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MIKHAIL SHOLOKHOV

And Quiet Flows the Don

EXCERPTS FROM BOOK IV

On the death of old Ilyinishna, Koshevoi became the sole owner and master of the house. He ought by right, it seemed, to have set to work with a will at improving and adding to his property. But instead he showed an increasing reluctance to work. He absented himself from home very often and of an evening sat on the doorstep till late, smoking and thinking his thoughts. Dunyashka could not help but notice the change that had come over her husband. More than once, this same Mishka who had formerly worked with complete self-abandon, would astonish her by suddenly throwing down the ax or the plane and sitting down somewhere to rest. The same thing would happen when they were sowing winter-rye: he would go a couple of furrows, then rein in the bullocks, roll himself a cigarette and sit for a long while smoking, his brow wrinkled in thought.

Dunyashka, who had inherited her father's practical turn of mind, thought with alarm: "He didn't last long at it. . . . Either he's ailing or he's getting into lazy ways. I'll have my hands full with such a husband. He works for himself as if he were working for other people—smokes half the day, takes the other half to come to, and then there's no time left to do anything. I'll have to talk to him, in a quiet way, so as not to vex him. Or else, if this is the way he's going to look after the place, there'll be no end to the trouble he'll bring on us. . . ."

Once she asked him cautiously: "What's up with you lately, Misha? You don't seem like yourself. Or maybe you're ailing?"

"What could ail me? It's all sickening enough without ailment," he replied, vexed, and, giving a touch to the bullocks, followed the seeder.

Dunyashka felt it would not be the proper thing to pursue her inquiries any further; after all it was not a woman's business to teach her husband. So the conversation ended at that.

She was mistaken in her conjectures. The only thing that hindered Misha Koshevoi from giving his mind to his work was the growing conviction that he had settled down in his native village too soon. "I was in too much of a hurry to start my farming,

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Illustrated by S. Korolkov

it's early for that, yet," he said to himself with vexation, when he read the reports from the front in the papers or listened of an evening to the stories of the Cossacks demobilized from the Red Army. But what made him most uneasy was the disposition of the people round about. Some of them declared openly that the Soviet Government would not last till winter, that Wrangel had left Taurida and, accompanied by Nestor Makhno, was already approaching Rostov, that the Allies had landed immense numbers of troops at Novorossiisk. . . . Rumors—each new one wilder than the last—spread about the farms. The Cossacks who were back from concentration camps and mines and had eaten their fill of good food at home that summer, kept to themselves. They held private conversations of their own at night over their home-distilled *vodka*, and whenever Misha met any of them, they would ask with pretended indifference: "You read the papers, Koshevoi—tell us, are they going to finish Wrangel off soon? And is it true or just talk that the Allies are coming again?"

One Saturday night Prokhor Zykov happened to drop in. Mishka had just come in from the fields and was standing washing himself at the door. Dunyashka was pouring water out of a pitcher into his cupped hands and looking at his lean, sunburnt neck with a smile. Prokhor said good evening, then, seating himself on the lowest step, asked:

"Heard anything of Grigori Panteleyevich?"

"No," said Dunyashka, "he doesn't write."

"You miss him, don't you?"

As he asked this question, Mishka dried his face and hands on the towel and looked, unsmiling, at Prokhor.

Prokhor sighed and settled his empty shirt sleeve.

"That goes without saying. We went all through the war together."

"I was thinking you could hardly wait to join him and go back to the army again," Mishka continued, still unsmiling. "To fight against the Soviet Government same as before."

"It's not right of you to talk like that, Mikhail," Prokhor said in an offended tone.

"What's not right about it? I hear all the talk that's going about the village."

"Have I been saying anything? Where did you hear it?"

"Maybe you haven't, but there are plenty of others like you and Grigori, all waiting for what they call their own gang to turn up."

"I'm not waiting for any of my own gang. All gangs are alike to me."

"That's the worst of it—they're all alike to you. Let's go into the house. Don't take offence, I'm only joking."

Prokhor mounted the steps reluctantly, and as he crossed the threshold into the passage, said:

"These jokes of yours, my lad, aren't so terribly funny, you know. . . . Old scores ought to be forgotten. . . . We should let bygones be bygones. I think I've righted the old wrong."

"Not all bygones are bygones," was Mishka's dry rejoinder as he took his place at the table. "Sit you down and have supper with us."

"Thanks. No, not everything can be forgotten, that's only natural. Here I've lost my arm, for instance, and I'd be glad to forget it, god knows, still I can't help but remember it every single minute of the day."

Dunyashka glanced at her husband as she laid the table.

"You mean to say," she began, "that if a fellow's once been with

the whiteguards it's never going to be forgotten?"

"And what do you think?"

"What I think is that folks who keep slapping up old offences at you are no good. We're told we should forgive. . . ."

"That may be what the gospels say," said Mishka coldly. "But to my mind a fellow should always answer for what he does."

"The government doesn't say anything about that," Dunyashka protested softly.

She did not want to get into an argument with her husband when another person was present, but in her heart she felt a little offended with Mikhail for making a joke she considered out of place, and for the dislike he so openly showed of her brother.

"The Government will say nothing to you, it has nothing to say to the likes of you, anyway, but if you've served in the White army you've got to answer, by all the Soviet laws."

"So I'll have to answer as well, then?" Prokhor asked curiously.

"Your business is of no more importance than a calf's that eats its fill and back to the cowshed. Nobody's going to bother about orderlies, but it'll be different for Grigori when he gets home. We'll make him answer to us for the rebellion."

"You'll make him, do you mean?" Dunyashka's eyes flashed, as she set a bowl of milk on the table.

"I'll make him answer to me as well," Mishka answered quietly.

"It's no business of yours. . . . There are plenty to question him without you. . . . He's earned forgiveness for himself in the Red Army."

Her voice shook. She sat down at the table, and picked nervously at the cloth. Ignoring his wife's agitation, Mishka went on as calmly as before:

"There are a few things I'd like to ask him, too. The forgiveness will have to wait a bit, I'm thinking. . . . It's got to be seen first what he did to deserve it. He's shed a good deal of our blood. We'll have to see who'll win."

It was the first difference that had arisen between them in their short married life. There was an awkward silence in the kitchen. Mishka ate some sour milk and wiped the corners of his lips from time to time with the towel. Prokhor smoked and looked at Dunyashka. He stayed half-an-hour or so, talking over farm affairs, and as he was taking leave of them, said:

"You've heard Kirill Gromov's back, I suppose?"

"No. Where's he come from?"

"From the Red Army. He was with the First Cavalry, too."

"Wasn't he serving under Mamontov at one time?"

"Yes, that's the fellow."

"Regular fighting-cock," said Mishka with a sneer.

"Go on! He was always the first and foremost whenever there was any robbery to be done. He was sharp enough at that sort of thing."

"They say he had no mercy on prisoners. Would kill them for a pair of soldier's boots. Kill them and then wear the boots himself."

"Yes, there was talk of it," Prokhor agreed.

"Is he to be forgiven, too?" Mishka asked slyly. "God forgave sinners and said that we must, too—is that it? Or what?"

"Well, I don't know now. . . . What satisfaction will you get from him?"

"Oh, I'd get satisfaction from him all right. . . ." And Mishka's half-closed eyes looked sinister. "I'd get so much satisfaction from him that there wouldn't be any breath left in his body! But he

won't get away with that. There's the Don-Cheka in Veshenskaya—it'll know how to take care of Kirill."

Prokhor smiled. Then he said:

"It's a true saying that the grave straightens out even a hunchback. He came back from the Red Army laden with stolen goods. His wife was bragging to my old woman of the woman's coat he had brought her, and I don't know how many gowns and other things besides. He was in Maslak's brigade before he came home. It's my belief he deserted, and he's brought firearms home with him."

"What kind?" Mishka's curiosity was aroused.

"What kind would they be? You know, one of those short carbines, and a revolver and maybe something else."

"Do you happen to know if he went to the Soviet to register?"

Prokhor laughed.

"Wild horses wouldn't drag him there! So far as I can see he's a deserter. And he'll clear out, if I'm not mistaken, today or tomorrow. Now I wouldn't be surprised if Kirill wasn't thinking of doing some more fighting—and you were getting on to my track. Nay, I've had my fill of fighting—my fighting days are over."

He left them shortly after that. After he had been gone a while Mishka went out into the yard. Dunyashka gave the children their supper and was just ready to go to bed when he came in. He was carrying a bundle wrapped in sacking.

"Where on earth have you been?" she asked.

He unwrapped a carefully-packed rifle, a knapsack bulging with cartridges, a revolver and two hand grenades. He laid them down on the bench and cautiously poured a little kerosene into a saucer.

"Where did all these come from?" Dunyashka asked, indicating the weapons with a lift of her brows.

"They're mine. I brought them back from the front with me."

"Where did you hide them?"

"That doesn't matter, but I've kept them in good order."

"You're a sly one, it seems. . . . And you've never said a word about them. So you hide things from your own wife, even?"

With an assumed lightness and an ingratiating smile, he said:

"What has that to do with you, Dunyashka? It's not a woman's business. Let it lie, it's property that's needed in the house."

"But what have you brought them indoors for? You're the one that knows all about the law, you know everything. . . . And won't you have to answer before the law for having these things about?"

Mishka's face hardened at once.

"You're a fool! When Kirill Gromov brings home arms he means mischief to the Soviet Government, but when I bring them home it can mean nothing but good. See? Who should I have to answer to? You don't know what you're talking about, go to bed."

He had come to the only conclusion which seemed right to him: if all these whiteguards who had not been finished off yet were coming home armed, it behooved him to be on his guard. He carefully cleaned the rifle and the revolver and as soon as the first faint light appeared, he set out on foot for Veshenskaya.

As Dunyashka was putting up some food for him in a knapsack, her bitterness and vexation got the better of her, and she burst out:

"You never tell me anything! You might tell me at least if you're going away for a long time and what's taking you there? What sort of a life have I with you? He's all ready to go and you can't get a word out of him! . . .

Are you a proper husband or just something tacked on to me?"

"I'm going to Veshenskaya, I'm going up before a commission. What else can I tell you? You'll know all about it when I get back."

Steadying the knapsack with his hand, Mishka went down to the River Don, got into a boat and rowed himself across to the other side.

When the examination of the medical commission was over, the doctor said briefly:

"You won't do at all, my dear comrade, for service in the ranks of the Red Army. Malaria has pulled you down terribly. You'll have to undergo treatment, or else things will go badly with you. It isn't men like you that the Red Army needs."

"What kind does it need, then? I've served in it two years and now I'm not needed?"

"It needs sound, healthy men. You'll be needed again, too, if you get well. Take this prescription and get some quinine at the druggist's."

"I—see. It's all quite clear now." Koshevoi started to drag on his tunic as if it were a collar on a restless horse; he could not seem to wriggle his neck into the collar. He finished buttoning his trousers in the street, and went straight to the headquarters of the district Party committee. . . .

. . . Mishka returned to Tatarsky as the chairman of the local revolutionary committee. After a hasty greeting, he said to his wife:

"Well, now we'll see!"

"What are you talking about?" she asked in surprise.

"About the same thing as before."

"About what?"

"I've been appointed chairman, now, do you understand?"

Dunyashka threw up her hands and clasped them in horror. She was going to say something, but Mishka did not wait to hear. He lingered a moment before the glass to straighten the belt on his faded khaki tunic and strode off to the Soviet.

Old Mikheyev had been chairman of the revolutionary committee since winter. Deaf and half-blind, he found his duties too onerous and was overjoyed to learn from Koshevoi that he was to be relieved at last.

"Here are all the papers, dear lad, and here's the stamp, take them for Christ's sake," he said with sincere joy, crossing himself and rubbing his hands. "I'm getting on to seventy and never went out to work in an office in my life, and here I have had to do it in my old age, and what good am I? My sight's not what it used to be, and I'm hard of hearing. . . . Indeed, it's time for me to be saying my prayers and they went and made a chairman of me. . . ."

Mishka glanced over the orders sent by the revolutionary committee and asked:

"Where's the secretary?"

"Eh?"

"Oh, hell—where's the secretary, I'm asking?"

"The secretary? Oh, he's out sowing. He never comes, blast his soul, more than once a week. And sometimes an important paper arrives—the kind that wants reading, and you wouldn't find him if you set bloodhounds on his track. And there the paper lies day after day with nobody to read it. I'm no reader, god knows, no reader at all. I can just sign my name if I'm put to it and that's about all. I can't read,

but I know which way up to set the stamp. . . ."

Koshevoi, with knited brows, surveyed the dingy premises of the revolutionary committee, the scratched and dirty walls adorned with one old, fly-blown poster.

So delighted was old Mikheyev with his unexpected release that he even attempted a joke. As he handed over the stamp wrapped up in a bit of rag, he said:

"There's all the portable property for you, there are no sums of money here, and it's not allowed to keep an ataman's mace here nowadays. But if you like I can give you an old man's old crutch instead." And with a toothless smile, he held out the stout ash, polished with much handling.

But Koshevoi was in no mood for joking. He gave another glance around the office, pitiful in its unsightliness, frowned and said with a heavy sigh:

"We'll take it, grandad, that the business has been handed over to me. And now you can get the hell out of here," and looked meaningly at the door.

Then he sat down at the table, his elbows wide apart. And there he sat in utter loneliness for a long time, his nether jaw stuck out, his teeth clenched. God, what a useless son of a bitch he had been all that time, never raising his head, never listening properly to what was going on around him. . . . Angry beyond words at himself and at everyone else, Mishka got up, gave a tug here and there to his tunic, and, staring into space, ground out through his teeth:

"I'll show you, my fine pigeons, what Soviet Government is!" He shut the door tight, put up the chain and started homeward across the common. As he was passing the church he met young Obnizov, nodded carelessly to him and had just passed him when he was struck by an idea. Turning, he called out:

"Hey, Andryushka! Come here a minute!"

The shy flaxen-haired boy came up to him without speaking. Mishka held out his hand to him as if they were the same age.

"Where are you going?" he asked. "Over in that direction? Just out for a stroll or have you got some business there? Well, what I want to ask you is this: you finished something like a higher elementary school, didn't you? You did? That's good. Do you know office work?"

"What kind of office work?"

"Oh, just the ordinary kind. You know all the ins and outs of it, I suppose?"

"The ins and outs of what, Comrade Koshevoi?"

"Well, all kinds of papers. You know all about them, don't you? There are those that have to be sent out and all sorts of others as well." Mishka made an indefinite movement with his hands, and without waiting for a reply, went on: "If you don't know, you'll soon learn. I'm the chairman of the revolutionary committee here, and I'm appointing you secretary, as you've had some schooling. Go to the committee room now and look after things—the papers are all out on the table, and I'll be back soon, see?"

"But, Comrade Koshevoi!"

Mishka waved his hand and said impatiently:

"We'll talk things over afterwards, now go and take up your new duties." Then, with a slow measured stride, he went down the street. When he reached home he put on his new trousers, thrust his revolver into his pocket, and as he fixed his cap carefully before the glass, said to his wife:

"I've got to drop in at a place

about some business. If anyone asks for the chairman, say he'll be back soon."

In his new position he felt something was expected of him.... His gait was leisurely and important. It was, in fact, so unlike his usual walk that several of the neighbors he encountered stopped and watched him with a smile. Prokhor Zykov, whom he met in a narrow lane, staggered back against the fence to make way respectfully for him.

"What's up, Mishka? All dressed up in your very best on a weekday and walking as if you were on parade or something. You're not going a-courting again by any chance, are you?"

"Something of the sort," Mishka rejoined, with a significant tightening of the lips.

He didn't give a damn for all their jokes and their sneering glances. He knew where he was going and why. . . .

When he reached Gromov's gate he pulled out his tobacco pouch and looked keenly around the big yard, the buildings scattered about it, the windows of the house, the garden.

Kirill Gromov's mother was just coming out of the passage. Her shoulders well thrown back, she was carrying in front of her a basin full of chopped-up fodder pumpkin. Mishka greeted her respectfully and went up the steps to the door.

"Is Kirill at home?"

"Yes, he is. Go right in," said the old woman, making way for him.

Mishka entered the dark passage and fumbled for the door-handle.

Kirill himself opened the door and recoiled a step. His freshly shaven face was smiling and wore a rather tipsy look. He gave Mishka an appraising glance, and said easily:

"Here's another who's been in the army! Go right in, Koshevoi, and sit down. We're having a bit of a spree."

"Bread and salt and may the cup be sweet to you!" Mishka muttered the customary greeting as he shook hands with the master of the house. Then he glanced around at the other people.

It was clear that he was an unwanted guest. A stranger, a broad-shouldered Cossack who was lolling in the corner nearest the door, shot an inquiring glance at Kirill and pushed his glass away from him. Semyon Akhvatkin, a distant relation of the Korshunovs, scowled when he saw Mikhail and looked away.

The master of the house invited Mikhail to sit down with them at the table.

"Thanks for the invitation."

"Oh, but you must sit down and have a drink with us. I hope you won't offend us by refusing."

Mishka sat down at the table. As he accepted the glass of *vodka* from his host's hand he nodded and said:

"A happy homecoming, Kirill Ivanovich!"

"Thanks. Have you been long out of the army?"

"Yes, a good while. I've had time to settle down."

"You've had time to settle down and marry as well, by all accounts. But what are you doing?—that's not the way to drink. Drain the glass."

"I don't want to. . . . I want a word with you . . . on business. . . ."

"Oh no. You're joking. Nothing like that here! No business for me today. . . . I'm on a spree today with my old pals. Come tomorrow if you want to talk business."

Mishka stood up and said with a quiet smile:

"It's nothing much, but it won't wait. Let's go out for a minute." Kirill smoothed his carefully twisted black mustache for a while and said nothing. Then he got up.

"Maybe you'll tell me here about the matter? What's the point in breaking up the party?"

"No, better come out," Mishka insisted patiently.

"Go out with him, can't you? What are you arguing about?" said the broad-shouldered stranger.

Kirill accompanied Mikhail very reluctantly into the kitchen. His wife was bustling about the stove.

"Go out of here awhile, Katerina," he whispered to her. Then, sitting down on the bench, he asked coldly:

"Well, what's the business?"

"How many days have you been at home?"

"What about it?"

"I'm asking you—how many days have you been at home?"

"This is the fourth day, I think."

"Been to the Revolutionary Committee yet?"

"Not yet."

"Do you think of going to the Military Committee in Veshenskaya?"

"What is it you're getting at? You came on some business, let's talk about it."

"This is the business I came about."

"Then get to the hell out of here! Who are you, I'd like to know, that I should have to answer to you?"

"I'm the chairman of the Revolutionary Committee. Show me the certificate of leave you were given by your unit."

"Oho-o-o! So that's it!" Kirill drawled. His eyes were sober and sharp now as he looked into Mikhail's.

"So that's what you're getting at?"

"That very same thing. Hand over your certificate!"

"I'll drop in to the Soviet today and fetch it with me."

"No, give it up now."

"I've got it put away somewhere."

"Find it."

"No, I'm not going to look for it just now. Go home, Mikhail, go home or else there's going to be a row."

"It won't be a very long one," Mikhail's right hand went to his pocket. "Get your clothes on and come with me."

"Chuck it, Mikhail! You'd better not touch me. . . ."

"Come along, I'm telling you."

"Where to?"

"The Revolutionary Committee."

"I don't fancy it, somehow." Kirill turned pale, but he still spoke in a mocking tone.

Mishka swung a little to the left, pulled his revolver out of his pocket, and cocked it.

"Are you coming or not?" he asked softly.

Kirill made silently for the other room, but Mishka blocked his way, while his eyes indicated the door into the passage.

"Boys, I'm sort of arrested here!" Kirill called out in a would-be careless tone. "Finish the drink without me."

The door was flung open; Akhvatkin was about to cross the threshold, but seeing the revolver pointed straight at him, staggered back against the door post.

"Go on," Mishka said to Kirill.

Kirill lounged with a rolling gait towards the door, lifted the latch lazily and then, clearing the passage at a bound, banged the outer door violently behind him and jumped down the steps. While he was running crouched through

the yard to the garden, Mishka fired at him twice but missed. Steadying the barrel of the revolver in the crook of his left elbow and planting his feet wide apart, Mishka took careful aim. At the third shot Kirill appeared to stumble, but recovered his balance almost immediately and vaulted lightly over the fence. Mishka ran down the steps. The dry spasmodic crack of a rifle followed him from the house. The bullet struck the clay of the white-washed barn ahead of him and plopped on the ground, flinging up a shower of grey stone.

Kirill ran lightly and well. His bent figure flitted between the green canopies of the apple trees. Mishka jumped the fence, and fell. He did not rise but fired twice from where he lay. Then he glanced back at the house. The outer door was wide open. Kirill's mother was standing at the head of the steps, shading her eyes with her hand and looking into the garden. "I ought to have shot him on the spot without any more to-do!" Mishka thought dully. He lay where he was a few minutes longer, staring at the house. Then, in a measured, mechanical fashion, he cleaned the dirt off his knees, and got up. He climbed the fence heavily, and, carrying his revolver with the barrel pointing downwards, he went towards the house.

Akhvatkin disappeared along with Kirill Gromov and the unknown Cossack whom Koshevoi had seen at Kirill's. That same night two more Cossacks left the place. A small detachment of the Don-Cheka arrived in Tatarskoye from Veshenskaya. A few of the Cossacks were arrested and four men who had turned up without leave papers from their units were sent to the punitive company in Veshenskaya.

Day after day Koshevoi sat in the Revolutionary Committee. When he returned home at dusk, he stood his loaded rifle beside the bed, thrust his revolver under the pillow and lay down without undressing. The third day after the affair with Kirill he said to Dunyashka:

"Let's sleep in the passage."

"Whatever for?" she asked, astonished.

"They may shoot through the window and the bed's just by it."

She said nothing more but moved the bed into the passage. That evening, however, she returned to the subject.

"Well, have we got to live a long time like this—like hares, as you might say, frightened of everything? And when the winter comes, will we still have to sleep in the cold passage?"

"It's a long way to winter yet and in the meantime we'll have to live like this, sleeping in the passage."

"And how long is this 'meantime' to last?"

"Until I catch Kirill."

"You don't mean to say he'll stick his head out for you to shoot at?"

"He will some day," Mishka retorted with conviction. But his hopes deceived him. Kirill Gromov, who, together with his friends, was in hiding somewhere across the Don, had heard of Nestor Makhno's approach. Makhno had made his way to that side of the river and gone to Krasnokutskaya, where, it was rumored, the vanguard of Makhno's bands had been seen. One night Gromov came home and, meeting Prokhor Zykov in the street, told him to let Koshevoi know that Gromov sent his respects and that Koshevoi might expect a visit from him. All this Prokhor recounted faithfully to Mishka next morning.

"All right. Let him come. He

slipped through my fingers once but he won't do it the second time. He taught me the proper way to treat his sort and I'm much obliged to him for it," was Mishka's comment when he had heard the tale to the end.

It was true that Makhno had actually appeared in the Upper Don Region. In a skirmish at the Konkov farms he had beaten the battalion of infantry sent out against him from Veshenskaya, but instead of advancing on the district center, he went to Millerovo, crossed the railway line to the north of it and from thence to Starobelsk. The more aggressive White Cossacks joined him, but the majority stayed at home, biding their time.

So Koshevoi lived constantly on the alert, attentive to everything that was going on in the place. Life in Tatarskoye was none too pleasant. The Cossacks railed at the Soviet Government for every hardship they had to endure. There was almost nothing in the local cooperative shop that had been recently organized. Soap, sugar, salt, kerosene, matches, cheap tobacco, oil for cart-wheels—all these necessities were absent; the bare shelves were graced with nothing but expensive cigarettes and odd bits of hardware for which there was no demand for months on end.

As a substitute for kerosene people burned oiled butter or other fat in saucers. They grew a little tobacco of their own. The shortage of matches was made up for by the extensive use of flint and steels hastily shaped by the blacksmiths. Tinder was boiled in a decoction of sunflower ashes and water to make it light sooner, but still, in unaccustomed hands, it was a long time before a light could be struck. Sometimes, as he was returning home of an evening, Mishka would see a knot of smokers in a lane, striking their flints with a will, and cursing under their breaths: "Blast the Soviets, give us a light!" When at length a spark fell on someone's dry tinder and glowed, they would all crowd amicably around and blow on it, and when they had lit their cigarettes, squat in a circle and exchange the latest news. There was no paper for home-made cigarettes. They took the registers from the vestry of the church and when these had all been smoked they ransacked their houses and took all the paper they could lay their hands on, from the children's school books to the religious works and scriptures belonging to the old people.

Prokhor Zykov often dropped in at the old Melekhov place to beg paper from Mikhail Koshevoi.

"I've torn off all the newspaper from the lid of my old woman's trunk and smoked it. We had a New Testament—I smoked that. Then I worked round to the Old Testament and now that's gone, too. It's a pity those old saints wrote so few testaments. . . . Then my wife had a book with the names of all her relatives living and dead—to be prayed for—written in it—I used that up, too. Now what am I to do—smoke cabbage leaves or dry burdocks in the sun for paper? No, no, Mikhail, you'll have to give me a newspaper. I can't do without a smoke. When I was fighting the Germans at the front I used sometimes to exchange my ration of bread for a couple of ounces of tobacco."

Life was cheerless in Tatarskoye that autumn. . . . The cart wheels screeched for lack of oil, harness and boots dried up and cracked for want of tar. But the thing that took most savor out of life

was the lack of salt. In Veshenskaya folks from Tatarskoye exchanged fat sheep for five pounds of salt and returned home cursing the Soviets. This same unlucky salt brought a great deal of trouble to Mishka too. One day the old people came to see him in the Soviet. They saluted him respectfully, took off their caps and seated themselves on the benches.

"There's no salt to be had, Mister Chairman, sir," one of them began.

"There are no misters or sirs here," Mishka corrected him.

"Excuse me, please, we were just speaking from habit, like. . . . We can live without the gentry, I guess, but we can't get along without salt."

"So what do you old people want?"

"We wanted you as the chairman to see if you can get them to send us some salt. We can't fetch very much at a time from Manich on the bullock carts."

"I've sent a report about it to the district headquarters. They know now there's no salt. They ought to be bringing it soon."

"By the time the sun rises the dew will have smarted the eyes out of your head, so the saying goes," said one of the old men, his eyes fixed on the ground.

At that Mishka flared up. His face crimson with indignation, he sprang to his feet and turned his pockets inside out.

"You can see I haven't any salt, can't you? I don't carry it about with me, I can't suck it out of my fingers for you, can I?"

"Where has all the salt got to?" said old Chumakov after a few minutes' silence, looking round in astonishment with his one eye. "At one time, under the old Government, there was never any mention of such a thing, there were heaps of it everywhere, and now you can't get a pinch of it. . . ."

"It's not our Government that's to blame," Mishka explained in a quieter tone. "There's only one government to blame and that's your Constitutional-Democrat Government that was! It's they who brought the country to such a state that maybe there's nothing to transport the salt on. All the railways are ruined, the trains as well. . . . "

Mishka gave the old men a long account of how the whiteguards had destroyed State property, blown up factories and works and set fire to stores as they retreated. He had seen something of this during the war, and knew something of it by hearsay; the rest he invented. It was an inspired lie told with the sole aim of directing the dissatisfaction away from his beloved Soviet Government. To shield it from reproaches he told harmless lies, justifying them to himself: "After all, if I do lay it on thick about those sons of bitches—there's no great harm done. They're blackguards just the same; they can't fall any lower, and it'll perhaps be to our advantage. . . ."

"You think the bourgeoisie are simple, do you? They're no fools! They collected all the stores of sugar and salt—thousands of poods of it—from all over Russia and took it away in good time to the Crimea, and there they loaded it onto ships and sent it to other countries to be sold," Mishka concluded with flashing eyes.

"And you mean to say it was they that took all the mazut oil as well?" old cross-eyed Chumakov asked in a skeptical tone.

"What do you think, grandad—that they left it for you? They've no use for you, they've no use

for any of the toiling people! They'll find someone to sell the mazut to, never fear! They'd have taken every single thing with them if they could, so as the folks here would die of starvation."

"That's very likely, of course," one of the old men agreed. "The rich are always grasping. It's been like that for ages, we know: the richer a man is, the greedier he is. There was a shopkeeper, for instance, in Veshenskaya—soon as the first retreat started, he piled everything onto carts, collected every scrap of his property to the last thread, and even when the Reds were quite near, he couldn't bring himself to go; he ran about the house in his coat, pulling the nails out of the walls with the pincers. 'I'm not going to leave these scoundrels a single nail!' he says. So it's no wonder they took the mazut oil and all with them."

"Still, what are we going to do without salt?" old Makhayev began again good-humoredly at the end of the conversation.

"Our workers will soon dig us a new lot and meantime you can send carts to Manich," Mishka advised cautiously.

"Our folks don't want to go. The Kalmyks do a lot of mischief, they won't let us get the salt out of the lakes and they steal the bullocks. A fellow I know came back with nothing but his knout. Just beyond Velikoknyazheskaya three armed Kalmyks came riding up to him at night, and they drove off his bullocks. And they pointed to his throat and said: 'Keep still . . . else you'll die a nasty death. . . .' That's a nice place to go for salt, isn't it?"

"We'll just have to wait, that's all," said Chumakov with a sigh.

If Mishka managed to soothe the old men, he had no such easy victory at home when he got into an argument with Dunyashka about salt. Something had gone wrong between them in general. . . .

It had started that memorable evening when he had spoken of Grigori in Prokhor's presence, and that slight difference had not been forgotten. Once at supper time Mishka happened to say:

"There's too little salt in the soup, wife. Or do you think it's better to salt too little than too much?"

"There's no danger of salting anything too much while this government's in. Do you know how much salt we have left?"

"Well, how much?"

"Two handfuls."

"That's a bad lookout," Mishka sighed.

"Decent folks went to Manich for salt in the summer but you never could find time to think of that," Dunyashka reproached him.

"How could I have gone? We've no bullocks. I couldn't very well put you into harness the first year we're married, and those young bullocks are too small yet. . . ."

"Keep your jokes for another time! Let's see which side of your face you'll laugh on when you have to eat food without any salt in it."

"Look here, what are you getting at me for? Now, where am I to get salt for you? . . . How funny you women are. . . . You've got to have it, even if we have to belch it up for you. And suppose there isn't any of this blasted salt?"

"Other people went to Manich with their bullock carts. They'll have plenty of salt and everything, and we'll have to eat saltless food with sour stuff. . . ."

"We'll manage somehow, Dunyashka. The salt must come soon—

it isn't as if we hadn't plenty of that kind of goods."

"You've got plenty."

"What do you mean by 'you've got plenty'?"

"You Reds."

"And what are you?"

"I'm just as you see me. Sick of this prating. Over and over again you told us: 'We'll have plenty of everything, and we'll all be equal and rich and all live the same. . . .' So these are your riches, are they?—there's nothing even to salt the soup with!"

Mishka gave his wife a startled look and turned pale.

"What are you saying, Dunyashka? How you run on! How can you talk nonsense like that?"

But Dunyashka had taken the bit between her teeth. Pale with indignation and malice, her voice rose to a scream as she went on.

"So we can leave things as they are, can we? What are you staring at me for with eyes starting out of your head? Do you know, my fine chairman, that folks' gums are swelling for want of salt? Do you know what they're eating instead of salt? They dig up the ground in the salt marshes, they go even as far as the Nechayev barrow to fetch salt earth to put in their soup. . . . Have you heard about that?"

"Wait a bit, don't shout. . . . Yes, I heard about it. . . . What else?"

"What else? What else do you want?" Dunyashka clasped her hands in dismay.

"We'll just have to live through it somehow, won't we?"

"All right. You go on and live through it, then."

"I will. I'll get through it, somehow. But what about you. . . . All the Melekhov breed in you is coming out. . . ."

"What breed do you mean?"

"The counter-revolutionary breed, that's what I mean!" Mishka said in a hollow voice, getting up from the table. His eyes were fixed on the ground. he would not look at his wife, and his lips trembled when he said: "If you talk like that again, we won't be able to live together any more, so you might as well know it! You talk like an enemy. . . ."

Dunyashka was about to say something, but Mishka suddenly squinted and raised his fist.

"Hold your tongue!" he ordered in a queer, muffled tone.

She watched her husband curiously, without fear. Then, after a moment, she said in a cheerful tone:

"Ah well, never mind. What the devil got into us to talk about such things. . . . We'll get along without salt, too." She was silent a moment and then, with the quiet smile Mikhail loved so well, she went on:

"Don't get wild at me, Mikhail! If you're to get wild at us women for every little thing, you'll never be done. The things one says when one's in a bad humor and has a mind to vent it on someone! Will you have some of this drink I made, or just sour milk?"

In spite of her youth, life had taught her something: she knew when to persist in an argument and when it was advisable to give in.

About a fortnight after this, a letter came from Grigori. He wrote that he had been wounded at the Wrangel front and that as soon as he was well he would very likely be demobilized. Dunyashka told her husband the contents of the letter, and then asked cautiously:

"How are we going to live, Mishka, when he comes home?"

"We'll shift over to my little house. Let him live here by him-

self. We'll divide up what property there is."

"Yes, we can't live together. It looks as though he'll settle down with Axinia."

"I wouldn't live with your brother under one roof even if I could," Mishka declared harshly.

Dunyashka raised her eyebrows in astonishment.

"Why, Mishka?"

"You know very well."

"You mean because he served with the whiteguards?"

"Exactly."

"You hate him. But you used to be friends."

"What the hell do I have to love him for? We were friends once, and now the friendship's over, that's all."

Dunyashka was seated at the spinning wheel. It hummed rhythmically. The thread snapped in her fingers. She steadied the edge of the wheel with her hand as she twisted the broken threads together.

"When he does come home," she said, without looking at her husband, "what do you suppose will be done to him for serving with the White Cossacks?"

"He'll be sent up for trial. Before the court-martial."

"And what punishment do you think they'll give him?"

"Oh, that I don't know, I'm not a judge."

"Could they sentence him to be shot?"

Mishka looked over at the bed where Grigori's children, Mishatka and Polyushka, were fast asleep. He listened to their even breathing a moment and then in a lower tone, said:

"Yes, they could."

Dunyashka asked no more questions. Next morning, after she had milked the cow, she went round to Axinia's.

"I've got good news for you, Grisha's coming home soon."

Axinia set down the iron pot of water on the stove, and pressed her hands to her breast. Glancing at her flaming face, Dunyashka added:

"No need to be so terribly glad: my man says he won't escape trial. And what they'll sentence him to, god only knows. . . ." For a moment fear came into Axinia's radiant and moist eyes.

"But what for?" she gasped, still unable to chase away the smile that lingered about the corners of her lips.

"For the mutiny and everything."

"It's all idle prate! They won't try him. What does your Mikhail know about it? What kind of a fortune-teller is he?"

"Well, maybe they won't try him," Dunyashka said. Then after a pause, she added with a stifled sigh: "He's bitter against my brother. . . . And it makes my heart so heavy, I can't tell you! I feel terribly sorry for poor Grisha. And he's been wounded again. . . . What a life he has of it, to be sure. . . . "

"If he'd only come home! We'd take the children and go away somewhere and hide. . . ." Axinia said excitedly. She had taken off her head-shawl without thinking; now she put it on again and began to fidget with the pots and pans. She could not control her agitation.

Dunyashka noticed how her hands shook when she sat down on the bench and smoothed the pleats of the old, worn-out apron on her knees.

Something rose in Dunyashka's throat. She wanted to go away and cry by herself.

"Mamma didn't live to see him return. . . . " she said softly. "Well,

I must go now. I've got to heat the stove."

When they went into the passage Axinia kissed her awkwardly and hastily on the neck, then caught her hand and kissed it.

"Are you glad?" Dunyashka asked in a low, broken voice.

"Just a tiny wee bit. . . ." Axinia replied in an attempt to hide the welling tears behind an unsteady smile.

Koshevoi returned from his trip in the evening. Dunyashka saw him through the window as he drove up to the gate. Hastily flinging her shawl over her shoulders, she went out into the yard.

"Grisha came this morning," she said as she reached the wicket-gate, then looked up at her husband with anxiety and expectation.

"I wish you joy of him," Mishka returned. There was a touch of mockery in his reserved tone.

His lips tightened and the taut muscles twitched in his cheeks as he entered the kitchen. Polyushka, carefully decked out by her aunt in a clean frock, was sitting on Grigori's lap. Setting the child gently down, Grigori rose to greet his brother-in-law and reached out his big, swarthy hand with a smile. He would have liked to embrace Mikhail, but he suddenly noticed the frosty animosity in the unsmiling eyes and stopped in time.

"Well, how are you, Misha?"

"How do you do?"

"It's a long time since we've seen each other—seems like a hundred years almost."

"Yes, it's a good while. . . ." Welcome home. . . ."

"Thanks. . . . We're related now, it seems."

"Yes, it turned out like that. . . . What's that blood on your cheek?"

"Oh, it's nothing, I was shaving in a hurry and cut myself."

They sat down at the table and looked each other over. They felt strange and awkward. There was a serious conversation awaiting them, but it was impossible to begin it yet. Mikhail had command of himself; he talked calmly of the changes that had taken place on the farms and of the state of things on his own farm.

Grigori stared out of the window at the ground, now covered with the first faintly blue snow, at the naked boughs of the apple trees. This was not the way he had pictured his meeting with Mikhail.

After a while Mikhail went out of the room. As he carefully sharpened his knife on the whetstone in the corridor, he said to Dunyashka:

"I want to call someone in to kill a steer for me. The master of the house has come home, we've got to treat him the proper way. And you run for some moonshine. Wait . . . you know what? Go to Prokhor's and tell him to get some moonshine even if he's got to dig it out of the ground. He'll do it better than you. And ask him to come to supper."

Dunyashka was radiant. She gave her husband a look of silent gratitude. "Perhaps everything will pass off all right. . . . The fighting's over now. There is no need to parcel the land out all at once? God send them good sense!" she thought hopefully as she went off to Prokhor's.

Before half an hour was over Prokhor burst in breathless.

"Grigori Panteleyevich! . . . Good old Grisha! . . . I never hoped, I never thought I'd live to see you again! . . ." he cried in a high wailing voice as, stumbling over the threshold, he almost smashed a two-gallon jug of moonshine.

He embraced Grigori, whimpering and rubbing his eyes with his fist and wiping his tear-wet mus-

tache. Something quivered in Grigori's throat, but he kept a tight hold of himself. He was moved, he clapped the faithful orderly roughly on the back, and muttered incoherently:

"So we are seeing each other again at long last. . . . Well, I am glad, I'm terribly glad! Come on, old fellow, turn the water off. Gone soft, eh? Screws come loose? How's your arm? Has your old woman broken the other one for you yet?"

Prokhor blew his nose violently and took off his short sheepskin coat.

"Me and my old woman live like a pair of doves, I'll tell you. My second arm's still whole and sound as you see, and the other, the one the Poles took off, has started to grow, I declare to god it has! Another year and there'll be fingers growing on it, just watch it," he went on in his usual cheerful way, giving a shake to the empty shirt sleeve.

The war had taught them to hide their true feelings, to flavor both their bread and their talk with pungent salt. And so Grigori went on with his inquiries in the same jocular vein:

"How are you getting on, old top? Hopping along as usual?"

"Not so fast as in my young days."

"Did you catch anything while I was away?"

"What sort of things?"

"Well, those nightingales you were carrying round last winter."

"Now, now, Panteleyevich, God forbid! What would I want with such fancy things? And what good am I with only one arm? That's your job, not mine . . . you're young . . . and a bachelor still."

They kept looking at each other. Old comrades from the trenches, laughing and pleased to have met again.

"Back for good?" Prokhor asked.

"Yes, I'm back for good."

"What rank?"

"Assistant regiment commander."

"How did it happen they let you go so soon?"

Grigori's face clouded. He replied curtly:

"I wasn't wanted."

"How come?"

"I don't know. Must be because of my past."

"But you got through the filter, that commission in the Special Department that weeded out the officers, so what past can you have?"

"You never know."

"Where's Mikhail?"

"Looking after the cattle."

Prokhor moved closer and lowered his voice.

"Platon Ryabchikov was shot a month ago."

"You don't say!"

"So help me god!"

The front door creaked.

"We'll talk about it afterwards," Prokhor whispered, then louder: "Well, now, comrade commander, let's drink to celebrate, as you might say, this great joy. Shall I go and fetch Mikhail?"

"Yes, go on, call him in."

Dunyashka was preparing the table. She could not do enough for her brother: first she spread a clean towel on his knees, set a plate of pickled melon before him, polished his glass at least half a dozen times. . . . Grigori noticed that she used the more respectful "you" instead of the familiar "thou" and smiled to himself.

Mikhail kept an obstinate silence when they first sat down at the table, and listened attentively to what Grigori was saying. He drank reluctantly, in small quantities. But Prokhor tossed off tumblersfull of *vodka*, and only flushed a deep red and oftener smoothed his

grizzled mustache with his fist.

When she had fed the children and put them to bed, Dunyashka set a big plate of boiled mutton on the table, and whispered to Grigori:

"If you've nothing against it, I'll just run for Axinia."

Grigori nodded silently. He fancied no one had noticed his state of tense expectation the whole evening, but Dunyashka had seen that he seemed to be listening to every sound, that he was on the alert for every knock, and shot furtive glances at the door. Nothing could escape the sharp eye of this Dunyashka.

"And what about Tereshchenko from the Kuban—is he still in command of a platoon?" Prokhor asked, clutching his glass as if fearful someone might take it from him.

"He was killed in action near Lwow."

"Well, well, god rest his soul! He was a good cavalryman!" Prokhor crossed himself hastily and took a gulp from his glass, never noticing Koshevoi's sarcastic smile.

"And that fellow—what was his name?—a queer sort of a name it was. A right-flank man—pooh! What's he called, devil take him?—May-Boroda, I think. A Ukrainian, that thick-set, jolly fellow that slashed a Polish officer in two at Brodi. . . . Is he still alive and kicking?"

"Lively as a stallion! He was sent to a machine-gun squadron."

"Who did he give his horse to?"

"I had another by that time."

"And what did you do with that one, the one with the white blaze on the forehead?"

"He was killed by a bit of shrapnel."

"In action?"

"We were quartered in a little

town at the time. We were under fire. He was killed down where the horses were tethered."

"What a pity, now! That was a horse!" Prokhor sighed and picked up his glass again.

The latch clicked in the lobby. Grigori gave a start. Axinia crossed the threshold, mumbled "Evening," and started to take off her shawl; her eyes, wide and shining, were fixed on Grigori's face. Then she came up to the table and sat down by Dunyashka. Tiny snowflakes were melting on her brows and lashes and pale cheeks. She half closed her eyes, wiped her moist face with her palm, gave a deep sigh, and only then, with a great effort, did she turn her eyes, now darkened by agitation, full on Grigori's face.

"He is my buddy! Ksyushka! We retreated together, we fed the lice together. . . . And although we did leave you on the Kuban, what else could we do?" Prokhor held out a glass to her, spilling the *vodka* on the table. "Drink Grigori Panteleyevich's health! Congratulate him! Wish him joy on his homecoming! . . . I told you, didn't I, he'd come back whole and sound . . . and here he is, you can have him for a ruble twenty kopeks! Here he is, sitting like a fool."

"He's had a drop too much already, neighbor, don't you listen to him," said Grigori, laughing, glancing in Prokhor's direction.

Axinia bowed to Grigori and Dunyashka, and only slightly raised her glass from the table. She was afraid they would all notice how her hand trembled.

"Happy homecoming, Grigori Panteleyevich, and to you, Dunyashka, joy!"

"And what about you? Grief?" Prokhor nudged Mikhail and burst out laughing.

Axinia flushed crimson. Even the lobes of her small ears grew transparent, pink. But she gave Prokhor an angry, firm look and said:

"And me—joy. . . . Great joy!"

Her directness disarmed Prokhor and softened him.

"Drink it, then, to the last drop, for god's sake!" he pleaded. "If you know how to answer straight, then you must know how to drink straight! It's like a stab in the heart to me when anyone leaves good drink in the glass."

Axinia did not stay long, only as long as she thought decency demanded. She allowed herself but a very few glances—and those of the briefest—at her beloved Grigori. She forced herself to look at the others, and avoided his eyes, because she could not pretend indifference and she did not want to betray her emotions in the presence of the others. Only at the threshold did Grigori catch one direct look, full of love and devotion; it told him all he wanted to know. . . . He went to see her to the door. Prokhor called tipsily after them:

"Don't be long! Else we'll drink everything up!"

In silence Grigori kissed Axinia on the brow and the lips, as they stood in the corridor.

"Well, how are you getting on, Ksyusha?" he asked.

"Oh, I couldn't tell you the half of it. . . . Are you coming tomorrow?"

"Yes, I'll come."

She hurried home as if she had very urgent work to do; only near her house did she slacken her pace, and went up the creaking steps carefully. She wanted to be alone with her thoughts, with the happiness that had come to her so unexpectedly.

She threw off her shawl, and went straight into the inner room without waiting to light the lamp.

Through the unshuttered windows, the thick violet light of the night streamed in. A cricket chirruped loudly on the stove. From force of habit she glanced into the mirror, and though it was dark and she could not make out her own reflection, she smoothed her hair and straightened the gathers of her muslin blouse before going over to the window and dropping down wearily on the bench.

Her hopes and expectations had so often been deceived and perhaps that was why her habitual alarm and anxiety now replaced the joy of a few moments ago. What would her life be like now? What was in store for her? And was it not too late for the bitter happiness of women to smile upon her now?

Exhausted by all she had gone through that evening, she sat there for a long while, her cheek resting on the chilly, frosted window pane, her eyes, quiet and rather mournful now, gazing into the darkness only faintly lit by the snow.

Grigori seated himself at the table again, poured out a full glass from the jug, and drank it off at a gulp.

"Good *vodka*, isn't it?" Prokhor asked.

"I can't judge. I haven't tasted any for so long."

"It's every bit as good as in Tsar Nikolai's time, I swear to god!" Prokhor declared in a tone of profound conviction. He swayed and threw his arms around Mikhail. "You're about as good a judge of things like that as a calf is of kitchen slops, Mikhail, but I know what's what in the drinking line. The wines and the liquors I've had to drink in my time—I couldn't tell you. There's wine, for instance, that starts to froth at the mouth like a mad dog, hardly before you can get the cork out. I swear it's true. When we were in Poland and we broke through the front and went with Semyon Mikhailovich to cut up the Poles, we took a landowner's estate on the way. A house there was, two stories and more high, the sheds packed with cattle horn to horn, and every kind of fowl you could think of in the yard—there wasn't room to spit for them. Well, to cut a long story short, this landowner lived like the tsar. When our platoon rode up to the place, the officers were having a party with the owner. We cut them down, the whole lot, in the garden and on the stairs and just took one prisoner. He was an important fellow—high rank—but as soon as we took him, his mustache lost all its sprightliness, and he seemed to go all soft with fright. Grigori Panteleyevich was called to headquarters, and we stayed there in charge of the place. We went into one of the rooms down below, and there was a great big table laid there, and I couldn't tell you all that was on it! Well, we strutted about but we were terrified to begin, though we were terribly hungry. What if all that was poisoned?—we thought. Our prisoner was looking pretty vicious, too. 'Eat!' we shouted at him. He did. You could see he didn't want to, but he had to. 'Drink!' we shouted at him. He did. We made him take a good bit out of each dish, and a glass from each bottle. And we could see the swine puffing out before our very eyes, and our mouths watered like nobody's business. When we finally saw the officer didn't die, we set to ourselves. We ate our fill and steeped ourselves in frothy wine to our nostrils. Then we looked and saw that the officer was starting to work from both ends. 'Oho!' we

think to ourselves, 'that reptile's been eating poisoned stuff and let us in for it!' So we pulled out our sabers and made for him. And down he went on his hands and knees: 'Gentlemen, it's only that I've over-eaten through your kindness. Don't be afraid, it's good wholesome food.' So back we went to our wine. You pressed the cork and out it came like a shot from a rifle, and the froth boiled up and flew about in clouds till it was a bit frightening to watch it even. And that wine made me fall off my horse three times running that night. As soon as I'd touch the saddle, it would be as if the wind had blown me off." Prokhor paused and sighed dreamily. "Yes, a glass or two of that wine every day on an empty stomach and I'd live to see a hundred, so I would, but as it is—how can a man live through his allotted span? You wouldn't call this drink, would you? It's just poison, that's all it is. Just makes you cast your hoofs sooner than need be. . . ." Prokhor concluded with a jerk of his head towards the jug of moonshine and—poured himself out a brimming glass.

Dunyashka had gone off to bed with the children in the other room, and after a while Prokhor rose to go. Swaying, he threw his sheepskin jacket around his shoulders.

"I won't take the jug," he said. "It goes against the grain to leave a house with an empty vessel in my hand. . . . As soon as I get home my old woman'll start to punish me. She's a great hand at that sort of thing. And where she gets all the poisonous words beats me! I come in a bit tight and she starts something like this: 'You old drunken one-armed dog, you! You're a so-and-so and a so-and-so and this, that and the other!' And I try quiet and decent-like to drive some sense into her: 'Where in god's name,' I say, 'you bitch's udder, did you ever see a drunken dog and one-armed at that? There's no such thing ever been heard tell of.' Well, I put down one dirty lie, and she ups with another, I put that down and she comes out with a third, and so it goes on—an all-night service till daybreak. There are times—I can't stand it and go out to sleep in the barn. And another time you come home tight and if she doesn't speak to me and give me hell, I can't sleep a wink, I swear to god. Seems as if there's something missing, I get a kind of itch all over me, I can't close an eye . . . and that's all there is about it. And if I only touch her—she's off till she knocks the feathers out of me! She's a chip of the devil himself, and there's no getting away from her; let her lose her temper, she'll work all the better for it—isn't that right? Well, I'm going, so long! Maybe I should go and sleep in the manger and not bother her tonight at all?"

"Will you be able to get home, do you think?" Grigori inquired.

"Yes, even if I have to crawl like a crab! Am I a Cossack or not, Panteleyevich? It's kind of insulting even to hear you talk like that. . . ."

"Well, then, godspeed!"

Grigori saw his friend to the gate and then went back to the kitchen.

"Shall we talk things over, Mikhail?"

"Yes, we might as well."

They sat, the table between them, and said nothing. Then Grigori broke the silence.

"Things aren't right between us somehow. . . . I can see by you they aren't. It isn't to your liking, is it—my coming here? Or am I mistaken?"

"No, you've guessed right . . . it's not to my liking."

"Why?"

"It's extra worry."

"I think I'll be able to earn my bread."

"That's not what's worrying me."

"What is it then?"

"We're enemies."

"We were. . . . "

"Yes, and it looks like we will be."

"Why should we? I can't understand."

"You're unreliable."

"You shouldn't say that. You have no reason to say that!"

"Yes, I do! What did they demobilize you for at a time like this? Come now, tell us straight."

"I don't know."

"Yes, you do! You know right well but you don't want to say. They didn't trust you, wasn't that it?"

"If they didn't, they wouldn't have put me in charge of the squadron."

"That was at first, but then they dropped you from the army—well, it's pretty clear, I think."

"Do you believe me?" Grigori looked him straight in the eye.

"No! No matter how you feed a wolf, he always runs for the woods."

"You've had too much to drink this evening, Mikhail."

"Chuck that! I'm no tighter than you are. They had no faith in you in the army and nobody here is going to put any great faith in you either, so you might as well know it."

Grigori let that pass. Listlessly he took a piece of pickle from the plate, chewed it and then spat it out.

"Did my wife tell you about Kirushka Gromov?" Mikhail asked at last.

"Yes."

"His coming back wasn't to my liking either. As soon as I heard it, the very same day. . . ."

Grigori turned pale, his eyes grew round with rage.

"So I'm the same as Kirushka Gromov to you?"

"Don't make a row. What better are you than Kirushka?"

"Now, look here, you know. . . ."

"There's nothing to know. . . . Everything's been found out long ago. And then I suppose Mitka Korshunov will turn up, and I've got to be overjoyed with him, too? No, it would be better if none of you came back here."

"It would be better for you, you mean?"

"Both for me and for the rest of the folks as well. It would be a lot quieter."

"Don't you compare me to those others!"

"I've told you already, Grigori, and there's nothing to take offence at. You're no better than they are, you're a lot worse and a lot more dangerous."

"In what way? What are you talking about?"

"They're only privates, and you went and put them up to this mutiny."

"I wasn't the one who put them up to it, I was commander of a division."

"And that's not much, I suppose?"

"Whether it's much or little is not the point. . . . If the Red Army men hadn't been going to kill me that time, during the merrymaking, maybe I wouldn't have taken any part in the mutiny."

"If you hadn't been an officer, no one would have touched you."

"And if I hadn't been called up, I wouldn't have been an officer. . . . Oh, that's a long story!"

"A long story and a nasty one."

"No use going over it now, it's too late."

They sat smoking in silence awhile. Then, flicking the ash off his cigarette with his nail, Koshevoi said:

"I know all about your 'bravery,' too. I heard about it. You did for a lot of ours and it makes me feel I can't look at you. . . . You can't forget things like that."

Grigori laughed.

"You've got too good a memory. You killed my brother Peter but I don't throw it in your teeth, do I? If we're going to remember everything, we'll have to live like wolves."

"Well, so I did kill him, what of it? Had I caught you that time, I'd have laid you out like a lamb!"

"Would you? And I, when Ivan Alexeyevich was taken prisoner at Ust-Khopra, I hurried off, thinking you were there, afraid the Cossacks would kill you. . . . So it seems I could have spared myself the trouble."

"Fancied yourself as a benefactor! I'd like to see how you'd have talked to me then if the Whites had got the upper hand, if your lot were on top. You'd have cut straps from my back, I expect. You're so good-natured now. . . ."

"Maybe somebody would have cut straps from your back, but I wouldn't have dirtied my hands with you."

"Ah, that's the difference between you and me. . . . I've never been squeamish about dirtying my hands with my enemies and now, too, I wouldn't stop at anything I thought necessary. . . ." Mikhail poured the remainder of the moonshine into their glasses.

"Will you have a drink?" he asked.

"Yes, we'd better, else we're getting too damned sober for this kind of talk. . . ."

They clinked glasses without speaking, and drank. Then Grigori slumped down with his chest on the table, and, twisting his mustache thoughtfully, looked at Mikhail through half-closed eyes.

"But what is it you're afraid of, Mikhail? That I'll start something against the Soviets?"

"I'm not afraid of anything, but at the same time I think: if some stew was to start again, you'd join the other side in a minute."

"I could have gone over to the Poles, couldn't I? What do you think?"

"You hadn't time, wasn't that it?"

"No. I didn't want to. I've done my service. I don't want to serve anyone any more. I've seen enough fighting in my time and I'm sick and weary of it. I'm sick to death of everything—of revolution and counter-revolution alike. It can all go to the devil for all I care! I want to have my children about me and look after my home, that's all. Believe me, Mikhail, what I'm saying is the honest truth!"

But there was no convincing Koshevoi. Grigori understood this and held his tongue. He felt a sudden bitter vexation at himself. What had possessed him to justify himself and try to prove anything? What was the point in carrying on this drunken conversation and listening to Mikhail's idiotic sermons? To hell with it! Grigori stood up.

"Let's put an end to this idle talk. That's enough of it. Only I'll tell you one thing before I am through: I won't go against the Government unless it takes me by the throat. But if it does—then I'll know how to defend myself. At any rate I'm not going to lay down my life like Platon Ryabchikov, all because of the mutiny."

"How's that?"

"That's how. They can take into consideration my service in

the Red Army and the wounds I got in it. As for going to prison on account of the mutiny—I don't object to that so much. But if they're going to shoot me for it—that's a bit too thick, I think!"

Mikhail gave a scornful snicker.

"That's something new! The Revolutionary Tribunal or the Cheka isn't going to ask you what you want and what you don't want, and they won't bargain with you either. Once you've put your foot in it, take your rations and the makeweight as well. Old debts have got to be paid in full!"

"If that's the case, we'll see."

"We'll see, that's certain."

Grigori took off his belt and shirt, and, grunting, started to take off his boots.

"Are we going to share out?" he asked, looking over-attentively at the sole that was coming off his boot.

"It won't take long. I've only got to repair my house and move in there."

"Yes, let's part somehow. There will be no peace between us."

"No, there won't," Mikhail agreed.

"I didn't know you had such an opinion of me. . . . Oh, well, that's that. . . ."

"I told you straight. I said what I think. When are you going to Veshenskaya?"

"One of these days."

"No, not one of these days, but tomorrow."

"I've come nigh forty versts on foot. I'm worn out. I'm going to have a rest tomorrow, and the day after I'll go and register."

"There's an order out to register at once. You'll go tomorrow."

"I've got to have a day's rest, haven't I? I'm not going to run away anywhere?"

"Devil knows what you might be up to! I don't want to have to answer for you."

"What a son of a bitch you've grown, Mikhail!" Grigori exclaimed, looking up in some surprise at the harsh face of his one-time friend.

"Don't you son-of-a-bitch me! I'm not used to it. . . ." Mikhail took a deep breath and raised his voice: "Time for you to stop these officer tricks! Off you go tomorrow, and if you won't go of your own free will, I'll send you under escort. Is that clear?"

"Yes. Everything's clear, now. . . ." Grigori shot a look of hatred at Mikhail's back as he went out. Then he threw himself down on the bed, dressed as he was.

Well, it had all happened as it was bound to have happened. Why should they have met him in any different way? Why had he ever imagined that his brief period of honest service in the Red Army would cover all his former sins? Perhaps Mikhail was right in saying that not everything would be forgiven and that old debts would have to be paid in full.

. . . In his dreams Grigori saw once more the broad steppe, the regiment deployed and ready for attack. From somewhere in the distance the command "Squ-a-dro-n!" rang out, when he suddenly remembered that his saddle-girths had been loosened. He leaned heavily on the left stirrup—the saddle slid from under him. . . . Overcome with horror and shame, he sprang down off his horse to tighten the girths and at the same moment heard the swift thud of horses' hoofs receding almost as soon as it had begun. The regiment had gone into action without him. . . .

Grigori tossed and turned and, waking, heard his own hoarse groan.

Dawn was just breaking. It was as if the wind had opened a shut-

ter in the night, and through the fluffy frost on the pane a glimpse of the sparkling green of the waning moon could be seen. Grigori groped for his tobacco-pouch and started to smoke. His heart still beat fast and hollowly—as if it had burst in two. He lay on his back, smiling to himself. "The devilish things you dream of sometimes! To be late for the fight! . . ." He could not know as he lay there at that early hour before daybreak how often he would still have to go into action, both in his dreams and in real life.

Late in the autumn of 1920, when delays in the delivery of grain made it necessary to form grain collection detachments, serious unrest began among the Cossack population of the Don. Armed bands appeared in the up-river villages—Shumilinskaya, Kazanskaya, Migulinskaya, Meshkovskaya, Veshenskaya, Yelanskaya, Slashchevskaya and other places. They represented the attitude of the well-to-do section of the Cossacks to the new food distribution measures taken by the Soviet Government and were the answer to the food detachments.

For the most part they were made up of local people—from five to twenty in a band—Cossacks who had been fighting on the side of the whiteguards. Among them were those who had been mixed up in the punitive expeditions of 1918 and 1919—non-commissioned officers, sub-cornets, and quartermasters of the former Don Army who had evaded the September mobilization, rebels notorious for their anti-Red exploits and the shooting of Red Army men captured during the rising of the previous year in the Upper Don district; in short, they were people whose way led apart from that of the Soviet Government.

They fell upon the food distribution detachments returning from outlying farms with grain, turned back the grain waggons going to the local centers, killed the Communists and the non-Communist Cossacks who were loyal to the Soviets and fought the best they could.

A battalion of the Upper Don district guard, quartered in Veshenskaya and the Baski group of farms, was given the job of breaking up the bands. But all attempts to do away with the bandits scattered over such an extensive territory proved a failure. For one thing, the local people were in sympathy with them, kept them supplied with food and information as to the movements of the Red units, sheltered them, covered their tracks; for another thing, the man in command of the battalion—Kaparin—was a Socialist-Revolutionary and had been a captain in the tsarist army. He had no desire to crush the counter-revolutionary forces lately sprung up in the Upper Don District; in fact, he did all he could to prevent others from doing that. Only occasionally, when the chairman of the District Committee of the Party would become too insistent, he would organize brief sorties on the rebels, and on his return to Veshenskaya would speak of the folly of splitting up the forces under his command and of taking unnecessary risks by leaving Veshenskaya, with all its various offices and stores, without proper guard. The battalion, which numbered about four hundred men and had fourteen machine-guns at its disposal, was doing garrison duty. The men kept guard over the prisoners, carried water, felled timber in the woods, and gathered—this too was a part of their du-

ties—oak-galls for ink. Thus the battalion was able to keep the innumerable local offices well-supplied with fuel and ink, while the number of small bands in the district increased enormously. It was only in December, when rumors came of a big rising in the Boguchar district of Voronezh gubernia (a district bordering on that of the Upper Don), that the preparation of timber and gathering of oak-galls for ink was perforce put an end to. By order of the commander-in-chief of the Don River region all forces—a battalion of three companies and a machine-gun platoon, together with the guard squadron, the first battalion of the 12th food distribution regiment and two other small detachments—were sent to put down the rising.

In a battle that took place near the village of Dry Donets, the Veshenskaya squadron headed by Yakov Fomin attacked the rebel line from the flank, crushed them, put them to flight and while in hot pursuit killed about a hundred and seventy of the enemy, losing no more than three men. The squadron was made up entirely—that is, with very few exceptions—of Cossacks from the villages and farms of the Upper Don. Here they remained true to the ancient Cossack traditions: when the battle was over, practically half the men exchanged, in spite of the protests of the two Communists in the squadron, their old overcoats and "warms" for the excellent tanned sheepskin coats taken from the slain rebels.

A few days after the suppression of the rising, the squadron was recalled to the Cossack settlement of Kazanskaya. Here, resting after the trials of military life, Yakov amused himself as best he could.

An inveterate dangler after women, a jolly, sociable tippler, he disappeared night after night and only turned up at his billet when day was beginning to break. He was on familiar terms with the men of his squadron and, whenever they'd catch sight of their commander, his boots polished to a dazzling brilliance, coming up the street, they would wink knowingly at each other and say:

"The stallion's after the fillies again! You won't see him till morning."

Behind the back of the commissar and the political instructor, Fomin used to drop in at squadron acquaintances of his whenever he got wind that there was home-distilled *vodka* to be had and a spree to be held. This happened fairly often. But after a while the dashing commander's spirits drooped, he was dejected and seemed to have forgotten the recreations that had pleased him so recently. No longer did he polish his smart high boots of an evening with the same vigor; he stopped shaving every day; from time to time he dropped in at the farms where his squadron companions lodged, to sit awhile and have a drink, but he took very little part in the conversation.

The alteration in his character coincided with the news received from Veshenskaya by the company commander. The Political Bureau briefly informed him that the battalion stationed in the village of Mikhailovka, in the neighboring district of Ust-Medveditsa, had rebelled and that the battalion commander, Vakulin, had instigated the rebellion.

Now, Vakulin and Fomin had served together and were friends. At one time they had both been in Mironov's corps, had marched from Saransk to the Don and had laid their arms on the one pile when the rebellious Mironov Corps had been surrounded by Budyonny's cavalry. Their friendship had lasted till recently. They had met in Veshenskaya only a little while ago, in the beginning of September, and even at that time Vakulin looked black as thunder and complained to his old pal of the doings of the commissars who were, he asserted, impoverishing the peasants with their food distribution campaign and bringing the country to the verge of ruin. In his heart of hearts Fomin agreed with Vakulin, but he was cautious and behaved with the cunning that often served him instead of native understanding. He was by nature circumspect, would never hurry or commit himself straight away. But very soon after he heard of the mutiny of Vakulin's battalion, his habitual caution deserted him. One evening before the squadron moved to Veshenskaya, the men gathered at Platoon Commander Alferov's lodgings. There was a huge pail full of *vodka*—home-distilled. A lively conversation was going on around the table. Fomin was present; he listened in silence, and as silently ladled his *vodka* out of the pail and drank it. But when one of the men began to talk about the way they had gone into the attack at Dry Donets, Fomin suddenly broke in upon the tale, and said, thoughtfully twisting his mustache:

"We cut up the Ukrainians pretty cleanly, boys, that time, but with things the way they are we may come to a bad end ourselves before long. . . . What will you say if, when we get back to Veshenskaya, these food distribution detachments have pumped all the grain out of our families? Folks here in Kazanskaya are terribly upset over these brigades. They

say they sweep the corn-bins clean. . . ."

A sudden silence fell. Fomin looked around at the others and forced a smile.

"I was joking, of course. . . . See you don't let your tongues wag . . . people might make devil only knows what out of a joke."

When the squadron reached Veshenskaya, Fomin, accompanied by half a platoon of Red Army men, went home to Rubyezhny. He dismounted at the gate, flung the reins to one of the Red Army men, and strode through the yard to the house.

He nodded coldly to his wife, made his mother a respectful bow and shook hands with her, and kissed the children.

"Where's Father?" he asked, sitting down on a stool, sword between his knees.

"Gone to the mill," the old woman replied. Then, glancing at her son suddenly, she commanded sternly: "Take off your cap, you heathen! Who ever saw the like—sitting down right under the ikon with your cap on! Oh, Yakov, you'll come to a bad end yet! . . ."

Yakov gave a reluctant smile and took off his sheepskin cap, but none of his outer clothing.

"Why don't you take off your things?"

"I only dropped in for a minute to see you, I never have time—on active service."

"We know all about your active service. . . ." the old woman retorted, hinting at the dissipated life her son had been leading, and his affairs with women in Veshenskaya.

The rumors had reached Rubyezhny long since.

Fomin's wife, a pale, cowed-looking creature, grown old before her time, gave her mother-in-law a frightened glance and retreated to the stove. In the hope of pleasing her husband somehow, of earning his goodwill and perhaps winning even one kind look, she picked up a duster and, kneeling down, started to rub the thick mud off Fomin's boots.

"What good boots these are, Yasha. . . . But how dirty you've got them. . . . I'll wipe the dirt off for you. . . . I'll get them nice and clean!" she whispered almost inaudibly, crawling on her knees at her husband's feet and never raising her head.

He had not lived with her for years now nor did he feel anything but a careless, contemptuous pity for the woman he had loved in his youth. But she still loved him, and in the secret hope that he would one day return to her, forgave him everything. For long years she had looked after the place, reared his children, and tried to please the self-willed old mother-in-law in every way. The whole burden of the work on the fields had fallen on her frail shoulders. Labor far beyond her strength, a sickness that had come on her after the birth of the second child, had year by year undermined her health. She wasted steadily. Her face lost its color. Premature old age had etched a web of wrinkles over her cheeks. The expression of frightened submission, to be seen in the eyes of intelligent ailing animals, appeared in hers. She herself did not notice how rapidly old age was creeping on, how her health was melting day by day; she still hoped, and on the rare occasions when her handsome husband was at home, she looked at him with timid love and admiration. . . .

Fomin looked down superciliously at the pitiful, bent back of his wife and the sharp shoulder-blades sticking out under her bodice, at her big trembling hands, painstakingly cleaning the dirt,

from his boots. "What an eyesore she is!" he was thinking to himself. "And to think I used to sleep with her. . . . But she's aged terribly. . . . My God, how she's aged!"

"That'll do! I'll get them dirty again in any case," he said crossly, freeing his feet from her hands.

She straightened her back with an effort and got to her feet. A little color had come into her sallow cheeks. There was so much love and doglike devotion in the moist eyes she raised to her husband that he turned away.

"Well, how are you getting on here?" he asked his mother.

"Same as usual," she replied sulkily.

"Has the food distribution detachment been here?"

"Just yesterday they left for Lower-Krivskaya."

"Did they take any grain from us?"

"Yes. How much did they take, Davidushka?"

The boy of fourteen, who had the same wide-apart blue eyes as his father's and resembled him, said:

"Grandad was with them, he knows. I think it was ten *chuvala*."

"So they took ten *chuvala*, did they?" Fomin got up, and with a quick glance at his son, settled his sword belt. He was rather pale when he asked: "Did you tell them whose grain it was they were taking?"

The old woman made a gesture to express the futility of such a thing; there was a touch of malice in her tone as she replied:

"They didn't seem to understand much about you. The fellow in charge of them said: 'Everybody has got to give up what grain he has to spare. Whether he's Fomin or the chairman of the district himself—we're going to take his spare grain just the same!' And there and then they started to pry about in the corn-bins."

"I'll get even with them, Mamma, I'll get even with them!" Fomin's voice sounded hollow. He hastily took leave of his relatives and went away.

After his visit home he went cautiously about the business of testing the mood of the men in his squadron and without much difficulty ascertained that the majority were dissatisfied with the behaviour of the food distribution detachments. Their wives and their other relatives came to visit them from the farms and villages, bringing tales of the searches made by the brigades who took away all the grain and left only enough for food and seed. The consequence was that at the end of January, when Shakhayev, the district military commander, was making a speech at the garrison meeting held in Baski, the men of the squadron protested openly. There were shouts:

"Take away the food detachments!"

"It's time to stop this grain business!"

"Down with the food commissars!"

The Red Army men from the garrison local guard replied shouting:

"Counter-revolutionaries!"

"Dismiss the dirty swine!"

The meeting was a long and stormy one. Agitated, one of the few Communists from the garrison appealed to Fomin:

"You ought to speak to them, Comrade Fomin. Just look at the tricks your squadron's playing!"

A smile disappeared in Fomin's mustache.

"They wouldn't listen to me—I'm not a Party member."

So, after sitting in silence awhile,

he left with Kaparin, the battalion commander, long before the meeting was over. On the way to Veshenskaya they discussed the situation and found they talked the same language. A week later, in the course of a confidential chat in Fomin's lodgings, Kaparin came to the point:

"It's now or never, so you might as well get that into your head, Yakov Efimovich! This is the most convenient moment—we've got to take advantage of it! The Cossacks will support us. You've got a great deal of influence in the district. . . . As for the sentiments of the population at present—you couldn't find a better time for our purpose. Then why wait? Make up your mind."

"What is there to make up my mind about?" Fomin drawled, watching Kaparin from under his eyebrows. "It's all decided, as far as I can see. The only thing we have to do is work out a plan, so as everything'll go off smoothly, so as nothing leaks out beforehand. That's what we've to talk about."

Their suspicious friendship did not remain unnoticed. Several Communists from the battalion kept an eye on them, and reported their suspicions to Artemyev (the head of the political bureau) and Shakhayev.

"A burnt child dreads the fire," was Artemyev's comment. He laughed. "A coward like Kaparin—he'll never go so far as to do anything. We'll keep an eye on Fomin, we've been watching him for a long time, but he'll hardly dare to come out into the open against us. It's all nonsense," he concluded in a decided tone.

But it was already too late to set a watch on the conspirators: they had laid their plot. The rebellion was fixed for eight o'clock on the morning of March 12. It had been arranged that Fomin was to take out the squadron with full equipment for morning exercise, fall on the machine-gun battery lying at the far side of the village, seize the guns, and after that help the guard to "clean up" the various Soviet offices and institutions in the district.

Kaparin was afraid his battalion might not give him its full support. Once he confided his doubts to Fomin. The latter listened to him attentively and then remarked:

"The thing is to get hold of the machine-guns. After that we'll settle your battalion in no time."

Though a careful watch was kept on Fomin and Kaparin, nothing was discovered. They rarely met and when they did, it was in connection with their duties. It was only at the end of February that the patrol saw them together in the street one night. Fomin was leading a saddled horse. Kaparin was walking beside him. When the sentry addressed them Kaparin answered. They went into Kaparin's lodgings. Fomin's horse was tethered to the rail of the steps. No light was lit in the room. At four o'clock in the morning Fomin came out, mounted the horse and rode home. That was all that could be ascertained.

Shakhayev communicated his suspicions of Fomin and Kaparin in a coded telegram to the commander-in-chief of the Don River Regional Forces. A few days later he received the chief's permission to dismiss Fomin and Kaparin from their posts and arrest them.

It was decided at the conference of the bureau of the District Party Committee to inform Fomin of the order, tell him that he was recalled to Novocherkassk where he was to await the orders of the commander-in-chief, and suggest that he hand over the command of his squadron to his second-in-com-

mand, Ovchinnikov. It was further decided to send the squadron to Kazanskaya that same day under the pretext that bands of rebels had appeared there; then the conspirators were to be arrested at night. Finally, it was decided to send the squadron out of the village for fear that the men might mutiny after learning of Fomin's arrest. Tkachenko, a Communist in command of the second company, was told to warn the Communists in the battalion and the company commanders as well of the possibility of a mutiny and to keep his company and the machine-gun platoon stationed in the village in complete readiness. Next morning Fomin received his orders.

"Well, you take over the squadron, Ovchinnikov. I've got to go to Novocherkassk," he said quietly. "Have a look over the papers, won't you?" Now, Company Commander Ovchinnikov was not a member of the Party, had not been warned, and suspected nothing. He at once became engrossed in the papers handed over to him. Fomin took advantage of the moment to scribble a note to Kaparin: "Attacking today. Am dismissed. Be ready." He handed the note to his orderly, who was waiting in the passage, and whispered:

"Stick it in your cheek. Ride to Kaparin's—but take your time. Go at footpace, mind you! If anyone stops you, swallow the note. Give it to Kaparin himself and come back as quick as you can."

Having received orders to go into action at Kazanskaya, Ovchinnikov lined up the squadron in the square in front of the church. Fomin rode up to him.

"Allow me to take leave of the squadron," he said.

"Of course, only don't be long, we've got to go right away." Fomin rode up to the squadron, and, controlling his restive horse, began:

"You know me well, boys, and you know what I've always fought for. I've always been on your side, always stood up for you. But I can't stand by and say nothing while the Cossacks, and in fact all the peasants, are being robbed right and left. And for that I've been dismissed. What they'll do with me I don't know. So I want to say goodbye to you all, boys. . . ."

The clamor and shouting interrupted him for a moment. He stood up in his stirrups and in a much louder voice, went on:

"If you want to have done with this daylight robbery, send the food detachments to hell out of here, kill the food commissars, all these Mursovs and Shakhayevs! They've come here to the Don and they—"

The noise drowned his last words. But a moment later he commanded in stentorian tones:

"Three paces to the right. . . . On the right—march!" The squadron obeyed. Completely bewildered by what was happening, Ovchinnikov rode up to Fomin.

"Where to, Comrade Fomin?"

"Round the church and back again," replied the other derisively, without turning his head.

And only then did Ovchinnikov grasp the full significance of the events of the last few minutes. He rode away from the line, followed by the political instructor, the assistant-commissar and one Red Army man. When Fomin noticed their absence, they were about two hundred paces away. Turning his horse, he shouted.

"Halt. Ovchinnikov!"

The four riders increased their pace from a trot to a gallop. Clots of melting snow were kicked up by the horses' hoofs.

"Fire! Go after Ovchinnikov! . . .

Number one company—after them!"

A bout of confused firing ensued. About sixteen men from number one company started in pursuit. Meanwhile, Fomin divided the rest of the squadron into two groups: one, in charge of the commander of number three platoon, he sent to disarm the machine-gun platoon, the other he himself led to the spot where the guard was stationed in what had formerly been stables, on the northern outskirts of the village.

Firing into the air and flourishing their swords, the first group galloped down the main street. They killed four Communists who fell in their way, then, lining up at the end of the village, they went silently into battle against the Red gunners who had turned out at the first alarm.

The house where the gunners were billeted stood by itself. The distance from it to the last farmyard in the village was not much more than two hundred yards. The gunners opened fire and the mutineers turned abruptly and retreated. Three of them were shot off their horses before they could reach the nearest side street. The attempt to catch the gunners napping had proved a failure. The mutineers made no second attempt. Chumakov, the commander of number three platoon, led his group into cover, and without dismounting, peered cautiously round the corner of the stone shed.

"They're fetching up two more Maxims!" he said. Then, mopping the perspiration from his brow with his sheepskin cap, he turned to the men.

"Let's go back, boys. . . . Fomin'll deal with the gunners himself. How many did we leave of ours in the snow? Three? Well, now let him have a try himself."

As soon as the firing started on the eastern border of the village, Company Commander Tkachenko dashed out of his lodgings, flinging on his clothes as he went, and ran to the barracks. About thirty of the men were already lined up outside the barracks. They greeted the company commander with puzzled inquiries:

"Who's shooting?"

"What's up?"

He made no reply except to line up the other men who now came running out of the barracks. Almost at the same moment some Communists from local offices joined them. Rifle shots could be heard at intervals. From somewhere on the western side came the hollow explosion of a hand grenade. A body of about fifty horsemen with drawn swords were making for the barracks. Tkachenko slowly pulled out his revolver. He had no time to give an order, the talk ceased suddenly and in silence the men raised their rifles.

"But these are our fellows coming! Look! There's the battallion-commander, Comrade Kaparin!" cried one of the men.

The riders burst out of the street and, as if at a word of command, crouched down on their horses' necks and made for the barracks.

"Stop them!" Tkachenko ordered sharply.

The first volley of rifle fire drowned his voice. A hundred paces from the close line of Red Army men four riders tumbled from their horses, the rest scattered, turned and rode back in disorder. Rifles cracked, and a spatter of bullets followed them. One of the riders was evidently wounded slightly, he slid out of the saddle, but held on to the bridle. He was dragged for about fifty yards by the horse, which was dashing full speed, then all at once he got to his feet, grabbed

the stirrup and the back of the saddle and in another instant had regained his seat.

Tugging desperately at the rein, he turned at full tilt and vanished up a side-street.

After a fruitless search for Ovchinnikov the men of number one platoon of the squadron returned to the village. Commissar Shakhayev was not to be found at the headquarters of the military committee nor at his lodgings. As soon as he had heard the firing he had gone down to the Don, crossed the ice to the woods, and made his way from there to the Baski farms; he turned up next morning at a village at the estuary of the River Khoper, fifty versts from Veshenskaya.

The majority of the people who occupied leading positions in the district offices managed to go into hiding in time. The search for them was not without its risks because the Red Army gunners occupied the middle of the village, and all the adjoining streets and lanes were within range of fire.

The men of the squadron ceased their searches, rode down to the river and swept on to the church square, the point from which they had begun their chase of Ovchinnikov. All Fomin's men assembled there very soon. They lined up in formation again. Fomin ordered a strong guard to be set, the rest to go back to their billets but not to unsaddle the horses.

Fomin, Kaparin and the platoon commanders retired to one of the houses on the outskirts.

"We're lost!" Kaparin cried in despair, helplessly dropping down on a bench.

"Yes. We didn't take the village. So we won't be able to hold out here," said Fomin softly.

"We'll have to raise the district, Yakov Efimovich. No use being timid now. We won't die before death comes, anyway. We'll raise the Cossacks and the village will be ours," Chumakov suggested.

Fomin looked at him in silence. Then he turned to Kaparin.

"What, feeling low, your honor? Wipe your nose. You plunged into it, don't look back. We went into this together, let's carry on together. . . . Should we clear out of the village or have another go? What do you think?"

"Let somebody else have a go! I'm not doing any more riding straight at machine-guns, no . . . that's no job for me. . . . " Chumakov broke in harshly.

"Hold your tongue! I'm not asking you!" Fomin glared at Chumakov till the man lowered his gaze.

After a short silence Kaparin said:

"No, of course there's no sense in beginning the second time. They're better armed than we are. They've got fourteen machine-guns, and we haven't even one. And they have more men, too. . . . What we've got to do is to clear out and organize the Cossacks. Before reinforcements arrive—the whole district will have risen. It's our only hope. It's our last hope now."

After a long time Fomin said:

"Well, that's what we've got to decide on, then. Platoon commanders, check the equipment and ammunition, see how many cartridges each man has. Give strict orders not to waste a single cartridge. The first man who disobeys—I'll kill with my own hands. Tell the men that." He paused a moment and then went on:

"Aye—the machine-guns! All your fault, Chumakov! If we could get hold of at least four of them! It's just the guns that are driving us out of the place. . . . Well,

we can break up the meeting now. We'll spend the night here if they let us alone, and as soon as it grows light, we'll move on—into the district. . . ."

The night passed uneventfully. On one side of Veshenskaya lay the mutineering squadron, on the other—the garrison company and the Communists with the members of the Young Communist League who had joined them. Only a couple of streets divided the opposing forces, yet neither ventured on a nocturnal attack.

In the morning the rebels left the village without giving battle and set off in a south-easterly direction.

PAUL VAILLANT-COUTURIER

The Perthes Gardens

I'm tired of always talking to you about myself. This story is about one of my intimate friends, an adjutant-major who told it to me one day while we were resting in a pine forest.

It is a story of spring.

"That time," he said, "I had a very small dugout next to the first-aid station, which I had to enter on my knees; it was a very small shelter dug in the shape of a coffin, wider at the head than at the feet. Room and bed in one. There was plenty of straw, a pole on which to hang the provision bags, a recess for the candles and two tunnelled exits through which the small field rats would come at night. . . .

"My battalion stood in reserve and I spent my time reading and sleeping in this hole.

"No bandages to be made, very little danger, nothing but the slight stir of the daily bombardments, and at night the sudden awakening by the shots fired to scare us, but which two rounds of seventy-fives would stop. Only two or three men every day to be sent to the base with spinal or stomach trouble. These chaps would catch typhoid fever in spite of all vaccinations.

"At that time I hadn't seen much war, and I had several false friends of the kind whom one only finds out when facing death. I was miserable.

"One day my battalion commander, a brave, intelligent and upright soldier (there are not many of that sort) sent for me.

"'You will go and reconnoiter in the village. You must find out the positions of the corpses which are contaminating the wells. See that you're not caught!'

"'Very good, sir!'

"And I went.

"The village was quite near.

"It was the end of April and so long since I had seen a village that I felt quite excited when I left the narrow trench for the grass-grown streets.

"They must have been killing each other in this place, since the second month of the war.

"The artillery of both sides had without discrimination and with sublime impartiality destroyed the village, and fire had completed the job.

"It was quite a big village, and must have been rich—one of those villages in Champagne which are more like a conglomeration of farms, their tall barns grouped around a

well and a church. Heaps of iron distorted and blackened by the flames still retained here and there the vague shape of agricultural machinery. Most of it still blocked the main road, the remains of barricades.

"When one is used to ruins the chief impression is not that of destruction. It is rather the pleasure of seeing some of the things still standing.

"I am not one of those who consider such sights picturesque. I detest this ghoul-like love of ruins.

"From time to time a bullet would whizz by and hit a wall; once a shell soared too high, its harmless shrapnel falling in a rumbling stream. My mission was not very pleasant and it soon made me tired.

"There were many corpses in the village, of men and of animals.

"I recall having stepped into what was probably the house of an old maid. The pots were still arranged in order on the unbroken mantelpiece, small pots, blue, pink and green. Images of saints hung everywhere. The cat had been killed and it lay stiff and bristling in a corner.

"In the priest's house I found a Latin bible and family photographs, touching, ridiculous in frames of red plush, and also some crucifixes of no particular interest. One very quickly feels one's self turning into robber, doesn't one? It is a profound instinct which the uniform, above all, seems to release in one. There was a small closet which I felt like carrying off.

"I think if I had got into Germany I would have taken away many interesting souvenirs, all of us would have. . . ."

I was going to protest in the name of the French army, but he resumed his story.

"Yes, the feeling that a thing belongs to somebody else disappears in the face of abandoned property. The absence of the owner, the privacy of the act and certainty of impunity make anyone capable of theft. . . .

"After all, it is an instinct.

"Just next to the house of the priest I came upon a very stiff corpse, that of an old man, still clutching a bundle of things which he must have meant to take with him in his flight. He had been killed, right on the threshold of his house, by a shell of no nationality. There are always poor fellows like this who refuse to abandon their homes or who only make up their minds too late. He had lived in a small house, still almost untouched, a small white one-story house with a pear-tree and large buds trained against the front wall and green shutters on the windows."

II

"I walked from house to house, holding my nose in some places, seeing things all the time: a donkey, three cows, a German, a Frenchman; these ruins were beginning to irritate me with their eternal broken and burnt beams, their broken plaster and pieces of torn wallpaper, when my orderly hailed me.

"I had taken him along with me (where bullets are flying about it is better not to go alone), for he was a brave and loyal fellow whom I had selected for his love of silence; it was he who revealed to me the living beauty of the village.

"'Why, the place is full of greens!' and at once he bent down to pick some.

"Vegetable gardens stretched behind the houses. Everything one meter above the ground had been mowed, but the juicy grass, the primroses, the tiny violets, the anemones and vegetables in

the gardens were thriving peacefully. . . .

"Spring itself was there with its tender green, adorning the gardens in which luxurious clumps of daffodils were springing up.

"One could not grudge nature her quiet serenity in the midst of the destruction of human things; on the contrary, one rejoiced in it all eagerly. I felt returning to me other months of April, those of my childhood, in the undulating, peaceful and rich country of Quercy. . . .

"First I sat down on the grass and then I lay down. I imagined the entire world reduced to a very small size, a world as seen by an insect in these gardens, to whom the paths were valleys, the garden beds hills, and the chicory patches forests. . . .

"And that was enough for me. It was childish and ridiculous, I grant it, and my orderly, seeing me stretched out on the ground in the sun and chewing the stem of a flower, began to laugh silently without stopping to cut the heads of lettuce, which evidently gave him a pleasure similar to what I felt.

"It is a strange thing that one still can feel so young. I felt the physical joy of a dog, in rolling in the thick grass, a joy which I had not felt for a long time, and I was so happy to see everything at my feet when I rose, that I forgot all about my mission, the corpses, the ruins and the war. . . .

"I could see nothing but beautiful plants and the sky. And best of all was that no ill-directed shell came, no stray bullet, so that I could enjoy fully, in my own way, the charm of the gardens planted by those whom the fighting had driven away."

III

"When at last I awoke to reality it was late. My orderly was sitting next to me, quietly plucking the leaves from an enormous bunch of dandelion lettuce.

"I got up, he got up, and we set off. It was near the hour of the daily bombardment.

"I did not go through the narrow trench, I crossed long open spaces without being fired at, and meeting a water fatigue, I followed it.

"They went to a well that had not been proscribed; the other well, the one on the square, I noticed as I was coming along was almost full of dead bodies, which had been thrown into it after the battle. This is simple, the ditch is already dug—and then it might be a form of atrocities.

"The well that had not been proscribed was near the first-aid station.

"I was astonished, on getting up to the well, to see crosses on recent graves all around the stone coping. The ambulance men of an adjacent regiment had found it a convenient place to bury the wounded who had died at the position opposite.

"I reported the lot, although I myself was one of them.

"Though I don't like picking flowers I took back daffodils, which in the half of a red shell, filled with water, lived in my tiny dugout and recalled to me every morning, when I awoke, the hour I spent in the beautiful gardens of the ruined village of Perthes."

I feel as if I had myself lived through this story, told to me by my comrade.

And so I felt the true joy of romping in the fresh April grass the first time I left my trench to lay wire among bullets, bombs and the dead.

These childish joys are the only ones left to us out there.

A Relief

Speaking of joy I should like to tell you also of the leave which is a three days' joy according to regulations.

You must have seen plenty of photographs in the magazines with the captions such as:

"Troops of the first line going on leave," or "How our brave *poilus* amuse themselves on leave," (I use this term, which is heard very little out here, just to quote the language of the newspapers); or again simply: "On leave."

These pictures generally show splendid warriors in small, dainty villages, hardly touched by shells. All this could not have given you a very exact idea of what a relief or leave really is.

You'd be surprised if I were to describe it to you hour by hour.

Tonight I will speak of the first day only, the day of relief.

The first day of leave, like the other days, officially begins at midnight. But at midnight we are still in the trenches. Of course, it has been raining and it is still raining. The day and the evening before have been spent in tedious work: counting the rockets, counting the bombs, counting the grenades, counting the heavy and portable tools, counting the embrasures, counting the shields, the ladders, the fascines, the splinter protectors, the foot-bridges, the shields for the look-out men, the gabions, the hurdles, the round and heavy logs, the sand bags, the cartridges and the shells in an endless coming and going of all kinds of papers, accounts rendered, orders, counter-orders, statements and notes with resolutions.

One begins to realize that military people overburden their existence with formalities and all kind of papers more than anybody else....

They are most particular as to the shape of the paper and the way of writing. . . .

We have to repair in haste as best we can a broken parapet and, just to satisfy a few vanities, we perform endless work, thereby attracting in the too-clear light the enemy's fire, and having two or three of the lads killed by falling bombs.

And now it looks as if the relief is really coming. I cannot say I have ever felt sorry to be relieved (the chances of death decrease as one gets away further from the front), but I have often left certain sections with regret. Everything, apparently, depended on the dangers which I had been exposed to.

But in the wretched life here, nothing is, after all, more pleasant for the chief of a section than an almost quiet trench in which he is his own master at certain hours and where, above all, he enjoys precious, invaluable solitude.

I have become so accustomed in my everyday life to choosing my own surroundings that the companions who are forced upon one in the army, especially those who have to be of a certain category

have always (with rare exceptions) appeared to me intolerable.

It has always been among my men that I have found the best companions. They have nothing to hope for.

It is half-past eleven.

The relief was expected for nine o'clock. The men have had their packs on ever since and are waiting, stretched out on the shooting embankment, their feet in the water. As the packs have already been put on, they are unable to open up their tents, and the rain is running down the backs of their necks. Shots ring out in the distance and the noise of small chunks of mud sliding along the parapets into the dirty pools of water may be heard from time to time.

It is now midnight and the rain pours still harder.

Then the order comes to put all the men under the protection of the covered trenches, all except the look-out men.

Splashing through the water and striking the walls with empty mess-plates and bayonets, the men move with exasperating slowness. The enemy opposite us hears us, sends over four or five bombs and begins to send up light-rockets.

These dark nights are always the most nerve-wracking of all.

Suddenly a rumor is spread that we are not going to be relieved at all.

The men, overloaded, buttoned into their coats, can hardly move. I come upon a man relieving himself right there, in his shelter, among his comrades. What can I say? Stale odor of sweat, cloth and wet dogs is exhaled.

Before the men have had time to spend a quarter of an hour in their shelter an order comes telling them to leave. The battalion which is to relieve us has been announced, and the waiting in the rain begins all over again.

Perhaps we are really going to move now. . . . It's high time.

I for one have a sensation of burning in my feet caused by the cold and the damp. The strings of my pack cut my shoulderblades. I arrange my pack, I remove it and rearrange it again. . . . I cheat my hunger by nibbling at a small piece of chocolate.

II

Half an hour past midnight. A liaison officer, feeling his way in the dark, brings a second lieutenant reeking of alcohol and tobacco to me. Introductions. We make a tour of the trench and exchange pass-words.

So far, so good. But when I emerge I find the narrow passage completely obstructed. The relieving section has occupied it too soon, and the men are crushed, pressed against the parapet, belly to belly, their straps, cartridge belts and instruments tearing their clothes.

Men are swearing, muttering to one another—a veritable hell.

"It's you, is it?"

"What company?"

"Don't you see I can't get past?"

"Many casualties?"

"Are there any embrasures on which the enemy keeps a particular eye?"

"Were you really attacked here yesterday?"

"No!"

"They say you were."

And from somewhere come the repeated loud belchings of a drunk causing stifled laughter among the men. . . . The enemy begins to send up his rockets all over again, these dumb, bad, greenish-white missiles followed by bullets.

I'd be just as pleased not to stay here.

I give the signal for the departure, but nobody moves.

Well, I will have to move up to the head of the section. . . .

Suddenly a rumor is passed from man to man:

"They have been asking why the fourth section is not moving."

Well, that's all I needed; this means that they are waiting for us.

The gentleman who relieves me quietly establishes himself in my shelter.

At last I get to the head of my section, I don't know how, perhaps by climbing over the encumbered parapets, all along the section.

A company coming down the other way is just about to pass by, and we have to wait until it is gone.

The enemy begins to shoot with small rifle grenades, these terrible missiles which have done us so much harm in this sector.

A vague anguish oppresses everybody. It would be stupid to let oneself be killed while leaving.

The man have leaned their packs against their stacked rifles. They speak no more, for the war of bombs has taught them to listen.

It was a mistake, it was not the fourth section of my company that had been called for; somebody has sent along an order which was handed over to the company that just passed by.

A wet paper is passed from hand to hand till it gets to me: "Change of route; the return will be effected by way of trench 12-bis, crossing the village. Point of assembly: first-aid station. Normal order."

All right. "Right about, march!"

I am furious, I change the route diametrically, I pass squarely over the parapet and stumble over some wire which makes me fall heavily on the men and on the bags, with a noise of broken dishes and sheet iron. . . .

At last I reach my post, completely covered with liquid chalk.

"Ah, here you are," ironically remarks my successor, who has already made himself at home.

I do not answer and march on. The men follow me in single file with difficulty, they start moving and follow with a squelching of mud and clattering of iron.

Every ten meters I sink into holes full of water which at first I try to avoid, but later give it up. I now march in the middle, it is much simpler.

In some places it smells very bad. We must be crossing the "trench of the dead." The village cannot be far away now. . . . My boot strikes against something soft and round in the water, a corpse—but no, it is only a loaf of bread, soaked with water, which someone from the relieving party must have thrown away to ease his burden.

I get in touch with my company.

We are not yet out of reach of these accursed bombs which one still hears whistling by from time to time, but too late. One feels angry at one's feet making that noise in the water.

We get into 12-bis and reach the first-aid station and the village.

Halt!

"Ask whether everybody is here."

"Answer that everybody is present."

We breathe freely.

It is not two o'clock yet. We shall have enough time to reach the resting place before it gets light.

This habit of living at night has sharpened our perceptions and given us a new, rather sad sense of life. We feel at ease in the darkness. The night is the domain of animals which find in it their best refuge when being hunted.

Man is driven by it to anguish and to fear light.

III

I put down my pack which has been weighing me down. Suddenly I hear a series of dull explosions behind us. It was an unbroken succession of French light rockets in the sky.

The relief party has been surprised and the enemy has sent several detachments of grenade throwers to attack the dangerous spots. . . . Curiosity to know what has happened. Satisfaction not to be there ourselves (people do not think of those who are there), that's all.

But all this will end up with artillery fire and the shells are going to drop right where we are.

A salvo of 75 whistles over our heads and bursts in the first line.

"Up. . . . Forward, march!"

The men who have been sitting and lying, delay the start, slipping in the mud and becoming entangled in their own things; all at once they begin to move at a more rapid pace.

We are being bombarded.

The connection has been lost.

Over there a heavy shell explodes on the parapet, in front of me, throwing up an enormous column of mud which bespatters everybody.

Everybody lies down in the pools at once, huddling miserably.

"Anybody been touched?"

"No."

"Forward, march!"

The halt only serves to emphasize our isolation.

One must not think of running and there is always the risk of getting lost with the troubles and difficulties involved in getting back.

I march at random.

And yet, as we advance, the trench seems less deep, our heads and then our chests are soon on a level with the ground, and, as we reach the top of a hill, the passage stops altogether.

There I reestablish contact. The black line of sections which preceded me stretches out motionless in the open camp.

"Lie down!"

Around us the bullets fall weakly and bury themselves in the soft ground at the end of their flight.

I hear the captain shouting in the dense, moist air. . . . His shrill voice sounds comic and painful.

Evidently he has got lost and now he is looking for somebody to blame.

A long pause. Some reconnoitering has now to be done. The men find the place ill-chosen for a stop, they are grouchy and make themselves as small as possible.

Somebody moans in front of us, someone is wounded. It is astounding that not many more of us have been hit.

Shall I put my section back, where the trench is deeper, or shall I remain here? The bullets miaow, scream and whizz, their noises mixing with the pitiful call of a plover, that weeper of the battlefields.

"Forward, march. . . ."

Despite the load and our fatigue we rapidly cross the zone under fire without any casualties and, with a resounding jump, we disappear one after one into a new muddy trench. Inside we advance with difficulty. The slimy water sometimes reaches up to the knee and our boots stick to the slimy bottom.

Stop. A man falling. Those who follow him push him with their feet and the butt of their guns in an attempt to make him rise.

But he does not move, half sunk in the liquid chalk.

I bend over his body and I flash on a pocket light. . . . He is dead all right.

I don't know how it happened that a stray bullet struck him in the temple.

"Pass the news down the line. A man has been killed. Berdeilles, of the third section."

A pause.

"Ask whether he is really dead."

"Yes."

There is no doubt. The reply comes back in different intonations—mostly tired ones, from man to man, the horrible expected answer, the only one.

"Then let's get on the move."

And the men step over the dead body. It is still too fresh to be stepped upon.

IV

The passage becomes impossible to use. The mud rises up to my thigh.

We climb over the embankment and again we march in the open, without any danger now, in a small wood heavy with raindrops.

A finer rain falls now and we march straight ahead, the mud forming a second pair of trousers on us, up to the stomach, the feet tortured by the unevenness of the path; it is an endless march which begins across the chalky undulating desert, sitting down hard during rest, departing to the sound of a whistle, stretching our stiffened bodies; to me it is like the eternal running of the shepherds' dog along the black on the march. . . .

Finally, at five o'clock we arrive under a dirty greyish sunrise; this is the cantonment, made up of huts in a pine wood.

We were so tired that to us it looked like the promised land.

When the men were quartered I swallowed a cup of coffee laced with spirits and went to drown my exhaustion in the perspiration, the mud and the dirt of six days on straw full of lice.

And now the sleep that I wanted so much, the sleep that overtook me on the march just a little while ago, failed to come on account of the field rats. . . . I listened. . . . Little pieces of chalk falling down suddenly, sudden darts in the rustling straw, short squeaks and grinding teeth, and within me the perpetual apprehension of cold paws passing over my face.

At last heavy animal sleep overcame me.

And this sleep is the first and greatest joy of the rest.

Only a Fly Has Been Crushed

The number of rickshaws in Shanghai had been increased by one: it was Djiu, the "Kan-poo-ning"—the man from the other bank of the Yangtze River.

To the inhabitants of Shanghai, "Kan-poo-ning" is a scornful nickname, applied to the poorest of the poor.

Djiu, the wretched owner of three *moos* of land, could not make both ends meet and was compelled to leave his native village. He left his house, sold his

miserable belongings and together with his family—his wife, daughter and son—he went south.

The "Kan-poo-nings" make up the majority of the common laborers, longshoremen, porters and rickshaw drivers in Shanghai. The "Kan-poo-ning" are human cattle, beasts of burden. The large Shanghai herd consists mainly of "Kan-poo-ning." And Djiu, by his coming to Shanghai, increased the number of these wretched people. He moved into a bamboo hut on the shore of the canal, on the other side of Chapei, not far away from a straw hut which housed a fellow-villager of his. When Djiu came to town his entire wealth amounted to less than one dollar in small coin—245 coppers—and to find work in Shanghai was quite impossible.

Never before had Djiu left his village. He was a very simple man and comprehended things very slowly; he was unable to think of several things simultaneously. When he had to buy moldy rice for his food, having previously sold his good rice, he would go and buy that rice. But if at the same time he had to buy red paper and a candle in memory of his ancestors, he was unable to do all this at once. First he would bring home the rice and only then would he go for the candle. Perhaps he was no more stupid than the rest, but his reason still lay dormant.

To make up for it he was sound and strong of body and his muscles were beautifully developed. But of what use was his physical strength in the village when the exhausted soil which he cultivated did not yield enough to even pay taxes and levies?

He asked his neighbor Liu what he could do in the city, where the factories had closed down and trading in the port had been reduced on account of the crisis. People must eat just the same, mustn't they?

"If you like," Liu replied, "the two of us will hire a rickshaw and pull it day and night in turn. I will look for one."

This Liu was a very cunning fellow. He went to a man who rented out rickshaws in a small way, with whom he had had dealings before, and offered him a dollar a day for the use of a carriage.

When he returned he proudly showed the carriage to Djiu and said:

"I hired it for a dollar and twenty cents. You will pay me sixty cents for this evening when you come back."

And as if apologizing, Liu added to himself:

"In this life it's always one who drinks the vinegar, while the other gets the oil."

These words expressed what the entire gang of middlemen who exploit the rickshaws might have said.

A business man, well-known to the French Municipality or to the Municipal Council of the International Settlement, some *hong*, or even doctor, lawyer, banker, saloon or dive owner, pays graft to an important official to get a certain number of licenses for carriages at, say, a dollar a month per license. The deal is closed and the licenses handed out to a speculator who does not own a single carriage. But he is connected with some owner of a small business who has obtained six hundred carriages at fifty dollars each in expectation of the deal. This owner acquires a thousand licenses at two and a half dollars each and the surplus four hundred licenses he re-sells to an owner of two hundred and fifty carriages at three dollars a license. The latter, in his turn, re-sells one

hundred and fifty licenses at three and a half dollars each to the owners of five, ten and twenty carriages. Thus, when the license reaches the rickshaw driver, who is compelled to pay a dollar and twenty cents a day for the use of the carriage, a whole chain of middlemen has already managed to make big profits on his labor.

There are more than thirty-five thousand rickshaws in Shanghai.

The rickshaws are an indication of the enormous number of people in China. Why have horses and tractors, why provide the docks with cranes and chains with which to unload ships, when China abounds with people to such an extent that nobody knows what to do with them? A governor heaves a sigh of relief here when half a million people perish in a flood or a famine in his province.

And so Djiu started out with his carriage.

He thought that to pull the carriage was a simple thing. But, unfortunately, this is far from being the case. This trade has to be learned just like any other. The human horse must be trained like a real horse. And very often, during the training, a street car or an automobile renders the training useless. Of course, one must be able to run and almost without panting; everything depends on the lungs and the heart. But one must know not only how to run, it is also necessary to know how to turn, to gauge the distance between the wheels and the length of the shafts, to know how to stop or slow down sufficiently when another carriage has to be allowed to pass by, and not to lose one's pace while doing so. One has to know how to ascend hills, lowering the shafts, and how to squeeze in between other rickshaws at stops. Each gesture of the policeman and the color of the lights which he turns on and off, all this must be known exactly. And finally, it is necessary to remember firmly that inviting a fare, though practiced by everybody, is prohibited under threat of a fine of fifty cents.

But one can easily get along without knowing the city. And Djiu thought that it was sufficient to know how to run and pull the carriage, to earn a living in a large city.

And so Djiu departed, giving a half of his remaining coppers to his wife to buy rice and vegetables.

First he went up North Szechuan Road towards Soochow Creek. There, perhaps, he could have found a fare, but his attention was completely absorbed by the sight of the street. He was afraid of everything: a truck which passed by, loaded with cases or policemen; an armored car, an automobile rushing by with the speed of wind. He did not know whether to look right or left, at the stores which attracted his attention or at the cars and carriages which threatened him. He was able to think of one thing at a time only.

It was a warm spring evening; now and then it would rain and a gust of wind would rise and die. But Djiu was covered with perspiration at the mere sight of things.

Several times stray fares came over to him, attracted by his strength, but either he noticed them too late or the other rickshaw drivers, who were cleverer and swifter than he, got ahead of him and seated the fare when Djiu was only about to approach him.

Djiu's attention was held by the Soochow Creek. Sampans and boats stood all along the shore, and how many of them! And how

many people lived, worked, slept, ate and digested here! Unable to tear himself away from the sight, he stood there, his hands flat on the shafts of the carriage, in complete forgetfulness that he had to earn sixty cents before daybreak. He would have remained in this position a long time, but for a Chinese who emerged from the post office, pushed down the shafts most resolutely, sat down in his carriage and said: "Djofu Loo, twenty coppers," pointing to the direction with his fan.

Djiu replied "*Hoa*"[1] and trotted away.

He had no idea of the distance or of what Djofu Loo meant. But Djofu Loo, otherwise Avenue Joffre, is at the other end of Shanghai, in the French Concession, which has about two thousand houses.

At this hour the streets are usually crowded. Straining his every muscle, Djiu, as if possessed by demons, got to the bridge with a single pull, but right there he had to descend. He held his carriage with great difficulty, for he still did not know how to balance the weight of the fare by leaning back and jumping from one foot to another. He wanted to push the wheel against the sidewalk, as a brake, and in doing so he almost hit with his shafts a policeman who stood on duty right at the bridge.

The fare, a respectable stout Chinese, wearing gold-rimmed glasses, muttered something with displeasure. The policeman raised his baton and the nearby rickshaw drivers began to mock the clumsy greenhorn, showering derision on him, but Djiu paid no attention to them, sure of his strength. He was completely absorbed by his role of human horse.

When he got mixed up with other carriages, carts and automobiles in crossing the Doumer Road, the unusual noise, the quantity of light, people, trams and carriages scared him to such a degree that he made a dash sideways like a frightened animal, almost throwing his fare out of the carriage. This time the Chinese lost his temper and Djiu, conscious of his guilt, kept quiet.

In imitation of the other rickshaw drivers he soon learned to shout "ho-ho," as a warning. Djiu tried to pass everybody else, for he felt the strongest among all of them.

From time to time the fare would bend over to him and name a street, pointing the direction with the fan.

Djiu was soaked with perspiration. He ran without looking back and without asking how far he still had to go.

He ran along Djofu Loo, he crossed Doubay Loo (Dubailles Avenue), Lobe Loo (Pierre Robert Avenue), Metsie Loo (Cardinal Mercier Road), Latoo Loo (Latour Road), Dume Loo (Doumer Road), the perspiration was streaming down his body, the blood was hammering at his temples and his chest was heaving, rising and falling like bellows. . . .

When he reached Duffoo Loo (Dufour Road) the fare signaled him to turn to the left. They found themselves on Concession territory and stopped somewhere on Sia Too Road. The fare placed twenty coppers arranged in a column into the hand of the stupefied and panting Djiu and disappeared shrugging his shoulders. . . . Djiu had run three-quarters of an hour without stopping.

He carefully hid his coppers in his leather belt. The poor fellow was all wet and his rags stuck to his body. He wanted to have a little rest and, lowering the

[1] *Hoa*—good.

shafts, he sat down next to the carriage. But at this moment a strong wind began to blow and sent an icy cold through his entire body.

It seemed to him that the cold was fanning a fire in his chest. It began to rain. Then, fearing to get lost, Djiu turned back along the road which he had just covered. He splashed through the pools, and the cruel rain pelted him all the way. It was an endless road and he failed to meet a single fare.

As he went along Albe Loo (Albert I Road) past the large hotel, lit up with its red lights, at which hundreds of rickshaws daily waited for the return of the basketball fans from High Alley, he was suddenly caught in a whirlwind of carriages rushing somewhere. He was an excellent runner and therefore, although he did not understand a thing, he ran like a race-horse and soon he was at the head of the escaping drove.

This is what had happened: the French police, armed with sticks, had raided the rickshaw drivers to check up on their licenses and to fine them for violating the parking regulations. With the help of a detachment of Chinese police, on foot and on bicycles, a regular hunt of people began under the leadership of a tall Russian white-guard wearing the uniform of a French policeman. And the white-guard prostitutes were amused at the spectacle.

Many carriages were upset during the flight. The policemen tore the cushions and license numbers from them. The rickshaw drivers who managed to escape stopped at a distance and looked at what was going on. Taking no chances five or six of them ran up Dume Loo and from there they proceeded to the International Settlement; among them was also Djiu.

It was getting late and Djiu had "made" one ride only. He was soaking wet and a cold shiver ran over his body.

On Edua Loo (Edward VII Road) a drunken foreign soldier, yelling a song in the company of more drunks, climbed into Djiu's carriage and addressed him in a language which he did not understand. Djiu was still very inexperienced and he did not know what luck had befallen him, for it was possible to get a small silver coin from a white man, regardless of the ride. Djiu was badly scared of his red-faced fare, while the latter was laughing aloud like the other drunken soldiers who had hired other rickshaws, who also failed to understand their language. The soldier swore terribly and showed Djiu the way, driving him on with short strokes of a bamboo stick on his arms, thighs and back. And Djiu obeyed like a good human horse which realized all the imperfections of his training. From time to time he would turn round, even trying to smile at his ferocious fare.

When the fare dismounted he handed Djiu a small silver coin and Djiu was very pleased. . . . The other rickshaw drivers, however, argued with their fares and ran after them. The cops who stood on their beat at the sailors' tavern "Charleston," threatened them with their sticks, even tearing the cushion from one carriage and demanding fifty cents for its return.

"Don't you know you must always overcharge a foreigner? They don't know what the real price is," a rickshaw driver said to Djiu. (This rickshaw driver was coughing badly and a large adhesive plaster was stuck on his right side.) "You always should ask more than they will give."

But neither Djiu nor the rick-

shaw driver realized that the first manifestation of class consciousness gleamed in these words.

When a rickshaw driver saw that it was easier to get money out of a foreigner, he naturally understood that he was dealing with a man to whom his labor represented a certain value. And since the foreigner ignores all the fine points of the rickshaw drivers' exploitation, one may ask a better price from him. In the mind of the rickshaw driver the idea was vaguely taking shape that his labor could be valued not only in coppers but in silver coins as well.

Djiu went on and on without stopping. The dawn was drawing near. the taverns were empty. Djiu had only two rides to his credit and he had earned hardly the half of what he owed Liu. He followed the other rickshaws and passed the Bund, hanging around Broadway and Szechuan Road, but finding no fares. He was hungry but he would not even dream of spending money to buy some of the biscuits which street boys in rags were selling. Near the "Black Cat" he came upon some coolies playing "straws."

And Djiu thought that he might play and win.

He began to play and won; he played again and lost; he kept on playing and lost the silver coin which the drunken soldier gave him. Again he won, but then he lost also some of the coppers which had been left over from the sale of his things. He would have continued to play, but a pretty Korean prostitute, tired of dancing and playing, emerged from the "Venus," touched his shoulder and pointed in a certain direction.

And Djiu ran. Only then did he realize the whole gravity of his loss. He had no money with which to pay Liu and there was no money to buy rice the next day. Nothing to give to the children to eat. He had no more than three hours to make good what he had lost. He had to find fares at any cost, five, ten fares.

The human horse stumbled in the shafts, and the sleepy prostitute swore at him. But he did not hear what she had said. He ran as fast as he could, to earn money with which to buy rice.

Suddenly, a bright light flared up around a turn and the crash of broken glass, wood and iron was heard . . .

With a loud scream the prostitute ran away.

Djiu lay there with a broken skull under an armored car belonging to the Japanese patrol service.

But for this accident Djiu might have lasted five more years, pulling his carriage. On the average the rickshaw drivers work five years after which they die. Some of them last only two years, others drag on for ten. Djiu lasted a single night only.

And there was one rickshaw less in Shanghai.

Translated from the French

MARKO CHEREMSHINA

St. Nicholas Under Arrest

Marko Cheremshina, the prominent Western Ukrainian short-story writer, was born on the 13th of July, 1874, in the mountain village of Kobaki. In 1896 he entered the law school of the Vienna University, and a year later he took active part in an anti-government student outbreak. Having completed his studies, Cheremshina practiced law in Deliatin, and later in Sniatin where he remained for the rest of his life. He died on the 25th of April, 1927.

Cheremshina launched his literary career with a short story, *Kermanich*, when he was still a young student. He was strongly influenced by the famous Russian writer Chernishevsky; especially was Cheremshina impressed by Chernishevsky's popular novel, *What Is To Be Done?* The Ukrainian writer, Franko, who helped Cheremshina with advice and criticism, also had a great influence on the young writer.

In his writings, Cheremshina continued the great traditions of the Ukrainian revolutionary-democratic literature and its most prominent representatives—Taras Shevchenko and Ivan Franko. His short stories, vivid and rhythmical as a poem in verse, depict the hopeless poverty of the Ukrainian peasantry oppressed by the Polish *pans*, gendarmes and officials.

Many of Cheremshina's stories deal with episodes of the first imperialist war. In these stories he painted the terrible devastation the war brought to the poverty-stricken villages.

Most characteristic of Cheremshina's short stories are an indirect revelation of the psychology of his characters, terse dialogue, and a profound lyricism tinged with an occasional undercurrent of delicate irony.

"Hush! There he comes!"

"To whom?"

"To us!"

"Where is he?"

"Hush! He is near Primak's fence already! Vassily! Run up to the attic once more."

"What for?"

"Cover the garments with those hemp-rests and put a stone over the plank."

"It's been done!"

"Then take off the fur jacket, because he'll take it away."

"No, he won't; I'll run away."

"Has mother hidden her shawl?"

"Yes, she has."

"And how's the pit?"

"I've strewn it with ashes, he won't notice."

"Father!"

"What do you want?"

"Let me have your hat, too."

"Take it, and off with you!"

There appeared from behind the fence a man all dressed in black, in a hat with a black-and-yellow cord trimming around its edge and a round button in its front. The button protruded over the smooth top of the hat. The man was holding a big book under his left arm and a stick in his right hand. Two peasants were following. One of

them was carrying a huge bundle of peasant's attire and garments.

"Is Kurylo Sivchuk at home?"

Silence . . .

"Hey, is Kurylo Sivchuk at home?" shouted the man somewhat louder.

"Why shouldn't he be, your highness," replied a hoarse and muffled voice out of the hut. The dark, sooty door creaked, and a man of middle height entered. He had a thin, wrinkled face. His hair was uncombed. A dark, torn shirt showed his bony chest and dry ribs. He wore shabby, reddish trousers and no shoes. There was no need of introducing him. Ages and ages of misery had shaped his frame, branding it in crude letters—*muzhik*.

"I am at home, thanks heaven and . . ." Kurylo Sivchuk repeated, bowing.

"Why don't you answer when called?" the visitor shouted.

"I did, beg your pardon, didn't I?"

"We came to take your goods to cover taxes."

"Yes, my honorable tax-collector."

"What kind of cattle have you?"

"Castle did you say? Nothing have we, but four bare walls. We are poor, kind sir."

"I say, have you any cattle?"

"No stock, such is god's will, dear sir. We have had no meat for a long time."

"You lie! Juror, let's go inside."

"You're welcomed humbly, my dear sir!"

The tax collector pushed the half-opened door with his stick. The door creaked and swung to the very wall. The tax-collector stooped and stepped over the threshold. One juror followed and then Sivchuk. The other juror remained with his bundle in the yard, preparing strings for another.

"But where are your things?" demanded the tax-collector, looking at the bare walls.

"Poor we are, my dear, sweet sir. Four walls and . . . You see with your own eyes, dear sir, might god bless you!"

"I don't see anything."

"Well, there's nothing nice to be seen for a noble man's eyes, nothing but misery and poverty!"

"Is this your wife?"

"Yes, sir, she is."

Kurylo Sivchuk's wife, who had been standing motionless, in a black shirt and without a shawl,[1] stepped closer to her husband and cast a sidelong glance at the tax-collector's eyes.

"Nothing have we, my handsome and gracious lord, I even have no shawl to wear."

"We have nothing," echoed Sivchuk, "we might as well starve to death."

"But where do you sleep?"

"Not to abuse your lordship and the images of saints, we sleep on the ground, and the children on the bench."

"What did you say you sleep on?"

"On the bare ground."

"But where are your pillows?"

"No pillows, we rest our heads on our fists."

"You are a liar!"

"All that we have is here, sir! You can search wherever you choose."

The tax-collector quickly strode across the room and poked his stick in a corner, in another, in the third and fourth. He saw that there was nothing for him to take. A long plank fixed to three posts occupied the front wall. It served as a bench; a somewhat shorter plank which was a "table." In the middle of the room was

[1] Peasant women in the Ukraine, even the poorest ones, usually wear a shawl round their head.

a pit with some ashes in it—this was the "stove."

The tax-collector took it all in, but he continued the "search." Suddenly he stopped, his eyes caught by something hanging on the wall above the "table." That was an ikon wooden frame, so covered with soot that only dirty-yellow streaks were seen instead of the saint's face, head and halo. The frame alone, evidently carved by the chisel of some skilful *Hutzul*, was dignified and attractive. Sivchuk noticed that the *pan* was peering at the ikon, and scratched his head.

"Here you have a piece of frame," the tax-collector muttered to himself.

"Forgive me, sir, it is Saint Nicholas."

"But the framework is nice."

"My great-grandfather chiselled it."

"Where did you get that ikon?"

"As I have already humbly told you, from my grandfather and great-grandfather."

"Witness, take off that image!"

"But how so, my dearest sir? Be merciful, leave us our saint," Kurylo begged.

"Be merciful to us, my dear and handsome lord," Kurylo's wife wailed.

The witness did not wait for a reply. He quickly took the ikon off the wall and carried it out into the yard. Some dust spread behind, and a square traced by cobweb remained on the place where the image had hung.

"But how will our home remain without a saint?" Kurylo grieved.

"Don't disgrace our home, dear sir," Kurylo's wife lamented.

"Don't waste your breath! I am going to auction your house, too, if you don't pay the taxes. Your debt is not yet cancelled," the tax-collector shouted as he stepped out of the hut.

"Jurors, Hrits Sayin is next."

They left . . . It was getting dark . . .

"Ma, I'll go to sleep, tell me 'Our father,'" said little Annychka, who was beginning to doze at the table after her meal.

"Kneel, my child, and put your hands together."

Annychka knelt, put her hands together, and raised her eyes to the very place where the ikon had hung. Only a bare wall was there now. Her eyes wandered round about all the walls, but they saw no ikon. She peered inquisitively into her mother's eyes, and uttered plaintively:

"Mother! Where is St. Nicholas?"

Vassylko and Petrik glanced at the wall and joined:

"Father, mother, where's St. Nicholas?"

Sivchuk looked at his wife, and she at him. They sighed. Then he said:

"Saint Nicholas is under arrest!"

"Has the tax-collector taken him away?"

"Yes, children, he has. Saint Nicholas is under arrest."

A Girl Deceived

The wench has got a bastard!

She covers her long braided hair[1] with a shawl, and cries, her face buried in her hands.

She has been deceived. There she goes with her bastard!

She plods through the forest. The grass takes fire wherever she treads. Oak-trees crash, and the earth trembles under her feet. The sun sinks.

A cuckoo is calling, sitting on a twig.

"Don't thou cry, cuckoo. Having eaten the *pan's* bread, I am a maiden no longer, and I dare not listen to thy cry. Why should I deceive thee, why should I cause thee trouble?"

"Thou hast given me a wreath,[2] my beloved, a fine wreath which sucks at my breast. Look, what a fine wreath. The forests are surprised to see me with such a wreath!

"And I shall enter the village, and people will stare at me. They will whistle as I pass, stop me, and shout at me.

"And they'll ask me: 'Where have you bought such a wreath, where have you gathered such flowers?'

"And I'll answer them: 'I have been at a *pan's* who has such a garden!'

"Or else I'll tell them truly: 'The *pan* tied my hands late in the night and I lay there helpless . . .'

"Or else I'll speak to no one, I'll flee from men."

The wind rustles, the wind heralds her shame to the village, the wind makes way for the girl deceived. The wind gathers the clouds together.

A cuckoo is calling, sitting on a twig . . .

"Thou has foretold such a good fate for me, cuckoo, such a joyous life! Now a new life clings to my bosom, remaining with me forever.

"Swains will meet me, they will ask me: 'Where is the place where the lads are so sinful as to have done you wrong?'

"And I'll answer them: 'Might you marry no sooner than I become a maiden again! Why did you avoid me, seeking dowry?'

"This is what I'll tell them. . .

"No, I will tell them nothing, I'll only curse them for letting a girl go away from the village.

"And if I don't curse them, I'll entreat them all: 'Don't you fear me, lads, I'll bring you no shame. I shall not go to the dances ever. Don't mock me, I am doomed and my heart is heavy.'

"And I shall warn the girls: 'Take heed of me, sisters, for my fate may be yours.'"

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[1] According to the old custom, only maidens had the right of braiding their long hair.

[2] A wreath of flowers is a symbol of maidenhood.

"A-a, a-a, a-a!
"Sleep, my chi-i-ld!"
The bastard howls at the top of its voice, for it is a child of sin, it has no father to shake his ax at it, or hush it by gritting his teeth.
"A-a, a-a, a-a!"
"My own bastard!"
The mountains cannot remain rooted in their places any longer, the sky is shaking, the entire universe is rocking as if in a cradle.
"Cu-ckoo! Cu-ckoo! ha, ha!
"My own bastard!
"I'll kneel, I'll greet my father and my mother.
"My mother will bless her old age and will rejoice: 'Oh! I have lived to see a solace, to have a granddaughter!'
"And I'll tell her: 'You have told me, mother, to obey the *pan*! And I obeyed him day and night.'
"And I'll kiss my father's hands: 'Father, I'm only guilty of having gone to work in the town, of having worked and fed you by working. And when I worked myself up to this, the *pan* fired me. So I have come to you, I'm your guest.'
"Then my mother will hold me by my tresses, and my father will take his granddaughter by her feet and will beat me pitilessly.
"And I'll beg for mercy.
"And then I'll go to look for a deep pool.
"And it will all be over . . ."

Translated from the Ukrainian

GRIGORI ROMM

Watchmaker and Doctor

A ONE-ACT PLAY

HE—A Jewish watchmaker aged sixty.

SHE—A Soviet army doctor about thirty or thirty-two years of age.

Scene: A small town in Western Byelorussia.

Time: Three days after the town had been occupied by Soviet troops.

The curtain rises on the interior of a wretchedly poor workshop; a bench, stool and a chair are the sole articles of furniture. The watchmaker is standing, an alarm clock in his hand.

HE: Ach! A life this is! Have I worked hard for thirty-eight years so that now I should stand here with this alarm clock and not know what to do with it: to put it in the show-window or not? Does Zalman Abramovich the watchmaker exist or does he not? It's only three days since the Bolsheviks came and look what they've done! Everything is upside down. There was a time when on the morning of every Sabbath the police officer would drop in, sit himself down and eat up everything we had for dinner—herring, chopped liver, soup, *gefillte fish* and meat; wash it down with a few glasses of *peisohovka*, wipe his whiskers and instead of thanking me, he'd say: "By god, your religion isn't so bad, after all!" and off he'd go. *Nu*, at Easter and Christmas and the New Year you'd have to give them money besides. Then Poland came. If it wasnt the police officer, so it was the elder from the *voyevodstvo*. What's the difference? He'd come in once a week and grab all you had earned in two. Then it would be quiet for a time. No one touches me. It's robbery, of course, but at least they leave me alone. I can sit at my bench and work as much as I like, ten, twelve, thirteen hours a day. Rent, taxes, duty and fees one has got to pay, doesn't he? . . .

And now? Nobody comes for money. In general, since this war started I haven't seen a soul for days. Abram Leizer, the tailor, says they will take everything away from us. What will they take? The "means of production." Well . . . His needle they'll take?

His scissors? My magnifying glass? *(Gestures).* Ai-ai-ai! *(Looks at the alarm clock.)* Maybe I should put it out after all. *(Moves toward the show-window.)* Hm, ridiculous: thirty-eight years that alarm clock has stood in the show-window and everybody knew that Zalman Abramovich was sitting quietly working. And all of a sudden no alarm clock. Is Zalman Abramovich dead or what? *(Places the clock in the window.)* Nobody in sight. They're all there by the highway. Nobody will come here anyway. Maybe Abram Leizer was right? Maybe I had better hide it? *(Removes the alarm clock from the window.)*... Ach . . . What does it matter anyhow? Let it be. At least we'll know where we stand. *(Puts the clock back in the window, and inserting his magnifying glass in his eye starts to work, singing a little song:)*

Avramenu, Isaakenu . . .
Little Father of ours . . .
Why dost thou not pray
To the good Lord for us . . .

I wonder what Berman, the hat maker, will do now. He has ten Polish uniform caps ordered, with lacing and badges what-all. And a box full of all sorts of epaulettes, shoulder-straps, brass buttons with eagles on them. Who needs all this now? For a masquerade ball? Why, the poor man will be ruined. Wife and five children, too. My business is safer. Clocks, watches—even the Bolsheviks have to look at a clock dial sometimes. *(Continues working and singing:)*

So that our wives should have food
And our little ones drink
Adonoi-oi-Eichod!

Enter SHE

SHE: Good day.

HE: Good day. *(Removes his magnifying glass. Aside.)* Gott mei-

Scene from the performance at the Moscow Theater of Miniature

ner, a woman! What shall I do? Never in my life did I bribe a woman. . . . What can I do for you, miss?

SHE: I have a small repair job here. *(Removes her wrist watch and hands it to him.)*

HE: A little repair job? Hm, I see. . . . *(Aside.)* Young enough but as shrewd as the rest of them. They all begin with that before asking for a bribe. *(Examines the watch.)* No crystal. Small hand broken, big hand bent. Must have dropped it, eh?

SHE: No, I got a nasty jolt in a car . . .

HE: It's stopped. Let's have a look at it. *(Opens the cover.)* Fine watch. We'll fix it for you. What's this? *(Reads the inscription engraved on the cover.)* "... For excellent work. Voroshilov." Voroshilov? Which Voroshilov? *The* Voroshilov?

SHE *(smiling): The* Voroshilov.

HE: Whose watch is it?

SHE: Mine.

HE: Yours? Eh. . . . Won't you sit down? *(Reaches for a chair.)* Excuse the disorder, please.

SHE *(reaches for a chair herself)*: That's quite all right. Please, don't bother.

HE: Ai, ai, ai. . . . Voroshilov! He gave you this watch, eh? Just a minute, just a minute. Fine watch. Very fine watch. I know a thing or two about watches, believe me. He-he! Many a thousand watches have passed through these hands. Just a minute. We'll find a crystal for it, and a hand. . . everything. *(Goes on working)* . . . Ai-ai. . . . Such a young lady and Voroshilov gives her a watch for "excellent work". . . Excuse me for asking but who may you be?

SHE: I'm a doctor.

HE: A doctor? Fine. And what did you get the watch for?

SHE: For my work during the battles at Lake Hassan.

HE: Hassan? That's a long way off, isn't it?

SHE: Yes, in the Far East.

HE: You're a brave girl. Fancy Voroshilov awarding you a watch. Your parents must have been pleased, eh?

SHE: My father and mother are dead.

HE: No father or mother? . . . What a pity. . . . Rewarded for work at the front. . . . A doctor, eh? Just imagine a woman and an army doctor. And my poor boy. . . .

SHE: Ilyusha?

HE: Yes, Ilyusha. Elchik. But how do you know his name?!

SHE *(smiling)*: Bolsheviks must know everything. Where is Ilyusha now?

HE: Ach, where is he. . . . As if I know? It's more than a year since I heard from him. The last letter he sent was from . . . what d'ye call the place? *(Consults a slip of paper.)* From *(reading in syllables)* . . . from Cal-cut-ta, Calcutta. A long way off it is. They say it's as far as Australia is from here and then two Americas more. . . . He's been gone five years now. . . . And plenty of trouble the police have given me because of him. You see, he ran away.

SHE: Ran away?

HE: Yes. He ran away to escape the draft. And why shouldn't he? You know what it means to be a soldier in the Polish army? And a Jew besides. . . . There's Isaac Shemelevich who lives across the street. His son was taken last year. A fine looking lad he was. A month later he came home on leave. He looked terrible. All his front teeth knocked out. He had been beaten up by everyone. No wonder. The family rejoiced six months later when he was released altogether, blood flowing from his throat. . . . And whom should one serve anyway? The *pans*? What for? For our misery? For our poverty? For the prisons they have built for the people? My poor Elchik, he also dreamt of becoming a doctor.

SHE: Perhaps he will become a doctor after all. Calcutta is a big city.

HE: Perhaps, who knows?

SHE: You'll know . . . soon. . . Now he can write to you. He can come home.

HE: Elchik? Come home? I'd like to believe you, young lady. . . excuse me . . . Mr. . . . er-Doctor. And no one will bother him?

SHE: No one, *Reb* Zalman, no one. As soon as he finds out to whom these parts belong now, he'll come home soon enough.

HE: Listen here—for god's sake, what sort of a person are you, anyway? Why, you know my name too. . . .

SHE: And I know your neighbors as well. I know Abram Leizer, and Shemelevich, and many others . . . Petkevich . . .

HE: Stepan Petkevich? Petkevich is gone. Died. He was murdered before our eyes. His wife died first. She was very sick. They never had enough to eat. Taxes killed them. . . . So he took his little daughter. . . .

SHE: Anna?

HE: Yes, his little daughter Annie, and he crossed the frontier. They were shooting at him, but he didn't even try to hide. He was desperate. Couldn't stand it any more. He ran on. Many of us saw it happen. He was shot down. But his little girl managed to get across to the Soviet side.

SHE: And what became of her? Do you know?

HE: What could become of her? She was a wild little thing. Her father was a good man, a hard worker, her mother, too. But the child had grown up on the streets. So what could you expect. Just a little bit of a thing—and yet she had already learned from the Poles to hate the Jews. Why, I can remember how she used to climb onto the fence and jeer at the passers-by:

Sheeny, Sheeny,
Who's behind you,

SHE *(laughing)*:
In a pitch black caul,
To snatch at your soul!

HE: Look here, you'll drive me mad. . . . Maybe you'll tell me who you are? Or else. . . .

SHE: Or else? *(Laughs.)*

HE: Or else. . . . Oh, I don't know. . . .

SHE: So you think nothing good could come of that little girl? Well, it might interest you to know that the Bolsheviks took this little Jew-hater and. . . .

HE: And what?

SHE: And made an army doctor of her.

HE: Annie! It can't be! Annie, Annie, my dear! *(Embraces her.)* Oi, excuse me, Miss Doctor. Annie, I must be losing my mind!

SHE: If you only knew, *Reb* Zalman, how happy I am to see you again. Forgive me if I once teased you. I was such a silly little thing then. . . . I recognized you at once. . . . I was walking down the street when I saw the old alarm clock in the window. And I knew *Reb* Zalman must be here. . . . You dear old thing, I wanted to come and see you right away. . . .

HE: So why didn't you?

SHE: You said yourself, just now, I was a—what did you call it—wild girl.

HE: Isn't she vengeful? Well, well, so you had to torment the old man a little. But it was worth while. Ach, what a pleasant surprise. Who would have thought it? Now tell me, how did it all happen?

SHE: It was very simple. They put me in a school, then another school, and then the university. The State paid the expenses. Komsomol took care of me and helped me.

HE: Who is Komsomol? He must be a fine person!

SHE: Very much so, but he is not one person. There are thousands of them, hundreds of thousands of them. All young. It's the Young Communist League.

HE: That's wonderful. That's a friend for you. If only my Elka had such friends. What did you say? Komsomol. *(Writes it down.)* I must write to him. And I'll tell him all about it. Who are these people you say? Young Bolsheviks?

SHE: Yes, the youth. Future Communists.

HE: Wonderful. . . . And to think that I was afraid of you.

SHE: Of me? Why?

HE: How do I know? A Jew in Poland is afraid of everything.

SHE: *Was* afraid.

HE: Yes, yes, there is nothing to be afraid of now. And yet . . .

SHE: And yet, what?

HE: Annie, listen, for the love of god, tell me the truth.

SHE: What truth, *Reb* Zalman?

HE: You see, Abram Leizer says they are going to take everything away from us.

SHE: So they will.

HE: You mean . . . Our means of production.

SHE *(smiling)*: Yes, and houses and land and means of production.

HE: So Abram Leizer was right.

SHE: Yes, *Reb* Zalman. But all these things will be taken away from the rich people, the landowners, the manufacturers, those who live by the labor of others. And. . . .

HE: And what?

SHE: . . . And given to those who have nothing, those who work themselves, with their own hands.

HE: How splendid, how splendid and simple.

SHE: The splendid is always simple, *Reb* Zalman.

HE: You know, Annie, I'm too excited to fix your watch today. You leave it here. I want to take my time with it. I'll clean it carefully. I want to read that inscription from Voroshilov over again. And I'm going to show it to everybody. I'm going to tell all my friends about you. And about — what is his name?

SHE: Komsomol.

HE: That's it, that's it, about Komsomol. And you come back tomorrow for your watch whenever you like. . . .

SHE: Yes, we're staying here until tomorrow.

HE: That's right, tomorrow. And when you come I'll call Shemelevich and Abram Leizer and all of them. And you'll tell them how fine it is over there in your country.

SHE: "Your" country?

HE: Ach, yes, now it is our country. I'm not used to it yet. But you'll tell us all about it, won't you? It will make us all so happy. And it's a long time since we've been happy.

SHE: I'll come. Tomorrow without fail.

HE: Yes, tomorrow, tomorrow. That will be splendid. Tomorrow will be a very great occasion. It is *Yom Kippur*, the Day of Atonement. It is the day when all Jews fast and pray and weep. Ach, how the Jews weep on this day! But tomorrow we will laugh. No, we will weep as well, but our tears will be tears of joy. . . . And there will be fasting. *Gott meiner, Gott meiner! Yom Kippur* without tears and fasting! What's happening? Everything is upside down. The end has come.

SHE: No, *Reb* Zalman, the beginning, the beginning of a new life.

HE: Yes, you are right. The beginning of a new life and, I think, of a splendid life.

LENIN BORN SEVENTY YEARS AGO

KONSTANTIN FEDIN

A Drawing of Lenin

It was a summer noon when someone from the newspaper office rang up Sergei Shumilin and asked him to drop in and talk something over with them. The young artist broke off in the middle of his drawing, washed his hands, thrust a drawing-pad and a pencil into the pocket of his jacket and went out.

The shop windows exhibited pictures of Lenin framed in red calico. "Long live the Third Communist International!" met the eye everywhere. Sergei glanced at the windows. No doubt the photographs reproduced Lenin's features very correctly, he thought, and without any mistakes, but an artist could have caught the peculiarities of his features and the liveliness of the movements with more subtlety and delicacy; it would be wonderful if one could draw Lenin from life some day.

"We've got a commission for you," they told Sergei in the editorial office. "A lot of foreign delegates are coming to the Comintern Congress. Now you have to go to the Palace of Labor—they are going to meet there today—and sketch a few of the delegates. Will you do it?"

"All right."

"And tomorrow we'll give you a pass for the opening session of the Congress, you can draw any delegate you like, and if you see Lenin. . . ."

"Lenin?" Sergei exclaimed. He smiled as it flashed through his mind that Fate was curiously prompt in granting his wish.

"Yes, do us a drawing of Lenin if you get the chance."

"All right," Sergei said once more.

He left the office in high spirits and took the tram for the Palace of Labor. Every time he caught a glimpse through the open window of the tram of a picture of Lenin, he wondered again at the extraordinary coincidence and saw in his mind's eye the easy, effortless, living thing his drawing of Lenin would be.

He decided which sketchbook he would take with him, which pencils he would need, and what kind of a portrait he would paint afterwards from the drawing.

II

It was noisy and crowded in the Palace of Labor when he got there. On the stairs and in the corridors there were groups of foreigners surrounded by Russians who were telling them about life in the Soviet Republic.

The war with Poland was still going on. But the Poles were beaten and the Red Army was in hot pursuit of the retreating enemy. In the Crimea, too, Baron Wrangel's whiteguards were being made an end of. But it was still a long way to peace. The blockade was holding the young Soviet land on the verge of exhaustion, and it was difficult for anyone coming from abroad to get to Petrograd. The foreign visitors had arrived by sea, *via* Scandinavia, after many narrow escapes on the way. But the desire to see the country of the Soviets was so strong that it had impelled them to overcome any and all obstacles, and people from all ends of the earth were met together here.

Sergei made the acquaintance of a German, a little hunchback with a grave face and a leisurely gait. He was a tailor by trade and hailed from Braunschweig. During the German revolution he had been head of an "independent" republic in Braunschweig for three days until it was treacherously overthrown by the German Social-Democrats.

He agreed at once to sit for the artist, but proceeded with detailed questions about the Soviet system of government. He could not understand at all why it should have been found necessary to do away with every kind of private trade and introduce distribution of goods.

They were standing on the balcony, looking down at the grim square in front of the palace, where traces of the heroic defense of Petrograd against General Yudenich were still visible—the trenches hastily filled in on the pavement, the sandbags and logs, remains of breast-works, in the boulevard. Sergei was saying:

"Countless hordes of enemies have risen against us. We think of one thing only—of how to rout them."

"I quite understand that," said the man from Braunschweig in a tone of superior understanding, slowly and rhythmically nodding the head that lay so deep and snug between his shoulders. "But what exactly was the object of closing down the haberdashery shops?"

"The shopkeepers are hand in glove with our enemies."

"I see, yes, I see. But supposing a button was to come off me somewhere, where am I to buy one?"

It looked as though there would be no end to these arguments. Sergei, suddenly bored, felt that if he started to draw this man, nothing would come of it; the drawing would probably turn out badly.

"You know what, I think I'll have a shot at sketching you at the Congress tomorrow instead," he said.

To this the German agreed condescendingly, and the artist took leave of him.

III

With the pass in his pocket, Sergei hurried off next morning to the opening of the Congress. When he got there the auditorium of the Uritsky Palace was already packed, the galleries rippled with living waves of heads, hummed with voices, whitened with the fluttering wings of newspapers unfolded and straightened out every moment. It was hot and stuffy,

more and more jackets were taken off in the gallery, people fanned themselves with newspapers and handkerchiefs, and the vibration of innumerable spots of light dazzled the eyes; everything was permeated with tense expectation.

Sergei found a place in the reporters' box opposite the platform. He could see the benches of the presidium very clearly from here. He opened his sketchbook and got ready to draw.

The buzz in the galleries swelled suddenly to a volume of sound that, drowning all other sounds, swept downward in an avalanche of applause. Sergei sprang to his feet like the rest and stared at the place that was to be occupied by the presidium. There was no one to be seen. He looked around the hall and then dropped his sketchbook, and started to clap as furiously as the rest.

Straight toward him, across the hall, Lenin was coming at the head of the diverse crowd of delegates. He was hurrying, his head bent, as if forcing its way against the current of air and striving to slip out of sight as soon as possible, so as to put an end to the applause. He mounted the place for the presidium and was no more to be seen while the ovation lasted.

The moment he appeared, the doors of the hall were flung open, and huge baskets of red carnations were brought into the galleries and amphitheater. The flowers were quickly distributed, colorfully linking the long rows of benches with the scarlet banners and decorations. Glancing about him, Sergei caught sight of two elderly artists who had once been his teachers. They had already settled down while he was still on his feet. He remembered what he was there for; he picked up his sketchbook and got out his pencil.

But unexpectedly, when all was still, he saw Lenin again, hurrying between the seats in the amphitheater. The people did not notice him at once, but hardly had they done so than they started to applaud again, and crowd the gangway down which he was almost running. Then he noticed someone, his face brightened, he smiled and held out his hand. The other man got to his feet, shook hands in a leisurely way, with something of the slow dignity of a peasant, and greeted him with a reserved, affectionate smile. They talked for a moment, bending close to each other because the roar of applause was gaining in volume and people were pressing in on them.

"That's Mikha Tskhakaya," Sergei heard someone say. "A Georgian Communist. He was in Switzerland with Lenin."

The ring of people pressed still closer. With a hasty shake of the hand Lenin left his old comrade, almost forced his way through the unyielding throng and hurried on down the room. He was obviously displeased with the noise and the jostling crowd.

Sergei missed no movement of his. He fancied he had observed some very important characteristics in the movements of this agile little figure, and he was already seeing them in his sketchbook, caught by his pencil.

Lenin mounted the platform, disappeared for a moment, then reappeared. Then Sergei saw him take out a writing pad and sit down on the steps. It all happened in an instant, and so casually, so simply—that a better pose could not have been looked for, could not have been thought of. Sergei sensed that his neighbors, the artists, were already hard at work. He gripped his pencil but could not take his eyes off Lenin.

What a good view of his head it was—a big head, an extraordinary head, one that instantly remained fixed in one's memory. Lenin laid down his papers on his knee and bent over them, reading. The breadth of his brow, the crown of his head, the light hair just touching the collar at the back of his neck, strangely dominated his whole aspect. Sergei wanted to compare Lenin with someone in ancient or modern history, but Lenin resembled no one. Every trait belonged to himself alone.

At length Sergei put pencil to paper. With one soft, groping, gliding stroke he roughed in the contour of the head. Then he looked up. Lenin was no longer there.

IV

Sergei saw him again when he came onto the platform to read his report.

An enthusiastic ovation greeted him, and he had to bear it to the end. He sorted and arranged his papers for a long while, then raised his hand and shook it as though exhorting the stormy audience to be still. He glanced about reproachfully and sternly—alone amid the tumult. Suddenly he pulled out his watch and, turning the face so that the audience could see it, tapped it impatiently. It was no use. Again he took to fidgeting with his papers, rearranging them, until at last the ovation exhausted itself and died down into attentive silence.

Then Lenin began to speak.

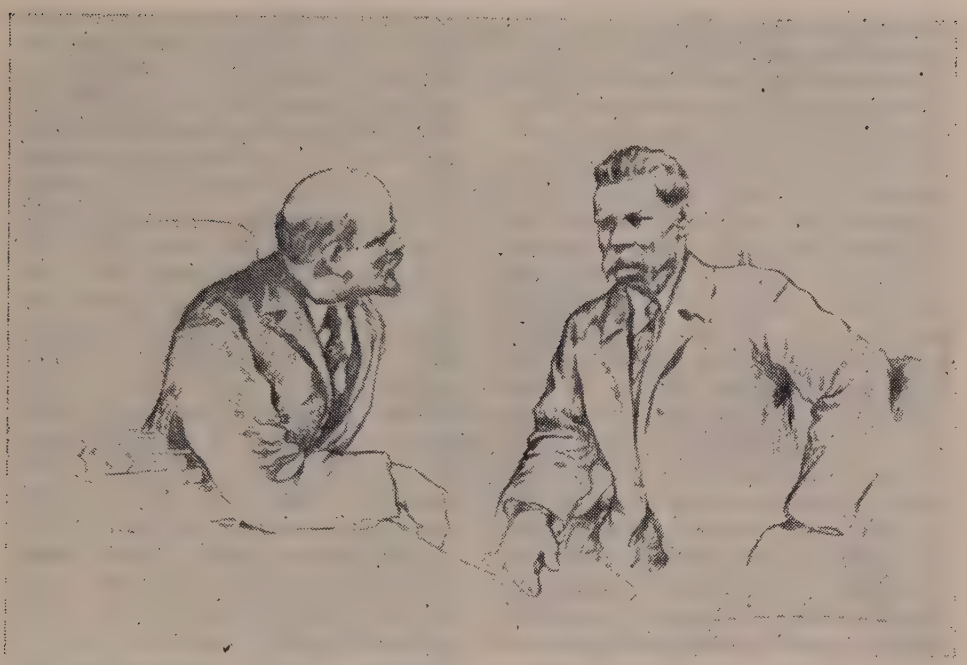
Sergei saw him now in movement, trying to convey his thoughts. That was precisely how the artist had dreamed of showing him in his drawing. The features of the Lenin of a moment ago now seemed to have vanished in Lenin the orator, and were superseded by others in swift succession. Sergei marked them one by one but they never reappeared and he was afraid to miss any of them. He could not have said now what he was doing: studying Lenin's gestures or listening to his speech.

The complete unity between the words and gestures of the man made a powerful impression on him. The substance of the speech was transmitted plastically, with the whole body. It seemed to Sergei as though molten metal was being poured into a living, yielding mold—so closely did the form of external movement embody the spoken word, so vividly did the impetuous utterance convey the fiery sense of the speech.

Lenin was exposing the policy of England, who, having suddenly become imbued with a love of peace and a desire to rescue crushed Poland and the White Russian General Wrangel, offered to mediate between these two and the Soviet Republic. When Lenin demanded of the audience why the world had been thrown into a state of "unrest"—as the bourgeois government of England mildly put it—the whole figure of the man ironically expressed this awkward "unrest" that was proving so embarrassing for the bourgeoisie, and world politics was momentarily condensed into a single unforgettable image of sarcasm.

Lenin glanced every now and again at his notes and quoted figures, but never for a moment did he become the dull professor, always remaining the masterful people's leader. His high voice was unwearying. His language simple, his pronunciation easy and soft; sometimes he slurred his "r's", and it gave his speech a human touch, brought it somehow nearer to his audience.

With the feeling that he was not missing a sound in this speech,



V. I. Lenin and A. M. Gorky in the Kremlin in 1920. Pencil drawing by P. Vasilyev

Sergei started to draw. He roughed in the raised head, the outstretched arms, the strong, straightened tense line of the back, the rounded, thrust out chest. He gave up one drawing and started another; in one he did not get the head right, in another the arms, in a third the torso. He repeated the satisfying bits, struggled with the unsatisfactory, turned over page after page, made innumerable fresh starts and at last realized with horror that he was getting no nearer his goal.

He glanced at his former teachers. One of them was bent over his work, painstakingly rubbing out what he had done. The bald spot on his head was crimson, and Sergei remembered that he had always been in the habit of flushing like that whenever things went wrong. The other artist had left the box and settled down in the seats opposite the platform. He had stopped drawing and was simply listening to Lenin.

A terrible fear came over Sergei that he would let his one chance slip for ever, that Lenin would come to the end of his speech soon, and there would not be a single finished drawing in his book. He went out of the box and pushed his way to the door where people were standing, closely packed. He found a place for himself down below in the gangway; from this point Lenin seemed bigger and taller. He decided this was the best view of all. But the lights got in his way; the cameras and artists were all hard at work, trying to catch the elusive living Lenin. The lights blinded him, left everything dark before his eyes. He went over to the other side of the rostrum. From this point he could see Lenin almost in silhouette, because the light behind him was more glaring. No, his first place had been the best, after all; he had better get back to the box as quickly as he could.

He found his seat occupied, so

he had to stand. But as he stood there he suddenly got a view of Lenin in full stature and in a completeness that had previously eluded the eye kept busy with the details of a figure whose very nature was unity. Sergei started a new drawing. And now all his preparation, all those uncertain attempts, groping, fragmentary studies, made as if half-blindly, of gestures, turns of the head, separate features, gradually began to augment each other, fill out and unite in a coherent drawing, into a portrait conveying something of the truth—into the living Lenin. Sergei was now drawing rapidly, effortlessly, never taking his eyes off his sketchbook.

There was a roar of applause. Sergei raised his eyes. Gathering up his papers with a sweep of his hand, Lenin ran lightly down from the platform.

Sergei closed his sketchbook.

V

When the meeting was over, Lenin came out with Gorky into the hot, tightly-packed crowd of delegates. The glare of the blue summer's day blinded and scorched after the warm yellow twilight of the auditorium. At the exit, it was impossible to move forward because of the crowd. Cameramen pressed in on the delegates from all sides, clicking frantically, delighted by the glaring light. Jostled by the crowd, Gorky and Lenin paused by the columns at the entrance to the Palace. They were being photographed without interruption. Gorky's clean-shaven head shone in the sun and could be seen a long way off. His name was heard on every side. Lenin, bareheaded too, was standing in front of him, a step or so lower.

Sergei was just beside them; he ought to have been drawing. But the crowd crushed him. And he had no thought of stirring; he had not seen Lenin as close as this all day. He could feel himself smiling; he was conscious that it was perhaps out of place, but the smile seemed fixed to his face. He could not find particular delight in the cameramen who were taking several score bad photographs, but he envied them the alertness of their carefree profession.

The procession set out. High overhead among the waving banners a huge wreath of oak-boughs and red roses was borne. They were going to the soldiers' grave in the square named after those who had laid down their lives for the Revolution.

Lenin walked at the head of delegates. Beside him walked foreigners and Russians, young and old—the grouping changed every now and again; when he had finished talking to one, he began talking to another and so on.

He wore no coat. His jacket was open, his hands sometimes clasped behind his back, sometimes thrust deep into his trousers' pockets. He did not look as though he were out in the street, surrounded by great towering buildings, but in an intimately known room at home. He appeared to find nothing out of the ordinary in the multitude around him; he felt natural and perfectly at ease among the mass of people irresistibly drawn to him.

Sergei, who was walking at a little distance, caught sight of a figure he knew threading its way through the close lines of people. Taking advantage of the first opportunity, it darted ahead and came alongside Lenin. It was the man from Braunschweig. He introduced himself with great thoroughness, shook hands, and plun-

ged into what was evidently a well-prepared tirade.

Lenin bent his head to one side the better to hear what the little hunchback was saying. The latter emphasized his impressive, weighty sentences with important gestures of his long arm, fearful of letting a word slip by unnoticed. At first Lenin listened with a serious countenance. Then he smiled, screwed up his eyes quizzically, gave little curt impatient jerks of his head. All at once he recoiled a step and waved his hand in a way that plainly said: "Absurd! Nonsense!" The hunchback went on trying to prove his point—whatever it was—and gesticulating. Lenin took him by the elbow and uttered two or three phrases, final and irrevocable. To these the man from Braunschweig protested furiously. Suddenly Lenin clapped him lightly on the shoulder, then stuck his thumbs inside the waistcoat and started to laugh; he laughed and laughed, rocking from side to side as he walked on at a quicker pace, never turning once to look at the man who had amused him so much.

Had the unlucky man from Braunschweig raised the problem of buttons? Quite possibly. And Sergei smiled, when the German was left behind by Lenin and mingled once more with the throng. Curious feelings had been awakened in Sergei by this scene; it had been all dumb show for him, yet full of movement, so keenly had it expressed Lenin's lack of constraint, accessibility and merciless sense of humor. Sergei had seen him gay and laughing heartily, had watched his manner when arguing—the lightning changes of expression, the quizzically screwed-up eyes, the gestures full of passion and will power. The scene with the man from Braunschweig was to round out Sergei's drawings, to give those telling touches that he had not dreamed of before.

"Two presidents," he thought to himself, smiling as if he could see the two figures before him. "The head of the three-day Braunschweig government that has been consigned to oblivion, and the head of a government that has existed now for three years and will last for ever."

An unfamiliar, almost physical sense of pride swept over Sergei; almost at the same moment his heart beats quickened with vexation and a sudden bold desire. Why, why, when so many people were going to Lenin, and he seemed to find time for them all—why should he, an artist whose duty and desire was to depict Lenin's features for hundreds and thousands of people—why should he have to watch for every slightest opportunity of getting a glimpse of his face, catch every hint of a smile, every fleeting glance.

Sergei opened his sketchbook. There were traits of resemblance in the drawing, of course. Caught in passing, they were not absolutely unquestionable, but what would Lenin himself say of them?

Sergei was pushed forward. Or perhaps, he only fancied he was—and in reality it was his own impulse that pushed him into the front ranks where he found himself marching alongside Lenin. He was almost out of breath. Only a step divided him from his goal, and wondering whether he had the strength to make it or not, he made it.

He went up to Lenin.

"I want," he began, and then the hardly-formed sentence burst forth. "Vladimir Ilyich, what do you think of this drawing?"

Lenin glanced at Sergei, took hold of the sketchbook by the corner and, bending over it, peered

at the drawing through half-closed eyes. Then he pushed it away and gave the artist a half-laughing look out of the corner of his eye.

"Do you like it yourself?" he asked.

"No," Sergei replied, "but I think there is some resemblance. . ."

"I'm not an artist—I can't judge," Lenin rejoined hastily.

There was a knowing twinkle in his eye; he threw back his head, gave Sergei an encouraging nod, and turned away as someone else claimed his attention.

Sergei was squeezed out of the first row and then out of the second and he wondered why it was that after contriving to keep a good place in the procession all the time, he had suddenly lost it. Was it disappointment? Was it embarrassment? Sergei evoked anew the state of mind he had just experienced. But no, neither Lenin's voice nor glance conveyed anything to alarm Sergei. Yet—why had it ever occurred to him to show Lenin his unsuccessful sketch? It had been sheer weak-mindedness. Sergei opened his sketchbook and shut it again, at once; the drawing was no good at all.

Then someone took him by the elbow and pulled it downwards. He turned. It was the German holding his arm in a hard grip.

"You intended to draw me, my friend," he said in a loud tone. "You have not been able to do it today, but I can receive you tomorrow."

And lifting his long, dry hand high above his head, he clapped Sergei on the shoulder.

"It's a devilish hot day. Not in the least like your Mother Russia."

"You know what," Sergei said suddenly, "I've changed my mind. I don't think I'm going to draw you."

"Oh, very kind of you, I'm sure," Sergei heard as he made his way through the crowd.

He forgot the German immediately. And at that moment he felt a warm, welcoming handshake. His teacher, the artist who had been sitting in the box with him drawing, was speaking to him with the old, familiar thoughtfulness.

"Listen to me. Nothing came of my drawing of Lenin. And what about yours?"

"Same thing," Sergei replied. Then, suddenly, pressing the kind hand, he burst out passionately:

"But I promise you, I promise you on my honor, that something will come of it yet! . . . "

VLADIMIR MAYAKOVSKY

A TALK WITH COMRADE LENIN

Heaps of work,
people coming and going,
Thus the day has passed
and faded away.

We are two in the room:
I
and Lenin—
on the white-washed wall
his lifelike portrait.
His lips
for a stirring speech are opened,
slightly turned up—
his bristling moustache.

Powerful thought
profound
and human
is enshrined
in his forehead wrinkled and vast.

Thousands,
it seems,
are passing below him . . .
Forest of flags . . .
like grass—
swaying hands . . .
Radiant with joy,
I jumped up,
all glowing
with fervor
to hail him,
report,
and so I began:
Comrade Lenin,
to you I will progress report
not as in duty bound,
but gladly.

Comrade Lenin,
of work
there is a hellish lot.
It shall be done,
it's being done already.

We give light,
and we give clothing to the poor, the barefoot
growing is
of coal the out-turn
and of ore.

But there is,
sure,
also a handsome output
of nonsense
of all kind
and trash,
so far.
One gets tired
of arguing and scowling
Some people
without you
got out of hand.

Many a rogue,
many a scoundrel
rove
to and fro
and around our land.

Who
can tell
their names
and their numbers!

Endless
runs
of all types a ribbon.
There are kulaks and there are slumb'rers,
lickspittles also,
sectarians
and bibbers.—

Chest thrown out
they stalk along
proudly,
all decked with badges
and fountain pens .

We shall master
soon,
no doubt, them,

But mastering
all
means moving mountains.—
Wherever
a factory chimney
is smoking,
all over the country,
under stubbles
or snow,
your heart
and your name,
Comrade Lenin,
evoking,
we think,
breathe
and fight,
we live
and we grow.
Heaps of works,
people going and coming,
thus the day has passed
and faded away.
We are two in the room:
I
and Lenin—
on the white-washed wall
his lifelike portrait.

1929 Translated by Helen Kagan.

Lenin and Stalin. Sculpture in a park in Sochi, Caucasus

JOHANNES R. BECHER

The Path That Brought Me to Lenin

A brief paragraph in some bourgeois paper caught my eye. That was in 1917. It said that someone named Lenin had arrived in Petrograd and made an extraordinarily dangerous speech there—had incited the people to revolt.

In the bourgeois circles I was acquainted with this laconic announcement aroused a storm of indignation and horror. But it affected me in quite a different way. It made me remember the name of Lenin for ever.

All through the war I had never ceased my quest of the unknown, of some miracle which was to put an end to this bloody shambles. And now, I do not know why, I found myself believing that with the arrival of Lenin in Petrograd the long-awaited hour had struck.

I shared the views and fate of many of the intelligentsia who had turned, instinctively, against the imperialist war and put their faith in the Russian Revolution, without penetrating deeply into the core of the revolutionary process. We were inspired, too, by the heroic struggle of Rosa Luxemburg and Karl Liebknecht; it strengthened us in our hatred of this wholesale, senseless slaughter—yet we remained aloof from Marxism and the workers' movement.

Soon after that the trend of historic events made Lenin the center of attention of all mankind. But it was a long time before I could grasp, even if not completely, the magnitude of what Lenin had done.

And then Lenin died. How well I remember that day, that very hour! It was snowing in Berlin. Evening was drawing in. I was walking towards Wittenberg Place when someone stopped me and said: "Lenin is dead." The hoarse voice trembled with suppressed sobs. I wandered about the streets until late at night and, catching the mute question in the glances of friends and acquaintances I chanced to meet, I only exchanged nods with them as if giving each other to understand that we had heard the terrible news.

But the imperishable genius of Lenin was to regain new life in his successor, Stalin.

The image of Lenin never ceased to inspire me even after his death; he stands before me still—unforgettable, living, as never before.

It was Lenin who exposed the secret springs of war to me.

It was Lenin who showed me in his theory of imperialism the depth and direction of the social currents amid which I had been drifting blindly till then.

It was Lenin's teaching about revolution and the state that armed me with the knowledge

that brought me to my right place in the approaching historic conflicts.

It was Lenin who implanted in my consciousness faith in the universal, historical destiny of the revolutionary party of Communism.

It was Lenin who in his letters to Maxim Gorky cleared up many points that until then had been unsolvable enigmas to me, and gave me an understanding of the great Russian writer Tolstoy that I could never have arrived at alone.

It was Lenin who gave me the answer to the question of: "What is to be done?"

It was in the works of Lenin that I found what mankind has been seeking so long—the truth of life.

I have sought Lenin during my visits to the places where he lived.

Who knows—I often said to myself—who knows but that I have met him sometime in my native Munich? When he lived there he loved to roam along the banks of the Isar. He might often have been seen sitting on one of the green benches, with a book and a pencil in his hand, in the spot where I was at the time still playing my part as "chief of the robber-band" with my schoolmates.

Not far from our Party organization in Klopstock Street in Berlin, stands the house where Lenin lodged at one time. It is an incongruous affair of red brick plastered with little turrets and balconies. How often, as we passed that house, have we glanced in at the windows of Lenin's room and tried to see ourselves with his eyes. And each and every one of us would ask himself: "What would Lenin have thought of your work?" Yes, Lenin lived in our consciousness, he was our conscience.

I found him in Switzerland, in Zurich—his last place of refuge before his return to Russia. The narrow street leads uphill from the embankment of the Limmat, past the picturesque fountain, to the house where he lived. And even in the murmur of the fountain there is something that seems to call forth memories of Lenin. On the wall of the house there is a simple tablet saying that here lived the leader of the Russian Revolution.

But can these meetings convey even a faint idea of how frequent and intimate was my daily contact with Lenin? I find him in the love of the millions of world's toilers toward him. I find him in the impotent hatred of his foes, the hatred that involuntarily bears witness to the enduring greatness of his work.

One cannot help being moved when reading about the blind man who begged his wife to lead him to the bust of Lenin in the Soviet Pavilion at the World's Exposition in Paris. With trembling, reverent fingers he groped for the sculptured features so as to imprint them upon his memory for ever.

And we who have our sight turn our gaze ever and again to the dear image that can never sink deep enough into our consciousness.

Innumerable are the roads, straight or tortuous, that lead to Lenin. His greatness has won over to his side thousands and thousands of his former opponents, and set many on the right path.

In our day the way to Lenin has become a great highway along which millions are traveling in their struggle for peace, toward a happy future for all mankind.

Translated from the German

MARTIN ANDERSEN NEXÖ

Lenin's Influence Upon the Artists of the West

Surely no single person in the course of centuries has fired the imagination and aroused the sentiments of humanity to such an extent as Lenin did. Wherever one came, in the last two decades, his name was everywhere first and foremost on the tongue of people, uttered with love by the plain men and with hate by the rulers and oppressors. In this respect, too, the intellectuals, with few exceptions, formed a no-man's-land. They discussed Lenin, but in an anemic fashion, as if he were an abstract notion; to a certain extent they still do it. For the most part, the creative spirits of Western Europe, whether in the sphere of art, literature or science, are still unable to grasp the tremendous significance of Lenin. He is not shroded in mystery, he is all too human. To be sure, he is great, but his greatness is too simple for them: far from draping himself in the cloak of the medicine man, he speaks of the greatest problems of humanity in such a way that everybody can understand him. Moreover, he is not content to philosophize on these problems in the abstract, but realizes them. He transformed, so to speak, philosophic rumination into deeds, spoiling the academic business!

An improvement, however, has set in in this respect. The best of the intellectuals who have grown up after the October Revolution profess their admiration for Lenin and are gradually changing into conscious fighters for a new social system. In Sweden, a host of young, highly gifted poets and esthetes are strongly influenced by Lenin's genius and take part in the struggle of the proletariat. In the United States, poetry is experiencing a wonderful renaissance connected with Lenin. And in our country, too, the finest of the young brain workers are more or less under his influence.

But strongest of all is his influence upon the plain worker. The latter needs not pass through a process of adaptation in order to understand Lenin. The growing zeal of the proletariat of the old world can fully and entirely be traced to Lenin as to the greatest leader for centuries, and to his creation—the Soviet Union.

To the men of the lower class, intellectuals or plain workers alike, Lenin stands for everything that is most valuable in their movement and in their class. In him the militant proletarian finds all his good qualities—his faith, his aspirations, his ideals—represented in wonderful magnitude and brilliancy. And even

the masses that have not yet been aroused or have been lulled to sleep again feel instinctively that Lenin is of their flesh and blood.

His significance for the international proletarian movement today is immeasurable. By his genius, combining as he did in one person the herald and the accomplisher, he has given the brain worker new aims, has drawn him from the domain of passive contemplation into the world of action, of deeds. And a new ray illuminates the struggle of the proletariat! The working class movement is no longer in retrogression: Lenin breathed upon the progressive forces of humanity and infused new warm life into them!

Translated from the Danish

Drawing by Red Army man Fedorin

GIOVANNI GERMANETTO

Long Live Lenin!

The war dragged on.

"Time to finish!" the whisper went round.

The soldiers would drop into the barber-shop and if no one was about they would say:

"We should do what they did in Russia."

So they said. But the bloody machine of war still worked on, and police reprisals increased every day. My trip to Florence had enraged the gendarmes of Fossano. I was kept under the closest observation. Evidently the captain of the *carabinieri* and the police commissioner had received a stern reprimand on my account.

Then, to add to the horrors of the war, an epidemic of "Spanish influenza" swept over the country. It bore off up to one hundred and twenty people a day in Turin alone. The food shortage irritated the people, especially the women, who had to stand in long queues by the shops until they were sick and weary. They cursed the war openly.

"To hell with them and their wars! Rich folks don't have to stand in queues, of course! They

Excerpts from *The Autobiography of an Italian Barber*.

can eat chicken and white bread. . . ."

"Time to stop it!"

"We should do what they did in Russia!"

"That's right, we want a revolution!"

"We'll have our own Lenin, too!"

Lenin! The name was sometimes pronounced like a cherished word of hope, sometimes like a threat. It was to be seen written on the walls of houses, at the foot of monuments, everywhere.

Once as I was leaving the Turin office of *Avanti!* a passing patrol stopped me and sent me off to the Turin central prison, San Carlo.

I found there an extremely varied company: drunkards, thieves, drug-fiends and a few soldiers. There was a terrible racket. They were all swearing and shouting and the air was so bad that it was almost impossible to breathe. A drunken man got up on the table and started to make a speech. My entry did not interrupt his mouthings.

"Yes, there's no justice here—and I can prove it to you!"

"Get to sleep, you ape!"

"Shut up, you gabbler!"

"I'll prove it! I've been in America. As soon as I heard we were at war with the Germans, over I came. Joined up as a volunteer. In a month's time I was at the front. But my nerves were bad and I asked to be sent back. And just think, signors, they refused me. . . ."

"Umph! You're a damned fool, that's easy to see! And a volunteer into the bargain!"

"So I ran away. Worked in a munition factory. And now they've got me. Got drunk and got caught. That's how it is. There's no justice in this world! After all, I was useful to my country!"

"Coward, coward, coward!" roared a soldier at him. "Came over to fight and now you're hiding behind other people's backs."

And he knocked the orator off the table.

"And I," said the soldier, turning to the rest of us, "I never wanted a war, I fought against it. Twenty months I spent at the front! How many times I've been close to death! How many comrades I've seen drop down before my eyes! Hunger, filth, shootings, court martial. . . . Oh, I can tell you, I sometimes wished I could get a bullet through my head: it would have put an end to everything—but it wouldn't come! And when I came home on leave and saw what was going on here, I couldn't hold my tongue—and that's why I am here! And that ape came all the way here from America, the fool!"

He stopped, out of breath. I looked at him attentively.

"And what are you in for?" he asked me.

"I'm a Socialist."

"Long live Socialism!" he roared out. "Hurrah! Do you see that!" and he pointed to the wall.

High up on the wall, almost illegible in the dim light, was an inscription in enormous letters:

"Long Live Lenin!"

The door opened again and again to let in new prisoners.

The air was thicker than ever. My head felt as if it were in a vice. At dawn I dozed off for a little while as I sat on the floor. In the daylight the words "Long Live Lenin!" shone out clearly on the wall. Everybody could read it. The jailer came in and read it, too.

Stalin and Lenin in a Worker's Apartment in 1917. Painting by A. Belousov, a student at the Leningrad Art Academy

"Who wrote that?"

Nobody answered.

"I know you won't tell: you're all a pack of swine! Call the painter!"

A painter came in with a bucket of whitewash and a long brush and daubed over the ominous words. Towards midday the whitewash dried and "Long Live Lenin" appeared as bright as ever. Again the painter came, and again, as soon as the whitewash dried up, the inscription became visible. At last the jailer sent for a stone-mason and the latter scraped away conscientiously, letter by letter. The words went in deeper, lost colour, but could still be easily read.

"It's no use trying to wipe out that name," the man from the Alpine regiment said with great satisfaction.

I was let out after four days. The inscription still remained on the wall.

As soon as I came out of prison I got a letter from the Executive Committee of the Party, telling me that I had been elected one of the delegates to the Fourth Congress of the Comintern and the Second of the Profintern.

For the few days that remained until my departure for Russia I lived in a state of feverish anxiety. I was still afraid that something might happen to prevent me.

In three days' time I went away with three or four comrades.

We crossed Europe as if in a

fog and at last, on the eleventh day of our journey, came one cold October morning to the frontier of the land of the Soviets! We embraced the first Red sentry we saw like a brother. At Sebej we ate our first Russian *borshch*, and shivered at the first sting of the approaching Russian winter. What was the cold to us! We had stepped on to the glorious soil of the victorious October Revolution. We turned our faces towards Moscow, the Red fortress, to which the hopes and yearnings of the toilers of the whole world, and the hatred and indignation of their oppressors, are directed.

Lenin! There was no name in the world more popular than this. In Italy it was known in the remotest villages, in the big cities, in barracks, in fishing settlements, on distant islands and mountain huts lost in the Alpine snows. Grown-up people, youths, women, old men and little children all knew the name of their great comrade.

Thousands and thousands of the proletarian children of Italy bear this name. How many hundredweights of metal had been used for making badges with his profile on them!

And now I was to see him, to speak to him. . . .

Moscow streets were crowded with processions of workers. A forest of banners, greetings, music. Exciting welcomes in the factories, the clubs, the barracks! We were bewildered, shaken!

It was a holiday. Endless processions before the grandstand in the Red Square. The human wave flowed past for hours before its leader—and greeted the foreign guests. Who of us in the thin overcoats made for the mild climate of Rome, Genoa, or Naples, felt the cold! Our hearts beat fast, our cheeks burned, our eyes shone!

Then the solemn opening of the Congress of the Comintern in the Kremlin, to the sounds of the *International*, sung in fifty different tongues. . . .

We waited impatiently for the day when Lenin was to speak: to see him, to hear him, to shake his hand, and tell him of the feelings that burned in us. . . .

And I met him. It was in one of those countless corridors of the Kremlin. There was so much I wanted to say to him, and I forgot it all, and could only say:

"Good day, Comrade Lenin!"

"Good day, comrade!" he held out his hand. "Are you French?"

We had spoken in French.

"No, I'm an Italian," I said in Italian.

"I speak a little Italian," he went on in that tongue. A crowd of delegates surrounded us.

Later on I went with the other Italian delegates to see Lenin. One of us, a Neapolitan worker, was supposed to make a speech of greeting from the workers of his factory. When he saw Lenin, he got so excited that he could not speak a word. He just gripped Lenin's hand and cried. Lenin was extremely embarrassed.

When Lenin mounted the platform, the hall shook with applause. All the delegates rose and applauded. Then we sang the *International*.

I remember his eyes. He had a peculiarly attentive, sharp glance.

I saw him once more in the Kremlin, after a meeting. He spoke in German, slowly, plainly. And I did not know German and eagerly waited for the interpreter to translate for us.

The Fourth Congress of the

Comintern had a particular importance for our Communist Party. The Italian question was thoroughly discussed at the Congress.

Lenin took an active part in it.

Lenin's name was known in remote Alpine villages; it had penetrated to the sulphur mines of Sicily. People loved it for the hope of freedom it held; they pronounced it as a threat against the oppressors of the Italians. There was a popular song by an anonymous author at the time. It was sung by everybody, young and old, and it went like this:

Out to sea from Petrograd
The Neva swept
The slogan of the man who said:
"The rich are those
Who live by theft!"

There followed a refrain about the man who had liberated his people from the power of the rich and who was called Lenin:

Quest'uomo fu Lenin
Liberator del mondo!

I saw Lenin's name scrawled on the vaults of Roman catacombs, cut into the Alpine crags.

I came across it on the bronze portals of the Vatican, on the walls of the Cathedral in Florence, prisons, factories, schools and monuments—all bore this name.

I saw pictures of him not only in our clubs and meeting halls, but in many private houses, in the garrets and cellars where the workers lived, in the hovels of the peasants and fishermen; in these poor homes it was given the place of honor—which was sometimes beside the Madonna or the crucifix.

Once—it was in 1920—I had to speak at a meeting in an Alpine hamlet. In vain had the local priest threatened his flock with anathema and the torments of hell if they dared to go and listen to "godless speeches." He proved unable to stop the meeting. The peasants—men, women, children and invalids—all came to the square and listened to my speech with rapt attention. I spoke in their native dialect on the subject that interested them most—land. When I had finished, an old peasant woman came forward, climbed laboriously onto the cart that had served me for platform and, raising her clenched fists in solemn wrath, she turned to a knot of the local rich who were standing a little apart from the rest and shouted: "Lenin will come, he'll come here too! And that'll be the end of the good days for you!" Then she turned and, bursting into tears, embraced me.

Many were the Italian babies named after the great proletarian leader!—no easy matter when it came to registering the child. I remember an occasion in 1925 when I was obliged to "disappear," and hide for a few days in the house of a poor peasant-sympathizer, in a mountain village. The family consisted of himself, his wife and three children, the eldest of whom was eight years.

It was a typical Italian village with the narrow, filthy streets, usually deserted after the *Ave Maria*. I arrived late, my host met me at the station; his wife had prepared hot macaroni. The eldest boy was still awake when I came and he looked at me with great interest.

"What's your name?" I asked him.

The boy shot an interrogative glance at his father.

"It's all right," said the father, smiling. "He's one of us, you can tell him."

The child glanced at the door and said softly:

"My name is Lenin." Then after

a pause he added, frowning, "But in school they call me Vittorio."

When the fascists came to power in Italy parents who had named their children after Lenin were persecuted. By the application of police-clubs and doses of castor oil the fascists forced these people to change their children's name to Vittorio (the king's name) or Benito, after Mussolini. The parents usually preferred the former but at home they continued to call their children by the names they had given them, and the children knew that Lenin was their real name and understood very well why it could not be uttered in the presence of strangers.

"But in school the children call me Lenin when the teacher isn't around," the boy went on. "And one day the priest heard them . . . Well, he punished us: me and the boy who had called me by my name. Still, they all know that Lenin is my real name," he wound up proudly.

"And how did they punish you?" I inquired.

"I had to kneel in school for an hour and then I had to write 'I am an ass' a hundred times at home." The boy scowled again at the recollection.

Yes, in Italy it is a forbidden name, like that of Stalin, leader of peoples—a name equally dear to the Italian proletariat. But thousands and thousands of the children of proletarians and peasants now bear the name of Guiseppe (Joseph); they can't be punished for that; after all Garibaldi's name was Guiseppe too!

In 1936, when the strike movement was at its height after the victory of the People's Front at the elections in France, I happened to be in Nice. At one of the meetings of construction workers a young man came up to me and said with a smile:

"Don't you recognize me? Now ransack your memory . . . and see if you can recall an evening in the autumn of 1925 in a Lombardy village . . . ?"

"It's little Lenin?!" I cried.

"Yes . . ."

We threw our arms round each other.

We had a talk after the meeting; it was evening—like the first time we met—but this time we were on the seashore of a fashionable resort where rich people flock from every country to indulge themselves, but where the poor are as wretched as in Lombardy. The young man explained why he happened to be in Nice.

"Mother died, poor thing. Father is in jail, although he was only a sympathizer. I am a member of the Young Communist League, so I've been in jail, too. When I came out I decided to leave my country. I want to make my way to Spain."

A few months later I saw his name among those who fell in the fight for freedom, in the heroic struggle of republican Spain.

Translated from the Italian

PAUL VAILLANT-COUTURIER

Memories of Lenin

All too brief were the unforgettable moments I spent with Lenin. Since the day of his death, I have been eagerly ransacking

my memory, striving to recall the most minute details of those precious meetings. And when I open his books and become engrossed in his teaching, his ideas, his words—I find once again the living Ilyich, and see his eyes, his smile, his gestures. . . .

It happened in 1921. The year after the French Party had joined the Communist International. Across a devastated Europe we made our way to the proletariat of the U.S.S.R., creating a new world.

In Yamburg, in the Kronstadt, in Leningrad, thousands of open wounds were yet unhealed. Even at that time the meeting with the legions of those pioneers of new life, those warriors of destruction and restoration, of war and construction, stirred us deeply.

We had only to set foot on Soviet soil to feel our physical liberation from the capitalism of Western Europe. We felt regenerated, but so feeble and helpless ideologically. The Russian Party—ah, that is a party! And we—we, Frenchmen—were still wasting our time on renegades. Our party, undermined by those petty bourgeois members, had had no time up to then to attend to the political education of the masses; our party was stuck in petty-bourgeois mud.

I do not conceal the fact that some of us, myself included, allowed ourselves to be carried away by our animosity to the Right, and did and said foolish things. . . .

I remember going up to Lenin during the meeting of the French Section.

"So you are a Leftist? Oh, well, then, that isn't so bad." He saw through me at once and put me in my place with a loving hand. I had met none like him. After that, during occasional meetings, we talked of many things: of the peasants, of the French Revolution, of the Paris Commune.

Vladimir Ilyich was and remained the personification of unceasing activity, and at the same time he was a thorough Marxist in everything. Contact with him produced in one's consciousness the impression of a gust of wind bursting into a stuffy room; it refreshed the mind encumbered with prejudices and formal doctrines. As yet, no one has made a satisfactory drawing of Lenin; his face reflected to such a degree the man himself, his inner life, that it proved beyond the power of the pencil to depict it.

Outwardly it was a broad face with high cheekbones, a thin beard, a big nose, a shrewd smile constantly playing in the eyes and about the corners of the mouth. He usually held his hands in his pockets. Unparalleled good humor, straightforwardness, serenity, iron logic, culture, and the patience of an encyclopedist.

In this colossus of thought and will power there could be no room for emotional drama. His was a perfect soundness of revolutionary thought, a firm belief in the rightness of his cause, no wavering, no faintest deviation from the set purpose.

Lenin the intellectual could think like a worker. Lenin the orator could convey his thoughts without flowers of speech and bombast. The man who shook the world, the man who relived in his own consciousness all that the world had lived through, this man retained to the end of his life an amazing capacity for feeling and thinking like a Chinese coolie or a Negro porter. The oppressed Annamese and the Hindu were an open book to him who understood the Leningrad metal worker and the Paris textile worker and the miner from New Virginia. Lenin

was the perfected type of the new man; for us he was the prototype of the future. That was how I always saw Vladimir Ilyich from the time of my first meetings with him.

Translated from the French

SEN KATAYAMA

My Meetings With Lenin

I was prepared for my meeting with Comrade Lenin: I had heard of the power with which he had been able to convince audiences during the Brest-Litovsk peace negotiations, and in other cases as well, when he would inevitably silence his opponents.

But for me the best way of getting acquainted with Comrade Lenin was through his work *State and Revolution.* This gave me the real program of the October Revolution, as carried out by Comrade Lenin in his time, and after him by Comrade Stalin—the program of the "transition from capitalism to Communism."

It will not be out of place here to explain how I came to attend the meeting of the Congress.[1] From 1916 onwards I had been taking part in the Left-wing movement in America and in the publication of the weekly *The Revolutionary Age*, and the monthly *The Class Struggle.* I had come from Mexico, where I had been working, to attend the Congress of the Toilers of the Far East.

Before Lenin's arrival I said a few words of greetings. The Bolshoi Theater was packed. I could see that the people were in a state of great excitement because Lenin was to speak.

When Comrade Lenin entered the theater, everyone stood up and applauded for several minutes. Then the chairman announced the speaker, Lenin took his place on the stage, and the audience stood up again and greeted him with a prolonged ovation.

He was perfectly at ease, and the audience listened to him with the greatest attention, and in profound silence.

Comrade Lenin spoke for about three hours, showing no signs of fatigue, hardly altering his intonation, steadily unfolding his idea, advancing one argument after another. And the audience, it seemed, held its breath, straining to catch every word. Comrade Lenin resorted to no florid rhetoric or gestures, but he had an extraordinary power; when he began to speak, dead silence fell, all eyes were turned on him. He looked at the audience as if hypnotizing it. No one stirred, no one coughed, for the space of those three hours. He was the greatest orator I have ever heard. When his speech was ended, everyone stood up, and began to applaud again and to sing the *International*. This concluded the session of the Ninth All-Russian Congress of the Soviets.

II

I met him for the second time during the First Congress of the Toilers of the Far East, which was held in February, 1922. There were

[1] The meeting of the Ninth All-Russian Congress of the Soviets, held December 25, 1921.—*Ed.*

V. I. Lenin at the Third Congress of the Communist International

present one hundred and twentyfive persons in all—representatives from China, Japan, Indonesia and Mongolia. Lenin was asked to attend the Congress and give us instructions, but the state of his health would not permit it and he invited representatives of the delegates to come and see him.

That evening, several of us, chosen by the Congress, went to see him in the Kremlin. We were shown into his study. It was a big room, furnished simply but in good taste. As we entered, we noticed several pictures on the wall on our right; on the left stood two large bookcases. In the middle of the room stood a large table and Lenin's comfortable chair. Around the table were many chairs for visitors.

We had a few minutes to wait before Comrade Lenin came in. None of the delegates except myself had ever seen him. When he came in, he shook hands with each of us, settled himself comfortably in an armchair and began to talk to the delegates of different countries in turn.

With each delegation he discussed special questions concerning their country, as well as the whole of the Far East. He emphasized the need for uniting the revolutionary forces of each country represented at the Congress. Naturally the question of a united front came up. As he was urging the necessity for uniting the revolutionary workers of the Far Eastern countries, he glanced at me and said:

"You have been defending the united front in the Far Eastern countries." He must have read the article in which I asserted that the workers of Korea and Japan ought to form a united front against Japanese imperialism which was oppressing and exploiting to an equal extent the workers of both countries.

That evening Comrade Lenin was in excellent spirits and looked very well. He spoke fluent English and was very attentive to everyone who talked to him; he knew how to listen too. . . . We felt completely at our ease. He was a master of the art of conversation and could interest all of us in whatever he was saying. A great deal of useful advice and instruction was given us during his brief but very important conversation with the delegates of the Congress. As we were preparing to take leave of him he shook hands with each of us. I was the last and because of this I had an opportunity of exchanging a few words with him.

"I hear," I said, "that you are leaving Moscow and going to the country for a rest."

"Yes."

"I hope you have a good rest and come back in a better state of health," I said.

"Yes, I must have a good rest," he said, "because I have to work—we all have to work."

He spoke in a very friendly way. We shook hands warmly and parted.

III

I shook hands with him for the third and the last time during the Fourth Congress of the Comintern—to be exact, on November 13, 1922. As is well known, the subject of his speech was: "Five Years of the Russian Revolution and the Prospects of a World Revolution."

The vast Andreyev Hall of the Kremlin was packed to overflowing. Lenin's appearance was tensely awaited. When the leader of the Russian Revolution and of the proletariat of the world entered, he was greeted with enthusiastic ovations; it seemed as if the shouting would never come to an end. Everyone stood up to welcome him. The delegates sang the *International*.

When Lenin ascended the platform, he shook hands with all the members of the presidium. I felt that this was not the hand it had been; and I recalled that he had been ill for a long time and that it must have taken a great effort on his part to come and greet the Congress.

He appeared to be quite well when he began his speech, and it sounded very much like the way he had spoken at the Bolshoi Theater in December of the previous year. He spoke German. Several times he glanced at his watch and was evidently trying to finish his speech in one hour. It is superfluous to speak of the subject of his speech here; I shall only say that everyone present listened to him with the utmost attention and in perfect silence.

When he had finished the entire audience burst into loud applause. He sat down and carried on a conversation with the members of the presidium for a few minutes. Then he left the hall. The audience remained standing until he had gone out.

Translated from the Japanese

THEODORE DREISER

Lenin

When I was in Russia in 1927 and 28 I saw in many places—a number of the backward lands that had been united by his spirit—peasants and mechanics, women and men, standing uncovered with bowed heads before a candle lighted bust of Lenin, feeling him to be, as I assumed, (and truly enough in my judgement) their Savior.

Now is impending a titanic struggle between those who desire to enslave and tyrannize over the masses, and these self same masses who no longer are willing to be enslaved. They know now that the conqueror classes desire to dwell in luxury and idleness — they and their children and their childrens children. The French Revolution. The American Civil War and the Russian Revolution have taught them. And now those self same Russian masses, liberated by Lenin, are determined never again to be so enslaved. And their battalions will be captained by his spirit. And for one I do not doubt the outcome. Lenin, his Soviet state will triumph

However, whatever the immediate outcome of this contest, Lenin, his Russia, the humanity and justice which at last, and fully, he introduced into its government and statecraft, will eventually succeed. For even though he is no more in the flesh, the social illustration which he provided and which his associates and followers have since carried to its present great power and beauty will never be lost on future generations.

April 1940 (by Cable)

LENIN IN FOLKLORE

How Lenin Divided Up the People With the Tsar

(Russian Tale)

Once upon a time there came to Tsar Mikolashka, Nicolas the Last, his greatest general:

"Now then, your Imperial Majesty! There has appeared in a land somewhere, in a tsardom, a clever man, skilled in all knowledge. He has no title or mark of honor, no passport, and the name he bears is Lenin. And this very same man threatens: 'I shall go against you, Tsar Mikolai, win to my side all your imperial troops with a word I know, and all your generals, your commanders, your blue-blooded officers, and you yourself, Tsar Mikolai, I shall grind to dust and scatter to the four winds. I know a word for that.' ".

Tsar Mikolashka became panic-stricken, hopped to his feet, clapped his hands, and screamed in a loud voice:

"Write at once to that man of unknown title, without a passport, with the name of Lenin. Write him that he shall not use his word against me, not grind me to dust, nor my generals, nor my commanders, nor my titled officers, and for this I shall give him half my tsardom!"

All the tsar's wise men came on the run, puffing and blowing, sharpened their quills, and penned a letter to that man Lenin:

"Now then, Lenin, don't you march against Tsar Mikolai with that word of yours. Instead take for yourself half of Mikolai's tsardom without wrangling or cursing."

Sooner or later, but soon enough, a reply came from that man of unknown title, without a passport, with the name of Lenin. And thus wrote Lenin to Tsar Mikolashka:

"Now then," he wrote, "I am willing to accept from you, Mikolashka, Tsar, half your tsardom, but here is the way we shall divide it: not by provinces nor by districts nor counties shall we divide it. Here is how I am willing to share your tsardom with you, and no back talk. Take for yourself, tsar Mikolashka, all your blue-blooded: the generals, the commanders, the titled officers—with all their decorations, honors, medals, crosses, epaulettes, all their high-born wives and genteel children. Take for yourself your landed proprietors with all their wealth, their finery of silk and velvet, their dinner sets of gold and silver, their wives and brood. Take for yourself the merchants with their wares and countless riches, and let them withdraw all their money from the banks. Take for yourself the manufacturers with all their capital and machinery and the whole rigging of their plants. And as for me—let me have the common folk: the peasants, the soldiers and the factory workers with all their meager goods and chattels. The only thing I want is some livestock for breeding, meadows for pastures, and mother-earth for plowing and sowing."

Mikolashka Tsar read this, hopped and skipped for joy, clapped his hands in glee, and ordered his generals, officers and commanders:

"This very minute send word of my agreement to everything. What kind of man is he, skilled in all knowledge, knowing a secret word, if he turns his back on all my great treasures, all the wares of the merchants, all the goods of the landowners, and takes, instead, the low-born stripped and penniless. With our gold and treasures we shall hire other low-born beggars, make soldiers out of them and shall then roll in riches and live in clover."

Again the tsar's wise men came on the run, puffing and blowing, sharpened their quills and penned off to Lenin the tsar's consent. But they held their tongue about Mikolashka's sneer, fearing Lenin might change his mind and go against them with his secret word.

Sooner or later, but soon enough, Lenin came calmly-quietly to his soldiers, peasants and factory workers. The tsar and his blue-bloods in the meanwhile had moved away to a distance. The soldiers, the peasants and the workers looked at Lenin and saw that a plain ordinary man like they themselves had come to them. He said:

"Greetings, comrades!"

He shook hands with everyone as far as the eye could see and declared in a loud voice:

"I shall live as one of you, for we are all of us comrades. Only you had better listen to me, as I am skilled in all sciences and will never teach my comrades anything wrong."

The soldiers, trained as they were, said:

"Right, Comrade Lenin!"

The factory workers, town folks, literate, with brains in their heads, didn't contradict him either. But the peasants thought the tsar had tricked Lenin. They began to complain and grumble, and made a big racket, enough to wake the dead.

"Why did you let him get away with the treasury and the countless riches? You would have done better to have divided them among us to fix up our households."

Lenin chuckled, shook his head and replied thus:

"You'd better stop that noise and don't reproach me. Instead, you fasten on to the soil and the livestock, and go on with your work. The rest will take care of itself. The riches aren't enough to go round, for there are thousands upon thousands of you, while there are only a meager few of the bluebloods. But I know a word that works well with all the common folk throughout the world. I only have to say it, and the blue-bloods won't find for themselves any workers or soldiers. They will all join my side and cast the blue-bloods to the dogs. And as the blue-bloods are spenders and not builders, they won't last much longer."

Sooner or later, but soon enough, everything happened just as Lenin had said. A man on horseback came galloping to him and brought a message from Tsar Mikolashka, and in this message Mikolashka said:

"Now then, Lenin, you fooled me. You took for yourself the common folk, and let me have the spenders and not the builders. My generals, my titled officers without their soldiers are like idle horses in a stable. They only feed and grow fat. The gentry are eating up the last of what they have stored, and all their finery is worn threadbare and shabby. My merchants have peddled their wares in vain, but with-

out the peasants they have no one to talk into buying their shop-worn goods. My factory owners have wrecked all their machinery, for they are unskilled. They have learned all about it in books, but when it came to putting on a screw, they couldn't make it fit. And then the low-born in the foreign lands refused to serve us. They are always seeking to join you, drawn by that secret word of yours. So now, when there is nothing left us but to sink or swim, my generals and titled officers are going to war against you to get back the low-born."

From that time started the war between the common folk and the blue-bloods. But the blue-bloods won't last long, as the generals and titled officers are used to ordering soldiers about, and shifting armies to and fro, but aren't used to doing the fighting themselves, for they are white-livered. And it won't be much longer before the blue-bloods are driven out of this world.

Recorded in 1918.

Lenin Gave the Sun to Generations

(Chinese Legend)

Among stagnant swamps, among stunted thickets of ancient *karagach* bushes, generations of men dwelt without sun, without joy. Stench and hunger, fog and darkness gnawed at their tissues, stifled their souls, smothered their hearts.

Men never lived beyond the age of thirty. Their yellow, wrinkled children were born without nails, without hair. The race withered. Noseless, bony death hovered over the swamps, over the stunted thickets of *karagach* bushes, over generations of men lost in dreams of oblivion. But one evil-smelling, dank morning, from the mountains, from the distant peaks of the snow-white Thian Shan, came a strange man. His frightening words burned as flame does, his fiery words stirred the people. Old men prophesied the coming of death, the approaching doom.

The wanderer gathered crowds about him, calling men to change the world, to gain possession of the sun.

The chief, his feeble neck twitching, spine distorted, disheveled grey hair hanging in sparse locks, answered the wanderer grimly, echoing the voice of dying generations.

"Begone!" he grumbled angrily. "Begone! It is not for you to break the laws of centuries. Our fathers and grandfathers lived under these fogs, in the black endless swamps, among the native thickets. Begone! We do not need the sun, we do not want it! . . ."

"We do not need the sun!" echoed someone.

"We don't! We don't!" shouted the crowds. "We do not need the sun!"

"We do!" rang out a youthful voice with protest and abandon.

And other young and ringing voices cried:

"Give us the sun! Give us the sun!"

These men dug ditches, set up spikes, laid bricks—canals of stone along which the greenish, stagnant swamp water flowed to the giant Issyk Kul Valley.

Days went by, weeks and months.

Many of the young and daring perished, but ever kept calling and urging the fiery voice of the wanderer who had come down from the mountains to change the world.

And the world was changing! Dawn rose ever richer, green-glowing plains spreading ever wider and bolder. The odors of honey and flowers struggled with the stench of decaying earth. Sparkling streams gurgled along the stony, ribbon-like canals.

The battle was hard, unbearably hard, but the earth was already garbed in granite, the first blossoms, rosy and fragrant, already smiled at the dawn, and towering palaces already yearned for the heights.

Then came the first spring to the land of swamps, came from the distant valleys beyond the mountains, bathed in sunlight, in radiant joy, in the fragrance of blossoming flowers.

The strange man once more gathered the people of the land, and a joyous roar greeted him.

"Great one!" cried the young builders.

"Great one! The greatest one!" cried the crowd in exaltation.

Then the wanderer spoke:

"For all . . . all . . . the sun, joy for all . . . for all the sun-lit streams of water . . ."

"Who are you? Who are you, the one who has given the sun to men, the one who has flooded the world with joy?"

"Tell us your name, oh, great one!"

The reply was swift, and the people repeated the ringing name: "Lyann!"[1] "Lyann!" "Lyann!"

The People of the East and Far South Are Waiting for Ilyich

(African Legend)

Far, far away in the North, where mountains, fields and valleys are almost always white from the falling snow; where the grip of frigid cold crushes all life, devastates woods and meadows, drives all beasts and song birds to lands in the distant South; where day and night man keeps his hearth ablaze to ward off the icy breath of winds; where he perishes because of endless toil and oppression—there, in the Far North, a new man was born. His soul ever grieved over the distress and misery not only of his peope but, of all men, for he held everyone a brother unto him.

He never ceased his quest for the cause of man's misery, and when he at last found it, he turned his sad face toward the sun, and the sun smiled on him.

And he went forth. . . .

He went from tribe to tribe, from land to land, from the distant North down to the Far South.

Wherever he set foot, new life sprang into being. Winter gave way to spring, ice thawed, snows watered the soil, and tenderly fragrant flowers blossomed. Broad-leaved lilies grew up on both sides of the man's path . . .

The humbled, the weary, the disinherited and oppressed—all who were condemned to poverty and death, arose and followed him, stirred by the breath of freedom, of joyous life, and filled with unquenchable hatred against the tyrants.

This legend was recorded in 1918 by Vladimir Bonch-Bruyevich. He heard it from an Englishman who had a long stay in Africa.

[1] Lenin.

Drawing by A. Arzhennikov

The peoples of the East and the Far South are now awaiting the arrival of the new redeemer from the Far North from whence a ray of hope has reached them, enkindling their throbbing hearts.

V. I. Lenin's "On the National Pride of the Great-Russians"

(On the occasion of the twenty-fifth anniversary of the publication of Lenin's article)

There are short essays so profound in content that they can take their place all along big volumes embodying the results of extensive investigation. Such is Lenin's article *On the National Pride of the Great-Russians*, first printed in the journal *Sotsial-Demokrat* in December 1914, *i. e.*, twenty-five years ago, at the beginning of the first imperialist world war.

As is well known, that war, which was waged for a redivision of the world, for the seizure of foreign territory, for intensification of national oppression and for the enslavement and exploitation of peoples by a handful of big imperialist powers, was extolled by all the imperialist governments as a war waged for liberty and independence of nations. Ministers, venal publicists, social-chauvinists, flunkeys of Russian tsarism—all shouted and vociferated about "nationality" and "fatherland," fanned the flames of the World War, sang in a thousand different keys about "the freedom and independence of the 'homeland,' the grandeur of the principle of national independence." *(Lenin.)* They hoped that they would drown the voice of the proletarian revolutionary internationalists who were exposing the imperialist nature of the war. They combined nationalist demagogy with police terrorism in their efforts to check the rising tide of the revolutionary movement in all countries.

The imperialists succeeded in hoodwinking and fooling the petty-bourgeois masses, in poisoning them with the virus of chauvinism, in sending them to mutual destruction under the banner of "defence of the fatherland."

"The bourgeoisie deceived the people, concealing the true aims of the war and its imperialist, annexationist character. Each imperialist government declared that it was waging war in defense of its country.

"The opportunists of the Second International helped the bourgeoisie to deceive the people." (*History of the C.P.S.U. (B.)* p. 162).

In Russia, the tsarist government, the liberal bourgeoisie and the petty-bourgeois parties of the Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries joined in a united front. In the vile chauvinistic chorus, the voices of the "Socialist" echoers of the bourgeoisie—such as the *Narodniks* and Socialist-Revolutionaries (Rubanovich and Burtsev, who are mentioned in Lenin's article), the Anarchists (Kropotkin) and the Mensheviks (Plekhanov, Maslov, Smirnov) were even louder than those of the others.

But they did not succeed in drowning the voice of Bolshevik truth. They did not succeed in infecting the working class of Russia with the poison of chauvinism. The working class remained true to the internationalist spirit of its party.

"The proletariat," wrote Lenin, "is the only class in Russia which they failed to impregnate with the virus of chauvinism." (Lenin, *Collected Works*, Russ. ed., Vol. VIII, p. 208).

Of all the Socialist Parties, the Bolshevik Party headed by Lenin and Stalin was the only one that remained true to the revolutionary banner of proletarian internationalism. The stand taken by the Bolshevik Party irritated all the dogs and swine of the bourgeoisie, all the militarists, manufacturers, generals, priests and bourgeois journalists. They hounded the revolutionary Social-Democrats (the Bolsheviks) and accused them of indifference to the interests of their country and the fate of their people, of being wholly immersed in their narrow class interests and of ignoring the interests of their nation. The Menshevik and Socialist-Revolutionary agents of the bourgeoisie foamed with rage at the propaganda of the thesis of Marx and Engels to the effect that "the workingmen have no country," and that therefore they have nothing to defend in the predatory war which was started exclusively in the interests of the imperialist cliques of the world bourgeoisie and was designed to bring about the mutual extermination of proletarians and bleed the nations to death.

In his article *On the National Pride of the Great-Russians* Lenin exposed the thoroughly hypocritical and pseudo-patriotic jeremiads of the venal bourgeois and "Socialist" press and vigorously refuted the bourgeois slander uttered against the party of the working class. He showed that the revolutionary Social-Democrats were the really sincere and most faithful sons of their people, that they alone really loved their country and were selflessly devoted to it. He showed that under the conditions of an imperialist war true defense of the country could be achieved only by an irreconcilable struggle waged against the imperialist bourgeoisie at home, against the power of the landlords and capitalists—the worst enemies of the people and gang of traitors who were selling out their country.

Lenin wrote:

"Is the sentiment of national pride alien to us, the class-conscious Great-Russian proletarians? Of course not! We love our language and our country, we, more than anybody, are working to elevate *her* toiling masses (that is, nine-tenths of *her* population) to the level of the conscious life of democrats and Socialists. It pains us more than anybody to see and perceive the outrages, oppression and humiliation inflicted on our splendid country by the tsarist hangmen, the nobles and the capitalists." *(Ibid.)*

Lenin explains in his article the internationalist Socialist tasks the Great-Russian proletariat has to perform as one of the glorious and advanced detachments of the international proletarian army. He speaks of the task of educating the workers "in the spirit of *absolute* national equality and fraternity," brilliantly foreseeing how "great will be the *Socialist* role of the Great-Russian proletariat as the prime mover of the Communist revolution which is engendered by capitalism." *(Ibid.)*

The importance of this article

of Lenin's transcends its tremendous immediate political effect. Following as it does a number of Lenin's profound works dealing with the national question, particularly that on *The Right of Nations to Self-Determination* (1914), it represents, in a way, a summary of the conclusions arrived at by Marxist-Leninist science on the questions of nationality and fatherland.

In his article Lenin shows that the substance of proletarian internationalism is the fight for freedom and equality of nations, against national and social oppression and enslavement of peoples. Proletarian internationalism implies both the struggle for the liberation of one's own people from the power of the imperialist bourgeoisie and the fight for the liberation of other peoples from the rule of one's own nation; for, Marx taught: "No nation can be free if it oppresses other nations." This means that proletarian internationalism is not opposed to the defense of the interests of one's own country, on the contrary, it coincides with the interests of one's own people and other peoples, provided these interests are correctly understood and furthered in a proletarian way.

Lenin's thesis on the equality of nations and the right of nations to self-determination was of exceptional importance in Russia, which was rightly called a "prison of nations" and where both the landlord-capitalist oppression and national-colonial oppression were rampant.

In the interests of the emancipation of his own people and the other enslaved peoples of his country, Lenin calls for a determined fight against the bourgeois and landlord system, against national oppression, against the bourgeois and landlord policy of enslaving other peoples. The class tyranny of the landlords and bourgeoisie was combined with the role of tsardom as executioner of the non-Russian peoples. The fight for the liberation of the peoples from national oppression furthers the cause of the overthrow of tsarism and capitalism. The national self-consciousness of the Great-Russian people therefore coincides with the internationalist "*Socialist* interests of the Great-Russian (and all other) proletarians." (*Ibid.*)

The substance of proletarian internationalism is to do everything possible in one's own country, to develop and support the revolution in all countries, that is, to rally the progressive forces of every nation to the cause of the great international emancipation movement of the working people in all countries.

As far back as in the *Manifesto of the Communist Party* (1848) Marx and Engels refuted the bourgeois slander which described the Communists as desiring to do away with nationalities and countries.

"The Communists are . . . reproached," Marx and Engels wrote, "with desiring to abolish countries and nationality. The workingmen have no country. We cannot take from them what they have not got."

As opposed to the chauvinism and nationalism of the bourgeoisie, to the bourgeois policy of dividing the workers by countries and nationalities, Marx and Engels proclaimed the greatest idea of modern times—the idea of proletarian internationalism. They told the workers who are separated by the borders of bourgeois countries that they have no country. Marx and Engels called for the unity and solidarity of the workers of all nations in the fight for overthrowing capitalism. They

proclaimed the militant revolutionary slogan: "Workingmen of all countries, unite!"

Marx and Engels explain in the *Manifesto of the Communist Party* the thesis that the workers have no country must not be interpreted to mean that it is immaterial to the working class what is going on in their country, or that the Communists are opposed to fatherland on principle. The Communists, more than anybody, understand the historical necessity of the idea of fatherland (in its various forms) as a means of uniting peoples in national or multi-national States. "The workingmen have no country" means that the proletariat, which had common aims with the revolutionary bourgeoisie in the wars for national liberation against feudalism and foreign domination, has no common interests with the bourgeoisie in the period when the bourgeoisie has become a reactionary force and has discarded the last vestiges of its former patriotism, its concern for the general national interests of the people as a whole, in the narrow, selfish class interests of a handful of big exploiters.

Marxism does not deny the progressive role which the bourgeois, national fatherland played in history. Historical development had to pass through a period of national wars for independence and of the establishment of democracy in the bourgeois states. But the history of bourgeois rule has shown that the national bourgeois governments of different countries are *at one* in their attitude to the proletariat, that it did not take long for the patriotism of the bourgeoisie to evaporate. It was supplanted by bourgeois chauvinism and the policy of national oppression both at home and abroad. This meant that the very conditions of its social and political existence, and the development of capitalism and of its own class consciousness confronted the proletariat with the task of waging a struggle to create a fatherland without a bourgeoisie to take the place of the bourgeois fatherland. It became necessary for the proletariat to assume the leadership of the nation as the representative of its majority. In the words of the *Manifesto of the Communist Party*, "the proletariat must first of all acquire political supremacy, must rise to be the leading class of the nation, must constitute itself *the* nation."

The proletariat must frame its political conduct in accordance with this task. The proletariat must support every people that wages a struggle against reactionary states, against foreign invaders who bring the masses under the yoke of national oppression.

That is why Marx and Engels hailed the wars of national-liberation of the peoples and gave every support to subjugated peoples who fought against their oppressors. The bourgeoisie had turned the ideas of "country," "homeland," and "national interests" into convenient blinkers to hoodwink the people. Marx and Engels removed the bandages of the "fatherland ideology" from the eyes of the working class, exposed the nationalist demagogy of the bourgeoisie and opened the eyes of the proletariat to its historic mission as a class—the mission of liberating the peoples from the yoke of capital.

Thus the thesis of the *Manifesto of the Communist Party* that "the workingmen have no country" is charged with tremendous revolutionary force. It calls upon the proletarians of all countries, who are separated by national and state barriers, to unite in the

fight against capitalism. Marx called upon the workers to do away with their division into separate groups, to put an end to the national estrangement among peoples.

Marx and Engels laid the foundation of the great proletarian doctrine of the equality of nations, which was further developed in Lenin's and Stalin's works, in their doctrine of the self-determination of nations.

The Communists do not propose to "abolish" nationality. That purpose is ascribed to them by the slander of the bourgeoisie, which deliberately confuses and identifies nationality with nationalism. In contradistinction to the nationalism and chauvinism of the bourgeoisie, Marx and Engels pointed to the honest national sentiments of the proletarians.

The proletariat, Marx and Engels wrote in the *Manifesto of the Communist Party*, "is, so far, itself national, though not in the bourgeois sense of the word." It is national in the sense that it represents the best section of the nation, and also in the sense that, in the interests of the international proletarian struggle, it must "first of all settle matters with its own bourgeoisie."

Proletarians—to whatever country they belong—have no reason to "be ashamed" of their nationality, that is, of their nation, of their people. On the contrary, they have every reason to be proud of belonging to peoples, each of which have created the wealth of their country and, in the course of their history, have produced many glorious fighters for the cause of their liberty and independence.

In his article Lenin shows that the Great-Russian proletarians are proud of the fact that in the course of its history the Great-Russian nation produced many remarkable figures of men and women who fought for progress, against the yoke of serfdom in Russia, worked to rouse the masses to conscious political struggle and thus contributed their share to the cause of the liberation of their country and their people. Lenin points out that it is the task of the revolutionary Social-Democrats to continue the finest traditions of the foremost Russian revolutionaries and democrats, their traditions of love for their country and unselfish devotion to their peoples; that, under given historic conditions, it is the task of the Russian revolutionary Social-Democrats to fight, so that their people may be the first to lay the foundations of Socialism and thereby serve as an example to the peoples of other countries. This meant at the time: to fight against the fatherland of the landlords and capitalists, for a new, Socialist society of workers and peasants.

The revolutionary Social-Democrats, Lenin said, are internationalists, because they are not encumbered by bourgeois national narrow-mindedness, chauvinism and national prejudices. They stand for the equality of all nations, against national antagonism, and for the self-determination of nations.

Internationalism does not imply indifference to the destiny of one's country. Just the contrary. The internationalists hold dear the patriotic sentiments of their unity with their people, its language, culture and country. As far back as 1908 Lenin wrote:

"It is indeed stated in the *Communist Manifesto* that the 'workingmen have no country. . . .' But it does not follow from this . . . that it is immaterial to the proletariat in which fatherland it lives; whether it lives in monarchist Germany, republican France

or despotic Turkey. The fatherland, *i. e.*, the given political, cultural and social environment is the most powerful factor in the class struggle of the proletariat. . . . The proletariat cannot treat the political, social and cultural conditions of its struggle with indifference or equanimity; consequently, it cannot remain indifferent to the destiny of its country." (Lenin, *Selected Works*, vol. IV, pp. 327-8).

The exploiting classes of Russia had no love for either their country or their language. They despised their people, fomented national strife, converted their country into an arena of arbitrary rule and the disfranchisement of the people, and made Russia a "prison of nations."

"The numerous non-Russian nationalities were entirely devoid of rights and were subjected to constant insult and humiliation of every kind. The tsarist government taught the Russian population to look down upon the native peoples of the national regions as an inferior race, officially referred to them as *inorodtsi* (aliens), and fostered contempt and hatred of them. The tsarist government deliberately fanned national discord, instigated one nation against another, engineered Jewish pogroms and, in Transcaucasia, incited Tatars and Armenians to massacre each other." (*History of the C.P.S.U. (B.)*, p. 4.)

As the revolutionary movement of the proletariat grew apace, the tsarist government, in its fear of the revolution, turned into a plain gang that sold its country, its people and the wealth of the country to foreign capital, and sacrificed the honor and security of the country for the sake of its own interests.

"We, the proletarians," Lenin wrote, "have seen dozens of times how the bourgeoisie *betrays* the interests of freedom, country, language and nationality when it is confronted with the revolutionary proletariat." (Lenin, *Selected Works*, Vol. II, p. 329.)

The Party of Lenin and Stalin has always guarded the interests of the country; it has never been indifferent to the interests of its fatherland. The Bolsheviks exposed the policy of tsarism, its imperialist designs and its efforts to bar the road to revolution by the conflagration of the war.

Continuing the great traditions of proletarian internationalism bequeathed by Marx and Engels, Lenin and Stalin—working under new historic conditions, in the era of imperialism and proletarian revolutions—raised "the struggle against national oppression to the level of a struggle against imperialism" (Stalin, *Marxism and the National and Colonial Question*, p. 64), and linked up the question of the attitude of the proletariat to the fatherland with the doctrine of the possibility of building Socialism, at first, in one country, taken singly.

In his work *Marxism and the National Question* (1913), Comrade Stalin refuted all the bourgeois and petty-bourgeois theoreticians of the national problem, and exposed them as servants of the bourgeoisie. Comrade Stalin teaches the proletarian revolutionaries of all countries the correct approach to the question of nationality and country. The workers of all national fatherlands, Comrade Stalin says, must remember that they "are *primarily* members of one class family, members of the one army of Socialism." (*Ibid.*, p. 60.)

In his report to the Conference of the Bolshevik Party in April 1917, Comrade Stalin said that the question of fatherland must

be settled in each concrete case "according to the interests of *the* proletariat, of the proletarian revolution," and that Socialists must support the peoples "which are resisting oppression" and come out against the classes which oppress them. (*Ibid.*)

Comrade Stalin has further developed the Marxist doctrine of proletarian internationalism, refuted theoretically and defeated all the anti-Marxian views on the question of nationality and country which were preached by the opportunists of the Second International.

"In opposition to the Menshevik and Social-Revolutionary policy of defending the bourgeois fatherland, the Bolsheviks advanced the policy of '*the defeat of one's own government in the imperialist war.*'" (*History of the C.P.S.U.(B.)*, p.167.)

By pursuing this policy, the Bolsheviks not only performed their duty as proletarian internationalists. This policy expressed their love for their country and their people, for they showed the people the way out of the horrors of the imperialist carnage by transforming the imperialist war into a civil war against landlords and capitalists.

The opportunist leaders of the Social-Democratic parties of the Second International supported "their" bourgeoisie in the imperialist war, proclaimed "civil peace" and called upon the workers "to defend the fatherland," that is, to defend their national bourgeoisie. They concealed from the workers the imperialist character of the war, basely deceived the masses with phrases about "the defense of the fatherland" and about the national-liberationist significance of the war "for the fatherland."

Lenin wrote:

"We shall reply to the opportunists that when the question of fatherland is brought up we cannot ignore the concrete historical character of the present war. This is an imperialist war, that is, a war of the era of the most highly developed capitalism, of the era of the *end* of capitalism. The working class must first 'organize within the nation,' the *Communist Manifesto* says, and at the same time defines the *limits and conditions* of our recognition of nationality and fatherland as necessary forms of the bourgeois system and, consequently, of the bourgeois fatherland. The opportunists distort this truth by applying to the epoch of the end of capitalism what was true in the epoch of its rise. And with regard to the present epoch, when the proletariat is faced with the tasks of fighting for the destruction, not of feudalism but of capitalism, the *Communist Manifesto* declares clearly and unambiguously: 'the workingmen have no country.' It is obvious why the opportunists are afraid to recognize this maxim of Socialism, why they are in most cases afraid even to refer openly to this maxim." (Lenin, *Collected Works*, Russ. ed., Vol. XVIII, pp. 69-70.)

The slogan of "defense of the fatherland" was justified by deceitful sophisms regarding "defensive" and "offensive" wars.

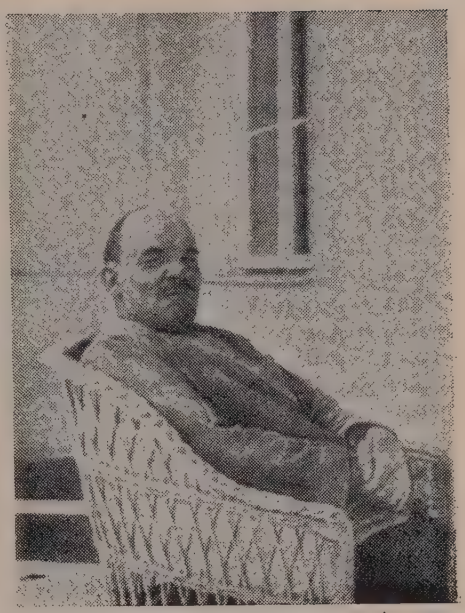
Instead of differentiating between wars according to the entirely external tactical characteristics of "defensive" and "offensive," the Bolsheviks demanded a scientific approach to the differences between wars on the basis of their *political*, that is, class aspects—namely: *which class* is waging the war, and *for which aims*? The Bolsheviks differentiated between two kinds of wars: 1) *just* wars, wars not of conquest but of liberation, waged to defend

the people from foreign invasion and from attempts to enslave them, or to liberate the people from capitalism and imperialist oppression; 2) *unjust* wars, wars of conquest waged to uphold capitalist exploitation and colonial slavery, or to conquer and enslave foreign countries and peoples.

In an unjust, imperialist war the working class cannot act at one with the bourgeoisie, for that would mean the betrayal of the cause of proletarian internationalism. In an imperialist war we see a striking corroboration of the thesis of the *Manifesto of the Communist Party* that "the workingmen have no country." In an imperialist war the class conscious proletarians come out against their bourgeoisie and transform the unjust war, the war of conquest, into a *just* war against capitalism, against their *own* capitalism and imperialism in the first place, against the rule of landlords and capitalists of the dominant nation over the people.

Lenin imparted to the idea of "love of the country" its true, popular and proletarian class meaning. Lenin showed that under imperialism and under the conditions of an imperialist war one cannot be a true son of his country unless one fights against the government hated by the people, the government of capitalists and landlords, the real enemies of the freedom and independence of the country.

"We, the Great-Russian workers," Lenin wrote in his article, "who are filled with the sentiment of national pride, want at all costs a free and independent, a democratic, republican and proud Great Russia, which will base its relations with its neighbors on the human principle of equality, and not on the feudal principle of privilege, which is degrading to a great nation. And just because



V. I. Lenin in Gorki near Moscow. Photographed in summer 1922

we want this, we say that we cannot, in the twentieth century, in Europe (even if it be far-eastern Europe), 'defend the fatherland' except by fighting, by every revolutionary means, the monarchy, the landlords and the capitalists of our *own* fatherland, that is, the *worst* enemies of our country." (Lenin, *Collected Works*, Russ. ed., Vol. XVIII, p. 82.)

Thus "love of the country" and "national pride"—ideas which the bourgeoisie had sullied and distorted—were revived and restored to their true meaning, transformed into the expression of the sacred sentiments of responsibility maintained by progressive and conscious people for the destiny of their country, their fatherland and their people.

In the new era—the era of imperialism and proletarian revolutions—Lenin developed the thesis of the *Manifesto of the Communist Party*—"the workingmen have no country"—by advancing the slo-

gan calling for the *demolition of the bourgeois fatherland*:

"*Only* the demolition of the bourgeois fatherlands can give the workers of all countries 'contact with the land,' the freedom of their native tongue, bread and the benefits of culture." (*Ibid.*, p. 95.)

This slogan calling for the demolition of the bourgeois fatherlands naturally has nothing in common with the Anarchist phrases about the abolition of the fatherland, the dissolution of the nation, etc. The place of the demolished bourgeois fatherlands must be taken by the new, proletarian, Socialist fatherland, historically the most progressive and highest form of fatherland—Socialism.

But the international duties of the proletariat in the country in which it emerged victorious do not end with the creation of a proletarian fatherland, at first, in one country, taken singly. As Lenin pointed out, the Socialist fatherland becomes the center and basis for the development of the Socialist revolution throughout the world.

The Bolsheviks, who were outspoken *defeatists* in regard to the government of landlords and capitalists in the imperialist war, became unflinching *defensists* after November 7, 1917.

"After November 7 (October 25), 1917," Lenin wrote, "we have become defensists. We are for the 'defense of the fatherland,' but the war for the fatherland toward which we are now heading will be a war for a Socialist fatherland, for Socialism as a fatherland, for the Soviet republic as a *detachment* of the world army of Socialism." (Lenin, *Collected Works*, Russ. ed., Vol. XXII, p. 378.)

Lenin further explained that Socialist defensism cannot be identified either with abstract "pacifism" or with "war of defense," that is, that we must not think that the Socialist State will always confine itself to passive *defense* of its borders.

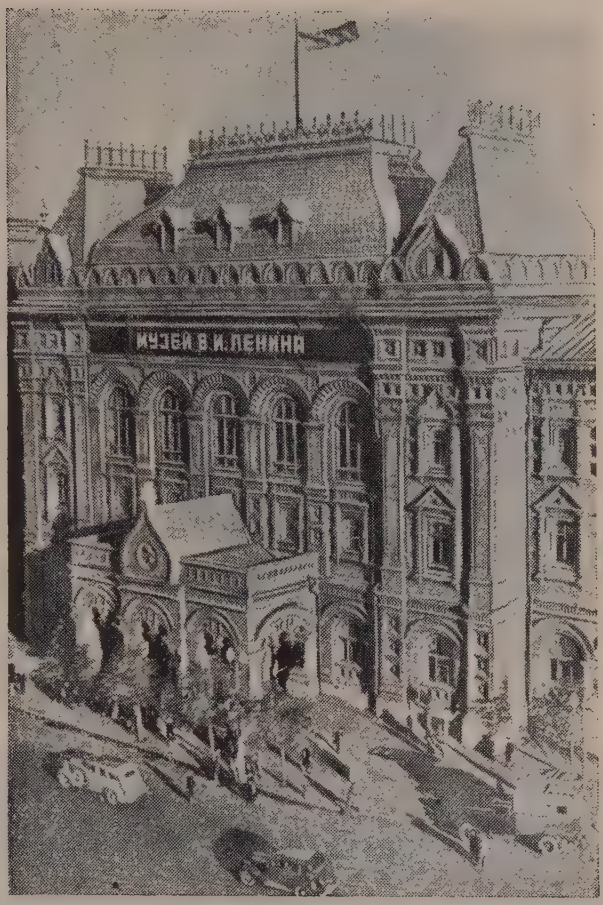
In an article entitled *The Military Program of the Proletarian Revolution*, written in 1916, Lenin, in proving that the victory of Socialism is possible, at first, in one country, foresees that "the bourgeoisie of other countries will strive to defeat the victorious proletariat of the Socialist country. In such cases, war on our part would be legitimate and just. It would be a war for Socialism, for the liberation of other peoples from the bourgeoisie." (Lenin, *Collected Works*, Russ. ed., Vol. XIX, p. 325.)

In case of attack or the menace of attack on the part of an arrogant aggressor, the victorious proletariat will take action *against* the aggressor, will rally to its own side the oppressed classes of the capitalist countries and rouse them against the capitalists.

As Comrade Stalin has pointed out, the characteristic feature of such action taken by the Socialist country is that it facilitates the victory of the working people of the capitalist countries and, by smashing the capitalist encirclement, hastens and insures the *final* victory of Socialism in the country that was first victorious.

PYOTR VYSHINSKY

Around the Corner From Red Square



A long queue forms as soon as the Lenin Museum opens in the morning.

Although moving forward rapidly, the line grows shorter slowly, being ever renewed by a steady stream of fresh visitors. The people wait their turn to enter the Museum and study the life of their great leader.

Ahead of us in the line stands a Tatar; behind us an Ukrainian girl. One sees Central Asian *dekhans* in colorfully-striped coats, and well-dressed Europeans; one sees blond Scandinavians, slant-eyed Mongolians, broad-faced Arctic peoples, sloe-eyed Georgians . . .

At the Museum entrance the visitor's eye is held by a white statue of Lenin in a blaze of light.

. . . The first hall covers the years from 1870 to 1893. We see photos of Lenin as a child, photos of members of his family. A model of the house in Simbirsk (now Ulyanovsk), where Lenin's childhood was spent; a painting of the simple room he occupied. His mother's books are here, with those of his brother, Alexander. They include Shakespeare's works in English, and Thomas Huxley. The class register with his marks are here, too—he received "excellent" in every subject.

Lenin as a schoolboy

. . . Kazan University is shown in a photo. A painting shows us Ulyanov (Lenin) at a students' meeting. Here is the list of students expelled from the university for participation in the meeting; Lenin's name is among them.

. . . We see a painting of the Kazan Kremlin, Lenin's first place of confinement, and a street in the village of Kokushkino, his first place of exile. Letters to the local police demand a strict watch over Lenin during his exile. Lenin finds the universities in Russia closed to him. He is not allowed to go abroad to complete his education. Police records bear eloquent testimony to this.

Lenin applies for permission to take university entrance examinations for which he was preparing at home. On his application is scrawled: "Ask the District Commissioner of Education and the police about him. He is a bad man, and the police probably know what he is up to 'on the side.'"

Lenin finally gained permission and in 1891 passed brilliantly the examinations at Petersburg University. The diploma given Vladimir Ulyanov (Lenin) on graduating from the Law Faculty of Petersburg University is shown, and also a

Lenin at a Students' Meeting

photo of the building of the Samara District Court where he worked as assistant to an attorney-at-law. There are documents of certain cases he conducted.

. . . And here are books Lenin read between 1879 and 1887. We find the classic writers: Turgenev, Lermontov, Pushkin, Nekrasov, Dobrolyubov, Chernyshevsky and the economists: John Stuart Mill and Ricardo. Here also are Ferdinand Lassalle, Ovid, Darwin, Mendeleyev and the great founders of scientific socialism: Marx and Engels. When still a youth, Lenin made a thorough study of their works and gained an astonishing command of Marxism. Among the books he read in Samara we see *Das Kapital*, *Communist Manifesto*, *Anti-Dühring*, *Poverty of Philosophy*. There are photos of the Samara Marxist Circle which Lenin led from 1891 to 1893.

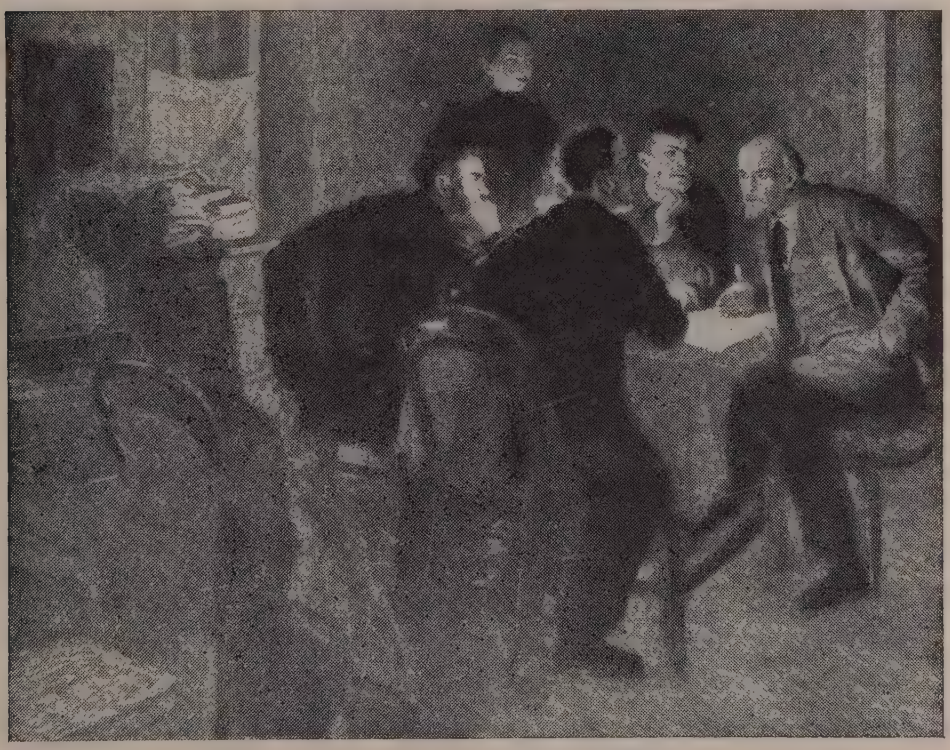
. . . The houses in Petersburg where Lenin spoke at Marxist meetings are shown on photos, as well as workers at whose homes Marxist circles met. In the center of the second hall is an original copy of V. I. Lenin's famous work *What the "Friends of the People" Are and How They Fight Against the Social-Democrats*. Printed underground on a hectograph in 1894, it is here enshrined in a marble block on the wall.

The work of revolutionaries in Russia of those days was carried on under most difficult circumstances. Lenin was forced to write under different pen-names. Each name in the secret police reports is underlined. Even a hectograph was not always to be had. We see Lenin's work *What the "Friends of the People" Are and How They Fight Against the Social-Democrats* in an edition copied by hand for distribution in Saratov in 1895. In this work Lenin thoroughly exposes the true character of the *Narodniks* (Populists), showing that they were false "friends of the people" actually working against the people.

Here is Lenin's picture with those of other members of the League of Struggle for the Emancipation of the Working Class, the Bolshevik Party in embryo. N. K. Krupskaya is also among the members of the League. On display are code letters of Lenin about the work of the League as well as police documents.

In 1895 the tsarist government arrested and imprisoned Lenin.

. . . Here are Lenin's letters from jail, articles written there, smuggled



Lenin Confers with Social Democrats in Ufa, 1900 *Drawing by A. Moravov*

out and mimeographed. We see Lenin's draft program of the Social-Democratic Party and his letters from jail outlining the plan of the book *The Development of Capitalism in Russia*. Before us are a few of the five hundred books in Russian, English, German and French which he used for reference. . . . The tsarist government exiled Lenin to Eastern Siberia for three years. N. K. Krupskaya was also exiled. On display are a model and a photo of the log cabin in which Lenin lived in exile. . . .

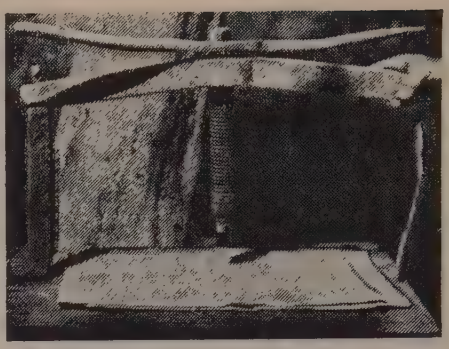
There, in the village of Shushenskoye, Lenin continued his revolutionary activity. There he completed the book started when still in jail. Here is the first edition of *The Development of Capitalism in Russia*, signed V. Ilyin, 1899. This book dealt a death-blow to the theories of *Narodism* (Populist movement). The hardships and hindrances of exile did not prevent Lenin from corresponding with comrades engaged in practical activities. In 1899 when the group of Economists—Prokopovich, Kuskova and others—issued their manifesto directed against revolutionary Marxism, and demanded that the working class refrain from putting forward independent political demands, Lenin called a conference of the political Marxist exiles in banishment nearby. Headed by Lenin, seventeen comrades made a strong protest against this opportunist document.

As soon as he returned from exile, Lenin threw himself into the thick of the struggle. He appeared at Social-Democratic meetings.

Lenin's *Iskra (The Spark)* began to flare. The first All-Russian Marxist newspaper was launched abroad.

. . . The years 1900 to 1903. The period of the *Iskra*, the illegal revolutionary newspaper issued abroad and smuggled into Russia. Copies of the *Iskra* with articles by V. I. Lenin are shown and a photo of the building in Munich where it was printed in 1900. The house in London, Holford Square, 30, where Lenin lived in 1902 and 1903. A tsarist secret police agent's account of the appearance of the first issue of *Iskra*, and rumors of Lenin's planned return to Russia. "And then to clap that gentleman in jail," we read in one of the letters how the secret agent gloated prematurely, dreaming of cutting short Lenin's revolutionary activity.

We see a dossier of the police department with a report that "A brochure of N. Lenin *What Is To Be Done?* has appeared abroad and caused a sensation." Comrade Stalin wrote of the importance of this book in his work *Foundations of Leninism*: "The fight of the old *Iskra*



Stalin's Printing Press

and the brilliant criticism of the theory of '*khvostism*' in Lenin's pamphlet *What Is To Be Done?* not only smashed so-called 'Economism' but also created the theoretical foundations for a truly revolutionary movement of the Russian working class."

. . . *Iskra* does its great work. We see a large map of the underground distribution system of the paper. The list of the *Iskra* supporters is a roll-call of great revolutionaries.

In the Transcaucasia at this time J. V. Stalin is leader of the group which centers around the *Iskra*. His revolutionary work is closely tied up with that of Lenin and the *Iskra*.

. . . Even Benjamin Franklin's press was not as primitive as the one used by Stalin to print revolutionary pamphlets and newspapers in Batum in 1902. But what powerful instruments such primitive weapons proved in the end!

. . . The tsarist police jailed Stalin. We see a photo of the cell in which Stalin was confined. . . .

. . . In May 1904 Lenin's famous book *One Step Forward, Two Steps Back* appears. It gave a resolute answer to the Mensheviks and drafted the organizational foundations of the Bolshevik Party. In July 1905 Lenin published his remarkable book, *The Two Tactics of Social-Democracy in the Democratic Revolution*, which contains a strikingly pointed criticism of the Menshevik tactics and advances the brilliant basis of the Bolshevik tactics. Before us lie photostatic copies of separate pages from this book.

. . . The Revolution of 1905. Lenin leads the rising movement. Here is a letter of Lenin "On the Time for an Armed Uprising," written October 25 (13) 1905. Lenin returned to Russia in November 1905. Though hiding from the police, he

took a direct part in preparing an armed uprising. In this same period Stalin carried on revolutionary work in the Transcaucasia. At one of the meetings where he spoke, he pointed out: "What do we need in order to really win? We need three things: first—arms, second—arms, third—arms and arms again!"

In 1905 revolutionary newspapers are printed legally for the first time in Russia. Lenin and Gorky organized *Novaya Zhizn (New Life)*, a legal Bolshevik newspaper. Here we see copies of this paper, with Lenin's articles, and a photo of Lenin, Gorky and others at the organizational meeting of the *Novaya Zhizn's* editorial staff. There are several large displays of Lenin's writings, brochures and in particular Lenin's review of an article: "The Third Congress Before the Court of Caucasian Mensheviks," which exposes the opportunism of the Mensheviks. This article was published in a newspaper edited by Stalin, but the writer of the article has not been ascertained. A photo shows Lenin and Stalin meeting at the Tammerfors conference of the Russian Social-Democratic Party in Finland in 1905. In 1906 Lenin and Stalin led the struggle against the Mensheviks at the Fourth Congress of the Party in Stockholm and in 1907 at the Fifth Congress in London. A photo shows the church in London where the Fifth Congress of the Russian Social-Democratic Labor Party was held.

. . . The 1905 Revolution brought forth great leaders. We see Stalin active in the Transcaucasia and particularly in Chiaturi. In Lugansk K. E. Voroshilov led the struggle of the revolutionary workers. M. V. Frunze was active in the struggle of the Ivanovo-Voznesensk workers . . . G. K. Orjonikidze in the Transcaucasia . . . Y. M. Sverdlov in the Urals . . . V. V. Kuibyshev in Petersburg . . . Felix Dzerzhinsky in Poland and Lithuania. . . S. M. Kirov in Tomsk . . .

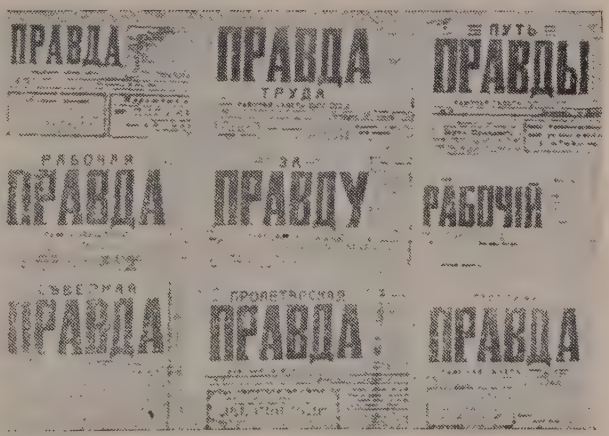
The 1905 Revolution fails. Years of unmitigated reaction set in. Stalin arrested . . .Orjonikidze in a Batum jail . . . K. E. Voroshilov in exile in Archangel Province . . . S. M. Kirov in a Tomsk jail . . . V. V. Kuibyshev in prison . . .

After the 1905 Revolution failed, the Bolsheviks retired to illegal organizational work, continuing to prepare the masses for new struggles. In Geneva and in London Lenin sharpened the theoretical weapons of the Party in his famous *Materialism and Empirio-Criticism*. In the *History of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (Bolsheviks)* we read of the great role of this work, as well as previous works of Lenin, in the creation of a new Bolshevik Party: "Lenin's *What Is To Be Done?* was the *ideological* preparation for such a party. Lenin's *One Step Forward, Two Steps Back* was the *organizational* preparation for such a party. Lenin's *The Two Tactics of Social-Democracy in the Democratic Revolution* was the *political* preparation for such a party. And lastly, Lenin's *Materialism and Empirio-Criticism* was the *theoretical* preparation for such a party."

Manuscripts and letters show Lenin's unremitting, tireless fight against opportunism and for solidarity of Party and working class forces. Stalin carried on this work in Russia. Before us lie his articles and letters to Lenin which show their unity both in thought and action.

The Sixth All-Russian Party Conference was held in Prague, January 1912. This conference expelled the Mensheviks from the Party and organized the independent existence of the Bolshevik Party. Here we see the letter of Lenin to the representative of the Czech Social Democrats in the International Socialist Bureau, asking assistance in the organization of the conference in Prague. Here is the draft resolution in Lenin's handwriting *About Liquidationism and the Group of Liquidators*, accepted by the conference. We see here also the dossier of the police department about the Prague Conference.

The rise of the revolutionary movement gathers momentum slowly but steadily



"Pravda" under different names

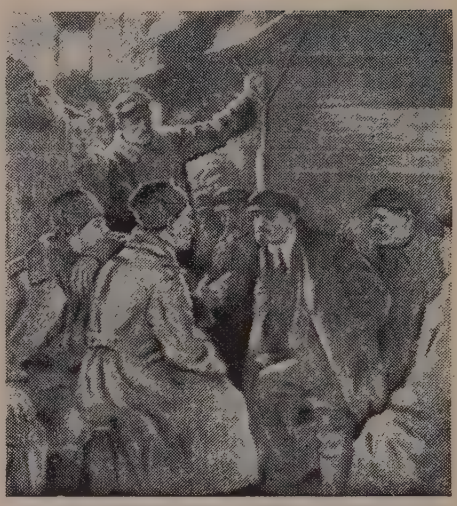
and ominously. It is organized, directed and expanded by the workers paper *Pravda (Truth)*, created by Lenin and Stalin. The founding of *Pravda*, central organ of the Party, is shown. On display are *Pravda* articles by Lenin and Stalin. The paper had a hard time fighting the censorship: it was obliged to appear under many different names. One day it was *Pravda*, the next *Trudovaya Pravda (Labor Truth)* and the day after—*Put Pravdy (Path of Truth)*.

Neither fines nor confiscation succeeded in suppressing the *Pravda*. To it the workers gave their last kopeks. In 1914 the *Pravda* fund received contributions from 2,875 groups of workers.

Your attention is drawn to other interesting documents on display. Here is Lenin's letter to Stalin in Petersburg, December 1912, about preparations for the strike and demonstration of January 9, 1913. The letter in N. Krupskaya's hand was written with chemicals between the lines of an extraneous text. Here is a copy of the newspaper *Sotsial-Demokrat*, December 12, 1914, with an article by Lenin, *On the National Pride of the Great-Russians*. We see the first edition of *Marxism and the National Question*, Stalin's classic work published in 1913. Also Lenin's article reviewing the pamphlet and his letter to Gorky about this work.

The year 1914 . . . The imperialist war broke out. Leaders of the Second International betrayed the cause of the working class. Lenin fought for the creation of the Third Communist International. He armed the Party with a profound theory of the Socialist revolution, creating an exhaustive basis for the law about the unequal economic and political development of capitalism in the epoch of imperialism, about the possibility of socialism being victorious in one country and the impossibility of socialism being victorious in all countries simultaneously. Lenin expounded these theoretical positions of greatest importance in his articles *The United States of Europe Slogan*, *War Program of the Proletarian Revolution* and most fully in the book *Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism*. While working on this latter book, he used for reference six hundred and three books and three hundred and fifty-three articles in English, German and French. Here are his library call slips, his notes and diagrams he drew analyzing the complicated interconnection of capitalist concerns.

. . . And here are his letters from abroad. They contain sharp attacks on Trotsky. "I consider Rolland Holst, Rakovsky (have you seen his French pamphlet?) and Trotsky *all* most harmful 'Kautskians'



Lenin on his Way to Petrograd. Drawing by A. Moravov

in this respect, that all of them *glorify* opportunism in various ways, all conduct a policy of eclecticism (in different ways) instead of revolutionary Marxism," he wrote to A. M. Kollantai from Zorenburg in the summer of 1915. A letter dated 1916 exposed the stand taken by Pyatakov and Radek for a compromise with the Mensheviks and Trotsky, as well as Bukharin's anarchist and anti-Marxian position on the problem of the state. In a letter from Zurich, May 1916, Lenin scathingly attacked Zinovyev's double-dealing in the struggle Lenin led against the Bukharin-Pyatakov anti-Party group during the imperialist war.

The year 1917 . . . Events fully bore out Lenin's foresight. The imperialist chain was broken. Under the leadership of the Bolsheviks the peoples of Russia overthrew the autocracy. . . .

. . . Lenin hastened to Russia. The moment when Lenin, the genius of thought and action, the leader of the world's oppressed, met the working people and spoke immortal words is impressed in the paintings, sculptures and photos on display. A manuscript is shown, the renowned April Theses, which proclaim "All power to the Soviets." These famous April Theses provided the Party and the proletariat with a clear revolutionary line for the transition from the bourgeois to the Socialist revolution . . . *Pravda* reappeared, directed by Lenin, Stalin and Molotov. A drawing shows them together in the *Pravda* editorial rooms.

The bourgeoisie united with traitors of the working class and the peasantry, the Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolu-

tionaries, in their attempts to continue the imperialist war and to suppress the revolution. Enraged they struck at the workers, shooting down a demonstration in Petrograd. Workers were brutally murdered in the attempts to behead the revolution. Lenin was forced to hide from the Kerensky government. Here in a glass case is the order for the arrest of Lenin issued by the Ministry of Justice of the Provisional Government, October 18, 1917.

. . . Lenin went into hiding in a hut at Razliv, near Petrograd. Here we see the objects he had with him there: a blackened tea kettle, a wood-pronged rake, a hatchet, a saw and a scythe . . . The wig in which he escaped from Kerensky's sleuths in Petrograd . . . In these circumstances Lenin led the struggle and the muster of revolutionary forces for the storming of October. From the underground he led the Sixth Party Congress which was held illegally. His closest friend and companion-in-arms, J. V. Stalin, carried out his instructions. Lenin was concerned about arming the Party with the most advanced theory and especially in the question of forming a workers and peasants state. In hiding, Lenin developed Marx's teaching on the state, writing the book *The State and Revolution*. His manuscript, the books he used for reference, and drafts are shown in the Museum.

. . . The storm approached. Lenin demanded that all activity be concentrated on preparation for an armed uprising. October 10, 1917, the Central Committee of the Bolsheviks passed the historic resolution to launch the armed uprising within the next few days. Lenin wrote this resolution in pencil on two sheets of paper torn from a notebook. Such is the appearance of the document which played an immense role in the development of a new era in human history—the era of the realization of Socialism. "It's more than clear," we read in Lenin's letter to the members of the Central Committee, "that to delay the insurrection now will be veritably fatal." Here also is Lenin's letter to the Central Committee of the Bolshevik Party demanding the immediate expulsion of Zinovyev and Kamenev from the Party for having divulged to the Kerensky government the secret resolution about an armed uprising.

Neither traitors nor their masters could halt the revolution. The *Iskra* had kindled a crimson flame. The uprising began on October 24 (November 6) 1917. Smolny Institute, the headquarters of the Revolution, was a beehive of activity. Before us are many paintings of the October headquarters—Lenin and Stalin among the Red Guards, conferring with workers, soldiers, peasants . . . There are newspapers of the day of the armed uprising . . . *Rabochi Put (Workers' Path)* carried two huge streamers on the fateful day:

All Power to the Soviets of Workers, Soldiers and Peasants!

PEACE! BREAD! LAND!

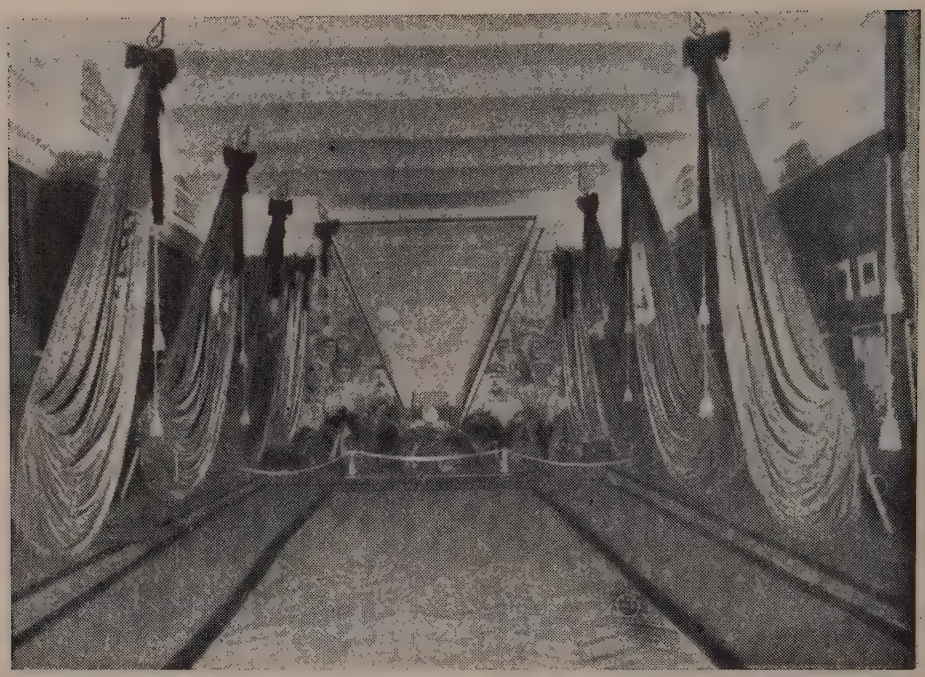
And then on October 27 and October 28 *Izvestia* printed the decrees on peace and land adopted by the Second Congress of Soviets.

The taking of the Moscow Kremlin. Power in the capital held by workers and peasants led by the Party. Lenin elected chairman of the Council of Peoples Commissars.

The bourgeoisie hurled all their forces into the struggle against Soviet power, launched the Civil War. A fierce struggle ensued.

. . . The year 1918. Civil War and the foreign military intervention. The socialist fatherland in danger. "Everyone to the Defense of the Socialist Fatherland!" A mass of documents illustrate Lenin's activity in leading the defense of the young Soviet republic. Posters challenge, shout aloud "Have You Signed Up as a Volunteer?" For nights on end Lenin would not leave the direct wire, leading the struggle. Stalin and Voroshilov were at the front. Trotskyites and Bukharinites, seeking to stab in the back, to behead

The Map of the Electrification of Russia



Hall 17. General View

the Revolution, arrived at an agreement with Mensheviks, Socialist-Revolutionaries and agents of foreign interventionists. They directed the revolver of the Socialist-Revolutionary Kaplan who shot at the great Lenin. We see here the coat worn by Lenin at the time. It has holes made by the poisoned bullets of the blackguard band. The eyes of the whole land were turned to the Kremlin. "Lenin is fighting illness. He shall conquer. So does the proletariat wish, such is his will, so does he enjoin destiny," read the *Pravda* headline of September 1, 1918. And Lenin overcame the illness . . .

One cannot take in everything. Lenin was everywhere. He organized the famine relief. In his hands were the threads of contact with all the numerous fronts. He organized a workers' and peasants' state, directed its power to restoration and expansion of the national economy. Witness to this are Lenin's letters and instructions on restoring transport, his telegrams about the food situation, his wires to Stalin, Voroshilov, Orjonikidze at the fronts. Lenin organized the victory on the Civil War fronts and the transition from the smash-up of the old regime to the building of the new Socialist order, from the struggle against ruin, to the first victories on the economic front. The work of Lenin as statesman is of vast scope. But in his private life he retains his simplicity and modesty. His room in the Kremlin is unpretentious but books, books, books line the entire wall. His great mind enriched science. The room is modest. The furnishings are simple, the chairs don't match, the furniture is even shabby. Here we also see Lenin's registration list certifying that he received a rations card.

The Revolution went from victory to victory.

Lenin the statesman. His scheme for the electrification of Russia, outlined on a map. Another huge map shows the scope of his instructions on the defense of the country from 1918 to 1920. Under the leadership of Lenin and Stalin, the Party aroused the people in a war for the fatherland against the invasion of interventionist armies. Lenin's slogan "Everything for the Front!" swept the country. Thick clusters of threads—hundreds of them—stretch across the map from Moscow to every part of the country: each thread represents a letter, a telegram, a directive.

A significant fact—in the years of the Civil War and intervention the plan of electrification was drawn up, because "Soviet Power plus Electrification equals Communism." What immense power of foresight! It is also evident in another Lenin document, in his article

"A Great Beginning," dealing with the new socialist attitude toward labor. Before us lie photostatic copies of pages from the manuscript of this article.

Displayed in the Museum are also numerous historic documents which reflect the part Lenin played as organizer and inspirer of the Communist International. Here is Lenin's article on the founding of the Communist International, and there his speech at the opening of the First Congress of the Comintern.

The years 1921 to 1924 . . . Photos of Lenin and Stalin, Lenin and Gorky, conferring . . . Posters calling on the people to fight ruin, hunger, destruction, to restore transport . . . Lenin's telegrams, letters, manuscripts, speeches, reports, articles, mobilizing the masses, organizing victories. He wrote to Semashko, Commissar of Public Health, on the bad state of the health resorts, and demanded action to improve the care for the health of the people.

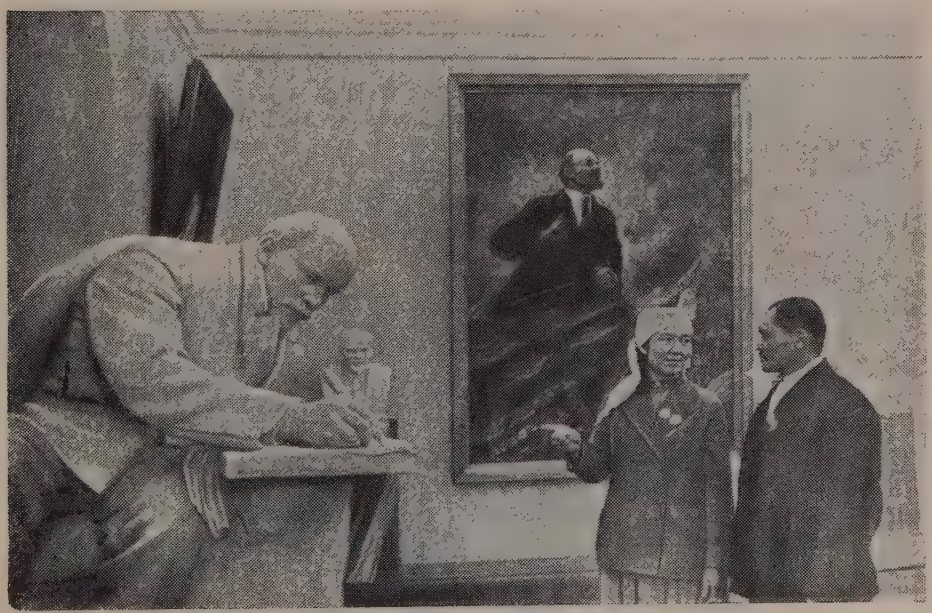
Here is his telegram in which he asked for the name and address of the physician who was treating Stalin.

Lenin was concerned with the problems of culture, of education. From Lunacharsky he demanded the preparation of a systematic plan of work for the Commissariat of Education. He proposed concrete measures to increase peat output—by means of exhibits, books, posters. He wrote to the People's Commissar of Justice on the struggle against bureaucracy. We see a table he drew up of industrial output for the first quarter of 1921, a note to A. D. Tsurupa on the state of the grain balance. Tabulated in enlarged form is the schedule of one of Lenin's working days, February 4, 1921, during which the great leader of the world's working people solved scores of problems, some of first-rate political importance. Here we see the comprehensive efficiency of Lenin, engaged in work of exceptional diversity, vast in scope. And with all this Lenin found time for touching marks of attention to comrades around him, for real paternal care about them.

Lenin listened carefully to the voice of the people. In a note to P. A. Karpinsky in January 1922, he asked: "Will you not write me in brief (2-3 pages maximum) how many letters the newspaper *Bednota (Peasant Poor)* receives? What is important (especially important) and new in these letters?" He asked for regular reports on these letters.

He wrote directives about textbooks, dictionaries, public libraries, the publication of atlases, fuel for Donbas plants, aid to Baku oilfield regions, improvement of the work of posts and telegraphs, about underground gasification of coal, and so on.

Lenin was constantly addressing meetings, visiting factories, receiving workers, peasants, intellectuals. He learned of the people's needs, was always aware of everything, and he determined the path



Visitors in Hall 17

of struggle with errorless judgment. The success of Lenin's policy was evident. The country rose restored. Its wounds were healing . . . Then suddenly the greatest misfortune—Lenin's illness.

. . . Lenin died. Red and black strike the keynotes of this hall. It is a long one, and at intervals around it are grouped red banners. The carpet is red, black bordered. Voices here are hushed. Many eyes grow moist.

. . . At the head of the room is a cast of Lenin's head and hands. On the walls: photos of the long line which stood in the snow for hours to pay homage to the great man as his body lay in state; Stalin carrying his coffin; the last salute—in Moscow, everywhere—even on icebound ships; newspaper extras carrying the news of his death; telegrams of condolences from all over the world.

The response of the workers was to rally still more closely around the Party of Lenin, around the Central Committee, around Stalin, Lenin's pupil and continuer of Lenin's cause. Lenin's power, his immortality, is seen ever and again in brief, moving documents—applications to join the Party. In Lisichansk District in the Donbas, where there were one hundred and fifty Party members, after Lenin's death six hundred and fifty applications to join the Party were received from workers and three hundred from peasants. "In the moment of our heavy loss we consider it the duty of every honest proletarian to rally around the banner of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union," stated a typical collective letter of application.

In the days of mourning for Lenin, at the Second Congress of Soviets of U.S.S.R., Comrade Stalin made a solemn vow in the name of the Party. He said: "In departing from us, Comrade Lenin bequeathed to us the duty of holding aloft and guarding the purity of the great title of member of the Party. We vow to you, Comrade Lenin, that we will fulfil your bequest with honor...

"In departing from us, Comrade Lenin bequeathed to us the duty of guarding the unity of our Party like the apple of our eye. We vow to you, Comrade Lenin, that we will also fulfil this bequest of yours with honor.

"In departing from us, Comrade Lenin bequeathed to us the duty of guarding and strengthening the dictatorship of the proletariat. We vow to you, Comrade Lenin, that we will spare no effort to fulfil also this bequest of yours with honor."

In the name of the Party Comrade Stalin made a vow to fulfil the behest of Lenin to strengthen the alliance of the workers and the peasants, to consolidate and extend the Union of Republics, to strengthen the Red Army and the Red Navy, to strengthen and extend the Communist International.

. . . Lenin's cause lives on. In the next hall we see a huge globe and ranged around the room are Lenin's works in eighty-three languages, and placards of many countries and many peoples.

Here is Lenin in art. Three large halls cannot contain all the works of art and in particular the specimens of folk art. In bright, warm colors Lenin is portrayed on ornamental rugs, vases, shawls. Lenin and Stalin are closely linked in the people's mind. This is evident in works of folk art from the Arctic, from Central Asia. There are children's drawings of Lenin, many, very many. Foreign artists do homage to Lenin. The triumph of Lenin's policies, the triumph of Leninism is reflected in art . . .

The Museum cannot serve the entire country. Branches of the Central Museum have already been opened in Leningrad, Kiev, and Tbilisi. The people learn to live, to work, to conquer, as Lenin had lived, worked and conquered.

JACK WILSON

Branch of the Lenin Museum in Tbilisi

VLADIMIR YERMILOV

Gorky and Dostoyevsky

"MORALS OF THE MASTERS"

Gorky relates in his *Talks on the Craft* that in his days of growing to spiritual maturity he came across two varieties of hostile ideology: one was the Nietzschean "morals of the masters"; the other, the Christian "morals of the slaves."

"I had some acquaintance with the Marxian theory," he says. "The 'morals of the masters' was just as repugnant to me as the 'morals of the slaves.' I evolved a third morality—'support the man in revolt! . . .' Some of my teachers contrived to combine both systems—the 'morals of the masters' and the 'morals of the slaves': they were imbued with the former by virtue of their highly developed intellect; with the latter by the impotence of their will and by submission to realities. Having tried to act in a revolutionary way, they had 'paid the penalty,' and the road to the 'master class' had been closed to them. This affected their 'will to live' and aroused in them a mood which I call the 'anarchism of the defeated.' This anarchism is very well formulated by Dostoyevsky in his *Notes From the Underground.*"

Thus, in Gorky's opinion, the work of Dostoyevsky reflected a combination of the "morals of the masters" and the "morals of the slaves."

This idea is of great help for an understanding of Dostoyevsky's work as a whole. Gorky attaches it in the first place, to the *Notes From the Underground.*

A slackening of social ties and the formation of the psychology of the social apostate—such is the inner meaning of the *Notes From the Underground.* Gorky pointed out that the sentiments expressed in this story arose "from a sense of personal injury, from an offended ego which, having been advanced to the front ranks of life by the will of history, finds itself inherently impotent in the face of problems facing it, and is offended by its own impotence, and wounded so deeply that, instead of responding to the natural desire to broaden and deepen its mind, it gives way to despair and renounces it. . . ."

Speaking at the Soviet Writers' Congress in 1934, Gorky referred to these sentiments as "an emigration from reality to the nihilism of despair." In the same speech he spoke of the hero of the *Notes From the Underground* as follows:

"Dostoyevsky's is the fame of the man who in the person of the hero of the *Notes From the Underground* depicts with an unusually vivid perfection of word painting the type of egocentric or social degenerate. . . . Dostoyevsky shows in the character of his hero to what depths of despicable whining the individualistic young

For the beginning see No. 3.

men of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries could descend in their divorcement from life. This hero possesses all the characteristic features of Friedrich Nietzsche . . . and of many other social degenerates produced by the anarchic influence of the inhuman conditions of the capitalist State."

The basic theme of Dostoyevsky's second literary period stands out in the *Notes From the Underground*. This theme is loss of contact with the people and a consequent loss of the criteria of "good" and "evil"; the "soul open to everything"; a horror of human isolation brought about by the bourgeois society, of the growing "spider's soul" of the egocentric individual who has severed connection with the masses of the "insulted and injured." The horror grew the greater the more pronounced the "spider" trait in this individual became, the stronger its grip on him, and the weaker his inner strength to resist it. The *Notes From the Underground* laid bare the soul of an individual who realized that he was *left alone*, without any contact with humanity.

The well-known Russian writer of the past century, Gleb Uspensky, wrote:

"'Lead me to the camp of the perishing,' cries the hero of Nekrasov's poem, *A Knight for an Hour*. By all means! Lead him there. Otherwise, left to himself, he will need only one little jolt to slip into the camp of those with bloodstained hands."

The severing of all real ties with the "camp of the perishing" inevitably led to a revaluation of all the humanistic traditions and a contact with the "camp of those with bloodstained hands." Like Balzac, Dostoyevsky realized that the bourgeois society confronted the individual with the dilemma of being either the thug or the victim, as one of Balzac's characters put it. Dostoyevsky was horrified to detect in the growing bourgeois soul of his "underground" hero the features of a misanthrope who is bereft of all moral buttresses. Hence, the types of Raskolnikov and Ivan Karamazov, terrified by the tempting idea that "everything is permissible"; hence also Smerdyakov. . . .

This extremely vital and significant theme in Dostoyevsky's creative work is enveloped in a cloak of obscurantism. The "spider" principle in Smerdyakov, is opposed by illusory, not real, values—by religion, by a reactionary, anti-capitalist utopianism, by a mystic "contact with the people." Furthermore, while depicting his types of bourgeois apostates, Dostoyevsky kept up a running fire of criticism of Socialism, and threw out hints designed to associate in the reader's mind these types with revolution and Socialism. Of course, the reactionaries have made the most of this. The reactionary critics obscured the true character of the types of Raskolnikov and Ivan Karamazov; they represented them as revolutionaries who were filled with horror and repentance at their "revolutionism" and atheism, or else as revolutionaries who persisted in their "revolutionary" views. . . .

Dostoyevsky voiced the fear caused by the spread of capitalism in Russia. Patriarchal Russia was shivering and collapsing under the shock of its assault; in this new world, the social type of whom Dostoyevsky was the spokesman was left to fend for himself. The minor official, the impoverished aristrocrat who had been swept into the capitalist maelstrom and was suffering all the hardships of the declassed, and the unprivileged intellectual who had lost contact

with the people—such were Dostoyevsky's heroes. A double burden weighed upon them: the Asiatic despotism of the authorities and the new capitalist relations. The new laws of life were revealed to them in all their savage brutality. And the ultimate victory of democracy, the part the working class was to play in that victory—that vision of the future which gladdened the spiritual sight of Nekrasov, Chernyshevsky, Dobrolyubov and Shchedrin, representing the vanguard of the democratic, the peasant revolutionary movement—only filled Dostoyevsky's main characters with fear and repugnance. The "ulcer of proletarianism" was to him as horrible as capitalism itself. "Proletarianism" was associated in his mind with poverty and broken fortune, the collapse of patriarchal morality, of the ancient ethical foundations, for it should not be forgotten that the Russian petty bourgeoisie preserved extensive survivals of medieval and patriarchal society. This offered fertile ground for reactionary anti-capitalist utopias, such as "Orthodox Church Socialism." "Proletarianism" terrified Dostoyevsky's main characters as a real menace to the petty-bourgeois strata of society who were engaged in a daily and even hourly struggle to avert their own proletarianization. The bitter complaint of Marmeladov in *Crime and Punishment* that "A man has nowhere to turn!" is a cry of reckless desperation and despair. Intently watching the social life of Europe, Dostoyevsky clearly saw the growing importance of the proletariat—and this increased his hostility towards the revolutionary intelligentsia.

Hence Dostoyevsky's "Orthodox Church Populism," with its fierce denial of the inevitable and progressive character of the development of capitalism in Russia, and its idealization of the village community and other pillars of the "rabbit"—as Gleb Uspensky termed it—order of society; and hence also his hostility to revolutionary Socialism and his attempt to pass off Raskolnikov and Ivan Karamazov as its followers. The historical paradox of Dostoyevsky's idea consisted of the fact that the conception of what was "bourgeois," and what "revolutionary," merged in his depiction into a unified whole. Therefore it is natural and even obligatory for Marxian criticism to draw a line between the *vital reality* of the characters created by Dostoyevsky, and his abuse of the revolutionary movement of his time. In such types as Lebezyatnikov in *Crime and Punishment*—primitive caricature-like characters which were common to all "anti-nihilistic" literature of that period—Dostoyevsky tried directly and indirectly to pass off vulgar and petty bourgeois types as revolutionaries ("nihilists"). But he found it impossible to commit an open outrage against truth and art in the case of such a deeply conceived type as Raskolnikov. Raskolnikov dissociates himself from the Socialists.

"Why on earth did that silly fellow Razumikhin attack the Socialists recently? They are industrious men: they work for the common weal. No, I have but one life, and I have no desire to wait for the 'common weal.'" Dostoyevsky, however, tried to preserve at least an indirect connection between the Raskolnikovs and the revolutionary camp: since the revolutionaries believe in violence, he, as it were, argued, they must believe in the "everything is permissible!" of the Raskolnikovs and the Karamazovs.

But the truth was too strong even for the reactionary critics, who would have naturally been only too willing to represent Raskolnikov as a spokesman of the democratic

youth, to pretend that he was a "nihilist." We find an amusing contradiction in N. Strakhov who devoted a good deal of effort trying to prove that Raskolnikov was a "nihilist." Strakhov was at length obliged to admit that Raskolnikov "is not a nihilist type, not a species of the real nihilist with whom we are all more or less familiar. . . . Uncertainty, *youthful* uncertainty and unsettled state accord well with Raskolnikov's *weird* (as Porphiri calls it) act."

Dostoyevsky's contemporaries, as we see, sensed the historical *novelty* of the Raskolnikov type. They pointed to Raskolnikov's contempt for people. Let us recall his words to Sonya:

"I used to keep on asking myself: *As you know that the majority are fools*, why not try and be more enlightened than they? Then I discovered that to wait for the moment when everybody else should be enlightened, would take too much time. Later on, I also discovered that that moment would never come about, that men would never change, and that it would be a waste of time to try to improve them! I am quite correct! Such is their law. . . . *I now know, the man who dares much is the right man in his fellows' opinion.* The one who defies and scorns them sets the law for them."

Raskolnikov concluded that "men are divided into 'ordinary' and 'extraordinary' men. The former must live in a state of obedience, and have no right to transgress the law, inasmuch as they are nothing more than ordinary men; the latter have a right to commit every kind of crime, and to transgress every law, just because they are extraordinary men." That is how Porphiri explains Raskolnikov's idea. Raskolnikov admitted to Porphiri that he defined his ideas "quite correctly," and went on to explain his "main idea." "It confines itself to maintaining that nature divides men into categories: the first, an inferior one, comprising ordinary men, the kind of material whose function it is to reproduce specimens like themselves; the other, a superior one. . . . " The experiment Raskolnikov made was undertaken with the purpose of determining to which class he himself belonged. The murder of the old usuress was to furnish Raskolnikov with the answer to the question: could he "transgress the principle"? Was he a "superman" capable of committing any kind of crime without the slightest twinge of conscience? Was he made of the same stuff as the "masters"?

Raskolnikov was connected in Dostoyevsky's mind, above all, with his conception of the West European bourgeoisie, of the nature and "leaders" of the bourgeois society (Razumikhin very pointedly called Raskolnikov a "Russian version"). After he murdered the old woman, Raskolnikov decided that he was not made of the stuff of the masters. He described the real "rulers" of the bourgeois society as follows:

"No, they are not constituted that way. The real *ruler*—man who dares all . . . marshals some picked troops in the open, and strikes down the good and bad, without even deigning an explanation! Obey, trembling creature, and *have no desires* because you have no business to!"

Among the first drafts of the novel we find the following comment on Raskolnikov: "His character in the novel is expressive of inordinate pride, arrogance and contempt for society. His idea is to subjugate society (for its own good—these words are crossed out). Despotism is his chief trait." "He wants to rule, but does not know how to set about it. To secure power and

grow rich as soon as possible is his one urge. And so he hits upon the idea of murder." In these notes the following words are put into Raskolnikov's mouth:

"Whatever I become, or whatever I do, whether I become a benefactor of society or suck the life blood out of it like a spider—that does not concern me. All I know is that I want to rule, and nothing else." Dostoyevsky undoubtedly half shared Svidrigailov's opinion of Raskolnikov: "He might become quite a rogue when he has sown his wild oats."

It is this reality—this urge to "rule," to get rich, to become a spider that sucks the life blood out of the human race—this is what Gorky stressed when he said that Dostoyevsky's writings reflect the "morals of the masters."

In the conversation with Sonya in which he bared his soul fully and gave the final and most convincing version of the motives for his crime, Raskolnikov said: "When I committed murder, it was not to . . . devote to the well-being of humanity the power and wealth which, in my opinion, such a deed ought to help me to acquire. No, no, such thoughts were not mine. But, at the time being, I longed to know if I was vermin, like the majority—or a Man, in the full acceptance of the word—whether, in fact, I had the power to transgress; if I was a timorous creature, or if I had the right. . . ."

When Sonya pleaded with him to repent publicly, he answered "What should I say to them? They themselves make away with millions of people, and even take pride in doing so."

This, then, is the real theme of *Crime and Punishment*—the laws of bourgeois society and the demands they make on man. This is the clue to Raskolnikov's experiment; he wanted to find out whether he is fit to be one of the "masters" of the bourgeois world who "make away with millions of people."

Porphiri called Raskolnikov's act weird, but at the same time he explained such "actions" and the "ideas" that motivate them quite realistically: "We are face to face with a weird and gloomy case—a case of a contemporary trend, if I may say so—a case possessing the hall-mark of the time when man's heart is darkened; when a phrase is quoted setting the blood on fire; when comfort is preached as life's aim. . . ."

Dostoyevsky's characters "test" themselves, as it were, in the role of a bourgeois individual. And they recoil in disgust, detecting in it the traits of a human spider, a Smerdyakov. The thing that was most painful to them was the strange feeling they experienced, calling forth in them a mystical horror of the "evil" in human "nature"; they felt a fascination for the renunciation of all ties with the human race, for the principle, "everything is permissible!" That is why Dostoyevsky punished them by condemning them to suffering, preaching the "purifying" value of suffering.

The element of mystification in both *Crime and Punishment* and *The Brothers Karamazov* makes it difficult for the reader to grasp the real "mundane" content of these novels.

But there is a book of Dostoyevsky's in which the element of mystification is, relatively speaking, reduced to a minimum. Here we find the social roots of Raskolnikov's "idea" openly revealed. What primarily interested the writer was the reality, the era which engendered "ideas" like Raskolnikov's. This book is *A Raw Youth*.

The background is Russia of the 1870's, with its company promot-

ing "gold fever," the rapid spread of the spirit of business adventurism and bourgeois rapacity, and the epidemic infatuation with wild speculative schemes. The scene is St. Petersburg, a bourgeois city differing little at that period from European cities, with its slums and shady quarters, and its recurrent tragedies, such as the suicide of the girl who had inserted a naive and touching advertisement in the papers to the effect that she gave lessons on all subjects, including arithmetic—which led Versilov to divine a state of desperate poverty. There is much in *A Raw Youth* to recommend it as a true social novel.

One of the interpreters of Dostoyevsky, A. Dolinin, is of the opinion, that in the early 'seventies, after writing *The Possessed*, Dostoyevsky became a prey to vacillation; and it must be admitted that *A Raw Youth* furnishes a certain justification for this opinion. In fact, the depiction of the revolutionary youth given in this work differs very materially from that in *The Possessed*. The characters in *A Raw Youth* are intelligent and honest people, although, it is true, Dostoyevsky intimately associated them with the general bourgeois spirit of the age. *A Raw Youth*, with its specific social background, throws a very clear light on the reason that induced the author to associate the representatives of the revolutionary camp with "bourgeoisdom"; the most advanced of them had grasped the idea that capitalism in Russia was a progressive force—and this it was that led Dostoyevsky to distort the facts and depict the revolutionaries in the role of eulogists of capitalism.

Fundamentally, of course, Dostoyevsky's outlook had not changed. As distinct from *Poor Folk* and other works of his earlier period, in *A Raw Youth* as in *Crime and Punishment* and *The Brothers Karamazov*, Dostoyevsky sought salvation in "Orthodox Church Populism," in a Christian "idyll," and this, too, was based on his lack of faith in man and in his "independence" and freedom. Nevertheless, it could not have been mere chance that while the book was in course of publication a certain coolness arose between Dostoyevsky and Meshchersky, N. Strakhov and his other conservative friends, nor that *A Raw Youth* was published in Nekrasov's and Shchedrin's magazine, *Otechestvenniye Zapiski* (*Homeland Notes*), or that, judging from Dostoyevsky's letters to his wife, these two praised the novel.

A Raw Youth thus helped to bring about somewhat more cordial relations between those old, irreconcilable enemies—Shchedrin and Dostoyevsky.

Gorky indicated the points of contact between these two men. While proceeding from utterly different and hostile standpoints, from completely opposite world outlooks, both writers expressed the essential features of their time—and this for Gorky was the true criterion of art. In his *Course in the History of Russian Literature*, Gorky stated that Shchedrin gave us "a splendid evaluation of the 'seventies."

Gorky then quoted a passage from *Signs of the Times* and concluded:

"This cry of one of the cleverest men of the 'seventies and 'eighties almost blends in its passion with the hysterical whining of Dostoyevsky. Two men of diametrically opposite views, one a Slavophile and the other a Westerner, are both writing in pain at the sight of the rapacity, bestiality and savagery raging around them, at the sight of the encouragement given by the government to everything that is bestial, and the persecution meted out to everything that is humane."

Gorky has here defined the *main* thing, the true value of Dostoyevsky's creative work, namely, the *passion* of his despair, of his protest again the savagery and rapacity of capitalist society, at the time of the rapid advance of capitalism in Russia.

All the elements of Shchedrin's description of the rapacity, bestial enmity, the law of claw and fang in contemporary society, the breakdown of human ties, the passion to rule, and the paramount thirst for wealth are to be found in *A Raw Youth*. But while exposing the rapacity of the bourgeoisie, Dostoyevsky did not idealize the nobility; on the contrary, the degeneration of the nobility formed one of the main themes of the book.

The hero—who says of himself: "I am a pitiable youth; at no time can I discern good from evil"—is plunged into a vast bourgeois city with all its temptations. He finds himself in a milieu of marauders, blackmailers and swindlers, big and little; and he perceives within himself the growth of the "spider's soul" *carnivorously* (Dostoyevsky underscores the word twice) savoring its prey. In the midst of such an atmosphere, the youth conceives his "idea," which in essence differs little from Raskolnikov's; he decides to become a Rothschild, a man to whom "everything is permissible," a ruler over the "lower orders," over the "ordinary run of men," those who are only so much material for the designs of the "real masters." As in the case of Raskolnikov, the "idea" leads to a breakdown of "human ties"; "I realize only too well," he says, "that by becoming a Rothschild, or even wanting to become one . . . I cut myself off from society." The "raw youth" and Raskolnikov have very much in common, in particular, their arrogance and contempt for others.

As in the case of Raskolnikov, this attitude of the "raw youth" springs from a feeling of humiliation, from a sense of injury, from a desire to "protect himself" from a hostile society. The protest of the "raw youth," Raskolnikov and Ivan Karamazov against the laws of the bourgeois world takes an individualist channel from the very beginning: since your laws of life are so vicious and brutal, I too will be vicious and brutal. This, of course, leads to the path of Smerdyakov. Dostoyevsky saw no possibility of any other kind of protest, and did not believe in such a possibility—hence, the "substitution," the *identification* of the Raskolnikov-Karamazov "revolt" with the revolutionary movement.

In his *Winter Notes on Summer Impressions*, Dostoyevsky expressed his idea of bourgeois society in a few words: "What is *liberté?* Freedom. . . . When is one free to do what he likes? When he has a million. Does liberty give every man a million? No. What is a man without a million? A man without a million is not one who does whatever he likes, but one with whom others do whatever they like."

And it is from this that Dostoyevsky derived the "ideas" of his heroes: "to become a Napoleon," as Raskolnikov dreams, or "to become a Rothschild." Dostoyevsky could see only the two alternatives: either to be a man to whom "everything is permissible," or a man with whom others are permitted to do everything. That is why Raskolnikov's "idea" moved him so deeply.

With the full power of his artistry he showed the mortal hostility of Raskolnikov's "morals of the masters" to man and human society. The torments of Raskolnikov, the mad ravings of Ivan Karamazov and the character of Smerdyakov, are all expres-

sive of Dostoyevsky's horror of bourgeois dissension, of the antagonisms that estrange men.

Dostoyevsky said, in a letter to Katkov,[1] that Raskolnikov was "*constrained* to give himself away. He was constrained to do so in order to recover his communion with men, even if it meant rotting in a penal settlement: the torment of isolation, of separation from human beings which overwhelmed him as soon as he had committed his crime, gave him no rest."

In Isergil's story of Larra, son of the eagle, Gorky related that after Larra had killed the girl who refused to become his bride, the inhabitants of the village "reasoned with him for a long time, and at last understood that he regarded himself as the first on earth and refused to take into consideration anybody but himself. They were all horror-stricken to realize to what solitude he had condemned himself. He had neither tribe nor family, neither mother nor wife, and had no wish for anything of that kind."

Raskolnikov has no wish for "anything of that kind" either. He severs ties with everything human. The consciousness of the severance fills him with a sense of death. He "had cut himself off from everything as though with a knife." When Razumikhin understood what Raskolnikov had undergone when bidding farewell to his mother and sister, he was stricken with anxiety for Raskolnikov. "Do you understand?" Raskolnikov had asked him, his face twitching with pain. He had loved his mother and sister more than anything on earth—and now he felt, with a sense of loathing for them and for himself, that he was beginning to hate them, to "hate them physically." Human relations and human emotions lost all meaning for him.

In the person of Larra the marauder, suggested by folk legends, Gorky discredited the social apostate whom the decadent bourgeois ideologists endeavored (and continue to endeavor) to surround with a halo of poetry. Spengler, for example, glorified the "primitive man, lurking in solitude like a beast of prey . . . bereft of all social feeling . . . ignorant of the tribal 'we' . . . a lonely individual."

"I have killed a principle!" Raskolnikov exclaimed. He had killed the principle of humanism. The jungle law of bourgeois society denies and destroys humanism—that is the truth revealed by Dostoyevsky's characters.

Pisarev said in an article on *Crime and Punishment* that Raskolnikov's short-lived impulse to renounce the murder was an expression of "the last shudder of a man who is on the verge of committing an act absolutely repugnant to his nature."

We might extend this thought and say that *Crime and Punishment* expresses the shuddering of a man in the face of laws of life that are absolutely repugnant to humanity, his shuddering with the pain of parting with humanism. Isn't this perhaps the major theme of all of Dostoyevsky's works?

Ivan Karamazov's "idea" (expounded in the Legend of the Grand Inquisitor), like the idea of the "raw youth," is in essence the same as Raskolnikov's. It, too, gives expression to the "morals of the masters." But, truly, "in defiance of common sense," Dostoyevsky associated the "morals of the masters" with "revolt" and made Raskolnikov and Ivan Karamazov give expression to certain really rebellious thoughts and sentiments. Dostoyevsky was obliged to the end of

[1] Katkov—reactionary publicist of the seventies of the XIX century.—*Ed.*

his days to reckon with the idea of "revolt," which all his life he had repudiated. His own productions are so saturated with human suffering that it was impossible for at least some of his characters not to conceive the idea of protest, of revolt, as a way out. In the *Course on the History of Russian Literature*, Gorky says:

"Recall Saltychikha, General Izmailov, the landlord Kashkarov[1] and all those others who scorched their serfs with red-hot irons, tore off women's breasts, and flogged and flogged without end.

"A man was bound to appear whose soul would retain the memory of all this horrible suffering and would give expression to it. That man was Dostoyevsky.

"His mind was bound to dwell on this shameful and humiliating side of life all the more because he was incredibly neurotic and a prey to fits of epilepsy—a malady which heightens the impressionability of the sufferer.

"Apart from these subjective causes, there was an objective one: Dostoyevsky was a plebeian, a commoner, and we know what contempt the all-dominant aristocratic class had for commoners."

Gorky always probed for objective factors in a writer's works; in Dostoyevsky's he detected the note of protest of the commoner against the arrogance of the aristocracy. Let us recall the "raw youth's" tale of Squire Versilov's "illegitimate" son, how he dreamed of meeting his brother, his father's "legitimate" son, who had come to St. Petersburg, and how the latter, after making him wait interminably in an ante-chamber, sent a lackey to him with some money.

"I shouted so violently at the lackey that he started and stepped back; I told him he must go back at once and 'his master must bring the money himself'—in fact, my request was, of course, incoherent, and incomprehensible to the man. But I shouted so that he went. To make things worse, my shouting was heard in the room, and the talk and laughter suddenly subsided.

"Almost at the same time I heard footsteps, dignified, quiet, unhurried, and a tall figure of a handsome and haughty-looking young man . . . appeared in the doorway a yard from the door leading into the passage. He was wearing a magnificent red silk dressing-gown and slippers, and had a pince-nez on his nose. Without uttering a word he fixed me with his pince-nez and proceeded to stare at me. I took one step towards him like a wild beast, and began glaring at him defiantly. But he only scrutinized me for a moment, ten seconds at the utmost; suddenly I detected on his lips a scarcely perceptible, but most malignant smile—what made it so malignant was that it was scarcely perceptible; he turned round without a word and went back into the room, just as deliberately, just as quietly and gracefully as he had come. Oh, these insolent fellows are trained by their mothers from childhood to be insolent!"

This is a cry of hatred for the insolent strong ones—true, hatred impotent and ineffectual.

Dostoyevsky knew well the "insolent ones" both in the camp of the aristocrats and in the camp of the bourgeoisie; and he implanted in his "raw youth," in Raskolnikov and in Ivan Karamazov the element of protest against the "humiliation and insult" the commoner had to suffer, forgetting that these heroes of his were themselves preparing to become "insolent ones," and instead depicting them as de-

[1] Saltychikha, General Izmailov, Kashkarov—landowners notorious for cruelty toward their serfs.—*Ed.*

moniacal and mysterious "nihilists." The element of protest is most perceptible in Ivan Karamazov. In conversation with Alyosha, he contrasted with all the churches and priests of the world the image of the suffering child personifying "the tears of the human race with which the earth is soaked from its crust to its core," and exclaimed: "It is he whom all the religions of the earth crucify, and whose sufferings they sanctify!"

In his lectures on literature delivered at Capri, Italy, Gorky said that "a novelist is broader than any trend, for in order to lend greater conviction to the idea he wants to express, he has to present it surrounded by adverse ideas, and so he acquaints us, even if in distorted form, with things to which he personally may be averse."

Dostoyevsky could not avoid putting certain utterances of a genuinely rebellious nature into the mouths of the characters he wanted to pass off as "rebels"! But in Ivan Karamazov, for instance, rebel views are combined with opinions that lead straight to Smerdyakov conceptions that men must be divided into "masters" and "slaves" and that "everything is permissible" to the masters (Legend of the Grand Inquisitor). It is as though Dostoyevsky exclaimed: look and see what comes of "revolt" and "atheism"!—and therefore beware of atheism and revolt! He tried to "extinguish" the protest that would flare up in the hearts of his heroes, with Christianity, and to show that every "revolt" was bound to lead to Smerdyakov's "everything is permissible!", to a loss of all standards, to chaos. . . .

The theme of revolt assorted very ill, of course, with the "morals of the masters." And there was another paradox. As we have seen, Dostoyevsky quite definitely associated the ideas of Raskolnikov and Ivan Karamazov with bourgeois society, with bourgeois rapacity; yet, in monstrous contradiction to the very nature of these ideas, he mingled them with rebellious and atheistic thoughts that were quite alien to the bourgeoisie of Dostoyevsky's times. He himself, in his *Winter Notes* and in articles, describes the fear of revolution that held in its grip the bourgeoisie of Western Europe. He apparently pictured Napoleon as the embodiment of the "everything is permissible!" of the bourgeois individualist, and at the same time—in accordance with the patriarchal tradition—as one of the most "extreme" embodiments of "revolt" and "revolution." By endowing Raskolnikov with the wish to "become a Napoleon," he associated Raskolnikov's "revolt" with this wish. Simultaneously Dostoyevsky's works were subjected to the law which says that every attempt to caricature the revolutionary is, in fact, an attempt to impute to the revolutionaries what is inherent in the ruling class and fundamentally repugnant and inimical to the revolutionaries. . . .

Gorky has revealed the contradiction of associating rebel elements with the "morals of the masters" that so enticed Raskolnikov and Ivan Karamazov. In Gorky's works the ideas that tormented Dostoyevsky's heroes are presented in connection with the social milieu that gives rise to these ideas, and, instead of the "nihilistic" and the "diabolical," we get the people to whom the "morals of the masters" are really natural. These morals are presented in Gorky's works in their pure form, without adventitious admixture—and for that reason alone the theme of the "morals of the masters" is treated in an entirely different manner. These "morals" were repugnant to Dostoyevsky, too, but inasmuch as he

associated them with "revolt," and rejected both as being part of one and the same thing, he could offer nothing in opposition to the bourgeois "everything is permissible!" except the "morals of the slaves."

Gorky's *Life of Klim Samghin* was preceded by two tales—*Tale of a Hero* and *Karamora* (both published in 1924)—which were in a way sketches for the larger novel. The idea of Samghin arose in Gorky's mind in close association with thoughts of Dostoyevsky—the two above-mentioned sketches and his *Okurov Town* were in the nature of "talks with Dostoyevsky."

The *Tale of a Hero* is related by a personage in whom we detect features akin to those of Samghin: fear of life, distrust of reason, contempt for fellow men, a profound conviction that "freedom means placidity," and hence a striving to avoid everything novel and "disturbing."

These characteristics lead the "story-teller" to attach himself to a man whom he regards as a genuine hero, one "capable of performing marvels, at least marvels of brutality," for only by such "marvels" can one preserve the customary tenor of one's life and protect oneself from revolution. In his eyes, Novak is a hero of this type. Novak, a former teacher of history in a provincial grammar school, had become a prominent figure among the Black Hundreds in St. Petersburg prior to 1917. The "story-teller," a former pupil of Novak's at the grammar school, who had quit university because of fear of the student "disorders," is enlisted into the anti-revolutionary fight by Novak, who finds him a position as secretary to one of the Black Hundred pillars. Novak is the patron of this "pillar."

What type of man is this Novak, and what are his "ideas," which so aroused the respect and admiration of his pupil?

He was "tall, bony, round-shouldered, with a small, baldish head and the hairless visage of an old maid, and with a protruding adam's apple so large. . . that it seemed a repulsive deformity . . . Nearly one-third of his face was concealed by round, dark, horn-rimmed spectacles. . . . He taught history in an even, colorless, tedious voice, and betrayed some slight animation only when justifying the severity of the tsars. . . . What interested me in his dry account was the gruesome details with which it was plentifully interspersed."

Noticing this interest, Novak decided to give his pupil "private lessons"; as a beginning he gave him Carlyle's *Heroes and Hero Worship* to read.

"I was amazed when Novak disclosed to me the philosophy of this little book. With a cold and oppressive intensity, in a voice that was low but all the more weighty, he would say that the general run of people were without form or countenance, primitive of soul and monotonously alike; the only thing they wanted was to increase the superficial comforts of life; but all desire to penetrate its secrets was alien to them; they knew nothing about the creative urge and detested it. They were even incapable of doing anything to improve their own coarse, hard existence, for the masses were unable to invent or innovate. It was only the rare individual who knew how to create, invent, legislate. . . . All history was an account of the struggle between the individual and the multitude. . . . Man and mankind were not one and the same thing. . . .

"As he saw me to the door, he whispered:

"'Don't believe the Socialists; their teaching is dangerous—sat-

urated with lies. It is against man's interests, understand that! History is a matter of individuals—it is made by heroes. . . .'

"He emphatically advised, or rather, commanded me to read Dostoyevsky, Constantine Leontyev, Nietzsche. . . ."

As to the people, who were "corrupted by the Socialists" and discontented with the role of "underdog" assigned to them by the "masters," Novak insisted that they should be treated with severity. He was a firm believer in public execution.

"'And torture. Public torture—openly, in the light of day.' So."

"My patron gently rubbed his hands and nodded his head, and when Novak had left, he said to me:

"'Your teacher is an extraordinary man.'"

Here we have a finished "hero" of bourgeois counter-revolution, not inferior in his hatred of men to the imperialist pirates of our day.

The teller of the story sees in Novak "a man who is capable of mastering chaos, even if it means killing off half of those who are capable of only reproducing their own kind, creatures just as superfluous as themselves and only fit to be clay in the hands of the chosen ones. . . ."

Of himself, the story-teller says that he "experienced keen, almost insane fits of brutality." Fully aware of his own cowardice, he comes to the conclusion that "if the truth be told, even Man (that is, the 'chosen one') must also be a coward, whoever he may be. Perhaps he does not fear things others fear, but he fears people. There are so many of them, and they are so unlike him. Fear of people entitles the life instinct in the Man to be merciless. . . . If I possessed power I would leave an awful and dazzling record of my deeds behind me; my fame would eclipse that of the great tyrants of history; I would wash and iron people like handkerchiefs."

The brutality of the bourgeois "statesmen" and "leaders" of today springs from their cowardice. The story-teller's guess about the cowardice of the "masters" of the capitalist world is borne out in the case of his own adored Novak. One day, during the Revolution of February 1917, Novak "burst into my room, stooping as though broken at the waist, hissing, wheezing and roaring incoherently. He pushed me into my patron's study:—

"'Why are you sitting idle?' he demanded. 'Tear up everything, burn everything! Are you crazy? R-revolution! He's arrested! Where are my letters? Tear them to pieces. Oh, oh, oh! Burn them . . . here, in the fireplace . . .'

"He sank into the armchair near the hearth, tore off his spectacles and wiped them on his knee, groaning.

"'Well, what are you standing there for? Tear, burn and destroy everything. . . .'

"That was the first time I had seen his eyes: they were small and colorless, without lashes, rimmed by red, inflamed pouches that must have been full of pus. I stared at them fixedly for some time, and then seized him by the coat collar and lifted him from the armchair.

"'You scoundrel,' I said, staring him in the eyes. 'And you call yourself a trainer of heroes? You swindler, where are your heroes?'

"He leapt to his feet, tearing at my hands with his crooked fingers, and shouted hoarsely:

"'Don't dare touch me . . . I am not to blame. . . . You are a revolutionist! . . . Don't dare touch me. . . . Traitor!'

"'You scoundrel,' I said with a relish I had never known before. 'I was afraid of you. I believed in

you; I believed that you were strong and formidable. What am I to believe in now, what am I to fear? You have killed the fear in me, you have killed the man in me, you scoundrel!'

"I pushed him from me, and left the room. . . ."

Cowardice and brutality are the two characteristics of the modern exploiting classes who are strangers to all positive ideals which alone engender a spirit of courage and self-sacrifice.

In Novak's arguments about the "chosen few" and the masses, and his references to Dostoyevsky, Nietzsche and Carlyle we get a development of the ideas of Raskolnikov and Ivan Karamazov. Gorky shows that these ideas are but a faithful weapon of counter-revolution; he brings out their social background, and shows them in their true light. In his *Foma Gordeyev*, he disclosed that the ideas which agitated Raskolnikov and Ivan Karamazov, and which Dostoyevsky depicted as the reek of some "nihilistic" hell, or as the fatal temptation of some "demon," were shared by the Russian merchant Yakov Mayakin, who advanced them as a veritable program, and who could in no sense be suspected of "rebel" proclivities.

Using Lyutov as his mouthpiece, Gorky himself disclosed his method of deflating these ideas. In reply to Samghin's remark that his (Lyutov's) arguments "smacked of some Dostoyevsky madhouse," Lyutov said:

"Well, one has to dress decently; one's self-respect demands that. And Dostoyevsky's tragic rags clothe us more decently than Shchedrin's greasy dressing gowns or fashionable coats, do you understand?"

Gorky cast off the "tragic rags" and disclosed the fashionable coat, or the official's uniform, or the merchant's cloak that lay concealed beneath them—he revealed the sober truth.

Unlike Lyutov, Mayakin experienced no need whatever to clothe himself in picturesque rags; he quite unaffectedly expounded his calculating, practical morality—and we find that it coincides with Nietzsche's philosophy and with Raskolnikov's and Ivan Karamazov's theories, although Mayakin, of course, had never read Dostoyevsky or Nietzsche.

". . . I put into Yakov Mayakin's mouth something of Friedrich Nietzsche's social philosophy. . . . The idea of this philosophy is very simple. . . . One must be prepared to admit that mankind has always been divided into a minority consisting of strong ones who may permit themselves anything, and a majority consisting of impotent ones who exist only in order to obey the strong ones implicitly. . . .

"It is a very ancient philosophy; its purpose is to justify the rule of the 'masters,' and they never forget it. In the case of Nietzsche, it must be presumed, it was called forth by the spread of the German Social-Democracy. . . .

"I had a perfectly legitimate right to borrow some of the features of the ancient philosophy of the masters and endow the Russian master with them. 'Class morals' and the 'morals of the masters' are international. . . ."[1]

Gorky depicted the realities of a later historical period which in many respects differed substantially from the realities of Dostoyevsky's day. But in carrying out his artistic design, Gorky found that in the ideology of the classes hostile to the proletariat, in the mentality of the members of those classes, there were chords that responded to the anti-humanistic

[1] M. Gorky, *On Literature*.

ideas of Dostoyevsky's heroes. Hence the controversy with Dostoyevsky, the attempt to define the exact meaning and significance of these ideas, and to find the way of combatting them, which occupied an important place in Gorky's work. The artistic and social nature of those of Gorky's characters who share Raskolnikov's ideas is different, of course, from that of Raskolnikov and Ivan Karamazov: there is nothing in them of that "protest," of that mixture of humiliation and desire to exact revenge from mankind for that humiliation which are characteristic of Dostoyevsky's heroes. Gorky placed Raskolnikov's and Ivan Karamazov's ideas into the mouths of types such as, for example, Novak, to whom such ideas were organic, whereas Raskolnikov and Ivan Karamazov were forever wavering, terrified at their isolation from society.

In *The Life of Klim Samghin*, Gorky depicted the function of the "ancient philosophy of the masters"—the "morals of the masters"—in the modern era, the era of decaying capitalism. The life of Klim Samghin spanned the latter part of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth century—one quarter of the work is devoted to a depiction of Russian imperialism. The artistic history of the Russian bourgeoisie during these decades is symbolized in *The Life of Klim Samghin* by two bourgeois types: Varavka and Berdnikov.

Unlike his predecessors—Ilya Artamonov and Yakov Mayakin, who were confident of the future—Varavka, who had risen from the plebeian class to the ranks of the "masters," began to realize with uneasiness that the bourgeoisie has exhausted its historical function, that it would never build any "Towers of Babel." Varavka is symbolic of the fleeting day of the Russian bourgeoisie. His fervid energy, fanatical industry and grasping business habits brought him no moral satisfaction. He died with the bitter thought: "I have toiled and toiled all my life, but have built nothing solid."

Varavka had set out to be an "honest" capitalist, he wanted to create something permanent and worthwhile; he had ambitions to be a missionary of culture. Naturally, he shared the morality and philosophy of the "masters"; but, as in the case of Mayakin, this was combined with a desire to do something serious and big, to cover wooden Russia with a casing of iron.

Possessed as he was by an urge to fertilize the bourgeoisie, to inspire it with a creative will, to persuade it that it had a cultural mission to perform, Varavka was born out of his time. This type of bourgeois was already extinct; he had once played a big part in the West, but had never succeeded even in properly developing in Russia.

Mayakin and Varavka are superseded on the historical stage by a new type of master, a true representative of the parasitic bourgeoisie in the era of decaying capitalism—Zakhar Berdnikov, of whom the bourgeois intellectuals at Leonid Andreyev's soirée in the fourth part of the *Life of Klim Samghin* had said the following:

"'We need a leader,' cried the brunette. . . .

"'Just so, a leader! Zakhar Berdnikov. . . .'"

Berdnikov had no passion for construction. It was of men of his type that the Bolshevik worker at Leonid Andreyev's soirée had in mind when he said:

"'Things have come to the point where a man has the same value as a scrap of paper on which it is printed that it is a ruble, or a hundred rubles. Even postage stamps now pass for money. It

has been said that the domination of the banks over industry means a monopoly of finance capital, and that means that all work is turned into money, into absurdity, into idiocy! The banker is in the saddle. The millionaire, damn his soul, has torn the working people into hostile nations, has started a war—and what a war!'"

In Zakhar Berdnikov we have the first exact portrait in fiction of the imperialist bourgeois, the money merchant, the callous and cynical bandit of finance capital. "The banker engenders the bandit"—this thesis of Gorky's is embodied in the type of Berdnikov.

The world of the Berdnikovs knows only these "scraps of paper." The madness of this stifling rule of scraps of paper soaked in the blood of toiling humanity, the madness of the entire system of life created by capitalism in the period of its decline, and the intolerable insult that this life means to the mind of the normal man, constitute one of the main themes of the fourth part of the *Life of Klim Samghin*.

Zakhar Berdnikov is a true master and "leader" in this system of life. It was in fact he, a member of an international gang of finance capitalists, and others like him in other countries, who "started the war," scheming, trading and selling their respective countries and the lives of hundreds of millions of their fellow men.

"I am a business man, and that is the same as a military man; there is no such thing as innocent business in this world," said Berdnikov to Samghin in connection with an offer he had made him to act as a spy.

Varavka looked upon himself as a builder and architect. Berdnikov regarded himself as a man of war, a *conquistador*. Such is the distinguishing feature of the commanding ranks of the bourgeoisie in the era which, in the words of Lenin, is marked by the "maximum and universal development of militarism." Berdnikov himself carried on a constant, daily, murderous war. For example, he instigated the murder of Marina Zotova. "A scoundrel, a criminal type," Zotova said of him. And Berdnikov said the same of Zotova: "A criminal type . . . she will end in prison." They were both right, inasmuch as all the "activities" of the imperialist bourgeoisie are "criminal" from beginning to end; nothing is impermissible.

In describing the imperialist bourgeoisie, Gorky portrayed the Russian bourgeoisie, with its national peculiarities—in particular its dependence on foreign capital. The rivalry between Berdnikov and Zotova reflected the rivalry of two groups of West European pirates for the right to turn Russia into a colony. Berdnikov set out to reduce his native country to a colonial status, as the only means of salvation from the approaching revolution.

"Our only salvation," he says, explaining his "program" to Samghin, "is gold—foreign gold. We must pour billions of francs, marks, and pounds sterling into our country, so that in the moment of danger the owner of that gold will rise to defend it. That's how I see it."

That was his whole "program": to sell his country only in order to preserve his rule over people, for a little while longer, to be able to trade in their lives—he had no other aim.

Yakov Mayakin's celebrated speech at the merchants' banquet in which, with passion and sincerity, he defended the right of his class to rule brutally and ruthlessly, on the plea that it was his class, the "masters," who created "culture"—

a speech that aroused such indignation in Foma Gordeyev—seems almost idyllic compared with Berdnikov's military-bandit "philosophy of life." Zotova tells Samghin of a conversation she had had with Zakhar Berdnikov:

"By the way, he told me today that at a good rate a banker would lend money to make an earthquake. I don't know about a banker, but Zakhar would."

"Everything is permissible!"—to the "strong," to the "masters." In the era of decaying capitalism this principle of the bourgeois world is proclaimed in all its naked cynicism, without any effort at justification. The imperialist bourgeoisie and its active servitors cast off the last shreds of human sentiment.

The Berdnikovs have no ideals. Moreover, they have no faith in the permanency of their rule, for this is an era of war and proletarian revolutions. Their preservation depends on their naked bestial instinct. As "ideological" agents of the imperialist bourgeoisie, it is the function of the Samghins to mask this bourgeois inhumanity, to penetrate into the revolutionary camp and disintegrate it wherever they can from within. The Berdnikovs train their agents in their own image. A devastating cynicism is characteristic both of the Berdnikovs and of the Samghins, who manage to contrive ideological justification of the most outspoken bandits of finance capital. Khotyatintsev, one of these bandits, developed the following idea:

" 'Saint Simon long ago prophesied that bankers would rule the world. In every state, each of them would sweep his entire capital into a bag; they would then put all their capital into one bag in each state; then they would join the concentrated capitals of all the states and all he nations in one bag, and then they would benevolently organize production and consumption all through the world. . . . So what are we afraid of? Why do we tremble? Isn't it more sensible to wait with calm confidence for the beneficial results of the energetic activities of these banks, and the reforms of the bankers? It's childish to fear that the bankers will take our shirts and our pants. Of course, they will—but only temporarily—only for concentration, for monopoly. After that they will organize us for manufacture—shoes, suits, bread, and wine—they will clothe and shoe us, slake our thirst and appease our hunger.'

"In the coarse humor of this speech, Samghin felt the presence of a healthy germ."

And so there evolved in the minds of the "ideological" henchmen of the Berdnikovs a bandit idyll, which later took the shape of the so-called "theory of organized capital," the Kautskian idea of "supercapitalism," and the like. The Nietzschean "morals of the masters" are adapted to the needs of finance capital. The bankers and Berdnikovs are depicted as "supermen," as the "chosen few." The Social-Democratic henchmen of the bourgeoisie even tried to adapt Marxism to the needs of finance capital.

The *Life of Klim Samghin* contains a regular portrait gallery of such servile agents of the bourgeoisie. For instance, among Berdnikov's personal entourage there is engineer Popov, a Social-Democrat and Menshevik. He is prepared to perform any service for Berdnikov, even the vilest, yet regards himself as a Marxist.

Gorky describes various "systems of phrases" used by the Samghins to conceal the bestial nature of the bourgeoisie, to adapt Marxism to the latter's needs and to divest it of its revolutionary and humane character. Here, for example, is

a typical conversation between Klim Samghin and the honest but naive Lyubasha Somova, who regards him as an orthodox Marxist.

"'The class standpoint absolutely precludes humaneness, does it not?'

"'Quite so,' he replied; and, desiring to confuse and intimidate her, he spoke in the tone of a philosopher who was accustomed to pitiless thought. 'Humaneness and struggle are mutually exclusive conceptions.'

"'I, for my part, cannot think without pity,' Lyubasha confessed."

Towards the end of the novel, on the eve of the Revolution of 1917, there had developed beneath the cover of Samghin's "Left," "terrible" phraseology a regular "morality of the masters."

He recalled Anfimyevna and a thought shot through his mind.

"'In society as at present constituted, there must be people deprived of the right of personal initiative, of independent action. . .

"'This idea, of course, will be thought both naive and heretical. It runs counter to all the canons of liberalism and Socialism. . . . The hierarchic structure of human society is based on biology. . . .'

"'If I want to be candid with myself, I must consider myself a poor democrat,' Samghin ruminated. 'Demos is mob. The Greeks called its government an ochlocracy. . . . As an individual, I must recognize as lawful and natural only the hierarchic, the aristocratic system of society. . . .'

"Long ago he had adopted a skeptical, downright hostile, attitude to the masses. . . . His involuntary participation in the events of 1905 had strengthened in him his skepticism about the power of the masses. He had long since docketed the Moscow uprising as amateur theatricals. . . . No. The motive force in history was certainly not classes or blind crowds; it was the individual, the hero. The Englishman, Carlyle, was closer to the truth. . . . Samghin's conviction on this subject was quite firmly established. The task of his life, as he saw it, was reduced to developing within himself the qualities of a leader, a hero—a man independent of the violence of reality."

Here we have the secret thoughts and feelings of "public figures" of the Samghin type, thoughts and feelings that are usually concealed under democratic, "socialistic" or ultra-"Left" phraseology. These thoughts rose very clearly in Samghin's mind during the imperialist war, when he and his like became recruiters of gun fodder for the bourgeoisie, after the manner of the Blums and the Attlees in the present war. An internal, concealed contempt for the masses, mingled with fear of them, is common to all the gentry of this kind, who build their careers on the deception of the masses.

Thus the ideas that tormented Raskolnikov and Ivan Karamazov are presented in Gorky's works against their proper background of bourgeois counter-revolution. This helped to lay bare the real truth of Dostoyevsky's creations. Let us recall, for example, what Ivan Karamazov says in the "Legend of the Grand Inquisitor." What does the ideal of the Grand Inquisitor amount to?—a herd of billions of submissive human beings and a hundred thousand or so "chosen ones" who deprive the "fold" of all will and reason, and leave them nothing but obedience. "Everything is permissible!"—for the "chosen few," of course. Miracles, mysteries and authority—such are the precepts for governing the mob. Ivan expounds all this in an exalted, declamatory style, but in

back of it all Dostoyevsky sees only one thing: the anthropoid face of a Smerdyakov. . . . Smerdyakov is the logical conclusion of the "everything is permissible!" of the social apostate.

Klim Samghin—a widespread social type embracing many of the varieties of the parasitic bourgeois—is likewise a conclusion from the bourgeois principle that "everything is permissible!" And he therefore shares with Smerdyakov a devastating vacuity of soul and a complete disintegration of personality.

"DISINTEGRATION OF PERSONALITY"

In Gorky's tale *Karamora*, we find outlined the theme of the *Life of Klim Samghin*: the degeneration and deterioration of the personality of the social apostate. (This theme was defined by Gorky in 1909 in his article *Disintegration of Personality*, which in many respects anticipated the contents of the *Life of Klim Samghin*.)

Pyotr Karazin, the chief character in the tale *Karamora*, a capable individual who had succeeded in winning the confidence of the Party leaders in 1905, became an agent-provocateur. In 1917 he was imprisoned and awaited trial by the revolutionary court. He began to write something in the nature of a story of his life. He began to do so with some distaste, but it soon took a hold on him.

"It intoxicates you," he said. "This is where I begin to understand Dostoyevsky. He is the writer who is most given to intoxication with himself, with the furious, stormy, non-rational play of his imagination—the play of the multitude within himself.

"I used to read him with distrust: he lets his imagination run away with him and tries to frighten people with the darkness of the human soul, so as to make them believe in god and meekly submit to his incomprehensible designs and mysterious will.

"Humble thyself, thou man of pride!

"This humility Dostoyevsky only needed incidentally; it was not the main thing he wanted. The main thing he wanted was to live for himself."

Before his political and moral downfall, Karamora detected in Dostoyevsky a desire to make men "submissive"—and, in Gorky's opinion, this conjecture came very near to the truth. But later Karamora endeavored to "adapt" Dostoyevsky to the needs of a shattered, utterly disintegrated and decayed "personality." He spoke of his own state of disintegration as follows:

"There are two men inside me, and they are always at odds with each other. But there is also a third. He keeps close watch on the other two, on their dissensions—and I can never make out what he is at: is he fanning their enmity, pricking them on, or is he honestly trying to find out what their enmity is all about? . . . Perhaps he is my true self, wanting to understand everything, or at least something. Or might it be that this third is my most malicious enemy? But that is already like a guess at a fourth.

"There are two personalities in every man's breast: one wants to know nobody but itself; the other is drawn to other people.

But in me, I think, there are four personalities—and they are all at loggerheads; each thinks in its own way. Whatever may occur to one, the other will reject; and the third will ask:

" 'What are you arguing about? And what good will come of your argument?'

"And in all likelihood there is a fourth; but he keeps even more deeply hid than the third—he just silently watches, like an animal, lying low. Perhaps he will remain quiet all my life, cowering in his hiding place and watching this muddle with indifference.

"In my opinion a man should of his own will, while he is still a youth and his character is only just forming, stifle the germs of all personalities in himself except one, the best.

"But supposing it is just that one, the best, that he stifles? For the devil only knows which is the best!"

Like the "conversation with himself" in the *Notes From the Underground*, Karazin-Karamora's "conversation with himself" tends to be endless—for each thought arouses an objection, and the "play of the multitude within oneself" has no end. . . .

Karamora is a large-sized mosquito, or rather a spider. In Dostoyevsky we find frequent comparisons with repulsive insects. Mitya Karamazov, for instance, every now and again calls himself a "cruel insect." In his sickening nightmare, Ippolit (*The Idiot*) sees a monstrous insect which chases him, and which he senses is connected with some terrible "secret." Liza says to Stavrogin: "It always seemed to me that you would lead me to a place where lived a huge malignant spider, the size of a man, and that we would spend all our lives staring at it and dreading it." Svidrigailov pictures eternity as a hut full of spiders. The "raw youth" feels that he has the soul of a spider; Fyodor Karamazov, that he is an evil insect, and so an.

In the image of a loathsome insect, Dostoyevsky concentrated all that "terrified him in the darkness of the human soul," all that aroused in a man the spider's desire to "suck the life-blood out of mankind," all that was associated with greed and rapacity.

This image Gorky borrowed. To his mind Pyotr Karazin was like an insect, a cross between a mosquito and a spider.

Karazin, in his memoirs, wrote of his youth as follows:

"My reason accepted the Socialist idea as the truth, but the facts from which this idea sprang did not offend my feelings, and as to the inequality of men, that seemed to me natural and legitimate."

"I considered myself better and cleverer than my fellows," Karamora relates. "Even as a boy I was already accustomed to command. I could easily exact obedience, and, in general, I lacked something essential to a Socialist—love of mankind, perhaps. I have known many Socialists like that, people to whom Socialism is alien. They are like calculating machines: it does not matter what figures you give them to add, the result is always right—but there is no soul in it, it is sheer arithmetic.

"When I say 'soul,' I mean . . . thought that is inseparably and permanently associated with the will. The essence of my life, I suppose, is that I never possessed such a 'soul'. . . .

"Thought alone, unfertilized by feeling, plays with a man like a prostitute, but is quite unable to change him in any way. Of course, even a prostitute is sometimes loved sincerely; but it is more natural to treat her with

caution, otherwise she'll steal something from you, and infect you with disease into the bargain. . . .

"I observed that people are strongly governed by a favorite idea just because it has thoroughly gripped their feelings, has become part of their flesh and blood. That idea is not just a soap bubble, but a tightly clenched fist, an idea which has faith in its own power."

Thought severed from love of mankind, dissociated from feeling (because the capacity for genuine feeling has been lost), or from a cause into which all the force of one's personality can be invested—such thought may assume any logical form, may justify everything or contaminate everything. That is the *Samghin way of thought.*

Samghin was constantly engaged in self-observation. His conception of himself was illusory. For example, he was convinced of the infinite broadness of his personality. But in those moments when he conceived a glimmering of his own true nature, he became suddenly afflicted by a feeling of vacuity, of void. He had no clearly formulated idea of what this feeling meant—he had rather a *physical* sensation of something strange and unpleasant, and guessed that it imported something significant, something fundamental in him. But the mere inkling of the truth was mortally offensive to his self-respect, and he fled from it immediately into his customary world of illusion.

The pages describing Samghin alone with his own thoughts amaze us by their profound penetration into the "holy of holies" of the degraded bourgeois personality.

One night Samghin found himself alone in a hotel room in an unfamiliar town. The surroundings disposed him to thoughts of himself and of life. He experienced a division of personality, a strange feeling as though he was "an unreal man, extremely unpleasant, even alien to the one who was thinking of him in a strange wooden town to the accompaniment of the melancholy, frightened howling of dogs.

" 'The core of the matter is that I cannot find in life a point that would attract my whole being.'

"He was filled with pity for himself and thought:

" 'That is a characteristic of men who are exceptionally gifted and endowed with a variety of talents.'

" 'But perhaps . . . talentless? No. Lack of talent is shapelessness, indefiniteness. I am sufficiently definite.'

"The other Samghin rejoined sullenly but sternly, almost rudely:

" ' . . .You are carrying out a commission entrusted to you by a group of people who dream of social revolution. You have no need of any revolution and do not believe in the necessity of social revolution. What could be more absurd, more ridiculous than an atheist going to church to receive the sacrament.'

"The argument quickly waxed bitter. A third Samghin, the Samghin of petty thoughts, butted in:

" 'Dunyasha spoke about the sacrament.'

"Samghin number one searched for the deeper meaning:

" ' . . . You do, without believing in it. You are scarcely even seeking forgetfulness. Under the whole tangled web of your thoughts, there lurks a fear of life, the child's fear of darkness, which you cannot, which you are powerless to light up.'

"This new Samghin was obviously worsting the other, and the one who saw himself as the true and real one suffered scarcely

any resistance but only thought wearily:

" 'Am I getting ill or recovering?'

"The silent argument continued. It was undisturbedly still, and the stillness demanded that the man think about himself. And so he did. He drank wine. He smoked cigarettes in swift succession. He walked about the room, sat at the table. . . . His thoughts kept repeating themselves in a monotonous procession, becoming duller and duller. They swarmed like midges which had chosen for their playground a certain vacuity which was, however, not free, but confined within narrow bounds. After a time, Samghin put out the light and lay in bed. Then everything around him became quieter, more empty and offensive. The sensation of having been offended expanded, and in the process was transformed into another feeling very much like fear. Drowsiness came on in unpleasant waves, but he could not fall asleep. Jolts from the inside caused him to shiver, kept him awake. The night, devastated, dumb, dragged endlessly on.

"It was as if the silence demanded that man think about himself. And so he did. He drank wine, tea. He kept smoking . . . walking about the room, sitting at the table," "everything as men usually do"; but the very word "thinking" does not fit the process which had been going on in Samghin's consciousness. Within this frame—"a man like many other men"—there was going on such a disintegration of personality, such a noisy clash of voices inimical to each other, such a "complexity" and rupture in his "soul" that it was clear: the frame concealed emptiness. Samghin's idea that he was "definite" was just another of his many illusions. There was also a moment when he guessed: "in reality I am mediocre."

Samghin is not so much "a thinking machine as an arguing machine," one of the characters in the novel aptly remarked. In point of fact, that faculty of the human mind which enables one to generalize and penetrate to the core of phenomena was atrophied in Samghin: all his efforts in this direction only brought him, as in the passage just cited, face to face with—vacuity. He dreaded generalizations and final conclusions.

Samghin—that "individualist" who was so proud of his "independence"—lost sense of his own personality, not only as something independent, but even as something real.

"What can one say of oneself," he argued, "except that, 'I have seen this, I have seen that.' "

Truly, what we have here is vacuity, a vacuity through which reality flowed without being perceived.

The various forms of subjective idealistic philosophy of the period of bourgeois decadence—including Machism—follow naturally from such a *Weltanschauung*. For the degenerate bourgeois personality there is no objective truth, nothing solid and durable. All it knows is that "I," a certain arbitrary unit confined within arbitrary bounds, sees something, experiences certain sensations ("the world is a complex of sensations"). Samghin is a pure relativist. The absolute relativist skepticism expressed in the phrase, "Was there a youngster, after all?" is the keynote of the entire life of Klim Samghin.

The Samghins even attempted to adapt Marxism to their own state of vacuity, in which they were aided by such writers as A. Bogdanov, who declared: "To my mind, Marxism contains a

denial of the absolute objectivity of any truth whatever." Philosophical relativism was intimately associated with political and moral cynicism; it justified Smerdyakov's precept: "Everything is permissible!"

The thought which is capable of betraying and corrupting everything, to which "everything is permissible," that thought terrified Dostoyevsky and inspired him with a distrust of reason. He vociferously proclaimed in his novels that a man cannot live out of contact with the people, with mankind—he would commit suicide, like Stavrogin, in order to avoid insanity or to avoid joining the loathsome phalanx of human insects.

Having severed himself from the progressive men of his time and their ethics and morals, Dostoyevsky could see no force to counter the spirit of Smerdyakovism except religion.

Naturally, he tried to "instil fear" into the hearts of his readers, and into his own, at the thought that the characters of his novels were "open to everything" and defenseless against the "temptations" of Smerdyakovism. Dostoyevsky's reactionary utopianism prevented him from seeing the progressive side of bourgeois culture, or from properly valuing science. Yet he knew very well what science in the hands of the bourgeoisie can degenerate into. He understood that science would simply perish in the hands of the Rothschilds, that all that would be left of it would be a powerful technique of destruction. These ideas he expressed in his articles and novels. As to the proletariat, it was never, of course, associated with science in Dostoyevsky's mind; we know his conception of the "ulcer of proletarianism." He combatted the faith that Belinsky, Chernyshevsky and Shchedrin had in "scientific ethics" (to use his own phrase), a faith built on real ties with laboring humanity. Like Shatov he *forced* himself to believe in god. But there is reason to assume that he himself was stirred to derision by the idea that man could not live without god. Verkhovensky told Stavrogin about a captain who, profoundly shocked at some atheistic talk he had heard, exclaimed: "If there is no god, then what sort of captain am I?"—"That's a rather sweeping idea," said Stavrogin jeeringly. A man could scarcely parody his own "sacred" idea in this way if it really was sacred to him; and Dostoyevsky's idea did in fact amount to this: "If there is no god, then what sort of man am I?"

The slyer the secret voice of derision at Zosima's "unctuous silence" (Dostoyevsky's own term), the more passionately Dostoyevsky defended it, for all its wretchedness. Outside of his famous utopia, he saw nothing but universal chaos, savagery and rapacity. . . .

In the person of Stavrogin, Dostoyevsky depicted the perverted play of thought isolated from mankind, from the people. He pictured Stavrogin as a "mask" concealing the man's internal vacuity. Stavrogin's thought was parasitic; his whole interest consisted in his ability to accept and justify the logicality of any idea, of any standpoint. Hence his interest in the subject of treachery.

Dostoyevsky depicted Stavrogin as a "scion of nobility torn from his soul," as a man who had lost all ties with the people. Desiring to "save" Russia from bourgeoisdom, he expressed in the image of Stavrogin his disapproval of the West-European bourgeoisie; it is not without significance that

Dostoyevsky made Stavrogin spend many years abroad.

It is to be presumed that when Gorky referred to a certain kinship between Samghin and Dostoyevsky's characters, he had Smerdyakov in mind, and partly Stavrogin. When Samghin remains alone with himself, he reminds us of Stavrogin, alone, facing his own thoughts. Naturally, the creators of these types described the vacuity in which the play of impotent thought takes place, in quite different ways. . . . Dostoyevsky wanted Mitya Karamazov to vanquish his "complexity" and "broadness" of soul by meekness and humility. In Stavrogin's case, this same "complexity," this disintegration of personality, resulted in utter vacuity, in a readiness to commit any crime or act of treachery—such is the logical conclusion of "contemplating two chasms," of dual personality. Depicting Stavrogin's handsome exterior, Dostoyevsky makes us feel how repulsive it is, how loathsome its *deathly* quality; it is an integument concealing a stinking and decaying corpse. Stavrogin is capable of the most disgusting crimes; his deathly vacuity is infinite. As a christian, Dostoyevsky believed in the resurrection of the dead, but in spite of his christian crust, and in spite of all his efforts to attribute Stavrogin's devastating vacuity to his atheism, we perceive a momentous question that Dostoyevsky raised: the question of social apostasy, of the degeneration of thought severed from the people and having no ties with humanity. Gorky helps us to understand the quintessence of this question by establishing a kinship between Samghin and Dostoyevsky's characters.

Dostoyevsky's creatures could not reconcile themselves to the prospect of the disintegration and decay of their respective personalities; they howled in pain. Properly speaking, Marmeladov's cry, "a man has nowhere to turn," is an expression of the horror felt by the majority of Dostoyevsky's heroes at the loss of their ties with humanity.

Karamora and Samghin, however, experienced no horror. Unlike the Raskolnikovs and Karamazovs, they were organic parts of the bourgeois world. Dostoyevsky's characters only hesitatingly "tried on" the costume of the bourgeois man, and recoiled in horror. But meanwhile no inconsiderable interval had elapsed, a new era had begun, bringing with it a complete loss of human feeling and the utter bestialization of the masters of the bourgeois world and their "ideological" agents.

In the rare moments when Klim Samghin divined his true nature, he experienced that horror at the glimpse of his own vacuity which once devastated Dostoyevsky's heroes and drove Ivan Karamazov out of his mind. But in the case of Samghin, this feeling was the reverberation of passions which he himself had never experienced. Ruminating on his kinship with Dostoyevsky's characters, Samghin found that their painful search for . . . immutable truth and internal freedom, lifting him up again, had led him away from the crowd of ordinary people and had made him akin to Dostoyevsky's restless characters.

"But at times he would fling down his pencil and exclaim:

" 'No, I am not like these men; I am sounder than they, I treat life more calmly.' "

As we know, "internal freedom" to Samghin meant tranquillity. That Samghin is more tranquil than Dostoyevsky's characters is

beyond question. They were tormented by many things, above all by disgust for themselves, for their own cruelty and love of causing pain, by their overwhelming temptation to snap all ties with humanity and become beasts of prey. They felt that they were "diseased." But Samghin was already so eaten up with disease that he was no longer conscious of it: there was already no disease to afflict him.

"That evening, testing and reviewing, with all the objectivity he was capable of, the events and impressions of the past few years, Samghin felt so lonely and isolated, so alien to all men, that he even experienced a dull, grinding pain, gripping something in him that was very sensitive. But at the next moment it occurred to him that if he was so lonely, it must be because he really was an exceptional man."

Vulgar arrogance could not corrode Dostoyevsky's characters, but it perfectly soothed and satisfied Samghin. . . .

Raskolnikov "experimented" on himself in order to find out what a *real* man of the bourgeois world was—and he recoiled in disgust and horror. Klim Samghin was an organic part of the bourgeois world—and he remained unmoved. In that sense, perhaps, one might say, using Marina Zotova's term, that he is more of a "whole":

" 'The prophets—and for long—will be two: Leonid Andreyev and Sologub[1]. . . . Andreyev, of course, is simpler in thought than Dostoyevsky but perhaps that is because he is more of a whole.' "

Zotova, "smiling and blinking her eyes," informed Samghin that Andreyev had chosen a traitor for his hero—a Judas.

" 'That is a penetrating jest! And perhaps there is something of real truth in it—a traitor does actually become a hero. There is a rumor that an *agent-provocateur* of high standing is active among the Socialist-Revolutionaries.' "

Bourgeois decadent literature justified treachery at that very period when *agents-provocateurs* were playing an unusually important part in the struggle of the bourgeoisie against the revolutionary proletariat. This was the period when "millerandism" was at its height—a species of treachery whereby bourgeois politicians used the working class movement to make their careers, and, having secured posts in the cabinet, to mete out savage treatment to the revolutionary movement. Klim Samghin dreamed of such a career with relish.

For all his deadness, Stavrogin performed countless experiments on himself to prove that he was alive; he sought for a "burden," a load that might fill his vacuity. He realized that he had completely "worked loose"; he was anxious to demonstrate that he was something real and not a "vacuity confined within strict bounds."

Karamora likewise performed experiments on himself; but all he experienced was a cold curiosity.

"Consciousness of human ties is the fruit of fancy. . . . Life really is a naked and bestial struggle, and there is no sense in trying to restrain it—moreover, nothing can restrain it. . . . Man has no strength to protest against his own vileness; and there is no point in protesting against it—it is a legitimate and effective weapon in the mutual struggle. . . . I have no feeling for people—I don't need them." That was the way Karamora argued, and his ideas coin-

[1] Sologub—prominent Russian writer and poet of the beginning of the XX century. Author of *Petty Demons*. His works are permeated with the mysticism characteristic of the Russian bourgeois intelligentsia of that period. *Ed.*

cided with those from which Raskolnikov and Ivan Karamazov recoiled.

Gorky demonstrated the absurdity of the approach to a traitor, based on the ordinary criteria of morality; Karamora's chief tells him that he (Karamora) is "really a soft-hearted fellow." It seems utterly absurd to apply *human* concepts such as kindness, hard-heartedness, etc., to a man like Karamora in whose heart nothing human remained. It had been completely replaced by an extraordinarily developed and perfected skill in aping human feelings.

The world is divided into two camps, Samghin kept insisting. The strength of the working class can no longer be ignored, and there can be no more hope of a peaceful solution of historical problems: the era is a cataclysmic one, and the solution will also be cataclysmic. Samghin was fully aware of the strength of the Socialist movement. Thus arose a new social type, and Gorky was the first to depict it in literature—"a rebel from fear of revolution," as many characters in the *Life of Klim Samghin* put it, or "a revolutionary who dreams of decapitating the revolution," as Klim Samghin in the privacy of his own mind formulated his aspirations.

"The formula arose spontaneously in Samghin's mind:

"We need a revolution in order to annihilate the revolutionaries."

It was with this aim that people of the Samghin type, masking their hatred and fear—the sentiments Samghin experienced towards Kutuzov—wormed their way into the revolutionary army, and strove to gain possession of its commanding posts.

Lyutov said to Samghin:

"An hour ago I was at a meeting of people who are also stirring and displaying, you know, the sort of uneasiness cockroaches betray when a house is on fire. There was a long-nosed dame there with a figure of a carter—the wife of a privy-councillor, a general's wife, will you believe it! There was also the daughter of a distiller, I think she was. And many others; all fine people, that is, acting in the name of the masses. They need money for a magazine, a Marxist publication."

Lyutov believed that Samghin was an important revolutionary, perhaps a member of the general staff of the revolutionary movement. He did not suspect that he too was a prey to "cockroach uneasiness."

In conversation with Samghin, Kutuzov cited Poyarkov as saying that "rich men's sons go in for Marxism because of instinctive class caution: they feel that, do what they like, a social cataclysm is inevitable; yet, the instinct of self-preservation forces them to keep trying."

In Gorky's opinion, the prevalence of the type of "rebel from fear of revolution" was due not only to the general aspect of the era, but also to the particular conditions prevailing in Russia: the weakness of the autocratic regime and its unreliability as a bulwark against the advance of revolution. That is why Lyutov, the millionaire merchant, contributed funds to secret political parties, and why Mayakin was dissatisfied with the weakness shown by the autocracy in combatting the revolutionary movement; they both hoped that after the revolutionary upheaval the "real masters of life" would come to power and put an end to "anarchy," to the perpetual uncertainty and unrest. But, of course, the Lyutovs and Mayakins were isolated individuals; the Russian bourgeoisie as a body put its faith in the autocracy.

Samghin, who was no fool—"a bourgeois intellectual of average caliber," as Gorky said—guessed that the Russian liberal bourgeoisie was not very strong and was too intimately connected with tsardom. This increased his uneasiness and spurred him on to "adapt" himself all the more to the revolution in the endeavor to utilize its tremendous power for the preservation of the foundations of the bourgeois world. He weighed the chances of the various parties, and maneuvered between them. The opportunists of the German Bernsteinist type appealed to him most, but his uneasy instinct of self-preservation compelled him to resort to "Left" phrasemongering.

While Dostoyevsky perceived that "there is a good deal of the born spy in the bourgeoisie" (*Winter Notes on Summer Impressions*) Gorky demonstrated in his Samghin how the bourgeoisie shapes the "soul" of the spy, the *agent-provocateur* and the double-dealer.

Nikonovna, "the tenderly loving and beloved spouse" of Samghin, was an *agent-provocateur*, and she was firmly convinced that he, too, is one. "You are what I am," she wrote to him in her farewell letter, after she was exposed and forced to retire into hiding.

In Smerdyakov, Dostoyevsky has essentially drawn the type of bourgeois man to whom "everything is permissible," the Spengler man, "ignorant of the tribal 'we' and lurking in solitude like a beast of prey." It was no accident that he stressed Smerdyakov's contempt for the people and for Russia; it was an expression of Dostoyevsky's idea that Smerdyakovism was the inevitable fruit of social apostasy, of divorcement from the people.

Smerdyakov is the embodiment and apotheosis of the spirit of the lackey. "That creature was positively malicious, inordinately ambitious, revengeful and passionately envious. . . . He cursed and jeered at Russia. . . . He loved nobody but himself, and his self-admiration reached fantastic heights. Enlightenment, in his eyes, meant clean shirt-cuffs."

"*Why are there so many lackeys among the bourgeoisie*," wrote Dostoyevsky, underscoring the phrase, "and what is more, lackeys with such a benevolent exterior? The lackey spirit is progressively corroding the nature of the bourgeois and is being increasingly regarded as a virtue. It must be so under the present order of things, of which it is a natural consequence. And the most important of all is that the nature of the bourgeois encourages it. Apart from the fact that there is a good deal of the born spy in the bourgeois, it is my opinion that the extraordinary craft of spying, spying as a profession, carried to a fine art and employing scientific methods, is due to their innate lackey spirit." (*Winter Notes.*)

It is not surprising that the *Okhrana*, the secret police, sensed a kindred spirit in Samghin; nor is it surprising that his whole life revolved around the *Okhrana*, and that of all his numerous acquaintances, the only ones he knew intimately and understood, were spies and *agents-provocateurs*. Dostoyevsky's idea that spying—which is the essence of the lackey—was progressively corroding the nature of the bourgeois, was borne out by the facts. The Smerdyakov essence of the "leading figures" of contemporary social-democracy, these bourgeois lackeys and spies such as Jouhaux, Citrine and Blum, has been proven these days with amazing conclusiveness.

Shigalev, in *The Possessed*, who is the "theoretician" of Smerdyakovism, as it were, proposed "as a final solution of the problem, to

divide the human race into two unequal parts: one tenth shall enjoy freedom of personality and unlimited authority over the remaining nine tenths" who are to be turned into "something of the nature of a herd." Dostoyevsky was anxious to present this "idea" in such a way as to create the impression that it was shared by the revolutionaries, the "nihilists"—and for that reason *The Possessed* is a calumny. But the artist's instinct revolted against this perversion of the truth. Stepan Verkhovensky plainly declared that he was not a Socialist, and Stavrogin finally became convinced that Verkhovensky really had nothing in common with Socialism. Even A. Volynsky, the bourgeois critic, an enthusiastic admirer of Dostoyevsky, was obliged to admit that Shigalev's "idea of the rulers is a sort of caricature on Plato's *Republic* and absolutely does not fit in with any Socialist conception."

Morals such as those depicted in *The Possessed* and murderers and vulgar adventurers of the type of Stepan Verkhovensky are quite possible, of course, in Shigalev's milieu which engenders such "ideas" just because it is a counter-revolutionary milieu. Its main characteristics, as defined by Dostoyevsky are social apostasy, aloofness from and hostility and contempt for the masses who are looked down upon as the "rabble"; its governing idea is the division of human society into rulers and a common herd; its principal modes of action are provocation, spying and murder; its "moral principle" is "everything is permissible!" In fact, in *The Possessed* Dostoyevsky depicted the forefathers of the modern bourgeois political adventurers, blackmailers and provocateurs. Compared with the "possessed" of today Dostoyevsky may seem rather naive, but we must remember that they were only the forefathers.

It is not surprising, of course, that the chief characters in *The Possessed*, Stavrogin and Pyotr Verkhovensky, are hostile to Socialism; it only emphasizes the fact that the book really depicts counter-revolutionary milieu with its hanger-on *renegades* from the Socialist camp. Dostoyevsky grasped many of the features of the political adventurer (for example, Pyotr Verkhovensky's typical fear of the masses, and his dread of being made one day to pay for his demagogy).

Gorky used the term "anthropoids" to describe the utterly degenerate and bestialized type of the bourgeois and the bourgeois agent. The anthropoids have severed connection with everything human and know nothing but the "naked brutal struggle."

One of these anthropoids lurks beneath the polished and civilized exterior of Klim Samghin.

The general significance of the character of Samghin lies in the fact that it embraces all the potential varieties of agents of the imperialist bourgeoisie. In one way or another, Gorky brought Samghin into contact with all the various "systems of phrases," parties and political shades. Samghin might just as well have been a Constitutional-Democrat, a Menshevik; he embraced these potentialities, various forms of defense of the interests of the bourgeoisie. Samghin's type, of course, has a wider social significance. Treachery as an organic characteristic of "personality," cynical vacuity, dread of the revolution, contempt and hatred for the masses, a readiness for any vile or criminal deed—all these Samghin characteristics are easily to be detected in many a leader of the Social-Democratic parties. Samghin is the typical

bourgeois "man" of the era of imperialism, who has resorted to a Socialist mask so as all the better to wage a struggle against the working class. Adaptability is his chief characteristic.

"MORALS OF THE SLAVES"

Gorky, as we have seen, constantly associated the name of Dostoyevsky with that of Carlyle.

Dostoyevsky rejected and cursed Raskolnikov's "Nietzschean" idea but Carlyle's dream of the "true captain's" lording it over the people found a responsive chord in his breast. In Versilov's reflections on government by a genuine aristocracy not contaminated by servility to bourgeois Mammon—this aristocracy to include all who distinguished themselves by talent or service to the people—we detect something very much akin to Carlyle's "cult of the hero." The dream entertained by one of Dostoyevsky's favorite heroes—Prince Myshkin—of a true aristocracy that would govern the people wisely, bears the same character. The kinship between Dostoyevsky and Carlyle is manifested in many other respects.

In his article, *The Condition of England*, Frederick Engels set forth the leading ideas in Carlyle's book, *Past and Present*. England, in Carlyle's opinion, had become the prey of atheism, and its present condition was a consequence. " 'We have forgotten god. . . . We have quietly closed our eyes to the eternal Substance of things, and opened them only to the Shows and Shams of things. . . . All the truth of this Universe is uncertain; only the profit and loss of it, the pudding and praise of it, are and remain very visible to the practical man. . . .' " (Let me recall Dostoyevsky's: "when all life is preached in comfort.") " 'There is no longer any God for us. . . . in our and old Johnson's dialect, man has lost the soul out of him; and now, after the due period—begins to find the want of it! This is verily the plague-spot; center of the universal Social Gangrene. . . . There is no religion; there is no God; man has lost his soul, and vainly seeks antiseptic salt. . . .' But since the place of the old religion could not remain unfilled, we have received instead a new gospel, a gospel corresponding to the vacuity and emptiness of the age, the gospel of Mammon. . . . 'With our Mammon-Gospel, we have come to strange conclusions. We call it Society; and go about openly professing absolute separation, isolation. Our life is not mutual helpfulness; but rather . . . it is a mutual hostility. . . .' "

"Complete disintegration of all social interests; universal disillusionment in truth and humanity, and, as a consequence, the universal isolation of man in his gross solitude; a chaotic and senseless confusion of all social relations; a war of all against all; general spiritual death; lack of soul, that is, of true human consciousness; . . . a working class suffering intolerable hardship and want, savagely dissatisfied and indignant with the old social order; hence the ominous and irresistible advance of democracy; chaos, disorder, anarchy, the decay of the ancient pillars of society; everywhere spiritual vacuity, unprincipledness and declining strength—such is the position of England," says Engels, summarizing Carlyle.

All this applies equally well to Dostoyevsky and the picture of society he painted. Everything that Carlyle detested, Dostoyevsky detested: the "gospel of Mammon," "vacuity and emptiness," "total separation and isolation," "the universal isolation of man in his gross solitude" (Marmeladovs cry!), "mutual hostility," "general spiritual death," and so on. Stavrogin and Smerdyakov are typical of the "vacuity and emptiness" which imply *spiritual death.*

True, Carlyle emphasized more powerfully and vividly the social side of the exile and misery he was exposing. Dostoyevsky, however, immersed the social aspects in mysticism and depicted them as something psychologically individual.

As in the case of Carlyle, Dostoyevsky's "total" rejection of capitalism made it impossible for him to get even an inkling of the true meaning of democracy and the working class, "whence comes our salvation," as Engels said. Both Carlyle and Dostoyevsky saw nothing in the workers but "grossness and demoralization"; everything connected with democracy inspired them with fear. Both sought salvation from the "universal vacuity" and "spiritual death" in religion and in "true captains."

Engels' criticism of Carlyle applies just as well to Dostoyevsky.

"Carlyle complains of the vanity and vacuity of the age, of the internal rottenness of all social institutions. . . . To cure an evil, you must first discover its cause; and had Carlyle acted thus, he would have found that this decay and vacuity, this 'soullessness,' this irreligiosity and this 'atheism' are rooted in religion itself. Religion virtually deprives man and nature of all meaning, and transfers this meaning to a phantom of a God beyond, who then in his mercy returns to man and nature a particle of his bounty. . . . This emptiness has long existed, for religion is an act by which man empties himself; and now that its purple has faded, now that the incense enveloping it has been wafted away, you are surprised and horrified that it stands forth in all its nakedness?" Engels declared that "vacuity and emptiness, doubt in the eternal truths of the universe would persist until man" liberated himself from religion . . . "and we must combat the insolvency, the emptiness, the spiritual death, the falsity of the age. . . . We want to abolish atheism, as Carlyle pictures it, by restoring to man the meaning he has lost owing to religion—a human, not a divine meaning. . ." Engels goes on to say: "If Carlyle's pantheistic definition of atheism were the true one, not we would be the atheists but our Christian opponents. It never enters our head to contest the 'ancient inherent facts of the universe'; on the contrary, we were the first really to prove them, demonstrating that they are eternal, and defending them from the omnipotent arbitrariness of a self-contradicting God. It never occurs to us to proclaim the world, man and his existence a lie; on the contrary, it is our Christian opponents who commit this immorality when they make the world and man dependent on the mercy of a God who was really created by the reflection of man in the wild chaos of his own undeveloped mind." These "Christian opponents," Engels says, "by offering the human race perfection in their Christ, set before history imaginary goals, checked its course somewhere midway, and therefore, for the sake of consistency, were obliged to regard the succeeding eighteen centuries as wildly absurd and utterly nonsensical."

These words of Engels' seem to

be aimed directly against Ivan Karamazov, with his denial that nature and history are governed by laws, his doubts as to the "ancient intrinsic facts of the universe," and his conclusion: "everything is permissible!" This denial and doubt Dostoyevsky deduced from atheism. Engels, however, points out that it is religion which denies immutable laws to nature and human history, and attributes everything to the arbitrariness of a super-human being. "The most 'godly' periods in human history," says Engels, "were the most cruel and inhuman; at any rate, the 'godly' Middle Ages led to the acme of human savagery, serfdom, the unrestricted rights of the feudal lord, and so forth. The *godlessness* of our times which Carlyle so deplored, is in fact its godliness. . . . The true nature of man is more grand and more majestic than the imaginary nature of all the 'gods,' who are nothing more than a vague and distorted image of man himself. When, then, Carlyle follows Ben Jonson in saying that man has lost his soul and is only beginning to find the want of it, it would be truer to say that in religion man lost his true nature, forfeited his humanity, and that now, when with the progress of history religion has been shaken, he has begun to observe its emptiness and meaninglessness."

Carlyle and Dostoyevsky drew back to the past from the "immorality, godlessness and inhumanity" of the present. Engels pointed to the progressive character of the new capitalist era in which man's true powers were ripening. "Man, of course, is not passing through democracy in order to return to the starting point. . . . Democracy, of course, is only a stage of transition, not to an improved aristocracy, however, but to real human freedom; similarly, the irreligiousness of the age will in the long run lead to complete emancipation from everything religious, superhuman and supernatural, and not to its restoration."

The denial of immutable laws of human history, a denial which is implicit in the religious concept of the world (and which is masked by blind obedience to the "incomprehensible" laws of God) led both Carlyle and Dostoyevsky to subjective arbitrariness, to a desire to halt the march of life and to turn it back in its course, a desire that made them stubbornly oblivious of reality. Dostoyevsky's "wilful" attitude towards reality was well brought out by Shchedrin in the preface to his *Right-Minded Speeches*, where he discusses various types of "bridlers."

"Sincere liars are utopians in the matter of 'bridling,' before whom even our modern society which is thoroughly accustomed to lying, stands in trembling awe. They are monsters, who lie not from any intention to deceive, but because they refuse to admit either the testimony of history or the testimony of the present, and who, when they see a fact, will not recognize it as a fact, but as a caprice of human willfulness. They hurl sharp-edged bricks at us quite conscientiously, never stopping for a moment to think that they might kill us. They are a morose crew who never forsake the mirage created by their own imaginations, and who strive with inexorable consistency to carry this mirage into real life."

Dostoyevsky wanted to cure the cynicism of bourgeois society, its loss of moral values, its denial of the objective laws of nature and history, its bourgeois nihilism and all-corroding and corrupting

skepticism by religion, attributing these characteristics to the working class as well as to the bourgeoisie, and tying them up with atheism and revolution.

Gorky raised the great ideals of the working class as a battle standard, showing with all the force of his literary powers that the only savior of humanity was the working class. In Klim Samghin and other characters, he revealed the frightful internal devastation of the bourgeois world, the true nature of the individualist "willfulness" of the bourgeoisie, with its denial of law in nature and its attempt to violate reality in order to preserve its moribund human society. No wonder Samghin felt that there was "something impermissible" in his attitude to reality.

This theme of the breakdown of the personality renouncing its social ties, establishes a kinship between Samghin and the hero of the *Notes From the Underground* and with Stavrogin, notwithstanding all the difference between Samghin and Dostoyevsky's heroes. Dostoyevsky tried to associate the breakdown of the personality with atheism and "rebellion." In the image of Samghin, Gorky showed that this process was characteristic of the bourgeois personality in its mortal hatred of revolution. The *objective truth* in Dostoyevsky's works is interwoven with falsity, including the falsity of religion which robs a man of his true worth and power and makes him a slave. Dostoyevsky is terrified by the vacuity of bourgeois life; however, as contrast to it he does not offer man in his supreme maturity, humaneness, but a slave whose vacuity is no less terrifying, a slave who has renounced his human powers and crawls in submission before an incomprehensible chaos and chance, an arbitrariness which he calls divine. . . . He offers *slavishness*—as a contrast to *willfulness*—and it is only between these two poles that his thought revolves.

The awakening feeling of protest in the early Dostoyevsky against the humiliations to which men were subjected was replaced by a feeling akin to rejoicing at man's suffering, at man's *faculty* for suffering. This arose from the conception of protest and revolt he had developed: if it is true that there is no revolt except the rebellious "willfulness" of Karamazov, with his anarchist repudiation of all laws, then it is better to suffer and willingly bear every humiliation, for that alone can preserve humaneness, can prevent man from becoming a tormentor and humiliator, and from adopting Raskolnikov's "morals of the masters." Hence his idealization and worship of suffering, which in reality meant sanctioning and condoning all the cruelties of society. . . .

This idealization of *slavish human vacuity* is manifested in Dostoyevsky's "positive hero," such as Alyosha Karamazov, Prince Myshkin, Zosima and others.

This is the type of the ideal christian. He is ready to forgive everything and everybody, ready to suffer for everyman, he is everyman's brother. Fyodor Karamazov, for example, declared that, unlike Ivan, Alyosha "is one of us." And, indeed, in Alyosha's opinion it was good to commiserate with the offended lad Ilya, but it was also good to forgive his offender. Both were good, and everything is good! Alyosha was ready to agree to everything, to approve of everything and to condemn nothing. He consented to carry out Fyodor Karamazov's shameless commissions, as, for

example, to act as an intermediary in the old man's love affair with Grushenka; and, generally, he assumed the role of agent in the shady dealings of the Karamazovs—for that is the essence of the christian *love* of one's fellow man. He forgave Mitya for his monstrous behavior, Ivan for his Smerdyakovism, Liza Khokhlakova for her misanthropy. Prince Myshkin similarly forgave everything and everybody, including Rogozhin, the murderer of Nastasia, whom he had pitied and loved. That, in fact, was christian forgiveness. Alyosha was taught by his mentor, Father Zosima, to "beware of squeamishness, both towards others and towards yourself. . . ." And, in fact, Alyosha Karamazov and Prince Myshkin were devoid of all moral squeamishness. The spiritual dressing-gown by Mitya Karamazov, Fyodor Karamazov and Rogozhin—greasy but comfortable, "not incommoding" and "allowing one freedom"—was watered by Alyosha and Myshkin with sentimental tears. Christianity sanctions and condones the maxim "everything is permissible"; for "he who does not sin, does not repent; and he who does not repent, cannot be saved." First weep over the sufferings of children and then kiss the hand of their tormenters—that is true christianity. . . .

Gorky created characters who exposed the true nature of Dostoyevsky's "positive heroes"; there are the youth Yevsei—the hero of *Life of a Superfluous Man*—and the "gracious youth" Diomidov in the *Life of Klim Samghin.*

The polemical nature of Yevsei as a character—who served Gorky as a means of settling accounts with the "poesy" of long-suffering, humility and passivity—with everything that was glorified by Tolstoyism and by Dostoyevsky—was so clear that even bourgeois critics, mystics and pietists could not close their eyes to the fact. "Yevsei is the embodiment of the principle of inertia . . . of the notorious spirit of long-suffering," argued Filosofov.

Yevsei's mind was perpetually occupied with thoughts of god, life seemed to him senselessly brutal, and all men cruel. He sought salvation in humility. The result was that he was ready to fulfil any vile and despicable commission. He became a police spy. Fear was the essence of his life. He turned into something soft and unsavory, a "rag," such as Golyadkin and others of Dostoyevsky's heroes felt themselves to be—a "rag" which can be put to any vile use. During the Revolution of 1905, finding that his dream of concealing his past and retiring to a "quiet, clean life" was doomed, he lay down on a railway track and waited for an oncoming train to pass over him. But "he could wait no longer. He jumped to his feet, ran along the rails, and shouted in a high screech:

"'I shall do everything . . . I shall . . . everything—I shall, I shall! . . .'

"'I shall—' he yelled, waving his hands.

"Something hard struck his back. He fell across the sleepers between the red cords of rail, and the harsh iron rumble crushed his feeble screams."

Thus ended the life of a man who was wax in the hands of those to whom "everything is permissible." On the one hand, "everything is permissible," and, on the other, "I shall do everything I am ordered to"—such were the two terrible alternatives from which Dostoyevsky's heroes had to make their choice.

Dostoyevsky's "positive hero" preached meekness, the renunciation of all struggle, disgust for the "wordly," for the "flesh." Active struggle and concern for the material things of life were associated by Dostoyevsky with the worship of Mammon, with the renunciation of the "soul" and with the proclivities of the "spider." He designed to develop his Alyosha Karamazov into a "public figure," a preacher, an active fighter against atheism and materialism. Alyosha began his activities as a "preacher," assuming the guise of a "mentor" of the younger generation, protecting it from the "fatal influence" of revolutionary ideas. . . .

In the *Life of Klim Samghin*, Gorky, as it were, "accomplished" Dostoyevsky's design. In the character of the "gracious youth" Diomidov, he demonstrated what *actual function* Alyosha would have performed as a "preacher." It was no coincidence that Samghin called Diomidov a "blessed louse"—"Am I man or a louse?" Raskolnikov defined his dilemma, thereby betraying his vacillation between the "morals of the masters" and the "morals of the slaves"; was he to be one to whom "everything is permissible," or one with whom it is permissible to do everything? Diomidov preached meekness, he defended the position of those who voluntarily submitted to slavery and idealized it—the position of Alyosha Karamazov, Zosima and Prince Myshkin. Gorky demonstrated that, for all its apparent "passivity," this position was *actively injurious* to the working people.

While working on his novel, the *Idiot*, Dostoyevsky wrote of his "positive" hero in a private letter, in which he said that he must be "ridiculous; therein lies his appeal. He calls forth compassion because he is scoffed at and does not know his own worth—thus he gains the sympathy of the reader. This power of arousing compassion is the secret of humor. . . ."

It was in accordance with this recipe that the characters of Prince Myshkin and Alyosha Karamazov were constructed.

And Gorky constructed the character of Diomidov on the same principle—only for polemical purposes. Diomidov was attractive, "angelic," "splendid"; he was "touching," naive, infantile; as in the case of Myshkin and Alyosha, *childishness* was one of his outstanding traits; and he had the holy "uprightness" of Myshkin and Alyosha. In Lydia Varavka and others he aroused compassion because he was "scoffed at and does not know his own worth." He accused the revolutionaries of wanting to "chain the human soul in fetters."

Growing older and more respectable, Diomidov became a "preacher." He gathered audiences, he was attentively listened to, he became something in the nature of a "lecturer." Naturally, there was a policeman always present at his "lectures"—to see there was no "disturbance of the peace." The subject of his preaching was similar to that of Alyosha Karamazov's: fear and distrust of reason, condemnation of the revolutionaries, who "tempt" people with the promise of "material benefits" and arouse "ambitions," and so on and so forth.

"'More damaging still than carnal pleasures are the amusements of wanton intelligence,' proclaimed Diomidov loudly, leaning forward like one ready to jump into the thick of the crowd.

"'And so students and other half-educated persons, block-heads, seekers of fame, and reckless mis-

chief-makers who have no pity for you, fill your hungry souls, to which even bitterness is sweet, with ill-conceived dreams about a certain Socialism, instil in you ideas to suggest that once the flesh is satisfied, its satiety will keep the soul satisfied, too.'

"'No, they lie,' shouted Diomidov with great force, solemnly raising his hand.

"Samghin rose with a chill of surprise. It appeared to him that the people closed in with their entire mass, moving nearer to the stoop. He even thought that their necks looked longer, and their heads more conspicuous. This gathering gave the impression of being devoid of hands, everybody's hands being hidden in the tattered clothing, the bosoms, the pockets. . . ."

Alyosha Karamazov's "sermons" to the young student Kolya Krasotkin and his friends bear a strong resemblance to Diomidov's and also amount to this: that the minds of the young are corrupted by "some kind of a Socialism," by "seekers of fame and mischief-makers"—who issue from the nihilists. . . .

"In his 'sermon,' Diomidov touched on 'politics'—he said a few words in defense of the 'loyal slaves of the earthly tsar.' The policeman at once pulled him up and closed the meeting. A certain 'man in a jacket' explained to Samghin:

"This policeman is young, but cunning. Stops him on purpose, to find out if there are any talkers. The other day, such a one sprang up and the officer grabbed him. Off with him to the station-house. They must be working hand in glove."

Gorky had an abiding and irreconcilable hatred of the passivity which shrinks from struggle, of the doctrine of meekness and its corrupting influence on the working people. He had seen many "preachers" of the Diomidov variety in his life, and knew how pernicious their activities were; and this it was that constantly spurred him on to combat the reactionary elements of Tolstoy's teachings, or the idealization of passivity in Dostoyevsky's works.

"Meekness is a terrible force," Dostoyevsky declared. His counterpart for meekness was rapacity, for impotence—force. And he feared every manifestation of real force, which he regarded as another species of the Karamazov brute "self-will," associating *all force* with the desire to torment, to rule and suck the life blood out of people. . . .

"In a state founded on the senseless and humiliating sufferings of the vast majority of the people," said Gorky in his report at the First Soviet Writers' Congress, "it is fitting that the creed of irresponsible self-will in word and action should be the guiding and vindicating principle—and it was. Such ideas as 'man is a despot by nature', that he 'likes to be a tormentor' that he is 'passionately fond of causing suffering,' and that he envisages the meaning of life and his happiness precisely in self-will in unrestricted freedom of action, that only this self-will will bring him his 'greatest advantage' and 'let the whole world perish so long as I can drink my tea'—such are the ideas capitalism has inculcated and upheld through thick and thin."

Gorky declared that Dostoyevsky justified the "brute, animal principle in man." And this, of course, is true, inasmuch as, for all his fear and disgust at the "brute principle," he considered the temptations of the Karamazov mind, and its natural consequence—Smerdyakovism, inherent in man's very

nature. That is why it seemed to him that without god, man was bound to go the way of Smerdyakov. The only escape he could see from the vileness of Smerdyakovism was in christian humility, slavishness. Gorky showed that this road, too, led to Smerdyakov devastation of soul: the spokesman of the "morals of the masters"—Samghin—and of the "morals of the slaves"—the wretched and humble Yevsei, who sought escape from the horrors of life in slavishness—were both distinguished by *utter internal vacuity*. Yevsei, who submitted to everything done to him, who offered his left cheek when struck on the right, and who, uncomplainingly and in christian spirit, carried out every command of the "masters," by his very humility *also* carries into effect the Smerdyakov principle of "everything is permissible!" When Yevsei recounted his life story to the writer Mironov, the latter could say nothing; he felt the futility of talking to a *vacuity*. In Yevsei as in Samghin, there was nothing human left, his personality had been excised. This coincidence only goes to show that the "morals of the masters" and the "morals of the slaves" are but two sides of one and the same thing, and that Smerdyakovism was the logical consequence of both. That is one of the most profound ideas in Gorky's work.

Russia never knew that virile, self-confident capitalism of the early stages, as it appeared in Western Europe; and if Belinsky, Chernyshevsky, Dobrolyubov, Shchedrin and Nekrasov were able to see something more than Smerdyakovism in the development of capitalism, it was due, apart from their personal genius, to their ties with advanced and progressive humanity, of whom they were the best representatives. Dostoyevsky parted ways with them, and all that was left of his heroes was Karamazovdom, with all its "potentialities." The humanistic principle, which had appealed to Dostoyevsky so strongly in his youth, protested against Smerdyakovism; his whole being revolted against it. But it invaded him on all sides and flooded the hopeless and utopian "isle of salvation"—that mirage and invention of fancy. The world grew ever narrower in the minds of his heroes, and they remained alone to face the "huge spider the size of a man." Dostoyevsky laid bare the soul of his hero, with all its dark and gloomy "abysses," to the judgment of public opinion. And it was revealed for all to see what the accursed property-owning society does to the soul of man.

The gloomy and uneasy atmosphere of Dostoyevsky's works and their disquieting power were expressive not only of a dread of Smerdyakovism and an apprehension of the even viler forms they were likely to acquire in the future, but also of the disastrous instability of bourgeois society and the explosive material it contained. Throughout his lifetime, Dostoyevsky was tormented by the thought of the suffering, of the insulted and injured; and by the impulse to make amends to them. Could he really have had a deep-seated belief in the sacredness, utility and humaneness of the "unctuous silence" of Zosima's monastery, when that revolting old debauchee, Fyodor Karamazov, Smerdyakov's real father, admitted that the monastery was useful to him?

Fyodor Karamazov was fond of voicing "freethinking" ideas—he proposed to "abolish monasteries," for example. But Ivan quietly

remarks that if it came to "abolishing" monasteries, then he, Fyodor, and his "little capital" would also be "abolished." "Bah! perhaps you are right. Oh, what a jackass I am!" exclaimed Fyodor Pavlovich, tapping himself lightly on the brow.—"Well, then, we'll let your monastery stand, Alyosha, if that's the case. And we wise people will sit snugly and warmly and enjoy our cognac." Could Dostoyevsky possibly have failed to see that the monasteries he idealized, and their Zosimas, made it possible for creatures like Fyodor Karamazov to "sit snugly and warmly and enjoy their cognac"? Fyodor Karamazov as a type is forcibly expressive of Dostoyevsky's disgust for the voluptuary, for the vile voluptuousness of property-owning society, which makes human life and human suffering an instrument of its "enjoyment."

One-tenth "enjoys" the labor, body and soul of the other nine-tenths of humanity—it was essentially against this law of property-owning society which the Verkhovenskys and Shigalevs extolled as a "gem of creation," that Dostoyevsky revolted. The abominable Smerdyakovism of the voluptuous bourgeois "soul" is shown very clearly in his works. He sought for peace in *compassion* and in a humility that stood in dread of the "sinfulness" of man.

In one of his articles, Gorky speaks of "our morbid conscience"—meaning Dostoyevsky. The significance of this remark, it seems to us, can only be understood in connection with another remark of Gorky's to the effect that he preferred Pushkin to Dostoyevsky, but that he "had no objection" to "the influence of Dostoyevsky's poisonous talent either, being convinced of its destructive effect on the spiritual equanimity of the European philistine."

Dostoyevsky's work is distinguished by what may be called a ruthless honesty, a brutal veracity in the *treatment* of moral and ethical questions. His endeavor to think out every thought to its logical conclusion, however painful the effort may be; the mocking and inexorable consistency with which he tore off all the illusions the philistine uses to adorn his smug heartlessness and vile proclivities; the passion for honesty with one's self he tended to foster in his reader; the self-dissatisfaction of his heroes, and the absence of self-complacency in his work, despite all his longing for tranquillity—such are the ingredients of Dostoyevsky's "poisonous talent" which is so inimical to the smugness and heartlessness of the philistine, no matter behind what mask it is concealed.

But it is not without good reason that Gorky spoke of Dostoyevsky's "*morbid* conscience." The fact is that Dostoyevsky not only acted destructively on philistine smugness; he tends to destroy, to undermine, the will to action and struggle, inasmuch as he identifies the will to action with the limitations of the philistine ("men of action" are "mostly limited creatures," said the hero of the *Notes From the Underground*.) The ruthlessness with which he analysed the minutest stir in the souls of his characters was designed to prove the uselessness of all action and all struggle: since there is so much of the horrible and repulsive lurking in man's soul, and since he is bound to display his destructive propensities as soon as internal and external freedom is given him, his only salvation lies in humility and the recognition of his insignificance

in the eyes of god. This led to the justification of the "nihilism of despair" (Gorky on Louis Céline) and to admiration of one's own self-dissatisfaction, which was only another form of smug self-satisfaction: everything is abominable, and I, too, am abominable; well, be it so, for I can't do anything about it anyhow! This psychological perversion, so characteristic of Dostoyevsky's heroes, Gorky detested with all his being, with a detestation that sprang from his love of men and his determination to fight for their happiness.

Dostoyevsky's works reflect the *inhumanity* of property-owning society, the twisted relations between man and man in that society, the horror of a human soul that can see nothing to counteract the jungle law of the property-owning world.

The divided personalities of Dostoyevsky's heroes, arising from their dual attitude to the laws of the bourgeois world, which tempt them and terrify them at one and the same time, their division of mind between the "morals of the masters," and the "morals of the slaves," enhanced by dread of a "third morality"—the morals of those in revolt—lay their impress on their whole character and mentality.

THE HORRIBLE IN GORKY AND DOSTOYEVSKY

Dostoyevsky is regarded as "an expert in the field of the horrible." The critics used to speak of his "cruel talent." But the *horrible*—brutality in every shape and form, savage beatings, the "leaden abomination of life"—even more of it is to be found in the works of Gorky. The difference, however, in the treatment of this theme speaks of the gulf which divides the two writers.

Gorky used to say that he knew a great deal about the "*commonplace* horrible," and that he felt he *must* tell about it. "I love people, and I have no desire to make anyone miserable, but one must not be sentimental nor hide the grim truth."

Gorky felt that he was *fulfilling a duty* in talking about the horrible. He did so unwillingly—not only because he loved people and had no desire to torture them, not only because he was keenly aware of his responsibility as a writer for the soul of his reader, especially the young reader, but also because of professional considerations. One of the characters in the *Life of Klim Samghin* said that "people are always good at telling about horrors . . . in tickling our feelings." And, in fact, Klim Samghin, ungifted as he was, gave a skilful account of the horrors of Bloody Sunday. His purpose was not to *insense* his auditors, not to rouse the spirit of revolt in them, but to *intimidate* them; and he presented his narrative with an "artistry," with a voluptuous enjoyment that was scarcely concealed beneath a mask of "objectivism." Gorky held that it is easier to describe the horrible than joy and happiness: the horrible is a theme that has ancient and fully elaborated traditions, and one to which people are highly receptive. Gorky was interested in the line of *greatest* resistance. But he deemed it his duty to tell the horrible truth, for in it he saw a weighty argu-

ment for the alteration of the entire system of life that bred so many horrors.

In the case of Dostoyevsky, too, the depiction of the horrible—including the greatest horror of them all: the maltreatment of children—was an argument in a controversy. It was an argument in defense of his contention that all attempts at a rational, revolutionary change of life are absurd. Man is a tormenter by his very "nature," he "loves" to torment the weak, to abuse the children—and therefore he must live in humility, submit to everything and feel "compassion" for everything. That is what Dostoyevsky tried to prove in depicting the horrible. His are elevated, not commonplace horrors. We detect both pain and a painful exultation in his depiction of the horrible, as well as a horror at the thought that the horrible can excite exultation—that "unceasing horror at the gloomy depths of his own soul" which Gorky sensed in Dostoyevsky. In *A Writer's Diary*, Dostoyevsky has himself quite frankly revealed his purpose in depicting the horrible. Here are some lines from the *Diary* which clearly formulate the idea underlying all his pictures of horror, crime and torture:

"It is clear that evil lies deeper in man's nature than the Socialist quacks suspect, that no system of society can eradicate this evil, that man's soul will always remain the same, that in this lies the origin of all abnormality and sin," and that the key to the "mystery of this world" is known only to the lord god himself. . . .

It is worth comparing these lines with what we are told in the *Talks on the Craft*, which in a way is also a "writer's diary." Gorky says the following of his early literary years:

"I considered a passive role unworthy of literature. I was familiar with the saying: 'don't blame the mirror for an ugly face.' And I already guessed that faces are ugly not because they want to be ugly, but because there is a force active in life which disfigures everything and everybody; and it was to this force that one must 'hold up the mirror,' not to those disfigured by it. But how was this to be done without depicting ugly men and women, without finding beautiful men and women?

"I wrote much that was confused and muddled . . . and a great deal more I tore up and threw into the fire. And, as you know, in the end I found my own path."

It must be admitted that Dostoyevsky tried to prove the very thing that the young Gorky refused to accept, namely, to use Gorky's terminology, that "faces are ugly," *precisely because* "they *want* to be ugly." He isolated the harrowing facts he depicted from that "active force which disfigures everything and everybody," with the result that in his works these facts emerge as *exceptional* despite his own intention, which was to explain them by the *nature* of the "human soul." In *A Writer's Diary*, for instance, Dostoyevsky told of a peasant who was tried for the brutal ill-treatment of his wife, which drove her to suicide; he was found guilty, but leniency was recommended. Dostoyevsky was indignant at the mild sentence (eight months' imprisonment), and he described him as a refined sadist, a *muzhik* Stavrogin, who finds cold pleasure in tormenting his victim. This type, of course, like everything that came *from* the pen of Dostoyevsky,

is portrayed with great artistic power—the trial is described very convincingly, especially to a reader who is not acquainted with the facts of the case, and the arguments of the defense, which led the assessing judges to pass so mild a sentence. But, be that as it may, this picture of a tormentor at once draws the mind of the reader away from the "leaden abominations of life," from the thought that the fate of his victim was the lot of many women in Russia of those days (recall Gorky's *The Orlovs*, for example) and the fact at once becomes something pathological and exceptional. This peculiarity of Dostoyevsky's writing was pointed out with remarkable penetration by Dobrolyubov who was acquainted only with the Dostoyevsky of the period of the *Insulted and Injured*, and not with his *major* works which followed this novel and in which this peculiarity was far more apparent. The essence of this novel, in Dobrolyubov's opinion, lay not so much in its "humanism," its undoubted sympathy for the insulted and injured, as in the depiction of the type of *villain*; out of this type, as we know, later grew more complex types of villains in Dostoyevsky's novels. "The action of the novel," Dobroluybov wrote, "is strangely and unnecessarily divided between the story of Natasha and the story of little Nelly, which positively destroys the harmony of impression. But as both these stories center around Prince Valkonsky, it is to be presumed that *the character of this man constitutes the foundation and core of the novel*. But when you come to examine this character you find a *veritable monster lovingly described*, an agglomeration of traits, villainous and cynical. . . . In the depiction of the personality of the prince there is not a trace of that conciliatory and reconciling principle which acts so powerfully in art, presenting us with a picture of a rounded personality. And therefore you can neither feel pity for this man *nor hate him with that supreme hatred which is directed not so much against the personality itself as against the type, against a definite category of phenomena*. . . . What made the prince what he is, and how?... If he has completely lost all heart and soul, how and under what conditions did this strange process take place? . . . We know, for example, how Chichikov and Plushkin became what they were, we even know in part what reduced Ilya Oblomov to his state of chronic laziness. . . . But Dostoyevsky has completely ignored this demand." (My italics—*V. Y.*)

By drawing this parallel with Gogol and Goncharov, Dobrolyubov pointed out Dostoyevsky's *special place* in Russian literature, to his departure from its essential realistic traditions. By making "man's soul" the explanation of everything, by making it independent of all forces "active in life," the prime source of all sin and all evil, Dostoyevsky was unable to awaken in the breast of his reader in relation to Prince Valkonsky, Stavrogin and other villains who "love cruelty," that "supreme hatred" which is directed against the general real causes of "evil."

It is the habit of the shallow critic who feeds on the pap of a vague "humanism," to endow every artistic description of suffering, humiliation and cruelty with a uniform rosy hue of "compassion" and "love." Naturally, every incident of suffering caused by deliberate cruelty and contempt for man speaks of itself against property-owning society

(or its survivals). But every description of suffering and deliberate cruelty is by no means humane; it may be the very opposite, if it casts a poetic hue over suffering, or speaks of the *temptation* of cruelty, or, finally, if the theme of the horrible is used to "frighten," to instil the "nihilism of despair," or to prove the insignificance of man. Gorky detested all preachers, whether "consolers," frauds of the type of Luka, or preachers who *exploit* the sores and sufferings of men, the tears of a child, in order to instil the "fear of god . . ."

The artistic problem the young Gorky struggled with was the problem of depicting the horrible so as to arouse, not anger against an individual, but a "supreme hatred" of the "forces active in life which disfigure everything and everybody." And this difficult problem Gorky solved. He "found his path." Here is an example of Gorky's solution:

"At that time I had a bitter enemy in the house porter of one of the brothels in Little Pokrovsky Street. I had made his acquaintance one morning as I was going to the market-place; he was dragging from a hackney carriage, standing at the gate in front of the house, a girl who was dead drunk. He seized her by the legs in their wrinkled stockings, and thus he held her shamelessly bare to the waist, yelling and laughing. He spat upon her body, and she came down with a jolt, out of the carriage, disheveled, blind, with open mouth, her head resting on her soft arms hanging as if they had no joints; her spine and the back of her neck and her livid face struck the seat of the carriage and the step, and at length she fell on the pavement, striking her head on the stones.

"The driver whipped up his horse and drove off, and the porter, taking one foot in each hand and stepping backward, dragged her along as if she had been a corpse. I lost control of myself and made a rush at him, but as luck would have it, I hurled myself or accidentally ran into a rainwater barrel, which saved both the porter and me a great deal of unpleasantness. Striking him on the rebound, I knocked him over, darted up the steps, and desperately pulled the bell handle. Some infuriated people rushed on the scene, and as I could not explain anything, I went away, having first picked up the barrel.

"On the corner I overtook the cab. The driver looked down at me from the coach box and said:

" 'You knocked him over smartly.'

"I asked him angrily how he could allow the porter to make sport of the girl, and he replied calmly and with a fastidious air:

" 'As for me—let them go to the dogs. Some gentlemen paid me when they put her in my cab. Is it any of my business who gets beaten?'

"After that I saw the porter nearly every day. When I walked up the street he would be sweeping the pavement or sitting on the steps, as if he were waiting for me. As I once approached him, he stood up, tucked up his sleeves, and announced kindly:

" 'I am going to smash you to pieces now.'

"He was over forty, small, bowlegged, with a pendulous paunch; when he laughed he looked at me with beaming eyes, and it was terribly strange to me to see that they were kind and merry. He could not fight, his arms were shorter than mine. . . .

" 'Why did you hit me?' he asked reproachfully.

"I asked him in turn why he had maltreated the girl.

" 'What did it matter to you? Are you sorry for her?'

" 'Of course I am.'

"He was silent, rubbing his lips, and then asked:

" 'And would you be sorry for a cat?'

" 'Yes, I would.'

"Then he said:

" 'You are a fool, rascal. Wait, I'll show you something. . . .'

"In a few days I saw him again, sitting on the steps and stroking a smoke-colored cat which lay on his knees; and when I was about three paces from him he jumped up, seized the cat by the legs, and dashed its head against the stone balustrade, so that I was splashed with the warm blood, and then hurled the cat under my feet, and stood at the gate, crying:

" 'What now?'

"What could I do? We rolled about the yard like two curs and afterwards as I sat on a grassy slope, nearly crazy with inexpressible grief, I bit my lips to keep myself from howling. When I remember it I shiver with a feeling of sickening repulsion—I wonder how it was that I did not lose my mind and killed no one.

"Why do I relate these abominations? So that you may know, kind sirs, that this is not all past and done with. You have a liking for grim fantasies, you are delighted with horrible stories well told, the grotesquely terrible excites you pleasantly. But I know of genuine horrors, everyday horrors, and I have an undeniable right to excite you unpleasantly by telling you about them in order that you may remember how we live, and under what circumstances. A low and unclean life it is ours, and that is the way it is."

Yes, that is the way it was—it was *life* that had to be changed. That was the thought which governed Gorky when he was working out the theme of the commonplace, "everyday horrors." No doubt, if Dostoyevsky had drawn the picture just described, the porter and the cab driver would have resembled the peasant in *A Writer's Diary*. In Gorky's opinion, what was far more horrible—*really horrible*—was the fact that the eyes of the porter were beaming, kind and merry.

That was the way Gorky solved his artistic problem. His writings aroused in the reader a "supreme hatred," an irreconcilable hatred of the system which disfigured men and women.

Dostoyevsky accused the Socialists and Chernyshevsky's party of claiming that spiritual ugliness and evil are actually due to the conditions of life, and not to the nature of man's "soul," which meant denying freedom of the personality and "justifying crime." This is an old, stereotyped "argument" of all opponents of Socialism. Dostoyevsky would wax ironical over the phrase "the environment is to blame."

"I have met people," says Gorky in *Konovalov*, "who are always blaming everything and complaining of everything, stubbornly closing their eyes to a number of obvious facts which refute their insistent claims to personal infallibility. They are forever blaming their failures on silent fate and evil-minded people. . . . Konovalov never blamed fate nor complained of people."

In *Konovalov*, the young Gorky discussed the subject of "environment" and "personality." He scoffed at the narrator (it was

written in the first person), who, with the ardor of a young adept, airily and superficially expounded to Konovalov the theory of the influence of environment. At the same time Gorky did not agree with Konovalov, who unreservedly denied the influence of objective conditions and insisted that "man himself is to blame for everything." However, Gorky also stressed the *obvious facts* which refute the attempts of people to blame everything on "environment" and "fate." In his later works, too, he scoffed at the banal attempts to evade these facts, by claiming that "the environment is to blame." But his manner of scoffing was, of course, different from that of Dostoyevsky. He shows that a claim that "environment is to blame" is only a wretched attempt at self-vindication on the part of capitulators, idlers, cowards, philistines, who have neither the courage nor the desire to *combat* the force that "cripples everything and everybody." The *freedom* of the human personality is in its freedom to take part in the struggle; in the "folly of the brave"; in the endeavor to change life according to man's will and reason. One may passively submit to "environment," or one may work to disturb and change it, to create a new life. Such an attitude does not deny man's personal responsibility; on the contrary, it enhances it.

One of the characters in the *Life of Klim Samghin* said that Dostoyevsky felt in the convict prison like an "inspector reviewing a parade"; for the rest of his life he kept writing of "criminals"—and when he tried to write about a non-criminal, the result was an "idiot." This remark can scarcely be contested; it is true to facts. Dostoyevsky's principal characters—Raskolnikov, Dimitri Karamazov, Stavrogin—are all criminals (Stavrogin is an undetected criminal).

Gorky's tale *The Cab Driver*, written in 1895, contains an interesting controversy with *Crime and Punishment*. It is a parody not only on the plot of *Crime and Punishment*—the murder of an old woman for money, and the incidental "undesigned murder of a servant—but on its whole *theme*: is it possible to "transgress the law"? The story represents a dream. It is something dreamed on Christmas eve by the narrator, an ordinary, humdrum "intellectual." "I am no Raskolnikov," he said. And he actually was not. He is distinguished from Raskolnikov, by that "tranquillity" which distinguishes Klim Samghin from Dostoyevsky's heroes. He committed his crime with perfect ease, and experienced only boredom and astonishment at himself: he was astonished that he suffered no qualms of conscience and that it was so easy for him to "transgress the law." The cab driver, who played the part of a mentor, explained to the criminal that he found it so easy to "transgress the law" because his soul was devastated, there were no "laws" in it. Like Sonya Marmeladova, the cab driver called upon him to repent and sent him away to suffer. The tale is very significant for Gorky students. We arrive at the conviction that Gorky actually started his controversy with Dostoyevsky at the very beginning of his literary career. We find that also the Samghin theme—the "devastated soul" (which was originally intended as the title for the *Life of Klim Samghin*)—began to preoccupy Gorky at about the same time, and that it was at once connected in his mind with

the problem of Dostoyevsky. Lastly, the story is interesting from the point of view of the *horrible*. The distinguishing feature of Gorky's parody on *Crime and Punishment* is that the elevated horrible, the "fantastic horrible," was in it replaced by the "commonplace horrible." Both the criminal himself, who after the crime assumed the role of a "benefactor of mankind" (the crime remained undiscovered, which enabled him to realize the possibility Raskolnikov conceived, namely, to use the old woman's money for charitable purposes), and the crime itself are utterly dreary and commonplace. . . .

It was Gorky's profound conviction—confirmed by experience—that no murderer was "fantastically" horrible, but rather *dreary and commonplace*.

"Murderers have always seemed to me the embodiment of stupidity. And however neatly dressed a murderer may be, he always arouses the suspicion of being physically unclean," wrote Gorky in his essay *Murderers*. The essay contains several portraits.

"Even more repulsive was M., the artist who had murdered a well-known actor by name of Insarova. He shot her in the back of the neck in his dressing room. He was tried, but was either acquitted or received a light sentence, I do not remember which. . . . Somebody brought him to me. . . .

"'You understand, my life is over; I am a man with a broken heart. I loved that woman madly. . . .'

"'His broken heart was encased in a sleek, well-fed body, clad in a new suit of imposing cut and dreary color . . .

"He then went on to speak about *Crime and Punishment*:

"'It's a dangerous book, to tell the truth. If it means anything at all, it is that murder is sin, but to feel it internally a man has to murder at least some wretched old woman.'

"That is just what he said: 'feel it internally.' And that was the cleverest and most barefaced thing he said in the course of one-and-a-half or two hours. It even seemed to me that the phrase did not belong to him, that he had heard it somewhere; and when it dropped from his lips he himself realized that he had said something unusual, puffed out his cheeks and stared at me triumphantly with his dark eyes, the whites of which were covered with a network of rosy veins.

"After this he was seized by a slight fit of sentimentality at the sight of a couple of bird-cages on the window-sill containing a finch and a linnet: it always filled him with pity, he said lyrically, to see caged birds. Having swallowed a glass of *vodka* and tasted some pickled mushrooms, he began to tell me with great fervor, but in a very cheap and flat way, of his love for nature. Then he began to complain of the newspapers.

"'The most painful thing for me was the sensation in the press. Such a lot was written about it. Just look!'

"He pulled a bulky book from a side pocket. It was filled with neatly pasted newspaper clippings.

"'Wouldn't you like to make use of them?' he offered. 'Murder out of Jealousy—a theme for a very good novel.'

"I told him that I could not write very good novels.

"Tapping the soft palm of his hand with the book, he sighed and went on to say:

"'I could tell you a lot. An interesting circle: an artist, actors, a fascinating woman. . . .'

"His arms were short for his body, and his hands had the blunt, also short, fingers of an untalented man, while the shape of his lower lip reminded one of a leech, only a red one, such as is not to be found in nature."

This individual talked to Gorky about Dostoyevsky. He "politely and impressively" reminded him that "Fyodor Dostoyevsky was a profound psychologist, but, for his part, he fully agreed with the critical opinion of Mikhailovsky:[1]

" 'His was truly a cruel talent.'

"It seemed to me that this man took a real pleasure in calling writers by their Christian names—Nikolai, Fyodor, Leo—as though they were all in his service. Shakespeare, too, he named simply and bluffly, 'William.'

"Having mentioned Nikolai Nekrasov, he also recalled Dostoyevsky, and asked whether I was fond of Fyodor.

" 'No, I am not fond of Fyodor.' "

THE CONTROVERSY OVER MAN

"The man of the nineteenth century has to be, and in fact is morally obliged to be, a creature without character: most men of character are very limited"—such is the opinion, matured by "forty years" experience, of the hero of *Notes from the Underground*

Gorky held up Shakespeare as a model for Soviet playwrights because in his personages integrity, definiteness and clarity of character are not accompanied by limitation, but by a vitality and color, a wealth and variety of thought and feeling that are absolutely beyond the reach of the so-called "complex," but actually characterless and disintegrated, personalities.

"Complexity," Gorky wrote, "is the ugly and deplorable result of the extreme disintegration of the 'soul' caused by philistine environment, by the continuous and petty struggle for a well-paying and secure position in life. It is this 'complexity' that explains why among hundreds of millions of men, we find so few with big, sharply-defined personalities, great men, men of a single passion."

Disintegration of the soul is a consequence of the monstrous contradictions of bourgeois society. "In our days," Marx wrote, "everything seems pregnant with its contrary; machinery, endowed with the wonderful power of shortening and fructifying human labor, leads to starvation and overwork. By some strange, weird spell, newfangled sources of wealth are turned into sources of want. The achievements of art seem to be attained at the expense of moral values. At the same pace that mankind masters nature, man seems to become enslaved to other men or to his own infamy."

"The Englishman," said Engels, "has no general interests; he cannot talk about general interests without touching a sore spot—contradictions; he despairs of them and has only his private interests. This is absolute subjectiveness, the break-up of the general into many parts. . . . The lack of unity in

[1] Mikhailovsky N. K.—Russian critic and publicist of the last quarter of the XIX century, a representative of the Populist movement. One of the worst enemies of Marxism; his reactionary views were subjected to an annihilating criticism by Lenin in several of his works.—*Ed.*

those individuals comes into view particularly now in times of universal misfortune and complete disintegration." Even in his earliest work, we already find Gorky striving to depict the heroic, complete man, the man of clear and definite character, possessed by a "single, but fiery passion"—the type of whom dreamed Lermontov and Pushkin, Gogol and Belinsky, Chernyshevsky and Shchedrin. Dostoyevsky also felt the curse of bourgeois disintegration, but he saw no way of avoiding it: "it would be strange to expect serenity of people in our day," he wrote in reference to Alyosha Karamazov. He associated a sound mind, will and character with his conception of a bourgeois man of affairs, with the beasts that prey on society. He could not imagine a man who was free and strong and at the same time not "limited," one capable of subtle feelings, because the only "freedom" and "strength" Dostoyevsky saw was that of a Karamazov. To the injuring ones, he contrasted the injured, idealizing their humiliation. But in back of Gorky was the might of laboring humanity, for whom he spoke; he was backed by the strength of the working class, of the sound and heroic men and women produced by the struggle for Socialism. Dostoyevsky knew of nothing that could be set up against the spidery "complexity" (of which a character in one of L. Leonov's plays says: "the inside of a spider is more complex than the stellar system"), except the characters of his own creation, such as Myshkin, Zosima and Alyosha, in whose humility this "complexity" was not vanquished, but only hypocritically concealed.

Gorky has depicted quite a number of disintegrated types. "When I say yes or no . . . I do not do so from conviction . . . but just because I must say something—nothing more. That's a fact. Sometimes I say 'no,' and I then begin to think—is that really so? Perhaps 'yes' would do just as well"—confessed Tatiana Bessemenova in *Philistines*. And in the person of her brother, Pyotr, Gorky shows us the Samghin-Karamora "soul" in embryo.

Between Sofia and her student son, Pyotr, in the play *The Last Ones*, the following dialogue takes place:

"*Pyotr*: Mama, it's useless to torment people, is it not?

"*Sofia* (*rapidly*): Yes, Oh, yes! (*After a pause.*) But perhaps not....

"*Pyotr* (*gently*): Your 'yes' and your 'no' live in extraordinary community. They always go together! Do you find that convenient?

"*Sofia* (*softly*): Terrible and painful, Petya!

"*Pyotr*: So it seems to me. . . ."

"You have torn man from life and crushed him to pieces," the hero of Gorky's *Mother*, the worker Pavel Vlasov said in court. "Socialism will rejoin the world you have shattered, into one great whole. That day will surely come!"

In our days only the working class, and the men of toil led by the working class, provide a basis for the growth of sound, big personalities; they are formed in the struggle for the Socialist society, in which the integrated and heroic character becomes ever more prevalent, a *general* phenomenon.

Furthermore, the whole-mindedness of man in the Socialist country is not a result of self-limitation, but, on the contrary, of a tremendous *growth* of enlightenment; it is a result of the fact that the masses are mastering the treasures of science and art, of spiritual and material culture, of nature and the universe, in all its many-hued unity. The fact that every citizen

of the Socialist society is taking an active part in creating, constantly strengthening and improving the Socialist State, in the carrying out of an integral plan of development, is in itself a powerful factor in vanquishing the monstrous disintegration characteristic of bourgeois society, and in enriching the inner life of men. Dostoyevsky was unable to conceive a combination of strength and wholeness with refinement, richness of mind, "cordiality," kindness, solicitude, and so forth. He drew a line between the first group of qualities and the second. Our era gives rise to a type of individual of whom this combination is characteristic. The Socialist man detests the "integrity" of smug limitation, heartlessness and primitiveness. And he equally detests that "refinement of feeling" which leads to slackness of will and tolerance of all that must be combatted.

The "third morality"—"support the man in revolt!"—demands that one should be strong, firm, sound, and should know what he is after. This was fully realized by such a brilliant exponent of the "third morality" as Shchedrin, who, in opposition to the "mature conviction" of the hero of the *Notes from the Underground* that the man of the nineteenth century must be a creature without character, expressed the conviction that a man who had no definite qualities and who could not be relied upon was just so much trash. We must *demand* clarity, especially in *our* era of struggle—this is one of the leading ideas in Gorky's writings. Gorky observed and developed the *best* traditions of Russian literature.

The type of man Gorky believed in, the man of whom he sang and whose advent his work paved the way for, was the man who knows when to say "yes" and when to say "no," who is "bold of heart and forthright," clear and definite in his views, who loves struggle, life and its movement, and who is governed by one mastering passion—love for men of toil.

In his earlier writings, Gorky clothed his heroes in romance and legend. But with the rise of the working class in Russia, the growth of the Bolshevik Party and its increasing influence on Gorky's art, his heroes assumed an increasingly realistic shape, the shape of Bolsheviks. But in this shape, too, all his heroes breathe the romance of the Falcon and the Stormy Petrel, contain something of the romantic spirit of Danko, with his frankness and fearlessness, his clear-cut "yea" and "nay." Gorky's hero is best described in Gorky's own words:

"He is the man of the new humanity, big, audacious and strong—and that is why he is so hated by the men of the old world."

This type of man has become the master of life in a big, audacious and strong country, the country of the Chkalovs, the Papanins and the Stakhanovs, of the men and women of the Lenin and Stalin type.

The characteristics of *men* of this type, men worthy of the respect of the people, the men of the Stalin era, of the new renaissance, have been clearly defined by their own great teacher, Stalin:

"The electors, the people, must demand that their deputies. . . . as public figures, should be as clear and definite as Lenin was, that they should be as fearless in battle and as merciless towards the enemies of the people as Lenin was . . . that they should be as upright and honest as Lenin was, that they should love their people as Lenin did.

"Can we say that all the can-

didates are public figures precisely of this kind?

"I would not say so. There are all sorts of people in the world, there are all sorts of public figures in the world. There are people of whom you cannot say what they are, whether they are good or bad, courageous or timid, for the people heart and soul or for the enemies of the people. There are such people and there are such public figures. They are also to be found among us, the Bolsheviks. You know yourselves, comrades—there are black sheep in every family. Of people of this indefinite type . . . the great Russian writer, Gogol, rather aptly said: 'Vague sort of people,' says he, 'neither one thing nor the other, you can't make head or tail of them, they are neither Bogdan in town nor Seliphan in the country.' "[1]

"The workers and peasants who without fuss and noise build factories and works, sink mines, lay railroads, build collective farms and Soviet farms, who create all the benefits of life, who feed and clothe the whole world—these are the real heroes and creators of a new life."[2]

"Leaders come and go, but the people remain. The people alone are immortal. All else is transitory."[3]

In these great words are formulated the philosophy and morality of the new man.

Gorky was an outstanding champion of this philosophy and morality.

The principal heroes in Gorky's works are the laboring people and their vanguard, the working class. Speaking of his early years, Gorky says: "I was a man of the crowd, and the 'heroes' of Lavrov-Mikhailovsky and of Carlyle attracted me as little as the 'morals of the masters' so eloquently preached by Nietzsche."

The bourgeois idea of the relation between the individual and society, as expressed in the words of Karamora—"there are two personalities in every man's breast: one wants to know nobody but itself, the other is drawn to other people"—is an idea alien to Gorky's heroes. This was the way the Karamazovs and Raskolnikovs felt; and all Dostoyevsky could offer in opposition to them was Alyosha, or Zosima, or Myshkin, who renounced their personalities out of "compassion" for the world. In the Socialist society the happiness of the individual is bound up with the happiness of the people—the common weal is the individual weal. This theme dominates the best productions of Soviet literature. The desire to "know only himself" is alien to characters created by Gorky, as is the feeling of arrogant contempt for others; they therefore experience no need to "heal" or "punish" themselves, as Dostoyevsky's heroes did. Gorky's hero, the man of the new era, cherishes a passionate love of his fellow men, and even his moments of creation, the hours he spends in solitary thought, are filled with the consciousness of living humanity. He strives for the happiness of the human race, and the idealization of suffering is abhorrent to him.

"Man! It is as though a sun glows in my breast. . . . I see

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[1] J. Stalin, *Speech Delivered at a Meeting of Voters of the Stalin Electoral Area.* Moscow, December 11, 1937.

[2] J. Stalin, *Speech Delivered at the First All-Union Congress of Collective Farm Shock-Brigade Workers.* February 19, 1933.

[3] J. Stalin, at a reception to executives and Stakhanovites of the metallurgical and coal industries in the Kremlin, October 29, 1937.

his proud forehead and bold, deep-set eyes, and in them the gleam of fearless and potent thought that has delved into the miraculous harmony of the universe."

This Man always hovered before Gorky's vision: to him every line of his writings is devoted.

Gorky's *Man* knew that "the day will come when in my breast will mingle in one great creative flame the world of my feelings and my deathless thought, and with this flame I will sear my soul clean of all that is sinister, cruel and evil. . . ."

Our Soviet era is searing the souls of our citizens clean of all that is sinister and cruel, of all that is *spidery*, of all that comes from the spirit of private ownership. This historic process is known as the struggle to vanquish the survivals of capitalism in the minds of men.

Even in his earliest writings Gorky strove to counteract the influence of the bourgeoisie on the working people, and especially the skepticism and contempt for man it fostered. Man is far better, far more "lovable" than he is made out to be by those who only see the animal in him, Gorky had always argued. He strove to inculcate a high opinion of man and to inspire the workingman with respect for himself.

Dostoyevsky voiced the horror inspired by the decline of human feeling in bourgeois society, anguish at having to bid farewell to humaneness, his sense of impotence in face of the bestial laws of the world of private property. Gorky voiced the rejoicing of man over his newly-acquired faith in his creative power, the joy inspired by a new and genuine humanism, and the knowledge of the inexhaustible and invincible strength of the new man.

Paul Vaillant-Couturier

The name of Paul Vaillant-Couturier, who died two years ago, is well known throughout the world. He was one of the leaders of the French Communist Party, a friend of the working youth, organizer of the movement of the progressive intelligentsia and a fiery fighter against imperialist war. Vaillant-Couturier visited the U.S.S.R. a number of times, traveled a great deal over the land of Soviets, and in his letters, articles and poetry affectionately referred to it as "the youth of the world." The young builders of Magnitogorsk and the Young Communist Leaguers of the Volga State grain farms have lost in him a friend and bard alike.

The enemies of peace, the slanderers and mercenary scribblers of the reactionary press feared him not only because he knew the facts about the Soviet Union, as befits a true man of politics, but also because he knew how to transmit to tens of thousands of people the living image of the Socialist country, which he had formed in the course of many months—in laboratories, universities, factories, during warm nights spent in collective farms and in the days of the Magnitogorsk construction epic.

Vaillant-Couturier died so prematurely, so full of creative powers, that it seems unjust to sum up his work, especially his literary activity which was broken off while he was writing one of his finest books, *Childhood*. This book leads us to believe that in the varied activities which made up Vaillant-Couturier's life literature was going to occupy a much larger place than it had done in the last few years before his death.

The image of the hero of that autobiographical book was formed on the background of reality comprehended during the period of revolutionary struggle in its historical aspect. Merely a development of that autobiography might have given us the character of a revolutionary so far unknown in Western-European literature, of a revolutionary who began his conscious existence during the first imperialist war and was brought up in the spirit of Bolshevism.

The beginning of Vaillant-Couturier's literary life dates back to the period before the first World War. He did not belong to the young bourgeois literati who are impressed by the artistic milieu and to whom the admission into this milieu is a great event. Vaillant-Couturier grew up right in it. He knew the French artistic world from its prosaic inside, and to him the "romantic" way out consisted in *leaving* bourgeois art circles, in communicating with nature, in a vigorous, healthy life, one that corresponded to his healthy, Colas-Breugnon frame of mind. A circle of friends of his age formed around him. Despite their aloofness and what Vaillant-Couturier aptly called "the dramatization of too easy a life," they listened to the "restless era" and were glad of that restlessness.

The imperialist war began. In 1916 Barbusse's *Under Fire* made its appearance. When this book, which Gorky called "immortal," appeared, bourgeois literature had already managed to create its own, lying image of the war, having followed in this the French bourgeois tradition of "political chicanery on a broad scale." (*History of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (Bolsheviks)* The imperialist army was represented as a vast stadium of happy fellows who during the hours free from receiving gifts, were defending the "ideals of liberty and democracy."

The social-chauvinists utilized this picture for their own purposes; Verdun was represented as Valmy, and the imperialist war as a whole as the heir of the revolutionary wars of the French people.

In his novel, *A Notebook on the War*, Gustave Geoffroy asserted that "the people possess a strong sense of necessity. They must fight; they do not know why

and for what reason, but they vaguely feel that war is necessary."

The appearance of Barbusse's *Under Fire* was equal to a major military defeat to the imperialists on either side of the front. They had some reason to blame Barbusse's book for the fact that some French army units refused to fight effectively enough.

Vaillant-Couturier, a writer of the Barbusse school, was one of those intellectuals who saw the light at the front. He rebelled against the deception of the imperialist war and, while in the trenches, reviewed not only the war but peace as well—pre-war bourgeois France. In his *Letters to Friends*, young Vaillant-Couturier described this difficult work of broadening himself with the directness characteristic of him, with sincerity and even naivete. Much in these *Letters*, however, is of a casual nature, of transient interest as regards both content and literary form. That is why Vaillant-Couturier published them after his more mature works were published, and evidently as a document of some instructive value. But there are two features in the *Letters* already characteristic of the future Vaillant-Couturier. The first is his quest for a brightness and purity in life, for a life with a clear purpose, a life under which man will have the right to enjoy nature, friendship and love.

The second feature is his hatred for the war which has been forced upon millions. The autobiographic hero of the *Letters* is still greatly preoccupied with the problem of violence which goes against his artistic sense but each day he realizes more clearly the kind of violence and war which forces him to hold a rifle; he calls upon "the outraged minds to arm" and to "remember the criminal names" of the war instigators.

In unmasking the war Vaillant-Couturier begins with the hinterland. It is not the war that he exposes, but capitalism as well.

"No, my friends, I am quite near the spot where the battle takes place. . . . Rising aloft under the protection of its chimneys and barred windows, a factory works. . . . The factory produces—and this is war. . . . A small suburb, or rather what the war has left of it, is slowly killing itself in this factory.

"It is said that the owner is in Nice, in General Headquarters.

"And we . . . we, *poilus*, think that the silent war which all these poor people wage here is very much like the one waged on the front. . . . Aren't we their brothers? . . . The war is primarily one of the forms of class struggle."

". . . let my son know that in the hour of his birth millions of wretched people, doomed to the unconscious life of beasts under the hail of metals enriching somebody, annihilated each other; but, drawn into the maelstrom of insanity, horror and stupidity, we kept our hearts and reason."

In 1919, a novel *On Leave* and stories collected under the title of *The Soldiers' War* were published.

The novel *On Leave* develops the autobiography of the hero of the *Letters*. The bourgeois critic Vandereme at one time classified it among the humoristic works written about the war, evidently for the same reasons for which Jules Renard was declared to be a humorist, so as to render him harmless and tame him.

Behind the lines they shamelessly lied to the people at the front; the weary soldiers coming on leave from the front were beset by the bourgeoisie who displayed enthusiasm and demanded of them high-sounding phrases about the imperialist war, stories about the *Boches*, etc. This happens to the man on leave in Vaillant-Couturier's novel. His relatives and friends count on him to share illusions with them.

He is going back to the front. Something is being built at the gates of Paris....

"Sometimes some owner would step out of the noiseless limousine and smile at his wealth which was growing by leaps and bounds. . . . Someone asked:

"'God, is this war ever going to end?' 'Look,' I told him, 'look, the war is building.' And all the people who were consciously returning to interminable battles understood then that the high-sounding noble ideas for which they were going to death—justice, liberty and right—had their dark brothers and sisters . . . greed loomed from the darkness. . . . Cynically it stepped out into the light, the false sham light. The new idol, constantly glorified by the press in his pay, was building his growing temple on the recent ruins. And thus it was all over the blood-stained earth, from end to end."

Vaillant-Couturier's story is somewhat superficial, however. Some important problems which are already clear to the writer himself are only barely outlined in the story. Still Vaillant-Couturier succeeded in showing, even in the most insignificant semi-humorous episodes taken from life, the moral decay both at the front and behind the lines which the war brought in its wake. He shows that the war was fought under slogans which had nothing in common with its true essence.

The Soldiers' War is one of the most powerful French books on the war, after *Under Fire*.

This is not the whole truth about the war, as the soldiers in the trenches see it. But in the majority of the stories one really hears "the new voices which rose after the lasting, angry and oppressed silence of the war proletarians."

In each imperialist war, the struggle against the official enemy is accompanied by the suppressed struggle between the "rulers" and the "proletarians" of the war; between the imperialist masters of the front and the mass who are compelled to do the fighting. The more these masters indulge in talk about the "spirit" the more obvious does it become that to them these millions of soldiers are mere cannon fodder.

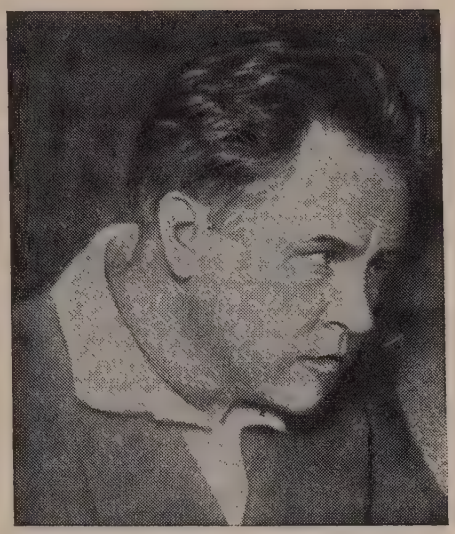
In the story entitled *Manifestation*, a Polish officer orders a parade with the singing of the *Marseillaise* arranged in the trenches, to celebrate some diplomatic victory. The guns of the enemy are trained on the company which has been turned into a defenseless choir. After each stanza some men fall dead. "But in Paris it will be known tomorrow that the *Marseillaise* was sung in the trenches of Champagne."

A soldier in the imperialist army may do a gallant deed (in *Miss Moran*) or perish unnoticed (in *The Lanky*)—his life and death are equally tragic and senseless; tragic is every detail of his life, everything, including the most peaceful episodes depicted so many times in literature—the receiving of mail, rest and reliefs (in *A Relief* and *Southern Troops*).

The description of the "physiology" of war in pacifist literature, like the description of the "small human joys" allegedly redeeming the "physiology," almost always has the same purpose: to conceal the real truth. It is no mere accident that Jules Romains wrote in one of his poems that to console the soldiers at the front it is best to remind them of the "thousands of such joys," allegedly left behind. As against the "hell" of the war they set up a "lost paradise"—"peacetime" pre-war bourgeois society.

It is these lies that the books of Barbusse and Vaillant-Couturier destroyed.

It is also remarkable that in depicting the "horrors of war," pacifist literature, which boasts of its humanism, tries to explain them in the final analysis by man's vicious "nature," by his inborn tendency to destruction, and cruelty, by his being capable of committing any crime. One of Jules Romain's characters says so outright. The stories by Vaillant-Couturier show the war in its unembellished nakedness. But at the same time we find the noble figures of men of the people



Paul Vaillant-Couturier

who "preserve their heart and reason." Such, for instance, is the fine story of the soldier, the singer Tembar (*Southern Troops*).

Vaillant-Couturier's *The Ball of the Blind* has been translated into many languages.

The blind—invalids of the war—have aroused the interest of the ladies of high "society," like the legless pauper who attracted the attention of the Paris snobs, of whom Mayakovsky wrote. The ladies arrange an "intimate" ball for the blind, which ends with a small indoor parade, the arrival of a general and the singing of the *Marseillaise*. The general pays tribute to the ladies, the "vestals" of antiquity who maintain the "sacred fire of morality" in the invalids, and reminds the blind that they "still are in debt." One of the invalids breaks up the ceremony with harsh, angry words which he hurls in the face of the deceivers. Shaken up and full of disgust he runs away and dies under an automobile. Nearby someone explains to foreign tourists: "This is the tomb of the unknown soldier."

A whole collection of stories was published under the title of *The Ball of the Blind*. Rereading them now, one notices several characteristic shortcomings, which are to be found in part also in the *Ball*, which is the best story in the collection. Vaillant-Couturier wanted to make this clever grotesque merciless (the general, the ladies) and at the same time lyrical (the blind tuner), but in many cases the combination turned out to be different, a mixture of coarseness and sentimentality.

The play upon the "inner monologue," which was in vogue in its time, and also several other indications show that Vaillant-Couturier was searching for sharp means of expression in the Left post-war literature.

Later (in his *Childhood*) he definitely discarded the attempts to synthesize the various Left styles which he apparently held in high esteem at one time.

Despite these shortcomings *The Ball of the Blind* is a sharp satire which has not lost its significance to this day.

Next to *The Soldiers' War* some of his best stories are in the collection entitled *Shanghai Sketches*: *How Cheng the Peasant Became a Red* (see *International Literature* No. 1, 1934); *Only a Fly Has Been Crushed* (the story of a rickshə, published elsewhere in this issue), *The Story of No. 2 and No. 3* (the names of two Chinese girls sold to a factory in Shanghai).

Many of Vaillant-Couturier's sketches are devoted to the portrayal of a different world, a world which attracts the gaze of the guerrila fighters of the East and of the "war proletarians" in the trenches in Western Europe.

The sketch about the Magnitnaya Mountain ends as follows:

"While the fast horses take us to the monumental Ederli factory I recall a poster which I saw at Magnitnaya.

"It was hung up there by American engineers, and it was a warning in English to the imperialists of the world:

"ATTENTION!
DYNAMITE IS USED FOR BLASTS HERE!
ROCKS FLY ABOUT EVERYWHERE. DANGER!"

Vaillant-Couturier's sketches dealing with the Soviet Union explain to the foreign reader why Magnitnaya Mountain, and not only this mountain, but also the Georgian valleys, the Volga State farms and collective farms, are visible from everywhere and why the gaze of millions of people is directed towards them from every part of the world.

One of Vaillant-Couturier's works that has become world famous is *The Misfortune of Being Young*. It is a stirring document dealing with the moral and material sufferings of the French working youth, based on the replies to a questionnaire which the newspaper *L'Humanité*, at the suggestion of Vaillant-Couturier, circulated among the French youth.

"During the war *death* was facing the youth. Today it is faced by *poverty*."

Today, when both the horrors of a senseless death and of poverty have been heaped upon the French youth, it is timely to recall the words of the true friend of the French people:

"The young generation feels its closeness to us, old veterans of the front . . . for we have in common the realization that we are the victims of the same enemy, of the same selfish interests. And this painful meeting of two generations is emphasized still more by the outlook on hand: a war, a result of the Versailles treaty, is expected to solve the crisis. Thus the noose has been tightened."

Couturier appeals to the young French workers, to the peasants and intellectuals:

"The trusts and the enemies of the people are preparing a counter-offensive. All this is true enough.

"But despair is not young.

"Joy is young. It must be regenerated.

"To be young is to hope, fight and win.

"Victory will be followed by the true happiness of being young."

This happiness has already been attained in the U.S.S.R. There one finds the "youth of the world" and "a youth which lives, loves and builds."

Vaillant-Couturier is very popular in the Soviet Union as a writer. His books have been translated many times. Only recently a large volume of Vaillant-Couturier's selected poetry, stories and sketches has been published.

Vaillant-Couturier is also known to the American reader. Today his courageous writings, full as they are of living truth and political force, especially those which present a true picture of the first imperialist war, are specially significant and stirring.

BORIS PESIS

VLADIMIR MAYAKOVSKY

I MYSELF

THEME

I am a poet. That is what makes me interesting. That is what I am writing about. Also about my being in love, or gambling recklessly, or on the beauties of the Caucasus—as long as it settles down in the shape of words.

MEMORY

Burlyuk[1] said Mayakovsky's memory was like the road to Poltava—everyone leaves his galoshes along it. But I can't remember faces and dates. I only remember that in the year 1100 some "gentility" migrated somewhere. I don't remember the details of the affair but it must have been an affair of importance. To be able to remember—"This thing was written May 2nd. Pavlovsk. The fountains"—is no task at all. So I shall swim freely in the sea of dates.

MAIN THING

Was born July 7, 1894 or 1893—Mama's opinion and Father's documents don't coincide. Certainly born no earlier.[2] Birth place—Bagdadi village, Kutaisi Province, Georgia.

FAMILY

Father: Vladimir Constantinovich (Bagdadi forest ranger) died in 1906.

Mama: Alexandra Alexeyevna.

Sisters: a) Lyuda,
b) Olya.

There was also an Aunt Aniuta. Apparently there are no other Mayakovskys.

FIRST RECOLLECTION

Conceptions of pictures. Place unknown. Winter. Father subscribed to the magazine *Rodina* (*Fatherland*). *Rodina* had a supplement of humor and satire. The funny things were talked about and looked forward to. Father goes around singing *"Allons enfants de la pachitiri."*[3] As usual *Rodina* arrives. I open it and suddenly (picture) yell: "How funny! A woman and an uncle kissing." Everybody laughs. Later, when the supplement comes and there is really something to laugh at, it transpires that they had been having fun only at my expense. Thus differed our conceptions of pictures and humor.

SECOND RECOLLECTION

Conceptions of poetry. Summer. Lots of visitors. Tall handsome student—B. P. Glushkovsky.[4] He drew. Leather bound album. Magnificent paper. On the paper a

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I Myself, Vladimir Mayakovsky's autoblography, was written in 1922. Later, in 1928, Mayakovsky augmented it for his *Collected Works*, bringing it up to that year.

lanky fellow without trousers (or maybe in tightly fitting ones) before a mirror. Fellow was called "Eugeneonegin."[5] Both Boria and the fellow in the drawing were lanky. Everything clear. I thought Boria was this Eugeneonegin chap. Stuck to this opinion for three years.

THIRD RECOLLECTION

Conceptions of practical life. Night. Endless whispering between Papa and Mama in next room. About a piano. Did not sleep all night. One single phrase kept running through my head. In the morning dashed full speed: "Papa, what is installment plan?" Delighted with explanation.

BAD HABITS

Summer. Amazing number of visitors. No end of birthday feasts. Father boasted of my memory. Was made to learn poems by heart for every birthday feast. I remember one I learnt for Father's birthday:

"Once before the mighty throng
Of kindred hills. . . ."[6]

"kindred"[7] irritated me. Who they were I did not know, but in real life they did not want to come my way. Later I learnt that that was "poetical" and began secretly to detest it.

ROOTS OF ROMANTICISM

First house remembered distinctly. Two stories, second was ours. First was winery. Once a year carts of grapes. Grapes were pressed. I ate. They drank. All around was territory of extremely ancient Georgian fortress near Bagdadi. Around the fortress was a feudal wall in the form of a square. At the corners of the walls were stands for canons. In the walls were turrets. Beyond the walls, pits. Beyond the pits—woods and jackals. Overhanging the woods were hills. Growth. Would run up the highest. Hills lowered to north. In the north a gap in the hills. There, I visioned, was Russia. Had intense longing to go there.

THE UNUSUAL

Seven years old. Father would take me along, on horseback, on his forest rounds. A pass. Night. Fog. Could not even see father. Very narrow path. Father's elbow apparently hit against a branch of sweetbrier. The branch slashed with its thorns against my cheeks. Almost shrieking, pulled out thorns. In an instant the fog and the rain disappeared. In an opening in the fog, under our feet, it was brighter than the sky. That was electricity. Prince Nakashidze's rivet works. After seeing electricity, lost interest in nature. Not up-to-date enough.

STUDY

Taught by Mother and by all sorts of female relatives. Arithmetic seemed implausible. Had to count apples and pears given to boys. But I was used to getting and giving fruit without counting. Fruit is plentiful in the Caucasus. I learnt to read with pleasure.

FIRST BOOK

Of the *Bird-Seller Agafia*[8] ilk. Had a few more such books come my way at that time, I would have stopped reading altogether. Fortunately the second was *Don Quixote*. That was a book! Made a wooden sword and shield and waged combat against all and everything.

EXAMINATION

Moved from Bagdad to Kutais. High school entrance examinations. Passed. Questions about anchor (on my sleeve)—answered well. But the school clergyman asked "What does 'oko' mean?" I answered "three pounds" (which it means in Georgian). The courteous examiners explained that "oko" is the ancient-church Slavonic for "eye." I all but failed. So I conceived a hatred for everything ancient, everything churchy and everything Slavonic. Possibly from this sprang my Futurism, my atheism and my internationalism.

HIGH SCHOOL

Preparatory classes—first and second. Ahead of the class. Rolling in "excellents." Read Jules Vernes. And in general anything fantastic. Some bearded fellow discovered artistic ability in me. Taught me gratis.

JAPANESE WAR

Increase in number of magazines and newspapers at home. *Russkiye Vedomosti* (*The Russian Chronicle*), *Russkoye Slovo* (*Russian Word*), *Russkoye Bogatstvo* (*Russian Wealth*), and others. Read them all. Unaccountably agitated. Picture postcards of cruisers were source of delight. Enlarged and copied them. Word "proclamation" appeared in Russian. Proclamations were hung up by Georgians. Georgians were hanged by Cossacks. My chums were Georgians. I began to detest Cossacks.

ILLEGALITY

My sister came from Moscow. She was jubilant. Gave me long leaflets on the sly. That appealed to me. Very risky. Remember even now. The first:

Think you, my comrade, think you
my brother.
Throw down your rifle quick on
the ground.

There was also some other one, ending:

Otherwise, the only way—
To Germans with your son, your
wife and Mama.[9]

(About the tsar.)

That was revolution. That was verse. Revolution and verse somehow blended in my head.

1905

Not in mood for study. Low marks. Passed the exams only because my head was split by stone (had quarreled on banks of Rion)—at the examinations was pitied. For me revolution began thus: a chum of mine, Isidor, a clergyman's cook, jumped up on stove, his bare feet—rejoicing that General Alikhanov was killed. He was the "pacifier" of Georgia. Demonstrations and meetings. Took part in them. That was good. Thought of participants pictorially. Anarchists in black, Socialist-Revolutionaries in red, Social-Democrats in blue, Federalists in other colors.[10]

SOCIALISM

Speeches. Newspapers. Derived from them only unfamiliar words and ideas. Demanded of myself explanations. In shop windows pamphlets. "The Stormy Petrel.[11]" Deals with the same. Buy up all. Would rise at six. Read voraciously. First: "Down with the Social-Democrats!" Second: "Talks on Economics." All my life have been amazed how Socialists can disentangle facts and systematize world. *What to Read*? by Rubakin[12], I think. Read what he recommended. There was a lot I could not understand. Asked questions. Was taken to a Marxist study circle. They were

somewhere in the middle of the "Erfurt program." On "the Lumpenproletariat." Regarded myself as Social-Democrat. Stole father's sawed-off guns and brought them to the Social-Democratic Committee. Lassalle appealed to me. Must have been because he had no beard. Young. Confused Lasalle with Demosthenes. Would go to Rion and make speeches, pebbles in my mouth.

REACTION

In my opinion it began as follows. During panic (maybe after police had attacked) at demonstration in memory of Bauman[13] I (having fallen) felt a whopper of a drum on my head. I got frightened. Thought I myself had cracked.

1906

Father died. Pricked his finger (putting papers together). Blood poisoning. Since then can't bear pins. End of prosperity. After father's funeral we had three rubles left. Instinctively, feverishly, we sold out chairs and tables. Moved to Moscow. Why? Not even acquaintances there.

JOURNEY

Baku best of all. Derricks, cisterns and best perfume—oil; then the steppes. Even desert.

MOSCOW

Put up at Razumovsky.[14] Plotnikovs—acquaintances of my sister. Next morning Moscow by river-tram. Took little flat on Bronnaya Street.

MOSCOW AFFAIRS

Eat badly. 10 rubles a month pension. I and two sisters study. Mama takes in lodgers. Room rotten. The students poor. Socialists. Remember Vasya Kandelaki—the first Bolshevik I saw.

PLEASANT

Sent me for kerosene. 5 rubles. Got 14 rubles, 50 kopeks change. 10 rubles net earnings. Conscience pricks. Went around shop twice—(had devored "Erfurt Program"[15]). Who would be out of pocket, owner or the man behind the counter?—asked him on the quiet—the owner! Bought and ate 4 buns with candied peel. With what was left went rowing in Patriarch's Pond.[16] Since then can't bear buns with candied peel.

WORK

No money at home. Had to char and draw. Particularly remember Easter eggs. They were round, span and creaked like doors. The eggs were sold in a handicraft goods shop in Neglinnaya at 10-15 kopeks each. Since then have had holy hatred of Bem,[17] Russian style and handicraft work.

HIGH SCHOOL

Passed to the fifth class gymnasium. One mark worse than the other. *Anti-Dühring*[18] under the desk.

READING

Did not accept belles-lettres at all. Philosophy. Hegel. Natural Science. But chiefly Marxism. No work of art ever interested me more than Marx's *Introduction. . . .*[19] Students' rooms become centers of underground work. *Tactics of Street Fighting.* Etc. Clearly remember Lenin's *Two Tactics*[20] in blue cover. Appreciated that margins of pages had been cut out. For underground smuggling. Esthetics of maximum economy.

FIRST HALFPOEM

The third Gymnasium published an illegal magazine *The Surge.* I felt piqued. Others wrote, but could I? Began to scribble. Result was terribly revolutionary and just as terribly appalling. Can't re-

call single line. Wrote second poem. Result was lyrical. Did not regard such practice compatible with my "Socialist sense of dignity," so stopped altogether.

PARTY

1908. Joined Russian Social-Democratic Labor Party (Bolsheviks). Sat for examination in commerce and industrial sector. Passed. Propagandist. Carried out propaganda among bakers, then shoemakers and lastly printers. At city conference elected to Moscow Committee. Went under name of "Comrade Konstantin."

ARREST

Caught in raid in Gruzini.[21] Our illegal printing works.[22] Chewed, swallowed notebook. With addresses, binding. Presnia police station. Secret police. Sushchevskaya police station. Examining magistrate Boltanovsky (apparently considered himself cunning) made me take dictation: the charge against me was writing proclamation. Made no end of mistakes. Wrote "Soshaldimocratic." Trick fooled them. Released on bail. To my amazement found Artsibashev's *Sanin*[23] in police station and read it. For some reason it was to be found in every police station. Apparently soul-saving.

Released. Year of Party work.

SECOND ARREST

Our lodgers digging tunnel under Taganka.[24] To release woman convicts. Succeeded in arranging escape of prisoners from Novinsky Jail. Nabbed me.[25] Found revolver and illegal literature. Didn't want imprisonment. Kicked up rows. Transferred from police station to police station—Bassmanaya, Meshchanskaya, Myasnitskaya, etc., at last to Butyrki.[26] Solitary confinement No. 103.

11 BUTYRKI MONTHS

For me most important period. After three years of theory and practice began to devour literary works. Read all latest stuff. Symbolists Bely, Balmont. Analyzed formal innovations. But all this was alien to me. Themes and images drawn from a life not mine. Tried to write just as well, but about other things. Found that just as well about other things was impossible. Result was banal sobstuff like:

Forests wear garments of yellow and purple
Fire of the sun on church cupolas plays
I waited: but days in the months were extinguished,
Hundreds of langorous days.

Wrote whole copy-book of such verses. Thanks to the warders for taking it off me, on letting me out. Otherwise would have published it! After disposing of contemporary writers, plunged into the classics—Byron, Shakespeare, Tolstoy. Last book—*Anna Karenina*. Didn't finish it. Told at night "get your things ready." So don't know how the Karenin business ended. I was released. Should have (secret police so decided) gone to Turukhansk[27] for three years. Friend of father, Makhmodbekov, said revolver was his and talked Kurlov[28] into letting me off.

While in prison was tried for first offense[29]—guilty but under age. Released from custody under police surveillance and parental responsibility.

A SO-CALLED DILEMMA

Came out in state of agitation. The authors I had read were the so-called great ones. But how easy to write better than they! I had already acquired a correct attitude towards the world. I needed only

Vladimir Mayakovsky in 1911. Photo

experience in art. Where would I find it? I was half baked. I needed thorough training. Had been kicked out of a number of high schools, even out of Stroganovsky.[30] To remain in the Party meant working underground. To work underground, it seemed to me, meant I could not complete my studies. In store for me—writing leaflets all my life and rearranging ideas taken from books which were correct, but had not been thought out by me. If what I had read were shaken out of me, what would remain? The Marxist method. Perhaps it had fallen into the hands of a child. Method easy to use if one were operating with one's own ideas. But when I meet enemies? After all, I could not write better than Bely. He said what he had to say with *esprit*—"To the heavens I threw up a pineapple" while I whimpered: "hundreds of langorous days." All right for others to be in the Party. They had a university behind them (higher education—I still did not know what it was—I then actually respected!).

What could I set up against the esthetics of the past that had avalanched on me? Did not the revolution demand serious training? I went to Medvedev, a Party comrade; wanted to create a Socialist art. He laughed long: hadn't the guts. I still think he underrated my guts. I stopped Party work. Got down to study!

BEGINNINGS OF CRAFTSMANSHIP

It seemed to me I could not write poetry. Attempts were pitiful. Turned to painting. Studied under Zhukovsky. Painted silver tea services along with some young ladies. In a year realized I should take up sewing and knitting. Went to Kelin. Realist. Drew well. Very good teacher. Firm.

Demand—craftsmanship, Holbein. Couldn't stand anything pretty.

LAST SCHOOL

Worked on "heads" a year. Entered school of painting, sculpture and architecture. Only place that did not ask for certificate of good conduct. Worked well. Was amazed to find imitators petted and original minds badgered. By revolutionary instinct stood up for the badgered ones.

DAVID BURLYUK

In the school appeared Burlyuk. Arrogant appearance. Lorgnette. Frock coat. Hums and croons while walking. I'd affront him. Almost came to blows.

IN SMOKING ROOM

Posh meeting. Concert. Rachmaninov, *Island of Corpses.* Fled from unbearable melodized boredom. Burlyuk fled a minute later. Both burst

out laughing. Went for stroll together.

A MOST MEMORABLE NIGHT

Conversation. From Rachmaninov boredom to school boredom, from school boredom to whole range of classical boredom. David had anger of a master who had outpaced his contemporaries, I, the fervor of a Socialist aware of the inevitable doom of the old. Thus was conceived Russian Futurism.

NEXT

Next day got poem done. Bits rather. Badly done. Nowhere published. Night. Sretenka Boulevard. Read my stuff to Burlyuk. Said a friend of mine wrote it. David stopped. Looked me up and down, yapped: "You wrote it yourself! You are a genius!" This grandiose and unmerited appellation overjoyed me. Became immersed in poetry. That evening quite suddenly I became a poet.

BURLYUK'S QUEERNESS

In the morning Burlyuk, introducing me to some one, trumpeted: "Don't you know him. My genius friend. Famous poet Mayakovsky." I tried to stop him. Burlyuk adamant. Leaving me, he bellowed: "Now write or you will make me look a regular fool."

THUS DAILY

Had to write. Wrote my first poem (as professional poet—it was published) *Crimson and White* and others.

THE EXQUISITE BURLYUK

I think of David with unchanging love. Wonderful friend. My real teacher. Burlyuk made poet of me. Read French and German poets to me. Got me books. Went around talking without stop. Never let me out of his sight. Gave me fifty kopeks daily, so I should not starve while writing.

For Christmas took me with him to "New Beacon."[31] Took along "Port" and something else.

THE "SLAP"

Returned from the "New Beacon." If with unclear views, then with clearly attenuated moods. Khlebnikov[32] in Moscow. His quiet genius was at that time completely overshadowed by the roaring David. Here, too, was Kruchenykh[33]—futurist, jesuit of words.

After a few lyrical nights we gave birth to a joint manifesto. David collected the material, copied it, christened the manifesto and published *A Slap at Public Taste*.[34]

THINGS BEGIN TO MOVE

"Jack of Diamonds"[35] exhibits. Debates. Fiery speeches by me and David. Newspapers full of Futurism. Tone none too polite. For example they called me simple "Son-of-a-bitch."

THE YELLOW BLOUSE

Never had a suit. Had two blouses—hideous looking affairs. A tried method was to use a tie for decoration. No money. Took a piece of yellow ribbon from my sister. Tied it round my neck. Furore. So the most conspicuous and beautiful thing about a man was his tie. Evidently if you increased the size of the tie, you increased the furore. As there is a limit to the size of a tie, I had resort to cunning. I made a tie-shirt and shirt-tie. Impression—irresistible.

NATURALLY

The general staff of the arts showed their teeth. Prince Lvov. Director of art school. Suggested we stop criticism and agitation. We refused.

The council of "artists" drove us out of the school.

A JOLLY YEAR

Traveled up and down Russia. Lectures. Governors of the provinces got wary. In Nikolayev were told to mention neither the authorities nor Pushkin. Police often stopped our lectures as soon as the speaker opened his mouth. Our cohort was joined by Vasia Kamensky, oldest of the Futurists.

For me this was a period of work on form, of mastering the poetic word.

Publishers did not touch us. Their capitalistic nose sensed dynamiters in us. They did not buy a single line from me.

When in Moscow, we lived usually on the Boulevards.

The crowning event of this period was the tragedy *Vladimir Mayakovsky*. Produced in Luna Park, St. Petersburg.[36] It was booed down to shreds.

BEGINNING 1914

Sense of craftsmanship. Could master my themes. Raise question of theme. In all urgency. Revolutionary theme. Am pondering over *Cloud in Pants*.[37]

WAR

Took it excitedly. At first thought of it in its decorative and noisy aspects. Poem *War Declared*. Draw posters to order.

AUGUST

First engagement. The horror of war stared us in the face. War hideous. Rear still more hideous. To speak about the war, must see it. Tried to enroll as volunteer. Not accepted—unreliable.

Even Colonel Moldi[38] had one good idea.

WINTER

Disgust at and hatred of war. *Ah, Close, Ah, Close the Eyes of Newspapers*[39] and others.

Lost all interest in Art.

MAY

Won 65 rubles. Went to Finland, Kuokkala.

KUOKKALA

Seven friends system (seven-fold rotation). Established seven dinner friendships. On Sundays "ate" Chukovsky. Monday, Evreinov, etc. Thursday was worse—ate Repin's grass.[40] For a futurist six-footer that would not do at all.

In the evenings stroll along the beach. Wrote *Cloud in Pants*.

Heightened awareness of the approaching revolution.

Traveled to Mustamaki. Maxim Gorky. Read him parts of *Cloud*. Gorky touched—wept on my shoulder. Poem affected him. I was a little proud.

NEW SATIRIKON

65 rubles went easily and painlessly. Wondering whatever to eat, began to write for *New Satirikon*.[41]

MOST JOYFUL DATE

July 1915. Made acquaintance of L. Y. and O. M. Brik.[42]

CALLED UP

Taken into army. Did not want to go to front. Pretended I was draughtsman. At night learned from engineer how to draw auto-designs. Matters stood worse with getting stuff published. Soldier forbidden to publish. Only Brik gave me cause for joy. Bought all my poems at 50 kopeks a line. Published *Flute of Spine* and *Cloud in Pants*. *Cloud* proved feathery. Censor blew through it. Six pages full of dots.

Since then hate dots. And commas, too.

SOLDIER'S LIFE

Mangy time. Draw portraits of superiors (trying to evade service). *War and the Universe*, grows in my head; *A Man*[43]—in my heart.

1916

Finished *War and the Universe*, a little later, *Man*. Published parts in *Annals*.[44] Arrogantly evade service.

FEBRUARY 26, 1917

Went with automobiles to Duma. Got into Rodzianko's[45] office. Had a look at Milyukov.[46] He was silent. For some reason I think he stammered. After an hour there we got fed up. Left. For a few days took command of auto-school. Guchkov Guchkovizes.[47] The old officer caste strutted around the Duma as of old. For me it was clear that the Socialists must inevitably replace it. The Bolsheviks. From the outset of the revolution, writing a verse-chronicle—*Revolution*.[48] Read lectures on *Bolsheviks of Art*.

AUGUST

Gradually Russia was de-Kerenskyied. He no longer commanded respect. Leave *New Life*. Conceive *Mysteria-Buff*.[49]

OCTOBER

To accept or not to accept? For me (as for the other Moscow Futurists) this question never arose. It is my revolution. Went to Smolny. Worked. Did everything that came my way. Meetings began to be held.

JANUARY

Visited Moscow. Spoke. Night time—Poet's Cafe on Nastasiynsky Pereulok [50] (the revolutionary Grandmother of present-day Salon Cafe). Wrote film script. Appear in it myself.[51] Draw posters

Mayakovsky in the film "The Young Lady and the Hooligan," 1918

for Cinema. June. Again St. Petersburg.

OCTOBER 25, 1918

Finished *Mysteria-Buff*. Read it. Much talk about it. Produced three times, then it was hammered. Then replaced by Macbeths.

1919

Go with *Mysteria* and other things of mine, and with colleagues, to various factories. Enthusiastic reception in Vyborg district (in Leningrad), a "comfut"[52] is organized, we publish *Art of the Commune*.[53] Fissures in Academies. In spring move to Moscow.

Head filled with *150,000,000*.[54] Propaganda work in ROSTA.[55]

1920

Finished *150,000,000*. Publish it without my name. Wanted anyone who wished to continue and improve

it. Nobody did, but everyone knew who wrote it. All the same. Publishing it now under my name.

Days and nights in ROSTA. All kinds of Denikins are advancing. Write and draw caricatures. Made about 3,000 posters and 6,000 titles.

1921

Break through walls of muddling, hate red tape and stupidity—produce a second version of *Mysteria*—on the boards of First R.S.F.S.R. Theater and in the circus, in German, for the delegates to the Third Congress of the Comintern.

Began to write for *Izvestia*.[56]

1922

Organize M.A.F.[57] Publishing House. Gather together the Futurists of the Commune. Asseyev[58] and other comrades-in-arms arrived from the Far East. Began to write a thing developing in my mind for three years, *The Fifth International*. Utopia, showing art 500 years hence.[59]

1923

We organize L.E.F.[60] L.E.F. equals coverage of great social themes through all of Futurism's resources. The definition is not exhaustive. Those interested should read the issues.

Wrote *On This*. Personal motifs on the theme of general life.

Began to think over the poem *Lenin*. One of the slogans and also one of the big achievements of L.E.F. is de-estheticising of the productive arts, *i.e.*, constructivism. Poetic supplement: the agitational pieces and agitation on behalf of industrial and trading establishments, *i.e.*, advertisements. Despite poetic adhering, I consider my *Nowhere but in Mosselprom* poetry of the highest caliber.[61]

1924

Memorial to Kursk Workers.[62] Numerous lectures up and down the U.S.S.R. on L.E.F. *Jubilee*—to Pushkin[63] and a whole cycle of such poetry. Travel: Tiflis, *Yalta—Sevastopol*, *Tamara and the Demon*, etc. Finished poem *Lenin*. Read it at many workers' meetings. I felt very nervous about this poem, as it would have been easy to reduce it to a pamphlet in verse. The workers' attitude to it gladdened me and confirmed my conviction that the poem was needed. Travelled much abroad. European technique, industrialism, any attempt to combine them with old Russia, still backward—such has always been the idea of the Futurists-Leftists.

Despite the none-too-consoling figures on the sales of the magazine, L.E.F. is enlarging the scope of its work.

We know that these figures frequently mean simply that the huge, cold machinery of G.I.Z.[64] show a bureaucratic lack of interest in certain magazines.

1925

Wrote agitational poem *The Flying Proletarian* and a collection of agitational verses *Walk Yourself the Heavens*.

Travel around the globe. At the beginning of the journey—My last of a number of poems on the theme *Paris*. I want to and am going to change from poetry to prose. This year I should finish my first novel.

Around-the-globe was a flop. Firstly, was robbed in Paris; secondly, after half a year of traveling, rushed back to the U.S.S.R. Did not even go to San-Francisco (where I was invited to lecture). Traveled through Mexico, U.S.A. and bits of France and Spain. Result—books of publicistic prose. *I Discover America* and verses *Spain*,

Atlantic Ocean, *Havana*, *Mexico*, *America*.

Wrote out novel in my head, but did not transfer it to paper. While writing it out in my head, began to detest what I had imagined, demanded real facts and real names. By the way, this holds good also for 1926 and 1927.

1926

In my work I am consciously becoming a newspaper man. Feuilletons, slogans. Poets badger me but can't do newspaper stuff themselves, for the most part getting their stuff published in irresponsible supplements. To me their lyrical trash is just funny, its so easy to write like that and it interests no one save the spouse.

Wrote for *Izvestia*, and other newspapers.

My other work: I continue the traditions of the troubadors and minstrels. Travel from city to city, reciting my verses. Novocherkassk, Vinnitsa, Kharkov, Paris, Rostov, Tiflis, Berlin, Kazan, Sverdlovsk, Tula, Prague, Leningrad, Moscow, Voronezh, Yalta, Evpatoria, Viatka, Ufa, etc., etc.

1927

Resumed publication (there was an attempt to close it down) of *L.E.F.*, now *New L.E.F.*[65]

Its main plank; opposition to invention, esthetism, and psychologism in art—it favors agitational pieces, high-class publicistic and chronicle material. My main work is in *Komsomolskaya Pravda*. Work overtime on *Good*.[66]

I regard *Good* as a program poem, a sort of *Cloud in Pants*, for the present time, but down on abstract poetical device (hyperbolism, self-sufficient images) and invent vignette-like devices for elaboration of chronicle and agitational material.

Mayakovsky with his puppy "Brutie" in Pushkino, 1926

Ironic pathos with description of details that may prove a sure step into the future; the introduction for creation of suspense, of facts of different historical calibers legitimate only through personal associations.

Will elaborate all this.

Further: have written filmscripts and children's books.[67]

Am still the traveling minstrel. Have collected about 20,000 questions from listeners. Am thinking of writing a book *The Universal Answer* (to questions[68]). I know what is in the minds of the reading masses.

1928

Write poem *Bad*,[69] a play and my literary biography. Many people have said: "Your autobiography is not seriously written." Right! I am not yet academised and am not in the habit of fussing about myself and what's more, I am in-

Mayakovsky reciting his poetry, 1929

terested in the business of myself only when things hum. The rise and fall of many literatures, of symbolists, realists and so on, as well as our struggle with them—all of which has taken place before my eyes—constitutes part of our most momentous period of history. It needs to be written about. And write about it I will.

COMMENTARY

1. A friend of Mayakovsky—artist and poet.

2. Mayakovsky was born on July 19 (old style July 7), 1893.

3. Opening words of the Marseillaise (*Allons enfants de la patrie* . . .) "Patrie" sounds the same as the Russian for "three times." Mayakovsky's father always sang "Pachitiri"—Russian for "four times."

4. A friend of the Mayakovsky family.

5. Eugene Onegin—hero of a novel in verse by Pushkin. Mayakovsky wrote the given name and surname together.

6. Opening lines of a poem by Lermontov.

7. In Russian *soplemenny*—an archaic word.

8. *Bird-Seller Agafia*—a sentimental "uplift" children's book.

9. Lines from two well-known revolutionary songs.

10. Mayakovsky here refers to the pre-revolutionary petty bourgeois parties which after the October Revolution engaged in open struggle against the Soviet Government. Federalists—the Georgian bourgeois-nationalist party.

11. A publishing house specializing in popular books on political questions.

12. A popular guide to reading.

13. Well-known revolutionary killed during the 1905 revolution.

14. Country place near Moscow.

15. Erfurt Program—the program of the German Social-Democratic party adopted in 1891 at its congress in Erfurt.

16. Pond in Moscow.

17. Elizabeth Bem—artist, made drawings in "Russ" style.

18. Mayakovsky refers to Engels' book *Anti-Dühring*.

19. Mayakovsky apparently refers to the introduction to Marx's *Capital*. Mayakovsky knew by heart long passages of this introduction.

20. Mayakovsky refers to Lenin's well-known book *The Two Tactics of Social-Democracy in the Democratic Revolution*.

21. A district in Moscow.

22. Mayakovsky was arrested for the first time on March 29, 1908, during the destruction of a secret printing works run by the Moscow Committee of the Bolshevik Party. He was only fourteen at the time.

23. *Sanin*, a reactionary, semi-pornographic novel by Artzibashev. Enjoyed sensational success among a section of the Russian intelligentsia, in the period of ideological chaos and despondency following the suppression of the first revolution in 1905. The reaction used this novel at times even directly for its own ends; it was given to political prisoners in the police station for their "enlightenment."

24. A prison in Moscow.

25. Actually this was Mayakovsky's third arrest. He was arrested for the second time in January 1909, but was soon released owing to lack of evidence. He was arrested for the third time on July 1, 1909, on a charge of participating in the organization of a successful escape of several women political prisoners.

26. Prison in Moscow.

27. Town in Siberia, where revolutionaries were banished.

28. Chief of the Department of Police.

29. On secret printing works case.

30. Industrial arts school. Mayakovsky had studied in it for several months prior to his last arrest.

31. An estate in the south of Russia, of which Burlyuk's father was overseer.

32. Gifted Russian poet, a friend of Mayakovsky and Burlyuk.

33. Experimental poet.

34. Mayakovsky's first two poems were published in an anthology bearing this title.

35. The name of a society of young artist innovators.

36. The tragedy *Vladimir Mayakovsky*, Mayakovsky's first important work, was produced by the "Youth Union," a society of artists, in St. Petersburg, in December 1913.

37. The original title of this poem, banned by the censor, *The Thirteenth Apostle*.

38. Chief of the Moscow Secret Police.

39. From the Poem *Mother and the Evening Killed by the Germans*.

40. Chukovsky—well-known children's writer, literary critic and historian, friend of Mayakovsky. Evreinov—regisseur. Repin—the famous Russian artist, was a vegetarian.

41. A satirical weekly.

42. Close friends of Mayakovsky.

43. Two long poems written by Mayakovsky in 1915 and 1916.

44. A magazine published by Gorky. In 1916 the censor banned *War and the Universe*. It was published only after the revolution.

45. Chairman of the Fourth State Duma.

46. Milyukov—leader of Russian liberalism, ideological spokesman of Russian imperialism. Held post of Foreign Minister in the first Provisional Government, after the revolution of February 1917. After the October Revolution inspired counter-revolutionary war against the Soviet Government, supported foreign intervention.

47. Guchkovize—a verb invented by Mayakovsky from the name Guchkov. Guchkov was an influential Moscow industrialist and a well-known bourgeois political figure. Following the February revolution he was Minister of War in the Kerensky government.

48. The verse-chronicle *Revolution* was written by Mayakovsky in April 1917. It was published in *New Life*, a periodical edited by Maxim Gorky.

49. *Mysteria-Buff*, a dramatic production—"a heroic, epic and satirical representation of our epoch."

50. A cafe organized by the poets Kamensky, Burlyuk and Mayakovsky.

51. Mayakovsky wrote the scripts for and performed the title roles of three films *The Young Lady and the Hooligan*, *Born Not for Money* (after Jack London's *Martin Eden*) and *Chained by the Film*.

52. A group of Communist futurists.

53. A newspaper specially devoted to questions of art, on which Mayakovsky worked. It appeared during 1918 and 1919.

54. The poem *150,000,000*.

55. ROSTA—The Russian Telegraph Agency which at this time was engaged in agitational art work.

56. Mayakovsky began to work for the newspaper *Izvestia* at the beginning of 1922. *Lost in Conference*, his first poem to appear in *Izvestia* was noticed and approved by Lenin. (A translation of this poem appeared in *International Literature, No. 3*, 1938.)

57. M.A.F.—Moscow Association of Futurists.

58. A well-known Soviet poet, a friend and colleague of Mayakovsky.

59. Mayakovsky did not finish this poem.

60. L. E. F.—Left Front of Art, also the title of a magazine edited by Mayakovsky.

61. During the period of restoration of Soviet economic life, Mayakovsky wrote advertisements in verse for State trading organizations. *Nowhere but in Mosselprom* was an extremely popular advertisement in verse written by Mayakovsky.

62. A poem dedicated to Kursk workers, heroes of socialist labor.

63. A poem written on the 125th anniversary of Pushkin's birth.

64. G.I.Z.—State Publishing House.

65. The magazine *New L.E.F.* appeared under Mayakovsky's editorship in 1927 and 1928.

66. *Good*—poem written by Mayakovsky for the 10th anniversary of the October Revolution.

67. Altogether Mayakovsky wrote 15 film scripts and 13 children's books.

68. Mayakovsky intended to write a book of answers to questions submitted to him by his innumerable audiences. The book was never written.

69. The poem was not written. In 1928 and 1929 Mayakovsky wrote two plays *Bed-Bug* and *Bathhouse*, and began to work on a poem about the Five-Year Plan. He actually wrote only the introduction "At the Top of My Voice."

AT THE TOP OF MY VOICE

First Prelude to a Poem of the Five-Year Plan

Most respected
comrade heirs and descendants!
Excavating
our contemporary petrified muck-heap,
studying our days through dark dead centuries,
you'll,
maybe,
ask about me, Mayakovsky.
And, maybe,
your scholars will then reveal,
swamping with erudition
questions that swarm,
there lived once a singer
of water pure-boiled,
who hated most cold water raw.
Professor,
take off those optical-bicycles!
I'll myself relate
about the times,
about myself.
I'm an incinerator
and water-carrier,
mobilised to the front
by revolution,
I came
from the seignorial horticulture
of poetry—
most capricious dame.
Precious muse that grows, like Mary,
roses
round
a bungalow.
"Mary, Mary, quite contrary,
how does your garden grow?"
Some pour verses from a sprinkler,
some just splutter
from their lips—
curly-headed Mitraikies,
muddle-headed Kudraikies—
who the devil knows which from which!

All translations of Mayakovsky's poems we are offering to the attention of our readers are reprinted from various collections and magazines. The translations we had ordered abroad specially for this issue did not arrive in time due to the disruption of mail service under war conditions. We shall print them in *International Literature* as they arrive.—*Ed.*

No quarantine will take them in—
there's those mandolines again!
"Tara—tina, tara—tina,
t — e —n —n..."
Not much of an honor,
that from such roses
my very own statue will rise
over squares,
with gobs of tuberculosis,
where whores with hooligans . . .
and syphilis
I'm fed
to the teeth
with agit-prop,
I'd like
to scribble for you
love-ballads—
they're charming
and pay quite a lot.
But I
mastered myself,
and crushed under foot
the throat
of my very own songs.
Hi, listen!
comrade heirs and descendants,
to an agitator,
loud-speaker-in-chief!
Deafening
poetic deluge,
I stride to you
through lyrical volumes,
as the live
with the living speaks.
I'll come to you
in the distant communist far-off,
but not
like Yessenin's rhymed knight-errants.
My verse will reach
over the peaks of eras
far over the heads
of poets and governments.
My verse will come—
But will come not ornate,
not like an arrow's
lyrical love-flight from Eros,
not like a worn-out coin
comes to the numismat
and not like the light of long-dead stars arrives.

My verse
with labor
thrusts through weighted years
emerging,
ponderous,
rock-rough,
age-grim,
as when to-day
an aqueduct appears,
firm-grounded once
by the branded slaves of Rome.
You'll accidentally find
in barrows of books,
wrought iron lines of long buried poems,
handle them
with the care that respects
ancient
but terrible weapons.
My words
are not used
to caressing ears;
nor titillate
with semi-obscenities
maiden ears
hidden in hair so innocent.
I open on parade
my pages of fighters,
pass in review
their lineal front.
My verse stand
in lead-heavy letters,
ready for death
and for deathless glory.
Stock-still stand my poems,
muzzle to muzzle set,
their gaping titles aimed
and at the ready!
And weapons most beloved yet,
ever ready
to charge with a cheer,
rear all alert
my cavalry of wit,
tilting their rhymes,
sharp-pointed spears.
And every single one
armed to the teeth,
that swept through twenty years
victorious,
every single one,
to the very last leaf
I give to you,
planet-proletarians.

The foe
of the working class colossal—
is my own foe,
dead-poisonous and ancient.

We marched behind the blood-red flag—
impelled
by years of work
and days of sheer starvation.
We opened
Marx and Engels
every tome,
as in our home
we open wide the shutters,
but without reading
we understood alone,
whose side we're on
and in which camp we're wighters.

And not from Hegel
did we learn
our dialectics.
That burst
through interclashing conflict
into verse,
when
bullet-sped bourgeoisie
ran away from our attacks,
as we
once also
ran away from theirs.

Let glory,
disconsolate widow frail,
trudge after genius
in funeral anthems.

Die, my verse,
die, like the rank-and-file,
as our unknown, unnumbered, fell
in storming heaven.
To hell
with many-tonned bronzes
to hell
with sleek marble slime.

We'll square up with glory—
why we're mates and brothers—
so let there be
a common monument for us
built up in battles—
socialism.

Descendants,
in our lexicons,
look up the flotsam
that floats down from Lethe,
odd remnant-words
like "prostitution"
"tuberculosis"
"blockades"
For you,
who're so healthy and nimble,
a poet
licked up
consumptive spittle
with the crude rough tongue of placards.
From the tail of the years
I must resemble
a long-tailed monster
from a fossilised age.
So come,
Comrade Life,
let's step hard on the throttle,
and roar out
the Five-Year Plan's
remnant days.
I haven't got
a rouble
left from my verse,
the cabinet-makers
didn't send the furniture home.
And my only needs—
clean-laundered shirts,
for the rest,
I honestly
don't give a damn.
When I appear
in Tse-Ka-Ka
of coming
bright decades,
above the band
of skinflint-grafters
in rhymes,
I'll lift up high,
like a bolshevik party-card,
all the hundred books
of my
ComParty poems.

1930 Translated by Herbert Marshall

A MOST EXTRAORDINARY ADVENTURE

The sunset fired a hundred suns,
Summer had rolled into July,
heat stretched and purred,
heat hugged the sky—
and it was in the country this occurred.
The hill, called Mount Akula,
hunched its back and lifted high
Pushkino's huts and winding streets.
The bark roofs of the village warped
The hill, and bowed with heat.
Now, off beyond the village lay
a yawning hole,
and every day
the sun dropped down into that hole,
and slowly and most certainly
upon the morrow its bright head
would pop out of that hole
as red
as ever, in the self same way,
And this thing happened every day.
So I got sore,
yes, I was vexed.
It maddened me always to know
just what would happen next.
And once, thoroughly sick of it,
I shouted in the sun's red face:
"Climb down!
Forget your lousy pit."
I cried like that, right at the man:
"You good-for-nothing! You've a cushioned place up in the clouds, and here
I sit, not knowing if it's Spring or Fall,
drawing posters and that's all!"
I yelled up to the sun:
"You wait!
Listen to me you brazen-eyed,
instead of setting as you do,
why don't you come around," I cried
"and have a glass of tea
with me?"
What have I done
Now I am lost!
Here comes the sun,
with sprawling rays out-thrust,
clambering down across the field to me.
Pretending I'm not scared
I beat retreat.
His eyes are in the garden now,
Filling
the windows,
filling
doors and cracks,
the burly sun walked in,
Just so—dropped in,
and having got his breath,
spoke in a bass voice with a brazen din:
"I have to hold my fires in check
the first time since creation.
You invited me?
Then poet, get the tea!
And don't forget the jam."
And though I wept with heat and dripped a flood of perspiration,
I got the samovar.
"Well, have a seat,
friend luminary."

It must have been the devil made me
shout my impudences at the sun.
I was put out—
and sat on the chair's edge:
afraid of what was going to happen next.
But from the sun
a strange light flowed—
he didn't seem so vexed—
and I, forgetting my embarrassment,
no longer scary,
sat—

talking to the luminary!
I chat
of this
and that,
and soon,
with open friendship
pat him on the back.
And the sun
says,—not to be outdone:
"Well, comrade, I declare,
we are a pair!
Let's go!
Poet, let's sing,
and shout to scare
the drabness of the world.
I'll pour out light,
you'll do no worse
in pouring forth your verse."
Then the sun loosed his shot—
shattered night's shadows,
banished the black lot.
Rays and words,
shine for all you're worth!
And when the sun gets tired,
and night, the stupid sleepy head,
wants to doze off,
suddenly I am fired
with zeal, and shine for all I'm worth
—and day roars out again.
Always to light,
and everywhere to light,
and to the very last,
to light—
thus runs
my motto,
and the sun's!

1920 Translated by B. Deutsch and A. Yarmolinsky

LANDING AT HAVANA

The steamboat approached, whinnied, blew—
And was chained like an escaped convict.
On board, 700 people—
The others were Negroes.
A little cutter steamed up from one side.
Running up the stairs, the lame doctor
In horn-rimmed spectacles made his inspection.
"Who has trachoma?"
Having powdered their pimples and washed their good-looks,
Dragging themselves along, coquettishly,
The first class passengers passed the smiling doctor.
The blue smoke from his doubled barreled nostrils
Wound into a single ring.
The first to pass in a diamond dawn was
The pig-king, Smith.
His pipe stinks a yard away.
Try to touch such a person—
Under the silk of his drawers, under the sheer cambric,
Try to make out his sickness.
"This island gives promise of abstinance. Order a halt!"
The captain saluted, and Smith, syphilitic, disembarked.
After the first class, the second followed.
Inspecting this class,
The doctor wondered why nostrils have holes.
He invaded ears and eyes.

The doctor looked and made a face,
And wrinkled his nose under his spectacles.
The doctor sent to quarantine
Three people from the second class congregation.
After the second, the third class approached like a storm,
Black with niggers.
The doctor looked:
three o'clock.
Cocktail time.
Drive them back into the hold, into the bottom.
Sick—you can see that.
Their dirty appearance. And in general—
Besides, they are not vaccinated.

The temples of the Negro are throbbing, throbbing.
Tom is stretched out in the hold.
Tomorrow Tom will be vaccinated,
And Tom will go home.
Ashore Tom has a wife,
Her hair's thick as oil,
Her skin black and oily,
Like BLACK LION polish.
Meanwhile Tom was bumming around on jobs—
But Cuba is no fool.
His wife was driven away from the plantation
Because she wasn't easy.
The moon threw coins into the ocean:
You could run up the bank and dive in after them!
Weeks, no bread, no meat.
Weeks, only pineapples.

Now, again the steamboat screwed itself to a stop.
The next would come in several weeks.
How could she wait with a hungry mouth?
Tom forgot to love her. Tom left.
He divides his straw mat with the white girls.
She cannot earn anything. She cannot steal.
Everywhere, policemen under their umbrellas.
But Mr. Smith's waning passion is kindled by this exotic.
His body becomes sweaty under his underwear—
From black flesh.

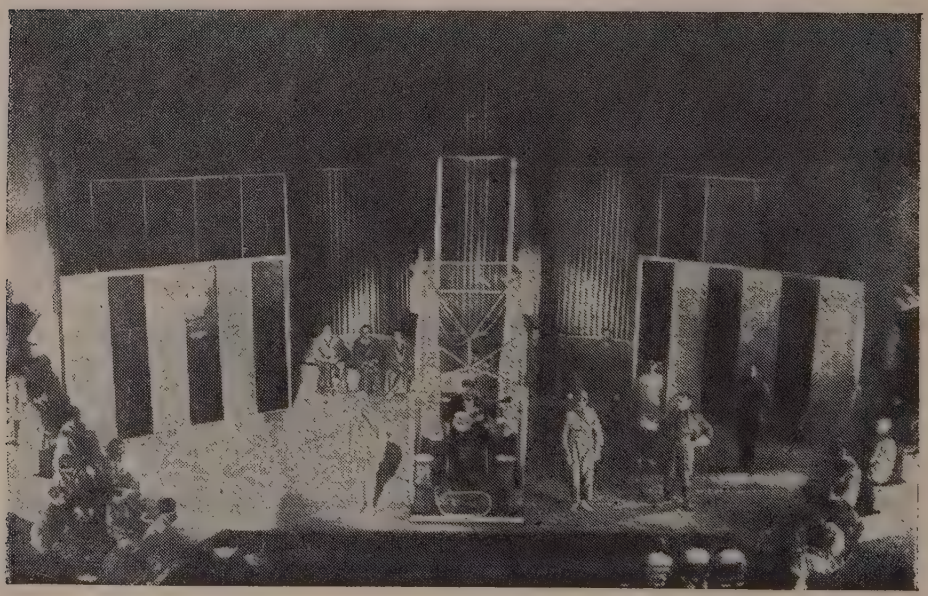
He pushes dollars into her hands,
Into her face, into the hungry months.
At grips, the stomach empty so long,
And the heavy load of faithfulness, fight.
She decides definitely, "No,"
And murmurs, "Yes."
Already the decaying Mr. Smith
Is pushing the door with his shoulder.
And the obliging elevator winds them up into a room.

Tom appeared in two days,
Slept with her for a week without awakening,
And was glad there was bread and money,
And he would not have the small-pox.
But the day came when on his dark skin
The incomprehensible pattern spread.
His children in mother's womb were dumb and blind.
With breaking knuckles, day to day,
The pages of the calendar years were marked.
Somebody took their half-bodies
And stretched their hands for alms.
Attention to Negroes became special.
When the flock was gathering, the lean priest
Pointed out this most obvious handbook of morals:
God punishes him and her, that she invited guests.
And the rottenness of black flesh fell from rotting Negro bones.

I did not intend to enter politics with this.
I intended simply to make a little picture.
Some call it—
civilization.
Others—
colonial policy.

1926

Translated by Langston Hughes.



A scene from "Bed-Bug", by Mayakovsky

I Discover America

EXCERPT

When one hears the word "America" one thinks at once of New York, Uncle Sam, mustangs, Coolidge and sundry other conceptions associated with the United States of North America.

Strange but true.

Strange because there are actually three Americas: North, Central and South.

The U.S.A. does not even cover the entire North—yet they have had the cheek to take and assume the name of all the Americas.

This is probably so, because the United States took the right to call themselves America by force, by dreadnoughts and dollars, by striking terror into the neighboring republics and colonies.

In the three short months of my stay there, the Americans had shaken their mailed fist at Mexico just because Mexico proposed to nationalize her own natural resources; they had sent troops to help some government ousted by the Venezuelans; they had hinted to Britain in no uncertain terms that if she failed to pay her debts, the Canadian granary was likely to crack up; they similarly treated the French and before calling the conference to discuss the French debt they had sent their airmen to Morocco to help the French and later developed a sudden passion for the Moroccans and recalled their airmen because of humanistic considerations.

All of which translated into plain language means: fork out the dough and you get your airmen.

That America and the U.S.A. are one and the same thing was widely known. Coolidge was merely rubber-stamping the deal when in one of his recent decrees he declared only himself and his compatriots Americans. Of no avail was the howl of protest raised by a score of republics and even by other united states (the United States of Mexico for example) forming part of America.

The word "America" has now been finally annexed.

But what is there behind that word?

What is America, what is the American nation, the American spirit?

I saw America from the train window only.

In reference to America, however, this means a great deal, for the country is literally criss-crossed with railway lines. They run alongside—four, ten and sometimes 15 deep. And beyond these lines, at a slightly different angle, run lines belonging to other railway companies. There is no uniform timetable because the compa-

nies are not so much concerned with the convenience of the passengers as with making money and competing with the next firm.

That is why when you purchase a ticket at some station in a large city you can never be certain that you have chosen the fastest, cheapest and most convenient route. The more so, because every train is an express, every train a fast train, super-fast.

One train covers the distance from Chicago to New York in thirty-two hours, another in twenty-four and a third in twenty; yet they are all express trains.

In these trains travelers stick their tickets behind their hat ribbons. Less trouble. You don't have to fumble nervously for your ticket when the conductor comes along; he himself reaches mechanically for the ribbon of your hat and is quite surprised if he fails to find it there.

If you happen to be traveling by Pullman sleeper, which is famed in America for its luxury, your entire rational being will be outraged twice a day, morning and evening, by the senseless unnecessary fuss. At nine in the evening they begin to break up the day coach; beds folded into the ceiling are lowered, bedding is unfolded, iron curtain rods are fastened down, curtains are drawn, iron screens are set up clatteringly—and all these cunning devices for the sole purpose of converting an honest railway car into two double-decker rows of curtained cubicles divided by what is more of a "crawlway" than a passageway.

To worm your way down this aisle when the porters are cleaning up, you have to juggle between two Negro behinds whose owners are hidden from head to waist behind the curtain of the cubicle.

The only way out is for one of the porters to precede you down the entire length of the car—together, plus the step ladder for the upper berth it is impossible to move—then you and he change places and walk back again. While undressing you clutch feverishly at the loose curtain to avoid the indignant protests from the sixty year old female organizer of some young women's christian association who is disrobing in the opposite cubicle.

As you lie reading on your berth you forget to pull in your bare feet which are sticking out of the curtain and the burly, hundred and eighty pound Negro porter barges into your pet corns. The bacchanalia of reducing the car to its "upright position" begins at 9 a.m.

Our European system of dividing even "hard" cars into compartments is far more sensible than the American Pullman system.

But what amazed me most was the discovery that American trains could arrive late without any particular excuse.

On one occasion after lecturing in Chicago I had to leave the same night for Philadelphia where I was scheduled to lecture. The journey from Chicago to Philadelphia by express train takes twenty hours. But at that time of night there was but one train necessitating two transfers and in spite of the fact the time between trains was no more than five minutes the man in the ticket office could not guarantee that I would get there in time, although he added that the chances of being late were slight. Possibly his evasive answer was calculated to cast aspersions at the rival railway company.

When the train stops, the passengers dash out of the car, purchase large bunches of celery and dash back again chewing at the stalk along the way.

Celery has iron. And iron is good for the American constitution. Hence Americans like celery.

The train rushes past unkempt woods of the Russian type, football grounds with players in colored sweaters—and technique, technique and again technique.

This technique is not stagnating, it is constantly growing. It has one curious feature—outwardly it creates the impression as of something unfinished and temporary.

As though the building, the walls of the factory have merely been put up for the time being.

Telegraph, even street-car, poles are made of wood as often as not.

Huge gas tanks, which would suffice to blow up half a city with the help of just one match, seemed to be unguarded. Guards were stationed there only during the World War.

What is the explanation?

I would say it is in the grasping, rapacious character of American development.

American technique is much more far-reaching and universal than the German but it lacks that ancient technical culture which apart from the piling of brick upon brick would see that the iron gratings and the factory courtyard be in keeping with the whole.

We were once traveling by car from Beacon (a six-hour ride from New York) when suddenly without warning we were in the thick of a road-repair job which had left no room for automobiles (the owners of the land were obviously paving the road for themselves and did not bother their heads about the traffic). We had to make a wide detour and found our way only after inquiring the direction of a passerby, for there was not a single sign post to guide motorists.

This could never have occured in Germany even in the most god-forsaken corner of the country.

With all the grandeur of construction, with all its phenomenal speed that Europe can never attain, with all the height of the American skyscrapers, their convenience and spaciousness, even the houses in America add to that curious impression of impermanence.

Perhaps it is only a seeming impermanence.

But the impression is there if only because at the very top of a huge building is erected a vast water tank. The city supplies water up to the sixth floor; the house itself provides the rest. With the universal faith in the omnipotence of American technique a house of this kind appears to be a makeshift, haphazardly pieced together out of something else and subject to demolition the moment it has served its purpose.

This element of impermanency is particularly obnoxious in buildings which are perforce of a temporary nature.

I visited Rockaway Beach (a New York suburb with a bathing beach for the small fry). Anything more odious than the structures that cling to the shore I have never seen. I could not live in one of these flat, cigar-box-like affairs for more than two hours.

All these cottages are standardized, as like one another as matchboxes of the same firm. They are packed as tightly together as the passengers in a Moscow tramcar returning from the Sokolniki Park on a Sunday evening in spring. If you open the window of one bathroom you can see everything that is going on in the neighbor's bathroom and if your neighbor's door should chance to be open, you can see right through his house into the bathroom of the next cottage. The houses are marshaled along the street like soldiers on

parade. The materials used for their construction are so flimsy that not only can you hear lovers next door billing and cooing but the faintest nuances of odor rising from your neighbor's dinner table are wafted through the walls.

A suburb like this is the most perfected apparatus of provincialism and gossip on an immense scale.

Even the newer and more comfortable houses have the same air of impermanence because the whole of America, and New York in particular, is caught in an everlasting fever of construction. Ten-story buildings are torn down to make way for twenty-story buildings; twenty-story houses have to make room for thirty stories, the latter for forty and so on.

New York is perpetually buried under a heap of rubble and steel beams, enveloped in the rasp of drills and the tattoo of pneumatic hammers.

There is genuine fervor in this passion for construction.

The Americans build as though they are performing for the thousandth time a thrilling play they know by heart. And it is fascinating indeed, this spectacle of skill and efficiency.

First the excavators are placed on the ground. With fitting roar the machine digs its teeth into the ground, gnawing off huge chunks which it disgorges forthwith into a passing train of trucks. In the center of the lot a girded crane is erected. It hoists massive steel piles which a steam hammer (snuffling as though all technique had caught cold) drives into the hard ground with as much ease as though they are tin tacks. The men merely set the hammers into place and measure the angle with spirit levels. The crane's other paws lift the steel columns which slide into their places smoothly and evenly without the slightest hitch. All you have to do is hammer and screw things together.

As the building rises, the crane rises with it as though the house was being yanked out of the earth by its hair. In a month or even less the crane is removed and the building is ready.

This is the old proverbial precept for gun manufacture applied to house building (you take a hole, pour some iron around it and your gun is ready); here they take some cubic air, erect steel around it and there's your house. It is hard to be serious, to derive poetic inspiration from some twenty-story Cleveland Hotel of which the townsfolk say: this building takes up too much room (just like in a tramcar—move up a bit, please), it will have to be moved ten blocks nearer to the lake.

I don't know how this building will be moved or who will move it but if a house like that should chance to get out of hand it would come down pretty heavily on some people's corns.

In the course of a dozen years or so buildings can change the appearance of a large town completely.

Thirty years ago, Vladimir Korolenko, after his first glimpse of New York, wrote:

"Through the haze on the waterfront huge buildings, six and seven stories high, were visible...."

Fifteen years ago Maxim Gorky visited New York and informed us:

"Through the slanting rain on the waterfront one could distinguish buildings fifteen and twenty stories high."

If I wished to adhere to what appears to be the rules of good writing I daresay I should comment thus:

"Through the slanting haze one

can discern tallish houses forty and fifty stories high . . ."

And a future poet after a similar trip might say:

"Through the straight buildings of unestimated height standing on the New York waterfront one could see neither smoke nor slanting rains nor any haze at all."

The American nation.

It is to the American nation more than to any other that the words of one of the first revolutionary posters apply:

"There are all kinds of Americans, some proletarian and some bourgeois."

The sons of Chicago millionaires murder children (the Loeb case) out of curiosity, the court pronounces them insane and preserves their precious lives, and these "insane" people live out their lives as prison librarians, delighting their fellow convicts with elegant philosophical reflections.

Champions of the working class (Sacco and Vanzetti) are condemned to death and committees organized for their defense are powerless to compel the governor of the state to pardon them. The bourgeoisie is armed and organized. The Ku Klux Klan has become an everyday phenomenon.

During the masquerade congress of the Klan, New York tailors published advertisements to attract customers from the white-hooded and white-cloaked gang:

"Welcome, Ku Klux Klan!"

The newspapers in various cities frequently carry news items reporting that some Klan leader has killed someone and is still at large; that another (no names mentioned) has committed rape for the third time and thrown the victim out of the car, yet he too is scot free. Next to the militant Ku Klux Klan come the peaceful Free Masons. One hundred thousand masons in gay oriental costumes roam the streets of Philadelphia on the eve of the festive occasions.

This army has still retained its lodges and hierarchy; it continues to hold converse in mysterious signs—a certain finger laid on a certain vest button when Masons meet—but actually the masonic order has long since become a sort of an *uchraspred* [1] of the big businessmen and manufacturers for the appointment of ministers and high officials. This throwback to the Middle Ages must present an incongruous spectacle, parading the Philadelphia streets under the windows of the *Philadelphia Inquirer* press room whose rotary presses spew forth newspapers at the rate of forty-five thousand an hour.

It is rather strange to see the Communist Party of America—legalized evidently to facilitate observation—existing alongside this cosy little outfit, and more than strange, the trade unions which have the guts to fight.

The day I arrived in Chicago, met by an icy blast and driving rain, I witnessed a mad scene.

Wretched looking people, wet to the bone and shuddering with cold, were walking steadily round and round a huge factory building, with burly, fat, mackintoshed policemen watching them closely from the curb. The factory was on strike. The workers were out to drive away the strikebreakers and warn off those hired under false pretences.

They had no right to stand still—for to stand still meant arrest for violation of the anti-picketing laws. Talk, strike if you must, but keep moving. A sort of ten-hour fast-walking workday.

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[1] A common abbreviation: a department for selecting and appointing persons for various positions in industry, offices, etc.—*Ed.*

Race prejudice is another tough spot in American life. I have written about the masses of foreigners in America (the whole country, of course, is a corporation of foreigners for purposes of exploitation, speculation and commerce)—they live for years and years, without losing either their language or customs.

The Jewish quarter of New York on New Year's Day is exactly like Shavli; there are the young men and girls dressed up as though they were off to a wedding or to pose for a colored photograph; patent leather shoes, orange stockings, white lace dresses, colored kerchiefs and a Spanish comb in the hair, for the women; the same order of footwear, a frock-coat, jacket and "smoking-jacket" for the men. And across the stomach a chain of real or American gold as heavy as the kind used along with bolts on backdoors to keep out burglars. Those who participate in the synagogue service, throw striped shawls over their shoulders. The children send and receive hundreds of greeting cards with hearts and doves on them, making the mailbags bulge like the belly of a pregnant woman and constituting the sole article of mass consumption for all the department stores for the duration of the holiday.

In another district the Russians congregate in like racial aloofness, and Americans frequent the antique shops of this quarter to purchase exotic samovars.

The language of America is the imaginary language of Babel with the only difference that in Babel the languages were deliberately mixed so that no one should understand whereas here they are mixed so that everyone can understand. The result is a kind of English which all nations understand except the English.

No wonder some Chinese shops, it is said, carry signs: "English spoken, American understood."

I myself do not know the English language but it is nevertheless easier for me to understand a close-tongued American than the hybrid babble of the resident Russian.

We have always imagined Americans to be something between O. Henry's eccentric hobo and Nick Carter with his inevitable pipe and checkered cowboy shirt.

Americans are not like that at all.

Americans are those who call themselves white men and who consider even a Jew colored and who never shake the hand of a Negro; should they see a Negro with a white woman they would chase him home with a gun; they themselves can rape any Negro girl with impunity, but a Negro who dares to approach a white woman is tried by lynch law which means he is torn limb from limb and roasted alive. A custom which has our "case of the burning of Gipsy horse stealers in Listvyani village" beat by a mile.

Why should such people be called Americans, and not Negroes, for instance?

Negroes, who originated the so-called American foxtrot and the shimmy and American jazz? Negroes, who publish fine magazines like *Opportunity*, for instance. Negroes who are seeking and finding their link with the cultured world; who regard Pushkin, Alexandre Dumas, Henry Taine and others as part of their own culture.

Casper Holstein, the Negro publisher, recently announced a hundred dollar prize in honor of the greatest Negro poet, A. S. Pushkin, for the best poem written by a Negro.

The prize is to be awarded on May 1, 1926.

Why, indeed, should Negroes not consider Pushkin their writer? After all, Puskin would have never been permitted to enter any "decent" hotel or drawing room in New York. After all, Pushkin had kinky hair and the telltale blackness under his fingernails.

When what is known as the scales of history is weighed, a great deal will depend upon what scale the twelve million Negroes will lay their twenty-four million powerful hands. Warmed by the flames of Texas bonfires, the Negroes constitute a power dry enough for any revolutionary explosion.

Spirit, the American spirit included, is an amorphous thing, in fact it isn't a thing at all; it doesn't occupy office space, isn't exactly exportable, and cannot be expressed in terms of tonnage—and if it does consume anything it is only whiskey, and, at that, not the American brand but imported whiskey.

This explains the interest in spirit, even if weak and of recent date, for after their orgy of exploitation, the bourgeoisie have acquired a more settled, more assured geniality, a certain "fat layer" of bourgeois poets, philosophers and artists.

Americans envy European style. They know quite well that their money will buy them all the Louis Quinze they want, but with their hustling efficiency they will never have either the time or the patience to wait until today's fever of construction simmers down into an American style. That is why Americans buy up European art along with the artists, and decorate their fortieth floor with Rennaissance interiors, ignoring the fact that these statuettes and curlykews are all very well for six story houses but beyond that they are quite lost. And to place these stylized baubles one floor lower would mean clashing with advertisements, billboards and suchlike useful things.

To me the height of stylized ugliness is the building near the central public library: it is done in smooth stone, severe, utilitarian and black but topped by a roof covered for beauty's sake with a coating of gold.

In 1912, for purposes of publicity, the poets of Odessa gilded the nose of the girl who sold the tickets for an evening of poetry.

A belated piece of hypertrophied plagiarism.

The streets of New York are adorned with miniature monuments to world famous artists and writers. The walls of the Carnegie Institute are inscribed with the names of Chaikovsky, Tolstoy, and others.

Of late the younger generation of American artists are raising their voices in protest against this disgusting, half-baked eclecticism.

Americans are trying to find the spirit, the rhythm of America. They are beginning to lead the gait of Americans away from the timid shufflings of the ancient Indians along the tracks of a deserted Manhattan. Surviving Indian families are carefully preserved by museums. It is the highest mark of distinction for a member of society to be able to trace his ancestry back to the Indians—something quite disgraceful in American eyes, in the none-too-distant past. Men of art who are not American born are practically ignored.

The cult of the native born American has begun.

CHICAGO.

In my poem *150,000,000,* written in 1920, I imagined Chicago like this:

The world
took a magical magnet
and drew
from its ends
a quintet making music with hammers,
with a city built on a screw—
one big
turbine—machine—dynamo
Chicago
has 14,000 streets
and suns and squares, and from each
of them flow
some 700 side streets—
the length of a train—ride of a year.
In Chicago a fellow feels queer.

Carl Sandburg, one of the best known American poets of today, a native of Chicago, driven by the reluctance of Americans to listen to the voice of lyricism, to the news column of the *Chicago Tribune*—this Sandburg describes Chicago thus:

Hog butcher for the World
Tool Maker, Stacker of Wheat
Player with Railroads and the Nation's
Freight Handler;
Stormy, husky, brawling
City of the Big Shoulders.

...They tell me you are crooked and I answer: Yes, it is true I have seen the gunman kill and go free to kill again. And they tell me you are brutal and my reply is: on the faces of women and children I have seen the marks of wanton hunger.
Flinging magnetic curses amid the toil of piling job on job, here is a tall bold slugger set vivid against the little soft cities;
Laughing the stormy, husky, brawling laughter of youth, half-naked, sweating, proud to be Hog Butcher, Tool Maker, Stacker of Wheat, Player with Railroads and Freight Handler to the Nation.

Guidebooks and old inhabitants say:

the biggest stockyards
the biggest timber producer
the biggest furniture center
the biggest producer of agricultural machinery
the biggest piano warehouses
the biggest railway center
the biggest oven manufacturer
the biggest mail order center
the most crowded corner in the world
the busiest bridge in the world Bush Street bridge
the best system of boulevards in the world—you can tour all of Chicago by boulevard without stepping on a single street.

Superlatives, superlatives, superlatives. . . .

But what is Chicago really?

If you take all American cities, throw them into a sack and shake them up as you would the pieces in a game of lotto, the very mayors of the towns would never be able to recognize their own property.

But there is a Chicago, a Chicago totally different from other cities, but not because of its people or buildings—different because of its peculiarly Chicagoan driving force.

Much of New York is just for show.

The Great White Way is for show, Coney Island is for show, even the fifty-seven story Woolworth Building is just as much eyewash to impress small-town folks and foreigners.

Chicago does not show off.

Its skyscraper section is negligible, and is pushed back against the shoreline by the huge bulk of industrial Chicago.

Chicago is not ashamed of her factories, she doesn't hide them away in her suburbs. You can't live without bread, so MacCormick sticks his agricultural machinery works right in the center of the town with as great a flourish as Paris its Notre Dame.

You can't live without meat and there is no sense pretending to be vegetarian, so right in the center

of the city is the bloody heart of the stockyards.

The Chicago stockyards is almost the most revolting spectacle I have ever witnessed. You drive your Ford right up a raised wooden roadway that bridges thousands of cattle pens filled with bulls, calves, sheep and all the hogs in the world. The screeching, bellowing and bleating a din never to be equaled until the day when man and beast alike will be hemmed in and crushed to powder between the stone mountains of eternity. The sour stench of bull's urine and dung dropped by millions of beasts of diverse varieties assails your closed nostrils.

The nauseating smell, real or imaginary, of a whole sea of blood makes your senses reel.

Flies of all shades and description swarm in from meadow and dunghill flitting between the cows and your eyes.

Long wooden corridors lead the unwilling cattle to their doom.

If the sheep refuse to budge, they are led onward by trained goats.

The chutes end where the killers' knives begin.

A machine swings the live, squealing hogs up by a hook fastened around one hoof, tosses them over onto a moving conveyor which delivers them, upside down, to the Irishman or Negro who sticks his knife into their throats. Every man kills several thousand hogs a day, the stockyard guide boasted.

There are shrieks and wails of agony at this end of the stockyards, but at the other end the seals are already stamped on the hams and a hailstorm of shining cans spurts out like an endless streak of lightning; further on, the refrigerator cars are loaded and the ham is sped on its way by train and boat to the sausage shops and restaurants of the whole world.

It takes fully fifteen minutes to drive the length of the wooden roadway of one stockyard company.

Yet dozens of other companies shriek their wares on all sides:

Wilson!

Starr!

Swift!

Hammond!

Armour!

Incidentally, all these companies, in defiance of the law, constitute one trust. Armour is the chief of the trust and the scale of his company might give you an idea of the volume of the whole enterprise.

Armour employs 100,000 workers; he has a staff of between 10,000 and 15,000 office workers.

400,000,000 dollars is the total value of Armour's property. 80,000 shareholders tremble for fear Armour should go bankrupt, and keep brushing every speck off the owners' reputation.

Half of the shareholders are the workers (half, I mean, of the number of shareholders, not shares), the workers get their shares in installments—one dollar a week. These shares buy Armour a temporary docility on the part of the gullible stockyard workers.

Armour is proud.

Armour produces 60 per cent of America's meat and 10 per cent of the world's.

The whole world eats Armour's canned meat.

Anyone can get catarrh of the stomach.

During the World War cans of meat with brand-new labels could be found in the front lines. In pursuit of new profits Armour bought up four-year-old eggs and canned meat twenty years old.

When naive people wish to see the capital of the United States, they go to Washington. The more

enlightened go to the tiny street in New York, Wall Street, the street of banks, the street which really governs the country.

This is cheaper and more to the point than a trip to Washington. It is to Wall Street rather than to the White House that foreign powers ought to send their ambassadors. There is a subway tunnel under Wall Street which if filled with dynamite could blow this little street to the devil!

Into the air would fly the records of deposits, the titles and series of innumerable shares and columns of foreign debts.

Wall Street is the first capital, the capital of the American dollar. Chicago is the second capital, the capital of industry.

Hence it is not wrong to put Chicago in place of Washington. Wilson, the hog-slaughterer, has no less an influence on American life than had his namesake Woodrow.

The stockyards leave their mark on men. To work there means to become either a vegetarian or to be able to commit murder in cold blood when one gets sick and tired of going to the moving pictures. No wonder Chicago is the center of sensational murders, the home of legendary bandits.

No wonder in this fetid atmosphere one out of every four babies under one dies.

It is understandable why the immensity of the army of toilers, the gloom of the Chicago workers' lives should rouse them to more active resistance here than anywhere else in America.

The strongest force of the Worker's Party of America is in Chicago.

Here is its Central Committee.

Here is its main organ, the *Daily Worker*.

It is to Chicago that the Party turns for contributions from the meager wages of the workers, when thousands of dollars have to be raised.

It is with the voice of Chicago that the Party roars when it has to remind Mr. Kellogg, the Secretary of State, that he is not to admit only dollar worshippers into the United States, that America is not the House of Kellogg, that sooner or later he will have to let in Saklatavala, the Communist, and other messengers of the working class of the world.

The revolutionary movement of the Chicago workers was not born yesterday.

Communists visiting Paris go to the wall where the Communards were shot. In Chicago they go to the graves of the first revolutionaries that were hanged.

On May 1, 1886, the workers of Chicago declared a general strike. On May 3 a domonstration was held outside the MacCormick Harvester Works, during which the police provoked several shots. This they utilized as their chance to fire on the crowd, and furnish them with a pretext to frame the strike leaders.

Five comrades: August Spies, Adolph Fischer, Albert Parsons, Louis Lingg and George Engel were hanged.

The words uttered by one of the men have been inscribed on the gravestone:

"You may strangle this voice, but there will be a time when our silence will be more powerful than the voices you strangle today!"

Chicago does not flaunt its technique in your face—but even the outward aspect of the town, even its external life shows that it is more industrially minded, more machine conscious than other cities.

At every step a drawbridge swings up in front of your car s hood, to allow ships and barges to pass through to Michigan. Traveling on the elevated you are

liable at any hour of the morning to be enveloped in the smoke and steam belched forth by hundreds of locomotives rushing by down below.

At every corner you pass gasoline stations belonging to Standard Oil and Sinclair, the oil kings.

All night long the warning traffic lights blink at the crossroads, and underground lamps that divide up the sidewalks to avoid congestion burn steadily. Mounted policemen jot down the numbers of cars that stand more than half an hour outside of one building. For if all cars were permitted to stand wherever and whenever they pleased, they would soon be parked ten high and ten deep.

That is why in spite of its parks and gardens Chicago should be depicted as screwed together by a gigantic screw, and is turbine-machine-dynamo throughout. This is said not in justification of my own poem, it is merely the assertion of the poet's right and duty to organize and revise his material, and not to polish up that which he perceives.

The guidebook's description of Chicago is accurate but not lifelike.

Sandburg's description is both inaccurate and unlifelike.

My description is inaccurate but lifelike.

Critics said that my *Chicago* could only have been written by one who had never seen the city.

After I saw Chicago, they predicted, I would alter my description.

Well, now I have seen Chicago. I have tried out my poem on Chicago natives, and it elicited no skeptic smiles—on the contrary it seemed to strike them as revealing a different aspect of Chicago.

1925

VASILI KATANYAN

The Best Poet of the Soviet Epoch

Mayakovsky wrote his first verses in 1912. He met his death in 1930, in the thirty-sixth year of his life, the eighteenth year of his literary career.

Look at his collected works. The first volume represents the first five years of his poetical work, all that he wrote before 1917. The rest of his work, written after 1917, fills eleven volumes.

The ratio is worth noting: one volume in five years and eleven volumes in thirteen years!

It provides an eloquent answer to the question: How did the Revolution affect the life of the greatest Russian poet of the twentieth century?

Life during the Revolution was not easy for the poet. But he enjoyed its scintillating variety, its fantastic reality, its impetuous course, the great emotions and amazing rhythms it had released within him. The Revolution opened boundless horizons to his genius, widened the range of his work as a poet, gave him access to the ears of millions. It was his element, the subject of his poetry and the content of his life.

His range was beyond the capacities of the poet who prefers to sit behind venetian blinds, recall the rosy tints of the last year's snow and listen to the noise in his own ears.

Mayakovsky lived a much broader and fuller life, a life of intense activity among his fellow men. He absorbed the rhythms of great assemblies, made speeches and engaged in newspaper work.

People who knew Mayakovsky remember how in the midst of a conversation or during a walk in the street he would often become oblivious to his surroundings, his fists would clench instinctively in an oratorical gesture as though accentuating the rhythm of the lines that occurred to him on these occasions. The jostling of passers-by, the noise of traffic seemed to help rather than hinder his poetic inspiration.

His constant association with his public, the people he wrote for, served to redouble his powers, to multiply the depth of his emotions, and the breath of his vision.

2

"Participation in the Revolution and revolutionary methods of participation," such were the two main principles which Mayakovsky once said should guide the true revolutionary poet.

This was Mayakovsky's credo. Nor was it a rhetorical premise. It was a formula derived from practice, the fruit of vast experience. Mayakovsky uttered these words in 1930, a few months before his death.

"I personally test my verses with two genre pictures," said Mayakovsky: "If all the poets should rise from the tomb they must say: 'We had no verses like those, they were unknown to us and we couldn't make them.' If the past rises from the tomb, the whiteguards and the would-be restorers of capitalism must destroy my verse wherever they find it as utterly inimical to them.

"The quality of my verse is proportionate to these elements."

3

Mayakovsky began as a Futurist. Russian Futurism must not be confused with the Italian variety. When Marinetti came to Moscow in 1913 he was hooted by Mayakovsky and his comrades.

The young Russian artists and poets who united under the banner of Futurism set themselves against all bourgeois art in general, rebelling against the sterile forms of academic art, against the tastes of the bourgeoisie and the art they had created in their own image.

The very name of the Futurist symposium in which Mayakovsky's first efforts were printed was a candid warning to conservative readers: *A Slap in the Face of Public Taste.*

The Futurists' strongest argument against the established schools was the poetry of their most talented member, Vladimir Mayakovsky. But his work did not comply with their dogma and theoretical schemes.

The Futurists declared that the purpose of poetry was to create pure, "self-sufficient" words, independent of utilitarian aims. Mayakovsky soon grew out of this stage, in fact there were notes of social protest in his earliest work.

The Futurists rebelled against the canons of bourgeois art. Mayakovsky, who had taken part in illegal revolutionary activities even as a schoolboy, was close to the Bolshevik Party, and had been in tsarist prisons; he hated not only bourgeois art but the whole system of bourgeois society, all its institutions, its moral code, religion, the bourgeois family and petty-bourgeois domesticity. His spirit of rebellion was broader, deeper and more organic than that of his fellow Futurists.

Vladimir Mayakovsky.
Painting made in 1938

The Futurists declared art "the free play of the powers of cognition." Actually Mayakovsky's work was frankly tendencious, strongly colored with social protest, unrest, a spirit of resistance.

"The war of 1914 was the first social test of Futurism," wrote Mayakovsky in after years. "The February Revolution drew the line deeper. It split Futurism into 'Rights' and 'Lefts.'"

Mayakovsky's fine epic poem *War and the Universe* (1915-1916) condemning the imperialist war as a new monstrous crime of the capitalists against mankind was not to the liking of the orthodox Futurists. "This is crude realism," they said, finding that it clashed with all their principles of "self-sufficient" words and "free play of the powers of cognition."

Mayakovsky had already outgrown the movement, although from habit he still considered himself a Futurist.

The term "Futurism," however

scientifically and profoundly interpreted, cannot account for the genesis of Mayakovsky.

He stood on a plane far above the school with which his name was originally associated.

He did not indeed belong to any literary school. He belonged to the people.

4

Every writer who crossed the great threshold of 1917 and accepted the Revolution with heart and intellect was bound to ask himself seriously how he could make his work socially necessary, useful to the Revolution.

The old select circle of readers and poetry-lovers had gone. The public in the real sense, the whole revolutionary people, had taken its place. There had to be a change not only in themes, but in forms. Art had to be made intelligible to the millions. It was not enough for a theme to be revolutionary, its message had to be conveyed to the people it was intended for.

Mayakovsky was one of the few who solved this historic problem of "re-addressing" art to the whole people.

He solved it because he understood from the outset that it was not just a matter of writing *about* the Revolution but of writing *for* the Revolution.

In 1919 he went to work as poet and poster-artist for the ROSTA (Russian Telegraph Agency) which was then in charge of popular agitation and propaganda. ROSTA issued daily huge posters with stories in pictures, captioned with short, catchy slogans.

Mayakovsky worked there all through the Civil War, day in and day out, drawing cartoons and writing captions.

Once, in 1919, a writer who had nothing better to do asked Mayakovsky, among other writers, to fill in the answers in a questionnaire on the poet Nekrasov. To the question: "Do you like Nekrasov's verses?" Mayakovsky replied: "I don't know, I'll think it over when the Civil War's over"

"What do you think of Nekrasov's technique?" To this Mayakovsky replied: "What I like about him at present is that he could write anything, particularly that he could write vaudeville. He would have been an asset to ROSTA."

These replies of course were demonstrative. Mayakovsky was fascinated by his work in ROSTA, proud that his talent was serving the great struggle for freedom, and so always had a caustic word for people who sympathized with the Revolution in words but took no practical part in the struggle to save and build up the country, preferring to interest themselves in purely abstract matters.

When he went to work for ROSTA, Mayakovsky was not afraid of "degrading" his talent by working to the clock on set themes day after day. He was not afraid to leave lyrical poems on stirring social themes in order to write couplets on Whiteguard generals, on mushroom-picking for hungry children, warm clothing for men at the front and fire precautions.

He was sure that as a result of his work he would find the form of poetic expression, intelligible to millions, in which the thoughts and emotions of the new emancipated man and true poetry would unite in an alloy previously unknown—Socialist art. And he found it.

His work in ROSTA made this one-time Futurist the poet of the Revolution. It freed him from the husk of abstractions and Futurist symbolism. It opened Maya-

kovsky's eyes to Soviet reality as one great theme of revolutionary poetry.

5

"I must travel," Mayakovsky once said. "For me contact with living things makes reading books almost unnecessary."

He traveled more than he really wanted to. This was not the curiosity of the tourist and had nothing in common with restlessness of temperament. It was a creative impulse, perhaps half subconscious.

Mayakovsky was one of those natures for whom "to know" is "to experience," for whom the main source of all knowledge is direct emotional contrast with the concrete facts of reality. Hence the power of his lyricism, the fervor and the constant note of excitement in all his work.

He was not one of those writers who can work only in solitude. His numerous travels both through the cities of his vast country and foreign lands gave him endless themes and a wealth of material.

That is why his themes, vocabulary, rhythms and metaphors are so close to actual contemporary life. And it was this direct contact with life, dispensing with books and literary reminiscences, that lent his poetry its tremendous realism.

Nine times Mayakovsky crossed the Soviet border on journeys to the Western world.

He visited Latvia, Poland, Czechoslovakia, Germany, France, Spain, Cuba, Mexico and the United States.

In 1925 Mayakovsky spent three months in the U.S.A. and three weeks in Mexico. In New York, Chicago, Detroit, and Pittsburg Mayakovsky gave lectures on art in the Soviet Union with readings from his own poetry. Mayakovsky was a brilliant orator and polemist, with the gift of keeping his audience interested in whatever he spoke about. His conversational and witty style held the attention of his listeners and won their sympathy. His magnificent voice, the envy of stage artists, reached every corner of the hall, however large, conveying the most varied intonations and cadences of his expressive verse.

People who have seen and heard Mayakovsky will never forget him.

He was perhaps the first poet who could hold the attention of thousands of people for hours with his verses and talk of his craft.

"His genius is beyond question," said the *New York Herald Tribune* in 1925.

On his return from America, Mayakovsky told press representatives:

"The rumors of my success in the U.S.A. are not exaggerated one bit. In my opinion to have audiences of 1,500 people for weeks on end is certainly success."

Mayakovsky brought back from this trip a sketchbook *I Discover America* and a collection of verse entitled *Spain*, *The Ocean*, *Havana*, *Mexico*, *America*.

Neither of these works have reached the American reader. They are still waiting for their translator.

6

One day a young man came up to Mayakovsky in some editorial office and proffered a sheet of paper.

"Please, Vladimir Vladimirovich, tell me your opinion of this poem."

Mayakovsky read it and handed it back with the brief verdict:

"Whiteguard verses."

"No, what interests me is the form," said the young man hastily. "I'm asking you about the form."

"The form? Oh, the usual thing with epaulettes. . . ."[1]

This was a characteristic incident.

Mayakovsky did not consider form apart from content. As a professional poet he could talk for hours about the technique of his craft, and once wrote a splendid article on *How to Write Verses* in which he tried to give readers with the utmost frankness the benefit of his own experience. But he never had the slightest interest in discussing the form of verses if their content was abhorrent to him.

Mayakovsky was one of the most remarkable reformers of Russian verse and the Russian poetic vocabulary. But his innovations were not just an overflow of talent, they were not inspired by a desire to surprise, to be original and inimitable at any price. He fought for new form, convinced that the old had had its day and only deformed and cramped the new content.

"If form misfits, either the fact is lost like a flea in your pants or it sticks out of its poetic garb and becomes ludicrous instead of sublime."

The ideological tendency of Mayakovsky's poetry determined its new form, his new technique of giving expression to revolutionary reality.

Mayakovsky worked in a multiplicity of genres, creating new things, modernizing the old. He wrote lyrical poems and epics, slogans and marching songs, satirical poster-couplets, political verse and newspaper sketches, plays in verse and scenarios.

In his article *How to Write Verses* Mayakovsky wrote:

"I give no rules for a man to become a poet, to write verse. There are no such rules. A poet is a man who makes these poetic rules."

Then Mayakovsky draws the following analogy:

"A mathematician is a man who creates, augments, enlarges upon mathematical rules, a man who contributes something new to mathematical knowledge. The man who originated the formula that 'two and two make four' was a great mathematician, even if he derived this truth from combining two fag-ends with two other fag-ends. All who come after him, even if they put incomparably greater things together, say a locomotive with a locomotive, are not mathematicians."

In line with this analogy we may add that Mayakovsky, the first to combine and alloy the sublime principles of revolutionary struggle with a new form of poetic expression, was a great poet.

7

Mayakovsky's first five books, which came out prior to 1918, were published in 4,400 copies. Between 1917 and 1930 Mayakovsky's eighty-six books were published in a total of 1,116,000 copies. In the ten years which have elapsed since his death, this number has risen to 7,000,000.

But is it possible to count in how many copies Mayakovsky has been published? Before publication in book form his verses were printed in newspapers and periodicals, with enormous circulations, on candy wrappers and posters; they were broadcast in his own voice.

Mayakovsky brought poetry out of the narrow circle of poetry lovers to the people, from parlor readings into the street, the rostrum, the popular press, the radio.

"Poetry is no longer something

[1] A play on words; "form" and "uniform" are the same in Russian.

visual," he said. "The Revolution has given us the audible word, audible poetry."

From 1922 onward Mayakovsky published most of his verses in newspapers. Mayakovsky took his contributions to the newspapers very seriously and insisted that editors should take them seriously, not as light relief to dry reading, but as political matter.

He liked to work in the atmosphere of a newspaper, to get the feel of the tempo of throbbing life.

And his "newspaper" verses were not merely publicist in the strict and narrow sense of the word. They were lyrical, the lyricism of a man of the revolutionary age, the impassioned words of a poet on events of every tonality, variety and range, from intimately personal to happenings which reverberated throughout the world.

His wide range of interests, his ability to absorb modern life in lyrical terms, was one of the most remarkable aspects of Mayakovsky's personality.

8

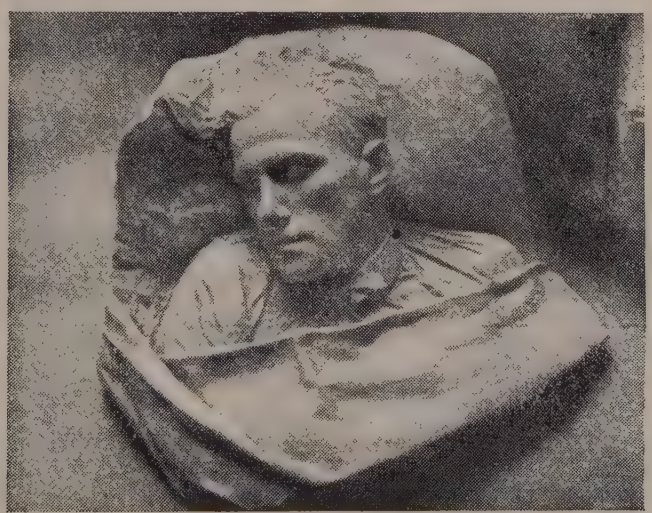
The question implied in the heading of our article is adequately answered in Mayakovsky's own words, the formula we have already noted:

"Participation in the Revolution and revolutionary methods of participation."

Mayakovsky's poetic virtuosity and originality subordinated to and imbued with the greatest ideal of modern times, his devotion to the principles of Socialism, his warm feeling for life and interests of the people, his self-sacrificing labors for the Revolution—it was all this that earned him the remarkable tribute which Stalin paid to him five years ago:

"Mayakovsky was and remains the best, the most talented poet of our Soviet epoch."

These words sum up the place which Mayakovsky holds in the affections of the Soviet people, his place in the history of the new, Socialist culture.



Mask of Vladimir Mayakovsky *By S. Merkurov*

VICTOR PERTSOV

Thrice Arrested

In his autobiography Mayakovsky devoted but a few lines to that period of his youth when he participated in the Bolshevik secret revolutionary movement; and what he did say was fragmentary and not very explicit. In general, he was not fond of expatiating on his active ties with the revolutionary movement in the past, not even among his own circle of writers. His behavior in this respect was motivated, evidently, not only by modesty but also by a sober estimate of his own share in the laying of the groundwork of the Revolution. What remained unsaid in conversation, however, forced its way insistently into his verse, especially his lyrical, intimate verse.

What part exactly did Mayakovsky play in the revolutionary movement? At such an early age, it would seem, a person cannot fully realize the significance of his actions. This might be true in general, but not of Mayakovsky. Mayakovsky grew to political maturity tempestuously, and, judged by ordinary standards, at a very early age. The reasons for this are to be sought as much in his personal qualities as in his environment in childhood and youth.

Of course, it is in no wise necessary for an understanding of the pre-history of Mayakovsky as a poet to make him out to be a Bolshevik of long standing. Nevertheless, it cannot be doubted that his revolutionary activities and his enthusiasm for Marxian theory had a tremendous influence on him in his formative years.

FIRST ARREST

On March 29, 1908, police lay in ambush in one of the wooden houses of Novo-Chukhinsky, a quiet lane on the outskirts of old Moscow. The Moscow Okhrana (secret political police) had received information that an illegal printing plant of the Moscow Committee of the Russian Social-Democratic Labor Party had been installed in this house in the apartment of one Lebedev, a tailor. The police had raided the house the night before and had discovered a set of type and proofs of proclamations in a large clothes hamper belonging to Lev Zhigitov, who had rented a room from Lebedev some six weeks prior to this. Zhigitov, and his fellow-roomer, Sergei Ivanov, a young printer, were arrested. So were the mortally frightened tailor and his wife.

Only when she saw the pieces of type that had been scattered during the search did the tailor's wife realize the purpose of those strange bits of metal she had sometimes found when cleaning up Zhigitov's room and had carefully picked out of the sweepings and placed on his windowsill. What is more, it turned out that his name was not Zhigitov at all, but Timofei Trifonov, a professional revolutionary and old enemy of the tsar and the capitalist system, for whom the Okhrana had been hunting for a long time.

A month earlier the police had discovered a secret printing plant of the Moscow Committee of the R.S.D.L.P. on Bolshaya Gruzinskaya Street. They had hardly ceased congratulating themselves on the capture when leaflets and proclamations bearing the mark "Printshop of the Moscow Committee" again began to appear. In Trifonov's room—in the neighborhood of Gruzinskaya Street—the police found specimens of his entire output for March. There were the long, narrow strips of a leaflet in which the Moscow Committee of the R.S.D.L.P. announced that March 1, 1908, was the twentieth anniversary of the "death of Karl Marx, the founder of scientific Socialism and the ideological leader of the international proletarian movement." The Moscow Committee called upon the workers to "mark this day by meetings in his memory in all mills and factories." There were bundles of a leaflet entitled *A New Attack by Capitalism*, which warned the printing trade workers of an impending lockout. There were copies of the first issue (March, 1908) of the *Workers' Banner*, organ of the Central Industrial Regional Bureau of the R.S.D.L.P. Everything was of the freshest; nothing later than March. The clumsy police inspector pulled a proof with unpractised hands; the form was badly tightened and the lines came out crooked. But there was no doubt about it: the leaflets had been set up here in this room.

So this was what the tailor's lodger had been busy with for days on end, leaving the room only to go to work on the night shift!

Trifonov's fellow-roomer was at home when the police arrived. Trifonov himself only returned late that night. He had already entered the street when he noticed a dim figure lurking in the shadow of a fence. He divined with the instinct of a

secret revolutionary that all was not well and that he had better go no farther. But it was too late to turn back. He tried to walk nonchantly past his house, but he was hailed and there was nothing for it but to stop. In an instant a police officer was at his side, inviting him to step into a neighboring courtyard "just for a moment." The tailor and his wife identified him as their lodger. After a search, Trifonov, his fellow-roomer and the tailor and his wife were taken to the No. 2 Police Station of the Presnya district.

Two policemen were left in the kitchen as an ambush. They sat through the remainder of the night and the following morning, but nobody appeared.

It was after one in the afternoon when they espied a tall young man approaching the house. He wore a long black coat; a Caucasian fur cap of a kind rarely to be seen in Moscow was cocked on the side of his head. Carrying a parcel under his arm, the young man marched across the yard with long, even strides and climbed the stairs to the kitchen on the second floor, where the policemen lay in wait. As soon as he entered the room one of them jumped up and seized him by the arm. The young man was taken aback, but at once recovered himself and peremptorily cried:

"Let me go. I've come to see the tailor!"

But the tailor's assistant hurried into the room and announced that this young man was not one of their customers although he had seen that Caucasian fur cap before in the lodgers' room. The young man was immediately deprived of his package and taken under the custody of one of the policemen to the same station to which the others had been conveyed the night before.

The police inspector who had conducted the search of Trifonov's room opened the parcel and instantly recognized the contents as Trifonov's handiwork: seventy copies of the *A New Attack by Capitalism* and seventy-six copies of the *Workers' Banner*. In addition, there were four copies of the first issue (February, 1908) of the *Soldiers' News*, organ of the Moscow Committee's army organization.

The young man gave his name as Vladimir Mayakovsky. When asked about his age, he hesitated at first, and then said he was seventeen. The first thing the inspector wanted to know was where he had obtained the leaflets and what his relations were with Trifonov, alias Zhigitov. But he could get no satisfactory answer. Mayakovsky replied vaguely and stuck to the story that he was carrying the parcel for a man he did not know very well and whom he had met several times at the Pushkin Memorial on Strastnoi Square.

The case of the secret printing plant of the Moscow Committee of the R.S.D.L.P. was turned over to Voltanovsky, investigating magistrate in special cases, who interrogated Mayakovsky on April 8 at the No. 1 Police Station, Sushchevskaya district. This was really a "special case" in the eyes of the Moscow police, for, like a number of others, it showed how intensive and unrelaxing were the activities of the Bolshevik Party, which had not laid down its arms in spite of the defeat of the 1905 Revolution and the ensuing reaction. The first issues of two new illegal Social-Democratic newspapers—the *Workers' Banner* and the *Soldiers' News*—that were found in Mayakovsky's parcel pointed to a resumption of the illegal publishing activities of the Party and to an influx of new funds and forces into its Moscow organization. And all this happened after the Moscow police had been commended by the Minister of Home Affairs for having broken up the Moscow organization of the R.S.D.L.P.

The Moscow Bolsheviks operated their new printing plant in profound secrecy; it was so compact at times that it could be carried about with ease, as was the case with Trifonov's clothes hamper. This made it all the more dangerous to the existing order, and the Okhrana was highly annoyed and mystified by the speed with which these centers of revolutionary contagion were restored after being destroyed. At the end of 1907, the Okhrana had arrested nearly all the Moscow District Party committees; in January 1908, the Zamoskvoretsky District Committee was caught in toto at one of its meetings, and in February the same fate befell the secretary of the Moscow Committee and its secret printing plant. Yet in the middle of this same month of February, as the tailor Lebedev testified, a man rented a room from him and moved in with less baggage than is usually brought by a journeyman tailor coming to work in Moscow from the country. And now it turned out that it was not just a simple lodger that had moved into Lebedev's apartment, but an entire printing establishment with type-setting and printing departments, paper s ores and circulating department. Here, hidden from the uninitiated eye, and unknown even to the neighbors, the ideas of the Bolsheviks, who if the official reports were to be believed had been smashed, were transformed into proclamations and newspapers, into leaflets and appeals.

And now before examining-magistrate Voltanovsky, who had the reputation among the revolutionaries of being a cautious and inveterate "stickler for the law," stood this strange youth who had

been arrested in Trifonov's room—an intelligent-looking fellow with a serious mien, an attentive, penetrating gaze, and the noticeable beginnings of a black mustache. He was either a high school or a college student, it was difficult to say which. He stuck to his testimony, reiterating what he had said at the preliminary inquiry. He refused to plead guilty to belonging to the Moscow organization of the Russian Social-Democratic Labor Party, a body whose aim was the violent overthrow of the existing government and social order by means of armed revolt.

He professed to have no knowledge of what had been in the parcel and said that he had received it by chance from a man named Alexander, whom he met near the Pushkin Memorial. He described this Alexander in detail, in fact, in too great detail. Alexander was "tall," "wore a Caucasian fur cap"—in a word, resembled Mayakovsky himself. But in all this there was nothing explicit, nothing definite. And as for Trifonov, alias Zhigitov, he had never even heard of him.

Was he lying, or had he really blundered into the affair?

The protocol of the interrogation contains the following statement in Mayakovsky's own handwriting:

"After my first acquaintance with this Alexander I met him seven or eight times, in the theater, on the street, or in beer saloons; never in any apartment. Towards the end of March, approximately on the twentieth, I met him near the Pushkin Memorial and we walked together in the direction of Trubnaya Square. On the way I stopped to look in the window of a book store. He told me he was in a hurry. He handed me two parcels wrapped in newspaper and tied with string, and asked me to deliver them to the following address: Novo-Chukhinsky Lane, house of Konoplin, apt. 7. I was to turn them over to Lev Zhigitov and say that they were from Alexander. I went to this address with the packages on the afternoon of March 27, and not finding Zhigitov at home, returned again on March 29, when I was arrested. I know nothing whatever about Zhigitov and never even heard of him before this. As for Alexander, who gave me the parcels, I can only give the following description: he was tall, had a small black beard, wore a Caucasian fur cap, which he recently discarded for a felt hat, and was dressed in a grey, striped suit and a black overcoat. He once told me that he was a former student and gave lessons; I know nothing more about him.

"Whether Zhigitov lived alone or with somebody else I do not know.

"Vladimir Mayakovsky."

In general, this corresponded with what he had told the police inspector on the day of his arrest, except for one detail: he had then said that he was seventeen, but now he suddenly declared that he was only fourteen. Could this tall, husky fellow be only fourteen? He looked seventeen, no less, in fact, more like nineteen!

Mayakovsky's sister, Ludmila, a student at the Stroganov School of Industrial Arts, brought his birth certificate, and it turned out that he really was not yet fifteen—fourteen years and nine months, to be exact. A mere boy! The revolutionaries must be in a bad way if they had to resort to the aid of minors. Examining-magistrate Voltanovsky, living up to his reputation of being a stickler for the law, made the following decision: Whereas Vladimir Mayakovsky is only fourteen years of age and whereas his testimony merits confidence—to apply in his case a milder form of preventing the evasion of investigation and trial and to place him under special police surveillance at his place of residence.

On April 9, 1908, Mayakovsky was allowed to return home on his mother's and sister's recognizances and after signing an undertaking not to leave Moscow without the knowledge of the police. Trifonov was transferred from the Sushchevskaya police station to the Moscow deportation prison, the Butyrka, pending investigation of the case of the illegal printing plant of the Moscow Committee of the R.S.D.L.P.

That is the picture of Mayakovsky's first arrest we get from an examination of the files of the Moscow Okhrana and the preliminary investigating authorities now deposited in the Archives of the Revolution.

This first, almost incidental arrest was in a way a baptism of fire for Mayakovsky. Short as was the time he spent in confinement, he gathered a multitude of new impressions. The Sushchevskaya police station was a regular prison. In the common cell there were about forty men of various types, the majority of them political prisoners. He made friends with the students, of whom there were quite a number, and talked and discussed with them day and night.

About this time Karakhanov, whose political nickname was Vaness, a friend of his sister Ludmila, returned to Moscow from another city where he was practicing law. Like many other intellectuals, Vaness had practically given up active participation in the revolutionary movement. Vladimir Mayakovsky, on the other hand, literally burned with revolutionary fervor; he excitedly told him all about

Photos of Mayakovsky in police records

his stay in prison and could talk nothing but politics. At this period, evidently, Mayakovsky's ties with the Social-Democrats were growing closer. Throughout the year 1908 he regularly carried out Party assignments, little by little acquiring the technique of an efficient revolutionary.

The Archives of the Revolution contain some interesting reports of police spies set to watch "Lanky's" (Mayakovsky's) movements. They give us a good picture of his wanderings through Moscow. One of them runs as follows:

REPORT

"Lanky," residing at Butygin's, Novo-Slobodskaya Street. August 12, 1908.

Left house at 11:50 a.m., boarded street car and went to the hotel on Nikolskaya Street. Remained there 50 mins., then went to the office of the city governor's printshop near Tverskoi Boulevard. Soon came out, carrying some small sheets looking like letter paper, which he rolled up and put in his pocket. Walked to Malaya Dmitrovka Street, got on a street car and returned home.

Left house again at 4:30 p.m. Walked to Saint Nicholas' church on Novo-Slobodskaya Street and returned home within an hour of leaving. From then on until 11 p.m. was not seen to leave the house.

Vinogradov
Sharkov
Gul

It is difficult to say what form and scope his activities took at that time, what Party assignments he performed, who his friends were, or what he read. It is important to note, however, that there were two factors in Mayakovsky's attitude towards revolutionary work: first, there was the romance of secret activities; but there was also the far-sighted vision of a revolutionary who had joined the struggle when the tide of revolution was at its lowest ebb, when the Russian working class was passing through a most difficult period following severe defeat.

Mayakovsky was leading a life of his own, which his family, for all their intimacy, knew only externally: comrades would come to see him, they would carry on whispered conversations in the corridor; he would go out every day, sometimes returning late at night. Neither his mother nor his sisters questioned him about these matters, for they knew that he would tell them nothing and would continue to go his own way. On the other hand, Vladimir knew how profound was his mother's belief in him and it hurt him not to be able to disclose his plans to her. He badly wanted to do something to please her. When it was suggested that he continue his studies, he spoke reassuringly about taking his matriculation examination. Sometimes he almost believed himself that this concession was necessary, and not only for his family's sake, in order to help them out of their poverty.

He acquired a syllabus of the examinations, procured some high school textbooks and for several days studied voraciously. But the work of a secret revolutionary had its iron rules—one had to be at certain places at certain times and do certain things—and so his studies came to naught. He would hurry in his shabby shoes in the pouring rain to attend meetings of the District Committee, or to some study circle, or on some other Party business. Was it possible for him to set his mind to the matriculation examinations when on all sides people were being arrested, persecuted, and hung, when the cruelty and misery around him called upon him to devote himself heart and soul to changing the order that produced them! And this meant working to prepare the ground for revolution, preparing himself for revolution—that was to be his real matriculation. . . .

Every day brought new reminders of the savagery and reaction of the triumphant tsarist regime. A young man of about eighteen or nineteen had rented the corner room of their apartment. One morning the police came to search his room. He was arrested, and soon after hanged. The next to occupy that room was a silent, bashful man who had recently graduated from the university. He lived a quiet, solitary life. One night he did not return home. He did not come the next night either, and in the morning Vladimir learnt from the newspaper that their quiet lodger had thrown himself under the wheels of a train. A few days later the man's sister came to Moscow and visited the Mayakovsky's. They learnt from her that he had been unemployed and penniless and had led an unhappy private life. This hanging and suicide of two persons with whom he had lived side by side, following in such swift succession, made a deep impression on Mayakovsky.

Shortly after this his sister Olga stuck a needle in her hand. It required an operation to extract it. The family had had a mortal horror of pins and needles ever since their father's tragic death: he had stuck his finger with a needle while sewing some papers together and had died from blood poisoning. Vladimir dashed out to find a cab to take his sister to the hospital. There they were told that the operation would require a local anæsthetic and would cost five rubles. There was no money in the house; their lodger had none to lend them either. Without money there would be no operation, that meant that his sister must die. . . . How keenly at this moment he recalled the Erfurt Program, with its demand for free medical service for the working people! He dashed from friend to friend trying to raise the money. At home his sister wept and said: "Perhaps it's not necessary. After all, it's so expensive." At last the required sum was procured and the operation successfully performed. But Vladimir, who had been morbid about matters of health from childhood and inclined to take the sufferings of others too much to heart, had been deeply shocked by the insecurity and defenselessness of man in bourgeois society, by the latter's frigid indifference to the life and health of those who live by labor.

SECOND ARREST

Ludmila urged her brother to enter the Stroganov School of Industrial Arts, from which she was soon to graduate. Although he was fond of drawing—a family hobby, at which he was more adept than she—he would not hear of the idea. "What is the sense of both of us being artists?" he would say. "I want to have my own individual stamp."

The Stroganov School trained industrial artists: it taught stage designing, textile designing, metal-chasing, engraving and enamelling.

Ludmila was specializing in print designing. She was one of the first women to learn the art of aerography, a method of transferring design to fabrics by spraying. It required good taste, a knowledge of textile designing and familiarity with factory production. All this Ludmila had, and she devoted herself enthusiastically to her studies, taking pride in the fact that she would be independent. Reserved and dignified, she would, however, flare up when the artistic abilities of women were questioned and their

right to prove their equality with men in work denied. The democratic ideals of the 1905 Revolution—equality of all citizens before the law, personal freedom—were expressed in her character and actions. She was of rigid principles, conscientious and exacting both towards herself and others. Uncommunicative and restrained in all that concerned her personal sorrows and sufferings, she could not contain herself when a principle she held dear was assailed. Even the director of the Stroganov School, a protégé of the Grand Duchess Elizabeth, did not miss the fire of her fury when he was tactless enough to twit two girl students in the carving shop, where women rarely appeared. For a long time after this the embarrassed director was very chary of approaching this proud student, although her work interested him. Perhaps it was a consciousness on the director's part that he owed amends to Ludmila that helped to get Vladimir registered at the Stroganov School, for when she applied to him for aid in getting round certain formalities, he at once complied. On August 30, 1908, Mayakovsky's mother applied in writing for the admission of her son to the Stroganov School. Consent was given for him to attend the preparatory class, where general subjects were taught to students who had received little previous education and where their artistic capacities were tested.

In the middle of January, 1909, Mayakovsky addressed the following petition to the director:

"After acquainting myself with the curriculum of the Stroganov School, I consider myself able to pass the examinations in general subjects and therefore respectfully request Your Excellency to permit me to take them in May, and to study the other subjects along with the main body of students.

"Vladimir Mayakovsky."

This petition was dated January 14, 1909. But four days later Mayakovsky was arrested on the street and again taken to the Sushchevskaya Police Station.

Both Mayakovsky and his family were completely at a loss to understand this turn of events. The simplest solution was that this arrest was an aftermath of the case of the illegal printing plant, which was still under investigation and had been hanging over his head all this time. It was already quite some time since the examining-magistrate had arranged for him to be examined by a city doctor, who had pronounced him not only perfectly normal but developed beyond his years, "with the physique of a youth of seventeen." On the basis of this the Moscow Circuit Court, on October 11, 1908, had held him answerable for his actions and the case had been turned over to the Moscow Tribunal. Over three months had elapsed since then and the police had left him undisturbed. He knew, of course, that he was constantly being spied on, but he was skilful enough to allow nothing incriminating to come to the notice of his shadowers.

What made the arrest all the more inexplicable was that none of his comrades had recently been arrested. Only one thing worried him: it was a Browning revolver concealed in an unlocked trunk in the corridor, of which neither his mother nor his sisters knew anything.

As it turned out, this second arrest was the result of a strange misunderstanding on the part of the Moscow Okhrana. However, we cannot be sure that it was entirely due to the stupidity of some assiduous gendarme anxious for promotion; it is not unlikely that it was part of some intricate maneuver.

Mayakovsky was arrested with several others on suspicion of being connected with a gang of robbers. The charge turned out to be groundless with respect to all of them. This is admitted by the police themselves in secret correspondence.

When Mayakovsky was searched a letter was found on him, the contents of which are described as follows in the record:

"Letter from one Yevseyenko at the Prechistensky prison, addressed to Vladimir Mayakovsky, Dolgorukovskaya Street, № 47, Apt. 38.

"The writer requests him to bring him a blouse, have his dirty linen washed, buy him some food, find out how matters stand at his place of employment and request permission to visit him (Yevseyenko) in prison. The letter contains a description of the regime in the Okhrana and at the Prechistensky prison."

It is not surprising that this letter, found in "Lanky's" possession when arrested on the street, was regarded by the Okhrana as proof of his unbroken connections with the revolutionaries.

A good idea of the scope of Mayakovsky's mental interests and development at this period is furnished by a letter he sent to his sister from the Sushchevskaya Police station. It was delivered by a comrade who had been released. Mayakovsky asks for a number of books on a wide range of subjects, from Marxist philosophy to the philosophy of art, from *Capital* to a Latin grammar and a physics textbook needed in preparing to take the much-discussed matriculation examinations. Other books he asked for were Coulper's *Introduction to Philosophy*, Dietzgen's *Essence of Mental Labor* and Mouter's

History of Painting. This extensive list and the request for water colors and a drawing album give the impression of a man who is about to leave on a distant expedition and is anxious to omit nothing he may need later on. Here is the letter in full.

"Dear Liuda,

They arrested me on the street that day as I left the house at 11 a.m. God only knows why! They seized me quite suddenly on the street, searched me and then took me to the police station.

"Here I am in the Sushchevskaya station again. There are three of us in my cell (nine political prisoners in all at the station). We are fed, or rather we feed ourselves, quite well. I shall buckle down to study at once, and if they permit it will do a lot of drawing. Meanwhile, please send me a pillow, blanket, towel, underwear, sheet, pillowcase, toothpowder and brush, mirror, comb, handkerchiefs and a black shirt. Also the following books (search around my room for them, and if you don't find any of them ask Serge, Vladimir, Xose or the other comrades): Davidov's or Tsesar's algebra or geometry, Nikiforov's Latin grammar, Kaiser's German grammar, a German dictionary, a small volume of Ibsen in German (you'll find it on my bookshelf), Krayevich's physics, Savodnik's *History of Russian Literature* and the syllabus for the matriculation exams. I would also like the following for reading purposes: Chelpanov's psychology, Minto's logic, a history of modern Russian literature (I don't remember the author; it's lying on my desk) Coulper's *Introduction to Philosophy*, dialectical studies (illegible—*Ed.*) and Dietzgen's *Essence of Mental Labor*.

"You'll find them all in my room. Also ask Vladimir or Serge whether they have Marx's *Capital*, Vol. I, Chelpanov's *Introduction to Philosophy* and the books of Tolstoy or Dostoyevsky.

"Bring all these books yourself or ask someone else to do so. Not all at once, of course, but a few at a time. Ask Serge for the address of Victor Mikhailovich, for whom I drew a poster. Go and get the money from him (ask for eight rubles) and if the poster requires some finishing touches, please see to it.

"Out of the money you get buy some water colors at the school (be sure to get them in a box), also a medium-sized drawing album with tear-off leaves, like the one I had before (it should cost about 1 rub. 25 kop. or 1 rub. 75 kop.).

"If you can, get two erasers and three pencils at the stationer's on Petrovka, Greenblat's, I think it is. You will find a penknife on my desk, bring that too. Try to manage it so that about four or five rubles are left, and send them to me. Money will come in handy here. When I get my things, I will settle down comfortably. Get the permission of the Okhrana for you, Mother and Olga to visit me. Visiting days are Thursdays and Sundays. Well, good bye for the present.

"My love to you all. Kiss Mama and Olga for me. Don't worry about me; they cannot incriminate me for this new affair, for I am as innocent as an angel. Regards to my comrades. Tell them not to forget me.

"*Vladimir.*"

"P. S. Send me Gnedich's *History of Art* and Mouter's *History of Nineteenth Century Painting*, if you can lay hands on them (do try!).

"I just had a talk with the inspector. He allows me to have paints and to draw. Only everything must be of small size, otherwise it will be inconvenient. By the way, bring two extra brushes.

"Well, I shall set to work and study. The surroundings are conducive. There is a fourth-year technology student in my cell who knows German and can draw a little. Be sure to bring only a few books at a time, otherwise they won't let them through. Five, six or seven at a time.

"I am well and in good spirits.

"Love to you all,

"*Vladimir.*"

This is the letter of a man who submits to fate with a sense of humor and has already acquired some experience in dealing with the police. He has left romance behind him, and looks upon prison with the air of a professional, determined to make the most of his term of confinement in preparation for future activities when at liberty.

While Mayakovsky was being held in custody by the police, it became known that he was being sought in connection with the secret printing plant case. The indictment had been drawn up on December 23, but owing to some stupid mistake it was thought that Mayakovsky had escaped police surveillance and was hiding in Samara—and because of this the hearing was postponed.

Meanwhile the family did all it could to unravel this tangle. Vladimir's mother petitioned the Governor of Moscow to release her son on her recognizances, but there was a difficulty—the revolver discovered in the unlocked trunk in the corridor during the search. This was the most damaging piece of evidence against Mayakovsky. Luckily, an old friend of the family, an official in the Moscow postal

department, who had lodged in their house not long before Vladimir's arrest, claimed the revolver as his own, and on February 27, 1909, Mayakovsky was released.

THIRD ARREST

In March 1909, Nina Morozova, a Bolshevik, member of the army organization of the R.S.D.L.P., was transferred from St. Petersburg to the Novinskaya Prison in Moscow. She had been sentenced to five years' hard labor in the trial of the Social-Democratic members of the Second State Duma. In St. Petersburg, the Kalashnikov brothers (one of whom was her fiancé) had tried to arrange for her escape, but unsuccessfully. They also came to Moscow, established contact with a group of students and began to study the regime in the Novinskaya Prison.

The inmates of cell No. 8, to which Nina Morozova was confined, formed a heterogeneous group. It would have been inexpedient to arrange for her escape alone; plans had to be made for the simultaneous escape of a whole group of political prisoners in that cell.

The daringly conceived, and no less daringly executed, prison break was a big victory for the revolutionaries. There could be no doubt about the significance of this escape of political prisoners through prison walls ten or eleven layers of brick thick, through bars and bolts, the line of jailors, sentinels and policemen, the outside cordon of guards and the whole hierarchy of police sleuths and detectives, headed by His Excellency Major-General Kurlov, Assistant Minister of Home Affairs.

There are documents in the files of the Okhrana which reveal the part played by various Social-Democrats in organizing the escape. Among the list of those suspected of having a hand in the affair we find the name of Vladimir Mayakovsky, student of the Stroganov School of Industrial Arts, with the following comment:

"Knew about the contemplated escape and promised to help conceal the fugitives, but was arrested on the following day."

How did Mayakovsky become connected with this affair?

The plan for the escape, conceived in the stifling atmosphere of the prison, depended above all on the determination of the women themselves, who were ready to incur any risk. Of course, it could not have been carried through without the help of devoted comrades outside. But aid came from a totally unexpected quarter, an ally within the prison walls. This was Tarasova, one of the wardresses, a young and attractive woman who happened to be in a state of great emotional stress: she had been abandoned by the man she loved on the eve of their wedding. She wanted to commit suicide and was looking for poison.

Tarasova had undergone special training as a wardress and was therefore above all suspicion. Her aid was therefore all the more valuable.

The inmates of cell No. 8 learnt of her tragedy and made friends with her; the moment was opportune to break down her prejudices. As a ruse one of the women prisoners promised to help her get hold of poison through her "Michael," as the fiancés, real or fictitious, of the political prisoners were called in prison slang. The "Michael," in this case a fictitious one, was S. Morchadze, a specialist at arranging prison breaks.

Morchadze had known the Mayakovsky family in the Caucasus, but became better acquainted with them in Moscow. He had once rented a room in their apartment and from time to time used to come and live with them.

Tarasova came to see Morchadze, and it was in this way that the Mayakovsky family learned about the planned escape.

Morchadze was a past master in his field: he was fertile in inventing and procuring the equipment required for an escape, was quick in grasping the layout and knew how to enlist the aid of all who might be useful and could be relied upon in such a delicate business. No one doubted that he would be very valuable in organizing the escape of Nina Morozova.

In spite of the risk and strenuousness of his "profession," Morchadze was always merry and even-tempered, and Mayakovsky liked to be in his company. In addition, Morchadze turned out to be an unusually patient and willing artist's model. Mayakovsky drew countless sketches and portraits of him. One of these portraits has survived as a specimen of Mayakovsky's earliest known works.

Although Morchadze was much older than Vladimir, they became fast friends. They went boating together on the lake at Petrovsko-Razumovskoye, and tried by their joint efforts to talk some sense into a certain Shelestov, whom the Mayakovskys called Kolya Baritone because of his fine voice. Shelestov was highly gifted, but a frightful drinker and could never hold a job for long. They once found a post for him in a bank, but he came late the very first day. Vladimir and Morchadze, who had made Kolya Baritone's affairs their own, urged him to rise earlier. Kolya excused himself on the plea that he was a heavy sleeper and could not wake

in time. Vladimir, who was accustomed to rising at an early hour to do household errands for his mother, offered to wake Kolya. The following morning Vladimir and Morchadze managed with great difficulty to rouse their friend. He sat up in bed and began to pull on his socks. When they left him he had the air of a man who was in no hurry, but was clearly bent on getting dressed.

Several minutes later Vladimir returned to see how he was progressing and found the new-fledged bank clerk fast asleep and snoring away peacefully. After discussing the situation with Morchadze, Vladimir laughingly pulled the blankets off the stubborn stay-in-bed. Kolya woke and protested angrily:

"What do you want now? I asked you to wake me—you did. Your job ended there. Waking me is your business; getting up is mine!"

Marveling at the logic of the carefree Kolya, the two friends went about their affairs. Later the same day, while Morchadze was walking along the crowded Kuznetsky Most, he heard a loud voice hailing him by name. There was Vladimir Mayakovsky on the other side of the street calling and laughing:

"Waking me is your business, getting up is mine!"

Mayakovsky often recalled this incident when he met Morchadze in later years, and the two would laugh heartily over it.

When Tarasova came to see Morchadze, he was overjoyed: here was a new adventure shaping; enough of idleness! But she came with a strange request—she wanted some potassium cyanide.

"What for?"

"I am tired of life. I want to die."

"Why?"

"I am very unhappy, I have nothing to live for."

"Wouldn't it be better to devote your life to others? Tell me, what do you think of the women politicals in your prison?"

"Oh, they are saints!"

"Wouldn't you like to be like them?"

"How do you mean?"

"Help them!"

Tarasova was at loss for an answer. Morchadze explained what was wanted of her. She was astonished but not scared. After several more meetings with Morchadze, Tarasova threw herself heart and soul into the plan for the escape.

The Mayakovsky family were informed about Morchadze's new enterprise. Vladimir of course was in the secret. Morchadze procured some black sateen, out of which Vladimir's mother made frocks for the prisoners. They had to be very thin, for Tarasova was to carry them into the prison worn beneath her dress. It was in the Mayakovskys' apartment that the ropes were tarred for the escape. Without knowing the exact day set for the attempt—Morchadze kept that a secret—the entire Mayakovsky family lived for weeks in an atmosphere of tense preparation for this daring and risky enterprise, on the success of which the fate of thirteen political prisoners and their friend Tarasova would depend . . .

The news of the sensational flight appeared in the newspapers on July 2, 1909. As soon as Mayakovsky read the report, excited and overjoyed, he ran to see Morchadze's wife. He had visited her before; she was also something of an artist and they had fulfilled some commissions together.

That day the entire police force was set in motion: the policemen patrolled their beats with rifles on their shoulders. Special groups of detectives were detailed to keep a watch over all the railway stations.

Mayakovsky was filled with pride and self-confidence that day as one of a group of audacious and resourceful revolutionaries who had so cleverly succeeded in outwitting the detested Okhrana. It was in this happy frame of mind that he approached the house of Morchadze's wife. He knew that for conspiratorial reasons, Morchadze himself did not live there, but his wife knew all about the escape, and there might be something he could do to help the fugitives.

Meanwhile in the apartment of Morchadze's wife, where Mayakovsky least of all expected to meet danger, the police were lying in wait. Morchadze himself, having done his share in the escape, had tried to leave Moscow, but the police were on his track. Noticing that he was being shadowed, he jumped into a streetcar passing at full speed and several stops later jumped off again and then boarded a car moving in the opposite direction. That was at nine in the morning. He got off at the Red Square, and noticed that he was again being followed. He began to go from store to store, buying absolutely unnecessary trifles after long and fastidious selection. But every time he left a store he found a police spy in the offing.

Thus he wandered about for three hours. There was still one place he could go to, but if he did he might bring suspicion on comrades who were innocent in the affair. At one in the afternoon he made a decision, destroyed everything incriminating in his pockets and went to his wife's place in the hope that the police might not think of going there.

But the chief of police himself met Morchadze at the door. The interrogation was almost over and a protocol being drawn up, when Mayakovsky burst into the room. The high spirits he had been in since the morning owing to the commotion caused in the city by the escape were not in the least dampened by this unexpected encounter with the police. On the contrary they rose still higher at the sight of the outwitted enemy. When the police inspector who was drawing up the protocol asked Mayakovsky who he was and why he had come there, he rattled off his reply in an impromptu rhymed pun, explaining that he had come there on artistic business.

After a few more witticisms at the expense of the policemen, who suspected that the buckshot used as a weight to balance a hanging lamp was a supply of ammunition, Mayakovsky, still in the same high spirits, was escorted to the Basmanny remand prison. There he was so boisterous that the station chief grew alarmed and took the first opportunity to get rid of him. On July 14, Mayakovsky was transferred to the Myasnitsky remand prison and placed in a separate cell.

Evidently, the new surroundings were more to his taste, for on July 16 he wrote a petition couched in quiet terms to the Moscow Okhrana asking permission to receive drawing materials, giving as the reason for this request the necessity of continuing his studies; he was listed in the police record as a student of the Stroganov School of Industrial Arts.

During the first general exercise in the prison yard he espied an old acquaintance among the political prisoners. This was Povolzhets, who at the beginning of 1908 had secured his admission to the Moscow Social-Democratic organization. Mayakovsky had not seen him since, and he was delighted at this unexpected meeting. Mayakovsky was very lively, always ready with a joke, and soon became known among the prisoners as an artist—he was never without his pencil and album and drew sketches at every opportunity.

To ward off any ill effects on their health from their stay in prison, the two friends decided to follow a strict regime. Povolzhets had Müller's *My System*, which he lent to Vladimir. Vladimir became a wrestling enthusiast. During general exercises Vladimir and Povolzhets would stage wrestling exhibitions, which served to enhance Vladimir's prestige, for Povolzhets never once succeeded in pinning him down. Povolzhets was five years older, but Mayakovsky was so tall and husky that no one suspected that there was such a difference in their ages.

Mayakovsky was appointed senior prisoner amid general approval. He proceeded to discharge this function with great energy: he established contact with the outside world, ascertained how the prisoners conducted themselves under interrogation, and even tried to supervise the cooking of the food. The prison governor began to feel uncomfortable; the man the Basmanny prison had managed so happily to get rid of was in his function of senior prisoner becoming a menace to the administration.

After Vladimir's sister had brought him crayons and water colors, he asked for permission to visit Povolzhets in his cell every day to draw his portrait—a fantastic demand from the standpoint of prison rules and regulations. But the new senior made his request in his deep bass voice in such a cool and contemptuous tone and with such veiled hints at possible complications in the event of refusal that the inspector hastened to comply. In order to give some semblance of conformity with the rules, which prohibited talking among prisoners, a warden was assigned to attend every sitting; the sittings, needless to say, lasted for hours, since neither the artist nor his model had any other pressing business to attend to.

Mayakovsky would seat Povolzhets on the window sill and place a low stool under his feet. For some reason or other he drew mostly in blue crayon. When the warder timidly announced that time was up, Mayakovsky would cooly answer that he was continuing his artistic studies, which had been interrupted by the police, who were holding him without having any evidence against him.

Only on August 7, 1909, did a summons reach Mayakovsky in the Myasnitsky remand prison from the Moscow tribunal charging him with complicity in the secret printing plant of the Moscow Committee of the R.S.D.L.P. under Paragraph 1, Article 102 of the Criminal Code. It had evidently taken quite an amount of time and trouble to find the accused; the police themselves had been unwittingly sheltering him by transferring him from one place of confinement to another.

Mayakovsky interpreted this summons as incontrovertible proof that the tribunal knew his case, and that the police had no right to keep him in prison when the examining magistrate had seen fit to leave him at liberty. He became more boisterous and uncontrollable than ever. The inspector grew panic-stricken.

On August 16, we learn from a prison

report in the files, Mayakovsky was let out of his cell to go to the washroom, but began to stroll up and down the corridor, paying no heed to the head warder, who followed him about and begged him to remember that although he was the senior, he was a prisoner after all, and that he therefore ought to stay in his cell and not walk about the corridor. An armed sentinel was summoned. Mayakovsky cursed him and, in a deep bass voice that made the head warder shiver, he called out:

"Comrades, these cads are driving the senior into his cell!"

The political prisoners in all the cells at once raised a loud racket in support of their irrepressible representative.

The next day the harassed governor sent a secret note to the Okhrana which ended with the following words:

". . . In view of the above, I earnestly beg you to order the transfer of Mayakovsky to another place of confinement. It should be borne in mind that it was on account of unruly conduct that he was transferred to me from the Basmanny remand prison."

The same day an official of the Moscow Okhrana wrote the following decision on the note:

"Transfer to a solitary cell in the deportation prison. Report fulfillment."

The governor was so glad to be rid of Mayakovsky that he made no demur when at the last general exercise the prisoners paid an uproarious farewell to their merry senior, the artist and wrestling champion. On August 18, 1909, Mayakovsky was transferred to the Moscow deportation prison, the Butyrka.

In the Butyrka, Mayakovsky was clapped into cell No. 103. That meant the end of his liberties. This was a real prison, and solitary confinement was exactly what the name implied. Hard times began for Vladimir, who was always liable to moroseness and needed the spur of company to stimulate his mind. His cell was on the fourth floor in the left wing, facing the North Tower. It measured six paces along the diagonal. It contained a slop pail, with a ventilation outlet. The furniture was a stool, a small collapsible table and a collapsible cot. There was a panel in the door which opened with a rattle from the corridor side, and through which bread and water for tea were passed. There was also the traditional spyhole through which the prisoner could be observed. The window was not very high but was heavily barred.

The prison regime needed getting used to: At 6 a.m. a whistle blew and shouts of "Get up!" resounded through the corridor. Then the cell had to be cleaned. A worker, usually a criminal offender, would come to remove the slops. The sliding panel was then opened, bread pushed through and the panel closed again. Twenty minutes later the panel again rattled noisily, this time to admit hot water for tea. Dinner was served at eleven; it consisted of soup with a morsel of meat the size of a matchbox, and a second dish—buckwheat or millet porridge. Wednesdays and Fridays were meatless days, when the dinner consisted of peas and again porridge with vegetable oil. Supper was at six—gruel. At seven came the evening inspection. The governor made the rounds, followed by a sergeant who counted the prisoners: one, two, three, four. . . . After the inspection the prisoners were left to their own devices; nobody glanced into the cells until six the next morning.

To a revolutionary who had been through many vicissitudes such solitary confinement was preferable to the common cell, which required adaptation to the most casual and nondescript company. In the solitary cell one could rest and read. But at first Vladimir was almost stunned by the unaccustomed stillness. What depressed his spirits most was, that being under investigation and his case not yet having been heard, he was not permitted to take exercise with the rest of the prisoners. He was led out for exercise alone in the inner yard for about twenty minutes. It did not pay to make a row in this prison; any prisoner who fell foul of the authorities was clapped into the punishment cells—or transferred to a dark, dank dungeon with windows so high that nothing but a thin strip of sky was visible from the cell.

In later years Mayakovsky recalled his longing for the sun in his poem *I Love*.

Having examined his new quarters, and not yet having found any escape from the tedium or any useful employment for his time, Mayakovsky, on August 24, wrote a petition to the Moscow Okhrana in his usual independent, aggressive style:

"In view of the fact that the Okhrana has not, and naturally cannot have, any fact or even circumstantial evidence to connect me with the misdemeanors ascribed to me, and that a verification of the facts I gave during my interrogation in proof of my innocence should quickly convince anyone of my complete lack of connection with what is ascribed to me, I earnestly beg you to examine my case and return me my liberty. I also request the Okhrana to permit me to take part in the general exercises during my con-

finement in the Central Deportation Prison.

"Vladimir Mayakovsky."

On September 5 the governor of the prison received a reply from the Okhrana:

"In answer to a petition received from Vladimir Mayakovsky confined in the prison under your charge, the Okhrana requests you to inform him that his request to take part in the general exercises cannot be granted, and that until his case has been completed he is not subject to release."

. . .The sliding panel is flung open and a voice announces, "Bath!" Prisoners in the solitary cells were taken to the prison bathhouse about twice a month in batches of from ten to twenty. Some of the prisoners would take tea and sugar with them and stay there from morning until dinner time. The authorities knew that the solitary-cell men used the bath as a club, and even as a conspiratorial rendezvous. But they were powerless to combat it; the regulations prescribed that the prisoners should be led to the bath at stated intervals as a precaution against disease.

Mayakovsky at once grasped all the advantages the bath had to offer, and was elated at the invitation. What he could not foresee, however, was that he would meet Trifonov there. Trifonov had been in the Butyrka ever since he and Mayakovsky had parted in the Sushchevskaya police station. While the police were trying to discover Mayakovsky's whereabouts the case had been postponed, and Trifonov was forced to spend several extra months in jail.

"How could you be so stupid, young man, as not to report your address?" Trifonov asked. "Here I am sitting in prison for nothing because of you."

They then discussed the forthcoming trial and Trifonov advised Mayakovsky how to conduct himself in court.

Several days later, on September 9, 1909, Trifonov and Mayakovsky were taken under convoy to the Kremlin, where the Moscow Tribunal sat. The case was heard behind closed doors, with Rang, Chairman of the Third Department, presiding. In the almost empty hall, among the small group of relatives and persons called in connection with the case, Vladimir spied his sister Ludmila. He had sent a message asking his mother not to come, so as to save her from unnecessary suffering. In the witness box sat the tailor Lebedev, his workman, and the policeman who had arrested Mayakovsky in the kitchen.

After the indictment had been read, the usual procedure began:

"Guilty or not guilty?"

None of the accused pleaded guilty. Then Trifonov, the chief defendant, was cross-examined.

"I don't know Mayakovsky."

"Who sent him? The devil only knows. . . ."

Mayakovsky followed the same line, as did the other defendants; they told the court nothing either about themselves or about one another. With regard to Trifonov, however, it was a clear case: he had served a term of hard labor as a political offender and had organized an illegal printing plant. Rang sentenced him to six years hard labor. As for Mayakovsky, in reply to the question whether he was guilty or not guilty of—

". . . while residing in Moscow in the month of March, 1908, belonging to a criminal society known as the Moscow Organization of the Russian Social-Democratic Party, which to the knowledge of the accused set itself the immediate aim of violently changing the system of government established in Russia by the fundamental law by means of organizing armed revolt . . . moreover, when detained on his arrival at the said printing plant, of having in his possession Party publications for the purpose of distribution . . . etc."

The court found:

"Guilty, but the accused did not belong to the criminal society, did not have communications with members of the society and did not receive or carry out instructions of members of the society."

Trifonov was satisfied: everything was going smoothly with Mayakovsky. But one fact that came out during the trial so astounded him that he was ready to sink through the floor with shame.

It appeared that Mayakovsky had only just turned sixteen. And it was this infant he had involved in such a risky affair! Trifonov could not believe his eyes: he could have sworn that this tall, independent fellow was nineteen at least. However, this circumstance, which had made Trifonov turn red with shame, decided Vladimir's case: the court decided to release him "on the recognizances of his parents."

From the court building in the Kremlin, Mayakovsky and Trifonov were conducted back to the Butyrka. Trifonov was put in irons and transferred to the penal servitude wing, while Mayakovsky remained in solitary confinement in cell No. 103 to await developments in the case of the escape of the women prisoners from the Novinsky prison.

The old, familiar landscape spread before the window in the corridor: directly opposite the prison was the funeral parlor mentioned in the poem *I Love*.

As before, the only diversion for the prisoners in solitary confinement was the periodical visit to the bath house. It was here that Mayakovsky learned the prison news: which warders had been shifted around, when the next party was to leave for deportation from the penal servitude wing, and so on. The regime in the penal servitude wing was very severe: a man would be condemned to the punishment cells for brushing away a fly while standing at attention; the prisoners had to rise whan an official entered the cells; chapel was compulsory. Recalcitrants were beaten.

The Moscow Okhrana delayed releasing Mayakovsky from prison on his parents' recognizances and again began to investigate the question of his age. His appearance accorded so little with the date of his birth certificate, that they evidently suspected a forgery. On September 17, 1909, the Okhrana instructed the governor of the Butyrka to have Mayakovsky medically examined, "with the object of establishing his age." Inquiries were also made at Mayakovsky's birthplace. But the facts could not be gainsaid, and the Okhrana would have to carry out the decision of the court.

There was only one noticeable change after the sentence: it became easier for Vladimir to receive visits. His mother and sisters came frequently and brought him what he cherished most—books. The meetings were brief, not more than ten minutes, and always agitating. The visiting room was dark, and Vladimir with his pale, shrunken face, was separated from his relatives by two iron gratings, between which a sentinel paced back and forth like a pendulum, so that they could get only indistinct glimpses of him.

The whole prison atmosphere had a depressing effect on Mayakovsky's mother and sisters, they had to pass through four or five locked and barred doors before they could see him. But Vladimir put up a brave front and was even flippant, although it was clear that he was finding it far from easy.

Meanwhile, the Moscow Okhrana continued its investigations into Mayakovsky's personal history. He was again interrogated on his share in the escape from the Novinsky Prison. Time and again we find the phrase in the records of the Okhrana: "denies belonging to any revolutionary organization."

On October 27, 1909, Mayakovsky was informed that his case had been submitted to the Ministry of Home Affairs. While not expecting that this would entail any radical improvement in his condition, he nevertheless hastened to take advantage of it to apply for permission to take part in the general exercises.

Evidently books were no longer any solace; nor was the writing of poetry.

Never had he written so much poetry before. He had already filled a whole notebook with verse. His writings were examined, although scarcely from what one might call the literary point of view: the pages were numbered to prevent them being torn out and the book sewn with twine, the ends of which were fastened with the prison seal. There was no one to whom he could read his poems. He no longer met Trifonov in the bathhouse; no doubt he had already been deported for penal servitude. And what would Trifonov have said if he knew that he, a propagandist, a member of the City Committee of the Party, wrote poetry? And was this the kind of poetry that was needed?

In the Butyrka Prison Mayakovsky completed another phase in the process of his self-education, this time with a literary bent. More, we perceive the awakenings of the realization that for him art was a Party duty. Here, in cell No. 103, Mayakovsky became ripe for that turning point in his spiritual life which determined his whole future career. Five years later he was to write the poem *Cloud in Pants*. How compelling must the urge for artistic expression have already been during those months in the Butyrka Prison if only five years separated him from the authorship of such a finished masterpiece!

Politics or art?—that was a dilemma that never faced Mayakovsky, neither then nor in later years. "A so-called dilemma," Mayakovsky himself ironically calls it in his autobiography. And rightly so; it was only a seeming dilemma. Mayakovsky did not forsake political activity for his art, but, with the insight of genius, rendered to the revolution that which belonged to it, and which he alone could render. Mayakovsky the secret revolutionary lived on in Mayakovsky the poet.

"What defense could I put up against the aesthetics of the past that had assailed me? Would not the revolution demand a severe schooling? I went to Medvedev, at that time still a Party comrade, and said: 'I want to create a Socialist art.'"

So writes Mayakovsky in his autobiography. And he is not exaggerating, not adapting the past to what happened subsequently. That is the way the mat-

ter really presented itself to this seventeen-year-old Social-Democratic propagandist from the very outset: "I want to create a Socialist art"—nothing less.

That in reality the path to a Socialist art proved to be far from easy for Mayakovsky is another matter. But at that period of his life, when he was a propagandist of Marxist ideas first and foremost, this grand idea of creating a Socialist art seemed to him simple and natural.

This statement in Mayakovsky's autobiographical confessions is deserving of full and unqualified credence. Of course, looking back on it from the historical elevation of the present day it is clear to us that the path of creating a Socialist art by no means required that Mayakovsky should retire from Party activities. What is more, after he had withdrawn from the Social-Democratic environment and found himself in the midst of people of an entirely different type, the Futurists, he often tended to forget what his purpose was in entering the field of art. However, it is quite impossible to understand Mayakovsky as the finest and most talented poet of Soviet times unless we bear in mind the direct connection that exists between all that he has created and his early actions and plans as a revolutionary.

The Moscow Okhrana communicated with the Ministry of Home Affairs in Mayakovsky's case and recommended that he be exiled to the Narym territory, Tomsk Gubernia, for three years under open police surveillance.

The announcement was a heavy blow to the family. It is not clear whether Vladimir had reconciled himself to the idea of exile as being at any rate better than solitary confinement, where even general exercises seemed a piece of good fortune, or whether he only made a brave show for his mother's sake, but when she came to visit him he said:

"Well, others can stick it, so will I!"

It was decided to use the ties and reputation of Vladimir's late father, an official of the Ministry of State Property, to try to secure a revision of the sentence. Vladimir's mother went to St. Petersburg, and on her return anxiously awaited the results of her efforts.

Late at night on January 8, 1910, a warder threw open the panel to cell. No. 103 and shouted:

"Mayakovsky, get your things ready to leave!"

The prisoner was certain that he was about to be sent off to exile, but in the prison office he was informed that instructions had been received from the Okhrana to release him under police surveillance. All his belongings were returned, with the exception of the notebook filled with poems. After examining it to make sure that all the pages were intact, the governor apparently decided that the contents were suspicious, and retained it.

Belinsky, the great Russian nineteenth-century literary critic, remarked in connection with Nekrasov's first volume of verse, *Thoughts and Sounds*: "Mediocrity in poetry is intolerable." Later, Nekrasov bought up all the unsold copies of this collection of his early poems and destroyed them.

In connection with his first notebook of poems, Mayakovsky says: "The prison authorities are to be thanked for taking it away from me when I left jail. Why, I might have printed them!"

This notebook would no doubt have occupied about the same place in Mayakovsky's work as *Thoughts and Sounds* in Nekrasov's. Otherwise, why should the poet recall his jailors with gratitude?

Vladimir arrived home unannounced and unexpected. He took up his mother in his arms and almost smothered her with kisses. Then he began to wash and tidy himself up. But he could not contain himself, embraced his mother and sisters again with soapy hands, and raced up and down the corridor. He returned from prison in the Stroganov uniform jacket he had been wearing when arrested the previous summer. It was a day of heavy frost and his winter coat was at the pawnbrokers. As usual, there was no money in the house with which to redeem the coat, and there was nothing to pawn in its place. But nothing could keep Vladimir at home. That very day he ran to see his friends, and walked about happily in the cold weather in nothing but his summer jacket.

He was repelled by everything that reminded him of prison. For a long time he could not eat rye bread for that reason. Once, when he found at the theater that his cloak room ticket was No. 103 he turned back and to the profound surprise of the attendant demanded that his overcoat be hung on a different hook.

In his autobiography, Mayakovsky speaks of the time he spent at the Butyrka Prison as a "most important period" in his life.

His emergence from prison coincided with an important qualitative leap in his development his emergence into the field of art.

LEV NIKULIN

Mayakovsky

REMINISCENCES]

I saw him in his youth wearing that famous yellow blouse which will forever be associated with the history of Russian poetry.

It wasn't exactly yellow, that blouse, for it had dark stripes, and there was nothing especially irritating about it; yet I saw myself how it infuriated the genteel and ordinarily polite ladies and gentlemen, the permanent subscribers to the *Russkiye Vedomosti* and *Rech*, the "intellectual" ladies, social workers from the Moscow Women's Club and the long-haired Socialist-Revolutionary-looking students.

It was only Mayakovsky's imposing stature that curbed their desire to tear that yellow blouse of his to shreds.

One day he was reading his poetry in the large auditorium of the Polytechnical Museum and when he came to the famous lines:

And down from the skies gaped a piece of trash
Majestically, like Leo Tolstoy. . . .

pandemonium broke loose. Elderly, respectable gentlemen in stiff collars and elegant ladies wearing amythest ear-rings, howled, stamped their feet, emitted vulgar cat-calls and made a wild rush for the platform.

A languid, bepowdered police inspector with a university badge (his name was Stroyev and in city government circles he was believed to be a connoisseur of literature), threw out his arms in a gesture of conciliation. Of course, he was interfering not because of the alleged defamation of Leo Tolstoy's name, he simply could not endure any disturbances.

The same literary connoisseur was present in his official capacity the morning Mayakovsky read his poem *War and the Universe* for the first time. At the very beginning of the recitation, the inspector, seated in his usual place in the front row, raised his hand and pronounced in his quiet, dry tenor voice:

"I forbid the reading to continue."

The response was a hissing and stamping from the audience. Then, addressing Mayakovsky and ignoring the public, he said:

"Please leave the hall . . ."

It was wartime and the Revolution was in the offing.

II

I doubt whether any of my contemporaries will ever forget the spring and summer of 1918, especially those who lived in Moscow at the time.

Samara was threatened by the Czecho-Slovaks, Krasnov was on the Don, Dutov in the Urals, the Germans in Kiev and the Anglo-French army of occupation in Murmansk; the Japanese were landing troops in Vladivostok, and Baku was in the hands of the British.

There was an uprising in Yaroslavl and the Left Socialist-Revolutionaries were staging a coup in Moscow.

On the walls of buildings, already covered with the huge figure 5 (the number of the Bolshevik ticket in the elections to the Constituent Assembly), new announcements were pasted up:

"Comrades soldiers, workers and peasants, enroll for service in the partisan detachments for all arms."

"All army men supporting the Soviet platform . . . are requested to report to the department of Red Army drill to be registered and sent to all provinces of the Russian Republic."

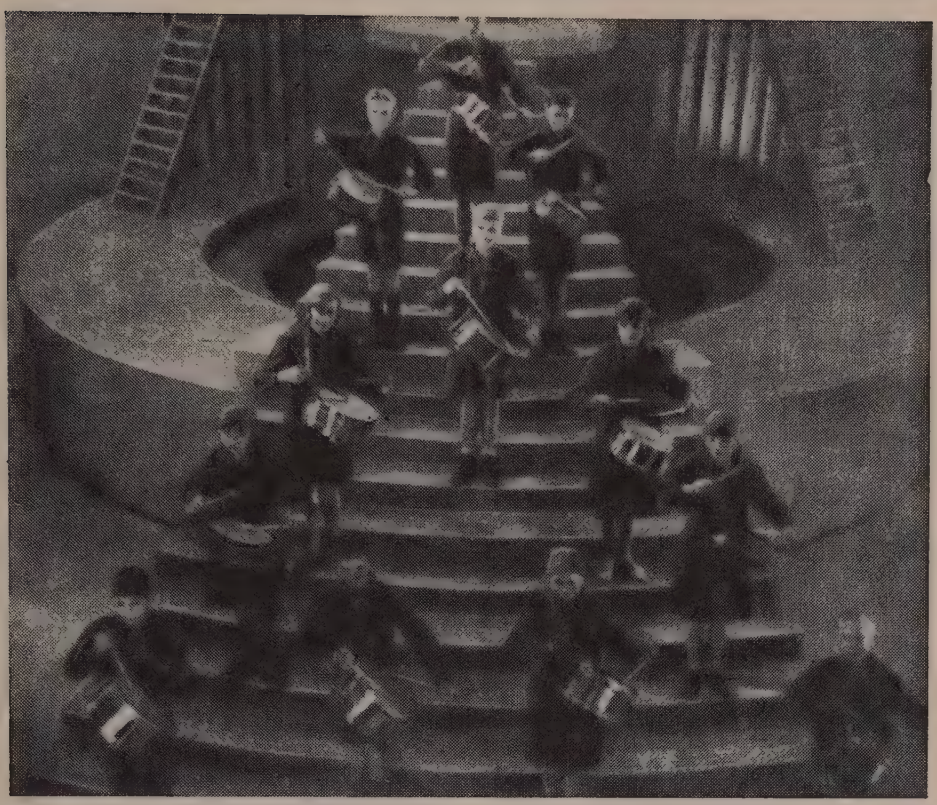
The food ration in Moscow consisted of an eighth of a pound of grey, coarse bread full of straw, and half a pound of potatoes per person.

Buried away on page two of *Pravda* among sundry items about meetings and gatherings, there was an announcement in small type:

"The Presidium of the Ural Province Soviet passed a decision to execute Nicholas Romanov by shooting. The decision was carried into effect on July 16."

Merchants, bankers, house-owners, and manufacturers held on to their Moscow mansions and fashionable apartments. Gloomy, mustached men in officers' uniform minus the epaulettes could still be encountered on the streets.

The anarchists had installed themselves in the former merchants' club on Malaya Dmitrovka. They had opened a restaurant where they had good food,



"What to be," a film made in 1931, based on a poem by Mayakovsky

drank imported wines and traded in cocaine, diamonds and weapons.

Marauders staged regular battles with the militia. By night the crackle of rifle fire and the rat-tat-tat of machine guns from armored cars echoed from end to end of the vast city.

Another modest notice appeared on the billboards amid a host of posters and proclamations. It announced that the All-Russian Extraordinary Commission for combating counter-revolution, banditism and sabotage (Vecheka) had moved to Moscow.

On Nastasyinsky Pereulok next door to the pretentious building of the treasury, stood an obscure one-story building, formerly a lodge. There is not a trace of it left today. On its site soars the impressive bulk of the Peoples' Commissariat of Timber.

On the facade of this building the word "Café" was printed in letters that danced hither and thither. You pulled open the door, upholstered in torn oilcloth, crossed the threshold and stopped short in utter amazement. The walls of the room were covered with riotous designs done in glaring colors; a pair of black pants hung crucified to the ceiling.

By night the lodge was crowded. Most of the guests were armed men in military tunics, leather jackets and sailors' uniforms. There was a sprinkling of out-and-out saboteurs, speculators who yearned for Kiev, the home of the Hetman. And all of them bellowed a popular ditty consisting of two lines:

Gobble your pineapples, guzzle your wine
Your number's up, bourgeois, this time.

The song appeared to be a particular favorite with those whose number was really up, as events were very soon to prove.

The days of pineapples and wine had gone however. Some scraps of fossilized dough and a pale liquid called tea was all one could buy at the bar.

Here, amid the incredible din and racket, merry, curly-headed Vasya Kamensky and David Burlyuk—broad-shouldered, red-headed and monocled—were in

their element. With supreme *sang-froid* they strode confidently through a maze of rifles, waving aside the wooden Mauser holsters and the handless of Colt Automatics. And of course this was the perfect setting for Mayakovsky. Whenever he felt like doing so, he would leap onto the improvized roughwood stage and recite his verses. His audience was hard-boiled and exacting; a crowd that had no qualms about chasing a poet off the stage if he didn't please them. Mayakovsky invariably stood his ground, proud and arrogant, compelling a respect for his poetry by the sheer power of his personality.

This audience listened with particular curiosity to Burlyuk's verses about a pregnant man standing beneath the Pushkin monument and about a locomotive engine that "lifted up its shirt" to urinate on the railway embankment.

The anarchists from the merchants' club began to drop in at Nastasyinsky Pereulok. It is hard to imagine what drew them hither for there was none of the wine, the fried chicken or the ladies of easy virtue, all of which could be had in abundance in the merchants' club.

They came to Nastasyinsky and made themselves quite at home, selecting the best seats, laying down their grenades and revolvers demonstratively on the table and casting challenging looks all around them.

They had their leader—a handsome brute who affected a velvet tunic unbuttoned half-way down his chest. His fingers were weighted with rings, and around his neck he wore something that glittered dazzlingly. One glance at him was enough to form a rough estimate of the approximate losses sustained by the show-window of the jewelry shop on Kuznetsky Most. Two guns stuck put of his belt. His followers were no less picturesque than their leader and inspired little more confidence than he.

This motley crew—to say the least—was far from popular with the rest of the crowd—Red Guards, demobilized soldiers and Baltic seamen.

One evening the anarchists brought along a tipsy song-writer for a lark. The song-writer climbed drunkenly onto a table, slapped himself heartily on the belly and began:

"Heard the one about the Jew who was sitting in a railway compartment opposite a priest. 'Pkhe!' says the Jew, 'Excoos me pliss, you're not maybe from Vinnitsa!'"

Mayakovsky's voice broke in at this point.

"Comrades! Don't let the swine shoot off his mouth here!"

Mayakovsky stood on the stage, his cape tilted at the back of his head, his hands thrust into his pockets. From the left corner of his mouth hung a cigarette which sharpened his grimace of disgust.

"What's the idea of insulting the artist!" yelled the anarchist leader, rising from his seat. "Get off that stage!"

"I'm going to recite *Revolution!*" roared Mayakovsky, his voice rising above the din.

Someone screamed. The women made a dash for the exit. For they had seen the anarchists reach for their revolvers. Fingering a grenade threateningly the anarchist leader planted himself in front of the stage.

But he had over-estimated his strength. The Anarchists were in the minority here. From all sides they were surrounded by a hostile ring of men. Red Guards, demobilized soldiers towered above them in a thick wall. And all were armed with carbines and rifles.

To be frank, it was not a pleasant moment for any of us. The anarchists were reluctant to show their cowardice, for they had behaved much too insolently from the outset.

"I'm going to recite *Revolution*," roared Mayakovsky above the hubbub of voices, the slamming of doors and the screams of the women.

In the tense silence the magnificent, inimitable voice of the Revolution's poet rang out like a tocsin. . . . The anarchists slipped out quietly one by one.

One night, two weeks later, the tenants of houses on Malaya Dmitrovka were awakened by machine-gun fire. They were not much surprised, for their proximity to the merchants' club had taught them plenty. But when morning came they saw the bullet-smashed window panes and the broken end of the flagpole over the entrance—all that remained of the black banner.

The *Vecheka* had "liquidated" the Moscow anarchists in one night, isolated those who called themselves "idealists" and executed the marauders.

On one of these troublous nights we were returning from Nastasyinsky at dawn. The streets were deserted. The windows gleamed somberly from their mysterious sockets.

Men slept behind triple locks and bolts, under protection of guards stationed by the house committee. Who were the people that dwelt in these houses? Comrades or enemies, or what were known as loyal citizens?

Through the greying light of dawn echoed the loud tram-tramp of soldiers' feet and the dark silhouettes of men with rifles came into view. It was the night patrol.

We walked along, listening to Mayakovsky arguing with a man of athletic build.

That man had toured the country delivering lectures on a radiant, sunny life, urging wan girls and near-sighted youths to rejoice in their physique and be strong. To prove his point he would take a none-too-thick wooden board and break it over his head. He was a handsome, arrogant fellow and he appeared before his audiences garbed in a Greek tunic, his hands and feet bare; he called himself the "Futurist of life."

The argument was about popularity—who was the more popular, this "Futurist of life" or Mayakovsky.

We were walking down the Tverskaya past the ruins of an unfinished building (now the Central Telegraph). Up the hill towards us came a detachment of Red Guards, young and elderly workmen in Russian shirts and jackets, with machine-gun cartridges in their leather belts, and rifles over their shoulders.

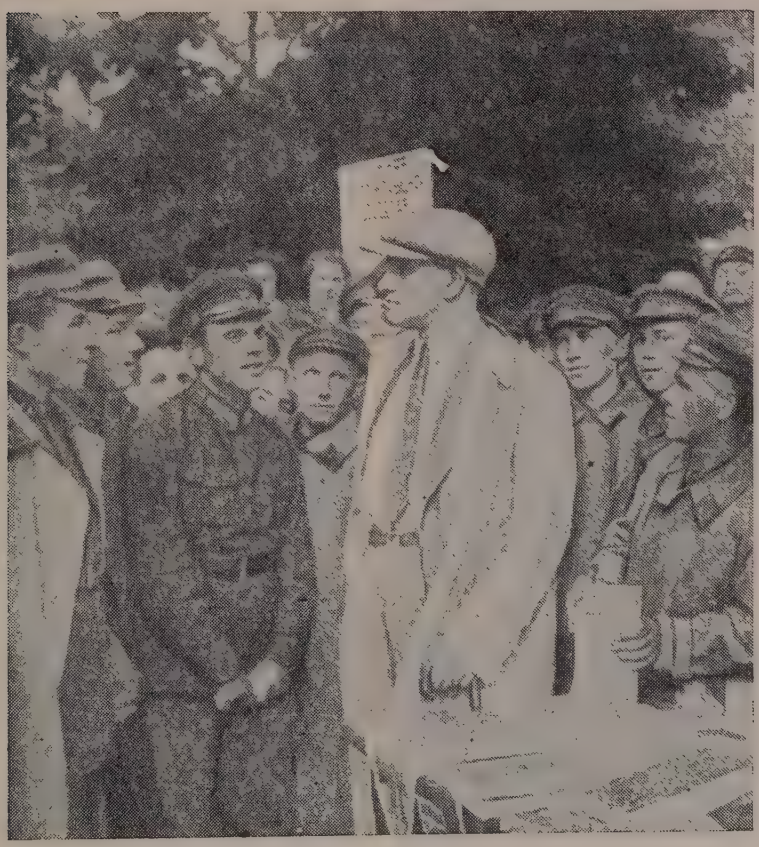
Mayakovsky stopped at the curb, touched his cap and filling the whole street with his resonant, unforgettable voice, said:

"Good morning, comrades."

"Good morning, Comrade Mayakovsky," was the friendly response chorused by the Red Guards.

Mayakovsky then turned to the "Futurist of life":

"Can you trump that?"



Vladimir Mayakovsky among Red Army men, 1929

SERGEI EISENSTEIN

Pride

We who have taken upon our shoulders the task of deciding the destiny of mankind have no reason to be embarrassed if we experience a sense of pride.

Rather it is for us to rehabilitate the very idea of pride.

Not petty vanity, vulgar self-admiration, the shrill vainglory of the priggish coxcomb.

But healthy, full-minted, full-blooded, positive pride.

The pride of a class which from day to day, from year to year, from one victorious five-year plan to another, is able to enter achievement after achievement in the account book of world history.

And so, here's to Pride!

And today the subject of our pride is the twentieth birthday of the Soviet cinema!

A new ideological content,
new forms of embodiment,
new methods of theoretical rationalization—

These were the features of our Soviet films that astonished foreign audiences.

Even though their thematic solution was not always complete, their forms of embodiment not always perfect, their theoretical implications by far not fully realized or rationalized, even though we ourselves were rather critical of them, our films came as a veritable revelation to the capitalist countries.

For an immeasurable gulf divides our films, as a manifestation of culture—a new, unprecedented, socialist culture—from the films of capitalist countries, where the cinema ranks in the same class as dope, alcohol, horseracing and the sensational press.

We should therefore not jump at overhasty conclusions regarding the political significance of films dealing with acute social problems which appear from time to time on the American screen.

It is not the nature of the problems themselves, but their sensational aspect, that explains the appearance of such films.

And if in the long run they do have a useful effect, it is only indirectly and by no means to the extent we would like.

Take Charlie Chaplin's really grim film *Modern Times*, for example.

I venture no opinion as to how deep-felt was its author's civic bitterness, or how deliberate his castigation of the existing social order.

But as regards the rank-and-file American cinemagoer, it is scarcely likely that he is moved by the "background" of this picture—the accusatory and satirical message which, whether the cinema owners like it or not, resounds from every foot of the film.

What a surprising intellectual shock to America and Europe was the appearance of our films! Suddenly all the "i's" in the social problems were dotted in the sight of audiences who had never seen even a flicker of the "i's" themselves on the screen before!

But that in itself would not have meant much. In those early days the formal imperfection of our films, novel though their themes were, aroused nothing but sheer curiosity.

I recall, for instance, the half-ironical, half-epicurean remark with which the *Filmkurier*, I think it was, greeted our film, *Palace and Fortress*: " . . . This eye-searing imperfection of contrast lighting, added to the general crudeness of treatment, has even a certain tantalizing appeal to our pampered sight."

And how, for all their impenetrable armor, the emotions of the bourgeois cinemagoer were seared when our films followed *Potemkin* one after another in solid phalanx!

The product of new ideals, and of the desire to live up to the level of these ideals and to serve them adequately, the formal peculiarities of our films astonished the Western world no less than their subjects and ideas.

Our films, often anticipating the official, diplomatic recognition of our country by many years, successfully forced their way through the frontiers of capi-

talist countries, despite all censorship vetoes, and by the power of their art won friends even among those who could not at once understand the grandeur of our ideals.

Our cinema itself—the youngest in the world in years, but the most vigorous, vital and richest in emotion and ideas—very soon took the lead of its older sisters on the other side of the barricade.

Our cinematographic art has had a profound influence on that of the West.

We were at first not a little indebted to the Americans, but it may be said that the debt has been repaid with interest.

Here is a curious instance. When I arrived in New York in 1930, I was literally deluged with newspaper clippings on the film *All Quiet on the Western Front*, which had just appeared on the screen. And there was literally not a single review which did not speak of our influence on the making of this film!

Had Raisman happened to be in my shoes when King Vidor's *Our Daily Bread* appeared, he and his *The Soil Athirst* would doubtless not have been forgotten.

Sternberg's *Shanghai Express* owed its origin to Trauberg's *Blue Express*.

Our Emden, a film highly celebrated in Germany, dealing with the battleship that was sunk in the first imperialist war, was a direct reply to *Potemkin*, while *Viva Villa*, it may be said, reflected the influence of every production of our Soviet masters, including even films like *October* and my own Mexican film. Mamoulian's first film (1931) was completely under the sway of the "symbolism of things," so typical of our films of the year 1924-27. Etc. etc.

Apart from these films, whose origin is stamped on their faces, and the list of which could be multiplied, there are countless films in which the influence is more indirect but which are full of borrowings and imitations.

The influence of the Soviet cinema is highly variegated.

It is sometimes revealed in a timid attempt to deal with a somewhat broader theme than the eternal triangle; sometimes in a bolder portrayal of reality so characteristic of our films, which are distinguished by their fidelity to truth; sometimes in the mere desire to borrow those formal devices with which our cinema art has been so richly endowed by its new ideological content.

As to the theoretical rationalization of the art of the cinema, even to this day we are practically the only ones who are working in this field, for nowhere except in our country is any attempt being made at a methodological analysis of this most amazing of the arts.

"Red Little Devils" *1923*

"Potemkin" *1925*

"Mother" *1926*

"Elisso" *1928*

And here we would like to say something about the art itself.

The noteworthy thing about cinematography, as a genuine and major *art*, is that it is a child of Socialism in the full sense of the word. The other arts have centuries of tradition behind them.

The whole history of the cinematography can count fewer years than the other arts centuries!

But the most important thing is that *cinematography as an art* in general, and, moreover, as an art which is not only equal but in many respects superior to its fellows, began to be spoken of seriously only with the appearance of our Socialist cinematography.

While, long before our cinematography fully blossomed forth, in our country the greatest minds of mankind spoke of cinematography as the most important of all the arts; and as the one with the widest popular appeal, it required the appearance of a brilliant constellation of Soviet films before people in the Western world began to speak of it as an art which is as serious and deserving of attention as drama, literature and painting.

Only from that moment did the cinema rise above the category of the music hall, the amusement park, the zoological gardens, the chamber of horrors and the chamber of laughter and take its place in the family of the great arts.

It was the social ideals and high artistic perfection of our Soviet films that helped to win this recognition for the cinema. For it was only in our country that the cinema was able to disclose its inherent potentiality of achieving that ultimate stage to which every art has striven for centuries.

It might be said that the cinema is the highest stage of embodiment of the potentialities and aspirations of each of the arts.

More, the cinema is that genuine and ultimate synthesis of the manifestations of all the arts taken together which fell to pieces after the Greeks, and which Diderot sought for vainly in the opera, Wagner in the musical drama, Scriabin in chromatic concertos, and so on.

For sculpture, the cinema is an endless chain of plastic forms, destroying at last the immobility of ages.

For painting, the cinema not only solves the problem of the movement of images, but also achieves a new and unprecedented form of pictorial art, a freely-moving stream of changing, dissolving, intermingling forms, pictures and compositions, of which hitherto music alone was capable.

Music itself has always possessed this potentiality, but with the advent of the cinema, its melodious and rhythmic flow acquired new possibilities of visual, tangible, concrete imagery (so far, it is true, we know of only a few instances of any complete fusion of auditory and visual images).

For literature, the cinema implies an extension of the strict language of poetry and prose to a new realm, where, however, the desired image is directly materialized in auditory-visual impressions.

Lastly, only in the cinema do we find that fusion into a genuine unity of all those separate spectacular elements which were inseparable in the dawn of culture and which the theater has striven in vain to amalgamate.

In the cinema we do in fact find a real unity of the individual and the mass, where the mass is a genuine mass, and not a handful of supernumeraries in a "crowd scene" circulating around the wings and back onto the stage again to create the illusion of numbers.

Here we find a unity of man and space. How many subtle minds have striven unsuccessfully to solve this problem in the restricted confines of the theater stage! We may mention only Gordon Craig and Appia. And yet how easily is this problem solved by the cinema!

The screen is not obliged to adapt itself to the abstractions of Gordon Craig to make space and man commensurable. It is not content with the mere reality of the scene of action, it compels reality itself to figure in the action. "The woods and the hills will dance" is no longer just a line from one of Krylov's fables, but a passage from the "lines" of Scenery, which just as much acts a part in the film as all the rest. The film fuses the mass with the individual, the city with the countryside into one cinematographic act. It mingles them in a dizzying succession of changes and transitions, in an all-embracing grasp of entire countries or of one single individual, and in its ability to follow at one and the same time the gathering of clouds in the hills and the swelling of a tear beneath the eyelash.

The diapason of the dramatist's creative potentialities is widening endlessly. And the keyboard of the sound organizer, who has long age ceased to be a mere composer, is stretching for miles to the right and left, and embraces not only all the sounds of nature, but also those the artistic fancy can conceive.

We sometimes forget that we have a miracle-working instrument at our disposal, an instrument of unbounded technical and artistic potentialities, and that we have as yet learned to employ only a mere fraction of them.

We, whom our system and country assures, by surpassing all established standards and limits in every sphere of human endeavor that there are no bounds or impassable barriers to creative activity, would do well to remember this.

Again and again will we be impressed by the superiority of cinematography if we picture the fraternity of the arts arranged according to the degree in which they are adapted to the achievement of their main purpose, namely, to reflect reality and the lord of reality—man.

How narrow is the diapason of sculpture, which is obliged to tear man from the environment and society from which he is indisseverable in order by hints—by immobile lines and contours—to create the possibility of divining his inner world, which reflects the world around him. It is bereft of word, color, movement, the changing phases of drama, the progressive unfolding of events.

Literature is able to penetrate into the subtlest convolutions of the human mind and the procession of events and epochs, yet how restricted it is by its imaginative devices and its instruments of melody and rhythm, which can only hint at the amplitude of feeling for which every line and every page cry out.

How imperfect and limited, too, is the theater in this respect! Only by outward *"physical acts" and behavior* is it able to convey to its audience the inner life, the inner movement of mind and feeling, the inner world of its characters and of the author himself.

But that is not only material for depiction.

If we reject the incidental and consider only the basic and fundamental, we might describe the methods of each of the arts as follows:

The method of sculpture reflects and reproduces the structure of the human body.

The method of painting reflects and reproduces the postures of bodies and the relation of bodies to nature.

The method of literature reflects and reporduces the interaction of life and man.

The method of the theater reflects and reproduces the behavior and actions of man under the influence of internal and external motives.

The method of music reflects and reproduces the laws of internal harmony governing the emotional apperception of phenomena.

In one way or another, and to the extent of the means and possibilities at heir disposal, all the arts—from the most external and lapidary, but more material and less ephemeral, to the most subtle and plastic, but less concrete and tragically ephemeral—strive for one end.

"China Express" *1930*

"The Road to Life" *1931*

"Judushka Golovlev" *1933*

"The Last Masquerade" *1934*

And that is, by their structure and methods, to reproduce, to reflect, reality—and above all the thoughts and feelings of man—as fully as possible.

But none of the older arts have been able to achieve this purpose to the full.

For the bounding limit of one art is the human body.

Of the second, the actions and behavior of this body.

Of the third, the elusive emotional harmony that accompanies this action and behavior.

But not one of them can embrace man's entire internal world, which reproduces the external world.

And when any of the arts is audacious enough to strive for the achievement of aims lying beyond its own boundaries, its very foundations must inevitably fall to pieces.

The most daring instance in literature of an attempt to achieve this is to be found in James Joyce's *Ulysses* and other works.

Here the limit has been reached in reproducing the reflection and refraction of reality in the thoughts and feelings of man.

The attempt to solve this problem is what distinguishes Joyce. He does it by writing simultaneously in two planes: he unfolds the narration of events and at the same time relates how they are reflected in the mind, feelings, associations and emotions of his chief character. [1]

This is a unique instance of literature creating an almost physiological impression of what it relates. The arsenal of the methods of literary influence is here supplemented by compositional structure, which I would call "super-lyrical." For while the lyric, side by side with its imagery, reproduces the intimate logical course of feeling, Joyce embodies the physiology of the formation of emotion, a copy of the embryology of thought.

The effect at times is astounding; but the price paid for it is the disintegration of the very foundations of literary craftsmanship and literary method; the text itself becomes an abracadabra to the ordinary reader.

Joyce shared the fate of the whole fraternity of so-called Left Arts, which reached full flower with the entry of capitalism into its imperialist stage.

And if we examine these "Left" arts from the standpoint of the tendencies we have described, we find curiously enough that there is a quite natural explanation of the phenomenon.

On the one hand, there is a firm belief in the permanency of the existing order, and hence a conviction of the limitations of man.

On the other hand, the arts experience a need to transcend their own limitations.

But for the most part this is only an explosion, and it is not directed outwards, towards the widening of the boundaries of the art, which can only be achieved by extending its content in an anti-imperialist and revolutionary direction, but inwards, towards the *methods*, and not the *content*. The explosion is not creative and progressive, but destructive.

Such is the plight of those artists and writers who, by not daring to associate themselves with the revolutionary and advancing trends in history, sign their own death warrant. They are only beating their heads against a wall, but think they are breaking through the limits to their potentialities.

How different is the lot of those artists and writers who have wholeheartedly accepted the revolution and harnessed the destiny of their art to it!

Mayakovsky, who from a Futurist became the greatest poet of our Socialist times, is an outstanding example of this.

And such is the case of the other honestly revolutionary artists and writers, notwithstanding occasional lapses into formalism. . . .

There lies the way of salvation for the artists.

And there lies the way of salvation for the arts themselves, which will find escape from the fetters of bourgeois limitations in a revolutionary ideology and revolutionary themes.

As to the media of expression, the way of escape from their confines lies in a transition to a more perfect stage of potentialities—cinematography.

For the cinema alone can take as the basis of its dramatic esthetics, not the statics of the human body, nor the dynamics of its actions and behavior, but an infinitely wider diapason, the reflection of all the variety of movement and of the succession of man's feelings and thoughts. It can do so not only for the depiction of man's actions and behavior on the screen, but also as the compositional framework for a reflection of the world and reality charged with thought and feeling.

This is beyond the powers of the theater too. And when it attempts to transcend its limitations and skip into a higher class, it, like literature, has to pay the penalty and forfeit its vitality and realism. It has to retire to the immateriality of a Maeterlinck, whom we know by his

[1] I will not stop to discuss the fact that the reality reflected by the author and his hero is a distorted and perverted reality. That is obvious: Joyce is and remains the *dernier cri*, the pique of bourgeois literature.

works, and whose "program" for the theater was just this elusive blue-bird dream.

What a wilderness of unreality the theater lands in as soon as it sets itself "synthetic" aims! It is enough to mention two cases in illustration: the *Théâtre d'Art* and the *Théâtre des Arts*, which opened in Paris in 1890 and 1910 respectively.

They are described at length in Gvozdev's *The Theater in Western Europe in the Late Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries* (Moscow, 1939), from which the following quotations are taken.

The maxim of the first of these theaters, founded by the symbolist poet Paul Faure, was: "It is the word that gives birth to the scenery and to everything else."

". . . That meant that the staging of the play was entirely determined by the lyricism of the poet's verses."

In practice, this led to the production of plays like *La Fille aux Mains Coupées* by Pierre Quillard (1891). This play, "written in the form of a poem in dialogue, was staged as follows: in one corner of the proscenium stood a reciter who read the prose passages indicating changes of scene and narrating the plot, while on the stage, screened by a gauze curtain, the actors moved and declaimed their verses against a golden back-curtain with icon-like figures painted in the manner of the religious 'primitives' of the late Middle Ages. This stylized scenery was to . . . serve a sa means of 'disclosing the lyricism concealed in the verses'!"

"Priority is given to the lyrical word," wrote Paul Weber. "The theater, as it were, completely disappears, yielding place to declamatory dialogue, which is a sort of poetical scenery."

Pierre Quillard demanded that "scenery be just an ornamental fiction, serving to help out the illusion by an analogy with the colors and the lines of the drama. . . ."

"Seeking for new methods of 'inductive infection' of the spectator, Paul Faure's theater sought to give practical shape to the theory that there was a correspondence between the different senses, a theory very popular among the symbolist poets and theoreticians. . . ."

However, these new designs on the theater, by no means reprehensible in themselves, led to the most absurd excesses.

"For example, Rounard's *Song of Songs* was furnished with an accompaniment not only of music, but also of 'scents composed in a tonality harmonizing with the various lines of the verse. The theater sought to establish a harmony of music, verse, scenery and . . . perfumes."

"Chapayev" *1934*

"Pepo" *1935*

"The New Gulliver" *1935*

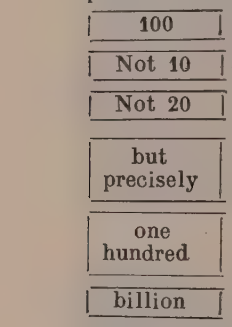
"We Are From Kronstadt" *1936*

In my opinion it was the failure to discover anything more than an imperfect harmony in other elements that led to this absurdity.

The program of the other theater (founded by a wealthy dilettante, Jacques Rouche) contained many points of a like nature: "Its decorators were fertile in the invention of conventionalized scenery in an endeavor to compose a 'symphony of color supplementing the symphony of sound.'"

All such attempts at synthesis inevitably fail and lead to anti-realism.

Yet when these very same aims are set the cinema, far from leading it away from realism, they help to increase the power of its realistic influence.



The reciter, who appears so unexpectedly in the theater to keep the audience "informed" (and who, by the way, is nothing but a copy of the announcer in the Japanese Kabuki theater), existed in the cinema, in the form of the caption even in the days of the silent film and was, moreover, organically woven into its texture.

Even today we find the caption every now and again unobtrusively playing its part, announcing the "prose passages indicating changes of scene and narrating the plot," while leaving the lyrical emotions of the characters to the graphic part of the film.

Attempts were made even in the days of the silent film to take a step further in this direction and draw the caption into the very rhythm of the action and to endow it with a dramatic value by means of design and variation of size. Let us recall in illustration the caption at the beginning of the film *Old and New*, whose rhythmic composition had a definite emotional effect and created the atmosphere for the film itself (see illustration).

In the sound film, the caption still remains an equal member of the confraternity of expressive media (try to take the captions out of *Minin and Pozharsky* and see what comes of it!), and at the same time, in the announcer's voice, tends to an even closer approximation to the reciter of the "conventionalized theater." The dramatic potentialities of weaving this voice into the action have still hardly been utilized by the cinema.

The late Pirandello used to dream of what could be done with this voice, as he told me himself during our talks in Berlin in 1929.

And, in fact, how close is this voice from without intervening in the action to what Pirandello dreamt of all his life. It was not unsuccessfully employed for the purposes of irony by René Clair in *The Last Billionaire*, and even more cleverly by Kuleshov in *The Great Consoler*.

The "secret" of the gauze stretched across the stage apparently lies in a desire to "unify" the diversity of the real and material environment, the painted scenery, three-dimensional human beings, and authentic color texture (gilt, for example).

This is a problem of the utmost difficulty for the theater (its solution has been sought in hundreds of variations, which have almost inevitably led to extravagances of one form or another); but the cinema solves it with the greatest ease, operating as it does with conventional photographic images of the objects coming within its purview, all of which are equally real. Similarly, it is in a willful and active, and not merely naturalistic and passive sound recording that we see the secret of the possibility of combining sounds which in their natural form may not be amenable to combination and orchestration.

Lastly, the cinema achieves one of its greatest successes where the theater has to retire in defeat. We are referring not only to the "symphony of color supplementing the symphony of sound"—where the cinema is most happy.

We are referring to that which is within the reach only of the cinema.

Namely, that genuine and complete "disclosure of the lyricism concealed in the verse"—that lyricism with which the author of the film is inevitably possessed in its particularly emotional parts.

We have just spoken of the deplorable results achieved by the "Left" theaters in this respect, and said the same of "Left" literature a little earlier.

The solution of this problem has been left entirely to the cinema.

Here alone, real events, while preserving all their material and sensory plenitude and richness, may be simultaneously:

Epic, in the disclosure of their content;

Dramatic, in the treatment of their subject;

Lyrical, in the degree of perfection to which only such a refined type of form as the system of sound and visual images of the cinema can repeat the subtlest nuances of the author's emotional experience of the theme.

When the cinema production, or any

part of it, achieves this triple dramatic synthesis, its impressive force is unusually powerful.

That is just what I found in my own work.

The three scenes which I consider most successful in my work are precisely of this character: they are both epic and dramatic and at the same time most lyrical, if by lyricism is meant the nuances of the purely individual experience which determines the resulting forms.

These scenes are the "Odessa Stairs" and the "Meeting with the Admiral's Fleet" in *Potemkin*, and the "Attack of the Knights" in *Alexander Nevsky*.

Of the first and third of these scenes I have already written in a special article, where I said of the stairs that in their compositional progress they "behave like a human being in a state of ecstasy," and of the leaping of the Knights that

> "in subject, it is the beat of hoofs;
> in structure, it is the beat of an
> excited heart . . ."

The same may be said of the meeting with the admiral's fleet, where the whirling engines were meant to embody the excited collective heart of the cruiser, and the rhythm; and the cadence of their beat were meant to reproduce the lyrical experience of the author when he imagined himself in the place of the insurrectionary cruiser.

Such problems the cinema solves with the utmost ease.

But the point is not the ease with which it does so, or that it can do so at all.

The point is the concreteness, the materiality and the absolute compatibility of all these achievements with the demands of realism, that categorical condition for art that is alive, full-blooded and fertile—Socialist art.

Thus in respect to all these features the cinema is a step ahead of the contiguous arts, while remaining a contemporary of the theater, painting, sculpture and music. There was a time when with youthful presumption, we considered that it was time for all the other arts to retire with the appearance of an art that was more advanced than any of them in their own potentialities and manifestations.

Fifteen years ago, when I was only just "contemplating" work in the cinema field, I spoke of the theater and the cinema as "Alexander the Great's two skulls" (in an article of that title in the *Novy Zritel*). I recalled the anecdote of the traveling museum of curiosities, among whose rarities was the skull of Alexander the Great at the age of twenty-five and, side by side with it, his skull at the age of forty; and I held that the existence of the theater side by side with the cinema was

"Lenin in October" *1937*

"Baltic Deputy" *1937*

"The Conquest of Peter the Great" *1937*

"The Great Glow" *1938*

equally absurd, for the cinema was the theater in its maturity. . . .

Of course, this was rather a fact from my own biography, when I myself was "growing out" of the theater into the cinema, and not a fact from the history of the theater; for it cannot be denied that the theater is consorting peacefully with the more advanced form, the cinema.

But perhaps this is not quite obvious to everybody?

Is there any need to pile instance on instance to prove this self-evident fact once more?

Let us confine ourselves to one, the most theatrical element of the theater—the actor.

Does not the cinema make demands on the actor by far surpassing in refinement all that he needs to safely survive on the stage?

Just look at the screen acting of even the finest players, especially in their earlier period. Do we not find that what seems the height of truth and emotional fidelity on the stage seems the most atrocious overacting and a sheer succession of epileptic fits on the screen?

How much effort was required of even the finest masters of the stage to adapt their art from the broad framework of the theater to the "narrow gates" of the screen!

How their acting becomes perfected in refinement and subtlety from episode to episode, and from film to film!

How under the very eyes of the spectator screen "theatricality" passes into genuine life on the screen! How astonishing and illuminating in this respect was the development of the late Shchukin, not only from part to part, but even in the same part from film to film—from *Lenin in October* to *Lenin in 1918!*

Self-control even down to movements of a millimeter, so as not to slide out of the frame of the picture or to move out of focus in a close-up.

A degree of fidelity of feeling allowing of no refuge in the conventionalities of the "stage," which the screen has abolished.

Super-concentration and instantaneous assumption of role, which are incomparably more difficult in the cinema than on the stage, where the actor does not have to burn in the glare of arc-lights, or play his part in the public street, or in the surf of the sea, or on a curvetting airplane, or first to act death and only a month or two later the cold from which it supervened!

As we see, the elements are all the same, but the demands have grown immensely, and the retrospective enrichment of earlier stages of development, proceeding side by side, is obvious and undeniable.

And conversely.

We can learn to know, and, having learnt to know, to develop any particular element of the cinema only after making a thorough study of the origins of the phenomena of the cinema. But the origin of each element of the cinema lies in other arts.

Nobody who has not learnt the secrets of staging to perfection can hope to learn the art of film montage.

An actor who has not mastered all the resources of the theater will never shine on the screen.

Only an operator who is thoroughly familiar with the art of painting can grasp the fundamentals of composition in film-making.

And only by drawing on the experience of dramaturgy and epic and lyric poetry can the writer create a finished work in that new and unprecedented branch of literature, scenario-writing, which is a synthesis of all literary forms, just as cinematography in general is a synthesis of all forms of art.

But art which has reached its highest stage of development in the cinema offers potentialities not only to the film-makers.

No less inestimable is what this highest development of art as a whole offers to those who ponder over the general laws of artistic creation, and most of all to those who endeavor theoretically to grasp the phenomenon of art in general, as a social phenomenon, in all the uniqueness and inimitableness of its peculiar method of reflecting the world and reality.

In this respect the Soviet cinema is an equally inexhaustible well of research into the general laws and principles of art, as one of the branches of man's spiritual activity.

For the Soviet cinema, as regards its content, its structure and its theoretical foundation, is the only one in the world to reflect a victorious Socialist system. It should therefore possess, and, in fact, does possess, all the requisites for serving as that perfect material for research that will enable Marxist analysis to strip the last veils of "mysticism" and secrecy from the method of the arts, and to implant the standard of science in a field of endeavor that was hitherto a prey to class abuse and the evils of bourgeois deceit, pseudo-science and agnosticism.

Too little thought is being given to this.

And even less still is being done.

Yet we have at our disposal so perfect a stage of development of all the arts, fused into one—cinematography—that we may already make endless deductions from it for a knowledge of the entire

system and method of the arts, which is one and exhaustive for all of them, yet peculiar and individual in each particular field.

For here, in the cinema, a *genuine synthetic art has been attained for the first time, which by its very nature is an art of organic synthesis, and not a "concert" of co-existent, contiguous and "conjoined," but each in itself independent, arts.*

And this for the first time places in our hands tangibly, simultaneously and fully, all the underlying laws governing the arts in general.

The laws which hitherto we could only grasp piecemeal—one bit from the experience of painting, another from the practice of the theater, another still from the theory of music.

Hence *the method of the cinema, when thoroughly understood, will enable us thoroughly to understand the method of art in general.*

And so we indeed have something to be proud of on this twentieth birthday of our cinema.

Within our country.

And beyond its borders.

Within the art of the cinema itself, and far beyond its borders, throughout the whole system of the arts in general.

We have something to be proud of.

But a lot still remains to be done by the practitioners and theoreticians of our art for many a year of the glorious Stalinist future ahead!

"Alexander Nevsky" *1938*

"The Great Citizen" (part II) *1939*

"A Member of the Government" *1940*

NEWS AND VIEWS

U.S.S.R.

IN MEMORY OF MAYAKOVSKY

The entire country paid tribute to Vladimir Mayakovsky, the great poet of Soviet epoch, on the occasion of the tenth anniversary of his death.

The Soviet Government has set up a special commission to perpetuate the memory of the poet. The commission includes such outstanding public figures as A. Vyshinsky, Vice-Chairman of the Council of People's Commissars of the U.S.S.R., Academician Yemelyan Yaroslavsky, P. Pospelov, editor of the magazine *Bolshevik*, the writers and poets S. Kirsanov, Simon Chikovani, V. I. Lebedev-Kumach, N. Tikhonov, A. Prokofyev and others. It is headed by N. A. Aseyev, well-known Soviet poet.

Publishing houses have prepared special editions for the anniversary. A collection of articles and reminiscences dealing with Mayakovsky was issued by the State Publishing House, while the Academy of Sciences Publishing House has prepared a volume of articles and unpublished works of Mayakovsky himself including *A Comedy With a Murder*. A biography of the poet and a three-volume edition of his selected works has been put out by the Soviet Writers' Publishing House. Three monographs have been issued including one on *Mayakovsky in Satire*.

Many translations of Mayakovsky's works have likewise been published. A volume of selected works appeared in Georgian as well as Armenian translation. A Ukrainian translation edited by the renowned Ukrainian poet, Mikola Bazhan, as well as Mayakovsky's verses in Jewish and Polish, have been prepared for publication in Kiev, capital of the Ukraine.

An exhibition on the life and creative activity of Mayakovsky has been opened in the house where the poet spent the last years of his life. His notebooks, watch, calendar and books are on the large writing desk. Over the table is a photo of Lenin. A rug decorates the wall near the divan.

There are collected numerous documents, photographs, manuscripts and books.

The visitor can trace by them the childhood of the poet, his adolescence, his participation in a students' strike in Kutaisi, his activity in the Russian Social-Democratic Labor Party and subsequent arrests.

Several interesting documents speak of the friendship of Gorky and Mayakovsky. There is a special display, *Lenin and Mayakovsky*, which shows excerpts from Mayakovsky's poem *Vladimir Ilyich Lenin*.

In the last eight years of his life Mayakovsky was abroad nine times. In a stand entitled "The Ambassador of Verse," there is an artistically executed map tracing the routes of his travels. Next to it, there are Soviet magazines with verses of Mayakovsky on his travels.

In a special volume of the *Annals of the State Literary Museum*, there will be published the contents of notebooks kept at the Mayakovsky Museum, manuscripts of his plays *Bed-Bug* and *Bathhouse*, first editions of his works and rare newspaper clippings. Some of the material in the custody of the museum has never been made public hitherto.

Two expeditions were sent by the museum to Bagdadi, Kutaisi and Tbilisi where the poet spent his childhood and adolescence. These expeditions collected reminiscences of people who knew Mayakovsky and also photographs of the places where he had lived.

CHEKHOV DAYS

Numerous literary evenings dedicated to the memory of Anton Chekhov were held on the occasion of the eightieth anniversary of the birth of this great Russian writer.

Lectures on the life and activity of Chekhov were held at clubs in factories and mills, in collective farms and Red Army units. Theaters arranged special programs for the celebration of the anniversary.

Postal authorities joined in the general tribute paid to the author by issuing a series of stamps bearing his portrait.

A Chekhov exhibition was organized by the Lenin State Library. Much space was given to displays illustrating the work of Chekhov as playwright and his close collaboration with the Moscow Art Theater. Among the exhibits were: a page from Chekhov's *Seagull* with the regisseur's annotation made by the late K. S. Stanislavsky, a page from *The Cherry Orchard* with the text mutilated by the censor, photos of the first performances of Chekhov's plays at the Moscow Art Theater, photographs of the renowned actors of this theater who appeared in Chekhov's plays, etc.

"The Art Theater will constitute the brightest pages of the annals that will some day be written about the contemporary Russian theater," reads an excerpt from Chekhov's letter to V. I. Nemirovich-Danchenko, one of the founders of the Art Theater.

"Chekhov and Gorky" was the name of an exhibition arranged by the Gorky Museum; the exhibition is devoted to the friendship of these two great writers, of their creative activity.

Prominently displayed were excerpts from Gorky's writings expressing his appreciation of Chekhov's works. "No one," Gorky wrote, "had so clear and so fine an understanding of the tragedy of little things in life, no one before him was able to convey to people the shameful and dreary picture of their lives in the sordid chaos of philistine existence with such relentless truthfulness.

"He was the enemy of mediocrity; all his life he fought against it, ridiculed it, depicting it with his sharp pen. . . ."

A watch, presented by Chekhov to Gorky, is also exhibited. It bears the inscription: "To Gorky from A. Chekhov. 1899." Next to it a copy of the well-known letter Chekhov wrote to the Russian Academy of Sciences protesting against the decision depriving Gorky of the title of honorary academician, and waiving his own title.

The Chekhov section of the Literary Museum contains 110 manuscripts of the writer and more than 300 of his letters to contemporary writers as well as a considerable private correspondence. Another part of the Chekhov archive holds many documents, such as his graduation-certificate, documents relating to his work as physician and to his public activity.

An interesting acquisition of the museum is the unpublished manuscript of reminiscences on Chekhov by his cousin A. Dolzhenko. Very close to the writer's family, Dolzhenko presents an intimate picture of the great man, his surroundings and his early attempts as author. Eight letters of Chekhov to Dolzhenko are also included in the new acquisition.

The ever-increasing editions of newly published Chekhov books prove that Anton Chekhov is one of the most popular writers in the Soviet Union. Since the October Revolution his works were published in editions totaling 15,000,000 copies of which more than 2,000,000 were issued in 54 languages other than Russian. In the preceding period, from 1897 to 1916, however, Chekhov's works were issued in only 493,000 copies in the Russian language and but 27,000 copies in other languages.

LENIN'S WORKS ACCESSIBLE TO MILLIONS

Huge editions of Lenin's works have been published in the last 22 years with the total running to 123,000,000 copies. They have been translated into 73 languages of the various nationalities inhabiting the Soviet Union.

Last year the State Political Literature Publishing House alone issued Lenin's books in the Russian language in over 8,000,000 copies. In addition, the Marx-Engels-Lenin Institute has put out a two-volume edition of Lenin's *Selected Works* in 300,000 copies.

Great popularity is enjoyed by Lenin's classic study *Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism*, which was issued in 2,278,000 copies: next comes the pamphlet *What the "Friends of the People" Are and How they Fight Against the Social-Democrats*, with 1,871,000 copies. *What is to be Done?* reached a circulation of 1,694,000 in 16 languages, while the classic work *Materialism and Empirio-Criticism* was issued in 1,337,000 copies. *State and Revolution* comes close to the 1,500,000 mark; *One Step Forward, Two Steps Back*—1,596,000; *Development of Capitalism in Russia*—1,193,000.

Tremendous is the popularity enjoyed by Lenin's works outside the Soviet Union. Lenin's teachings are studied by progressive people throughout the world, his works being translated into 39 foreign languages.

The English, French and German translations of his works are most complete. Besides complete editions single works of V. I. Lenin are continually being issued in foreign languages.

At present his book: *What Is to be Done?* is being published in 15 languages and *The Two Tactics of Social-Democracy in the Democratic Revolution*, in 10 languages.

Jacket-cover of the almanac "Friendship of the Peoples"

UNKNOWN MANUSCRIPT OF MARX ISSUED

A hitherto unpublished manuscript of Marx has been issued in German by the Marx-Engels-Lenin Institute. Containing a comprehensive criticism of bourgeois political economy and an exposition of his own views, this manuscript was written by Marx in the period of August 1857 to March 1858.

The manuscript contains eight notebooks. Marx himself has not given a general heading to the manuscript.

The title of the manuscript, *Main Outline of the Critique of Political Economy (first draft) 1857-1858*, was adopted by the Marx-Engels-Lenin Institute on the basis of various statements expressed in Marx's letters.

The new publication of the Marx-Engels-Lenin Institute is of great importance to all students of Marxian theory. The reader has for the first time an opportunity to get acquainted with the preparatory work of Marx for his fundamental economic teachings.

ALMANAC "FRIENDSHIP OF THE PEOPLES"

Friendship of the Peoples is the title of a new publication, an almanac, designed to further the best literary works of the many nationalities of the Soviet Union.

The first issues contain prose and poetry translated from twenty-five languages.

Two major themes—fraternity of the peoples on one hand and the Socialist fatherland on the other—run through most of the works.

Of particular interest are the short stories: *Meeting*, by Gulia; *Judgment of Elders*, by Kerash and the novel *Snow Fell, Tracks Covered*, by S. Rizayev. These are stories of people who fight against national prejudices and establish new Socialist relations. The first describes an age-old feud that separates Nanba and Aran; one is a professor and the other a collective farmer but both are working on the same problem, developing a frost-resisting variety of lemons, and this brings them together. An Adygei woman, forcibly given in marriage to an old man twenty years ago, secures her divorce; this is the theme of *Judgment of Elders*. The third story deals with a young girl, Chinar, member of the Young Communist League, who fights against wearing the veil in her native village.

The theme of new life and new relations of people, especially the remolding of man in the process of the struggle for the collective farm system, dominates the novel *Gvadi Bigva* by the Georgian writer Leo Kiacheli.

FOLK BARD OF THE ADYGEI DIES

The death of its oldest folk bard, Teuchezh Tsug, is reported by the Adygei Autonomous Republic. The Adygei people, the Circassians, were subject to vicious persecution by tsarism and lived in dire poverty in the past. To this day, every one, young and old, point to the dreaded Mount Zhitaibs, the mountain of old age, whence it was the custom in old times to throw the aged down a precipice to rid the family of an extra mouth. Ignorant and impoverished but original and freedom-loving, the Adygei people preserved through all the dark years of slavery their wonderful folk tales and poems which are imbued with wisdom and courage.

Tsug knew well the past of his country and it was he who said:

He who has met no evil
Cannot grasp what is good,
He who knows not the past
Cannot judge our times

Tsug loved his native land which has been so miraculously transformed in Soviet times.

Play in your saddle, ride hard in battle
Bringing glory to my mountainous land,—

so he admonished the Adygei youth, and he himself sang praise to his native Ady-

gei in his songs and poems. A poet of the people, he towered like a mighty tree that has struck deep roots into the soil and is heavily laden with fruit. His native Adygei no longer needed the wailing song of old, the *gybz*, Tsug felt. New songs, songs filled with vigor and joy had to come forth, and Tsug found the words for them:

'Tis true, my life is behind me
The years gone by veiled in haze
And yet, young is my spirit
To march with the youth I aspire
To march to Communism. . .

QUINCENTENARY OF "JANGAR," EPOS OF KALMYK PEOPLE

The quincentenary of the epic poem of the Kalmyk people, the *Jangar*, is being celebrated in the Soviet Union this year.

Preserved for five centuries by many generations of folk bards who handed it down by word of mouth, the *Jangar* is known and popular not only in Soviet Kalmykia but also in western China, the Mongolian People's Republic, Tanna-Tuva and Western Tibet. Created by the people, the epic poem is imbued with the century-old aspiration of the Kalmyk people for the fabulous land of eternal youth and immortality, the land of Bumba, where people do not grow old after the age of twenty-five, where all live in prosperity and happiness and "nought is divided into mine or thine." This dream of ages has now come true in the Soviet law.

Lofty patriotism and infinitive love for one's native country, emotions close to all Soviet people, permeate the poem.

Great artistry, vividly drawn characters, remarkable language, rich fancy and the melody of its verses have contributed to the great popularity of the *Jangar*.

The poem contains an introduction, twelve songs and a concluding paean to its hero, Jangar. Each of the songs is dedicated to one of the twelve titans of the *Jangar* and each has its own complete plot.

The jubilee celebrations will include a folk festival in the Kalmyk autonomous republic. A jubilee plenary sitting of the Union of Soviet Writers will be held in Elista, capital of Kalmykia. The Kalmyk national theater will present a production based on excerpts from the *Jangar*.

A festive meeting is to be held in Moscow. An exhibition of Kalmyk pictorial and folk art has also been arranged in the capital.

A translation of the poem into Russian is being issued by the State Literary Publishing House while a complete text of the poem and selections of scientific material relating to it will be issued by the Academy of Sciences of the U.S.S.R.

Other publications include articles on the *Jangar*, a collection of data relating to the epoch in which the poem originated and a collection of Kalmyk plays.

The Giant Minchayan. An illustration by V. Favorsky to the jubilee edition of "Jangar"

NEW REPIN CANVAS FOUND

Long considered as the work of another painter, the canvas *Storm on the Volga* has been discovered to have come from the brush of the famous artist Ilya Repin. Kept at the Kiev Museum of Russian Art, this picture of the grim Volga with the storm furiously lashing at rafts on the river was ascribed to the painter E. Vasilyev.

A research worker at the museum, C. Chernogubov, thought that canvas not typical of the works of Vasilyev, and undertook a careful study of it. And indeed, the signature was not the one used by Vasilyev. Final proof was supplied by the date, 1882, for Vasilyev died in 1873.

Chernogubov, who was well aware of Repin's love for the Volga, studied his little known *études* and landscapes preserved in the album *Autumn on the Volga*. His studies proved the Kiev canvas to be one of the versions of Repin's well-known painting *On a Raft on the Volga During a Storm*.

The Kiev museum has restored the canvas and placed it for public review.

BRINGING ART TO HIGH MOUNTAIN DISTRICTS

An ambulant art exhibition and studio has been devised by the Honored Artist G. Gyudzhyan to bring art to the people of the high mountain districts of Armenia.

A specially outfitted truck carries many paintings, watercolors and drawings which are exhibited by the artists themselves in different settlements. Lectures on art are delivered simultaneously. The truck also carries canvases, paints, easels, and other equipment needed by the artists as well as tents for camping at night. Everything is done to enable the artists not only to exhibit their works but also to paint the landscapes and the people.

Honored Artist G. Gyudzhyan is a Deputy to the Supreme Soviet of the Armenian S.S.R.

EXHIBITION OF WORKS BY JUVENILE ARTISTS

The best works of pupils of the Leningrad Secondary Art School are exhibited at the Leningrad Academy of Fine Arts. The art school was established on the initiative of S. M. Kirov.

Visitors are amazed by the developed artistry and the high degree of maturity of many of the canvases. *Stalin and Voroshilov at the Tsarytsin Front* is a striking composition submitted by Belitsky. Sokolov depicted M. I. Kalinin paying a visit to collective farmers. Valya Schultz has a fine etude, *Arrest of a General in 1917*. High praise was merited by the sculpture *Kirov*, *Honorary Pioneer*, by Trofimova, a ninth-grade pupil.

"ROMEO AND JULIET" STAGED AS BALLET

Romeo and Juliet has been staged as a ballet by the Kirov Opera and Ballet Theater, Leningrad.

"No matter what the shortcomings of the ballet," *Pravda* writes, "whether musical or other, they cannot detract from the significance of this production. Most likely the efforts of Serge Prokofieff, the composer, L. Lavrovsky, the producer, P. Williams, the artist and I. Sherman, the conductor, will be the cause of animated controversy. But, however diverse the opinions may be, no one will dispute that this ballet is a major event in art.

"The overture," *Pravda* notes, "written in a manner somewhat new for Prokofieff is the prologue to the ballet, the new element in the music being its emotional depth.

A scene from "Romeo and Juliet"

"Serge Prokofieff has endeavored to convey the true spirit of Shakespeare's characters which combine noble ideas with impetuosity, untamed passions with a tendency to reasoning, coarse humor with fearlessness. Everything seethes and bubbles over in this wonderful world of the Renaissance. . . ."

Prokofieff's music is not always in keeping with Shakespeare's poetry, the reviewer adds, but the composer has created the musical foundation for the first, genuine Shakespeare ballet, an aim that is accessible only to a true artist and great master.

"A stirring portrayal of Juliet is given by Ulanova. That Ulanova is an outstanding dancer and gifted actress is no news. But her performance in *Romeo and Juliet* surpasses everything done before. We need not hesitate in stating that Ulanova's Juliet is a perfect work of art which places her among the finest artists of the dance, among those who contribute to the progress of choreography and define its course."

A true and very expressive portrayal of Romeo is given by Sergeyev, Ulanova's partner.

A great impression is made by Tybalt, in the interpretation of Gerbek. On the stage appears a real Italian of the Renaissance, full of prejudices yet, a squabbler, brutal and haughty, with a wicked face and the abrupt manners of a soldier. Life to him means to fight, to kill.

The stage settings by P. Williams are magnificent. The architecture of Verona, the scenes in the Capulet castle, the fête and jesters' processions in the second act, the portal curtains and the costumes—everything is excellently executed, *Pravda* states.

TWENTY YEARS OF SOVIET CINEMA ART

The Soviet Union recently marked the twentieth anniversary of the Soviet moving picture industry.

In the course of these twenty years cinematography, that youngest and most popular of the arts, made great strides in the Soviet Union. The soviet cinematography represents a large organization, in which upward of 100,000 people are active. The audiences have grown considerably too; in 1939, the cinemas had a total attendance of 1,200,000,000. This is apart from the attendance of showings presented by means of portable projectors which penetrate into the remotest corners of the land, bringing the latest hits to the shepherds of Kirghizia, to the collective farmers of Uzbekistan and to the tribesmen and schoolchildren of the Evenki in the North.

As part of the celebrations, a cinema festival was held throughout the Soviet Union. The best Soviet pictures were shown and producers, directors, actors and operators met their audiences, whom they told of their work and plans. At Ashkhabad an exhibition was arranged during the festival, showing the achievements of the moving-picture industry, models of cameras and projectors, and designs of costumes and scenery. Similar exhibitions were held in the cinema houses of Moscow, Leningrad, Kiev and other cities.

The Soviet people, the Communist Party and the Soviet Government have shown their great appreciation of the work of producers, directors, scenario writers, actors and operators, and many of them have been awarded Orders and medals of the U.S.S.R. Some of them have been elected to the Supreme Soviet of the U.S.S.R., the Supreme Soviets of the Union republics and local Soviets.

On the day of the twentieth anniversary the workers of the Soviet cinematography received congratulations from the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union and from the Council of Peoples Commissars. All the leading newspapers (such as *Izvestia* and *Pravda*) published long articles and essays about Soviet pictures and about the best representatives of the art of moving pictures in the Soviet Union, including operators. Many of the latter are well known for their daring in taking pictures of the fighting on the fronts of Abyssinia, Spain and China, for their participation in Arctic expeditions such as the Chelyuskin expedition, the North Pole flights, the expedition to the Papanin iceflow and the recently completed heroic drift of the Sedov.

A newsreel *Our Cinema*, and a full-length sound film *Twenty Years of the Cinema*, were released on the occasion of the anniversary. The latter, produced by V. Pudovkin and Esther Shub, contains fragments of the best Soviet films released during the past twenty years. The film gives sections from pre-revolutionary moving-pictures, followed by fragments from newsreels dealing with the civil war. The film goes on to show the birth of the Soviet full-length picture. These first pictures were produced under the influence of the best Western European and American films. They are followed by such hits of Soviet cinematography as *Potemkin*, *Mother*, and *Earth*—new both in content and form. The picture then shows the appearance of Soviet sound films and one of the best of them, *Chapayev*.

In 1935, congratulating the Soviet

A group of leading workers of the Soviet cinema. Sitting (from left to right): V. Pudovkin, A. Kapler, S. Eisenstein, B. Chirkov, M. Chiaureli; standing: A. Beck-Nazarov, E. Tisse, S. Yutkevich, M. Straukh, Y. Reisman and E. Dzigan

moving-picture industry on its fifteenth anniversary, J. V. Stalin wrote:

"The Soviet power expects of you new successes—new films which, like *Chapayev*, will glorify the greatness of the historic deeds that attended the struggle for power of the workers and peasants of the Soviet Union, pictures that will mobilize the people to carry out the new tasks and that will remind people of both the achievements and the difficulties of Socialist construction.

"The Soviet power expects that the masters in the field of the cinema will penetrate into new spheres of "the most important" (Lenin) and the most popular of all the arts—the cinema."

These words are reproduced in the film which then goes on to show how the masters in the field of the cinema responded to this with a stream of films dealing with historical and revolutionary themes, with the Great October Revolution, the Civil War, the Stakhanov movement and the new Socialist countryside. The film winds up with the fragments from pictures depicting Lenin and Stalin.

Favorite Heroes is another short film released on the occasion of the anniversary. It is an animated cartoon by B. Laskin and I. Sklyut which parodies some of the most popular films of recent years, such as *Alexander Nevsky*, *Minin and Pozharsky*, *Peter the Great*, *The Baltic Deputy*, etc, as well as favorite actors of the Soviet cinema—L. Orlova, M. Zharov, I. Ilinsky and others. The music of the film is composed from popular film songs. The film shows the heroes going to Moscow for the celebration of the twentieth anniversary of the Soviet cinema.

The State Cinema Publishing House has published a monumental album, *Soviet Cinema Art*, with thousands of illustrations gathered and arranged by O. Atasheva and Sh. Akhushkov.

The album is edited by Trauberg and Romm. The album includes biographies of the most renowned representatives of the Soviet cinema. Here one finds the first film taken by S. Eisenstein as part of the play *The Mexican*, which he staged in 1920; a fragment showing A. Dovzhenko as an actor and painter; stills from films in which the present regisseurs Pudovkin, Ermler, Chiaureli and other well known producers appeared as actors. A considerable section of the album is devoted to the documentary films which such masters as Dziga Vertov and E. Shub have raised to a high artistic level.

The special enlarged issue of *Cinema Art* published on the occasion of the anniversary contains some interesting articles written by masters and theoreticians of the cinema. There also is much interesting material on the children's films, animated cartoons, three-dimensional films, etc.

"MY UNIVERSITIES" THIRD PART OF FILM TRILOGY ON GORKY, COMPLETED

The last part of the film trilogy on Gorky, *My Universities*, is running now on the Soviet screen. The other two parts were *Childhood of Maxim Gorky* and *In the World*.

"On the whole, the film is somewhat weaker than the excellent films *Childhood of Maxim Gorky* and *In the World*," *Pravda* writes of this new production. "But when considered separately, aside from the trilogy, it must be admitted that it is good and even excellent in part.

"The film is good," the reviewer states, "first of all, because it recreates the epoch, the impoverished and hard life of the towns on the Volga, and primarily because it gives a clear perception of the gifted and cordial people, a people that suffered much but preserved its love for freedom.... Gorky asserted this sentiment all his life and left it to us, his descendants, as his legacy.

"The horrible life at that time, the bitter lot of the workers, the poor and the tramps, all this is illuminated by the growing light of the Revolution, by the anticipation of liberation that is near and inevitable."

Great mastery and refined taste are characteristic of the picture.

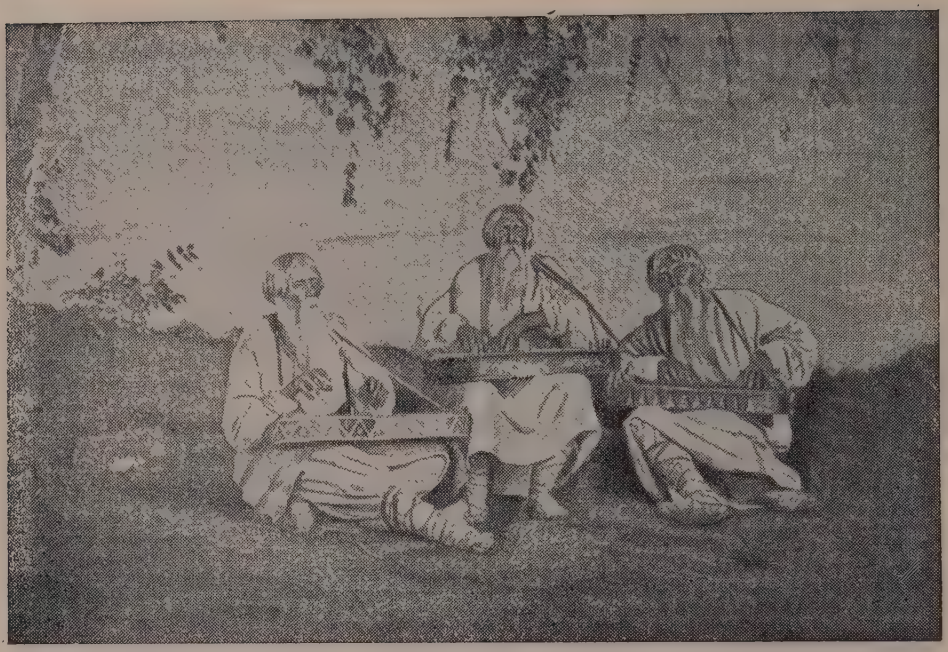
The film has many fine scenes and details which animate the whole picture, details that are at times moving, comical or horrifying (freezing of a kitten to death, a police officer scorching his finger on a samovar, slapping a boy in a bakery).

At the same time, the *Pravda* points out, the film has a number of shortcomings, the gravest being that Gorky is frequently portrayed not as an inquisitive youth, going through the hard school of life, of the "universities" of cellars, slums, tramp life, hard labor, hunger and secret revolutionary activity, but is presented as a mentor and preacher. Some of the phrases he utters are very sententious.

In the film Gorky is drawn in paler shades than the other characters. The presentation of Gorky is too schematic and too simplified. Even the measured acting of N. Valbert does not lend the character sufficient color.

My Universities was produced by the All-Union Children's Film Studios under the direction of M. Donskoy.

Scene from "My Universities"



"Guslyars" singing about Vasilisa and Ivan. A still from "Vasilisa, the Wise"

"FOUNDLING," NEW ENTERTAINING COMEDY

Charming, entertaining and instructive is the new comedy *Foundling*, which gained instantaneous favor with Soviet moviegoers. The main role in the film is played by a small girl, the "foundling."

The entire plot revolves around the adventures of a little girl in a big city. Left alone, she walks out on the street, wanders about till she meets a group of children at play in the park, together with them she goes to a kindergarten; then makes the acquaintance of a bachelor who mistakes her for a foundling. Then a strange woman takes an interest in the child. The woman is glad to have found her, and desires to adopt her. In the meantime the little girl is sought all over town.

Finally she is restored to her mother. As the little "foundling" falls asleep in her mother's arms after a day of adventure, she suggests that tomorrow they both get lost—so well did she like everything that had happened to her in the course of the day.

The scenario written by A. Barto and Rina Zelyonaya is simple and unaffected. The film is charming for its warmth, moving naivete and gay atmosphere. It presents truthfully part of the new life, the tenderness to and solicitude for children in Socialist society.

A Moscow Film Studios production, *Foundling* was directed by T. Lukashevich.

NEW FILMS

A new documentary film, *Eleven Capitals*, has been produced by the Moscow Newsreel Studios. It contains shots of characteristic landscapes and views, construction, industry and life in capitals of eleven Union republics such as Frunze, capital of Kirghizia, Minsk (Byelorussia), Stalinabad (Turkmenia), Alma-Ata (Kazakhstan), etc. Historic places in Baku and Tbilisi associated with the revolutionary activities of J. V. Stalin have been included in the film, which ends with scenes of Moscow, a parade on Red Square, and views of the Kremlin.

The life and activity of the great Russian poet, M. Y. Lermontov, is the subject of a film recently completed by the Technical Film Studios. Dealing mainly with the last years of the poet's life the film includes many shots of documents, manuscripts and portraits.

Russian folk tales were used in the scenario *Vasilisa the Wise*, a Children's Film Studios production. It is the story of how Ivan, a peasant's son, fights with the fiend, Zmei Gorinych, and frees Vasilisa from captivity. The film was directed by A. Roy.

HONORING RENOWNED COMPOSER

Soviet music lovers joined in the jubilee celebrations of the renowned composer Reingold Gliere who rounded off 40 years of musical activity in February. The People's Artist of the USSR has turned 65 in the same month.

A gala concert for the jubilee was held at the Moscow Conservatory with the composer conducting a number of his works: the symphony *Ilya Muromets*, the symphonic poem *Sirens* and the *Concert for Harp and Orchestra*.

Reingold Gliere

"Bright talent, wide sweep of emotion blended with great mastery have earned great popularity for Gliere's musical works, placing their author in the ranks of the most renowned Russian composers," *Izvestia* wrote in an article entitled "Outstanding Composer." The diversity of genres (compositions for various instruments, chamber music, romances, choruses, symphonies, operas, ballets, music for dramatic plays and now even music for films) have made Gliere's music familiar to a great audience.

Gliere wrote many works in the years prior to the Revolution which expressed the striving of the author for bright musical description inspired by the folklore of the Russian people.

After the Great Socialist Revolution Gliere undertook a systematic study of the folk music of the peoples of the U.S.S.R.

Gliere was one of the first to work on music of the Soviet East and has made a valuable contribution to the music of the Socialist society. It was in Socialist society that he found new inspiration, new strength, and his talent has blossomed forth with new vigor.

The composer had to overcome great difficulties in acquiring the style of eastern music and blending it with European, in finding the musical intonations for oriental speech.

Deep penetration into the music of the Tyurkic people enabled Gliere to write an opera to the theme of *Shakh Senem*, the Azerbaijan folk tale about the *ashug* (bard) who traveled the world over in order to raise money to pay for his bride.

He also composed the Uzbek opera *Gyulsara*.

Among Gliere's works created in Soviet times are the first Soviet ballet *Red Poppy* and the ballet *Comedians*.

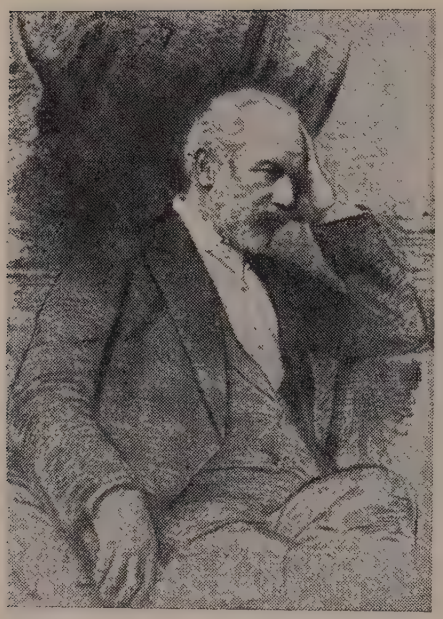
The Soviet Government values greatly the services of the composer; it has bestowed on him the title of People's Artist of the U.S.S.R. and awarded him the highest decorations of the country.

AMATEUR MUSIC CIRCLES AT COLLECTIVE FARMS OF UKRAINE

With nearly 25,000 amateur music circles functioning in the Ukrainian countryside, there is hardly a village in the republic where a chorus, music ensemble or capella have not been formed in recent years. Many of the amateur groups have gained renown far beyond the bounds of their native villages. Great popularity is enjoyed by the song ensemble of the Velikotskoye village in the Voroshilovsk Region. The ensemble directed by the woman collective farmer Novokhatskaya has a membership of 40 and a repertory of 200 songs.

The Ukraine has close to 6,000 amateur choruses. One of the most outstanding is the chorus at the Varvarovsk State Farm which is on par with many a professional capella for its repertory and performance.

Many collective farms have their own composers such as the 70 year old Androsyuk of the village of Stanishovka, Zhitomir Region, who in recent years composed more than 30 songs mostly on topics of collective farm life. This farmer who knows over 100 folk melodies and songs has organized a musical ensemble and chorus of 13 people, members of his own family. This family ensemble has performed successfully at village and district reunions. Among the



Chaikovsky *An etching by Monet*

folk composers there is a blind collective farmer, Movchan, of the Sumsk Region, who has a dozen popular songs to his credit.

The last two years have seen the organization of many amateur song and dance ensembles with a membership running to 80 performers. Such ensembles have been set up in a number of grain and sugar beet state farms.

MUSIC FESTIVAL IN COLLECTIVE FARMS

The best musical forces of the country will take part in the Second Collective Farm Music Festival sponsored by the Committee on Arts under the Council of People's Commissars of the R.S.F.S.R.

The first festival was held last year in 36 regions and autonomous republics of the Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic. As many as 12,000 artists took part in bringing classical and modern music to the countryside. In the course of the festival 1,427 concerts, attended by 613,000 collective farmers and rural intelligentsia, were given. Symphony orchestras, opera casts, wind and folk instrument ensembles, choruses, singers and prominent musicians came to villages and rural districts.

Renowned musicians such as Emil and Liza Hilels, David Oistrakh, Marina Kozolupova, the opera singer Barsova and many others took part in the festival.

HUGE PROGRAM FOR CHAIKOVSKY CENTENARY

The centenary of Chaikovsky's birth falls due on May 7, 1940. Long before this date the country is preparing to mark in suitable fashion the anniversary of the great Russian composer. An All-Union Committee has been formed, headed by the well-known Soviet composer Reingold Gliere.

The largest opera houses in the Soviet Union have prepared for new productions of Chaikovsky's operas. The Bolshoi Theater is presenting a revival of the opera *Mazeppa*, a new production of *Silver Slippers* and *Iolanthe*. The Kirov Opera and Ballet Theater in Leningrad is rehearsing the opera *The Enchantress*.

Several exhibitions dedicated to Chaikovsky have been arranged at the Conservatory, the Philharmonic, the Bolshoi Theater, as well as a central exhibition at the Literary Museum. Other cities have also arranged exhibitions.

Philharmonic and other concert organizations are featuring Chaikovsky music from April 15 to May 15. A festive meeting to be broadcast all over the country will be held on May 6th in the city of Votkinsk, Udmurtia, the birthplace of the composer.

Other activities include a contest for the best rendition of Chaikovsky's works, the foundation of a Chaikovsky prize for the best symphony in 1940, a contest for the best biography of the composer, a contest for a monument to be erected in Moscow in front of the Conservatory, establishment of three Chaikovsky scholarships for gifted student composers from the national republics in a number of conservatories.

Life and Musical Activity of Chaikovsky is the title of an album issued by the Leningrad Scientific Institute of Theater and Music.

CULTURE AND ART OF THE PEOPLES OF CENTRAL ASIA

A new section dedicated to the culture and art of the peoples of Central Asia has been opened at the Hermitage in Leningrad. Occupying ten halls, these exhibits, many of which were unearthed by recent archeological excavations in Tajikistan, Uzbekistan and other republics, cover a period of over two thousand years. Of great interest are manuscripts on leather discovered in ruins of a castle in Tajikistan which dates back to the eighth century. Attention of visitors is drawn to a priceless gem of ancient architecture, a frieze which adorned one of the palaces two thousands years ago.

On view are also remarkable ceramics, fine carvings in stone and wood, ornamented clay, bronze vessels and rich-colored rugs.

COMPULSORY EDUCATION FOR WESTERN BYELORUSSIA

Compulsory education has been introduced in Western Byelorussia by decision of the Council of People's Commissars of the Byelorussian S.S.R.

All schools in the western regions have been taken over and will be maintained by the State. Old schools are being extended and new ones set up.

Free elementary school instruction is introduced in all villages and a seven-grade education in cities. The teaching of religion in the schools is prohibited.

The decision provides the teaching of the Byelorussian language in all Russian schools and that of the Russian in all Byelorussian and other national schools.

Special schools for illiterate and semi-literate persons both adults and juveniles, are being established. Kindergardens and nurseries are being opened in former landlord estates and mansions.

MUSICAL EDUCATION IN LWOW

The entire system of musical education in Lwow has been reorganized in order to provide greater facilities of study for gifted students. Formerly the privilege of a narrow circle, musical education is now available freely to anyone, talent being the only requisite.

The conservatory of Lwow has been extended. It will provide free musical education to 175 students in classes for the piano, orchestra, singing, composition and history of music. Other music schools will enroll 750 students. Many of them will be provided with state stipends. Dormitories for the students are also being established.

A number of music schools have been opened in other cities of western Ukraine.

PRESERVING ANCIENT MONUMENTS

All historic monuments in Lwow have been catalogued and are cared for by a special commission for preserving ancient memorials. The commission is headed by the Ukrainian writer Petro Panch. The catalogue embraces works of architecture from the XIII to the XIX centuries. It includes the ruins of Kazimir's castle built in 1360, the city arsenal, the king's arsenal and many churches and other buildings, some of which were designed and built by famed Italian architects.

GUTSUL FOLK ART EXHIBITION IN KIEV

A section of Gutsul folk art has been opened at the Ukrainian State Museum in Kiev, capital of the Ukraine. The Gutsuls are a branch of the Ukrainian people who reside in the Carpathian Mountains. Oppressed by the Polish gentry, like all other nationalities that inhabited former Poland, the Gutsuls have now acquired the possibility of developing their national culture freely.

The Kiev museum has a collection of more than 200 exhibits. Among them Dutch-tiles with intricate design, carved wooden boxes, pails and barrels with fine poker-work. Bead ornaments, bright woven belts, kerchiefs, embroidered towels and blouses and rich-colored rugs are on display. Workers of the museum left for the Carpathians to collect more articles for the exhibition.

THE SOVIET STATE TAKES OVER PRIVATE MICKIEWICZ MUSEUM

The small Mickiewicz museum that was set up by private individuals in the town of Novogrudok has been turned into a state institution. Novogrudok, a provincial town in Western Byelorussia, had been for many years the residence of the famous Polish author, a friend of Pushkin and the Decembrists.

A wooden cottage where the writer lived has been preserved. Several years ago a resident of Novogrudok and great admirer of the father of modern Polish literature undertook to set up a museum in the old cottage. His project was not supported by Polish authorities, the city administration and other Government institutions rendering no aid whatsoever.

Nonetheless he succeeded in assembling 800 exhibits, various belongings of the poet, books, letters, a model of the monument of Mickiewicz in Paris, notes of his friends and a diary of the poet covering the years he stayed in Novogrudok.

The museum, now maintained by the State, will seek to augment its collection since much material on the life of the poet is still lacking. The friendship of Mickiewicz and Pushkin is well known but no records of it are to be found since the Polish chauvinists tried to eradicate all traces of fraternity between Russian and Polish literature.

NOTES

A broadcast of Wagner's opera *Valkyria* from Moscow to Germany was arranged in February. A short introductory speech before the microphone was delivered by Sergei Eisenstein who will

stage this opera at the Bolshoi Theater in Moscow.

Eleven new philharmonic societies are being established in various cities of the Soviet Union in the current year. The R.S.F.S.R. alone is to have forty-three philharmonic societies this season.

More than five thousand manuscripts, eight hundred in languages other than Russian, have been submitted to the contest for one-act plays organized by the Committee on Arts. Most of the authors are beginner playwrights, people of various callings, including teachers, Red Army men, collective farmers and members of amateur art circles.

The Odessa Museum of Jewish Culture named after Mendele Moikher Sforim has been reorganized into the Museum of Jewish Literature and Art.

The museum has a big display dedicated to the life and activity of the Jewish classics—Mendele Moikher Sforim, Linetsky and Sholom Aleichem. A section on Jewish Soviet literature is to be opened soon.

Calderon's play *The Invisible Lady* was the initial production of the new Theater of Comedy in Moscow.

GERMANY

RUSSIAN OPERAS ON THE GERMAN STAGE

The opera *Ivan Susanin* of the great Russian composer Glinka was performed at the Berlin Opera House. The music excellently interpreted by the orchestra evoked enthusiastic applause of the audience. A cordial ovation was given to the singers who played the parts of Ivan Susanin, Antonida and Vanya.

A special issue of a theatrical magazine publishes articles about the works of outstanding Russian composers—Glinka, Dargomyzhsky, Moussorgsky, Rimsky-Korsakov, Borodin and Balakirev. The magazine is profusely illustrated with photographs of scenes from the opera *Ivan Susanin*, as staged at the Bolshoi Theater in Moscow.

Moussorgsky's opera *Boris Godunov* has been revived by the Opera House in Köln. "The great folk opera *Boris Godunov* is an outstanding example of Russian art," the *Kölnische Zeitung* wrote. "This powerful work of art will undoubtedly be one of the best productions in the repertory of the Köln Opera House."

The Opera House of Duisburg has staged Chaikovsky's opera *Mazeppa*, the first of Chaikovsky's works presented by this theater.

SCANDINAVIA

NEW YOUTH MAGAZINE

A new magazine, *Voice of Youth*, has been published in Denmark. Edited by Per Meurling, the first issue shows among its contributors such outstanding Scandinavian writers as Martin Andersen Nexö, Nordahl Grieg end Haldor Laxness.

The magazine opens with the well-known appeal of Andersen Nexö to the youth, where he castigates, with his usual candor and passion, the imperialists, who involved mankind in a new shambles and are attempting to draw more countries and nations into the orbit of the imperialist war.

The issue contains the following articles: *China Marches to Victory*, by Eskil Bergen; *Heroes of British Imperialism* by Ralph Fox; *The Enigma of the Western Front* by Eric Rodén; a chapter from the latest novel of Nordahl Grieg and a brilliant exposition of the present international situation by George Bernard Shaw.

BIOGRAPHY OF NORDAHL GRIEG

A biography of Nordahl Grieg, written by Arvid Hansen, well-known Norwegian journalist, has been issued by the publishers of *Scandinavia's Heralds of Freedom*. The book earned considerable praise. "It is more than just a biography," writes the Norwegian newspaper, *Arbeideren*. "It is a timely, militant book issued in a difficult and trying moment. The book has called forth furious attacks on the part of the reactionary press. But we may retort upon all enemies of progress with the words of Byron that one may smash the waves, but never stem the tide."

Biographies of Martin Andersen Nexö, Tegner, Per Silve and other champions of freedom of the Scandinavian peoples are scheduled for publication in the same series.

CHILE

A NEW NOVEL BY JUAN CASTRO

Stagnant Water—(Aguas estancadas) is the title of a new novel by the Chilean writer Juan Modesto Castro, the author of a collection of stories entitled Beyond *the Cordilleras (Cordillera Adentro)*.

This is a psychological novel; its action takes place in a hospital. The author passes from patient to patient, from bed to bed, and the reader beholds powerfully presented stories of the poor, with their misfortunes, sorrows, illnesses and dejection. The reviewer of the *Athenea* magazine declares that Juan Modesto Castro, who is well acquainted with Chilean reality,

has given a true picture of the life of the Chilean poor. The characters of his novel are workers who have lost their strength and health in mines, docks, factories and fields and whose life is one continued hard struggle for existence.

CUBA

SOVIET FILM IN CUBA

The Cuban newspaper *Hoy* has published articles by the woman journalist Emma Perez about the Soviet films *Thirteen* and *Parade of Youth*, both of which were recently shown in Havana.

"Art belongs to the people," Lenin said. And in the U.S.S.R. this is always kept in mind, writes Emma Perez. Soviet cinematography sticks to its correct line; it reflects the noble sentiments of the people, educates the people, it widens the horizon of their knowledge and at the same time it developes their esthetic taste.

All this fully applies to the Soviet film *Thirteen*. The action takes place in a desert, in central Asia. The desert reaches out to the very horizon. A hot wind blows from Afghanistan, the sand blinds one's eyes, and the lack of water causes cruel torture.

"Twelve men and a woman are going on leave; there is the commander and his wife, some men who have been discharged from the Red Army at the end of their service, and a geologist who has completed his explorations. While searching for water they come upon a nest of *basmachi*, and engage in a valiant struggle against the stronger enemy.

"*Thirteen* has revealed what man is able to accomplish once society has enabled him to find himself. This film, which is imbued with the spirit of true humanism, could have been made in the U.S.S.R. only, for only among the Soviet peoples is the sense of duty and comradeship so highly developed."

"*The Parade of Youth* is an excellent documentary film," Emma Perez writes in another article. "The youth which we see on the screen is the most remarkable youth in the world, the happiest and merriest. (Let us recall that they never knew the horrors of capitalism!) These young men and girls who, thanks to the high technical level of Soviet cinematography, rise before us as if in the flesh, recall the youth of ancient Greece. Yes, it was of the youth of ancient Greece that I thought, looking at the gorgeous parade of Soviet youth, resplendant in its beauty and strength.

"In this film the young Soviet sportsmen and sportswomen demonstrate their skill, they breath genuine happiness, and we begin to passionately wish the same happiness for our Cuban youth as well."

ECUADOR

"NOVIEMBRE," A NEW NOVEL BY HUMBERTO SALVADOR

International Literature received a new novel *Noviembre* from the famous Ecuadorian writer Humberto Salvador, the author of the novel *Toilers* (a letter of his was published in *International Literature*, No. 10, for 1939).

The novel deals with the November uprising in Ecuador, which brought the power into the hands of the reactionaries. Salvador tells of the struggle of the Ecuadorian People's Front and of the rebellion in the army units, incited by the forces of reaction, which enabled them to wreak vengeance not only on the Communists and Socialists, but on all the foremost representatives of the intelligentsia.

Salvador makes the reader sympathize with the oppressed and unfortunate, and hate the reactionaries and the mercenary liberals. It also shows the position of women in Ecuador. The whole book is permeated with the spirit of defense of culture, of which—in the words of the author—the Soviet Union is the center. In his novel Salvador extols the struggle waged by the progressive elements of society, primarily by the communists.

Noviembre has been banned in Ecuador.

About Our Contributors

KONSTANTIN FEDIN. Outstanding Soviet novelist. Among his most popular books are *Cities and Years* and *The Abduction of Europa* (see *International Literature* No. 4, 1934), translated into many languages.

GI. ?ORI ROMM. Young Soviet newspaperman and pla· wright.

JOHANNES R. BECHER. Noted German revolutionary poet. For several years has been editing the German edition of *International Literature.* His *Sonnets* were published in English in *International Literature* No. 6, 1938.

GIOVANNI GERMANETTO. Italian writer, at present living in the U.S.S.R. His *Autobiography of an Italian Barber* has appeared in English some years ago.

BORIS PESIS. A Soviet critic. One of the editors of the Russian edition of *International Literature.*

VICTOR PERTSOV. Soviet critic, expert on contemporary poetry and prose. Began his literary career as Mayakovsky's fellow-editor of *Novy L.E.F.* (*New Left Front.*) His book *Mayakovsky's Life and Work* has just been published by the State Literary Publishing House.

SERGEI EISENSTEIN. World-famous Soviet cinema producer.

VASILI KATANYAN. Soviet critic and journalist.

Associate Editor TIMOFEI ROKOTOV