waited, until finally: the house resounded.

15

Zinke had work.

Kurt and Hermann had work.

Zinke's family had nothing to worry about.

16

Two men appeared in the middle of the street just opposite Zinke's little house. One of them put on a cuirassier helmet. On top of the helmet plumes waved to the left and right: a case of bells. He had put on a frock-coat. In front on his belt he carried the hand organ. His right foot was tied by a strap to the cymbals on the kettle-drum. The concert began. The "cuirassierman" played four instruments at a time. He shook

his head, it tinkled; he moved his right elbow, it drummed; kicked his left leg, the cymbals crashed; with his right hand he turned the organ. His companion looked carefully up and down the windows as if waiting for a shower of money. He bowed when a fiver wrapped in paper fell in his cap.

"Oh, hell!" Zinke muttered. "What nonsense the workers take to!... Jumping jack!"

It did not last long: a brass band came down the street.

A group of young boys, apparently students, sang; another followed with violins and zithers.

A magician of the Houdini type appeared, a muscular chap, but he could not free himself from hunger.

Men knock at the doors, some in rags and others better dressed, young and old, of every age, girls, women, women with children and begged for a piece of bread.

An open proclamation which was hung up in the town warned against beggars, asked that the police be notified.

Zinke gave when he was home.

Frau Zinke thought: those swindlers and tramps, you'll only keep them in idleness...

But Zinke saw a mother and her child whom he had given a piece of bread. They tore the bread from each other's mouths and fought over every bite. They picked up the last crumbs from the ground eagerly.

17

Zinke put a safety lock on his door and barred the lower windows.

Zinke was preparing his house for defense.

Against whom?

Against hunger?

Hermann said: "Just wait, father, the crisis will not stop for our house either."

With safety locks and barred windows you can't do any good against hunger, that the old trade unionist knew well, and so he again read his trade union paper.

One evening Hermann was attacked by the Nazis who had just made powerful gains in that district.

"That's what you get for it" lay on the tip of Zinke's tongue, but he pressed close to Hermann as he lay there with his head swathed in bandages; he might have shook the boy's hand but the "lackey of the bourgeoisie" stood between them—he had not forgotten it.

18

"What—like Hindenburg!" The entire department wondered at the way Zinke flared up at it.

When still another worker was fired, Zinke went to him and invited him to his house.

He got himself a dog. When he did this, he thought of the Nazis—should it every occur to them to pay him a visit.

19

Crash of the Donat Bank.

Zinke was glad that he had kept his savings in his own house. In front of the savings banks people gathered. "Closed!" was to be read on all the signs. Like a flying, all-penetrating inscription, "Closed!" was carried to every nook and corner. People laughed in terror, noticeably raving. There was a terrible quiet in the air and an expectation, as if in this moment something unusual, entirely immense had occurred. Rich people went abroad. Far and wide there was nothing to be seen of the Nazis. How they had disappeared. As if they had . . .

Zinke stood at his window one evening and looked out on the street, sometimes to the left, sometimes to the right, to both sides, as if the expected must pop up at the corner at any moment.

20

The 20th of July came.

A lieutenant and his three men.

Zinke walked home after work. He had waited on the street. What was he actually expecting from the street? Up and down the streets, what was he looking for? The wonderful newlybuilt trade union house across the way—but everything was as commonplace as usual; again streetcars crisscrossing; in front of a subway station there was an assemblage of people. A young boy with a Soviet star distributed leaflets.

"GENERAL STRIKE."

Zinke remembered a blow. The blow came to him from pre-war times: he is an apprentice compositor, the first of May, red gilliflower in his buttonhole, thousands in step, Lindenstrasse, the Hellic Gate: "Long live the people-liberating Social-Democracy, hail!" "The Internationale fights for human rights!" The spiked-helmets that were to hold up the procession, remained powerless, the drawn sabers remained poised in mid air.

Something draws on that, strikes old Zinke cold to the heart.

It was like a sudden change in the atmosphere.

Something must be done against it—his fingers were itching.

He took a step, this "lackey of the bourgeoisie" and the place between Hermann and himself was free.

"What a dumbbell!" He laughed over how he had let himself be so closely tied up to his own house; his wife didn't know better, where should she have gotten it from, this daughter of a confectioner, and he had even let her go to church on Sundays . . . He remembered how often he had had visitors and let his house resound—a queer chap, really a shame . . .

Zinke took a leaflet from the boy with the Soviet star—and took part in a discussion with an old trade unionist who warned him against unpremeditated action and launched forth into an invective against the Communists.

Zinke who also thought of himself as an "old trade unionist" had only to bring forth those proofs and arguments that he had often heard from his son.

The leaflet distributor gave him his hand.

"I have struck a blow at myself with this handshake," he thought but he didn't consider it a defeat.

"I have defeated myself" he said half-aloud while the old trade unionist stood by with open mouth and could only growl a few stupid curse words.

"GENERAL STRIKE!"

Zinke went home, behind a huge bright red flag.

21

The next day he was again uncertain.

The slogan of the trade unions was: Present arms!

He listened around at the plant, he would gladly have taken it to a vote. The blow that had gripped him a few days ago paled on him. he fell into emptiness.

22

Hitler came into power.

The trade union official explained that it was the fault of the Communists.

Torchlight processions passed through the night. "Hail!" And the echo came back to Zinke: "Ail!" Ail! Lil! What ailed them-

Zinke listened around and heard that Hitler would soon be done for and that besides he was very strictly legal, had come to power constitutionally. At the first breach of the constitution the trade unions would . . . Zinke believed.

Zinke contradicted Hermann who explained the conduct of the Social Democracy and the trade unions as the most shameful betrayal in the history of the labor movement—but suddenly the old man stopped speaking, was quiet, he kept silent so that the silence spread out about him like a pool, then he stood up, locked the door and said in a low voice:

"It will be bad, very bad."

23

On the day of the Reichstag fire he had to go to the police station about his dog, which was running around without a muzzle.

The chief called into the station:

"No one is to go on leave tomorrow. Tomorrow the great drive against the KPD begins."

That was at 11 o'clock in the morning.

In the evening at 8 o'clock the Reichstag burned.

24

"Man alive!"

Frau Zinke could not make heads or tails of her husband.

"Lies! Lies!" he disconnected the loudspeaker. "The Communists did *not* burn the Reichstag! I heard it! I heard it myself! Listen to me!" It was all the same to him if he would not again get leave of absence. "Lies!" he screamed as the Cologne clock festively began to strike nine. "Lies! Lies!" at every stroke. "Lies!" He banged his fist down on the piano so that the strings resounded.

"Lies!" Zinke called out of his resounding house.

25

He wanted to run to meet his son, to warn him, but Communists lived all around and so he ran to each one he knew and warned them. He met Hermann, gave him enough money to keep him in hiding several days.

26

At five o'clock in the morning large police wagons sped noiselessly through the town.

Fully a quarter of the inhabitants were locked up.

Detectives with dogs searched the houses for Communists.

All had fled to safety.

Two detectives came to Zinke when they heard the Cologne clock strike, smiled and did not carry on their search.

27

Three days later the Storm Troopers broke into town.

It was the notorious murderer Stormer Treske who in Grossbeeren had set fire to the house of the Reichsbanner man Schlombach.

The furnishings of the Communist functionaries were piled into a heap. the books thrown out on the street, kerosene poured over them and burned.

A comrade who, despite the warning, had remained at home, was, dressed only in a night shirt, pursued through the town and dragged into a Nazi concentration camp.

28

The following night the storm broke loose again.

On the evening before Zinke had thought of going away and sleeping over at the house of a friend. Hermann had sent him a message not to remain home under any circumstances since it had somehow got around among the Storm Troopers that it was he who had warned the Communists.

But his wife said "Stay! If they break up our house, then let them do whatever they please with us . . ."

29

At night Zinke woke up. He put on his trousers and walked about the house.

In each room he flashed on the light. Looked into each room like a stranger come from distant parts.

Like an exhibition his life made claims on him: hours, days, months, years that he had lived—became chairs, tables, lamps and cupboards; he himself was a thing that was spread out before him in many shapes. Months of his life unrolled before him as a carpet, weeks of his life hung in a colored lithograph. Above in the nice apartment a whole year of his life struck: the Cologne clock.

He flashed the light off. Remained standing a moment in the darkness. Became scared of himself. Felt himself all over as if to make sure that he

was still there—he touched himself like a table, a chair, a cupboard, like that thing there—in the darkness he touched something, he did not know what thing—but the snoring of the dog quieted him. He went to sleep again.

Again he woke up. Ran in his nightshirt to Hermann's room and could only breathe again when he saw that Hermann wasn't there. He covered the bed, stroked the cover with his hand as if to cover something up with his love.

He woke up a third time.

It was shortly before four o'clock in the morning.

Early morning light lay outside on the tops of the fir trees.

All around the house there was a tramping of feet.

Zinke sat up in his bed.

The blows which rang against the door downstairs made him get up; he walked into the middle of the room.

The door sprang open as his wife, whom he had asked to remain quietly in bed, said: "They are coming!"

"That's they all right," said Zinke when they remained standing before him, pistols in their hands. There were three men, death-heads in their caps.

"Herr Zinke. . ."

"Comrade" grinned one of them.

Zinke noticed how weak he was as he stood before them in his nightshirt. They had tight uniforms on and wore high boots.

The three muzzles of the pistols crept up close to him.

He shivered with cold.

"Hermann!"

All three demanded simultaneously.

Zinke felt as if an iron muzzle had been clamped on his mouth. Ten marks fine for the muzzle, he thought—his tongue vanished behind his teeth, his entire mouth with its spittle became a dry, lifeless block.

Downstairs the dog again began to bark loudly.

Zinke took one step towards the three.

When they backed up a little, the old blow suddenly seized him, he went up to the three contemptible figures like a giant and raised both his fists high for a blow.

Three shots cracked out, one right after the other.

Zinke whirled about, saw the spring gleaming down the tree-trunks, leaned against the air which yielded and beckoned him somewhere, like to a soft pillow.

He still heard his wife clearly:

"Husband!"

As if the stairs had been torn away, the three rolled down.

Then the whole house rocked.

30

The Cologne clock struck.

First stroke:

As light as a feather he ran through the streets, distributing the election call of the Social-Democratic Party.

"Workers of the world unite!" the appeal ended.

Second stroke:

Arm in arm with Lieschen, on a Sunday down the canal, he has his first job as a compositor, he can make enough for two, the train goes over the bridge, this time under the bridge without fail—it is the first kiss—and next Sunday in blossom time they will go to Werder.

Third stroke:

Digs. Back bent as if he would soon bury his head in the earth. Pulls a note out of his pocket: "End the war!" Digs. Also he digs: Liebknecht.

Fourth stroke:

GENERAL STRIKE.

Then the clock no longer stops striking.

Strikes. Strikes.

Strikes without end.

GENERAL STRIKE.

The clock strikes. Strikes.

Strikes down the house.

The house resounds.

He lies there as if he were dying in the middle of free and open spaces

Translated from the German by Dorothy Halpern

James Steele

Conveyor

Fragment From a New American Novel of the Auto Workers

"Layoff t'day."

"Twenny t'ousand day before yesterday."

"Won't be long now."

The remarks fluttered from mouth to mouth as the men pressed on over the bridge into the plant. Jim bit his tightly clenched fists, grew sore from the strain. Oh Gawd, why in hell don't this come an' be over with?

Inside there was the same discordant roar he noticed so long ago. The men were fraid: their machines were erratic: the bosses were scurrying around like rats in a cage. "Come on now, man, git goin'! Step on it, there! Git the rags out! Let's go buddy!" The more they shouted the more confused the men became. The grinder's stock was almost half scrap!

Jim's mind was not on his work. What would he do if Marie left? Where would he go? He didn't have any money—and if he didn't have any job, what then?

"Clean yuhr machine, ev'rybody! Clean machines!" Johnnie tossed a half dozen rags in his face as Jim turned around. His blood seemed to freeze for a moment. . . Layoff. In a moment the whole building was silent —the machines were down, the power was off, the men gazed at each other with sick, set faces. . . The silence was pregnant with tension. . .

The men wiped their machines carelessly, anxiously watching the aisle down which the timekeeper would come. Silence, broken only by the faint sounds of rags on steel. Silence, in which every tick of the time clocks burned itself into the minds of the workers. Silence. . . Oh God, what in hell was holding up that time-keeper?. . .

Down the aisle came Ferguson. He walked up to a cutting machine, drew his finger over some oil spots. The man at the job cowered under his glance. "So this is clean, huh? Well, go' an' clean yuhrself an' get the hell outa here!"

The words snapped the suspense. Rags were whipping around oil cocks, flashing over greasy surfaces, muck was being scooped out by the handful almost before he finished speaking. Jim saw the boss coming his way and slammed to the door of the grinding wheel. Ferguson passed him by but Jim saw that his eyes were red with bloodshot and that his face twitched like elastic. The man next to Jim smiled and stooped to wipe the oil from his shoe. Ferguson turned and saw him. "Get yuhr time!"

The others smiled happily. It wasn't layoff, after all! A half hour later they were ordered to resume production.

By lunch time the spirit of the men had changed—hell, there wasn't going to be any layoff. They sat around, joking, shoving the food down their throats in order to talk the more.

"Boy, I ain't felt so good in a long time," one of them beamed, "I figger if this layoff jus' keeps off another six months I'll be all set to open up' a li'l garage I been waitin' for."

"'At's the thing to do. It ain't no good stickin' around a place like this, 'st's a cinch."

"Well, I'm glad there ain't no layoff comin'."

Jim was not quite so hopeful. He sat munching his bologna sandwich with a skeptical look on his face.

"Well, what d'yuh say?" one of the men asked him.

"I ain't sayin' nuthin'," Jim replied with a wise glance. He happened to look over by the cutting machines.

"Hey, look over there!"

A serviceman had come up behind a worker who was sitting on an upturned box and kicked it out from under him. For a minute the man was on the floor, his lunch scattered under the machines, then he picked himself up and walked over to the serviceman. The others had risen from their seats and were drawing closer, silently.

"Wot's de idea?" The worker hitched up his pants. Jim saw his chest throbbing, his knuckles showing white under his dirty skin.

"Yuh know what's the idea. Yuh ain't got no right to be sittin' on 'em boxes, 'at's what." The serviceman turned on his heel.

The worker spun him around, faced him. "Oh, yeah?" The worker's fist crashed in the serviceman's face, sent him reeling against a machine, where he cowered, covering his bleeding face with his hands.

The worker stood over him, shaking with rage, his fists clenched tightly. "Come on, yuh goddam louse, get up or I'll wipe de floor with yuh."

A roar of delight went up from the men.

"Give it to 'im!"

"Geef 'em de hell!"

"Kill the bastard!"

"Knock th' hell outa—"

The cries stopped jerkily as a half-dozen servicemen broke through the crowd. Their automatics shone cold in the light.

"Get back!"

The line wavered, stood. The muzzles of six pistols were pointed at six men's hearts.

"Get back!"

The men under him burst back. The line broke, retreated.

"Back to work!"

The bosses ran up. "Wot's a matter?"

"Back to work!" roared the leader of the servicemen, his gun firmly in hand.

"Come on, back to yuhr jobs!" commanded the bosses.

The servicemen turned to the worker who fought. "Awright, yuh bastard, come on!" The man shrunk—a revolver butt beat on his skull, fists pounded his kidneys, and he slumped to the floor like a bag of potatoes. Four servicemen dragged him out while two others remained to watch over the men. . .

Two thirty! Johnnie came around, "Shut off yuhr machines! Clean up, ev'rybody!"

Jim felt faint as he heard the machines whine to a standstill. . .Silence. . . silence heavy with fear. . . layoff. . .

He turned, saw the timekeeper quickly sliding the timecards back into the racks, saw on each of them the little discharge slip. . . Christ, it's come. . . And Marie's leaving. . . what'll I do. . . It's winter. . . no place to

go . . . tramping again . . . Starve on the snow . . . Charlie fired . . . and poor old Mac Pherson . . . Oh Jesus Christ, what in hell am I gonna do? . . . And all the while the unearthly silence of a factory at a layoff. . .

Suddenly someone shouted, "T'hell wit' Rivers!"

Jim tossed his rag on the machine. Why should he bother to clean it up? All around him men began to smoke and shout.

He turned around as he heard the crash of steel on cement, saw a drill press operator smash the drills on the presses with an immense wrench. Then he turned and roared, waving the wrench in the air, "Come on yuh servicemen, come on yuh dirty rats. I'll give yuh the same dose!"

A thin lithe serviceman darted around the side of the press but not quickly enough. The operator's fist caught him in the breast and sent him head foremost into a machine. He lay there, crumpled up.

Voices swelled in a roar.

"Attaboy!"

"Down with Rivers!"

"T' hell wit' de servicemen!"

Jim's lungs tingled at the sound: his heart leapt as he joined the cry. The repressed rage of a year broke from him.

"T'hell wi' Rivers!"

"Down with the servicemen!"

"Whoopee!"

A gang of servicemen arrived, smiling contemptuously. One of them casually walked up to a worker and struck a cigarette from his mouth. In an instant, before Jim knew what was happening, there was fighting. Workers were running to the rescue of their mate: the servicemen went down under sheer force of numbers.

Jim later remembered the fight that morning. "Take their gats!" he bellowed, and plunged into the milling crowd. A serviceman got behind him, tripped him. Jim rose, twisted, and jumped on his assailant. They both went down, and Jim felt a thud behind his ear. He struggled up again, dizzy: a fist flashed before his face and he felt blood rouring over his chin. Half-blind, he struck out with all the force of his fury—he felt flesh on his knuckles, and blood. In his ears he heard a roar of pain and a threat. "Yuh bastard!" Jim stumbled, saw a blackjack drive at his mouth and then suddenly there was a roar at the back of his head, and black silence. . .

Bela Illes

Twilight of the Gods

A Story of Hungary

An old man in a greenish shabby overcoat and battered hat was caught stealing in a bakery. His clumsiness betrayed the amateur. While purchasing two stale rolls he tried to make a five kilogram loaf vanish under his coat. Caught, he was like one paralyzed: he did not utter a word, did not make a gesture. His inflamed water-blue eyes stared. His excitement could be noticed only in the trembling of his bloodless lips. The shivering old fellow looked so miserable that the policeman had a good notion to let him go if it weren't for the deep mannish voice of the bakery woman demanding that he do his duty.

"I'd hang the scoundrel, Mr. Inspector! So help me God, I'd hang him," thundered the bakery woman with her threateningly heaving high breasts. "He has one foot in the grave and is not ashamed to steal! The God given dear bread. . ."

The cases of theft have increased lately to an unbelievable extent. They require almost as much police attention nowadays as the political cases. So the thieves and other criminals are treated almost as bad as the communists.

But it was hard to give the old bread thief a real drubbing. At the first blow he fell to his knees on the muddy floor crying. The fat reddish-tan face of the policeman on duty was stretched into a broad grin.

"Get up, you old geezer. You needn't be afraid, I won't eat you. What gutless stuff you get to handle these days. What's your name?"

"Gabriel Endrei," said the old man, still on his knees.

"Do you live anywhere? Where do you live?"

Endrei mentioned an address.

"Have you a trade or profession?"

"Houseowner."

"Tell it to your grandmother."

The grin disappeared from the face of the policeman.

"If you don't want to get acquainted with my fists again, and a little closer, you'd better tell the truth, you old bastard, as if you were talking to God Almighty. What is your profession?"

"Houseowner," repeated the kneeling old man.

After another blow in the face he continued without waiting to be asked:

"I own a three-storied corner house on Andrassy Street and a four-storied tenement on Elizabeth Ring."

The policeman on duty reported the case to the district captain by telephone. In half an hour it was verified. The old man was telling the truth, and the bread-thief was really the owner of two large tenements. Towards evening the peculiar houseowner was brought to a respectable private sanatorium for investigation as to his sanity.

A wholesomely fragrant warm bath, the barber, a soft snow-white bed, long forgotten dishes: eggs, ham, cocoa, grapes. Endrei ate well and

greedily, and then fell into a long peaceful sleep. He had hardly opened his eyes when he asked for something to eat again.

After a good meal he stepped out into the garden and sat down on a bench under a big peach tree in full bloom. For hours he sat there quiet and motionless. He came inside the sanatorium only to eat and sleep, otherwise he was always sitting under the peach tree in his coat and hat. When a breeze rocked the branches Endrei's shabby hat was covered with rose colored petals.

The sanatorium director, Dr. Eugene Zala, the well known nerve specialist had ordered that for three days Endrei should be left entirely to himself. The orderlies were only to take care of his bodily comforts. On the morning of the fourth day Dr. Zala sat down on the bench next to the peculiar houseowner and engaged him in conversation. He began by showing Endrei a newspaper paragraph about his case. The reporter made Endrei out a victim of the Trianon peace treaty. He told Endrei's life story from the time he had been an ill-paid bookkeeper of a provincial trading house to the days of his having become a multi-millionaire and houseowner in the capital. The journalist wrote further that it was the dismemberment of Hungary that had shattered Endrei, as he loved his homeland more than anything. For a long time after the declaration of peace he had been melancholy. When he regained his health, he threw all his energy into the reconstruction of Hungary—struggled in his own way for the triumph of Magyar thought in economics. The political events of the past week, the threatening attitude of the Little Entente, the anti-Hungarian demonstrations in Roumania, brought on another attack of melancholy on the sensitive old man. The rest is a story not for the reporter, but for the physician. "The Endrei tragedy again calls before the bar of justice the murderers of the thousand year old land of Saint Stephan."

Endrei read only a few lines, then he fingered the newspaper nervously. With feverish eyes he soon found what he was after. With a groan the old man dropped the paper.

Zala did not betray that he had noticed what had affected this victim of the Trianon Peace: the Exchange item. The quotations of foreign currency.

"New Low of the Dollar," was the headline.

Endrei was again left to himself for days. The old man liked this: he ate and drank, the rest of the time he spent on the bench under the peach tree and seemed to sleep well all night, though the orderlies reported that he groaned aloud in his sleep. Once he even cried bitterly without waking.

The physician thought Endrei would grow tired og being alone so long and began to talk about some stimulus to make the specialists work easier. Perhaps the physician was right in his assumption, but it didn't materialize on account of a small unforseen detail.

The sanatorium presented its bill weekly to the patient's relatives. As Endrei had no relatives, the clerk, without consulting Dr. Zala, handed the steep bill to the patient himself.

At first the old man failed totally to understand what was wanted of him. Tired and bored he let the bill slide to the floor without reading it through.

"Please give your directions for settling the bill."

"What?"

Endrei now understood. He looked at the total and began to shout:

"Robbers! Robbers!"

Then he got up and threw himself upon the clerk.

"Robber! Robber!"

Endrei was in the snow-white bed of the sanatorium weak from a morphine injection. His face greenish-pale, his waxen hands on the blanket.

"Have pity, doctor! Have pity! I shall end in the poorhouse."

"No, no, Mr. Endrei," the doctor said soothingly, "You are rich. You have no reason to complain, no cause for worry, you a rich and independent man."

"What are you talking about? I, rich? Is there a rich man left in the world today?"

Endrei's face twitched into a sort of smile.

Dr. Zala put a glass of water to his lips.

"No sir," the sick man refused, "then they will want more money for this. Doctor," he pleaded, "Doctor, do not rob me, do not ruin me."

"You are suffering from persecution mania, sir. You are overworked. You require rest, then everything will straighten out. You have no family and are the owner of two large tenement houses. You are a very rich man."

"I own two houses? They belong to me? Yes," Endrei answered himself, "they do, and how I worked, how I worked to get them. Yes, they belong to me, but Doctor. . . if there were justice, if there were a God!"

Two big tears rolled down the cheeks of the patient.

"You must sleep now, sleep. When you will have rested we shall discuss this some more."

"No, no Doctor, now, now! I am not ill and not tired, listen to me now!"

Another morphine injection quieted Endrei, but not for long. A half hour later he sent the orderly to fetch Dr. Zala.

"Doctor," he began without beating about the bush, "Doctor, you say I am a rich man. Hm. Do you know what a rich man is? Have you considered the question as to who has the right to think himself a rich man? It is generally believed that one who eats and drinks incontinently, wastes all kinds of money on clothes and women, is a rich man. H-m. These are not rich, they are only spendthrifts. It sometimes happens that a spendthrift is rich, but they are mostly not, they mostly *were* rich or are the sons of rich men. A rich man, Doctor,—do not be impatient,—is one who has more today than he had yesterday, will have more tomorrow than he has today. That's a rich man. One who knows that tomorrow he will have more than today, one who is sure of himself. Nowadays, as I have told you already, there are no rich men. There is nothing certain now, there is perhaps no God any more. Since 1919 I have doubted there is one."

"Yes, we have lost the war. Hungary is torn to pieces," sighed the doctor.

"What about it!" the patient reasoned. "The war! Torn to pieces! It is easy to blame everything on the war and the revolution. Since 1919 the interest on the war loan is not being paid. Do you know what that means? The State has borrowed money from its citizens, the country

is in debt to these citizens—the country that is supposed to protect the property of its citizens, the state whose duty it is to punish defaulting debtors, is itself in default. The country robbed me of 400,000 crowns. I have only a package of old paper! Do you know what this means, Doctor? Not only has the State robbed us of our money, it has robbed us of our faith. What can one trust, whom can one believe, have faith in, if the State has turned robber? No one—in nothing!"

"Correct!" Endrei continued after a short pause, "Correct! Man is a strong animal. . . The strongest animal in the world. He can stand anything. I, too, outlived this stock, and began anew. I worked again as when I was twenty. Better, harder, more wisely and mercilessly. And I lived almost like a beggar. And I recuperated from the shock. The State of Hungary cheated me, robbed me—very well. If one cannot trust Hungary, there are other more reliable governments in the world. I shall be brief. Do you know what the dollar meant during the years after the war, Doctor? Everything. Life, hope, faith, security. To how many people the dollar brought faith, the joy of life again! It was the great benefactor of mankind. Yes, sir. That's what it was. Was!

"The greatest part of my fortune was in dollars, in Switzerland, in Lichtenstein, in American investments. Hungary could do whatever it pleased, it could not harm me any longer. For all I cared Czecho-Slovakia or Roumania could take Budapest, they could take nothing of mine. I was serene, sure of myself, I was rich. I was rich, Doctor, was. Then. . ..

"God is dead, Doctor, finally and for all time. At first I did not believe my own eyes. Then I thought the newspapers are lying. They want to frighten me, scare me into something very foolhardy. The dollar fall? Foolish lies! I was not at all angry. I ridiculed them. . . But they were right. The dollar is falling, the dollar. . . . The Tsar was murdered. The German Kaiser was driven into exile. Hungary was parcelled out. Man is a strong animal. But to lose the last certainty, the dollar—that is unbearable!

"For days I didn't eat. I went hungry. I imitated the Hungarian State, the American banks, I stole. Is this madness? I know that no one can bring back to me what the New York Stock Exchange stole. And if brought back to me of what use would it be? If I should find a billion dollars on the street would that bring faith back to me? Never. And I have gone hungry as a shipwrecked man grasps at a plank in the middle of the ocean. . . I have come to you to recover, Doctor, and you are driving me to my grave. You are taking the last plank away from me. Have you seen the bill, Doctor?"

"Yes, I've seen it. And I must admit that now after having heard you, I understand you less than ever. What have you to fear? You have no family. You own two houses clear and have some wealth besides. What real harm can the fall of the dollar do to you? What need have you of more than you have left now? What do you need money for?"

Endrei sat up in his bed. He laughed. It looked as if he wanted to say something, say something profound. He had opened his mouth already, but shut it again. He only waved his hand, as if to say:

"What can you say to a man who does not even understand what one needs money for?"

After this conversation Endrei refused all food. He went on a hunger strike. After three days he was fed forcibly.

That afternoon Endrei was visited by his old friend, the consellor David Buday who had come down from Berlin with the morning train.

"Man, man, have you gone mad?"

Two aquamarine eyes shone gaily out of the perspiration covered face of the reddishblond, mellowheaded, broadshouldered lawyer.

"Man, I just came from Berlin—and am absolutely happy! Devil take me if we are not embroiled in a war before the year is out. We must get ready and not walk about with long noses. A heel on the internal enemy— a punch at the external one and we are the bosses in our own home again—more so than ever. Pull yourself together man. . ."

"Quit it," said Endrei sourly. "You talk big. I have no faith in miracles."

"Miracles? Heroism, courage, patriotism, are these miracles?"

Instead of an answer Endrei laughed.

He laughed with his mouth wide, a nasty laugh. His laugh reminded one of the death rattle of one suffocated. Buday belabored his friend this way for another full hour, but vainly. He could not get another word out of him.

"The man is mad," he told Dr. Zala upon leaving. "The devil only knows what kind of an abomination might turn up, it is necessary to put him back into the hoosegow."

Zala nodded agreement and Endrei was transferred to the prison hospital that same day.

All shrunk and deathly pale he lay in the narrow iron cot.

At his right a communist lay with a broken jaw received at the hands of detectives while being examined. At his left lay an old peasant wounded during a forced tax collection. Both his neighbors groaned, the old peasant blubbered off and on, only Endrei lay still and silent.

With tight lips he suffered silently.

On the tenth day of his hunger strike he lost consciousness, but his stubborn body fought death for five more days.

Translated from the German by S. D. Kogan

Karlton Kelm

Tinkle and Family Take a Ride

An American Short Story

There comes, you see, a time when a fellow faces the futility of saving what there'll never be enough of to ever matter anyway,—skinching on what of itself is a skinch,—then with a god-swell gesture he says, O hell, and get what he wants—or tries to.

I suppose that is why Mr. Tinkle got the Ford.

It was a very old model, black worn blue with the iridescent shadings of oil on water. A touring car, five-seater, with the isinglass knocked out two of the three windowlights in back, and the black leather seats blistered open in places, like cracked fingers that won't heal, and the stuffing coming out. Mr. Tinkle said it cost him twenty dollars tho, and the tires were in pretty fair shape. It had a sick once-used-now-unused look as it stood all day, all night, in the blazing stuffy street outside the Tinkle flat, third floor rear, its front wheels twisted painfuly into the curb. Mr. Tinkle said it had performed very decently that first day he had driven it home on the complimentary gallon of gasoline the used-car man had put in it to get-it-the-hell-out-of-here.

Mr. Tinkle had not driven it since. But I did not know this till I stopped to talk to him on my way home from work. Before I only knew what I seen. I would walk home from work and see him tinkering with the thing, his head in the engine, his backsides looming upward, or simply his long oil-smeared legs jutting out like stovepipes from in-and-under it. It was only the one time I seen his face that I stopped to talk.

Every evening that summer I walked back to town after supper to shoot pool with some of the boys and perhaps pick up a date later. Past the Tinkles again I'd go and there sure as anything would be the whole family sittin' in that car, sittin' in rags, talking and looking around nice as you please, just like they was moving along a fine country road. It's true I saw Mr.'s face then, but there was the five faces to see, six with the baby, so I just kind of see 'em all as a whole not sorting out any one at the time. It's only now as I look back that I do that.

Mr. was always at the wheel with the little boy aside him except sometimes when the two little girls kicked up a fuss and scrambled over into the front seat and made the little boy go in back. But the mother, Mrs., was always in back with the baby in her lap. She just flopped there and seemed so kind of still while the rest kept up a holler that you guessed it was the only time in the day she ever really took a moment to rest. I remember now noticing once her eyes were a nice blue and kept blinking softly as if she were trying to see everything for the first time, trying to believe everything was new and different and worth looking at. Now it's our turn, the little girls would say and over they'd plop into the front seat with little squeals.

Mr. never seemed to notice the noise they made but kept looking straight ahead at the road, all hunched up over the wheel, and answered all their questions. Once in a while he smiled, as if the idea of their not budging an inch had suddenly hit him full in the face all over again.

Now we're going up a hill, said the little boy. More gas, Papa, more gas, and he pounded on the tinny footboard with his thin little sandals.

Papa's giving it all the gas he's got, said Papa, and then that kind of smile of his.

Or:

O see the cow, Mama, see the big fat cow, said the bigger little girl, clutching her scrawny body excitedly.

It's not a fat cow, it's a very thin cow, corrected the smaller little girl with a forlorn little face. It's a very thin cow and it can't give any milk and all the farm babies are crying for their milk.

No, no, no, cried the first little girl more and more excited, It's ever so fat and it gives ever so rich cream and it's all nice brown like in the picture-book except one little white patch between its ears.

It's black and white and not brown, said the second little girl. It's black and white like on the magazine cover, only its bones stick out very and all the little babies are crying. Hear them cry, Mama.

Hush, said their mother, looking out where there was only hot pavement, high hot tenements, screaming, filth.

Nuts! muttered a dirty little neighbor boy listening from the curbing; and I passed on.

Or:

Papa, is it cool in the country and are there lots of trees and can you walk in grass? Can you pick little flowers and roll up your pants and wade in real water instead of what comes from the hydrant, can you, Papa? Is it all like in the book?

Yes, son, all like in the book.

When are we going there, Papa?

Why, we're there now, son. See that little brook over there? See all the bright green things? Smell the fresh clean smells, son?

The little boy's eyes shone, his thin little chest expanded, the small black nostrils dilated—but just for an instant, then he sat back very far in his seat, sighed like a little old man exhausted, and meekly said. Yes, Papa.

Yes, said Papa looking straight ahead, Yes.

Nuts! said the dirty little beggar on the curb.

Then the day I stopped to talk. What seems to be the trouble? I asked. He was sitting on the runningboard, his head in his hands. He looked up and squinted at me for a moment, then he drawled, Why, nothing special—thinking I meant his car—You know how it is when they get old. And then a feller has to be doin' something.—Then brightening, O it's in fine shape right now, but it'll be even better when we finally get goin'.

He had a fine long sensitive face, and a violin would have fit nice under his chin, but his hands were maimed flat toil-hands and seemed in the way of the rest of him. The work had not touched his face, only the emotion of it, but his hands were the made hands of his place in the world. His face could do nothing about his hands now, it was too late. Like he told me after we got to jawing a while: I got tunes in my head. All the time I got tunes in my head. If someone could take them down, he said. Where does one take these tunes to? Would you know where I could get someone to listen to them and take them down, would you?

His eyes were alight for a moment, very black-bright light, but then

there was those hands, and all that shabbiness, and a beaten-dog look, so I was ready with my answer. No, I said, I wouldn't know where.

Maybe he knew what I meant.

Maybe they were lousy tunes anyway. But just the same they were in his head.

But first:

He said, Maybe you think like the others I shouldn't have the car. No, it wasn't before but after I was laid off that I bought it. I don't suppose you can understand that. I just had the twenty bucks left, that was all. When you don't know where the next twenty's coming from, well, the twenty you got don't matter so much. And we'd been planning on it so, the car,—just getting out in the country of a Sunday. Really for the first time since we got married we could see a little fun ahead. We figured it wouldn't take so much gas if we diluted it up with kerosene like some of our neighbors does.

You see, I kept saying I'd have another job in a few days, but I knew I wouldn't. I just said that so I wouldn't have to think about what I was going to use for gas. Food? O my little girls go with a basket to a convent every day. Whatever is left over they give us. You see the charities won't give us help unless I sell the car. Our landlord says I must sell it too to help pay what I owe him. My wife says it's the only thing to do now, but I won't do it. I bought that car and paid for it and I'm going to keep it. That's the last hope and I'm going to hang onto it. Why, that car's freedom, it's a way out, the only way out I can see. Why I couldn't give it up before the wife and kids even had a ride in it, could I?

Listen, if I can hold onto it a little while longer, I'll get hold of some money somehow, see? And then what do you think I'm going to do? buy food? pay the rent? No! I'm going to buy gas, lots of gas. It's better than food or lodging, is gas. A feller can get somewhere with gas, see something. A feller has to get *some*where before he dies, don't he?

Yessir, I'm going to fill 'er up with gas and oil and go far into the country. We'll just keep going, me and the wife and kids, until all the gas is gone, then we won't have to come back, ever. We can get along then Animals do. But here, this aint a fit place for an animal!

Well, why don't you say something? I guess you think I'm an awful guy. But it all seems fair enough to me, Mr.

Nuts! said the little roughneck on the curb, and I said, Fair enough, and went home.

Well, the next night Tinkle wasn't tinkering around his car, when I went home, and after supper on my way down to the poolhall there was only the little boy in the car foolin' around with the steeringwheel. Mama's sick, he said when I asked him where everybody was, and then he went right on playing, kind of mumbling to himself about how he was a racer and going a hundred miles an hour, *Whew! just made that corner on two wheels, whew!*

The next night it was the same, then the night after that even the little boy wasn't there and the car stood empty and forlorn, twisted into the curb. There was a big-fat woman sitting out on the secondfloor stoop rocking away with her arms folded high on her stomach and I yelled up to her and she said, Mrs. Tinkle died last night, she's always been poorly, and this ptomaine she got from the old food sent in just done her, that's all. Yes, the whole family's down at the undertaker's with her, Ward's, funeral tomorrow afternoon, two o'clock, you're very welcome I'm sure.

I swallowed that and went home.

Next morning on my way to work the Tinkle car was not at the curb, and the big-fat woman leaned over the railing of her stoop, a kind of balcony, and without my even asking her, said, He come with a gallon of gas and druv it off this A. M. They're going to use it in the funeral procession instead of the regular mourner's car to cut down expenses.—Then she laughed, I shouldn't say procession because there'll just be the hearse and their car, they were never people to neighbor much, always stuck to themselves, but they have a cousin at the other end of town, and I guess it's him that's buryin' her and that bought the gallon of gas. Mr. says the kids is all excited about the ride to the cemetery. I says the cousin might of filled it up while he was at it, but Mr. says he's been laid off too, and the gallon will just do it out there and back.

It was Saturday and in the afternoon I didn't work and I thought several times of going over to Ward's and talking to Tinkle, but hell, I couldn't, just couldn't, and then first think I knew it was after two o'clock and they'd be on their way to the cemetery, and what the hell anyway. But I might as well of gone because all afternoon I saw it all anyway, just like it was happening. The long dull black-solemn hearse moving with not too disrespectful haste thru the bright-glittering afternoon. Then the Tinkle flivver, the worn color of oil on water, struggling along behind.

I didn't want to see more than that but I had to. I had to see Mr. and the cousin from the other side of town whom of course I'd never seen, sitting together stiffly in the front seat, Mr. hunched over the wheel just a bit and his eyes straight ahead. I had to see those kids, the two girls and the little boy (the baby'd been left somewhere of course) bouncing about the back seat, looking at everything, having the time of their life, clapping their hands and even yelling in their excitement, *See the cow, Papa. See the beautiful white cow.—And the flowers, Papa, all the bright little flowers.—O doesn't it all feel good, Papa, doesn't it smell good! Isn't it fine to ride in the country, Papa?*

And Papa letting them make all the noise they want, *what the hell no one's around out here, and they've been quiet so long.* And Mama, so cold and still in the dull black hearse ahead. Was Mama seeing the flowers and the cow and nice bright air? Was Mama having a nice ride too?

And now the crude black box is going down, down, but the little girls and the little boy are so busy watching a beautiful yellow butterfly fluttering high above it in the bright sun-lazy air, that they forget to look down, forget to say goodbye to Mama, until the dull black box is out of sight, gone! And then the cousin is bustling them away, while Papa keeps standing there, looking, looking, looking where the black box is no more!

Nuts! I said like the little roughneck. Nuts! and went home. I didn't go past the Tinkles. After all, it was only a shortcut and I most always had time for the longer way.

Joseph Kalar

Night-Shift

Sleep aches deeply in the eyes; taste of ashes
dryly sands the mouth, while lips are cracked
with mouthing gobs of stale brown plug;
hours have no periods, no precision, they
are merely hours, stretching into dawn
like a haze of fog greyly lifting over lumber
to warm compulsion of the sun; they are merely
the aching cry of the body for sleep, sleep,
sweet, sweet Jesus, sleep, sleep, the far cry
of drowsy tired blood: sleep, sleep, sleep.

Into the night, body a hunch against darkness,
jostling and bouncing on a wagon rigid
with stiffness, permitting no dreams of cotton,
creaking, groaning, a clot of shadow urgently
propelled down dark canyons of lumber, poking
fragrant load of pine between rows of piles
darkly reminiscent of western canyons of stone,
thoughts swarm drowsily behind the eyes of this man
who stares vacantly at the giant swell and roll
of horse buttocks dark and heaving before him,
thinking no more while muscles bulge terribly
like pistons moving smoothly under hide,
and the body is only a remembered cry for sleep.

In the morning when dawn has crept over the sky,
lips are a thin line not curving into the glow
of a smile, eyes are a lesson in brooding and vision,
and hands clutching at leather reins are ominous
with significance; tho sleep is a phlegm of weariness
clotting his mind, hate is knowledge incandescent,
bright illumination for a mind busy with planning,
and hands are rich with promise of a tomorrow
in which dreams will sprout beautifully into action,
and throats harsh with cursing will shout terribly
the word that will give meaning to hours,
precision to time, significance to bodies
now but a far painful cry in blood for sleep.

ARTICLES and CRITICISM

R. Kim

Japanese Literature and Revolution

A Survey of Literary Developments in the East

At the end of the eighties the caste of the intelligentsia, diplomas in hand, stood waiting at the university doors for the keys of the city to be brought to them with an offer to come and occupy commanding posts.

To color the interval of waiting, the learned literati wrote stories on heroically-romantic themes—on the heroic soldier accomplishing superhuman exploits, the young man who renounced his beloved to devote himself wholly to art, the vassal sacrificing his child for the welfare of his lord, the exceedingly wise Buddhist hermit and so on. Every hero unique in the matter of wisdom and exploits. Anything, but not work-a-day life.

Then an unexepected denoument.

Instead of a deputation the government sent a notice to the university registry office: wanted—so many secretaries for the post and telegraph offices, so many chief dragomen at the consulates, so many teachers of the English language at the high-schools, so many physicians for the settlers' hospitals at the island of Hokkaido. From commercial and industrial concerns, the shareholders of which were those same government officials, came requisitions for several dozen lawyers, commodity experts, engineers.

The university intelligentsia, "Europeans," received orders to immediately assume the duties of their respective specialties and occupy the positions assigned to them under various ministers and company directors—who were once Samurai, superior officers, boors who could not read a single serious book in the Latin alphabet.

Amazement, indignation, disillusionment, sulking, grimaces of disdain—and subordination. They had to admit that not they were masters of the country, but the members of the feudally bureaucratic clans that had joined hands with the usurers and landowners and had no intentions whatever of admitting anyone into their upper spheres.

They, the most highly skilled section of the intelligentsia, were put in the position of cultured aliens in their own country.

Some of them to give vent to their feeling of stultifaction, begin to discuss *kioma-siuger*—nihilism of nights and read Stepniak. But further than disputes and admiration of Russian terrorists they did not go.

The majority of these specialists of the intelligentsia, making better use of their time, quickly adjusted themselves to the circumstances, took the position of antisocial, passive apostates, decided to hide their disappointment deep within themselves, as far away as possible from the stulti-

fying world. The great poet, the *tonkist*[1] of the beginning of the twentieth century, Isikawa, has, in his tonkist verses, caught the political indifference and impotent melancholy of these offended souls.

They say the peasants renounced saki.[2]
What will they renounce
When things get worse?
Strange as it may seem, today
The tears came to my eyes while cursing congress.
It made me happier!
Let someone empty
His revolver at me.
I want to die like Prince Ito.[3]
I wrote a hundred times
The symbol "Great" in the sand
And came back home
Decided not to die.
My tears all spent
I play with crabs
On the sandy shore of a little island
In the Eastern Sea.

The Occult Paragraph

"I want to publish my thought, disperse erroneous opinions, enlighten composers and, preparing a reform of the novel from now on and the progress of the novelist's art, achieve the point where our fiction, surpassing the novels of European lands, will brilliantly shine at the heights of art alongside painting, music and poetry.

The eighteenth year of the era of Meydsy, the beginning of the third month, at the southern casement of the House of Spring, signed with my brush—

The Traveler"

This paragraph ends the introduction to *The Occult Essence of the Novel,* the book of the Bachellor of Letters Tsubuti. The book was published in April, 1885, a month after the organization of "The Fellowship of the Friends of Tushnitsi."

The occult title of the book and the high-flown language of the Baccaulaureate were fully justified. Tsubuti did not write any ordinary book of research on the novel, or some learned treatise about prose. He wrote a decalogue of a new literature: *The Occult Essence of the Novel* consisted of ten chapters which became the ten commandments of the new Japanese literature.

With all the force of his Baccalaureate eloquence the author annihilated classical Japano-Chinese prose which put in the foreground metaphoric style and ingeniousness of plot, and proved the superiority of Western novel technique, the art of description.

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[1] *Tonka*—a poem of 31 syllables.

[2] *Saki*—Rice whiskey.

[3] One of the mutineers of 1868; one of the main representatives of the "Southwesterness," killed at the height of his fame by a Korean terrorist at the Harbin railroad station.

The gist of *The Occult Essence of the Novel* is: "The main thing in the novel is the description of human feelings. Life and manners should occupy second place. One must dig down to the bottom of feelings and carefuly describe all the secret corners of the soul. That's the duty of the novelist."

In a few years this paragraph began to be realized. The followers began to carry out the dictates of this paragraph so earnestly, so enthusiastically that Tsubuti himself, after writing only two stories threw down the brush of the novelist and buried himself in Shakespeare and Japanese legend. The leader could not keep up with his followers, who, declaring themselves "naturalists," determined to outdo the European psychographers.

Literature became an exhibition of exercises in psychography, psychoanalytical stenograms, a collection of experiments in the description of the secret corners of the authors' microcosms and those of their friends.

The term "high" literature arises.

Tsubuti's paragraph drew a line which separated Japanese literature into "high" and "low."

"High"—for select intellectuals that must read literature with the same seriousness with which they read, by the help of a dictionary, European books on their specialty. They must read this "high" literature in order to keep up their intellectual prestige and not for entertainment.

"Low" literature (*tiaku-bungaku)* the university masters term the literature which, direct heir to the composers of the tokugai era, has become the expression of the psychoideology of the masters of the feudally capitalistic monarchy.

Adventures of itinerant Samurai, duels with swords and spears, vendettas, death for the suzeraine, unusual adventure of Japanese youths on newly discovered islands in the ocean, melodramatic incidents in life. The entire assortment of heroes required by the Empire. After the China-Japanese war the necessity is announced for the creation of a socalled "enlightening fiction" of a strictly definite thematic content: 1) optimism, warlikeness and highmindedness of the Japanese, 2) patriotism, devotion to the state.

The development of "low literature" as a means of shaping the emotions of the Banzai-chauvinists, proceeds parallel with the growth of "high literature" during the decades of the twentieth century.

"Low literature" has not brought out any Kipling, not a single first class artist. Its cadres were made up of the composers of dime novels (shilling shockers) having no particular literary skill. The university masters named it very aptly from a point of view of literary technique and were entirely right in emphasizing their aloofness from it.

"High literature" becomes the leading literature and acquires a monopoly of all the first class literary and political economic periodicals.

To bother about being entertaining, about the plot, grandiloquency of style, is considered "low literature" in tone.

Master Toiosima declared: "The higher the writer the easier he can write without a plot. Writers that cannot write fiction without 'adventures' cannot be considered good writers. It should be considered a special distinction of Japanese literature that its writers have learned to describe emotions exclusively."

". . . viewed from the angle of 'purity', from the viewpoint of the absence of vulgar entertainment, the stories which have no 'story about

something' are the purest, most self restrained," declares Master Akutakawa.

Life and Literature

The country was moving on with mad haste, covering with leaps and bounds the road of the white race from Arkwright machines and the Magna Charta to Morgan Sr. and eleven inch mortars.

The entire foreign colony in Tokyo opened its eyes wide once, the entire city is decorated with red lanterns, thousands of rockets are shot into the air, the constitution is published, in another year parliament is opened, the news venders shout about a change of cabinets, Mitsui and Mitsubisi begin their collection of plants and mines, the police make their first examination of Okunomi, the leader of the union of two-legged horses—rikshas, the young scientist Katayama sat down to write about Lasalle, the hundred twenty second Emperor for the first time in the history of Japan augustly visits the theatre, at the coal mines on the island of Kiusiu there is a fracas, in Seoul Japanese soldiers raided the palace of the Korean king and slaughtered the queen, in the outhouses of village schools electric lamps are turned on, an earthquake destroyed 225,000 homes in one day (1891), another 10,000 two years later, 13,066 another two years later;

—and the high masters, eyes closed, ears muffled, repeat the occult paragraph.

Japan, without having gone to school, is holding her examination for the position of a first class power, regiments with flags on which the sun is shown like a many legged crab invade, after three victories, the entire Southern Manchuria, the fleet of the Chinese Emperor is locked up in the bay and destroyed, the Admiral Din hangs himself, Englishmen invent the word "Jingoism" from the name of a semi-mythological Japanese Empress, the railroad engineers celebrate their first victorious strike;

—and the masters write:

Odsaki—*Many Feelings—Much Sorrow*—a professor loses his wife, moves to a friend's, is tortured by recollections, moves back so that he will not be suspected of a flirtation with the wife of his friend—a long novel.

Hirosu—*Suicide in Imado*—a geisha girl loves, jilted, she decides to die, wins back her lover.

Higuti—*Who's Higher*—a boy and a girl grow up together—how their relations to each other change.

Oguri—*Powder of the Night*—a description of an incestuous love affair between a brother and sister.

For the Korean market, for coal from Fushun and beans from Manchuria, for Kamchatka salmon, for the beautiful eyes of the Kwantung peninsula a war with "Rosuke" is started, Admiral Makarov and the artist Verestchagin fly up in the air and drown in the sea, bloody pools appear on the map of Manchuria: Tiurenchen—Wafangow—Liaojan—Shahe—Mukden, over all Japan Buddhist requiems, General Nogi sacrifices two sons—officers, Captain Hirose, until the war an incorrigible tippler in the salons of St. Petersburg, drowns in a fire-ship at the mouth of Port Arthur and soon rises covered with bronze on one of the crossings in Tokyo. Stessel reliquishes his sword to the *makaky,* evening demonstrations with red lanterns on all the islands of the Empire, two Rus-

sian squadrons go to the bottom in the straits on May 27, 1905, Peace of Portsmouth, mobs in Tokyo, dissatisfied with the terms, pull down 140 police booths, 38 houses, 10 pagodas, kill and maim 471 policemen;

—and the masters:

Hashigawa—*Mediocrity*—a petty official falls in love, feels his insignificance, tortures himself, whines.

Nagai Kafu—*Bloom of Hell*—a young governess in an aristocratic family, history of her fall.

Tayama Katai—*The Bed*—a middle aged pedagogue falls in love with a young pupil, steals into her bedroom.

A small Asiatic State (the first edition of the *Encyclopedia Brittanica* devoted exactly twenty-four words to the article on Japan) attains the title of "a power"—the rank of the great, Prince Ito is on his way to take away the Korean Emperor-opium smoker's crown, the miners in Assio—Furukawa's trust—are cutting wire conductors, burn the officers to hell, bombs, the police run away, three companies of Takasaka infantry attack the miners, in another two months 1,200 coal miners in Bessi—the Sumitomo trust—set fire to the administration building, a pyre of bookkeepers' volumes, several police officers of high rank are commissioned to the resting place of their imperial forefathers, the 11th infantry division is mobilized, the cabinet of General Katsura proceeds to confiscate all books containing the words *siakui*—"society, social," even the scientific work *Social Life of Insects* is prohibited, the owners of five concerns are knighted and become barons, an anarchist conspiracy, annexation of Korea, the death of Ito on the Harbin railroad station, the apotheosis of the Emperor Mitsuhito, General Nogi performs hari-kari, a general strike of the tramway workers in Tokyo, the curve of growth of the cotton goods industry: 414,000 bales in 1903—1,517,000 in 1913;

—and the masters write, and write, and write about the secrets of the soul, dig down to the obscurist bottom.

In far distant countries a war is begun, a Japanese division is sent to the Shantun peninsula to save Paris and London, the Empire loses, in the course of the entire war, two hundred soldiers killed, increases its gold reserves six and a half times, the vaults of the Japanese State Bank are bursting with European gold, six new love districts open up in Tokyo, in 1917 the fashion spreads among the fish vendors of sporting gold wrist watches, the price of silk remnants in the Matsui department store reaches 1,500 yen, officers of the general staff are beginning to draw maps of a Great Continental Japan and dream of soup made out of freshly caught Baikal fish;

—and the masters have finally reached the occult essence—they proclaim "egofiction."

One rebelled and came out at the beginning yet of the twentieth century with the categorical advice to his colleagues to begin the study of Sociology and Political Economy—that was the Professor of Philology, Takayama Tiugiu. He declared: "Most of the writers today are very young, have a meagre biography. . . ," "the majority of their heroes are young people under thirty, like the litterati themselves, and the heroes, spending their lives in a way similar to that of their authors, are not interesting to the wider circles of readers;" "such novels can satisfy only a few of the younger students."

He invented a name for these masters who locked themselves into their narrow limited literature; *mukosangenriorintekina*—six words stuck together into one a la Joyce, that translated mean: "three houses opposite neighboring two" literature.

II

In their search for the occult essence of the art of prose writing, the masters, at the beginning of the present century, struck a road which was declared a trunk line. This trunk line was named "naturalism," in view of the fact that some of the basic principles were borrowed from the French in exchange from some Siaraku and Hokusai engravings that the impressionists made use of.

But Japanese naturalism very quickly split away from the main stream, raised its own flag, developed its own laws, its own dialect. The literary encyclopedias of the world must not fail to include "Naturalism, Japanese" as distinct from the European; there is as great a distance between them as between Marinetti's manifestoes and the Russian "budetlanians" (futurists).

Historians of the new Japanese literature diligently enumerate various trends that have appeared among the masters during the past two decades. But the fingers of one hand will suffice to count the books produced by other than the method of "Japanese Naturalism." Heretics and initiators of new schools after very few attempts either left the field of "high literature" or became loyal followers of the main road.

And the main road raised the slogan of extremely truthful, stenographic recording of life. Of prime importance is precise, ascetic recording, reporting sensations experienced, conversation and gesture. The masters begin to weed out all literariness—epithets, comparisons, plot. The same logic later forced the Parisian Supermatistes to eliminate all picturization in the name of "pure painting" without any "literature."

The term *dsiunbungaku*—"pure literature"—or more correctly—purified of literature, appears. The masters found it difficult to call their works—plotless records—stories. They began to apply to them the very diplomatic term *Sosaku*—a work belonging to "pure literature." No connotation like: novel, story, or short story. Such connotations are applicable to the works of Western authors and "vulgar" literature. (The consistency of the Japanese purists is to be respected. The critics from the clan of masters of "high literature" characterized Dostoyevsky as "the great novelist of low literature." Paul Morand bears the tab, for which one can hardly bear them malice, of "the mass fiction writer for women." Excerpts from Pilnyak's *O.K.* were not given place in the *sosaku* department but next to an article by the minister of foreign affairs Utida and a statistical essay on prostitution in Japan.)

The master Satomi frankly inscribed above one of his *sosaku*—"A telling from which no tale resulted." Characteristic titles are: *Description of the Sensations of a Man Jilted by a Woman (Takeboiasi Musoyan* or *Psychological Landscape.)*

Most frequently there is a description of a single day or period in the life of the hero or his environment: all indispositions of the characters are recorded, everything is descibed including natural functions, the family is registered with all the names, addresses, habits even if it has nothing whatever to do with the trend of the tale as there is no plot; accidental

personages like the servant that handed the guest his sandals, showed him to the toilet, a man met accidentally on the street—are all described with great precision; if the hero and his wife happened to go to the store, there is a complete list of every purchase and at what price; conversation at the dinner table, on the street, in bed, incoherent babble about trifles, reflections about one's self—everything is recorded with stenographic precision; a landscape is given without adjectives—the name of the place or street, the topographic details are given with the same businesslike laconic exactness as the detailed directions in a play.

Then the masters decide to free themselves completely from "literature," go over to pasting pieces of glass, hair and lace on the canvas. Under the label of *sosaku* they began publishing the full text of their letters to their wives, sweethearts and friends, (for instance, the famous thing by the master Tikamatsu, included in "The Library of Masterpieces of New Literature" published by Siatyo—*Letter To My Wife From Whom I Separated)* fragments from diaries, intimate notes, descriptions of trips to summer places or to other cities on family matters—genuine "documents of life." And from literary purposelessness it was a short step to the declaration of the masters one day:

Extremely truthful, without the least tinge of "literature," "composition" can be considered only such *sosaku* in which the author describes only his everyday life, his family, his friends, his dealings with the publishers, his own experiences, troubles, joys without any inventive addition or any omission.

The masters have reached egofiction.

III

Egofiction arrived unnoticed. Manifestoes, terminology came afterwards, after it was discovered to be already in practice. To a roof and ready upper stories a theoretical foundation was hastily got up post factum.

The leaders climb the platform:

"Egofiction in the true sense of this word is the basis, the midchannel stream, the quintessence of the art of prose. All that is not included in egofiction is—vulgar art!" (Kume Masao)

"Egofiction is made up only of such work as can be guaranteed to contain nothing false." (Ibid)

"Let literature become the diaries of the authors! Whoever find it uninteresting let him not read!" (Tanidsaki Seidsi)

They write about their environment, the trifles of their everyday existence, family tiffs, love intrigues, recreation in writers' cafes, drunken parties, sport activities, playing madjan, quarrels with others, "born before their time" about how *sosaku* should be written, of the anguish experienced before blank paper when the manuscript is due, telephone calls from the editors, money troubles. Egofiction induced extreme frankness. In a lecture on literature Master Sato Haruo declares: "The writer must create egofiction. He must pay no attention to what the world may think of him or that he may hurt his reputation. The writer must tell the truth about himself. He must announce to the world: this is what my life consists of. This is the writer's privilege—his happiness." Titles in the first person become the fashion: *I Am Taken For One Who Explains the Pictures in the Movies; Why I Didn't Go To The Funeral; I Take a Walk*

With My Brother; I Open the Window; I Hate My Father; I Swim In Front of My Children; I Send a Wreathe; I Listen To a Monk; I See Mosquitoes; I Betray My Wife.

The literary vocabulary has been enriched by a series of new expressions. In periodicals, literary reviews where critics until now used a sort of pidgin English, fitting into every phrase English words adapted to Japanese phonetics, the most frequent terms now used become:

Siniko-siosetsu—psychographic fiction.

Simpendsaki-siosetsu—fiction dealing with the trifles surrounding the writer.

Genkosakusya-seikatsu-sioetsu—fiction describing the life of the author himself.

If most of the literary terms were of foreign origin up to now (European or Chinese), with egofiction a native terminology came into being. This indicated that literary Japan had freed herself from foreign dependence and gone over to home production.

On the world's cultural market the Japanese have patent rights to the following inventions: *tanka, haiku,*[1] *kabuki,* the tea ceremonial,[2] the art of *ikebana.*[3]

The masters decided that their invention is also entitled to a world patent and should be considered on a par with the listed Japanese specialties.

The most important critic Ikuta declares:

"Some of the critics are already saying that the story in Japan, on the average comes up to European-American standards, and even excels these, so much has the art of fiction writing progressed!"

Another critic asserts:

"The Japanese story is on a par with the tea ceremonial and the art of *ikebana* in the sense that there is nothing comparable to them in the world."

"The Japanese story will undoubtedly occupy a place similar to the engravings of Utamoro."

The masters looked at one another with deep respect. The master Uno publicly declared the egofictional *sosaku* of the master Kassai "unique of their kind in the world." Critics, compelled by their calling to be more sober and reserved in judgement, limited their observations to say that "Kassai can be compared only to the Frenchman Balzac."

Then the masters grew sad. They thought: those Europeans, whom they have at last overtaken will hardly understand egofiction—the heights of Japanese "high literature." The Japanese know: notwithstanding the

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[1] *Haiku* — a verse of seventeen syllables — for instance Pushkin's:

Evening comes —
The sky grows dim,
Calmly flows the river
And insects hum.

[2] The tea ceremonial, a code of rules for serving tea to a guest; a complete ritual of gestures, body-movements, methods of serving tea — a ritual of theatricalized, "played" tea-drinking. Old Moskovite "merchants" that drank their tea from a saucer held on three fingers, with a towel, a definite selection of jams — would not have thought this Japanese ceremonial idiotic.

[3] *Ikebana* — a code of rules for making bouquets; together with *tanka* making and tea ceremonial making up the "politeness-minimum" of the "fashionable miss."

compliments of the French Ambassador Claudel, the French only make a pretense of understanding.

One master says, with a sigh: "If we, considering that the Japanese novel has reached the highest development from a world literature aspect, should translate some of them into foreign languages, for the sake of demonstrating this,—foreigners will hardly grasp the quintessence, the intransferable taste of our stories."

The Low Origin of "High" Literature

Non-Japanese will not understand, will never grasp, but the native constant readers of the works of these masters understood at once and appreciated the taste of egofiction. Because they had been prepared for the reception of this new prose of the twentieth century by *gossipu* which originates in the English word gossip. That is the way the department of literary chronicle is called and it is an imperative adjunct of every number of every literary periodical.

Gossipu appeared in periodicals first during the last years of the past century. Then it was the usual chronicle; it informed the readers of what writers were doing and what books are being prepared for publication.

But then *Gossipu* began to lose its strictly chronicle nature; instead of information about new books notices on the private life of the masters began to appear more and more often. The men in charge of the *gossipu* departments ceased to be satisfied with announcements of what was happening in the writers' studies, they began to move aside quietly the paper doors of other chambers and the immodesty of the *gossipu* grew in direct proportion to its popularity among the readers.

The editor of the magazine *Sintio,* explained the popularity of the *gossipu* departments this way: "I guess everyone interested in literature is also interested in the stage curtains of literature; those that read are necessarily interested in the personal lives and states of mind of the authors."

One can judge the character and style of the notes in the *gossipu* department from the following quotations, picked at random from the first magazine that came handy:

From *Bungay Siundsiu (Literary Record):*

The writer Tokuda traveled in Northern Japan during the last part of July. On his return from the trip he began to live with Madame Jamada Dsiuniko. He says he feels something like love for her.

The writer Simadsaki. In spite of his having announced himself ill, he has published a 150 page story in the magazine *Kaidaso.*

The writer Midsumori. Has given up his beloved saki (rice whiskey) and is devoting all his energies to editing the periodical *Esse.*

From the magazine *Sintio:*

Kume is preparing to get married. After this event we have no doubt the things he says on the sweet and joyous art will acquire depth and breath.

From the magazine *Bunte (The Literary Corporation):*

It is said the writer Sakai is organizing a group of boxers. He brags of his strength, but in a fist fight with Yamauti, one of those born before their time, at the cafe Lion—Sakai ended up on all fours.

To these examples we may add, that notes of the following nature are considered quite the usual thing:

The wife of the writer Ima and the author Midsukami have entered an adulterous union.

The writer Kassai, after having a drink often beats up his sweetheart Madame Osey.

The masters accept the excesses of *gossipu* with equanimity because the advertizing value of the notes more than compensate their compromising nature. The deceased master Akutakawa even came out in defense of *gossipu*. He pointed out that the interest in *gossipu*, the passion for intrigue, is one of the moving forces of the world's literature. The *Iliad*, for instance, in the opinion of the master, is nothing but gossip about the Greek gods.

Egofiction was accepted by the readers as the same *gossipu* only extended into a story.

Authors—Heroes—Models

Egofiction turned the masters into the heroes of their own works.

The master Kume Mosao for a long time made love to the daughter of the venerable master Natsume, mentally turning the pages of his future voluminous *sosaku*-novel with its happy ending. The author-hero built up his lover's tactics fully in accordance with the previously carefully laid plans of his novel. But the daughter of Natsume suddenly made her own corrections of the novel, rejected Kume and married the third-rate author Matsuoka.

Doubly indignant, both as author and hero, Kume writes a novel *The Ship That Was Shipwrecked* where he tells the whole story of the wreck of his adventure in literature and love, and blackens the doors of the home of the newlyweds. Matsuoka, in order to rehabilitate his wife in the literary history of Japan writes an answering novel, *Defenders of the Citadel*. The fictional quarrel did not stop with this. Kume wrote a series of *sosaku* on the theme of this triangle. Then the master Kikuti, a friend of both, mixed in with *Between Two Friends*, where he gives the history of this business from the point of view of an outsider tickled by the attractive theme.

The master Kassai betrayed his wife and the entire country was told about this by *gossipu* at once, and then the master wrote a whole series of *sosaku* on the subject covering all his expenses on the love venture. The master Tikamatsu Siuko divorced his wife—he wrote her a long leter of which a copy was duly made. The letter he sent his divorced wife with the note "Personal," the copy went to the editors with the note *sosaku*.

The author and the hero have become one. The critics, analyzing the works or individual products of a master must needs make excursions into his private life, take under criticism both the composition and the tendencies of the author to indulge in alcoholic beverages. Generally the authors themselves appear in the role of critics, and critical studies are frequently most conveniently used for settling personal matters. For example: the article by Suva on the work of the master Kassai in the periodical *Sintio*. Analyzing the work of Kassai, Suva tells in great detail the precise reasons for his quarrel with Kassai which almost came to a fist-fight. The critic then frankly says: "I hate Kassai. I shall therefore pass over the good points in his work to which I have no desire to draw attention."

Another critic, Kassai-Kobayashi, discussing the master's novels carefully describes all the symptoms of the latter's passion for rice-whiskey.

In the annual almanac of the most important Japanese newspaper, *Osaka Mainiti,* a review of the year's literature is always given under the title "The Literary World." I pick up one of the almanacs and turn to the review, where a general characteristic of the literary trends and a list of the works of the masters are given as follows:

"And so there has been a calm in literature during the past year, but in the personal lives of the litterati much has happened. We note especially that, while the previous year was marked by many divorces among authors, this year there have been only love adventures.

"The incident of the writer Simada Seidsiro drew wide attention. On April 5 Simada eloped with the oldest daughter of Rear-Admiral Funaki-Yosei (sister of the writer) to the spa Dsusi where they put up at the hotel 'Yosintey' registering under the name of Yasiro, lawyer, and wife. On the 12th Mlle. Yosei was called before the police for not giving her right name and on examination she declared that she was seduced by Simada who robbed her of fifteen yen and her innocence."

The review goes on to tell how the incident was settled thanks to the good offices of the master Tokuda.

After the Simada-Funaki incident comes the tragic history of the writer Arisima:

"The next event that set society agog was the simultaneous suicide of the writer Arisima and an employe of a *Woman's Magazine,* Mrs. Hatano, on June 6th at the summer resort at Karuidsava.

"This event, in view of the fact that Arisima figured in it with a partner who was the wife of someone else was a general sensation and there was not a person in Japan at the time that didn't talk about it."

After the publisher of *Idsumi,* the periodical where all Arisima's work appeared, gave a detailed description of the entire episode all society blamed the husband of the dead woman for his meanness and sympathized with the writer. Articles of a sympathetic nature appeared in the magazines *Women's Public Opinion* and *The Central Review;* the number of the magazine *Reconstruction,* specially dedicated to the death of the writer was sold out completely; the periodical *Cultured Life* issued a special number under the title "Special Number on the real man Arisima." We are told that for a long time flowers were to be seen at the summer home in Kariudsava—offerings of admirers.

Soon after this the writer Musiakudsi entered into a liaison with Ikawa Yaou and she was soon pregnant. Musiakudsi's wife had, at the same time a love affair with a young man called Otiai Teidso.

The next example of the inseparability of author and hero in the eyes of the critics is from the stenographic report of the *Happiokay* of the periodical *Dissonance.* The *Happiokay* was in honor of the venerable master Tokuda Susei and six writers took part in it together with Nakamura, the "permanent toastmaster" of all *Happiokays.* Together with the ideology of the master, prognosis of his future work, the attention of the gathering was focussed on the fresh and living details of the private life of the author.

The *Happiokayists* begin with a discussion of Tokuda's story, *On the Former Branch,* in which the author describes his love for Mrs. Yamada.

Disputes arise—is it love or only a flaming of passion, when did this infatuation begin—before or after the death of his wife.

The masters have begun to live without any secrets before their readers like monkeys at the zoo, to open up their diaries every month in the literary magazines which became exhibitions of candidness.

In a small periodical for young authors a department is started: "I And My Surroundings;" there the masters publish their confessions in turn. As an example we take a fragment from one of the articles that have appeared in this department by master Asahara—"A Writer's Life Such As It Is."

"I often have an inspiration while I am in the water-closet. Stories come to my mind very frequently while engaged in conversation with a woman. While walking with my sweetheart I always think of the *sosaku* I shall write in the evening.

"I have no desire to put up any barriers to my life. I want to experience everything. Poverty I have experienced more than anyone else. Now I want to experience, if possible, the life of a bourgeois complete. I am tired of going about in wooden sandals or torn shoes on rainy days. I want to run about in an auto on the streets of Tokyo—say a Nash or a Cadillac—that makes no difference. Then I want to go on a spending spree and buy all my favorite things at the Hindse for a full 10,000 yen."

Editors of magazines think up new forms of reportage about the masters every week—dialogue, interviews on philosophic, culinary and sexual themes, symposiums; "Do You Write Well At Night," "What Form of Sport Do You Prefer," "What Are Your Plans For Next Year."

IV

The Japanese have retained the system of counting the years by eras. These eras bear the high flown names of: "Clear Administration," "Great Truth," "Bright Harmony." Eras changed frequently before; card players, when luck is against them, change the deck of cards; whenever some misfortune like a flood, an earthquake, an epidemic, the court academies hastened to change the era. Occasionally, when history turned up a poor deck, eras were changed oftener than wooden sandals—every year or two.

Only with the second half of the nineteenth century was this method of combatting national calamities abandoned and eras fixed by reigns came into effect with the ascendency to the throne of a new emperor and ended with the last all-highest sigh.

When the war ended in the West, Japan was in its seventh year of "Great Truth." At the end of this year all the seven gods of happiness, like the Astri of Greek legend, suddenly disappeared from Japan, and their places were taken by those that on a definite day every year all Japan drives from homes by throwing peas and shouting: "Happiness in the home! Demons, out!" The incantations which had brought results for so many years were suddenly ineffective. Established everywhere, the demons started a whole series of alarming events: an economic depression, rice rebellions, penetration of dangerous ideas from the other shore of the Japan Sea, rebellion in Korea, collapse of concerns that had swelled during the war, the Siberian Expedition that damaged severely the repu-

tations of several regiments, the removal of the Emperor who had become senile, etc.—see the chronological table since 1918.

The country was alarmed—from the Chi-shima islands to Formosa.

Excepting of course a very small section of Tokyo. The masters in their little world continued to live on as before, the printers' devils ran about on bicycles with orders for manuscripts, the masters paid visits to one another, raised chrysanthemums and read newspapers as one reads the accounts of the Astronomical Society.

The anachronistic wellbeing of the masters withstood trials even of the magnitude of the earthquake of 1923 which had devastated five provinces including the Tokyo prefecture. The masters only had a scare. When the periodicals came out again there was a flood of diaries about their experiences during the three September days. Not a line appeared about aid to the victims of the catastrophe, not a word of protest about the mass lynchings of Koreans who, caught on the street, were compelled to say the words *sensey* (reborn) and *kakikukeko* (part of the alphabet) and when they could not manage the gutteral and sibilant consonants were promptly turned into heaps of flesh. Not a symbol about the death of all the political prisoners in the Kameidos prison. The masters wrote only about themselves, about how the guardian muses had saved them.

The master Satomi published a solemn article under the title "Yashma Saved!" with the follwing paragraph:

"They say there has been a tremendous earthquake in five provinces that destroyed everything. It is said what has been destroyed will be rebuilt. But I am deeply convinced of one thing. Art has not suffered a single fissure, even one that the eye can barely notice."

Gold Fever

The pyramids of corpses turned to ashes were removed, street cars and buses went along unrecognizable streets, lanterns were lit at wooden barracks bearing the inscription "cafe." The well-fed, now calmed Tokyoans felt very hungry. The great fire had destroyed the central library of the Imperial University and the entire Kanda quarter—where all the book stores had been.

Tokyo citizens were as grief stricken as the Alexandrians had once been. Millions of volumes had become gray ashes, some tens of thousands of titles were entirely wiped out, not a single copy remained. All the books that survived, beginning with the works of the masters and ending with the handbooks on the making of fans became rarities. Instead of "this book is sold out" it was said "this book was burned". The publishers had a capital—the eighth in the world in size—with empty bookshelves.

The publishers began raids on manuscripts. From the windows of buildings that escaped the fire a flood of yens poured out on the masters. A real, not metaphorical, golden age of literature had arrived.

"The literary world has reached the highest point of prosperity. . . Whoever had some luck is covered with riches and fame; such riches and fame the ordinary manager of a commercial enterprise does not even dream of. Bankers, clerks, officers, military men—all look with wide eyes at the high soaring literati." (The Publicist-historian, Sirayanagi.)

The first generation of masters of "high literature," had but meagre fare until their reading public had appeared and the circulation of the periodicals established.

In the nineties the master Saito Riokuyo complained of the fact that the earnings from literature are below the minimum required to sustain life: "One writes with only one brush while one eats with two sticks: an uneven struggle!" One of the founders of the new literature, Odsaki, notwithstanding his fame that had spread over all Japan, lived in rented rooms all his life, dreamed of his own little home on the outskirts of Tokyo until his death.

The prosperity of the masters begins with the second decade of the twentieth century. In ten years, according to one master, the earnings increased forty fold; according to the magazine *Sintio* twenty-three writers became owners of houses and villas after the war.

The price in Japan is calculated by the ruled page, having 400 squares for letters. Paper ruled into squares for manuscripts is sold ready ruled. It would be a mistake to think that every square must be filled with a symbol, the Japanese write with both hieroglyphs and syllabic letters, so that the word "ate," for instance takes up not less than nine squares: *ta-be-te-si-ma-i-ma-so-ta,* or "undoubtedly went. . ."—*i-tsu-te-si-ma-tsu-tu-no-ka-mo-si-re-na-i—fourteen* squares.[1]

After the world war, when a Japanese yen was worth half a dollar in gold, the average price paid masters was ten yen a page of 400 squares. To compare ordinary English magazine rates this is equivalent to about $15.00 a typewritten page.

At the end of the nineteenth century Odsaki Kayo wrote with the speed of a snail, filling about 200 squares in five days. About 1920 the masters got to the point where one wrote from twenty to thirty pages a day, i.e. 8,000 to 12,000 squares. Two hundred times as fast as Odsaki! According to the yearly newspaper almanacs every master writes on the average two stories (every story averages 20,000 squares) besides critical articles, and serial novels for the newspapers.

It was now a matter ten yen for 400 squares—that is, fifteen to sixteen dollars a typewritten page.

After the earthquake which wiped out a great many small publishers, the publishing business began to concentrate. The few years after the catastrophe in the economic history of the country was "the era of industrial revolution in the publishing business of Japan" and in the history of literature as "the era of literary prosperity".

Instead of the small book factory come the large publishing houses of the American type of Curtis, McMillan, McGraw-Hill.

Not only the scale of publishing was Americanized, but the production as well. The Americanized publishing houses began issuing thick magazines that have quarter-million and half-million circulations, veritable department stores of reading matter—brothers and sisters of *The Saturday Evening Post* and *The Ladies Home Journal.* In the *Man's Monthly,* for half a yen, you can wander through political feuilletons, talks with mem-

[1] These examples are shown with the so-called etiquette word inflections, turns of phrase of many storied politeness, very convenient for increasing the author's income. One can attach a polite tail to every verb—*masu* or *arimasu* or *godsaimasu,* all impossible to translate. The difference between any other language (European) and Japanese is, that the Japanese can add from two to ten silent "e-s" to any verb and these additions are paid by the treasurer.

bers of the cabinet, scientific essays, anecdotes, political gossip, chatter about industrialists, actors, professors, detective stories, *kodans*—stenographic versions of tales of Samurai, adventures by professional storytellers, the products of the representatives of "low literature", and finally a small chamber in a corner—*sosaku* of the "high" masters. In the women's magazines—articles on style, medical notes, advice on the art of cooking, recipes, confessions of actresses and fashionable ladies, symposiums on sexual and family questions and two literary departments: "high literature" and "plebeian literature."

One of the largest magazines is called *King*, another, frankly in honor of its readers: *Heibon (Mediocrity).*

The periodical-department stores, with American speed and ruthlessness, attack the problem of making the proud masters of "high" literature furnish not only *sosaku,* but also work in the style of "low" literature. They make the important peacocks produce ordinary eggs for omelets.

The "department stores" boost the rates of authors' pay rapidly, reaching thirty yen for 400 squares—equivalent to two and one half cents a letter, including a lot of silent "e-s"!

Panic gripped the masters. The guardian of the traditions of the caste of masters, Sato, published an article "I Discuss the Life of Writers" where he declared: "I do not require the masters to stay poor, but I would draw their attention to the fact that they are becoming the hounds of commercialism, becoming permeated by the psychology of speculators. . ."

The incorruptible master, in the name of the caste prestige of the "born before their time" proposed to his colleagues that they write no more than thirty pages—that is earn no more than 1,000 yen a month.

But too late! The thirty yen temptation worked and the authors crowded the "department stores." The slow and pompous masters of yesterday elbowed their way through the crowd to hand in their manuscripts to the editorial secretaries.

The king of Japan's reading matter industry, publisher of three monthlies with tremendous circulations, pillarposts of "low literature," a sort of Ford of Books, the publisher Noma, is frankly unceremonious with the masters and talks to them as to fishmongers or greens venders. Noma places orders with them on reading matter intended for business men on trips from Tokyo to Osaka, for provincial police officers, barbers, geysha girls, housewives and waitresses. Noma goes a step further—he demands the revamping of the *sosaku,* in other words establishes a control and an art censorship on the products of "high literature."

In January of 1930 the master Hirotsu came out with a protest.

He stated: "The life of the literati, hitherto considered a privileged estate, is being rocked on the waves of life. The profession of literature has become as hectic as all other professions!"

Noma and his three competitors—the newspaper reporters call them "the four kings of the heavens of the publishing world"—take the masters in hand at a rapid pace.

The flag of "free art," taken over by the Japanese masters from the Chinese hermits of the period of the six dynasties, poets who, their cells built in the mountains and solemnly poor, wrote verses to one another and spat down on ambassadors from the court; the flag that flew for sev-

eral decades over "high literature" is slowly being lowered accompanied by the lamentations of Sato and Hirotsu.

Commercialized Writers

Commercialism proved as infectious as influenza. Japanese protect themselves from the later by means of small masks that cover nose and mouth. But the masters found no remedy against commercialism other than Sato's ineffective prescriptions.

The magazine *Literary Record* published by a group of masters headed by Kikuti suddenly got ambitious to beat the circulation record. And so there is a summary of the growth in circulation in every number that looks like a cross between the Olympian series tables and the quotations of the Kabutomati rice market. They finally succeeded in raising the circulation to 150,000 a record breaking figure for a purely literary monthly. But the magazine came into the finish not even resembling itself at the start. In the department where literary articles were featured there now appears "The Secret of Success In The Business of Magazine Publication;" instead of vignettes at the beginning and end of each article, advice of the masters appeared on the buying of the dandruff cure "Sumadore," liquid pomade "Bitaoru," saki "Christanthemum," erotic aids "Uros" and preventives made of fish's gall bladder. A special advertizing bureau is added to the editorial department to handle the intimate achievements of civilization.

In the press someone has already begun to speak of the fact that writing is one of the branches of commerce and the masters assented by their silence. To the question of one of the reporters—"why did you take to writing?"—one of the older masters, Masamune answered unwinkingly: "My health was failing, I was not strong enough to drag a cart. That is why I chose the profession of a manuscript maker. That's the only reason."

Following the tradition of the Chinese literati Japanese writers liked to call their homes, or rather their studies, "huts" *(ken),* "cells" *(an),* "eyries" *(ro),* "towers" *(do)* and "pavilions" (tey), adding grandiloquent adjectives. The name of his study was the writer's nickname. For instance, the critic of the beginning of the Meidsian literature Miadsaki, called himself "Master of the Octagonal Tower," the critic and translator, Utida—"Master of the Cell of Foolishness," the master Akutawa,—"Master of Pure River Tower," the master Satomi—"Master of the Pavilion of Splendid Drunkenness," etc.

One evening critics and masters, gathered for the regular *happiokay* of the periodical *Sintio* started to talk about the very real problem—that the writing of literature which was a home industry, pursued in one's study is becoming, as any one can see factory work. The critic from the left camp Katsumoto stated that a number of masters have turned their studies into manuscript factories. Katsumoto had in mind the masters Kikuti, Kume and others who engage a large staff of literary laborers from among poor students. These laborers in the literary factories where Watch Towers used to be, prepare summaries of European novels for a mere pittance (one yen for 200 squares), picking mainly dime novels and make up plots. The principal of the enterprise either works the raw material into shape himself or lets the older literary laborers make a rough draft

of the novel or story. Everything produced by this office or factory is published under the name of the owner.

Soon the labor is organized and specialized: some of the laborers are assigned to reading and summarizing foreign authors, others gather facts reportorial fashion, still others are assigned the task of inventing themes and plots, while another group writes the works in the rough for the master.

V

> "The literary event of the year in Mayan is the confession of Rutchko on sixteen thousand pages, entitled *Why I Cannot Write.*"
> Maurois *Voyage au Pays des Articoles.*

While the speeches on commercialism in literature were being stenographed and Kikuti and his friends, showered by a rain of yen were playing madjan, seducing waitresses, running about Odovara pricing villas and new model Chevrolets,—the master Kassai, the one called the Japanese Balzac, was gasping for breath. In a few years he died from excessive indulgence in *saki* (rice whiskey). On the stone marking the place where the urn with his ashes was buried, a name hastily invented by the Buddhist monks was inscribed. But in the history of literature this stone is a mark beginning a new chapter on the beginning of the fall of "high, pure literature."

Kassai was the personification of "high literature" and was the first of the masters of egofiction to expire.

After publishing a few collections of short stories, Kassai noticed that there was nothing to write about. He had already written about his *saki* drinking, his quarrels with his wife and her parents, about the writers that live in the three houses across the street and in the two neighboring ones also. There was nothing else. Then Kassai found a way out. He began to write on how he cannot write. He became a specialist in describing a writer's impotence.

The collections of his stories: *With the Child* and *Young Flights* consist of stories that resemble one another and on the same theme: the author sits at the table or walks and can write nothing in spite of the strict injunctions of the publisher. Only the weather and the details of the torture are varied, the subject remains the same. Here are typical paragraphs from his stories:

The fall has gone, the new year comes, but still no energy to undertake anything. No mood for invention or writing anything like fiction." (Story—"Superstition.")

"My head is all empty. On acount of the unpleasantnesses, illnesses, on account of the crisis in my work during the past two or three years, my head became altogether empty." (Story—"Conversation with M.")

"I walked about the flagstones at the temple, went to town in order to mend my shattered health. But as before I was not in the mood to pick up my brush. Since summer I have not written a page." (Story—"End of the Year.")

"The time for handing in the manuscript for a new year's number was rapidly approaching and I was not in the least in a mood for writing." (From the same story.)

"At noon on December 11th, I received a registered letter, demanding that I turn in the manuscript immediately. Although I had expected this

reminder, my head swam like before an attack of vertigo." (From the same story.)

And at the *happiokays* strange disputes began to spring up. When the chairman of the *happiokay,* the master Nakamura, announced the work to be discussed, some of those present declared that the work was not a story, was not fiction.

A number of the masters, led by Kikuti, began to deny the right of Kassai's confessions on "Why I Cannot Write" to the name of story. Kassai, after several weeks of suffering at his writing desk, produced a labored essay insisting his stories were stories.

Long nights spent in discussion: what can be called novels or stories? It developed that the masters were greater experts on miniature-golf and the theory of madjan than on the genres of "high literature."

It was very difficult to argue as only in Japan where traditional Japanese, classical Chinese, and West European met, was there such a jumble of genres.

In the tables of contents of current Japanese magazines one finds the following terms (as a rule, every literary piece is designated by its genre in addition to its title):

tioken-siosetsu—novel; *tiuhen-siosetsu* –tale;

tampensiosetsu—story, short story.

These three categories of *siosetsu* (pure fiction) go into the department *sosaku*—"pure literature."

Siohen (literaly translated: a thing the size of one's palm)—a very short story; *tiukannono* (literally translated: intermediate thing)—a mixture of fiction and essay.

Yomimono (literally: a thing to read, i.e., reading matter)—entertaining reading.

Then come a group of terms from the essay family: *dsatsubun* (mixed writing); *dsuyhitsu(* following the brush); *kanso* (exposition of impresions and reflections); *kosio* (research essay).

The fruitless search of the last line of demarcation of pure fiction did not last long. It was decided to consider the old line of demarcation no longer in effect. One of the foremost critic-masters, Kawadsi, pronounced the dictum: egofiction must be freed from the fetters of the novel, story, the "essayization of fiction" must be undertaken; and the master Muro argues that it is necessary to create "fiction that does not resemble fiction."

They went further.

Master Kikuti's magazine *The Literary Record,* with a circulation of a hundred thousand, undertakes the mission of the "essayization of fiction—to bring in, in circumvention of "high literature," stuff that till then was to be found in newspaper chronicles and magazine miscellanies, in writers' notebooks or simply in the drawers of their desks.

Eighty percent of the *Record* is devoted to: (1) Literary raw material, diaries, anecdote, curious facts, rudiments of stories, plots, intrigues, letters, schematic themes, jokes. (2) Essays, reminiscences, feuilletons, rough notes, reflections on random subjects : on dishes prepared from beans, sex abnormalities, theory of tennis, psychology of fishermen, etiquette at banquets, the habits of pedigreed dogs, Chinese porcelain, incidents in the lives of writers, etc.

Those masters who had provided themselves with literary factories began to produce dime novels and detective stories for popular magazines.

"Pure literature" is written only to maintain standing as a member of the caste of masters.

Within the caste dissolution had begun. 1930 was an eventful year in literature alley. Three masters ran away from Tokyo into the mountains, shaved their heads and became monks. In the annual reviews a fist-fight between two masters was recorded: Kukuti took umbrage at the fact that Hirotsu had depicted him in an uncomplimentary pose in one of the latter's stories and attacked the tale-telling Hirotsu in public. Scandalous stories began about the appropriation of other peoples manuscripts. The reporters for the *gossipu* spent their nights at the telephone. The magazine *Literary Record* declared the *happiokays* of *Sintio* a usurpation. Literary youths instead of going to the hallways of the masters, gathered in small groups and pooled funds to issue thin magazines lampooning the "born before their time."

"Puro"

The notable clan was falling apart, the genres of "high literature" were losing their outlines, only the line of demarkation between "high" and "low" literature remained. The masters want to retain the right of representing leading literature and at the same time establish themselves on the market of entertaining reading.

But dangerous competition springs up in both fields.

Their right to leadership in literature the masters find disputed by the so called *puro*.

These are home competitors.

On the colonial reading matter market "low literature" has established a solid front and some ten local leaders, skilled fiction writers, claim leadership of the literature they have officially named "mass literature." The name covered the slogan of the periodicals having circulations reaching into the millions. It was in these magazines that "mass literature" with its Samurai established itself: not for a select circle of readers carrying the privileges of the intelligentsia, but for all, everyone without distinction, for all that pass the book-stall, fill the tramways during peak hours, crowd the movies in Asakusa park, anyone that has ten cents in pockets or kimono sleeve to buy a copy.

VI

On March 15, 1928, at five-o'clock in the morning, the chief of the secret service department of the ministry of the interior Yamaoka, taking the pose of Karl IX before the massacre of the Hugenots gave the signal and in Tokyo, Osaka, Kyoto, Kobe, over the entire extent of the archipelago, in thirty four provinces of the Empire, police battalions, with the first factory whistle, began knocking at shutters of previously marked houses and shouted "telegram, telegram," "good morning, open the door."[1] A few hours later, the chief of the "specially high section" of the Japanese secret service, Kokitsu, one of the principle stage managers of the raid, reported to the ministry of the interior the arrest of 1,300 communists and that the "Red Treason" had been wiped out all over the

[1] See *History of the Mass Arrests of the Japanese Communist Party* publishers "Bukiosya," Tokyo, 1928.

country in one blow. Since the day, twenty-three years ago, when Admiral Togo came to report on Tsusima, no one in Japan wore such a solemn smirk as Kokitsu that morning.

The police triumph lasted nine days.

The tenth day suddenly spoiled the whole thing.

On the tenth day, that is on March 25th, the Federation of Nippon Proletarian Artists was announced—NAPF, embracing the union of *puro* literati, the union of *puro* theatre workers, the union of *puro* artists, the union of *puro* movie artists and the union of *puro* musicians. After a few days the first number of the magazine *Senki (Militant Banner)* appeared —the official organ of revolutionary proletarian literature in Japan. The police began to arrest youngsters that came near their booths shouting "The Communist Party has been arrested, long live proletarian literature!" The officers of the "Special High Section" received orders to become careful, assiduous readers of *Senki*. There was nothing to give the police a pretext for suppression. The magazine came out half in the Japanese language, half in a kind of rebus. All stories, articles, poems, manifestoes bristled with a mysterious symbol "X" which was not to be found in any lexicon of hieroglyphs, not even in the Chinese *Haibin-Uini-dsiuul* printed at the beginning of the eighteenth century and containing 53,525 hieroglyphs. The editors used this symbol as a charm against the evil genius of police censorship. Instead of the dangerous words: revolution, communism, proletarian dictatorship, imperialism, white terror, militarism, monarchy there appeared phrases: "Long live XX!" "Down with XX!" "Workers and peasants need XX literature!" "XX of all countries XXX!" Stories appeared in the same style "The workers XXX the orator from XXX shouting: get out to your XXX! Then all singing the XXX began XXX. At the factory gates XXX appeared. . ."

It developed that the charm was not efficacious, and every other member of the magazine was confiscated a few days after being issued as soon as Kokitsu's menials guessed the meaning of the *puro* symbols. It must be noted here that the police agents are successful in deciphering only the *puro* riddles. In other magazines one comes across phrases like the following:

"In bed together, the young man XX only XXXX in the XX of the woman." (*Tiuo-Koron,* 1931)

"The god Omonunsi having fallen in love with her turned himself into an arrow and pierced the XX of the beauty from below." (*Kaidso* No. 1, 1933)

Or "Opening her kimono he XX and XXXX on the mat."

These riddles remain undeciphered by the official readers. The *puro*-literati by hook and by crook established themselves in a small house on the outskirts of Tokyo in the village Otiai. One of the leaders of *puro* was Kurahora Korehito. He had been in Moscow as correspondent of a bourgeois paper, but instead of writing correspondence studied Marxism and Soviet proletarian literature.

Thus after "March 15th" the Japanese revolutionary movement had to cover itself with the symbol X. The active ones were either in prison or "underground."

The muse of Japanese *puro* literature found herself in the position of the wife of a revolutionist in hiding. Having put up a big sign "literature"

over the little house surrounded by a triple ring of eyes and ears, and obtained an official permit from the ministry of the interior to publish a monthly devoted to literature and criticism a club was organized at the place, plus an information desk and political Red Cross branch.

The official organ of *puro* literature, *Senki,* had not at all the appearance of a literary magazine.

The muse was compelled to tear herself away from fiction manuscripts every five minutes. Her day was filled with troubles about collecting money to help those in prison, visiting their relatives, composing appeals, bringing clothes and envelopes with money to the office to aid the sufferers from the flood and XXX Koreans, telephone conversations with the police department after which it was necessary to wash ones' hands with cleanso, sudden sending of the fiction writers on duty to do reporting at strikes, agrarian conflicts and police exploits, organizing concerts-meetings for readers, organizing itinerant lecture groups of *puro* writers who, at gatherings near factories and plants or near the fence of a landowner's villa, after a lecture on literature or proletarian culture, would take a chance to say rapidly before the policeman always present would have time to shout *Tiusi!—(stop)*—a few sentences about *hehemo, dsenesto* and *demo.*[1]

The literary department in *Senki* took second place, verse, even vignettes were of an applied nature, because the stories were mostly fictionized rendering of the most recent events at the front of the revolutionary struggle, verses—the notes were printed with them—were intended for singing at the next demonstration, and the vignettes, grouped together in various forms on one page were accompanied by the notation: "examples of decorations for strike bulletins and proclamations during the demonstration." When Yamamoto Sentoro, one of the leaders of the left front, was killed, *Senki* published in the form of short stories a description of the murder and a report of the funeral illustrated with photographs. Every number carried an announcement that the editors invite manuscripts on definite themes: the strike at this or that plant, an episode from the history of the revolutionary movement, the organization of a pioneer detachment at such a village and so on.

Principal attention was given to the current politics department of the magazine. Instead of articles on how to write verse, stories, essays, there were articles on the revolutionary struggle within the limits of legality: such as on the rules of lodging complaints against abuses of power on the part of local officials, on the interpretation of the law—a sort of correspondence course in the sophistries of lawyers—how to find one's ways among the paragraphs of the "Laws regulating public order;" books are recommended: "How to avoid arrest, detention, confiscation, searches," "Tactics in Agrarian Conflicts;" methods of police spies are described, etc. In one number a complete course, with illustrations, on jiu-jitsu was given—that is the most practical way of dealing with policemen during demonstrations and strikes.

Instead of the *gossipu* department of the "high literature" magazines telling about the latest fist-fight or pending divorces, *Senki* creates its

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[1] The Japanese revolutionary movement has its own argot — *hehemo* meaning hegemony,*dsenesto* — general strike, *demo* — demonstration, *buru* — bourgeoisie, *puro* — proletarian, proletariat.

own *gossipu* and "egofiction": in every number photos of arrested revolutionists are given showing how they are being taken with their hands tied and their heads under wicker baskets, their biographies told, interviews with their relatives published, their letters from prison given and in editorial postscripts it is noted that the continuation of this or that story is not given on account of the forced change of address of the writer to that of police headquarters. Here also one finds an ad that at the office of the magazine one can buy a towel for 15 yen—the proceeds to go to aid the prisoners.

Constant departments are: "Living Newspaper"—letters from readers describing factory and village strife, excesses of managers or landowners; "From the Militant Ranks"—views and critical opinions of the readers on what they have read in the magazine, the authors of stories and articles are often criticized severely without any Japanese ceremony for their "highbrow language" and "the pusilanimity of their heroes"; a "popular science" department: where new political terms are explained, translations from Mihalevsky's *Poltical Economy* given, biographies of revolutionary classics and lectures on the international situation.

Trained in reportage, the *puro*-writers, who personally visit striking plants and villages demanding the lifting of old land decrees, who take part in these rows with their own skins and throats, in the intervals between assignments, write stories punctuated by numberless letters X, in the form borrowed from the bourgeois masters of "high literature" because there is not the time to think about a new method of expression. But even so this writing soon found itself the leading literature.

"Puro" Invades the "Buru" Territory

The largest bourgeois monthlies *Kaidso, Tiuo-Koron* and others give them place in the department of *sosaku* which up to now was the monopoly of the egofictional concoctions of the high masters. The invitation of *puro* writers to the *buru* magazines, this maecenas gesture to "suspected" literature is dictated by commercialism, by publishers' strategy. They wanted to capture the masses of left readers and those platonically sympathizing with the left sections of the professional intelligentsia.

One of the leading masters, Massamune, on his return from Europe in 1930, stated publicly that during his absence "the new literature, called *puro* it seems has captured the skies while the literature that was preeminent before is driven into a corner and is gasping for breath." He exaggerated a little from fright, but as a matter of fact *puro* literature took away about half the space allotments for literature in the thick monthlies and book publications of bourgeois publishers. In a country where the law called for capital punishment for the profession of "dangerous ideas," where students are kicked out of universities for entirely objective lectures on Marx and are then beaten up outside the gates of the university by their colleagues of the "Society of Seven Lives," where workers' demonstrations are permitted only on the condition of strictly adhering to the proportion of one worker to three policemen, not taking into account the firemen in the side street,—in this country *puro* achieved pretentions to leadership in literature.

The officials in the ministry of the interior, during their sleepless nights, began to think very assiduously of a law beginning with the para-

graph: "It is strictly prohibited to write, print, or publish any artistic literature whatever with the exception only of compositions describing the exploits of Samurai, devotion to the Emperor and the pleasures of love."

In the morning these sweet dreams had to be abandoned because they involved a host of troublesome things: such as changing the name of the era, re-establishment of the Tokugayan decree of the closing of the country, the razing of all the universities, the burning of all bookstores, closing all barber shops, etc.

Puro established a puritan discipline in their ranks. At a convention of *puro* writers the resolution is solemnly adopted that: "The daily life of the members of the union must be pursued in purely proletarian surroundings." Keep away from the meaningless, idle, smoke filled life of the professional literati, where hundreds of authors with their laurels gotten on sufferance, pother about stewing in their own juice!

Among the *puro* wartime relations predominate—they do not sentimentalize with one another. Any deviation from the correct political line, even the slightest, calls for severe disciplinary measures and rebuke. Tokunaga, whose novel *Street Without Sun* has given him European fame was thrice compelled to leave unfinished stories already begun to be published (the stories: *Fascism, Factory Without a Workers' Organization* and *Mount Aso).*

Like any other live and difficult matter, when there are no precedents to go by, *puro*-literature, a company fighting their way to the future through a country occupied by a powerful enemy that has its traps set everywhere, machine guns on roofs, the police snipers getting the best commanders at night—has gone through many inner crises, has changed its tactics many times, tried hard to ward off blows, continually improving its mobility, fighting ability and assuredness of final triumph.

Within their own ranks they had to combat tendencies of extreme caution that, in order to insure the legality of *puro*-literature preached tactics of a political cultural activity; at the same time it was necessary to bridle the too enthusiastic element that wanted to convert *puro*-literature into the direct agit-prop department of the revolutionary underground, risking having the police department shut down upon the entire successfully started offensive.

In *Senki* the purely literary material was shoved into the background, literary activity was frankly subordinated to organizational, agitational political-enlightenment problems. But with the development of the movement a certain differentiation became necessary and in 1930 alongside *Senki* the periodical *NAPF* came out. *Senki* became the official organ of the general staff of the *puro*-cultural front, while *NAPF* became a magazine devoted from first to last page to literature. *NAPF* gave final features to *puro*-literature, compelling bourgeois publishers to include it in the voluminous "Library of Japanese Literature of the Meidsi, Taisio, and Syowa eras" since 1868 to the present. The best works of *puro*-writers, made the most important *buru* magazines use critical articles of *puro*-critics, beginning and ending their articles with quotations from dangerous thinkers on the shores of the Moscow River in order to maintain their circulation. *NAPF* opened a special department under the heading *Gay-Pay-U* where the life of masters and critics of "high literature" is mercilessly exposed, and the quality of their work judged.

A New Policy

One of the most important dates in the history of the *puro* movement is the convention of the union of *puro*-literati in July, 1931. The air was then already full of war fumes and newspaper extras. The captain of the general staff, Nakamura, had already played his Sarejevo role in the forest near Taoian; at night the tracks near Mukden hummed with the premonition of what actually took place sixty days later, the special high section was giving a benefit performance inside the country, "full house" notices were posted at all the prisons in Itigaya, Sugamo, Komendo.

At the convention *puro* took stock of the achievements, analyzed failures, analyzed one another in great detail. It was decided to adopt a new course.

From then on not to concentrate *puro*-literature in Tokyo alone under the very nose of the police general staff. Scatter it over all Japan, cover the entire country with the red flags of *puro*-literary bases.

Up to now *puro*-literature was of the nature of a movement of militant individuals—the police could close down any morning in a raid and put up the entire movement in two fairly large prison cells, spending not more than half an hour to destroy the editorial offices of both *Senki* and *NAPF*. But let the Imperial police try to stage a "March 15th, 1928" when the union of *puro* writers will consist of several regiments—not only of professional writers but of worker and small renter correspondents, and when *puro*-literature circles will have tens of thousands of militant participants, when several hundred magazines will be circulated—Hektographed, Shapirographed, multigraphed, lithographed, finally just written by hand!

The *puro* offensive was started almost simultaneously with the operations of the lieutenant general Hondsio.

In October, 1931 the army was formed under the name of "Federation of Japanese Proletarian Culture" (KOPF) consisting of the following divisions—*puro*-unions: writers, theatre workers, artists, photographers, movie-workers, musicians, physicians, Esperantists, birth control adherents, scientific workers, teachers. Every one of these unions established an official organ.

The putting through of the course of "massification of *puro*-literature" was entrusted to the magazine *Proletarian Literature* and the newspaper *Literary Gazette* which replaced *NAPF*.

In the provinces more than ten branches sprung up and about 250 (!!!) circles; almost every circle hastened to issue its own manuscript magazine publishing the literary exercises of the participants. The branches organized literary factory-worker courses where active members of the circles got training in dialectic materialism, dramaturgy and verse, in lectures by *puro*-literati.

The time had come for a serious consideration of the problem of literary technique.

Here the Japanese *puro*, finding they have absolutely nothing to get from the masters of bourgeois literature, turn completely to their older comrades—the Soviet *puro* whose books serve as approximate text books. (The majority of the leaders of the Federation of *puro* know the Russian language which is considered as imperative as a knowledge of Latin to physicians.) Moscow and Leningrad *happiokay* on the latest books on proletarian realism, on the struggle against formalistic manipulations,

etc,, are reported in the pages of *Proletarian Literature* and the *Literary Gazette* only thirty days later. When a Soviet book is discussed only the title is mentioned—the author is well known.

Puro are the first readers of all the Soviet books that are published and enjoy such a large circulation in Japan from the works of Lenin to *The Iron Stream* by Serafimovich.

Japanese *puro* are not afraid of innovations. Some practice the socalled *kabe siosetsu* (wall-stories)—short stories placed in wall newspapers, others write movie scenarios, adapted for reading, still others want to adapt the genre of oral story practiced by professional story tellers of the Tokugai era to the problems of *puro*-literatue and so on.

The *puro* general staff in Tokyo is occupied primarily in planning thematics and preparing cadres. It sends out socalled "detachments of literary agitation" to all points—*puro-writers* who visit industrial regions and the regions of impoverished villages, instruct the literary circles there, look over manuscripts, give lectures on the most unexepected matters, reach the rough drafts of their own work without any Xs. The meetings of the literary circles in factory districts are accompanied by as much solemn conspiracy as if not stories were to be read and songs sung (the shutters are tightly closed), but bombs prepared. Women workers in the textile mills, who are strictly prohibited from leaving the premises of the factory where they work and live, using all the wiles of their sex, steal out at night after a twelve hour working day to attend these meetings. In the villages the literary circles function as Pasteur stations for the farmers: all around the members of the patriotic associations of the military reservists and fascist nuclei of the "Economic Regeneration of the Village" run about.

A Mass Literature Is Born

In the Japanese anthology of verse of the eighteenth century, the *Collection of Ten Thousand Leaves,* side by side with *tankas* by Emperors, court ladies, ministers of state and army leaders, there are verses of unknown fishermen and village maidens. Professors of Japanese literature love to dwell on this anthology and on one of Japan's first poets, Basio, of the seventeenth century, who wandered over the villages like a beggar and lived on what the peasants gave him—his warmest maecenases. According to ancient tradition, the ministry of the court arranges a *tanka* competition on a definite theme every year. The theme is announced very widely at the end of every year. The themes are, for instance, "The cold moon lights up the plum tree;" "The shadow of the pine tree is reflected in the water;" "A heron flies across the clear sky;" "A turtle on the rock;" "Noble and plebeian greet the Spring;" etc., etc. The newspapers then publish the results of the contest and the names of the laureates: villagers from some far provinces that get presents bearing the emblem of the chrysanthemum.

Some day, of course, an anthology of the first half of the twentieth century will be issued. If the editor will have any regard for truth he will write an introduction containing the following:

"In the era of *Ten Thousand Leaves* and in the times of Basio poets only rarely came from among unknown fishermen and rice growers. But in the thirties of this marvellous, contrary to all human history, twentieth century, in Japan, as a result of the devilishly energetic work of *puro*

writers and their network of literary circles, every third worker and small renting farmer learned to write stories and poems, based on the materials of their own lives, compose laconic expressive correspondences about strikes and agrarian conflicts and compose very good and malicious proclamations pasted at night on the walls of police stations and the private homes of landowners and managers of factories.

The worker and peasants writers did not stop with the publication of their works in the handwritten little magazines, they sent them on to the central organs *Proletarian Literature* and the *Literary Gazette;* there detailed critical reviews are given on these little magazines without any distinction being made between the work of recognized *puro*-writers, professionals and unknown proletarians.

This mass association of the Japanese proletarian to literature, accompanied by more frequent strikes at plants and on rice fields, exceedingly disquieted the Japanese government. In view of the rapid sharpening of the internal political situation stimulated by the crisis and the war being conducted, the government undertook a series of repressive measures against *puro.* This, however, gave no appreciable results, except to increase the expenditures on prisons and premiums to the police. For every killed [1] or arrested *puro*-writer ten new ones sprang up that had had their training in the literary circles and the courses organized by the branches. *Puro* achieved its aim: *puro*-literature became inexterminable. After the German race-fiends with the invisible rings in their noses staged their dance around the book pyre, Japanese *puro*-literature both in quality and quantity jumped to second place in the world. One newspaper (in Kiusiu) after organizing a competition on stories had to call it off as the vast majority of the manuscripts could be published only in Russian.

The thick monthlies, published by the publishing houses had to increase the space allotments to *puro*-literature on account of the continued movement to the left of their main contingent of readers, the intelligentsia. The *puro*-writers never at a loss for thematic material and continually perfecting their literary technique pushed egofiction into the background in the sphere of "leading literature."

VII

In passing we must mention the group of young masters and submasters who attempted to come out against *puro*-writing. This group came out with the slogan *"Ero-gro-non"* (erotics, grotesques, nonsense), as the ideologists of the golden dancing hall youth and clerks dreaming of a voluptuous life. After publishing a few short stories, gymnastic exercises, and telling about the way movie actresses and cafe waitresses spend their time with Tokyo dandies, this group split up into several insignificant smaller ones with the loud names of "Nonsensists," "Neopsychologists," "Douglasists," etc.

Another group of writers appeared whose writings were officially christened by the critics "Ultra-Ero"—a portion of them headed by Maruki Sado (the pseudonym represents a Japanization of the Marquis de Sade) published their writings—essays on erotic themes—in the magazines, the

[1] At the beginning of 1933 one of the best *puro*-writers, Takiji Kobayashi was arrested. Exactly thirty minutes after he was placed in prison he died — in exactly thirty minutes! (*Editor's Note:* Reported in No. 2 *International Literature,* and in a poem by the American writer Michael Gold in No. 5.)

others headed by Umehara Hokumo, going altogether into pornography, issue their writings in the form of manuscripts passing from hand to hand; Umehara even became famous although not a line of his appeared in public print.

Finally, against the *puro*-writers came the "mass-writers". They founded the "Society of the Fifth Day" together with the fascist group of staff officers of the Tokyo garrison (these officers in their turn are in contact with the right wing of the social democrats and the organizations of kulak terror). The "mass writers" in one voice declared the main subject of literature to be the bloody events of 1868—the period of Samurai-terrorists, the future stagers of the overturn. The reasons for making heroes of these Samurai terrorists of the sixties became apparent when over all Tokyo and in all the regiments leaflets were distributed written by the same officers—fascists telling of the necessity of "a second Meidsian overturn." Together with these literary preparations for a fascist overturn, the "mass writers" with the speed of war munitions plants began to turn out novels about war with a certain country on the western borders of Northern Manchuria (Tani's novel), about war in the Pacific Ocean (Naoki, Fukunaga), about the exploits of the Japanese army in Manchuria and under Shanghai and about the famous Samurai of the fourteenth century Kusunoki.

From its very first steps *puro* literature occupied itself with commentaries on the official history of Japan showing the rear view of glorified patriotism. Official history tells with a trembling voice of the heroic fire ships that sank with joyous *handsais* at the entrance to Port Arthur in order to blockade it. The *puro*-writer Takeda in a montage-story "Defeatism," makes a correction of fact: at the order of the commander of the squadron volunteers were called to take the military transport boats which had gone out of commission back to the first Japanese port. There proved to be too many that desired to return to Japan. All came aboard with shouts of *bandsu*. The old robbers went out into the open sea and then "suddenly turned round" and went directly into the cross fire from the forts of Port Arthur. Another *puro*-writer wrote a book about the victorious expedition of Japanese forces into Shantun in 1928 entered in golden letters into the history of Japanese warfare. The book of the *puro*-writer tells of the stirrings within this heroic army. This same *puro* (Kurodsima) is considered an expert on the Siberian intervention. He has written a cycle of stories on the struggle of the Japanese expeditionary force with the partisans and the peaceful inhabitants of the Amur River and the seashore regions. Others write about the foresight with which Japanese artillery men are chained to their guns during a battle, about the occasions when the soldiers beat up their sergeants for their great love of ear cuffing, of how under pretext of an epidemic military sections are hastily evacuated from villages where an agrarian conflict flares up.

A Disappearing Species

A few of the "high masters" who did not lose their breath like Kassai, and refused to enter the guild of literary merchants, i.e., to work on the plane of "low literature", bolstering up their shaky heights somehow against the onslaught of *puro*, continued to exist, but with weak lungs that are suitable only for university incubators and need Proust-like lined

studies to exist have a hard time in this land gripped by crisis. Many factory chimneys have stopped smoking.

A collection of stories of the egofictionist Yosumura, one of the more stubborn maintainers of the traditions of "pure literature" is issued in only 500 copies; this kind of stuff is now an esoteric dish for very few. One of the critics called the masters Tanidsaka, Satomi, etc., for persistently continuing their line of egofiction "famous restaurants for gourmets, which are located in dead side streets." A special society sprang up to collect funds for the master Tokuda whose name for three decades was among the first in "high literature", in order to save him from hunger. The most important newspaper *Asahi* publishes a series of articles on a vital current problem: the pauperization of writers.

Two small islands to which the dying ichtyosaurs have crawled:

1) A small magazine *Sakuhin*—in this small heathen fane the fourteen volume bible of Saint Marcel is read and comments made on the cabalistic invocations: "FRSEEEEEEEEFRONNNNG," "BBBBB LLLLL BBBB LBLOBSCHBG," "PHILLAPHULLA POULAPHOUA" from *Ulysses* and *Work in Progress.*

2) A small magazine for twenty sen, *Literary Review,* which advertizes itself in a tragic voice: "Our magazine is the last fort of pure literature which is in danger of perishing!"

In April, 1932, the critic Aono officially announced that the "special corporation, representing literature" the caste of masters no longer exists.

In the *Asahi* year book for 1933, in the chapter on the state of literature it says:

"The development of the world economic depression made keener the general crisis of capitalism. In connection with the difficult conditions of workers, the falling of the standards of life of the poor farmers and middle class, the appearance of two and a half million unemployed, the sale of books and magazines has sharply declined. The magazines are concerned mainly in keeping the decline in sales down to a minimum and are altogether unable to pay any attention to means of protecting literature, developing pure literature, discovering and developing new talents.

"The more pessimistically inclined say that fiction will soon be abolished altogether."

And so every number of the monthly magazines contains writing bearing the genre tab: *dsitsuwa,* which means "stories about what is actually taking place."—"factography." The most fashionable literary arbiter, Mr. Tanikawa, announces (in the magazine *Kaidso,* 1933 no. 1) that the era of a new literary genre has arrived, of *dsitsuwa,* called upon to replace the novel just as the latter once replaced the poem.

Tanikawa gave the following classification of "factographic writings"; 1) *dsitsuwa* about unusual things, 2) detective *dsitsuwa,* 3) *dsitsuwa* about funny things, 4) love *dsitsuwa,* 5) political *dsitsuwa.* And added: "The possibility is not excluded that in time *dsitsuwa* will appear in the kingdom of heaven and hell."

Literature of the Non-Literary

Dsitsuwa is a direct descendant from egofiction and those essayist exercises which were cultivated by Kikuti's *Literary Record* and other

magazines edited by the masters after the "essayization of fiction" was announced.

At first essays were written only by professional writers and dealt mainly with the personal lives of authors and facts by professional writers and facts associated with literature. The crisis came sooner than expected, the essayistic magazines decided to open their columns to the passerby. They began to print the literary attempts of generals, lawyers, tennis champions, diplomats, statisticians, music conductors, teachers of chess, zoo directors, trustees of corporations. The man of the street thus invited to write, talks about how to make war on America, the secrets of inflation, the machinations against the cabinet, the Los Angeles Olympiad, a personal meeting with Mussolini, intermarriages of Japanese with European women, the cause of decrease in population of the mandatory islands—about everything. Instead of *happiokay* the "informal exchange of opinion" becomes the fashion (*snandankai*); there gather professors, poets, officers of the general staff, deputies, merchants, journalists, masters, in order to talk in the presence of a stenographer of various themes: the political crisis in Japan, the prospects of Manchukuo, the technical problems of raising sunken ships with gold in them, collection of rarities, inflation, the tea ceremony, etc.

Having convinced themselves that the non-literary write business-like essays and talk entertainingly on any subject, the master-editors decided to try these passersby out as fiction writers; propose to the non-literary to write about interesting incidents in their lives. *Dsitsuwa* resulted. Someone, by the way, remembered the famous saying of the poet-monk of the Tokugau era Riokau: "I hate food prepared by cooks, poems written by poets, letters made by caligraphists."

The magazines call upon the reading public:

We gather *dsitsuwa!*

On the following subjects:

a) authentic histories of great family scandals that took place since 1868;

b) about tragedies that occurred in the families of pedagogues and the military;

c) about divorces;

d) about finds in night express trains;

e) about unsuccessful attempts to earn money; if you have any histories based on facts on other than the above subjects we shall accept them gladly!

From the beginning of 1933 the publishers of the *Literary Record* of the master Kikuti began to print only *dsituwa* in the magazine, with the English subtitle "Topics and Informations." The ad about the issue of the magazine reads as follows:

Wait a minute!
Look around!
Look into the past!
Everywhere interesting stories abound!
Pick out the most interesting and
send them with a Spring breeze on the
way to the new magazine!

And in one of the first numbers the editors of the magazine announced the following subjects of *dsitsuwa* for the coming number: "1) Histories about how people were eaten; 2) On a case when human meat was used as food. 3) Histories of how certain things were wiped out with blood."

The main round of subjects for *dsitsuwa*—curious incidents, adventures, family scandals and tragedies, bloody stories—coincided with the subjects of newspaper chronicles of events. The literature of *dsitsuwa,* we shall add, is a detailed fictionized chronicle of events that usually occupies the third page of Japanese newspapers. But after the third page all the other pages followed into the literary magazines, that is those which carry the telegrams of special correspondents, interviews, political sensations and the exchange bulletins. *Literary Record* and the other organs of the essay and *dsitsuwa* must give more and more space to writings on the subject of current politics and economics. *Sintio,* the standard organ of "high literature" that had up to now never printed anything that was not directly connected with literature suddenly sets aside a respectable section for a series of articles by the military journalist Hirota on a Japano-Soviet war.

It cannot be otherwise. For ever since the fall of 1931 the readers of magazines wake up in the morning on the ringing of the newsvenders' bells to find in the paper that the borders of the Empire have changed during the night, about the deceased minister and the last anti-governmental conspiracy on the right or left.

The editor-masters have to ask the mob that gathers on the sidewalks in front of the editorial offices not only to send in stories how people are eaten but appeal to them with symposiums on current events. They have to study in haste the ideology and tastes of the clan of *dsitsuwa* writers; this clan the masters, until recently, knew only from what they saw through their editorial office windows or taxis.

The *dsitsuwa* genre comes to the fore simultaneously in the popular monthlies *Sunrise* and *King.* They are of *dsitsuwa* on military subjects. Their authors are military officers and correspondents. For instance:

"Descriptions of Battles Approved by the War Ministry" (follow descriptions of a series of battles in Manchuria and North China written by eyewitnesses, war correspondents of Tokyo newspapers).

"Notes on the Secret Penetration Into the Enemy Lines"—Colonel Sakurai.

"Story of the Spy War All Over the World"—Lieutenant Captain Nakadsima.

"The American Fleet Has Shown Its Fangs"—military journalist Hirota Sinsaku.

"Stories Sent In From the Front Trenches"—Captain of Artillery Kitagawa; and so on in the same style.

As to *puro,* instead of the *dsitsuwa* of bourgeois literature they have brought out the new genre *hokoku-bungaku*—stories of workers, peasants, soldiers and students about their lives.

Puro-criticism is proud of the publication in 1932 in the *Literary Gazette* of the examples of *puro-dsitsuwa:* "Diary of a Soldier Who Took Part in the Shanghai Expedition," "A War Munitions Plant At Which An Explosion Almost Occurred," "One Day At Our Factory," and others. A sixth of all the works published was on anti-war themes.

At the beginning of 1930 the *Literary Record* addressed the question to its readers—the representatives of the student youth: "What Do You Think Of Reality Today In Japan?" assigning prizes for the most sensible answers.

The prize answers were permeated by the deepest alarm:

"I thing that the real 'extreme moment' about which there is so much talk has not come yet. The situation will grow even more chaotic from now on. I think a change in the social order in one way or another is inevitable." (*K. S. 23 years.)*

". . .it seems to me that during the Spring of 1932 there was as much tension as there was just before the Meidsian revolution in 1868. I guess events will soon begin to happen." *(Kobayashi—24 years)*

"Observing the present situation one feels keenly the necessity of a radical change under the name 'Renewal of the government of the Siowa Era,' which should replace the 'Renewal of 1868.'" (*Terayasu, 20 years.)*

The seventy-three years old Odsaki Yukio, who in his day occupied the posts of ministers of education and of justice, was elected to parliament seventeen times, an elder of Japanese liberalism, exchanges calls with the twenty year old Kobayashi and Terayasu. Feeling the coming of death Odsaki published a confession under the title *Instead Of An Epitaph,* in which he solemnly declares:

"Whoever calmly and dispassionately will look at Japan today will understand that in everything—in politics, in economics, in finance, military affairs and in the ideologic sphere there is a complete disintegration. The era of palliatives is gone. A reform from the foundation up is needed."

The grandchildren-students and the grandfather-ex-minister come to the same conclusion. As if they had consulted one another they recall the atmosphere of the fifties and sixties of the past century, when the Samurai youth also spoke of the inevitability of things rapidly coming to a head. The heroes of that period are the same that "mass-literature" advertizes with all its strength.

The grandchildren and the grandfather are echoed by the theoretician of *dsitsuwa* Tanikawa: "the era of *dsitsuwa* is the era of dilletantism which comes every time at a critical moment when the existing cultural forms are crumbling under the pressure of living reality."

Translated from the Russian by S. D. Kogan

Leonard Spier

Notes on Robinson Jeffers

A Critical View of a Noted American Poet

When you stand on the peak of time it is time to begin to perish. — Robinson Jeffers.

By us time is upheld,
Supported by the Steel Helmet.
If the helmet were shattered,
Time would cease to be.
Johannes Becher ("Fascist Phase" from *Der Grosse Plan)*

Is it so hard for men to stand by themselves
They must hang on Marx or Christ or mere Progress?

Robinson Jeffers is an Individualist. He as much as tells us so. But somehow, his telling it invokes its own associations from out of the depths of historical recollection. It seems there have been other individuals, and those who have not failed to yawp their cherished, if imaginary, selfhood, over the rooftops of the world. There was Whitman; and before Whitman there was Emerson; and on the other side of the lake a Stirner and a Nietzsche egotized with universal vituperation. This is to mention but a few.

It has ever ensued that these heroic individuals, whether their leanings were democratic, anarchistic, or aristocratic, eventually, from more objective and historic perspectives, turned out to be quite definitely determined products of their own time and place, and in particular the social positions they occupied at that time and place. Their obstreperous insistence upon single-separateness, their contemptuous aloofness, their dignified detachment, all, in the laboratory of history were found to be and comprise substances organically bound up with the social body of a stated period. It would be a rare incident, indeed, in the long chronicle of thought and literature, if Robinson Jeffers should be exceptional in this respect. He isn't.

Robinson Jeffers, the man, is and always was, a member of that class of modern society, each of whose members considers himself to be, in all sincerity, above all classes. They toil not, neither do they spin, unless it be witch's-night tales of the 'subconscious', if such a thing can be said to exist. They constitute the spoiled children of today's social family.

Jeffers was born in Pittsburgh, in 1887, of well-to-do folk. At the age of five and again at six he was taken to Europe. From his twelfth to his fifteenth year, he attended schools in Europe, at Vevey, Lausanne, Geneva, Zurich, and Leipzig. Following this, he honored with his presence, consecutively, the University of Western Pennsylvania, the Occidental College in California, the University of Southern California, the University of Zurich, and the University of Washington. It was at these temples of learning, possibly, that the poet gleaned much of his knowledge of the corruption of modern life. Certainly it was here that he became classconscious in the manner of most college students, if we may be permitted to judge from his works.

Now he was fully prepared to inherit a legacy from an uncle who opportunely died and left him sufficient to declare himself independent. And so work the twists of chance, that who might have been a mole became an eagle.

There, when Jeffers writes:

As for the people, I have found my rock
let them find theirs.

he gives us a clue to the understanding and evaluating of similar remarks throughout literature. It is only to be regretted that we cannot all find our rocks (or relatives) with such providence. Jeffers has a right to believe in predeterminism.

When Jeffers writes that "Joy is a trick in the air," while pain "is terrible and real," we have also a right... to scepticism. This terrible pain from which Jeffers suffers through many horror-scattered pages, is redolent of that "love of Woman," a man sometimes engenders within himself, especially when he has missed the secret caresses of the one in particular.

Jeffers is absorbed and fascinated by the suffering of the world. No doubt, he is often sincerely pained by it. Perhaps he has more time to be pained by it, than those who, in their daily prayers and struggles for existence, actually experience it. The consciousness of such intense pain which Jeffers delineates so excruciatingly, implies compensatory moments of joy quite beyond the reach of the man with the hoe, or the factory robot; for instance such joy as is expressed in his *Fauna.* There is another alternative; the pain and woe which abound in this writer's volumes, constitute, and are the manifestations of, his joy in life. Suffering is his business and his art, to which he has devoted himself with admirable earnestness and profitable returns.

A sublimated love of cruelty and desire to torture and destroy, a love and desire which amount to the perversity of sadism, distinguish the poetry of Jeffers. He places his creatures upon the wrack of fiercest torment, both mental and physical. Yet he does this, hardly with the sympathy of, let us say a Balzac, but rather with that joy a spoiled rich child will pinch a beggar first, then drop a penny into his cup.

This sensational sadism, it must be said, accounts to a great degree, for the popularity of Jeffers' narratives such as *Cawdor, Women of Point Sur,* and *Give Your Heart to the Hawks.*

Despite their remarkable desciptive passages and their frequent instances of profound psychological penetration, they remain sadistic farces, appealing to an emotion in adults equivalent to their children's fondness for sanguinary jingles. If it is not a heresy already to say so, the *Women of Point Sur,* is a psychopathological circus, with its incest, lesbianism jealousy, christian neuroticism, lust, infanticide, wife-beating, torture, adultery, mysticism, and suicide, crammed into one hundred and seventy-five pages. It was written for a people whose senses have been jaded by the monstrosities of a morbid press and cinema, whose ears have long become deaf to more delicate tones. It is the sublimated dissipation of a refined sadist.

Together with his lust for cruelty, two other characteristics of Jeffers mainly attract one's attention; the first of these being a profound pessimism.

A world so steeped with plausible sufferance and possible anguish, is assuredly a weary one, and worth escaping from. Especially is this so (if we are to believe Jeffers' conception of it) when the world is actually composed of this sufferance and this anguish. It is indeed so bad that he writes:

I tell you unconsciousness is the treasure,
the tower, the fortress,
Referred to that one may live anything.

This is his advice to a young artist. Throughout his work, he teaches, how one may win this covetted unconsciousness, thereby betraying his escapist nature.

We may, for example, mollify the pain of existence, by a species of rationalized star-gazing, by "choosing far stars to check near objects by." In *Give Your Heart to the Hawks,* the vastness of the cosmos would be a justification for murder. Fayne says, to console her husband who has murdered his brother out of jealousy in a moment of drunkenness:

No. Listen: how the air rushes along the keel of
the roof, and the timbers whining.
That's beautiful; and the hills around here in the cloud—race moon-glimmer, round rocks mossed in their cracks with trees;
Can't you see them? I can, as if I stood on them,
And all the coast mountain; and the water-face of the earth, from here to Australia, on which thousand-mile storms
Are only like skimming swallows; and the earth, the great meteor-ball of live stone, flying
Through storms of sunlight as if forever, and the sun that rushes away we don't know where, and all
The fire-maned stars like stallions in a black pasture, each one with his stud of plunging
Planets for mares that he sprays with power; and universe after universe beyond them, all shining, all alive;
Dou you think all that needs us? Or an evil we have done
Makes any difference? We are a part of it,
And good is better than evil, but I say it like a prayer
That if you killed him; the world's out of our power, the goodness and splendor
Are things we cannot pervert, although we are part of them,
And love them well.

This is an example of Jeffers' witchery. Beautiful? Yes, but the suicidal perversion of people who still require a god if they are not to destroy themselves.

While ruminating upon the Great War, in *The Truce and the Peace,* it is declared:

Ten million lives were stole and not one star dulled. By which announcement, presumably, we are to find consolation.

Jeffers reconciles himself to his own bleeding universe by psychologically severing the relative valuations by which man comprehends his environment. As an olympian diety, he would place himself above these valuations. He would conceive of good and evil, pain and joy, life and death, war and peace, simply as novel contrasts, nothing more esthetically

fashioned by a terrible but artistic creator. The sole purpose and function of this creator is to produce such manifestations.

The essence and the end of his labor is beauty.

Standing beyond good and evil and buttressed by his uncle's legacy, he advises us to detatch our personal interest "our division of desire and terror," fom scenes and events, to place ourselves beyond their natural implications and our normal reactions.

So I believe if we were strong enough to listen without
Division of desire and terror
To the storm of sick nations, the rage of the hungersmitten cities,
Those voices also would be found
Clean as a child's; or like some girl's breathing who dances alone
By the ocean-shore, dreaming of lovers. (Natural Music)

If one pretends to be a god, he will forget he is a mere man. This is the attitude of a petty intellectual, secure in his little shop (or Falcon Tower) blinking at life through a bullet-proof window. For a man to look upon war with its horrors, its selfish causes and gruesome consequences, as an artistic production of nature, is not a mark of wisdom, but a stigma of perversity. This pose of olympianism, to be found in his first, is to be found in his latest volume:

Still the mind smiles at its own rebellions,
Knowing all the while that civilization and the other evils
That make humanity ridiculous, remain
Beautiful in the whole fabric, excesses that balance each other
Like the paired wings of a flying bird.
Misery and riches, civilization and squalid savagery,
Mass war and the odor of unmanly peace:
Tragic flourishes above and below the normal of life.

(Still the Mind Smiles)

It is thus that Jeffers suffers the pain of life and finds it all very beautiful.

His love of cruelty, his consciousness of suffering, and subtle mystical ways of escaping it, Jeffers clothes in magnificent array. He has contributed to world poetry a wealth of new images, and he has revived the faith in the tremendous inexhaustible vitality of the English language. He has the remarkable power of seemingly blending his characters with the untamed landscape of their habitat. The figures acquire weird, inhuman traits, while storm and northwind, redwood and hawk, and the waves beating eternal music on the night coast, are endowed with life almost human. This feeling is furthered by the relationship between the terrific thought-processes and actions of the primitive, mythical individuals on the one hand and the idiosyncracies of the locality on the other. Another characteristic of his style, which however is more a matter of content, is that of mysticism and supernaturalism. Whether he expounds cosmic despair or progress (as in *Dear Judas* where he uses optimistic mysticism to depict the type of Jesus—though it is significant to note that even, here, Judas, the negative spirit, speaks with a fiercer, more spontaneous eloquence than

does Jesus) one brand of mysticism or another must be the underlying force. He exhausts every brand of mysticism from Buddha to Ouspensky.

Mysticism has a strange effect upon a people who having lost their faith in the old god, still cling to metaphysical half-beliefs and superstitions. These people find an additional sensation of awe in Jeffers' poems.

The horror of life and the suffering it engenders, together with the mystical escape from these, constitute one principal trait in the writings of Robinson Jeffers. There is one other, of sufficiently vital import.

Politically Jeffers is a fascist. Though fascism represents his hero-worshipping propensity in contrast to his tendency toward pessimistic resignation, a closer view will reveal the approximation of these two tendencies.

The romantic yearning for "memorable persons" who will "stand with the trees, one life with the mountains", which may be found throughout Jeffers' work, discloses in general a dissatisfaction with, if not a bitter contempt for, the mass of mankind. The result is a poetic invocation of so-called great historical personages. These are to utilize mankind as their creative material. Through mankind they are to express their own will-to-power.

Underlying the longing for strong individuals, is the philosophic disillusion in the christian conception of god. A new god is created in its place. One that is "treacherous and full of unreason." In *Birth Dues* is suggested an individual whose nature is changed in accordance with the new god, a superman, eschewing the christian-bourgeois moral conscience. He must, therefore, be "monstrous" like the new god. The bourgeoisie and its allies, or perhaps it would be more exact to say its dupes, among the lower classes, require a new god. They no longer need a loving deity, but one that will justify their crimes against the rising proletariat, which their defensive reaction necessitates, just as does Lance in *Give Your Heart to the Hawks*. Jeffers, perhaps unconsciously, reflects this need. Also, if you kill a man, you only save him the trouble of growing old and having his teeth fall out. If God is ruthless, so can Man be. Moral degeneration, it would seem, likewise has its place in the present "downfall."

One poem in particular, *The Broken Balance* gives unambiguous voice to the social outlook of Jeffers. In this poem, our era is linked to its classical analogy when "The Romans rule, and Etruria is finished."

A sign is aectared in heaven
Indicating new times, new customs, a changed people.

Today, Jeffers perceives a similar sign. (The sign has all the earmarks of Spengler's *Decline of the West).*

You must eat change and endure, he advises, *not be much troubled*
For the people; they will have their happiness.
When the republic grows too heavy to endure,
Then Caesar will carry it.

The second passage is addressed "to the children," to whom he praises the "beauty in power," advising them,

You children must widen your eyes to take mountains
Instead of faces, and millions
Instead of persons.

He tells them not to hate life, while there is still power. "After the lone hawk's dead" there is still "massed power." Following this comes an appeal for them to consider the birds and beasts of prey, and with beautiful phrases the poet eulogizes the blood-thirstiness of the weasel, the hawk, herron, cormorant and woodpecker. "They understand life." While men under civilization (read Capitalism)

live insanely and desire
With their tongues, progress; with their eyes, pleasure;
With their hearts, death.

"Through wars and corruption the house will fall," he declares, and the one solution of his five-fold university wisdom seems to be to help it fall. He mourns the ruination of "beautiful places killed like rabbits to make a city," and then finally plunges into the "farther future" and reflects with characteristic joy on "the last man dying." In this mood he addresses the grass:

Your seed shall enjoy wonderful vengeances and suck the arteries and walk in triumph on the faces.

The Poem is significant in that it illustrates the affinity of fascism to despair.

The tone of these poems is comparable to that of the works of Nietzsche and of Spengler. Black despair, confusion and cynicism, together with a compensatory longing for superindividuals (who will save the status quo). "Civilization" and "Man" are forever confused with capitalism and its superstructures. Censuring "man" for his failure to use science reasonably, the poet writes:

Man, introverted man, having crossed
In passage and but a little with the nature of things
this latter century
Has begot giants; but being taken up
Like a maniac with self-love and inward conflicts
cannot manage his hybrids.

Robinson Jeffers is, in a way, a typification of the entire fascistic mental *weltanschauung*. In the one hand he swings "peace" like a priest swings his censer, while his other hand wields a double-edged sword. As the fascist state poses to stand above society and above classes, so Jeffers, would soar over the "uneasy and fractional people." Also he has cut himself off from humanity, at continent's end, where he abides in his stone tower, enjoying his good uncle's individualism; which is all redolent of the fascistic aim for a narrow self-sustaining nationalism. He is so remote from the struggles of men, that for him these conflicts do not even constitute a reality; they are simply "spectral episodes."

Robinson Jeffers is a great American writer, classconscious and courageous enough to express it. For this we can respect him.

Lydia Filatova

Fascism and Recent English Literature

"When I hear the word 'culture' I cock my revolver."
(From the play of the Fascist playwright Johst.)

Fascism and culture—these two things are irreconcilable. The atmosphere of obsurantism and barbarism in which Germany is enveloping itself, the pyres reviving the Middle Ages, the persecution and terrorization of intelligentsia, scientists and writers as practised by Hitlerite bandits—are proof of the truth of this premise.

Science, art and literature are doomed to retrogression and decay in the present stage capitalism has reached. Culture finds itself in contradiction with the system. The wrecked ship of capitalism must throw overboard as superflous ballast all new achievements of civilization. Inventions only increase unemployment, imply hunger marches, rebellion, revolutions. They add to markets already gorged with unsellable goods, ruin magnates, bring into bolder relief the contours of the modern capitalist vista—hunger in the midst of plenty.

Decaying capitalism with the poison of death within it throttles all living thought, human genius, creative imagination. Faced with mortal danger to itself, capitalism stamps all cultural values into the dust in order to somehow live on.

Like a faithful dog of the imperialist bourgeoisie, Fascism takes upon itself its wonted office of executioner in throttling science, art and literature. The ugly face of imperialism in its death throes shows itself in Fascism as in a mirror. Degeneracy, pathologic decay are stamped upon its features. What can be said of a regime which drives the best minds and talents out of the country, where a reward of 80,000 francs is offered for the genius head of Einstein, where murder and the torture of workers, intelligentsia and scientists are everyday "trifles."

The economic crisis hit art and literature hard. The book market is dead, writers can find no publishers, artists can sell no paintings. Revolutionary literature is persecuted and suppressed.

But one kind of literature is quoted high on the marts of the bourgeoisie and carefully nursed by the Fascists. It is the frankly apologist literature of capitalism, the literature of the bourgeois offensive directed against the revolutionary movements. Just as orders for the war industries, the only industries not affected by depression, keep up, the demand for ideologic arms for the bourgeoisie in the sharpening class struggle increases, grows Fascist tendencies in literature.

Lenin has defined imperialism as the stage of the decay of capitalism and the eve of the proletarian revolution. As the collapse of the capitalist system becomes particularly evident and the possibility of a proletarian revolution grows actual, the imperialist bourgeois turns to Fascism for succor, seeks salvation in new imperialist wars. Fascism is a form of naked dictatorship of the bourgeoisie and having its origin in the decay of the capitalist system, in the aim of overcoming this process of decay, combines in itself elements of aggression together with elements of disin-

tegration. Only by keeping in mind both of these aspects can Fascism and the phenomena associated with it be understood.

The process of Fascization penetrates all bourgeois relations, embraces all sides of the capitalist system. Religion, science, philosophy, literature, all become carriers of Fascist ideas and join the host of healers of failing capitalism.

This article aims to uncover the already definitely outlined Fascist tendencies in the literature of England and expose the tactics of the class enemy on this sector of the ideologic front.

The years of crisis have been years of Fascization of England's government apparatus. True, properly Fascist organizations are still weak in England, and the influence of the Fascist press insignificant. But that is because British imperialism at the present stage is still capable of carrying out its policy of attacking and robbing the workers both at home and in its colonies without resorting to the ungloved methods of Fascism. It has at its service parliament and a broad network of traitorous labor organizations, clever at fooling the masses, and carrying the policies of British imperialism among the workers. The conservatives coming into power after the fall elections of 1931 with nine-tenths of the seats in parliament, the formation of a national cabinet having at its head that arch-lackey of English imperialism, Mr. MacDonald, the cruel offensive on the working class, the slogan of "imperial unity"—these are all elements of the Fascist offensive of the English bourgeoisie. The dissatisfaction of the extreme wing of Tories with the "moderate" policies of the conservatives of the type of Baldwin and their demand for a more vigorous offensive on the proletariat and a more active defense of the interests of the British Empire is portentous. In his *Daily Express,* Beaverbrook develops a consistently Fascist program. The recent conference of the conservative party in Birmingham was a fresh confirmation of these moods, there the militaristic and rapacious substance of these arbiters of the fate of the "great" Empire unfolded itself in its full brutal nakedness.

The bourgeoisie draws its own conclusions from the facts of the situation, seeks for ways of overcoming the crisis and their search is directed essentially on the lines of criticism of bourgeois democracy which in its old form has proved an ineffective weapon of the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie under the circumstances. The voices in favor of a strong authoritative power, of granting extraordinary powers to the cabinet, etc., grow loueder. We are witnessing a crisis of liberalism and parliamentarism.

The ways of Fascism in different countries are different. The forms of Italian and German Fascism are not obligatory. The breaking up of the old government machinery is not inevitable. There is a good chance that English Fascism could exist alongside parliament and avoiding insignficant fascist groups, come from the cabinet of the prime-minister or from the benches of the conservatives of the extreme right.

Fascist tendencies in English literature, developing immediately after the war, grew stronger after the general strike of 1926 and during the present crisis. The roots must be sought in the pre-war literature of British imperialism. One of the founders is of course Kipling, the open inveterate imperialist with his theory of the "supremacy" of the Anglo-Saxon race and England's "great" mission of colonization.

The aims of Fascist literature are: the consolidation of the positions of British imperialism, avoid the threat of revolution, struggle against the influence of the USSR and Communism.

A series of books markedly Fascist in their tendencies have already appeared in England *(Blue Shirts* by J. J. J., *A Cockney's Pilgrimage* by W. Margrie, *The Shadow of Mussolini* by Wilfried Ward, etc.).

Besides this Fascist propaganda literature, a good deal of bourgeois and petty bourgeois literature is under the influence of the crisis developing anti-revolutionary tendencies, imperialist apologetics, playing into the hands of Fascism.

Fascist literature originates at a time of the disruption of capitalism and the rise of a revolutionary movement. It is distinct from simply reactionary literature. It has a new property. Fascism needs mass support, especially during the period of its struggle for power. It takes into account the growth of revolutionary moods in the working class, the petty-bourgeoisie, the farmers. Fascism clothes itself in a revolutionary mask. Both Mussolini and Hitler operate freely with revolutionary phraseology. Hitler was not abashed to christen the most reactionary of reactionary overturns in Germany a "nation revolution." Fascists make demagogic promises very promiscuously.

Fascism takes form in its struggle with Marxism. Instead of the Marxian teaching of the class struggle Fascism preaches class harmony, identity of interests of worker and employer. Instead of the internationalism of Communism, Fascism puts forward the idea of the nation, subordinated to which all classes presumably find themselves unified collaborators. Translated into the language of fact these Fascist theories result in the defense of the interests of the imperialist bourgeoisie, the exploitation of the working class, tearing out all revolutionary initiative with the roots. Fascist nationalism is an arsenal full of dynamite, ready to set the world afire with new wars which the Fascists heartily recommend. War, says Marinetti, is "the world's hygiene." The absurd race theory which the Fascists propose in diverse ways gives them a basis for the unbridling of the most rapacious imperialist instincts, for the most merciless exploitation of the toilers of the colonies, reducing them to the state of toiling cattle, for the most shameless and beastly persecution of Jews.

These features of the Fascist world philosophy are mirrored in their literature.

The methods employed by Fascism to influence the masses are exceedingly interesting. No small service is rendered them in this respect by the social traitors of all shades, beginning with Vels who crawls before Hitler and including the honey worded Mr. MacDonald.

The close connection between Fascism and Social-Fascism are self evident. Social-Fascism and social-treachery are the outposts of the Fascist offensive, preparing the way for the Fascist dictatorship. They are the Fascist base within the working class. It is characteristic that Mussolini is a former Socialist, Oswald Mosley was a member of Parliament from the Labor Party.

The literature of Fascism and Social-Fascism are closely interwoven and constantly interact upon each other. Books appear in England that, openly betraying the interests of the workers, go hand in hand with Fascism. These books, making a pretense of defending the interests of

the working class, are in reality a mockery of the worker and humble bending of the knee before the bourgeoisie.

In 1927 Margrie's *A Cockney's Pilgrimage,* was published in London; it is a collection of short stories, plays and verse. Margrie, coming from the working class, himself a worker once, a member of the Independent Labor Party for twelve years, took the way of treachery to his class, went over to the camp of the bourgeoisie. *A Cockney's Pilgrimage* is the work of a class enemy who, having let himself go, has torn off all semblance of hypocrisy.

England after the war, according to Margrie, is in a state of chaos and disruption. The parliamentary system has proven its inability to govern the country. Britain has lost its wonted strength, its place as the first world power.

The spectacle of disruption and decay compels Margrie to look for a means of saving the perishing empire.

"Great Britain is like a large Atlantic liner that is officered by men who are only big enough for river steamers. All departments are suffering in the same way, but the greatest need is in the political field. What a glorious opportunity for a big man!... The hour has arrived but the man cometh not."

This is the habitual lament of the Fascists—that England has not succeeded yet in foisting upon itself an English variety of Mussolini.

Margrie is an apologist of British imperialism. In one of his stories he tells of a competition for the best slogan for England held before the war of 1914. First prize was awarded the slogan "Let London Lead." These words comprise Margrie's complete doctrine. Trying to gloss over the imperialist rapacious substance of this slogan, he attempts to justify it by the universal Fascist remedy, the race theory. The English have an inborn capability to rule and govern. The visions of the ecstatic imperialist cannot be curbed.

"Great Britain gives the world practical and honest politics. She also provides plenty of good administrators... Britain has founded better and greater colonies than any nation in the world, ancient or modern. Therefore I seriously suggest that all the other countries should voluntarily federate under the supreme leadership of Britain."

However such "voluntary" federation is, in England's imperialist practice effected by somewhat different means and the "sweet-voiced" Fascist visionary is quite ready for them.

"I readily admit that war is the supreme tragedy. . . But even a great war has one or two advantages. It unites a nation as nothing else can do. It stimulates people to do their best. It makes us forget our small personal troubles."

Such reflections on the unifying and purifying functions of war are characteristic of Fascist world philosophy generally. We find them also in German and Italian Fascist literature.

In spite of the strong dose of social demagogy by means of which Margrie attempts to illustrate his thesis of the unity of interests of worker and employer, the social hierarchy remains in full force in the social order he proposes. The working class is abased to the role of hands in the organism of the state and Margrie justifies the social inequality by saying that the proletariat is not fit for anything better in view of his limited mental

capacities—he is, don't you know, just naturally dumb. Here we meet the characteristically Fascist theory of "masses" and "leaders."

But Margrie's tongue slips. "If everybody was educated and refined, there would be nobody to do the dirty work."

Margrie's entire argument of the inborn "stupidity" of the workers is refuted by himself. The thing is, if the workers would have access to culture it would be a great loss to the parasitic bourgeoisie.

Margrie comes out with sanctimonious hypocrisy and with nasty, cynical humor tells, in the story, "Some Wonderful Children and a Wonderful Slum" of the living conditions in the workers' quarter of London, the East End.

"Every room in every house in the court is occupied by at least fifteen persons. They sleep on the three shift system. A has eight hours, B has eight hours, and C has eight hours; and then A begins again. Thus the bed is always warm, which is a great advantage in the winter. There is only one w. c. to fifty families. One is struck by the cheerfulness of everybody. The tenants remind you of Walt Whitman's animals who never grouse about their lot. But, unlike the animals, these people are consciously happy and contented. Every tenant has been offered a bonus of five pounds to go and live in some fine, healthy, L. C. C. prison in the country; but nobody will go. The residents love their homely slum, and are patriotic about it . . ."

And then Margrie goes on to the following "thoughtful" conclusion:

"It is a mistake to suppose that people who live in slums are unhappy. They are the happiest people in London. It is all a question of freedom. The worse the slum the greater the freedom."

In the story, "Millionaire and Navvy", he develops the same mocking theory. He sees no big difference between the conditions of the millionaire and the earth digger and absolutely cannot agree with the Socialists who see some relation between happiness and economic well being. Oh, no, Margrie is no such materialist!

Genetically connected with Social Fascism, Margrie's book is an illustration of how Social Fascist tendencies turn into legitimately Fascist ones.

Margrie's work is that of the traitors to the working class who try to please their masters the British imperialist bourgeoisie.

The subject of the working man is dear to the Fascist. He needs it for demagogic purposes. From this point of view the novel *Blue Shirts* is interesting.

Blue Shirts is a fantastic novel on the order of detective stories. The author hid himself behind a pseudonym. The book evidently dates back to 1924—1925. The entire action is laid in 1942. The subject of the book is the doings of a Fascist workers' organization called The Freeman's Union, its "merits" in the struggle against Socialist and Communist influence, the suppression of a revolutionary uprising in London.

The Freeman's Union is organized by three Fascist bravos, "heroes" of the British army, Brock, Mullins and the once workingman, secretary of the miners' union, Vaus. The credo of this Fascist organization is the defence of British nationalism and imperialism, a brutal hatred of the revolutionary proletariat, struggle with all available means against the revolution.

"Socialism—it's a foreign made creed and we're here to fight for British ideas and British interests and British common sense," Vaus added.

"And the British Empire," added Josiah Brock, "sometime Little Englander."

The novel is full of social demagogy that could fool no one but the most backward of the working class. Strikebreaking is lauded as the greatest virtue, as the expression of the spirit of a true Briton. The dispersal of strikers' pickets is described with bestial sadism—how from trucks loaded with strikebreakers and Fascists a hail of bricks in the language of the author "fell like autum leaves." The Socialists and Communists, no distinction is made between them in *Blue Shirts,* are accused of keeping the masses subjugated by means of terror and the tyranny of the trades union, that the workers are fooled and these parties are in the pay of Moscow and foreign bolsheviks. Only The Freeman's Union is thus the genuine defender of the interests of the British proletariat which, to the greatest satisfaction of its leaders, prove identical with the interests of the English employers.

The author relishes the rough justice meted out to revolutionists with disgusting cynicism. " 'I've pulled the two ears off him and them hanging down his neck,' said Jerry cheerfully. 'There was four o' them,' said Vaus, 'that dirty dog Kisher . . .' 'He's below,' said Jerry, 'wid the two eyes of him knocked through the back of his head and his leg broken.' 'And the other doesn't know which side of his head his face is on,' Jerry remarked with relish, 'I got a tap or two at the divil meself.' "

Talents of an executioner similar to that of the three organizers of the union are exactly those the author of the book considers necessary attributes of Fascist leaders, people of "common sense" and determined action.

In his anxiety to show the strength of Fascism the author is not abashed to give the reader equine doses of Fascist deeds, making heroes of his Fascist bandits. But such methods of glorification, the stressing of the rudeness and bloodthirstiness of these three Fascist boys which is extremely characteristic of Fascist literature, sharply outlines the pathologic elements which are certainly a part of Fascist world philosophy.

War is, in this novel, as in all Fascist writings generally, a subject for idealization and heroics. Epithets, comparisons, metaphors, which the author uses are very often taken from the military vocabulary.

The author compares the Fascist "leaders" with the idle, undecided Fabians on one hand and the "bloodthirsty, dirty bolsheviks" on the other. The spy Mallory says of one of this Fascist gang: "I don't know how he would vote, and I doubt if he much cares; but he said to me—'that Mussoleeny twenty years back is the kind of bloke we want today."

The entire novel is built on the principle of the crudest kind of Fascist agitational pieces. The bolsheviks, the USSR are splashed with mud. The bolsheviks are traitors to British interests, "bloodthirsty dogs" and so on. They are all, of course, foreigners; first of all Jews, Russians, Hungarians, etc. Communism is a fostered, foreign idea. A distinct anti-semitism is characteristic of the book.

The central figure of the story is the traitress and spy Pat Mallory. She conducts a clever and dirty intrigue with the Socialists who do not understand her treachery. She takes a direct part in the suppression of a

revolutionary uprising. She is made out a savior of England, a sort of Fascist Joan of Arc.

On the colonial question the author is a supporter of the indivisibility of the Empire. In his opinion only with a firm hand can the mother country wisely administer the colonies; separatist tendencies result in chaos and internecine strife there.

In *Blue Shirts* we have the characteristic methods of Fascist literature, distortion of truth to suit Fascist aims, minimizing class differences, social demagogy. This method of varnishing truth is also one of the essential traits of the literature of social Fascism.

We speak of the method of glossing over contradictions of falsifying facts of life, of deliberate harmonization of phenomena. It would not be amiss to recall at this point Mr. MacDonald's idealist theory of art, one of the principal points of which is the coloring of truth. Falsification and sentimentality are traits of Fascist literature. Fascism cannot, dare not show life as it is, with its real relations, dare not write the truth about the world, dare not cast off its own mask.

Fantastics, the utopia genre is characteristic for Fascist literature and the literature tending towards Fascism *(Blue Shirts, Jacob's Ladder,* by Margrie; *The Red Napoleon* by the American Floyd Gibbons; *Ragnarok* by Shaw Desmond; and a host of German Fascist novels). The utopia genre is convenient for showing those "horrors" into which the bolsheviks will "inevitably" plunge the world, to show satirically and mockingly the new social order to which the Communists are leading, and to affirm Fascist ideals.

In 1926 *Ragnarok* by Shaw Desmond was published. The subject of the book is the destruction of "white" civilization. Asia makes war on Europe. The USSR is the basic enemy of the "civilized" world. And as often happens in anti-Soviet literature, the USSR is not considered from the point of view of a new social economic system, the opposite of the capitalist system, but as an Asiatic, wild country. In this novel the Fascist international "The White Companions" is introduced, headed by the eighteen year old Fascist girl Joan Trefusis. In her we see the figure characteristic of Fascist literature, of the girl hero, the savior, genetically descendant from the figure of Joan of Arc. In this novel we meet with another characteristic trait of Fascist literature, the glorification of youth, youthful strength.

In English literature we have the first attempts to make Mussolini the hero of an artistic work; *The Shadow of Mussolini* by Wilfried Ward, 1931; *The Dictator* by George Slocombe, 1933.

Ward's book is devoted to the glorification of Mussolini and in this book we again meet a variation of Joan of Arc. The heroine of the book, Jemma, is entrusted with the mission of killing Mussolini. Instead of which she warns him of the plot, thus becoming a savior of mankind and of Italy. *The Shadow of Mussolini* is a most untalented detective story with all its accessories, guilding Fascism and intended to disparage Communism.

As we have seen, variations of the Joan of Arc theme often occupy the center of attention in Fascist and close to Fascist literature. The French nationalist, Charles Peguy, treats this figure as the symbol of victory of French nationalism, the inspiration for ever new battles for the glory of *la belle France.* It is not by chance that the heroine of *Ragnarok* is called

Joan. The role of savior of England in *Blue Shirts* is given to the young woman Pat Mallory. A similar role is played by Jemma in *The Shadow of Mussolini.* Joan of Arc becomes the flag of Fascism, the symbol of nationalist and patriotic obscurantism.

War is a necessary element of Fascist and imperialist policy. We hence find in Fascist literatures not only glorification of war but direct apologia of war. If occasionally the unpleasant sides of war are touched on they are offset by praises of its unifying function, its "purifying" influence on people who forget their own "trivial" interests during a war.

War is a means for the consolidation of its positions by imperialism, and it is not mere chance that the subject of war, the conflict of two worlds—Capitalism and Socialism—is a common theme of Fascist literature (*The Red Napoleon, Ragnarok,* etc.). Fascist literature is one of the agencies employed by the capitalist world to stir up sentiment for new imperialist wars, for intervention in the USSR. The USSR is Fascism's greatest foe; and Fascist literature does its best for quickly turning the imperialist bayonets against the country where Socialism is being built.

The Fascists greatly encourage all sorts of anti-Soviet literature, they welcome books on the socalled "real travels in Soviet Russia." The terminology leaves one to suspect there are other unreal or fantastic travels in the USSR, something that can only be interpreted as additional evidence of the peculiarity of Fascist mentality and its decline from normality.

In one of these "accounts" we read: "When this damned system breaks there will be a pogrom. You will be able to row on Jewish Blood from Arbat Gate to Red Square." (W. C. White, *These Russians,* 1931.)

In anti-Soviet and Fascist literature such prognostications are not uncommon.

According to the greater part of Fascist literature, Communism, USSR and the "dictatorship" of Jews are synonymous. It is the Jews who are responsible for the introduction and spread of Communism, for the existence of the Soviet Union. The idiocy of the notorious race theory is particularly evident in this. It is the ravings of a madman. But Fascism is not much concerned with logic. Such theories are useful, the Jews become the scapegoat, and Hitlerite bandits can, on the basis of this, wade in the blood of massacres of Jews staged on a German national scale.

Fascist "theoreticians" attack pacifism in literature with all their vigor. Reviewing Remarque's book, *All Quiet on the Western Front,* the reviewer in the periodical *Fascist* writes: "The author of this unpleasant work has had his bank account seized in Germany on suspicion of transferring funds abroad contrary to law. His name it appears is not Remarque but Kramer and he is a Jew. That is why he could see nothing in war beyond its horror and filth." As soon as he came into power Hitler took the, to him, logical step of driving Remarque into exile beyond the borders of Germany.

Not so long ago Von Papen declared: "Germany on January 30, 1933 struck the word pacifism from its vocabulary."

On the colonial question Fascist literature expresses the offensive robber tendencies of British imperialism. This literature calls for the severest oppression of the toiling population of the colonies. It is opposed to any separatist movements. The theory of the "supremacy" of the Anglo-Saxon race finds its fullest expression here. This literature advocates the most merciless suppression of colonial revolutionary movements, of all attempts at rebellion on the part of the natives. It continues the imperialist tradi-

tion of Kipling. A tremendous number of reactionary books on life in the colonies, affirming Britain's rights to the most unheard of willfulness and exploitation of the native population of the colonies has been published and it conforms to the tastes of Fascism developing in England (books like *Black Gods* by Mills, *Revolt in the Desert* by T. H. Lawrence, etc.). British Fascism will of course be glad to avail itself of the services of such as Lawrence.

For justification of the right of Englishmen to "administer" the colonies Fascist literature usually turns to the race theory. Wyndham Lewis, for instance, one of the most active apologists of Fascism in the literature of England, considers the white race the highest in the world, especially its Anglo-Saxon branch. The whites dictate world policies while all the others humbly act accordingly. From Lewis' point of view the entire responsibility for the colonies developing one way or another falls upon the white race. The latter is particularly responsible for any revolutionary movement that may start. It is the whites who suggest "dangerous" thoughts to the colored races—the Negroes in the United States, for instance would never dream of liberation if some white groups would not suggest such things to them. The colored races lack initiative. The best fate for them in the opinion of the frank and straightforward Mr. Lewis, is to serve the whites.

The Fascist literature thus far dealt with is of a low intellectual and artistic order. It is artistically infantile and does not usually rise above the level of the dime novel. It is the literature, however, read by the undeveloped conservative and middle class reader as well as the backward elements of the working class. Its attempt to influence broad masses is dangerous.

We shall now try to trace the policies of British Fascism in the fields of culture, literature and art as far as it is possible to do so from the scattered utterances on these subjects in the Fascist press. The Fascists declaim the necessity of creating their own art and literature as a means of Fascist agitation. In Germany Hitler awaits the coming of a "new art"—a competition is announced on the best Fascist book and the best Fascist film.

Great attention is paid to the education of youth in the spirit of Fascism. The periodical *British Fascism* repeats Liebknecht's words: "Who has the youth has the future."

Fascist policy in the field of culture is marked by struggle against Communism. The influence of the Soviet Union on the development of proletarian culture in capitalist countries they consider the main danger.

The process of Fascization takes hold of considerable sections of bourgeois literature. The spectacle of chaos in which the capitalist world is sunk gives rise in this literature to attempts at mastering this chaos, to various prescriptions for curing capitalism.

The works of Wells during recent years present a series of attempts to understand what is happening, find the means of solving the modern conflicts and contradictions in a manner favorable to capitalism and point the way for the future development of humanity.

The subject of Wells' novel published in 1930, the *The Autocracy of Mr. Parham,* is a Fascist overturn in England and a second world war. Wells ridicules Fascism on the Italian model, but the means of combating the

chaotic conditions in the world of today which Wells proposes are of course entirely in the taste of the bourgeoisie and not at all far from Fascism. It is Wells' opinion that the world should be governed by an international of scientists, men of large affairs and industrialists. Wells is definitely with the imperialists in this book already. His further evolution brought Wells into the camp of the Fascists. Wells has his own specific departure from the Fascist standard, like stressing the role of science in the future order of society, and he schemes on an international scale. But this does not essentially affect the Fascist tendencies of his work during the recent past. Fascism has diverse forms and shades.

In 1932 Wells published, *The Work, Wealth and Happiness of Mankind,* in which one of the problems this venerable author sets himself is the struggle against the philosophy of Marxism.

In the summer of 1932 Wells came out with his project of organizing a new party which he called The X Society, and the program of which Wells defined as "Liberal Fascism." In an article "Project of a World Society" he proposes to put the project through immediately. Wells is opposed to democracy. The structure of the future society must be one of organized capitalism with a strong rule by an enlightened minority. The "X Society" must be organized "for the discussion, study, research and propaganda of social biology and for the effective application of their principles to the reorganization and enlargement of human life." *(New Statesman and Nation,* Aug. 20, 1932.) Wells stresses the militant nature of this society, proposing the organization of "shock troops" which is essentially the same thing as the Fascist "storm troops."

The essays and articles of this period Wells collected into a book published under the title *After Democracy* (1932).

In 1933 Wells published *The Bulpington of Bulp* which is a sort of rest from the campaign of Fascism in literature conducted by Wells, but in an undeveloped form his Fascist ideas permeate this novel also. In the hero Bulpington, Wells debunks romanticism, dilletantism in the field of art and literature. Juxtaposed with Bulpington is the intellectual, the scientist Teddy Broxted. The latter is of the kind who in Wells' opinion move mankind ahead. He represents the men of science, of definite convictions, realists. Wells' position with respect to war in the novel is interesting. Bulpington, under the influence of chauvinistic propaganda goes to war. Teddy goes to prison on account of his pacifist convictions. During the previous war Wells was in favor of the war and his attacks on Germany were of service to British imperialism. Now Wells is among the ranks of those opposed to war. This is not consistent with the entire chain of Fascist lucubrations propounded by Wells of late. But it is hard to believe this pacifism of Mr. Wells and there is no telling what his position will really be when the next war comes. Wells' latest book, *The Shape of Things to Come,* is a new ring in his chain of utopian stories. It is composed as a chronicle of events going back from the year 2106 through the two preceeding centuries. The future holds for man, according to Wells, periods of world wars, epidemics and the complete destruction of modern civilization. Salvation will come in the form of a novel variation of Fascist dictatorship, the dictatorship of scientists plus flyers, this time.

We see that the thought of a bourgeois dictatorship effected through scientists is a sort of *idée fixe* with Wells. He throws science to the feet

of capital and in the pose of a humble lackey prays that it does with science as it sees fit.

Another colorful representative of Fascism in England, and like Wells an apologist of science, is Wyndham Lewis. Unlike Wells, whose opinion carries weight, Wyndham Lewis' influence is limited to a narrow circle of "highbrows" and does not carry wide socially. But in the literary salons of London the figure of Wyndham Lewis is well known. Lewis who came to literature an enemy of all canons, an extreme modernist, like Diogenes "pouring forth his invective upon all passers," now recognizes an authority in Adolf Hitler. His book *Hitler* published in 1931 is a defense of Hitler.

At the beginning of his career before the imperialist war Lewis was a cubist in art and a vorticist. An interesting stage in Lewis' evolution was the publication by him in association with Ezra Pound of the magazine *The Blast*. Lewis and Pound staged some modernistic extravaganzas for the English bourgeoisie. Another blast of energy by the enterprising Mr. Lewis was the publication, after the war, of a somewhat unusual magazine, *The Enemy,* singular in form, and written almost entirely, edited and published completely by himself.

Lewis is prolific in his journalistic and artistic activities. This scandalous business of attacking everything and everybody is characteristic of all his diversified activity. Mr. Lewis is an artist, a journalist, a philosopher, critic and writer.

Lewis is an extreme individualist, full of disdain for all mankind excepting a few "people of genius." His development is interesting as one of the possible trends for bourgeois individualism and modernistic tendencies in literature. An analogy with Italian Futurism that furnished the cadres for Italian Fascist literature is indicated

Lewis recognizes the seriousness of the situation in which the capitalist world finds itself and proposes Fascist remedies for curing it. He is opposed to democracy, charging it with inactivity and apathy. The present democratic apparatus must be destroyed and full power granted to a select gifted minority.

Lewis has great faith in science, but science like politics must be an instrument in the hands of a "select" minority, which translated means perfected exploitation and oppression of the working portion of mankind.

Lewis' book *The Doom of Youth,* published in 1932 gives us an idea of Mr. Lewis. He is not satisfied with being a "genius" but must also be a prophet. In the last chapter of the book Lewis writes: "I have said that I was a prophet. And I will prophesy that two centuries hence a long and sweeping snow white beard will be an emblem of aristocratic privilege . . .—just as long skirts returned to us, but as a token of social distinction, on the principle of long fingernails in China. Obviously long skirts suggest that the wearer does not work; long fingernails the same. The long white beard will be the supreme token that the person possessing it belongs to the ruling class . . ."

The growing influence of the U.S.S.R. throws fear into Lewis. Lewis has decided it is time for the Anglo-Saxon to wake up, curtail the influence of Communist ideas and take the initiative into their own hands. "We should take the intellectual initiative," writes Lewis, "in the Anglo-Saxon countries and create a new 'radicalism,' if you like and so steal the apocalyptic thunders of Moscow, and put 'revolution' to the uses of our whole

Western community; using it to racial instead of to class ends." This was written in 1928. In 1933 Hitler, without doubt would sign this declaration. The revolutionary phraseology employed by Lewis, one of the instruments of social demagogy, is what Mussolini used when he was trying for power, Hitler's executioners cover themselves up with it.

Wyndham Lewis is an imperialist and a patriot; a supporter of England's unlimited rule of the colonies. Lewis' program is the program of British imperialism, of erecting a Fascist oligarchy, the abasement of the toilers at home and in the colonies to the state of speechless cattle, driven by the "wise men" of the bourgeoisie.

In 1931 Lewis wrote for Mosley's paper *Action,* now no longer in existence.

Conditions in after war England gave rise to a mood of skepticism, indifference to social political questions, cynicism, unbelief. Aldous Huxley interpreted these moods. Huxley has written a number of talented books on the life of the literary Bohemia, busy wasting their lives, on the parasitic existence of bondholders. Dominant in his work are disillusionment, skepticism, negation. During the present crisis Huxley continues his skepticism and does not remove the toga of the cynic. But his criticism, to the joy of the English bourgeoisie, has turned its edge in another direction. In 1932 he published his *Brave New World,* a satire and mockery of Communist ideals which Huxley falsifies outrageously and presents in a weirdly distorted form. It is nevertheless clear what he has in mind. His Utopia is a senseless concoction of Socialist principles reduced to absurdity, Henry Ford's ideas, Dostoyevsky themes and the author's own pet ideas. Huxley has demonstrated in this book his most complete lack of understanding of Socialism. The features which he gives to the future, presumably Socialist order have nothing in common with Communism. They are much more likely attributes of a Fascist state. But Huxley's book performs its counter-revolutionary anti-Soviet function. The inventions of Huxley take the usual course of bourgeois literature of lies and calumnies on Communism, does not stop at anything to blacken the Soviet Union and the world revolutionary movement.

Under the influence of the ever deepening crisis and the pending threat of revolution the bourgeoisie seeks a world philosophy, a system of views, which could throw some light on the modern tangle and confusion in all the phases of capitalist reality. In this situation, this "system seeking," Catholicism and especially the native variety of it Anglo Catholicism gain popularity. English imperialism needs values that will strengthen its shaking domination. Catholicism is convenient for the purpose; it presents a finished, rigorous, world philosophy, disciplines and organizes consciousness, is still an effective opiate for the masses, can keep them subjugated. Catholicism is therefore a close ally of the Fascists in their offensive. The works of the Catholics Belloc and Chesterton come handy to reaction and Fascism. Chesterton throws himself upon the blaspheming Communists, on the USSR, on revolutionary literature, praises Fascist Italy enthusiastically. Together with Belloc he takes an active part in the Fascist American magazine the *American Review.*[1] The differences which the Germans have with the Catholics, the quarrels between Mussolini and the Vatican, these are family squabbles within the camp.

[1] Formerly *The Bookman.*

Catholicism, the idea of law and order, has its supporters among the Anglo-Catholics headed by T. S. Eliot, "classicist in literature, royalist in politics and Anglo-Catholic in religion." In the pages of *The Criterion* Eliot announces his Anglo-Catholic verities. Eliot is closely connected with the American neo-humanist trend. Irving Babbit and Paul Elmer More are his teachers.

Eliot welcomed the appearance of the Fascist magazine *The British Lion* in 1928, in 1931 he comments sympathetically on Oswald Mosley's reactions, in 1932 he holds a series of lectures on Communism full of the foulest inventions and calumnies. His sympathies to Fascism and hatred of revolution are of long standing.

Eliot's Fascist inclinations are more clearly expressed in his journalistic than in his creative work. His poetry is a document of the collapse of the bourgeoisie. Eliot's activity is an example of the activizing tendencies which grow up on the basis of the decay of the capitalist system. The strong authoritarian rule of Anglo-Catholicism seems to Eliot a desirable alternative to the present chaos and ruin.

In art Eliot is an adherent of classicism, rigorous form, which is in line with the search for discipline.

Classicism to which some of the Fascist writers of England are turning at present, the evolution to classicism on the part of many of the Italian Futurists, one of the basic groups of Italian Fascist literature, cannot be viewed as a recession to the past, as escape from modernity. Classicism is an instrument which the Fascist writers find efficient and striking for the presentation of Fascist ideas and putting over Fascist policies. Classicism serves as a spring board for the writers to vault into the solution of the contemporary burning questions of the Fascist movement. Classic form means discipline, orderliness, the cult of the strong man is habitual to classic literature, all of which is essential to Fascism.

It is interesting to note how Fascist ideas are refracted in D. H. Lawrence who has exerted such a tremendous influence on English literature and whose ideas have been caught up by a host of middle class and bourgeois writers. Lawrence's is an evolution from middle class anarchist individualism to Fascism. In *Kangaroo* published in 1923 Lawrence's Fascist ideals are clearly expressed. Kangaroo is the foremost man in Australia, dreaming of the regeneration of mankind. The way to happiness is by shifting the burden of knowledge and guidance to the shoulders of a few wise and strong men. Lawrence's ideals are developed under the direct influence of Dostoyevsky and his idea of the Grand Inquisitor and the human horde. The state Kangaroo dreams of must be a church, the future governor must be a sort of second Christ.

This state would be headed by a strong despotic type of administrator, "... in a sense, he would be a tyrant. Perhaps it would be nearer to say he would be a patriarch, or a pope ..." says Kangaroo.

"We want to take away the strain, the nervous tension out of life, and let folks be happy again unconsciously, instead of unhappy consciously."

Here we have again the theory of "leaders" and "masses" in the Fascist sense.

Lawrence comes out in defense of the race superiority of the Anglo-Saxon. One of Kangaroo's disciples says: "I don't want to be kissing and hugging a lot of foreign labor tripe: niggers and what the hell. I'd rather have the British Empire ten thousand times over, and that bed's a bit too

wide, and too many in it for me. I don't like sleeping with a lot of neighbors. But when it comes to going to bed with a crowd of niggers and dagoes, in an International Labor Combine, with a pair of red sheets so that the dirt don't show, I'm absolutely sure I won't have it. That's why I like Kangaroo. We shall be just cosy and Australian. . ."

Fascist literature as well as the literature with Fascist tendencies is the art of a perishing, dying class. This is frequently acknowledged by the theoreticians and literati of Fascism themselves. The subject of perishing capitalism treated either in the plane of the perishing of white civilization or that of the British Empire is characteristic of this literature.

Bourgeois thought lives under a constant nightmare and there are no horrors they do not imagine. The answers of famous English men of letters, science and art to the symposium of the *London Bookman,* published in the August number, on the question of what will happen to their branch of knowledge or art in the next hundred years, are very interesting. Most of the answers breathe an extreme pessimism. A. J. Cronin writes: "The question which comes to my mind is not what the world will be in 2033 but whether the world will be at all."

1931 saw the publication of a book by Lord Percy, minister of education in the previous Baldwin cabinet, under the characteristic title *Democracy on Trial.* The book is devoted to a critical study of bourgeois democracy, and sees salvation on the road to Fascism. In the book the author feels the crisis and the possibility of the death of capitalism very keenly. "If our civilization begins to decline its destruction may be far more sudden than that of any ancient civilization. And certainly if it is destroyed the catastrophe is likely in some sense to be a final one."

The picture of the Fall of Rome dominates contemporary bourgeois literature. The theme of Wells' book *The Shape of Things of Come,* is the destruction of modern civilization, drowned in the bloody stream of impending wars. In Eliot's works the deepest pessimism and a consciousness of the disintegration of bourgeois culture dominate. The subject of death is preeminent in his poetry. The attempts at activization originate in despair. Eliot himself bears witness that they are only possible to those who have looked into the "abyss." Fascist literature and the literature tending towards Fascism are literatures of the mortal convulsions of capitalism, the mortal agony of the bourgeois world. The stamp of doom and rot is on it, on a great deal of it there is also the stamp of degeneracy.

To balance the increasing Fascist tendencies in England the political consciousness of the proletariat grows along with the revolutionary spirit in broad masses of the petty bourgeoisie. The influence of the Communist Party grows deeper. The mutiny in Invergordon, the powerful demonstration and strikes of the past two years, the recent break of a part of the Independent Labor Party with the Second International are decisive indications in this direction.

The growth of interest in Communism on the part of the petty bourgeois and even bourgeois intelligentsia, and their gravitation towards the Communist Party which are observable in England, in the past two years have been called out by the attempts of this intelligentsia to determine "with whom they go" in the impending class battles.

These facts are evidence of the growth of the English Communist Party

and the weakening of reformism; they are a reflection of the achievements of Socialist construction in the USSR and the rise in the international revolutionary movement.

Their significance is particularly great for England which was up to recently one of the weakest links in the international revolutionary movement, where traitors from the camp of Mr. MacDonald and Co. are working their heads off to keep the working class movement in channels safe for the bourgeoisie. But the open consolidation of the "workers" government with the bourgeoisie in October, 1931 and the following distinctly Fascist character of the measures taken by the national cabinet, the cruel attack on the toilers is beginning to open the eyes of the English worker to the real nature of the Labor Party. Reformism shows a cleft.

As a natural consequence of the rise of the revolutionary movement in England is the growth of revolutionary culture there. Before our eyes the foundation for a Socialist culture is being laid; the first long awaited shoots of revolutionary literature appear, (The magazine *Storm,* A. P. Roley's novel *Revolt,* etc.) a workers' theatre develops, bourgeois literary traditions are exploded. (The Oxford school of poets.)

The best answer to the growth of Fascist tendencies in literature is the further strengthening of the revolutionary wing of English literature, a systematic and deepened struggle against Fascism and its manifestations in literature and culture, the attraction of the best sections of the intelligentsia and writers to the side of the revolution.

There is in England no broad movement among the intelligentsia and literati, such as in America, in favor of the revolution and only the events of the last two years give reason to think this situation will change.

In our struggle against Fascism we must not forget for a moment that in Fascism there is a tremendous danger to the further development of culture, that Fascism itself is a crime against culture. Fascism will cut all the best achievements of mankind off the face of the earth with the scythe of Death—every day of the existence of the Hitler regime proves this.

The future progress of culture is possible only outside the bounds of capitalist society. Everyone to whom the achievements of human thought and human genius are dear must realize that their interests are one with the interests of the revolutionary proletariat struggling for a social order where science, literature and art reach their highest development, where creative individuality will have the opportunity for fullest expression.

L. Griffel

Hungarian Revolutionary Artist

L. Griffel

From its very first day, the Hungarian revolution opened up opportunities for workers in every sphere of cultural activities. Workers Art Schools were among them. And L. Griffel, a young Hungarian son of a peasant family which had moved to Budapest, attended one of these.

In these days Griffel was by no means a revolutionary. He was "a vague sympathizer"... one of the young generation being gradually shaped by the world war and revolution. And it was not until the fascist Horthy dictatorship of counter-revolution that he became a fullfledged revolutionary.

The only art training that Griffel received was for four months after the Hungarian revolution. "This was a comparatively peaceful period" he recalls. He was interested in art for its own sake then although he was attending an art school made possible by the revolution. He was a convinced Futurist. "When the revolutionary government fell", he tells you, "I saw how silly all my theories of art were then. Futurism was dabbling in art, I decided. It was time to be thinking of more serious matters."

Griffel joined in the struggle against counter-revolution. Since the distribution of printed literature was a "crime" punishable by death, he made topical drawings which were passed from group to group and which soon earned him widespread attention and finally a year in prison.

On his release in 1931, Griffel went to Vienna. He worked there in a factory as a designer for umbrella handles. He did the same a year later in Berlin. But here also, unasked, he did cartoon posters for various revolutionary meetings held in the city.

These soon came to the attention of a revolutionary group of artists which included the noted George Grosz, Hartfield and others who invited him to join them. After this his work appeared in various publications: *Pleite,* a left magazine, *Knüppel,* a revolutionary satirical monthly, *Rote Fahne,* revolutionary daily, and the world known weekly pictorial *AIZ.*

Griffel did posters, placards and "chalk talks", as did other members of his group who considered that art was a weapon in the class struggle.

Griffel was one of the original organizers of the Revolutionary Writers and Artists of Germany in 1924.

In 1927 Griffel came to Moscow where he has lived ever since.

FOUR DRAWINGS

Цена № 3 коп. ПРОЛЕТАРИИ ВСЕХ СТРАН, СОЕДИНЯЙТЕСЬ!

РАБОЧАЯ МОСКВА

Орган МК ВКП (б), Облсовпрофа, Моссовета и МОСПС.

ВТОРНИК 25 НОЯБРЯ № 278 (2492)

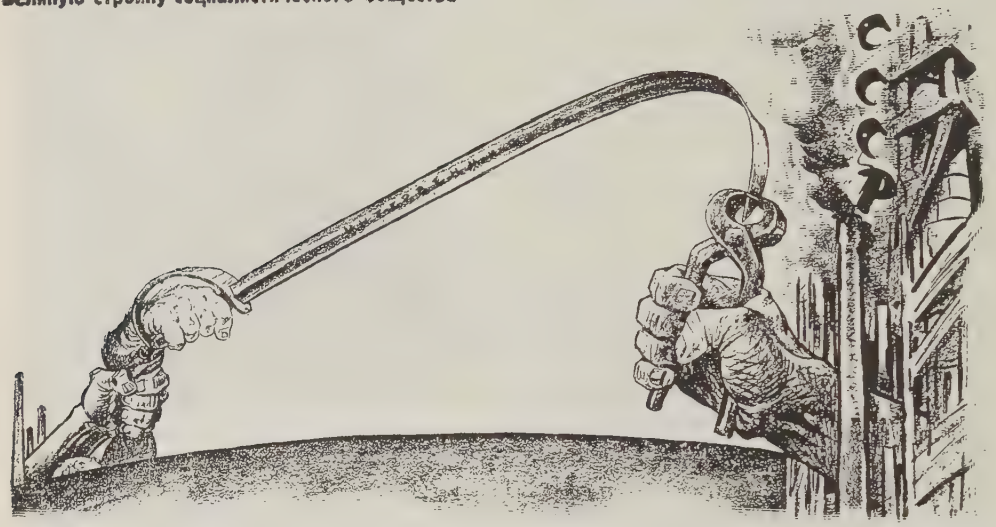
Сегодня перед судом пролетариата предстанут агенты интервентов—поджигателей войны против Советского Союза

Сегодня—все на демонстрацию:

за мир, за победоносное социалистическое строительство, за беспощадный отпор классовым врагам, за укрепление обороноспособности страны

Для бешеной травли коммунизма соединяются все силы обреченного капиталистического мира—воинственный римский папа и кровожадный хищник Пуанкаре, социал-империалистский пройдоха Бриан и вчерашние хозяева буржуазно-помещичьей России. Продажные агенты мирового капитала—„промышленная партия" буржуазных вредителей, чтобы повергнуть в рабство наш многомиллионный народ, подготовляли кровавую интервенцию

Непреоборимым натиском трудящиеся массы, под руководством коммунистической партии, сметут сопротивление классовых врагов и камень за камнем будут победоносно продолжать великую стройку социалистического общества



Обломаем когти организаторам войны и голода

Рис. ГРИФФЕЛЯ

"Break the Claws of those responsible for Hunger and War"—a front page cartoon by L. Griffel from Rabochaya Moskva (Workers Moscow)

He is still the poster artist and cartoonist. But since then his interests have grown beyond that. He believes that revolutionary working class life reaches further than the most spectacular "barricade" aspects of the class struggle. He wants also to picture the simple, less-sung details of it. He believes it can best be done by means of illustrations of working class literature. He has made drawings for the books of leading German writers issued in Moscow, including the works of Ludwig Renn, Johannes Becher and others. And the Hungarians, especially for the stories *The Rifle* and *Tissa Burns* by Bela Illes.

His great masters are the Frenchman Daumier: for technique, light and "color"—and the American, Robert Minor, (whom he discovered in Hungary in 1919) for strength of line, and for that best of all examples for revolutionary artists—to draw from day to day life for subject matter.

Since he is only 32 years of age, he feels that his past years were only a preparation for the work that he should now be doing.

BY L. GRIFFEL

"Only A New Seat for the Same Chair"—an election cartoon from the German revolutionary satirical magazine Knüppel *published before the Hitler Regime*

News Item: "Madame Muller's tickets to the Opera were found among the waste paper in a garbage can . . ."

The Avenging Proletarian Fist

LETTERS and DOCUMENTS

E. Troschenko

Marx on Literature

There are many indications of the fact that Marx and Engels took a tremendous interest in fine literature. It is well known that young Marx planned a special work on esthetics. It is assumed that Marx was a collaborator in the book of the young Hegelian, Bruno Bauer, *Trumpet Voice, or Final Judgement On Hegel, Atheist and Anti-Christ.* Marx was at that time at work on a *Treatise on Christian Art.* In one of his letters to Rugge, Marx says: "In view of the sudden reawakening of the Saxon censorship it will evidently be impossible to publish my *Treatise on Christian Art* which was to appear as a second part of the *Trumpet Voice.*" Lafargue in his reminiscences about Marx tells of the latter's intention to write a book on Balzac after completing *Capital.* It is also known that Marx was preparing an article on Esthetics for the *New American Encylopedia*—there are in existence quotations and summaries of the books Marx read specially for this purpose.

How is this great interest in literature and fine arts on the part of Marx to be explained?

It may be noted first that Marx, the discoverer of the Materialist Conception of History, was attracted to the realm of art as a sphere of ideology that lent itself with particular difficulty to materialist explanation. We shall see later that among the various remarks on literature by Marx, in different notes scattered throughout his works, both historical and economic, as well as in his letters and articles there are cases when in one or two phrases, or a remark not directly referring to art or literature, he gives us a key to the understanding of entire eras in the development of art, individual phenomena, the connection between art and the history of society, individual writers and artists.

Another very important fact we must note is that Marx found art a powerful weapon in the education of the masses. During the German revolution of 1848, when Marx was editor of the *Neue Rheinische Gazette*—the militant organ of the communists, he invited the revolutionary German poets Wehrt and Freiligrath to collaborate on the paper. He paid a good deal of attention to their work, was closely associated with them generally and trained them to be party writers. It would not be amiss to mention here the history of the bolshevist anthologies and the relations between Lenin and Gorky, the *Pravda,* which united around it revolutionary worker-poets and writers.

Finally, there is the significance for Marx of fine literature as a source of information in the study of the history of society. A great many social phenomena are more deeply and truthfully presented in literature,

especially realistic literature, than by most bourgeois historians and scientists. Marx often borrowed examples from literature to illustrate some of the ideas in his theoretical work on the structure and laws of development of bourgeois society,—he used these examples as scientific facts.

Anyone reading *Capital* cannot fail to notice the large number of notes on every page. In these notes Marx surveys the world's economic literature beginning with the very oldest, giving credit for every, even approximate, mention of any idea developed by him. There, among these notes, alongside quotations from scientific works, Marx also gives quotations from poets and writers on a par with those of the others.

It is well known that Engels, in the Harkness letter[1] expressed himself to the effect that he found out more about French society from Balzac "even in the sense of economic details (e. g. the redistribution of real and personal property after the revolution) than from all the books of professional historians, economists, and statisticians of the period together."

Marx expressed himself similarly about the realistic novel of the past century. "The brilliant modern school of English novelists," writes Marx, "have uncovered more political and social truths with their graphic and eloquent portrayals than all the politicians, publicists and moralists taken together. It has shown all strata of bourgeois society beginning with the respectable rentier and owner of gold bond certificates who looked down upon all kinds of 'business' as upon something vulgar and ending with the small shopkeeper and lawyer's assistant."

Realistic literature translated social relations into the language of human relations. It gave a rich and allsided characteristic of man of the bourgeois era, an outline of social psychology, a picture of the rise and spread of conceptions, views, types of thinking, characteristics of the bourgeois era. Realistic literature was of service to Marxism, because it showed in the life of society the significance of which only a Marxist can appreciate.

Marx's range of literary interests was very wide. He knew, read and reread the ancients and followed closely the newest creations of his contemporaries. We often find, particularly in Marx's letters, remarks and opinions which give us a hint of his tastes: he liked this, he didn't like that, he read this with satisfaction and recommends that his correspondents read it, and of another he gives a sharply adverse opinion, often without mincing words. However, when we sum up all these opinions and compare them with his more circumstantial statements, we discover a certain unity, a definite line, a single principle which runs through it all. We find that Marx was interested exclusively and always in literature of a rich socio-historical and intellectual content. Marx's tastes are not subjective. He selected that from the entire treasury of culture and human knowledge which was useful in the elaboration of a world philosophy and even his seemingly most personal opinions are illuminated by this world philosophy.

The dramatists and novelists occupy first place among the writers that particularly interested Marx. In his reminiscences, Lafargue mentions that Marx was always reading Aeschilus, read him in the original Greek

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[1] See *International Literature* No. 3, 1933.

and reread him every year; of Shakespeare, Lafargue says, the Marx home had made a veritable cult.

Marx quotes Shakespeare innumerable times in *Capital*. The Marx-Engels correspondence bristles with turns of phrase and expressions from Shakespeare. Of the high regard in which Shakespeare was held by both Marx and Engels one can judge from their letters to Lasalle on the subject of the latter's drama Franz von Sickingen.[1] These letters are really critical essays on Lassalle's drama in which they do not simply advise Lassalle to study Shakespeare, to "Shakespearianize," but to explain why it should be done considering Shakespeare as a realist.

Marx and Engels were positively indignant when some of those newly found "geniuses" of German literature of their time expressed themselves derogatively about Shakespeare. Here is how Engels speaks of one German dramatist and his book on Shakespeare. He writes to Marx: "That wretch, Roderick Benedicks, published an evil smelling thick volume on *Shakespeareomania* in which he goes into details to prove that Shakespeare cannot compete with our great or even contemporary poets. It would seem Shakespeare should simply be removed from the pedestal in order to place the fat-hammed R. Benedicks on it. There is more life and movement in one first act of *The Merry Wives of Windsor* than in all German literature. Lamns and his dog Crabbe are worth more than all German comedies lumped together."

Their relation to Shakespeare was, on the part of Marx and Engels not a matter of taste but of principle. They were party people and had a party bias. Taking up the cudgels for Shakespeare they were defending a principle. This is particularly evident from an equally sharp opinion expressed by Marx in a letter to Engels with regard to another attack of German critics on Shakespeare: "That beast Rugge argued at Prutz's that Shakespeare was not a poet because he lacked a philosophical system. On the other hand Schiller as a Kantian is a real dramatic poet."

This is a very important statement. Marx and Engels often ridiculed and condemned the tendency of German philosophers and poets to substitute for the problems of practical liberation of German society, for problems of action and revolutionary deeds, the freedom of philosophical imagination soaring in heavenly mist. Reproaching Goethe for being at times a philistine, for turning away whenever he found himself face to face with history, Engels sees no efficacy in seeking salvation from German squalor in "Schillerean pursuit of the Kantian ideal." "Goethe was too astute," writes Engels, "not to see that this meant only substitution of the high flown for low down squalor."

In the *Communist Manifesto,* showing the ugly transformation the ideas of French socialist and communist literature underwent in the brains and writing of the German "true" socialists, representing the interests of the reactionary German petty bourgeois pending the revolution ridiculing and exposing this love of hair-splitting of the German literati and tendency to philosophical verbiage, emasculating the real contents of the lore they "absorbed," Marx and Engels write: "In contact with German social conditions, this French literature lost all its immediate practical significance, and assumed a purely literary aspect. Thus, to the German philosophers of the eighteenth century, the demands of the first French

[1] See *International Literature* No. 4, 1933.

Revolution were nothing more than the demands of 'Practical Reason' in general, and the utterance of the will of the revolutionary French bourgeoisie signified in their eyes the laws of pure Will, of Will as it was bound to be, of true human Will generally."

Another and very important side of the contrast between Shakespeare and Schiller according to Marxism is cleared up in the light of this juxtaposition of the French Revolution and German philosophy.

To Marx, Shakespeare was the expression of the stormy period of historical activity, the expression of the actual struggle that was rending the society of the period, shaking it and breaking up the old foundations. An active, practical, operative principle in Shakespeare against a speculative principle in Schiller, against "philosophical systems" abstractly transforming the world into thought, against "escape in the ideal," against "high flown squalor" of the German philistine who is incapable of revolution. Not in vain did Engels ridicule the "true" socialist, Karl Grunau so viciously for his expression "liberation of man from within," remarking that "nothing results from this purely German liberation."

Marx's preference for dramatic literature is also far from accidental. Critical periods in the life of society give rise to drama, which expresses the active practical elements and reflects the polemic character of the period. It recreates the existing conflicts by its very structure, shows the struggle of opposing principles. It is a democratic art, a public one, that has tremendous power of influencing the masses.

In nineteenth century literature, Marx's attention is attracted to the bourgeois realistic novel, particularly the French. Marx's views on the English novelists are clear from the previous quotations where Dickens, Thackeray and the other contemporary novelists of realistic tendencies are discussed. With respect to the French, Marx and Engels single out Balzac as the apogee of bourgeois realism. To Balzac, as to Shakespeare, they showed a kind of "partiality." Speaking about his relations to someone in one of his letters to Marx, Engels writes: "I tried for a long time to retain a good opinion of him, but what can one think of a man, who after reading Balzac for the first time (and *The Antiquity Shop* and *Pere Goriat* at that) speaks of him in the most supercilious terms as of something ordinary and banal." In one of his letters Marx advises Engels to read *The Unknown Masterpiece* and *Malmotte Reconciled,* characterizing them as "two little masterpieces full of the most delicious irony."

In *Capital* Marx refers to Balzac many times, using examples from the latter's works in the course of his economic research and in one of these references he gives the reason for such great attention to this writer. Speaking of Balzac's *Peasants* Marx writes: "Balzac is remarkable in general for his deep understanding of real relations. . ." It is interesting to compare this remark with the following one in one of his letters to Engels: "In *The Country Parson* of Balzac we find the following: 'If the products of industry did not possess a value twice as great as the cost of their producion, trade would not exist.' What do you say to that?" In other words Marx calls Engels' attention to the fact that Balzac approached the idea of surplus value.

Here we must stop on the, in our opinion, erroneous construction by some of our critics and writers of Engels' remark on Balzac in the Harkness letter. Engels writes: "The realism I allude to may come out even

in spite of the author's views." This expression has puzzled a good many. And really, if political sympathies, nay convictions, have no direct bearing on the result of an artistic depiction, if an objective version (which means a realistic one) of a phase of social life in a given period can be given in spite of one's political views, as was the case with Balzac, then there is no use talking about a world philosophy for writers, of Marxism, which we nevertheless recommend both communist and non-communist writers to study. Some critics understood Engels in this sense.

What is the truth? Does Engels contradict Marx who characterized Balzac as "remarkable for his deep understanding of real relations?" No, Engels saw the power of realism in the same way that Marx did and valued artistic realism for the same reasons that Marx did. Engels writes: "That Balzac was compelled to go against his own class sympathies and political prejudices, that he saw the necessity of the downfall of his beloved aristocrats and described them as people deserving no better fate; that he saw the real men of the future where, for the time being, they alone were to be found—that I consider one of the greatest features of old Balzac." In other words, the objective course of life did not correspond to Balzac's political views and class sympathies but in his word he violated not the truth but his class sympathies; showing a kind of "scientific conscientiousness" which Marx observes in the classics of bourgeois economists, particularly in Ricardo, who reached conclusions sometimes inimical to the interests of his class. "If Ricardo's conceptions in general correspond with the interests of the industrial bourgeoisie, it is only because the interests of the latter are identical with the interests of production or the productive development of human labor, and only insomuch as they correspond. As soon as the interests of the development of productive forces are contradictory to the interests of the bourgeoisie Ricardo takes up the cudgels against the bourgeoisie as straightforwardly as in other cases he does against the proletariat and the aristocracy."

Bourgeois science and bourgeois literature were capable of this objectivity only within definite limits and Marx points out these limits many times: the degree of development of class contradictions, the class struggle within that bourgeois society.

In order to "see the inevitability of the downfall of his beloved aristocracy". Balzac had to possess a correct and deep understanding of the objective processes of social life. We thus see a very original and peculiar contradiction in Balzac: a correct depiction of it in spite of his own political views—a contradiction which could appear only in an artistic realist. Could such a contradiction take place in a romantic?

No, it couldn't because reality to the romantic must conform with the idea; to him not life but the idea is objecive, life being only a phase of the idea and the general ligatures of life are not in itself but in the idea.

It must not be inferred that because Balzac's views did not coincide with the objective course of life that he did not think through his work in the process of creation, or that he was a realist only because he pictured what he saw like some automatic camera. On the contrary, Balzac understood very well what he was picturing. In Balzac's work we find a generalizing realism, Balzac set himself the task consciously to picture society as a whole, give a connected view of it. "The deep understanding of real relations" which is characteristic of Balzac by no means signifies the absence of a world philosophy; quite the reverse, it assumes a definite philosophy

and of a very high order (at any rate high enough to merit Marx's approval), a definite principle at the base, a definite type of attitude to the world.

The contradiction we mentioned and which was pointed out and formulated by Engels could be the result only of such a realistic attitude to the world, i. e. the result of a definite world philosophy and not the absence of one.

Now what is the first conclusion we can draw from all this that has been said? In order to give a correct picture of the surrounding world, to give a connected picture, uncover the inner logic of the facts of life, it is necessary to endeavor to have "a deep understanding of real relations," and such an understanding our artist, engaged in the study of revolutionry reality, can obtain only from Marxism.

But let us go a step further and ask ourselves: is it posssible that in our literature, in our realism, for the picture to contradict the poltical conviction of the artist? Yes, it is entirely possible but in the case of our artist it would indicate not depth of understanding of the world and not power of objective analysis, as in Balzac, but weakness and poverty of understanding. And in any event the picture drawn would either misrepresent the real connections and relations or be incomplete, superficial, external. Balzac had no world philosophy in our sense of the term and could not have one, because he was a bourgeois thinker. One portion of Balzac's world philosophy could contradict another part of it, and many of the great thinkers of the past were subject to this (think of the French materialists with their idealist views on history; idealist viewpoints and realism in his art also coincided in Tolstoy). An intergal world philosophy, consistent in all its parts, having no inner contradictions is created only by the proletariat, the only class revolutionary to the very end. A correct and deep understanding of the world in contradiction to his political views is, in our artist, an absurdity.

The very role of a world philosophy has radically changed in our times. Balzac lived in a society where the social relations of people were being built up behind their backs, so to say, involuntarily on their part, unconsciously. One of the powerful sides of Balzac's pictures of society is the depiction of this very unconscious building up of social relations. But in this lies also the weakness of Balzac, the limitations of bourgeois realism. The lawful historical process assumes, in his work, a character of unavoidable fate. The bourgeois system, in Balzac, orginates with the force of a law of nature and he perceives it as something absolute, a natural phenomenon, a force to which man must yield willy-nilly.

Balzac depicted unconscious history, our artist recreates history being made by people consciously; people direct their production relations, consciousness is included as a necessary link in the historical process, the world philosophy ceases to be merely a philosophy of the world and becomes human practice. Lenin said of our times: "The historical moment has now arrived when theory becomes practice." To depict correctly this new history of society, differing in principle from that of Balzac's time, in spite of one's world philosophy is impossible.

With respect to Balzac, it is, by the way, necessary to add one more thing: Balzac did not so simply renounce the artistic realization of his views and class sympathies as one would think. Here and there in his many novels one can notice attempts to "drag in," so to say these views,

but whenever he does so, the figures are artificial, "ideal," lacking life, untruthful. In other words the contradictions in his world philosophy left traces in his work, tore the artistic woof and led to inconsistencies in his realism.

Taking all the known utterances of Marx on fine literature, his opinions expressed on individual writers, and comparing them, we reach the definite conclusion that Marx always singled out, was interested in and held in high regard artists with realistic tendencies. As to Marx's attitude to the romantics, it can be said here, first of all, that they seldom entered his field of vision in the process of his theoretical work—he makes no use of them, does not refer to them and there is no mention of them either in his correspondence or in reminiscences about him, from which one could gather his preferance for any one romantic writer. With respect to Marx's and Engels' attitude towards the classic representative of German romanticism—Schiller, the fullest expression is contained in their letters to Lasalle. Marx and Engels analyze there that relation of art to reality when the artist inflicts a preconceived philosophic conception upon reality and transforms the latter abstractly into thought. It is in this sense that Engels speaks of Schiller's "pursuit of the Kantian ideal."

When, in their political activity, Marx and Engels come in practice across such a characteristic phenomenon of German life in the prerevolutionary period as the writers and poets of "true" socialism, they consider them expressions of philistine romanticism and fiercely ridicule their soul-rending literature about "the poor" and their calls to the rich to be more humane. It must also be noted that speaking time and again about Victor Hugo and commenting sharply upon him as a political figure Marx does not say anything anywhere about his artistic work. However, with respect to another trend in French romanticism and its representative Chataubriand, there are two interesting and exceedingly sharp comments in the correspondence. In a letter to Engels in 1854, Marx writes: "In my study of the Spanish cesspool I came across the honorable Chataubriand, this King of Eloquence, writing in himself in the most obnoxious fashion the aristocratic skepticism and Voltairianism of the eighteenth century with aristocratic sentimentaliy and romaniticism of the nineteenth. Of course, in France, such a combination as a style was bound to mark an epoch, although in the style itself in spite of all aristocratic artifices, the hypocrisy is self evident." And later, in 1873, again in a letter: "In general, I have read Saint-Beuve's book on Chateaubriand, a writer that has always been repugnant to me. If this man attained such fame in France it is only because he represents in all respects the most classical embodiment of French *vanite,* and this *vanite* not in the light, frivolous dress of the eighteenth century, but covered with a romantic mantle and with the air of importance lent by newly baked phrases: false depth, Bysanthine exaggeration, coquetry of feeling, variegated chameleon colors, word painting, theatricalness, pomposity—in a word, a false concoction such as the world has not otherwise seen either in form or in content."

To how many works of the romantic school this Marxian characteristic of the French romantic style can be applied, if not wholly, at least in part.

Marx and Engels had a high regard for Heine, but there are many indications that, as in the case of Goethe, they did not take him in his

entirety. But if in the "greatest German" the progressive thinker and artist of genius lived peacefully side by side with the philistine, Heine, expressing a new historical period when the problems of liberation become practical, were widely recognized, is characterized by his painfully keen feeling of inner division. Heine acknowledged this inner conflict between the revolutionist and philistine. Bitterly mocking at the political inertia, the provincial backwardness of his country, shocking the bourgeois by his daring attacks on the respectability, sentimental placidity and visionary piggishness of the German philistine, Heine did not see the forces capable of changing German life either in himself or in his surroundings although he fully realized the necessity of such a change. His irony is bitter and directed against himself but with a strong dose of skepticism. The age of Schiller and Goethe, the age of classical philosophy was already past. Heine lived in a political era; his gifts as a publicist and his political temperament drew him to the platform of civic poetry and inasmuch as he was such a poet he came out against romanticism which had taken root in the depths of the German soul. Engels describes Heine's artistic method very clearly in the article "True Socialism in Verse and Prose" where he analyzes a poem of one of the "leading" poets of this school. In this poem the people address the soldiers calling upon them to unite for the struggle but it later develops that this was only the "secret dream of a youth during a parade." Engels writes further: "To Heine this theme would be an occasion for a bitter satire on the German nation; in Beck it is a satire on the poet himself, the poet that proved to be one with the German dreaming youth. With Heine the dreams of the bourgeois would be purposely inflated to be let down afterwards to the level of reality. With Beck there is a solidarity of the poet with these fantasies and he of course falls together with the fantasies when they hit the solid ground of reality. The first calls out the anger of the bourgeois by his impertinence; the latter pacifies him as a kindred soul."

It was in this deflation of the fantastic vision of the German bourgeois to the level of reality that the power of Heine's satire lay, showing the realism of his views. And it was for this that Marx and Engels valued him.

Speaking of the attitude of Marx and Engels to romanticism it would be only futile pedantism to declare that Marx had an adverse attitude to all artists of this style without exception. We have however, enough evidence to conclude that Marx had an adverse attitude to romanticism as a trend. That is a conclusion we are entitled to draw.

We have already seen in the case of Balzac and the English novelists that Marx saw the power of artistic realism in its deep penetration into the very essence of social relations. This was so in bourgeois realism and it was important to Marx and possible because at the foundation of this style lay the principle, that attitude of art to the world, when art endeavors to objectively cognize reality, when the artist issues not from an abstract idea but from life and its own laws. Romantic art sees the essence of life in the idea, outside reality; realism pictures the world of things and the ideas arising from them.

These general principles of realistic art make it the most important artistic heritage of the bourgeois era.

Socialist realism must be a step ahead in the development of realist art, a summary of the critical study of bourgeois realism. Our realism can

overcome both the limitations and the inconsistencies of preceding realist art. Our art depicts reality not simply at it is, but as it is being made by man; in its depiction of the objective world it includes a link absent in the older realism—the subject, revolutionary human activity; in our realism the unconscious social content becomes conscious, and this assumes party adherance, the depiction of life from the point of view of a definite class consciously adopted and consistently applied; our realism is most objective because the point of view of the proletarian party is the fullest, the most consistent scientific expression of the objective law of development of modern society into communism.

We have already mentioned the enormous role given by Marx to fine literature in the work of the party, in the cause of revolutionary propaganda. In the Marx-Freiligrath correspondence there are some pages of the utmost importance for the understanding of Marx's views on the question of party literature generally. In several of his letters of Freiligrath, Marx expresses thoughts that are directly akin to the principles laid down by Lenin in his article "Party Organization and Party Literature." In one of the letters Marx puts the question unequivocally of the direct connection between the merit of an artistic work and its party content.

During the years of the revolution of 1848-1849, Marx worked in close contact with Freiligrath, during the emigrant years in London they were also closely associated for several years, only in the later fifties was there a recession when Freiligrath began to lose the revolutionary firmness and the ardor of the years when he was the singer of the revolution, "the party poet", and a collaborator in the *Neue Rheinische Gazette*. It was to the period when Marx fell out with Freiligrath that the episode relates which called out such a sharp reprimand from Marx. In one of the emigrant newspapers, in an article devoted to the work of Freiligrath there was a calumnious attack on Marx. The sheet wrote:

"Afterwards Freiligrath became a collaborator in the *Neue Rheinische Gazette* published by Doctor Karl Marx, master in stirring up and spreading hatred to democracy, which, in his mad communistic blindness and poisonous bitterness towards everyone not communist, even when they are democrats, he tries to present wittily and poisonously. With all our great reverance for the poet we do no wish to fall to idolatry. We must therefore say that under the tutelage of this virtuoso of hate, who has written many witty things, but who has never expressed a single noble thought, Freiligrath has lost his voice, his freedom, his firmness. Since Freiligrath is under the influence of Karl Marx he sings but seldom."

What is most remarkable about this tirade, is not the yellow style which made Mehring, who cites this and similar excerpts in his brochure on the Marx-Freiligrath correspondence exclaim: "And it was with this sort of people Marx had to fight!" (proletarian revolutionists then and later were to grow accustomed to all kinds of meanness, to trivial, vulgar, bitter slander from the camp of the socalled "fighters for democracy"). The most remarkable thing about it is that the main idea in this little article is the thesis of the harmfulness of party adherence to artistic quality, which sounds familiar. Didn't we hear and do we not today still hear similar things in Soviet literature, said or only half said, with papal importance, hinting at some ulterior knowledge of the mysterious nature of art which cannot stand the insult of "ideology" and avenges itself by the artistic depreciation of the sinner? Art free from politics or party, poetry

independent of class interests are things which belong among the deceptions long ago exposed by the living history of the class struggle, deceptions which the intelligentsia was always prone to fall a victim to, and was continually playing up as eternal truths even long after it had become perfectly evident that they were only special forms of the dependence of art and literature upon the dominant class which had been worked out by bourgeois society.

However, these ideas, sanctified and enriched in their time with learned formulas by idealist esthetics, took such deep root, were absorbed so deeply into the psychology of many of our "makers of the artistic word" that they still show themselves in the most diverse form up to this very day: now it is sorrowful regret about the poetic genius of Mayakovsky, presumably lessened in power ever since he dedicated his verse to the service of the revolutionary proletariat; now it is alarm over the artistic quality of the work of a writer who has "recast" himself to the themes of the reconstruction period; now it is an esthetic disdain of all literature touching upon the political burning questions of the day, treating such literature as "not genuine art."

When Freiligrath in a letter pointed out to Marx the article cited above written by one of Freiligrath's new found friends, Marx, after acquainting himself with this, as he expressed himself, "rubbish", wrote Freiligrath in an answering letter as follows: "If regardless of the truth, one would wish to ascribe to me any influence upon you, it could only be during the short period of the existence of the *Neue Rheinische Gazette,* when you wrote excellent and certainly the most popular of your poems." Marx here connects artistic merit of the work of a revolutionary poet directly with his adherence to the party. This remarkable Marxian utterance allows of no other interpretation. The *Neue Rheinische Gazette* created a new type of writer, a party writer, an artist consciously bringing out in his work the point of view of a definite class. Only the revolutionary proletarian party and only the proletarian class could promulgate such an idea of a party literature and form this type of writer.

In the period of the dictatorship of the proletariat, in the country where socialism is being built, when also a new socialist art is arising this idea assumes a wider significance.

We say to our writers as Lenin did: In a bourgeois society, under the mask of freedom art is dependent upon the "money bags," here—an open and conscious connection of art with the class interests of millions of workers engaged in building a socialist society. The idea of party art becomes a slogan for all Soviet literature, one of the main principles of our views on art.

The history of the "thoroughly foolish Mr. Betty" and Marx's answer did not exhaust the problem of party art for Freiligrath. Soon he writes Marx a noteworthy letter in which he announces his formal severance of party relations.

Here are the reasons which moved him to take this step:

"It is in the nature of poets generally, and it is in my nature to require freedom! The party is also a cage, and songs, even for the party, are better sung outside than inside the cage. I have been a poet of the proletariat and revolution long before I became a member of the union and coeditor of the *Neue Rheinische Gazette!* I want to stand on my own feet again, belong only to myself and dispose of myself. There are other con-

siderations on account of which I have never regretted leaving the party. When I think of all the equivocal and doubtful elements that have succeeded in spite of all precautions to penetrate into the party then, from a Feeling of cleanliness only, I am exceedingly glad that for some time already I do not in fact belong to a society where I should from day to day be forced to come in contact with such people. If it is necessary to put in writing this fact, then with this I—*sine ira et studio* (without anger and calmly) and again underlining my ever as before friendly feeling for you personally—hereby do so."

In his answering letter Marx turns his fire on this intellectual finickiness on the part of Freiligrath and patiently explains and proves to him that to go away from the proletarian party does not mean freedom to sing one's songs outside the cage, but running over to a bourgeois party to "mean respectability."

Here is what Marx writes Freiligrath:

"There is no doubt that during a storm the mud is stirred, that a revolution does not smell like oil of roses and that some of the dirt will from time to time fall upon the participants. However, if we were to take into consideration the tremendous efforts of the entire official world against us, which, in the endeavor to destroy us, not only applied, but dug up the entire criminal code; if we were to take into consideration all the slander and intrigue of 'democratic foolishness' which cannot forgive our party that it is wiser and has more character than its opponents; if we were to recall the simultaneous history of all the other parties; if, finally, we were to ask ourselves what facts could be brought to bear against the whole party—one must come to the conclusion that in this our nineteenth century our party is distinguished by its cleanliness. Can one escape dirt in bourgeois life or affairs? Only there it is considered natural. The honest meanness or mean honesty of paying morals are not a whit higher to me than unrespectable meanness from which neither the first Christian communities, nor the Jacobin club, nor our defunct union could entirely protect themselves. But in bourgeois surroundings one gets accustomed to lose one's sensitiveness to respectable meanness or mean respectability."

After this incident, during all the succeeding years, Marx and Engels in their correspondence never mention Freiligrath otherwise than as the "philistine" or "thick philistine." As the reader will judge for himself the title was well deserved.

Translated from the Russian by S. D. Kogan

LETTERS FROM WRITERS

F. C. Weiskopf—Louis Lozowick—Romain Rolland

GERMANY

The German Literary Emigration

Hans Johst, president of the *Dichter-Akademie* (Poet's Academy) and playwright to the Staats-Theater under the benign dispensation of Goebbels in an "Easter Appeal" to German National-Socialist and like-minded writers crisply and uniquivocably set forth their role and purpose: to be "no more and no less" than "Adolf Hitler's intellectual Storm Troops." *(Sturm-Abteilung).*

"Storm Troops" tells the true and essential story of the neo-German literature. Except for a few shifters-with-the-tide and high-riders on the wave of the moment, like Barthel, Erhardt, Reimann, Loerke, Molo, Benn, Binding (second rate talents, who but a short time since were counted by the Nazis themselves as makers of tabloid literature), except for these deserters from other camps and the few truly representative veterans of literary Hitlerdom, like Ewers, Johst and Bronnen, the literary work of the socalled National Revolution, of the Third Reich, has failed to produce a single noteworthy figure. The talents which allegedly had for years been submerged and which, were we to believe the National Socialists, were destined to make the world sit up and take notice, have failed to materialize. True, in the German press, ever since the advent of the Third Reich one may read heaps and heaps about the Arenhoevels and Schrempfs, the Kischkys and Rebss, the Schloessers and Stoepesands and whoever else the great in the National Socialist parnasus may be, though in the reading one finds nothing but decrees of appointments and phantastic reporting . . . and what one reads *by* them turns out to be nothing but puff-sheet interviews by pitiful amateur dabblers.

The bankruptcy of National Socialism in the literary field is patent and incontestable. What comes off the presses of the Third Reich today as literature is at best some remote concoction suitable for museum display and in the general run just plain maliciously inspired trash.

But how do matters stand with that other portion of the German writing world, with those writers who by boycott, individual badgering, destruction of their work and deprivation of their livelihood have been forced to leave Germany and live abroad as émigrés?

Not Exactly Anti-Nazi

Varied and divers as were the causes which drove them into emigration so equally divers are the paths upon which they have struck out. Of course, aside from those few more or less indifferent ones who have emigrated for lack of an Aryan grandmother or by reason of too close association with the "November system" (the post-war republic); and aside from several more who have shifted not only in space but in ideology: to mysticism, like Franz Werfel; to Zionism, like Alfred Doeblin; to "Austrian monarchistic conservatism", like Joseph Roth; aside from these, most German literary emigrants are opponents of the Third Reich, opponents of National Socialism. Still they are, many of them, only anti-National Socialists for the present and not yet anti-Fascists. In other words they see in National-Socialism an interlude, an anachronism, a reversion to the barbarism of the middle ages, or else a peculiarly German type of mental disorder, or an anomaly which runs counter to the "proper" trend of history. These speak of the "release of the lower instincts" *(Ungeist)*, the "getting out of hand of a horde of wrecked lives." They still fail to see that German fascism is as little an accident as the Italian variety, they do not see that it is an organic product of capitalism on its death-bed and that every attempt to fight and replace it with a "purified, rejuvenated democracy" is futile, an illusion.

Indeed quite a number of emigrant writers who formerly had little or nothing in common with proletarian, revolutionary literature, now have the fighting spirit. They know, to quote some passages from the new emigrant publications, "that politics is not destiny but object... what would upset they overturn, they do not despair of life, of mankind, of Germany. They would help fashion a new Germany as one member of a new world." And they declare—again we quote from emigrant writings, from the *Neue Deutsche Blaetter* appearing in Prague—"In Germany the National Socialists rage. We are at war.

There is no remaining neutral. Least of all for writers!"

This process of clarification is facilitated by developments in and outside Germany which compel National Socialism to show its true face more and more openly, with less and less of the actor's make-up. If today Thomas Mann and Rene Schickele should still believe that they may live in emigration and yet be published in Germany (to this belief they have already sacrificed a good share of their prestige and the high regard in which they have hitherto been held, ever since the letters of capitulation in which they waived further collaboration with a very tame emigrant publication came to light) by tomorrow they may awaken to the fact that this straddling of the fence will not only be impossible but damaging. Stefan Zweig who also sought to tack about and withdraw from collaboration on an emigrant publication so that his books might get published in Germany, has by now undoubtedly felt the sting and gall of seeing his "neutrality" played up by the Nazis as propaganda for the Third Reich, and his name wilfully hung up as a shingle advertizing the "neo-German culture." Indeed in a letter just published he has already solemnly declared that "all further literary work in Germany is impossible" and that he is burning behind him all bridges that lead back to Germany.

Nevertheless it is a long road that separates the anti-National Socialist writer from the anti-fascist writer, a road which many a literary emigrant will probably never negotiate to the very end. Many today are only at the start of that road. Whether they will proceed further along it and with what speed depends to no small degreee upon the example, counsel and assistance afforded them by those engaged in and allied with the revolutionary literary movement, who in these times and in these circumstances carry an ever-growing responsibility.

Revolutionary Literature Grows

Today, nine months after Hitler's accession to power, the German literary emigration already has numerous publications and its first literary organizations. Turning to the latter, we find the *Bund proletarischer - revolutionaerer Schriftsteller Deutschlands* (The German Proletarian Revolutionary Writers Association), which is as little dead inside the Third Reich as are the other proletarian revolutionary organizations (witness the illegal publication *Stich und Hieb (Thrust and Blow,)* the literary columns and the short stories and sketches by members of these groups, who despite every ban, continue to write and to reach their readers). The *Bund* has brought together in wellknit groups those of its members who have been forced into emigration in France, Switzerland, Austria and Czecho-Slovakia. Regarding now the groups' work and what fruit they bear we shall find some other occasion to speak. Here we would briefly point out that quite a number of important works by *Bund* members will shortly make their appearance: a novel by Anna Seghers. *The per Capita Wage,* another by Walter Schoenstedt *Shot in Attempting to Escape,* one by Adam Scharrer, *The Moles,* and another novel by a writer whose name cannot now be revealed, *The City of Billigen Awakes and Falls in Line.* Again, there will shortly appear a novel by Gustav Regler dealing with the *Saargebiet,* a volume of short short-stories, *The Stronger Ones,* by F. C. Weiskopf, and a children's book on Hitler Germany by Alex Wedding. And so on.

Even the German writers' trade union, (German Writers Protective Association) has been revived. Started in France, it is spreading to other countries and will later make its way back into Germany.

To replace the publishing houses which were destroyed, banished or made to fall in line, new ones are being organized abroad. The first to resume activities was the famous Universum Library, which as the only proletarian publishing house with revolutionary tendencies was necessarily one of the first to suffer the onslaught of fascist culture. The Universum's first symptom of renewed life was a blow that struck has become world famous. Side by side with the Universum, a sort of blood-brother arose, the Editions du Carrefour; that is, the latter has been converted into a German publishing house. Its list for the next few months includes such titles as *The Brown Book, Part II, Germany's Leaders as Nobody Knows Them,* Walter Schoenstedt's *Shot in Attempting to Escape,* new books by Seghers, Regler, Mehring, Kisch and others.

The traditions of the old Kiepenheuer and S. Fischerverlag, publishers of left-bourgeois works with an occasional admixture of revolutionary writings, will be carried on by the Dutch firms of Querido and e Lange, which have set up

German departments. These houses have already announced books by Kesten, Feuchtwanger, Heinrich Mann, Arnold Zweig, Ernst Toller, Egon Erwin Kisch, Theodor Plivier.

The newly founded Paris house, the Europaeischer Merkur will probably carry on in much the same way as the two Dutch publishers. The Merkur is bringing out pamphlets by Heinrich Mann, Feuchtwanger, Rudolf Olden, translations from the French (Maurois) and English (Golding).

Europaverlag is the name of the Zurich branch of the Opprecht publishing house, which is under Social Democratic influence. One of its new German books will be a volume of short stories by Bernard von Brentano.

The Malikverlag is now carrying on in Prague. Its forthcoming titles by German writers are Scharrer's *The Moles* and Plivier's *Democracy.*

The German department of the Czech house of Kachaw will shortly publish a new novel by Werner Tuerk, *The Little Man without a Compass.*

The Literary Press in Exile

If there are many emigrant publishing houses, there are no fewer emigrant literary magazines. We cannot here deal with periodicals like *Das neue Tagebuch, Die neue Weltbuehne, Das blaue Heft* which contain literary sections as an incidental feature; nor with news papers and magazines like *AIZ, Gegenangriff, Deutsche Freiheit,* etc. which also run literary departments—short stories, novels, criticism — however interesting and worthwhile such a study undoubtedly would be; we must here limit ourselves solely to actual literary magazines in a narrower sense of the term; making a brief exception, however, in favor of *Unsere Zeit,* started in Basel and, after a short break, resuming publication in Strassburg, because *Unsere Zeit* has given the bulk of its columns in recent issues to a survey of literature.

In Prague a magazine is being published by writers closely connected with the revolutionary movement, who in the short period of the paper's existence, have succeeded in rounding up a good number of the best German writers of the day and attracting a large body of readers. I have reference to the *Neue Deutsche Blaetter,* contributors to which include Becher and Brecht, Seghers and Hegemann, Brunngraber and Torberg, Fontana and Wassermann, Bruegel and Ernest Fischer. From the first number, which lays down the purpose and program of the editors, we have already quoted some characteristic passages. Here we would call attention to its column "Voices from Germany" which contains comment from the pen of writers in Germany who have not "fallen in line." (The word in German is *gleichgeschaltet* coined since the advent of Hitler to power. Borrowed from electricity it is used to describe those who have adjusted their "voltage" to conform to the Hitler requirements.) These contributions are, of course, made under a pseudonym.

The *Sammlung,* put out by Querido, Amsterdam, under the general editorship of Klaus Mann purports to replace the *Neue Rundschau* at its recent best. The editor is without question a sincere opponent of Hitler and National-Socialism, but on that very account the paper shows all the more clearly how impossible it is to combat Fascism—as an "intellectual and spiritual manifestation" by means of "purely intellectual weapons." This explains why Klaus Mann is repeatedly the victim of the half-hearted, the hesitant, the "discreet". His own father Thomas Mann and his friends Doeblin and Schickele have made no bones about cutting themselves loose from the *Sammlung,* in order, as they have declared, to be able go to on publishing their works in the Third Reich; and, on the other hand, he is abandoned by those writers, again, whose eyes have been opened by the behavior of Mann, Doeblin and Schickele and who have come to see that a step backward, a "declaration of neutrality", a flight into indifference is only a way of helping Hitler and National-Socialism.

Finally, a word about an emigrant publication that is in a class by itself, for its own accord, balmily enough, it has fallen in step, despite the fact of its editor having been unceremoniously kicked out of Germany by the masters of the Third Reich. It is the *Welt im Wort,* offshoot of *The Literary World* which had gone "brown" ("Hitlerite"). Willi Haas is the editor. *Welt im Wort* to which such hopeless muddleheads as Rudolf Pann and thwarted National Socialists like Paul Kornfeld contribute, is at great fains to write up "objectively" that which has long since ceased to exist, namely German literature of the publishing houses and magazines that have fallen in step.

Literature and Revolution

The German literary emigration, as we have seen, is busy setting up its organiza-

tions and has already started publishing houses and numerous periodicals. The emigration is producing, it is alive and fighting; at least, the more worth while elements of the emigration. Yet this manner of existence will be but a shadow and a sham should life in emigration become a life unto itself. This the revolutionary literary emigrants have realized from the first and accordingly set for themselves and for those who have joined or eventually will join with them the aim to remain in constant, active touch with their comrades left behind in Germany; with writers, of course; but more than that with the broad revolutionary movement, as a whole, at present consigned to the shadows of illegality, yet destined, perhaps tomorrow, to fight once more out in the open so that the new, trugly awakened Germany—a socialist Germany—may be ushered in.

F. C. Weiskopf

Prague, Czecho-Slovakia

(Author of *Draft of the Future* and other books.)

USA

The American Artist and the Crisis

The lot of the average American artist has never been too bright, even before the crisis. Although he liked to castigate the "booboisie" and flattered himself as being "above masses and classes," he kept a yearning eye on the half dozen collectors who constituted one of the rare sources of his potential income. Since the depression, the position of the artist has worsened terribly. Some of the best galleries shut up shop (Daniel's, Neumann's, Babcock's and others). Most of the others present an air perfectly funereal. Sales of art works have fallen disastrously, and the artists, proud "intellectual aristocrats" of better days, have been forced to compete with the starving plebeians for a bench in the park, and turn to the relief bureaus for jobs and groceries. A small number found employment as house painters, decorators of churches, temporary teachers in temporary schools and so forth. Regardless of his intellectual station the artist is investigated with the same insolent prying into his private life as are the workers, and is often forced to lie—or starve. Many lie and starve.

Various schemes of relief have been either of short duration or failures from the start. One of the most fanciful plans to help the artist was concocted in a large New York hotel last year, and was briefly as follows: an eligible artist submits one or more paintings as collateral for a short loan. After the artist has received a loan which is about ten per cent of the value of his painting as appraised by a jury, the dealers (leading members of the organization) attempt to sell the painting. If, however, the painting is not sold, it is continued to be kept as collateral until the loan plus the accrued interest and expenses are paid by the artist. If the artist can not pay the loan, as would most probably happen, it would be just too bad for him and his painting. It is like the good old army game of the veteran, his loan and his insurance.

One of the more popular attempts to alleviate the artist's lot was by out of door exhibitions. Four such exhibitions have now been held in Washington Square, Greenwich Village. At first, as a sensation, the exhibitions received some publicity which resulted in a number of sales. These sales have grown smaller with each exhibition. A stroll on the sidewalks and in the alleys where the artists peddle their wares is depressing in the extreme. The artists are so anxious to sell that they often realize no more than the cost of the material. The most common way of earning a few pennies is by making portrait sketches from life at prices lower than a photograph: fifty and twenty five cents, in a word, lower than the price of a decent meal. Paintings are offered in exchange for foodstuffs or a suit of clothes; here and there are signs: "Job wanted—willing to do anything." Greenwich Village, once the center of artistic life, is now evicting artists, who cannot pay rent and who are moving in an exodus toward the East river.

What is true of New York is true of other large art centers. In Chicago for example, at the very gates of the Century of Progress Exposition, scores, even hundreds of evicted and starving artists peddle their works for anything that is offered. Many of them have no place of their own to go to, but sleep in the parks, and live the life of the million headed unemployed army.

The fourth winter of the depression promises to be even worse than the preceeding three. Artists (among many thousands of other workers) employed by the largest relief bureau in New York have been dismissed recently, presumably because the hokus-pokus of the NRA is somehow going to keep them fed, and clothed and contented. The leftward swing among artists shows that many of them, aware of the NRA hokum, are drawing the logical conclusion from it.

Louis Lozowick

New York

FRANCE

Rolland Writes About International Literature

I did not answer you a long time, wishing to read through the French issue of *International Literature* Nos. 1 and 2—3.

My general impression of the magazine is good. Of course the quality of different articles and fragments is very unequal. But on the whole the magazine is very substantial and vivid. Some of the excerpts are excellent. I won't speak of the value of Gorky's collaboration and, alas, the late Mayakovsky's (the translation of Nikulin's migthy *At the top of the Human Voice* is necessary and I congratulate Aragon that he has translated it.)

The labor novels (on factories and agriculture) are not always successful. They usually lack two things (from which one would be enough, this one being quite necessary, though): either tension of a subjective conception, or an objective curiosity and intruding into a mutual relationship of the characters (collision of characters). A great impression was made on me by Paustovsky's sketch-panorama *Kara-Bugaz,* whose core is the earth — a corner of the earth — developing in time. There is something new in this, what can develop later on into an original epic.

One of the subjects, occasionaly touched in it (as well as in Ehrenburg's last novel *The Second Day of Creation* which is not yet published in Russian, though it will be, I think) deals with the intellectuals for whom *International Literature* is most adapted. It would be very important to know the attitude of these people —intellectuals — (Scientists and so on) towards the revolution, towards proletarian labor — to know how the most honest of them very force of events driven out of their conservatism, have gone from this. Why don't the writers and artists of the West, who happened to take part in some moments of Soviet construction, as Aragon did, for example, and who felt a deep exciment, why don't they publish a diary of those days, a simple dairy of facts?

I am sure this experience would have a big influence on the Western intellectuals.

I think, it would be interesting for you to publish in your French edition, as it was done already by *Nouvelle Revue Française,* but with a broader and more serious choice, the letters-confessions of the young men, young women, workers.

In a few words, show in your magazine the desires, hopes, inclinations, the new life, which makes the best, the most productive, the most enthusiastic proletarian youths higher and better.

My fraternal greetings to the IURW. If there are some pages of mine that could be of interest, I would send them to you with great joy.

Romain Rolland

Paris, France

AUTOBIOGRAPHIES

Nikolai Semyonovich Tikhonov

(Soviet author of the novel War, *short stories, and a number of volumes of verse.)*

A reader once told me that one thing he did not like about my Ballad of the Blue Parcel was that it had no end.

"Excuse me," I said, "but what would you call an end?"

"You ought to have given that remarkable man the Order of the Red Banner as otherwise his exploits were wasted."

Alas, a great many of my literary exploits were wasted. I started off as a realist. I went in for prose. I was eight years old, and wrote on a thick piece of grey paper (which had been used for wrapping up herring) in imitation of a novel of Zola's. Seven years later I was working at a novel, or rather a series of novels on the subject of the fight for freedom. I was freeing the Malayan from the Dutch yoke in *The Rough Road,* the Chinese from the foreign, consessionaires in *John Hampden,* Algiers from the French in *Desert Fate,* and India from the English in the *Forests of the Deccan.*

Nikolai S. Tikhonov

All these works written in a child's bold round hand, are still lying in the drawer of my desk. Sometimes I take them out and look at the yellow pages with the grey ink and I am seized with melancholy. What simplicity of style, what clarity of thought, what an ardent wish to guess at what had never been seen, and above all how unconvincing. I grew up during an epoch of war, when the Turks were fighting the Greeks, the Americans were sinking the Spaniards, the "Great Ones" were oppressing the Europeans and the Europeans were plundering the palaces of Eastern potentates, the Boers were blowing all the traditions of the British army to the winds on the veldt of the Transvaal, the Japanese were taking Port Arthur from the Russians and the Chinese, the Italians were taking Tripoli and the whole of the Balkan Peninsula was ablaze. It even seems strange to me that I was born not with the drums beating round me but in a quiet artisan's family to a father who was a small townsman from near St. Petersburg. All my childhood I played with soldiers and wrote what were really war novels. And for that I was punished. In order to find out the difference between fighting on paper and fighting in reality I had to become a soldier myself. I who had previously only seen droschky horses at close quarters now became a hussar.

Wild Turkestan horses, camp stables, dish water from the battalion tea boiler. Horses that can kick pretty lustily and with good aim too, even when they are not shod. Frosts so that your hands freeze to the hilt of your axe as you chop wood without gloves. An expert in sweeping manure from the stables takes a good month and a half to train.

I was surrounded by the heroes of my books. I found that everywhere they

were treated badly, that they were always wandering about, always cold and always fighting, fighting, fighting only to perish in the end, and with them perished my childish adventure novels. At nineteen I took part in cavalry charges. They used to gamble with my heroes. They kept impressing them that they were fighting for freedom against German Imperialism. The revolution came down like an avalanche on the front and brought in that great epoch by which one could not help being caught.

Consequently during the time I was in the Red Army I wrote chiefly poetry. The enthusiasm of the times caught me like the wind in spring. This enthusiasm was like a disease with me. I became an apostle of verse. Nowadays people talk a good deal about the dominance of prose over verse, but whatever we may say about the superiority of prose we shall never drive poetry out of life. It may shrink beyond recognition, may become covered with scurf, and may reach such a degree of poverty that it only lives by charity, but we can't drive it out altogether, it will still persist as an essential part of human life. It arises out of the very nature of language, and compels the choice of the best word, it makes its appearance in sayings and proverbs, it comes out on the stage, strays through the collective farms, barracks, universities and factories, it opens novels and stories with solemn epigrams. It is in ceaseless conflict with prose, for prose is like the dry land while poetry is like the ocean with its continual ebb and flow. That is why, although the many poems I have written are for the most part bad, I shall never forsake poetry. I have gone from one subject to another and from one rhythm to another and have many times changed the style of my language—I have spent much time in intensive "search for the hero" in order to find the spirit of the epoch. I was long afflicted with cynicism. This was my second great disease. Honesty in poetry is as essential as sonority. I was honest in my poetry, but the other medium (my call was to prose) was too strong for me.

I again turned to prose. I once wrote that a tank was a thousand times greater than a heart. Millions of yards of human skin had been torn by barbed wire . . . but tanks and barbed wire and radio and fighting aeroplanes were made by human hands, the hands of working men, not one of which was longer than even a short barrelled rifle. There was one simple story that ought to be told, I said, and that was the story of the earth and of man.

I add now: of the Soviet earth and of the Soviet man.

I add now: of all the different species of men who are taking part in the class struggle of our time. What a splendid but difficult task. A hundred years ago Gogol mourned the fact that he had been called to picture only the sore spots of life, only the ugly side of things, whereas it had been Pushkin's fortune to delight in a joyous and happy art. The more I sink myself in the life of the presnt day the more complicated and difficult does writing become. In each new poem, in each new story, I want to find the spirit of the epoch and each time my hand falls down impotent. How happy those writers are who write long novels with such ease, painting the most attractive scenes in lively colors, content in the belief that they have attained their end, letting everything give way before the swift flight of their genius. But I am not satisifed with the wide canvasses and swift work of the literary giants of today.

I know that works will be written, and are already partially written, painting a black picture but an honest one, but that does not console me for it, will not be I who have written them.

And that is my third disease.

I want to write without leaving out either joy or pain, without becoming aloof but at the same time without letting myself slide unawares onto the polished floor of easy story making, with its glint of cheap fame.

Now, have my different attitudes up till now been the right ones? They have been right so far as they went, but something more is wanted. I want to write simply, concisely, I want to write something new and something strong. That is my ambition in a nutshell.

I have seen so many horrors in my time, as have so many of my contemporaries, that I have become hardened, and I have shared in so much happiness that I am at the same time an optimist. I have not that gift of words which I should like to have. I lack the power to express all that I see around me; and so my hand very often falls impotent.

It is possible that the thousands of pages of verse and prose which I have written up till now have only been my apprenticeship, and that my real work is only now beginning.

I was born on the 21st of November, 1896, so I am now at the right age to do real work.

M. Charny

Ardour

People and Events in Sholokhov's "Broken Virgin Soil"—from which excerpts are included in this issue

I think I should recognize Makar Nagulnov in the street, even at a distance, or in a crowd. I should know him by his alert bearing, the bearing of a fighter, always ready for every attack. Even his face, worn and seamed with many an old wound and the burden of great responsibilities, would seem familiar to me.

"Ah, that's you, Makar, is it? Nagulnov of Gremyachy Log—from *Broken Virgin Soil*—?

...and I should wait eagerly for his pronouncements on World Revolution.

Makar Nagulnov is a character created by Michael Sholokhov, the central figure of his book. A character obviously drawn from life, who has stepped out of the pages and returned to the struggle once more, stirring the hearts and minds of millions. The success of *Broken Virgin Soil* is the success of a gifted writer, who has proved capable of treating one of the most important problems of today, the fundamental processs underlying the transformation of the world. Whoever does not understand this has grasped nothing of the laws of life in general and of art in particular.

Sholokhov, author of the three volumes of *The Quiet Don*—the novel describing old-time Russian Cossack life, the World War and the Revolution, found himself in 1930 face to face with events which by their intrinsic value, the emotional intensity of the masses taking part in them, and their historical significance, were bound to be determining factors in the history of socialist reconstruction of humanity. It was a stupendous subject, but it did not frighten Sholokhov, nor did he shrink from the trial. He took the material at hand, the Cossack village during the first year of collectivization, with its main blocks of humanity, its determining processes and outstanding conflicts.

It is true that the interest is centered round a faraway village, Gremyachy Log, for a few short months, but the strength of a great literary work is shown by the way in which it breaks the bounds set by the situation, the hour and the locality and stretches away into time and space, covering a huge section of life rich in experience.

Broken Virgin Soil actually begins not with Captain Polovtsev's secret visit to Gremyachy Log in the first chapter, but with Kondrat Maidannikov's painful calculations and Liubishkin's idea of "writing to Kalinin in the necessity for beginning a new life."

"The first few years life was no different from what it was in the old days—you paid your taxes and got along as well as you could and what the Russian Communist Party was for Christ knows? We fought and we won, and then what? Then we had to go back to the same old business, follow the plough if you had anything to hitch the plough to? And what about those who had nothing? They were to go and beg by the church-door, were they? Or go making collars for Soviet shop-keepers and cooperative assistants? You could rent land if you liked, and hire laborers if you liked...

Was that what the Revolution was fought for in 1918?

The story begins still earlier; it goes back a dozen years or so to the age of darkness, when the peasant's existence was worse than that of a convict. There is Kondrat Maidannikov in an agony of watchfulness, worrying about nothing else but his cow, on which his whole life and welfare depends. There is Demka Ushakov's wife who had gone on bearing children year after year, wrapping the babies in the same old tattered swaddling-clothes and the bit of worn out sheepskin. Want and grief had robbed her of her former beauty, health and freshness. All the summer she went about in the one skirt she had which was as thin as an old sieve, in wintertime she had to sit naked by the stove with the children whenever she washed out her only chemise which was crawling with vermin.

The Great Change

The greatest thing the Revolution did was not only to bring the masses to a realization of the depths of their poverty

and slavery, but to convince them that they had the right to a better life, and give them the opportunity of securing it. Out of the old despair and the new demand came that tremendous force that shook and is still shaking the world. The proletariat of the towns and villages had nothing to lose. They threw themselves desperately into the battle for life, for a new life, and like an avalanche swept away every obstacle in their path.

Kondrat Maidannikov fought like a devil on every one of the Red fronts. Paul Liubishkin, the partisan, was proud of the frightful scars across his stomach, "A present from the White Guards" he called them. The Victorious Revolution had freed the countryside from the exploitation of the landowners and given the land to those who tilled it. But was this all? Was this "The New life" that had been hoped for, was this what was meant by complete social freedom? Here Sholokhov draws us Titus Borodin—a figure of tremendous importance if we are to understand all that went on in the villages in 1929 and 1930.

In 1918 Titus Borodin, familiarly known as Titok, volunteered as a Red Guard. According to Nagulnov, Titok fought bravely, was wounded and presented in acknowledgement of "his revolutionary services" with a silver watch. But when he returned home, Titok, "got his teeth into farming like a dog on a bone." The Revolution gave Titok some land, he started to till it in a frenzy. He had done with fighting, he had got some land and he had plenty of energy, a fierce energy bred of the ancient age-old thirst for land, crossed with the assurance of the conqueror. Titok worked day and night. He went about "like a wild creature overgrown with hair, were the same linen, trousers, summer and winter" and began to prosper. Soon he had acquired three brace of oxen, a windmill and a threshing-machine worked by steam. And here we are back again at the stage of petty bourgeois property, which as Lenin tells us, "breeds capitalism daily, hourly."

At whose expense did Titus Borodin enrich himself? Was it the result of his own ardor for toil, was it at the cost of his health? "He ruptured himself lifting and dragging heavy loads about". This is the explanation readily given by the rich of all countries and nations. But Kondrat Maidannikov displayed a no less fervent energy and anxiety for his farm and stock. Hundreds of Maidannikovs labored day and night, but only Titus grew rich. Why was it? The answer is that only Titus Borodin was able to hire labor; "he had two and sometimes three men working for him and although no one could say he ever had much to eat himself, still he simply starved his farmhands and made them work twenty hours out of the twentyfour."

The answer lies in the elementary and irrefutable truth that Titus Borodin had grown rich through the exploitation of his former comrades, the *bednyaki* (poor peasants) and *serednyaki* (peasants of average means) and had climbed to the level of Lapshinov, Frol Rvany and the rest of the old kulaks of Gremyachy Log.

It should here be noted that Borodin's character as an exploiter is by no means fully displayed in the novel, but the few hints dropped to the hire of farm laborers and the habit of trading in catttle are ample indication of the usual progress of the kulak.

But the Revolution was not made by Titus, although he took some part in it. The Revolution was fought and won by the millions of the toiling masses under the leadership of the Party of the Proletariat. They did not fight so that the place of the landowners and capitalists might be taken by Titus Borodin, even if he had received a silver watch "for his revolutionary services."

Borodin's new interests came into violent conflict with those of Paul Liubishkin, Kondrat Maidannikov, Demka Ushakov, and Makar Nagulnov. They, the representatives of the huge majority of laboring peasantry, were perhaps not very strong in the subtleties of economic theory, but had risen during the storms of the Revolution to a firm belief, that everyone had the right to a decent life. They felt that the Revolution could not stop at the initial stages of the New Economic Policy, that things could not rest as they were.

That is why Liubishkin's arguments, which are not always remarkable for their restraint, ring out so forcefully.

"It seems, then, I only fought with the White Guards so that other people should get richer than myself again? So as they'd always have something tasty to eat, while I went on eating bread and onions? Is that it, comrade-worker? And you can just stop winking at me, Makar, I'm not going to take a bit of notice of you. I only speak once a year, you can surely let me to say what I think."

If Makar, the secretary of the Gremyachy Party local, was really winking at Liubishkin, it could only mean that he was displeased with the original and in his opinion uncouth way the fierce partisan had of expressing himself. Liubishkin, as a matter of fact, is directing his very for-

cible speech to persuading the rest "to go in to the collective farm, guts and all." When Davidov one of the twentyfive thousand workers mobilized for collective farm propaganda work in the villages begins to bring forward proofs that "only through the collective farm can they win out to socialism," Liubishkin is slightly offended.

"What do you think you're doing, defending the Soviet Government to us? It's us that fought for it and stood it so it wouldn't rock about and fall down again. We know what a collective farm is and we're going to join it. Give us the machinery, that's all."

Liubishkin felt himself one of the masters; the Soviet Government was his government and the collective farm a part of himself about which he thought day and night. "You don't need to come to us with your propaganda."

The Collective Comes

The collective farm came when the time was ripe for it, when the whole country was ready and waiting for it and when great glass and iron walls of workshops were erected all over the country for the agricultural machinery that Liubiskin demanded.

But although Liubishkin, Maidannikov and others felt acutely the need for a new life and a new kind of farming, it did not necessarily mean, that the transition from the old to the new would be easy and painless. There is great art in the way Sholokhov has shown us the tragedy of the break with the old customs, and the experience accumulated for centuries by the peasant masses. The narrowed horizon of the village life, the agricultural methods that had remained almost unchanged over a stretch of a thousand years, were responsible for the stiff conservatism of the village, the complete stagnation of ideas and habits.

In *Broken Virgin Soil* Sholokhov gives us a series of pictures that expose in its true light the savage psychology of the property owner.

Everything is changed by the coming of the collective farm. Not merely the ownership of the land, the methods of tilling, the production of crops. It can be felt in all phases of life, it bursts into family life, defines the peasant's attitude to his wife, to his god, to the neighbors, to the multiplication table. The wife who enters the collective farm on an equal footing with her husband and receives equal payment for her labor, no longer remains the meek slave of her husband and master. God himself loses the last vestiges of his authority when prayers for rain are replaced by the agronomist who teaches the peasant new methods of retaining the snow on the fields, when to sow and when to let them lie fallow, and introduces tractors and combines. The fact that they must now take part in calculations involving thousands of hectares, hundreds of people, tens of thousands of hundredweights, is opening the eyes of the new collective farm peasant to the necessity for higher arithmetic and more serious study. The collective farm school and the educational courses for farmers are turning this necessity into opportunity.

Everything is changing, the entire face of the old village, the everyday appearance of the house and yard.

But how they still cling to the old, how hard it is for the new to get a foothold.

Sholokhov shows us several remarkable scenes that disclose in a few lines the terrible curse of the old property-psychology.

There is a crowd around the collective-farm stables:

"What are all these folk doing round the stables?"

"Ask them yourself"—there is irritation in Kondrat's voice. "As soon as they hear the horses champing and fretting of a night, they go to the devil altogether. They can't get used to it, to giving up their own property. The horses belong to the folk round the stable. They come asking: 'Why hasn't my bay horse got any hay?' 'Has the dun horse got plenty to lie on?' 'Is my mare still here?' Think of that. What could happen to his mare I wonder? I couldn't swallow her, could I?" And they all come bothering me, "Let me give you a hand with the horses," they say, and each one tries to give his horse more hay than the rest." A little later on Kondrat admits to himself that as soon as he gets round to his own horse, "I look at his back with the gash on it, and something takes hold of my heart, he seems more to me than a wife at that minute."

Kondrat's grief and longing is touching, it is true, but in others at times this same grief turns into gloomy fanaticism and savage greed. One cannot read without a shudder of horror the description of the slaughter of cattle instigated by ex-captain Polovtsev and the kulak Ostrovnov.

"Just as dusk was falling the muffled bleat of a sheep could be heard from somewhere, then the bellow of a calf or the squeal of a pig would pierce the silence. The slaughtering was being done both by those who were joining the collective farm and those who were not."

They slaughtered oxen, sheep, pigs and

even cows, wholesale; they killed even those that should have been kept for breeding. In two nights half the horned cattle in Gremyachy had been killed.

The dogs began to drag the entrails about the village. Cellars and granaries were crammed with meat. In those two days the village shop sold about two hundred poods of salt that had been lying by for over eighteen months.

"'Kill, the cattle's not ours any longer.' 'Kill, or you'll have to give it up to the meat collecting base.' 'Kill, you won't get a bit of meat when you go into the collective farm,' the dark rumor went round. And they killed. They ate until they were fit to burst. From the youngest to the oldest, their bellies ached from overeating. At dinnertime the cottage-tables groaned under the loads of boiled and roast meat. Everyone had a greasy mouth, everyone belched as if they had been to a wake; everyone had filmy, lacklustre eyes from gorging."

Lacklustre eyes and souls polluted by the wolfish psychology of men of property.

What a ghastly feast. To belch and make themselves sick from overeating, to risk beggaring themselves, only for the sake of keeping their property from falling into anyone else's hands.

New People

New people made their appearance, people of an incomparably greater scale, with an inexhaustible supply of ideas, with real nobility.

Makar Nagulnov, one of the heroes of *Broken Virgin Soil* was a man of this new mould.

Makar Nagulnov was a man of profound emotions and high morals.

Even before the Revolution, in his early youth in fact, he saw and felt the utter barbarity of the man of property—saw it in all its naked savagery and hated it. Nagulnov refused his inheritance, his father's farm, and went to work for others as a farm-laborer. What would have become of him had there been no Revolution. Perhaps his horror of property-owning would have driven him to religion. He might have joined some Non-Conformist sect, as so many of the peasants did in those days. Or perhaps, when the first revulsion had passed and he tired of the bitter savour of a farm hand's bread, he would have returned to his father's roof and gradually settled down into the usual narrow-minded, tight-fisted property-owner. There was certainly very little chance of his ever becoming a member of a secret revolutionary organisation; there were very few of them among the Cossacks.

The war and the Revolution led him along another path. He had been choked by enemy gas at the front, had clearly seen the class contradictions at a time, when they were most glaringly evident and had come into contact with revolutionary ideas for the first time. Nagulnov's old hatred of property acquired a depth of meaning that it had never up till then possessed and became a passionate conviction.

The war took him abroad. He saw and thought and suffered a great deal. He became a Bolshevik and thought about the world, and humanity and its fate.

"The blood stands still in my heart when I think of our own brothers and the way they're treated by the bourgeoisie abroad. It's more than I can do to read the papers about that. It turns me quite sick inside to read them. And you, think of your own brothers, left to rot in the enemy's prisons."

Nagulnov is "all set for a World Revolution." He thinks of it day after day and his every move is calculated on the World Revolution. He may sometimes seem naive to us, he does not always grasp the intricacies of theory and the actual facts, but in the main he has a very clear understanding of this cursed propertyowning that disfigures the face of the earth. He has revolutionary ardour and a feeling of solidarity with the toilers of the world, and this proves him to be a revolutionary of the purest water.

Soviet literature has given us many examples of the Revolutionary partisan. Artem Vyesely paints them in particularly lively colors. But what a difference between his Vaska Galagan or Ivan Chernoyarov and Makar Nagulnov from Gremyachy Log. The former were fighters, it is true, but anarchists undisciplined, drunk with the ecstasy of freedom. They were people in whom revolutionary consciousness was only half awakened. They knew that they must put down counterrevolution, but did not know what to do after the victory. How much deeper and more purposeful is Makar Nagulnov. His ideas on property and his harsh selfdenial, his revolutionary zeal kept alive for thirteen years: No, the years that he had spent with the Communist Party had not been fruitless.

CHRONICLE

On the Cultural Front

USA

While Michael Gold, author of *Jews Without Money,* and former editor of the *New Masses,* was on a leave of absence, his column in the American *Daily Worker,* called "What a World", had been conducted by Joseph Freeman, present editor of the *New Masses* (Which became a weekly with the issue of January 2, 1934).

Both under Gold and Freeman this *Daily Worker* column has been a mine of literature discussion. In the last days of November and the early part of December, Joseph Freeman (also author of *The Soviet Worker)* answered in detail the attacks of Max Eastman against revolutionary and Soviet literature published by V. F. Calverton in hs anti-communist *Modern Monthly.*

The English edition of *International Literature* receives increasing attention in the American revolutionary press. The *Daily Worker* has reprinted articles and poems by Walt Carmon, Langston Hughes, Emi Siao and M. Ilyin, and continues with reviews of each issue as it appears. *The Partisan* reprints a section of Pilnyak's *O. K.* from No. 1, 1933, in its first number. Meanwhile *Left Front,* and *The Anvil* steadily take note of *International Literature* to complete a comradely close relation between the IURW and the American revolutionary cultural movement.

American Revolutionary Theatre

The first performance of *Peace on Earth,* the new anti-war play by George Sklar and Albert Maltz, given by the newly organized Theatre Union has received widespread attention.

Henri Barbusse, in New York at the time, called the play "a vivid treatment of the tempo and excitement of American life." He added: "I shall write and talk about this play in France."

"The Theatre Union's production" Joseph Freeman wrote in the *Daily Worker,* was given before a large audience which was "swept by the play's power into prolonged applause. The house was filled not merely with the intellectual response evoked by good propaganda, but with the emotional tension aroused by good art."

He continues: "The reactions of the (bourgeois) critics to *Peace On Earth* are worth noting. They not only reflect bourgeois opinion. They are, in a sense, a part of the play. Just as the hero of *Peace On Earth,* a cloistered college professor, cannot bring himself to believe, before brute events teach him better, that capitalist society is capable of the worst atrocities; so the cloistered critics af the bourgeois press cannot bring themselves to believe that in portraying these atrocities the Theatre Union play is simply stating the facts.

"Perhaps" adds Freeman, "the critics are only pretending to be skeptical. When the *New York Times* says *Peace On Earth* breaks "Into a bitter fantasy over mob rule in wartime" one begins to wonder where the critic was during the last war.

"For if anything, *Peace On Earth* understates the case. To show the worst brutalities of capitalism, it would be necessary to follow events from the viewpoint of the working class. Here we have a story dealing with the evolution of an intellectual toward the left under the impact of a wartime situation."

The play is not perfect says the critic. About its faults and presentation he writes:

"The thirty scenes of the play, constructed in the Expressionist style, reveal the two worlds separately and in direct combat. This alone makes *Peace On Earth* a landmark in the American theatre, for it is a continuation of a higher technical level of the Movement, now several years old, to create a drama dealing with the class struggle from a revolutionary viewpoint.

"There are flaws in the play and in the direction, but these are incidental to the major act that here we have a production by professional playwrights, actors and directors, which is powerful in content and creditable in technique and which deals with a great theme out of the contemporary world."

Freeman concludes: "From the first performance of *Peace On Earth,* I think we can look forward to a steady growth of the Theatre Union in its chosen direction."

Leon Moussinac, French novelist, playwright, director (whose story "Vive la Republique!" appeared in No. 4 International Literature) *and Vaillant Couturier, noted French author (whose story appears in the next issue) before the world famous Bolshoi Theatre in Moscow.*

Potamkin Operetta

Strike Me Red, an operetta by the late Harry Alan Potamkin was presented in New York by the Young Pioneers.

Writing about it, Muriel Rukeyser says: *Strike Me Red* sums up in its three acts, the ironic combination of burlesque and suffering which faces today's children. Passing beyond its moments of weakness, the play reached its highest levels in the scenes of mass-singing and recitation, the shoe-shiners' chorus with its moving *Starvation Blues,* the schoolroom scene which was pure farce ridiculing the ways of teachers who intone "The earth goes round and round, revolving on its axis," leaving the students reply, "The rich men have the money, and the poor men pay the taxes;" and the final full chorus, *Strike Me Red!*

The scenes went through the entire range in the young Pioneer's life, with street scenes followed by evictions, by Christmas, before "R. H. Mercy's Window", by the club which forms a Young Pioneer Branch, leading up to the triumphant schoolroom scene, in which teacher and pupils finally join in a strike for teachers' wages and free food for the students.

"The Music of Gertrude Rady", the review concludes, "was well suited to the spirit of the operetta, and the scenery made by the John Reed Club was very effective, especially in the mass episodes. The last scene, by Sascha Small, provided a satire of such allied figures as Hitler, Mussolini, Uncle Sam and Cuba, and the Brain Trust."

At this performance and a preceding meeting presided over by the noted artist Louis Lozowick (whose drawings appeared in No. 3 *International Literature)* a presentation of a Bust of Potamkin was made by the revolutionary sculptor Adolph Wolf.

FRANCE

The Worker's University of Paris has been very successful. The number of the students has increased considerably. 1021 students were registred on November 1st of whom 56.1% were men and 27.4% were women workers. The teaching staff, besides carrying on the basic work of the university, is giving courses at two schools which opened at the end of October at the school of the Union of Trade Unions with 140 students, and at the school of Railroad workers with 32 students.

Due to this expansion of the activity of the Workers University, the premises at present occupied have become too small and the question is being considered about putting up a building large enough to meet its growing demands.

In celebration of the 16th anniversary of the October Revolution, the Worker's University organized a meeting. It was opened by Prof. Prenant who lectured on "The making of the New Man in the Soviet Union". Following this several Revolutionary plays were presented by the *October, Masses* and *Combat* groups of the French Revolutionary Theatre, who have entered into the Federation of the Worker's Theatres of France.

The School of the "Friends of the Soviet Union" opened in November. The opening of a school for teachers also took place at the end of December.

SPAIN

The Department of Plastic Arts of the Madrid Atenes, at the initiative of the journal *October*, organized an exhibit of Revolutionary Art. Arthur Serrano Plaja, art critic, gave a lecture at the exhibit on "Two Pictorial Arts". The exhibit was open two weeks aud was very popular among the workers.

The journal *Modern Russia* published in Madrid by the "Friends of the Soviet Union" issued a special number devoted to the 16th Anniversary of the October Revolution. Documents and articles about various questions of Soviet Construction were printed in the issue including: "The First Five Year Plan", "The Liberation of National Minorities", "The Red Army", "The Liberation of Women", "Socialism in the Village" and "The Cinema and the Theatre". This number of the journal was richly illustrated.

Issue number 4—5 of *October* was devoted to the celebration of the 16th Anniversary of the October Revolution and to Socialist Construction in the USSR. The special care given to issuing this number bears witness to the strong desire of Revolutionary Writers, at the time of the 16th Anniversary of the October Revolution to give the worker-readers material which is well selected, documented and illustrated. Much Soviet material was printed in this number: The article of Stalin about Lenin, selections about the White Sea-Baltic-Canal, an Article by Lunacharsky about the Soviet Theatre, a sketch about the expedition of the "Sibiriak", a lot of statistical and factual material about the achievements of Soviet Russia, a short-story by V. Ivanov, a poem by Utkin and others. The Spanish material in this issue was also very well selected. The best revolutionary writers of Spain are represented in the number.

The Secretariat of the IURW sent a complimentary letter to the Association of Revolutionary Writers and Artists of Spain. The letter comments on the great work done by the editorial Board of *October*, especially in its October number.

MEXICO

The group of Revolutionary Writers "Noviembre" (November) has been formed in Mexico. The group's purpose is to create artistic work which supports the international proletarian movement. It issues the journal *Ruta (The Way)* at the head of which is Jose *Mansisidor*, author of the novel *Revolt*. The work of the "Noviembre" group goes on under the exceptionally trying conditions of Mexico: the severe economic conditions for intellectual workers, the illiteracy of the masses, and the bourgeois Mexican reaction and its foreign masters.

ARGENTINE

A Union of Revolutionary Writers and Artists was formed in *Rosario*. The organizational committee of this Union appealed to all workers of hand and brain in a manifesto in which it calls them to break off forever from "bourgeois-fascist ideology" and "To unite about proletarian Art and Literature".

Revolutionary Literature Grows

USA

By Agnes Smedley

Chinese Destinies, sketches of present-day China, by Agnes Smedley, issued by the Vanguard Press, has received considerable attention in the United States.

Alan Calmer, writing in the *Daily Worker* says:

"This book is important as history and as literature. As a chronicle of life in China today, it is perhaps the only bookful of realistic sketches in English depicting the white terror of the Kuomintang reaction and the revolutionary struggle of the Chinese Soviets. Unlike other American women who have written books on China, Agnes Smedley does not stand within the walls of white settlements, peering down at the "inferior" race through a lorgnette. She goes where foreigners fear to tread. Guided by the outlook of Leninism, she sees events from the point of view of the Chinese masses."

The New York *Nation*, liberal weekly calls *Chinese Destinies* "As engrossing as the best fiction, as easily read as the most

popular newspaper, yet as profoundly serious as the most learned sociological treatise, this books paints a picture of contemporary China that no intelligent person irrespective of race or nationality can afford to ignore." The reviewer adds also: "This book reveals the powers as well as the potentialities of revolutionary literature."

George E. Sokolsky, author of *The Tinder Box of Asia,* reviewing the book in *The Saturday Review of Literature* says: "Her descriptions of the social revolution, particularly of the struggle between parents and children, afford the first truthful and accurate account of this phenomenon that I have seen in any Western language. It hits one terribly hard and between the eyes, it is brutal in its frankness, but every word of it is true." And he adds: "She had dared to cast aside the roseate veil of oriental romance and to show love and hate and murder and vindictiveness, and the warfare of classes and the greed of officials, without compromise or apology."

Lewis Gannett, writing in the New York *Herald Tribune* says: "Agnes Smedley never hides her sympathies. Her pictures are hotblooded and partisan and honest; they help, more than any book yet written in English, to understand why the Soviets have grown up and endured in the back country of China."

Chinese Destinies has also been reviewed favorably in the first issue of the new *Partisan* of Hollywood, and other publications.

In Moscow, the book was the subject of an evening's discussion by the Anglo-American Commission of the IURW in which the leading young Soviet critics: Anne Ellistratova, Lydia Filatova, Startsev and others took part. The meeting, presided over by Walt Carmon, recommended unanimously that *Chinese Destinies* be brought to the attention of all sections of the IURW.

Sections of the book were also read by noted Soviet actors and actresses at a "Chinese Evening" in which Emi Siao, Chinese poet and editor of the Chinese edition of *International Literature* took part, together with writers and artists of various nations.

Meanwhile the *Moscow Daily News* reprinted an extract from the book on the anniversary of the Canton Commune.

By Jack Conroy

The Disinherited, first novel by the revolutionary writer and editor of *The Anvil,* Jack Conroy, is receiving a great deal of attention in the American press.

Walter Snow, young worker-writer (a section of whose first novel appeared in No. 3 *International Literature)* writes of *The Disinherited:*

"Here is a novel that towers like a gaunt, unforgettable coal tipple above all other recent American proletarian fiction.

"Even those who have followed all the work of Jack Conroy in magazines like *New Masses, Left, Pagany, The American Mercury* and *International Literature,* where parts of this novel first appeared, will be amazed to learn how forcibly this Missouri migratory worker has woven his autobiographical experiences into a compact, dynamic whole that has the surge of power of a well-disciplined picket line.

"In this odyssey of mid-Western labor during the past twenty-odd years" Snow continues, "Conroy not only fulfills a definite theme but also achieves the highest goal of any novelist, the creation of liveable human beings. No American labor novel since *The Jungle* has presented such a gallery of figures."

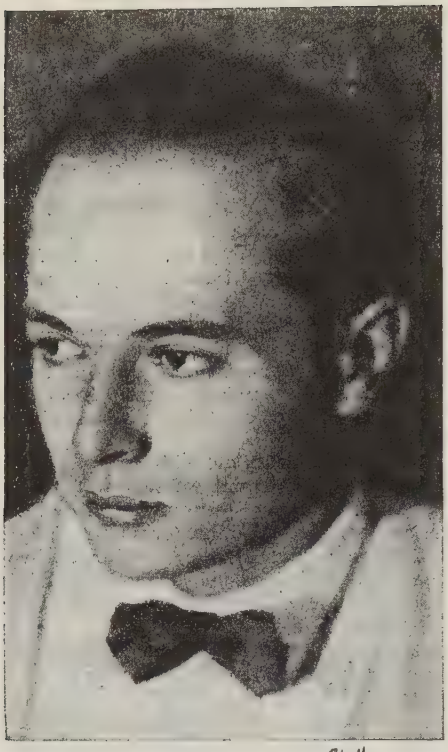
The review concludes: "The careful craftmanship of the book, as a whole, is a source of perpetual delight. Everywhere one encounters pithy phrases, similes that gleam like miners' lard-oil lamps in the murky depths of coal pits, and metaphors that are relentless hunger marches. *The Disinherited* is the work of a man who can really write and who tells the epic of our class."

To acquaint worker readers with this book in other sections of the world selections from *The Disinherited* will be reprinted in the Russian, German and French editions of *International Literature.*

A New Magazine Appears

The Partisan, a "Journal of Art, Literature & Opinion" of the John Reed Clubs of Hollywood, Carmel and San Francisco, issued at Hollywood, California (Box 2088) makes its first appearance with the December, 1933 issue.

While it is the first American revolutionary literary "newspaper", like the *Left Front,* bimonthly magazine of the John Reed Clubs of the Midwest, it correctly concentrates on the "regional" problems of the Pacific Coast. Following an editorial by Harry Carlisle (author of *Darkness At Noon)* entitled "Turn to the Left", the issue is led by the article "Mexican Labor in the United States" by Michael Quinn, "Campus Fascism Is Born", on the University of California, and "A California Summer", a story on the fruit pickers, by Ella



Alex Keil, German revolutionary artist whose work appeared in International Literature No. 5

Winters. Going beyond the borders of non-revolutionary "regionalism", the issue also includes brief articles on John Reed, by Lincoln Steffens, on Lenin, by Albert Rhys Williams, and a poem by Langston Hughes, as well as a theatrical sketch by John Dos Passos and Robert Morse Lovett. There are also book and cinema sections in addition to other items.

The Partisan is not only, ideologically, one of the most mature, but it is also one of the best edited of the new American revolutionary publications which have appeared during 1933. It is undeniable evidence of the growth of the American revolutionary cultural movement.

FRANCE

A new novel *Antoine Bloyé* by Paul Nizan picturing the life and morals of the petty bourgeoisie was issued in Paris.

The bourgeois critic Ramon Fernandez, in the magazine *Marianne* slings ink at the communist views of Nizan, but acknowledges the value of the book.

"*Antoine Bloyé* is a serious novel," he writes, "which attempts to remake our psychological attitudes."

Gabriel Marcel writes in *Europe Nouvelle*, that "*Antoine Bloyé* stirred me profoundly. And it would be completely unjustifiable to hold against this book, permeated with the spirit of humanity, those conclusions which the author, (in my view arbitrarily) makes from this very simple story, a story completely deprived of rhetoric and unnecessary literary ballast. I am very much afraid, that it may happen, that only the "Lefts" will pay tribute to this novel by Nizan. That would be scandalous. Provided one does not deliberately shut his eyes to the wounds of our world, it is impossible not to acknowledge the excruciating and almost universal truths included in this story."

Soviet Art Abroad

FRANCE

A September number of the weekly *Loups* published the story "Love" by Yuria Olesha.

The same journal printed the story "The last Ladies" by V. Gerasimov.

Two stories of Vsevolod Ivanov "Little Greggie" and "The Murder of the Commander" were printed in two recent numbers of *Les Nouvelles Litteraires.*

Revue des Vivants, a bourgeois journal printed a review of Marietta Shaginyan's *Hydro-Central,* issued in Paris by the Editions Sociales Internationales.

"The author was able to give her work the character of a genuine fresco, with a profusion of detail and diverse facets and it seems that her whole book is permeated with an instructive ideal."

The review adds: "How many characters, how many details, how much life the rich talent of Shaginyan gives us!"

The Belgian journal *La Ferre Wallonne*, issued in the French language, writes about *Hydro-Central.*

"We find in these plots, hopes, disillusionments, the familiar relations which man has repeated tirelessly. And the USSR becomes more accessible to us, if not closer."

LATVIA

For some time the Social Democratic press of Latvia has exhibited a keen interest in Soviet literature. This is explained by the fact that the Social Democrats are adapting themselves to the situation created by the expansion of Hitler Fascism

into the states bordering on the Baltic. The bourgeois apply repressive measures to revolutionary culture (the destruction of a legal revolutionary press, the arrest of the Worker-Peasant Factions of the Diet, etc), and the Social Democratic leaders are trying to win authority by means of spreading information about the Soviet Union among the revolutionary workers and peasants of Latvia, among whom interest in the USSR grows steadily.

The Social Democratic journal *Thought* printed favorable reviews of *Broken Virgin Soil* by Sholokhov, *Germany* by Chumandrin, *O K* by Pilnyak, *Woman's Paths*, by Berezovsky, and *Lasses* by Kochma. This journal also printed a detailed article of A. Toltsica about Latvian Soviet Literature. Besides this, an article by K. Dzillei about the Moscow Theatres also appeared in *Thought*. Dzillei writes; —

"The Soviet Theatre must serve as an example for Latvia. To know the life of the Soviet Theatre is useful to everyone; but for workers in proletarian culture it is indispensible."

Poster by Alex Keil, for the tenth year of the death of Lenin, which shared first prize in a Moscow competition

Culture and Crisis

A questionaire survey on "The Book and the Crisis" was circulated by the *Bulletin of French Books* among the heads of the leading publishing houses. The gist of the answers indicates that the book business in France is experiencing a crisis, particularly sharp during the past year.

The various answers by which the participants of the survey attempt to explain the causes of the crisis sketches an ugly picture of the literary world of France. "Too many second-rate books are awarded premiums. Often a perfectly unworthy book is advertised and the public is bored with the pallid books."

"Criticism does not fulfill its function. If a poor book has been written by an author who is already known, the critics overload it with praise. If such a condition of affairs is not changed, the reader will lose all faith in criticism."

The writer adds: "it would not hamper the critics to be more severe and more just; not coarse, but not too lenient."

One of the participants of the survey proposes, that "Coarse books (apparently pornographic), which may create a degrading and perverse impression of French Literature should not be allowed to go to book stores abroad."

Surveying the results of the questionaire, Andre Gillon (One of the directors of the very powerful publishing house "Larousse") called for books and "selected authors" writing them, including publishers to "save the world from crisis."

The reactionary writer, J. H. Rosny (the elder) in an article about "Pessimism" in in *Les Nouvelles Litteraires* was compelled to acknowledge the reign of Pessimism in modern French Literature.

"It is said, that the winds of Pessimism blow through modern literature. That is true. Three recent books completely unlike each other in method, style, color and taste are obliged to come to one and the same oppressive conclusion."

"Two of these books carry the gloomy titles *A Journey to the Border of Night* by Louis Celine and *Unknown in a Catacomb* bu Jean Cassou. *A Journey to the Border of Night* is a powerful, rabid, flaming work,-a journey through human loathsomeness. *Unknown in a Catacomb* is a charming book, delicate, clever, original. In it is presented a creature without morals, led by the will of the moment, rambling through a slow-witted and absurd life.

"The third book is *The Green Mare* by Marcel Ayme. The characters are coarse boors who commit all vices, who are capable of the lowest meanness, who are greedy, lewd, sly, cynical, hypocritical, but withall entertaining.

"However, pessimism as something primordial, is present in all these books; only

here, the author, by means of comic exaggeration attempts to arouse laughter.

"Marcel Ayme has written several good books, but in this work, he has learned from undisciplined writers.

"It can be shown that this work was bred by a society, preplexed and defeated in life. This society, mastering sources of immeasurable energy, which if you reason logically should assure it incomparable prosperity, has passed into a most lugubrious and absurd economic crisis."

François Porche writes in the reactionary *Revue de Paris* about the decline of theatrical Art in France and contrasts it to the flourishing theatrical art of the USSR.

"If dramatists in all other countries do not strain every nerve in order to remake theatrical art, then the moment will come, -and the critical times will hasten its appearance-, when the dramatists will be allotted the fate customary for poets in our society. And this perspective is not enviable."

ITALY

One of the recent numbers of the Italian Fascist journal *L' Italia Letteraria* prints a leading article entitled "Unrest in Europe", in which, despite the official Fascist optimism, notes of alarm are struck concerning the intellectual frame of mind of the bourgeois youth of Europe. Its author, Giorgino Polvarini was compelled to acknowledge that, "one can observe in all circles of European Society a hazy unrest and discontent of some kind. This is especially noticeable among the youth. Their clear feeling of the joy of life is poisened; their outlook is gloomy. An atmosphere of pessimism has replaced former idealism. The animosities of European countries have become more aggravated; day by day they prepare themselves for war, arm themselves more and more. Economic life loses its stability. Nations which but yesterday played a secondary role, today lay claim to leadership."

IN THIS ISSUE

A. Avdeyenko—a part of whose first novel leads this issue is a Soviet worker, a locomotive driver who is still at work on his job at Magnitogorsk, where he also attends evening classes in literature at the local university.

M. Sholokhov—Soviet author of *Quiet Don* contributes to this issue from his second novel. He lives in the Don region and is active in work among the kolkhozes.

Johannes R. Becher—German revolutionary writer, is author of the well known poem *The Great Plan* and a number of volumes of prose and verse.

James Steele—American auto worker contributes to this issue from his novel *Conveyor,* to be published soon in English in Moscow by the Cooperative Publishing Society of Foreign Workers in the USSR.

Bela Illes—noted Hungarian writer is author of the novel *Tissa Burns* and a number of volumes of short stories.

Karlton Kelm—is one of the rising young American writers, a contributor to many magazines.

Joseph Kalar—Whose poems have also appeared in *International Literature* No. 3, is an American lumber worker who has contributed prose and verse to the *New Masses, Anvil, Left Front* and other publications.

R. Kim—is a Korean revolutionary writer and critic.

Leonard Spier—Young American worker writer is author of the new first volume of verse *When The Sirens Blow.*

Lydia Filatova—young Soviet critic is now at work on a book on Walt Whitman. She is a member of the Anglo-American Commission of the IURW.

E. Troschenko—is a Soviet critic. She is at work on the yearly almanac *17th Year* and contributes to many literary publications.

Editor-in-chief SERGEI DINAMOV

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