INTERNATIONAL LITERATURE

ORGAN OF THE INTERNATIONAL
UNION OF REVOLUTIONARY WRITERS

№ 4

1935

Distributors in the USSR: Co-operative Publishing Society of Foreign Workers in the USSR Nikolskaya 7, Moscow. Distributors in Great Britain:—Martin Lawrence, Ltd., 33 Gt. James Street, London. W. C. I. Distributors in the U. S. A. International Publishers, 381 Fourth Avenue, New York, U. S. A.

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

Composite painting of the Soviet Karelian lumber camps, worked mainly by Finnish lumber-jacks from Canada—by HEINRICH VOGELER

Vsevolod Ivanov

My People

Episodes from the New Soviet Novel The Adventures of a Fakir[1]

My family has always been distinguished by the most astonishing vanity. I am now thirty-nine years old. I have met a great number of people and questioned them with, at times, an almost passionate curiosity. I have traveled in many countries and read many books on history, but nowhere have I ever encountered a vainer set of people than my own relatives.

My grandfather on my mother's side, Simon Kalistratovich Savitski, informed everyone, although he was known to be no more than seventy years of age, that he was a hundred and seventeen, that he was one of the exiled Polish rebels—the Confederatists—and that he had been sentenced to penal servitude. Beside the picture of the Virgin Mary in the corner hung enormous chains by which, he declared, he had been secured to his wheelbarrow during the aforesaid penal servitude. For six days in the week he was at loggerheads with God, whom he cursed and reviled without intermission, even going to the length of flinging the icons into the outhouse, and threatening to smash them up with the axe. This threat he only refrained from carrying out because it suddenly occurred to him that he might pretend the tinfoil vestments on the icons were real silver. Sunday came round, bringing visitors to grandfather's house. The village priest, Father Andrei, would come—a deaf but spiteful old fellow with an ashen face and short arms, and a habit of blowing his nose every minute or so in a long grey handkerchief. He showed more admiration than any of the other guests for grandfather's tales, and for the sake of this admiration grandfather patched up a temporary peace with God on Sunday mornings. He would rub the icons with sunflower seed oil, light the little lamp before them, and late at night he would kiss the heavy prison chains and declare that only through them had he come to know the real, the Christian God, who had never failed to appear to him and comfort him in his sufferings, particularly when he was birched.

"Seems to me, convicts weren't flogged with birch rods," spiteful Father Andrei would cannily observe, whipping out his grey handkerchief with a quick flourish, so that his short arms almost seemed to sweep the floor.

"Why not, indeed?"

"Only soldiers were birched; it was regarded as something special for civilians. Some were even proud of it when they were ordered this form of punishment."

"Well, I was ordered it—when I was caught right after the rebellion! I fought for Poland as a Polish soldier."

"I'd like to know how they did it—this flogging with birch rods?"

"A separate stick for every blow."

"And supposing you'd been ordered three thousand blows?" The priest asked spitefully.

"I stood eight thousand blows!" screamed grandfather Simon. "Eight thousand—every one with a separate stick. Fifteen cartloads of sticks they

[1] To be published soon in England. It will also be issued in English in Moscow by the Co-operative Publishing Society of Foreign Workers in the USSR.

used upon me, but I stood firm as a rock. Then the general flew into an awful rage, put me into chains and said: 'Send him to the devil to Siberia—to Lebyazhi on the River Irtysh—and may he live till he's a hundred and fifty!' And I will too!"

"You will, that's sure," the guests agreed.

Oh, those relatives of my grandfather's! When they heard him to the end, they began themselves. It turned out that Father Andrei was a descendant of Yermak, the conqueror of Siberia, and of Count Demidov San Donato, My godfather, it appeared, had taken part in the storming of Warsaw, where he had captured my grandfather and the whole regiment he commanded. The village of Lebyazhi had once, without doubt, been a capital city. And along the banks of the Irtysh, on the other side, countless treasures left behind by former Turkish rulers could be found.

The smoke curled from the pipes, the samovar gurgled cosily. Through the tiny windows came the sparkle of the vast silent steppe. Crude stone figures of women reared their massive heads near the salt marches. Beside the highway, along which bold and heavily moustached fellows galloped with the mail, golden eagles were tearing at the carcass of a horse. The lakes resembled a cataract over an eyeball; around them tall reeds grew; beyond the reeds lay deep gullies. For hundreds of miles wild strawberries covered the ground, fat forty-pound bustards roamed; and beyond the bustards stretched the pine woods.

My grandmother Felka, the wife of grandfather Simon, yearned unceasingly to a saint. Grandfather's blasphemies therefore afforded her a great deal of satisfaction: the more trials and affiictions she had to bear, the easier would it be for her to acquire saintliness. She was fond of vodka, and tasty food and lively guests, but she denied herself all these pleasures and for the last few years pretended to be blind in order to avoid the sight of sin. Winter and summer, she sat out on the doorstep in her wadded coat—a little, round, snub-nosed woman, clutching a bag of herbs in her hands.

Grandfather Simon—long, lean and blue—ran about the yard watching the sky, his gun slung across his shoulders. He liked nothing better than shooting at the ravens and vultures that came down after the chickens. It looked to me then as if he was trying to get a shot at God, and that grandmother was trying to keep him from committing this dreadful crime.

Grandmother Felka did not know a thing about herbs or sickness, but since tradition said that saints always healed the sick with herbs, she did the same. I think those who came to her to be cured did so not so much because of sickness as because they wanted to boast that they had been healed by St. Felka of Lebyazhi. She took no money for her cures, and neither did grandfather Simon, who, although he often cursed the fate that had sent a saint to his household, was obviously well satisfied none the less. If God himself had no time to come down and fight with Simon, he at least had the decency to send him a saint.

It so happened that once grandmother Fekla was healing a rich Kirghizian named Taksi-bey. He suffered from stomach-ache, so grandmother ordered him to eat a pound of yellow clay mixed with sawdust and herbs. This had to be partaken of at dawn, and afterwards he was to fast for ten days. On recovering his health, Taksi-bey brought me an unbroken stallion as a present. He gave it to me, because neither grandfather nor grandmother, much less my own father, would have accepted the gift.

It happened in 1910, during the Christmas holidays. I was attending the Pavlodar Agricultural School at the time, and I was just fifteen.

The horse behaved in the way peculiar to all unbroken horses. He kicked, snorted, and held up his tail as stiff as a ramrod. Our ramshackle fence was adorned with a string of Cossacks, curious to see how I would manage my horse, for the Cossack custom was that a gift-horse should be mounted once, as a trial, if he was already broken in, and three times if he was not. As to whether he would toss his rider or not—that was a different matter.

The horse was saddled. My father looked proud. Grandmother fixed her eyes on the ground, grandfather aimed at the sky. I mounted the saddle a little nervously. The horse rose in the air, and I flew over his head. He flew over me. I flew over a snowdrift. A snowstorm flew over me. At last I was dragged out of the snowdrift by the leg. My father looked modest, grandmother—ready to cure me, grandfather—as if he was recalling his own youth.

I mounted the horse once more. I hit the snowdrift with even greater force than before, and the horse, taking fright at the howl I gave, leaped over the fence. The Kirghizians went in hot pursuit. "I wish they may never catch him!" I thought to myself wearily.

Around me stretched an empty waste, bounded by a profound and scornful silence. My gauntlets, hat and short coat lay in the snow, trampled by the horse's hoofs: my legs throbbed, water poured out of my ears.

"They've caught him," said grandmother in her healing voice.

The horse was led up to me for the third time. He was in a fearful state now; clouds of steam rose from him, foam trickled from his mouth, at every kick of his hoofs a cloud of lilac snow flew out over the crowd. His stomach rumblings sounded like the crackling of the ice during twelfth-night frosts. But his eyes were blue and tender. Staking all my hopes on those blue eyes, I set my foot in the broad stirrup. The Kirghizians were about to let go of his bridle, when grandfather Simon slapped my felt boot and said.

"He'll fall off, I tell you—fall off, and it won't be into the snowdrift this time, but head-first into the log fence. And there's no saint'll ever be able to heal him."

"Christ raised even the dead to life," said grandmother highly offended.

"Well, and suppose I'm not believing in God today?" screeched grandfather, clinging to the saddle with blue hands. "Supposing I'm ready to sneeze at all the gods today? Get down, Sivolot!"

"I'm supposed to have a third try," I objected, dismounting with alacrity.

"You can try to your heart's content after me. I'll show you how to break in a horse!"

Taksi-bey himself held the stirrup for grandfather Simon.

"Now I'll show you how we broke horses a hundred years ago," grandfather announced, getting into the saddle and gathering the skirts of his coat under him. He slapped the horse with his gauntlet along the frosty mane and took the bridle in his hands.

"Off!" he shouted.

"Off!" cried the Kirghizians.

"Gee up, my beauty!" screamed grandfather.

The Kirghizians leaped back. My heart gave a throb of pride. The horse made such an incredible jump that I thought to myself delightedly: probably no one has ever fallen from such a height as I might have fallen from just now. The horse spun round and rushed about the yard with

blue-white snowdrifts whirling about him. Then, riderless, the blue-eyed beast cleared the fence, and left grandfather Simon lying in the snowdrift in the very same spot where I had lain.

I seized him by the leg.

"Drag me to the icon!" wailed grandfather Simon, "and you, Fekla, call down all the gods to cure me. I won't live to see a hundred and fifty at this rate. And neither will you, Sivolot, for that matter."

I felt sorry for grandfather. I cried bitterly. I loved his blue beard and the long blue sleeves of his coat and his thin piping voice, his chains, his Warsaw. As for myself, I had every reason in the world for doubting the power of God. A few years previous to this, my father had sent me to be an acolyte to a priest in the village of Volchikha. I was dressed in flowing vestments of silver brocade, and swung the censer in church. As soon as the priest had left the altar, I finished off the warm communion wine, weakened with boiling water, and smoked my father's cigarettes into the little door of the stove. On my left hung the black-bearded St. Nicholas, who stared past me indifferently. His tranquility irritated me, so I singed his beard for him with a taper; it burned right through to the wood of the icon. Then I ate four of the wafers prepared for the communion table. But still the gods held their peace. I threw a beetle into the liquor prepared for drinking with the wafers, and our revered church elder swallowed it. And God said nothing. Then and then only, with the intention of doing God a nasty turn, I sold my soul to the devil. Among my relatives, who for some reason or other claimed to have come from Poland, there was always a great deal of talk about a Polish gentleman named Twardowski, who had sold his soul to the devil. The soul—it appeared from all accounts—was of very mediocre quality, but the devil had taken a great fancy to it, and the gentleman was able to sell it at a profit. For example, it was practically impossible to arrest him; he might commit all sorts of frauds and forgeries with impunity—and simply disappear, after having sketched a horse in charcoal on the wall. I never had a personal interview with the devil myself, though. I resolved that if I wrote out an agreement in my own blood, and threw it into the church stove, it was bound to fall into the hands of the devil, since he was supposed to be sitting in there on the embers, wondering whether to hop out on to the altar or not. Father Andrei often went up to the stove and spat into it. "It's the same as spitting on the devil," I thought to myself.

With some difficulty I persuaded the priest's son, Egorka—who was a high school boy—to lend me his penknife. It proved very blunt. I tried to bite my hand—it hurt too much. Then I ran to the caretaker's hut and begged an awl from the bellringer. With this I pricked my finger. Blood spurted out. I had a goose quill ready, because I remembered that Twardowski always signed his agreements with a goose quill.

The quill pen was badly sharpened. I did my writing on the window sill by the altar. Outside, it was all snow drifts. Pigeons fluttered about. It was the Lenten season. The priest was muttering drowsily over the altar. The coals burned with a slow, silken flame in the stove. A heavy smell of incense hung in the air. The entire window sill was occupied by empty bottles that held Communion wine. It proved no light task to write out an agreement, for in addition to my ignorance of the form it should take, there was the possibility that the priest might notice what I was doing. Therefore I simply wrote: "Agreed. Signed V. Ivanov," and

flung the paper into the stove. To prevent the devil from fooling me, however, I took the precaution of stating my terms to him in a whisper. I demanded in return for my soul the following: a pair of "combed felt" boots the color of yolk-of-egg-in-milk, embroidered in the Barnaul style; a pair of skates; a penknife, and the concluding chapters of a tale called *The Secret Island,* the beginning of which I had discovered in the priest's attic.

Evidently the devil had his hands full with the demands of his other clients and was in no hurry to carry out the terms of our bargain. The skates I received about six years later. *The Secret Island* I only finished eight years after I had started it. The penknife I acquired in Berlin in the winter of 1933. And the embroidered felt boots of the desired color I have not so far obtained.

So grandfather Simon lay dying. Dying in a highly offended frame of mind. He accounted for his failure by declaring that the horse was bewitched, and that grandmother Felka had been unable to break the spell. As regards this grandmother had her own views. Naturally she wanted to heal grandfather, but at the same time—what sort of a saint would she be if she started curing her own folks! She even let slip the words: "Oh, if only you'd been a stranger, Simon!" Who knows, maybe she wished for his death, so that she might look forward to the frightful, inconsolable sufferings that all the saints had borne! After all, grandfather Simon had brought an element of frivolity into her life.

So grandfather Simon died, and was buried, but the vanity of my relatives did not diminish in the slightest. And before his corpse was cold, they were boasting that although Sivolot had not been able to break in the horse, his hundred-and-seventeen-year-old grandfather had been successful. It should be explained here, by the way, that the horse was one of the mildest of creatures, and that his capriciousness on the fatal occasion was due to his hasty saddling, when a piece of Kirghizian felt had been used instead of the usual saddle cloth. A tiny splinter in the coarse felt had irritated his back. What is still more surprising is that until quite recently, I have also been in the habit of telling the story of how I failed to break in the horse and of how my hundred-and-seventeen-year-old grandfather succeeded.

Grandmother Felka's saintliness increased from day to day. It was really beyond endurance. Everyone was sick to death of her. She persisted in her pretense of blindness and demanded that no fewer than two people should lead her about by the hand, and that they should repeat endless prayers after her while doing so. Of course, we were pleased that our fame went abroad throughout the neighborhood. Sometimes quite famous people came to see us, and once even the local Cossack commander, Egor Trubochev, drew up his sleigh at our gate. But it hurt my father's feelings to see grandmother's fame. He wanted to shine in some way himself!

My father, Vyacheslav Alexeyevich Ivanov, was an astonishing person. He disliked vodka and found it extremely difficult to stand, but drank it in vast quantities. His mother, Darya Bundova, had by her own account, been housekeeper to the well-known general Kaufmann, the "conqueror of Turkestan." There is every reason to suppose—even from the fact that my father excelled in trick riding—that grandmother Darya had "sinned" with the coachman. But since my father was "illegitimate," grandmother declared that the "sin" in question had been committed with Kaufmann.

At first my father worked in the gold-fields, then he graduated from a teachers' college in Tashkent, from whch town he subsequently made his way to the River Irtysh on foot. He became a teacher and taught the little boys of Lebyazhi; the lessons consisted for the most part in marching and dancing. He could even teach arithmetic by dancing. Arithmetic, indeed! That was nothing! Although one would imagine that calligraphy was too subtle and complicated a subject for any experiments of this kind, he contrived to introduce dancing even here. He played the balalaika, while the pupils danced in a ring. The letters were beautifully inscribed on the floor in chalk. In order that the pupils might remember words of difficult spelling, he hung little placards with these words to the backs of the pupils and they danced about like that.

Now this teacher, Vyacheslav Ivanov, became the son-in-law of the saintly Fekla. Her saintliness was a bitter pill to him. No matter what he did for his own glorification, grandmother Fekla's fame always proved greater than his. He was presented with a sabre for trick riding. He won prizes at skittles. He galloped better than anyone else. His vanity attained such dimensions that although he was a puny fellow, he contested with the best of wrestlers at the fairs and races, and often won. But here was grandmother Fekla healing the deaf! Grandmother Fekla would pray for rain, and the rain would be sure to fall. A cow would fall sick—grandmother cured it in a moment. Someone stole Trubochev's race horse; grandmother helped to find the thief.

My father brought her books in leather bindings and read her the *Prologue* and the *Book of Martyrs,* in order to point out to her that the saints did not live as she did. For instance, there was no record anywhere of saints drinking koumiss. But grandmother found it difficult to deny herself this pleasure, so she said that, like all the saints who had been afflicted with sons-in-law, she would very likely have to put up with even worse mockery than this.

And, as a matter of fact, she had. The Kirghizians were much more credulous and trusting than the Cossacks. Many of them came to grandmother to be healed, and brought her skins of koumiss, more as an excuse for conversation than as a present. Of this delectable drink—fermented mare's milk—she drank no less than a gallon a day. She sat on the doorstep, rosy and good-natured, and her eyes, though she kept them shut, had a cunning look about them.

My father sent for an alphabet of the Arabic language and, a little later, a dictionary. He learnt a good bit of Arabic, and then rode away into the steppe to the famous Mohammedan sheik, Gaukaz Fakhtulin, to test his knowledge. After that he invited the Kirghizians to our house and read them the Koran in Arabic. He read and interpreted its application in all cases—whether in sickness, ill luck or good luck. He explained the future, he elucidated the present; he acted as a doctor.

The Kirghizians began to visit father. He refused koumiss. What a disinterested fellow! He actually gave up the koumiss to grandmother.

Healing, evidently, can be done in number of ways. My father, for instance, used the Koran as a curative medium. But grandmother Fekla had no faith in the healing properties of the Koran, and said that my father had stolen the secret of her herb medicines. Very soon she began to complain to Father Andrei, "The Devil has entered into the schoolmaster Ivanov," she said. He had taken away her Kirghizians, whom she had wanted to convert to Christianity. Father Andrei was at a loss how to

act and turned for advice to his ecclesiastical superior. The latter—Father Gabriel by name—together with Father Andrei and the Cossack commander, Trubochev, came to see my father. Father Gabriel was a tall grey-haired man, a great lover of horses and a splendid rider.

"What's all this, Vyacheslav Alexeyevich? Are you intending to become a Mohammedan?"

"It's too bad! You've always lived like a respectable person, and now. . ." The Cossack ataman let his thick head droop to one side, as if he were dozing off. He took this pose because General Schmidt, the commander-in-chief of all the Cossack troops in Siberia, was in the habit of dozing off like that.

"Before condemning people, you should find out what they've done," said my father. "Look—you see what's written here. . . ." He opened the Koran and read something aloud in Arabic.

"Well, and I explain to the Kirghizians that all this is a lie. I lead them astray by giving them a wrong interpretation, and thus incline them to the Christian faith. You just ask the Kirghizians what they think of their old Mahomet now."

"I see," said Father Gabriel, and went away perfectly satisfied with my father's explanation.

My father was well pleased, too, but the feud between him and grandmother continued.

On one occasion he was presented with a two-gallon skin of koumiss. Into this he poured a bottle of spirit, and two days later, when the koumiss was well fermented, he brought the skinful to grandmother as a present.

She was delighted with it. She drank glass after glass. My father invited some people in for a chat. He told an amazingly tall story about his extraordinary passion for the Grand Duchess Sophia, who lived in the town of Verny in Turkestan. Then he went on to the story of the treasure he had found—a casket of Sassanian cions—and of how he had drunk the money he got for it at a single spree. It was a very hot day and the sun outside was high in the sky.

Grandmother was very tipsy by now. All of a sudden she burst out singing. And it was not a hymn, it was *I saw a brave troika go galloping by!* My father cast a mocking glance at her. He had a yellow face with smoke stained teeth below and narrow brown eyes above. He was a well built man—slim and agile.

Grandmother started to dance. At first the guests thought that it was perhaps the regular thing for a saint to do, or that she had merely taken leave of her senses. But then she opened her eyes. Grandmother had regained her sight! Grandmother demanded vodka. She got dead drunk and fell asleep at last on the church porch, after having vomited all around her and having drawn something obscene with a bit of charcoal on the icon of the holy martyr, St. Barbara, which hung at the entrance. My father was merciful. He carried grandmother on his back, put her to bed, and rubbed out the obscenity she had drawn.

Grandmother Fekla's fall from grace brought my father a good deal of suffering and trouble. Since grandmother found it impossible to regain her former aura of holiness, she took to trade. She found herself partners in order to open a little shop in Lebyazhi. Ataman Trubochev's brother, who kept a shop himself, got worried and ran to complain.

"She wants to start trade in partnership with the Kirghizians! Just

imagine Kirghizians selling goods to honorable Cossacks with the Order of St. George on their chests!"

The Cossack ataman summoned my father.

"It would perhaps be better, my friend, if you wouldn't lead the Kirghizians astray, after all... What did you want to go hammering the Koran into their heads for? Wanted to make a bit of money with them. Eh? Well, I'm going to dismiss you for a start, and then I'll send you up for trial before the church court."

My father was frightened; he just sat there blinking.

"Better make your peace with her. Better for you if she just stays a saint like before."

So father ran off to make his peace. He made a great many plans to restore Fekla to her saintly ways. He read and interpreted a certain place in the Koran to mean that a Kirghizian should not enter into any commercial partnership with a Christian. He threatened to start trading himself. It was all to no purpose. The rumors of Fekla's intentions to open a shop did not cease, although no partners could be found when once it was known that the Cossack ataman was displeased. Grandmother began to sell liquor in secret. Then father guessed that as soon as grandmother had collected enough money that way she would be likely to start a business, and he would then be dismissed from his job; he thought out a new plan of action.

Father resolved to become a great scholar. He knew Arabic, and he knew Kirghizian. He began his scholarly activities with the compilation of a dictionary of the Kirghizian language. Then some old fellow who was passing through the place on the way from Moscow described to him the wonderful uniform worn by the students if the Lazarevski Institute of Oriental Languages. "It's time for me to turn student too," said father.

He took a crust of bread, cut himself a stout stick, sewed up thirty rubles in the hem of his coat, and set out for Moscow on foot to try for the entrance examinations in the Lazarevski Institute. He was three years on the road. My mother, Irina Semyonovna, found employment as a cook. From time to time we received letters from father; one was from Jerusalem. After the examinations, he took it into his head to go to Mecca, and set out on foot, as before, for Odessa.

In Odessa he made the acquaintance of some rich Moslems. He informed them that he intended to become or had already become a convert to the Moslem faith. He bought himself a green turban and called himself Ivan-bey. The rich Moslems bought him a ticket on a ship that was to take pilgrims to Mecca. Just before his departure, he fell in with some pilgrims who were going on another ship to Jerusalem. These people shamed him out of going to Mecca. So father resolved to go to Jerusalem first. And it so happened that the boat for Jerusalem was leaving earlier than the one for Mecca. He sold his ticket for Mecca and bought himself one to Jerusalem instead.

In 1912 I arrived home from Pavlodar, our district center. I was now a type-setter, and I regarded myself as a full grown independent person.

"Well, Dad, what's Jerusalem like?" I asked him.

"Ah, it's something like Tashkent," he replied evasively.

We were standing leaning against the school fence. The dusty village street stretched before us. A tan calf was mooning along. It had got separated from the herd; a girl was chasing it with a twig, but the calf kept

careering about and refused to return to the herd. Ducks were waddling lazily up the bank of the Irtysh, and wild ducks were flying in the sky.

My father had brought back from his travels a long bone tooth-pick, with which he astonished the whole village. He kept picking his teeth with it all the time, even during the service in church. And he was standing picking his teeth with it now.

Having tried for the examinations at the Lazarevski Institute, my father extracted his thirty rubles from their hiding place and bought himself a tunic with epaulettes, tabs and glittering buttons. There was not enough money for trousers. Three years later in the early hours of the morning, he had reached the outskirts of his native village. He did not enter it, however, but stopped by the windmill. He wanted to wait till evening, when the Cossacks would all come out and sit smoking in front of their houses. The Cossacks were well aware that schoolmaster Ivanov was hanging about somewhere near the village, and considered his behavior quite correct. When the sun was setting, the Cossacks put on their uniforms, their trousers with the stripes down the side, their peaked caps with the cockades, filled their pipes with the best tobacco, and sat down outside their houses to smoke.

Then my father pulled out of his birch bark knapsack the splendid uniform worn by a student of the Lazarevski Institute of Oriental Languages, polished his boots, took five books out of the knapsack, put them under his arm, and, looking neither to the right nor to the left, marched slowly homewards.

The Cossacks rose from their seats and saluted him, and the Cossack women bowed low from the waist.

On arriving home, father took off his uniform, shook the dust from it and laid it away in the trunk . . .

"I've never been in Tashkent."

"You ought to go, do you good," father replied, picking his teeth.

"It was wrong, Dad."

"What was wrong?"

"It was wrong to be as irresponsible as that. Here's mother been tormented out of her life these three years, working for strangers."

"I've been tormented out of my life, too, among strangers these three years," said father. "It was hard to get a bite to eat sometimes. You come to a monastery and they give you some rubbishy kind of fish to eat, and then make you work. Yes, and they don't think twice of landing you one in the neck either, if you don't work well. And in the pilgrim's hotels in Jerusalem, they made us clean out the latrines, honest to God they did! Well, I told them: 'I'm a student, you know.' So they put me peeling potatoes. Why, I never have to peel potatoes at home."

"Still, tell us what it's like—Jerusalem?"

"Something like Samarkand," replied father after a moment's reflection. "Except that there are more dogs, perhaps."

I was silent awhile, and then I said resolutely:

"Yes—but it was wrong!"

"What was wrong? If there's no God, well, at any rate, it's a nice trip and you make it out of curiosity, and if there is a God—it's a good deed, after all, and it'll be counted to you in heaven."

"Vanity's a bad thing."

"Vanity?" he repeated with astonishment. "I don't know that I've ever met with the word in the dictionary."

"Vanity," I explained, "is to be found in many people, but most of all in the inhabitants of our village. Vanity is the thing that makes people pride themselves on little bits of trifles, often quite useless. Vanity drives people to stupid, thoughtless actions, which frequently ruin the whole of their future. Vanity is particularly to be dreaded when it gets a thorough hold over a family and settles down in it for a long time. It affects the children! It is all due to vanity that the children are neglected and grow up without proper attention, that they are left to the bad influence of the streets, that they grow up conceited and full of contempt for learning and think they can manage to get along in life without working—just like that! Vanity is dangerous, too, because it clings to one so, it's easily acquired but hard to get rid of. It's a bad thing in women, but ten times worse in men! You just look at what's going on around us in the village! Look at the agricultural machinery—instead of being put away safely in sheds, it is left out in the street, right under peoples' windows, where it can rust and spoil. To show off before guests, folk here squander a year's earnings on a bean feast, waste their best horses on races, pawn their daughters like cattle for drink . . ."

Father was upset. The tears were coursing down his cheeks. He fell on my neck. I had never dreamed that my speech would produce such an effect on him.

I was touched and even burst into tears myself.

"You're right, Vsevolod," said father, dashing the tears away with the tooth-pick.

"You bet I am."

"You're right, Vsevolod. Never marry, lad."

"I wasn't thinking of it," I said, not catching his meaning at once.

"Never marry, sonny. I'm telling you frankly—although it's hard for me. I've been watching you for a long time. That was a good word you hit on—vanity. You might think for a hundred years and not hit on a word that fits you so well, Vsevolod."

I was dumbfounded. "Fits me?" I repeated.

"Never marry. You'll ruin your wife and children, Vsevolod, with your vanity."

"I was talking about you, Dad!"

Father stroked my head consolingly. "I can quite understand you, Vsevolod, trying to put the blame on someone else. What else can you do? Young folk like to talk in parables. It's only when old age creeps on that people grow more sincere. Now, since I'm an old man, I may as well tell you, Vsevolod, that you're really one of the vainest chaps I've ever seen. And I repeat my advice: don't ruin yourself and above all, don't ruin your children. If you ever have any, that is. I'd advise you to go into a monastery."

"And live on cabbage?"

"Well, of course, the life's not an easy one there. They squabble and fight and get tight. But at any rate they don't spoil any other lives, except perhaps those that are spoiled already, like their own. Whereas here, you'll be breaking decent people's backs. You started just now about the agricultural machinery. Yes, it's stuck out on show, that's true. I'ts going rusty. And this looks like stupidity to you, whereas, as a matter of fact, it's business."

"Business? How can that be, Dad?"

"It's a sign of wealth right before your eyes. We'll get more credit out of it. Everything in this world's done for the sake of credit."

He gazed dreamily down the street. The cow-girl had not yet succeeded in driving the calf back to the herd. The ducks were still waddling along slowly. The sun was still shining lazily over the common. The school house with the high flight of steps up to it seemed to be trying to save itself from the bogs.

Suddenly father said: "Have you heard there's going to be a bank opened here? The Cossacks need big loans, and how can they get them without banks?"

He gave me a dig with his fist in the ribs and laughed gleefully.

"And supposing I'm to be director, eh? If it wasn't for your vanity, we might have fixed you up there. Why should I be director? Because I know six eastern languages and one western one too—French."

He was lying about the languages, as it happened. At that time he actually knew six oriental languages—although imperfectly—and could read French. The news about the bank annoyed me, the more so since I could already foresee my relatives discussing the candidates for the post of director, and his salary (not less than five thousand a year); he would buy presents for all his friends, and be sure to send to Turkey for his tobacco, while Persia and Afghanistan would have already sent out their caravans to open negotiations with him.

I felt depressed.

"I can recollect... when you were still quite a little chap Vsevolod, how vain you were! You'll say no? But just cast your mind back a while."

An Adventure of My Youth

We were being sent to exchange calico print and haberdashery for Kirghizian butter. Ahead of us went four wagons crammed to overflowing with goods covered with canvas; each wagon was drawn by a pair of horses. Feodor Malykh sat in the first, I sat in the last. Behind the wagons came a string of carts with empty barrels. These we filled with the butter we obtained and sent them back periodically with the Kirghizian carters to Urlyutyup. From there they brought us fresh bales of stuff, chests of tea, "Ceylon No. 42," sacks of sugar, small mirrors and eau de cologne.

We spent days and days in the steppe. We passed through ravines, crossed over high copper-colored hills, halted before clusters of white-washed cabins bordering broad streets. We tried to trade with the Ukrainian settlers, but they only said:

"Everyone lives by his own kind of fraud. Better try yours on the heathen hereabouts."

Only one alabaster-skinned virgin with large blue eyes bought a mirror the size of her hand from us, and that solely because, as it turned out, she visited Feodor that night. In the evening we set our wagons in a square and lay down, protecting our goods with our bodies. The workers slept outside. Feodor spent all night coaxing the girl. She demanded that he marry her. He promised to do so if she would wait until he had made a good haul in some successful robbery. It amused her to hear him talk: how much this fellow knew about stealing, she thought, and how easily he discussed the pros and cons of it.

"Were you a horse-thief before, Feodor? Better now say if you were.

Otherwise I won't marry you. They'll beat you to death, and then I'll lose hope of ever seeing you again, and cry. I'll be crying every night."

He gulped down his saliva noisly.

"You talk too flighty. Better if you moved a bit nearer to me."

The night was long and saffron colored. Now, for the first time, I learned what fellows talk about all night long when they have a girl with them. I found it deadly dull. Towards morning the girl's voice sounded cold and lifeless. She would not explain, but to his long-winded speeches only answered curtly: "No, no."

Feodor kept saying the same thing over and again. I thought to myself: "How silly, why should they lie all night under one blanket?" But I tried to keep their conversation in my mind. When I grew up, I would add something of my own to it, I thought—something really clever.

The sun peeped up rakishly, and the girl disappeared. Feodor shouted at me crossly to wake up.

"I wasn't asleep," I said spitefully.

"What a fool you're growing up to be!"

We went away far into the steppe, seven hundred kilometers or so from Urlyutyup. Every evening we bought ourselves a fresh sheep for two rubles. The mutton we ate and the fat from the huge tail we added to the butter in the kegs. Thus on each we managed to make a profit of fifty kopeks, besides the skin.

Usually we stopped on the outskirts of a village, and laid out our wares on a strip of felt. The Kirghizians sat in a horse-shoe ring around our wagons, and, before making any purchases, examined the silk we had brought. By the quality of the silk they judged if our business was a flourishing one and if our other goods were of high quality.

As they felt the pink silk, they asked:

"Have you got any meat for yourselves?"

They helped us to kill a sheep and make a fire, and then watched us closely as we ate, to judge whether we were greedy or lazy. If we ate greedily, it meant we would overcharge them for everything; if lazily, it meant that we had over-eaten already and would overcharge them just the same.

From time to time Feodor dived into the pot, picked out a bit of meat, and popped it into the mouth of one of the Kirghizians. The man would swallow it with a whistling sound. We permitted only the elders of the village community to sit beside us.

The Kirghizians would observe us for a whole day or sometimes two. Bargaining was hot and furious. Feodor wanted to steal, but at present he could think of nothing better than mixing mutton-fat with the butter. The Kirghizians showed an expert knowledge of prices. Feodor tried to run down the quality of their butter, but he found it hard to argue with the Kirghizians: they laughed at all his tricks.

We poured the butter into the kegs and went on to the next village of brown felt tents.

Now we encountered Kirghizians who were quite different to those in the winter-quarters along the banks of the Irtysh. They did not require much cotton material, their trousers were made of whole sheepskins. Their skins were darker, their lips thicker, their smiles readier. The tongue they spoke differed greatly from that of the Irtysh Kirghizians. They ate no bread, but kept to a diet of cheese and mutton. Money they

would not accept, because the Tatar traders who visited them often palmed off false coin on them.

Before beginning to trade they usually asked, pointing to the silk:

"How many yards of that will I get for a pound of butter?"

The steppe was different, too. The grass was higher. Away to the south misty blue montains could be seen. The sky was a deep cornflower color.

At length we started out for the village of Rakhman-Ayaz.

"There's going to be a big robbery here, as sure as fate," said Feodor.

But, as always, everything he took up slipped through his fingers. His hair hung into his mouth as before. He was dying to get rich, but he could not think of a way to do it, could not bring himself to the point of doing anything. There were such a number of portents that foretold disaster. Here, for instance, the people were not acquainted with money—on might pass off a new copper coin for gold on them, or actually buy some marvellous horse for a few coppers. But just try it! Even out here they knew how to fool people. The Kirghizians knew horses much better than Feodor; they would be sure to palm off some marvellous rubbish on him.

We were now approaching the tribe of the sultan Rakhman-Ayaz and his camp. At the foot of the rose-red rocks we caught sight of his white tent that resembled "a mountain top, embroidered by the sunset." A whole drove of horses were grazing nearby. We got out the new green-and-gilt trunk that held the rarest of our goods—tinfoil and "foreign-colored" velvet. Feodor Malykh was staking all his hopes on this trunk and on the sultan Rakhman-Ayaz.

"I'll be able to take him in nicely."

A servant in a sparkling tunic, donned for the occasion, invited us to enter the sultan's presence.

A tame golden eagle was swinging on a perch near the door. Its head was covered with a light hood. In the depths of the yurta the sultan sat on a large white felt mat. Beside him lay a skin of koumiss, out of which the mixer hung. Around the walls of the yurta stood Kazan trunks covered with bright sheet-tin. The sunlight streaming through the hole in the tent roof, gilded the metal. On the sultan's right hand sat his daughter, the round-faced Nyur-Tash. She wore many necklaces of silver coins, a round beaver hat trimmed with peacocks' feathers, a loose silk bodice and high-laced pink boots.

Outwardly the sultan presented a somewhat enamelled appearance, but I fancied he must be pretty unyielding inside. He addressed Feodor in excellent Russian as follows:

"What is life? Life, young man, is not merely a matter of expending the powers given one, but of bringing one into contact with great natural phenomena. I, for example, lead my unnumbered herds across the limitless steppe and bring them at mid-summer to my mountain pastures. Noble, high-minded children grow up in my family. We have seen many mountains and many steppes already! Now we want to gaze upon the sea. But can you sell me the sea?"

"I have tinfoil from the best factories in Warsaw and that, I can assure you, Mister Sultan, is a much finer color than any sea."

"Even cattle understand beauty. I always lead my herd to the most beautiful places. Not one cattle breeder has ever acted on this principle. My cattle are fatter than cattle from Holland. And now I am waiting day by day for buyers to come from China. It is quite possible that my mares

and my koumiss will be ordered by the Court of the Chinese Emperor."

"A straight light is better than a reflected one, even in trade," replied Feodor politely.

"But I believe there's a revolution in China," I remarked.

Feodor gave me a sharp glance. He knew that the Russian officials fleeced Rakhman-Ayaz. The sultan was up to his ears in debt; goods were sold to him at an exorbitant price. His respect for the Chinese Emperor caused him to sell his cattle for a song. In his pursuit of beauty and nobility the sultan often strayed from the traditional paths adhered to by his tribe, and the other tribes were offended and stole his cattle. It looked as though one might make a good haul here, but how?

Nyur-Tash sidled up to me. I thought perhaps she wanted to ask me about the revolution in China, but I had forgotten all I had read about it in a weekly called *The Flame.* I knew much more about the Panama Canal, and the live brontosaurus found in the swamps of Northern Rhodesia (according to the evidence of Carl Hagenbeck, the monster resided in the swamp lake between the rivers Lunga and Kafu). I knew a lot about coral and islands, and the riddles of equilibrium and the recent excavations in Mycenae and Phoenica, and famous collections of postage stamps, and interstellar deserts and many other things I had read in *Nature and People* and *Around the World.*

Njur-Tash was all perfumed and anointed with balsam. She was very neat, and cleaned everything she came in contact with. She resembled me in many respects: she had the same moon face, and short arms, and grey eyes with slightly swollen eyelids. According to Kirghizian standards; I was handsome at that time. Besides these attractions of mine, she looked upon me as something that stood in bad need of cleaning. As a matter of fact, I had not washed for quite a long time.

Njur-Tash placed both her hands on my palms and said rapidly:

"I love you."

So it was my fate to hear these words uttered for the first time in a strange tongue, away out in the steppe, at the foot of strange mountains. And to hear it from a girl of another race, a race which the Cossacks never designated by any other name than "beathen" or "dogs." Something caught at my heart and my head swam.

"I love you," said Njur-Tash out loud. "Bend your head towards me! Why should you wear so much hair in this heat? It must be shaven off at once. Then you will be perfectly round and beautiful."

A queer, languorous excitement came over me. But I said nothing and did not move an inch nearer to her. I was afraid of the sultan. He was still making fun of Feodor, but keeping one eye on me all the time.

Feodor was swilling down koumiss greedily, evidently imagining he was drinking away all the sultan's wealth.

The sultan was describing Bokhara and his journey there. He and his beloved daughter had been unfavorably impressed with the untidiness of Bokhara, but the Emir had promised to decorate the sultan with an order for his intelligent and outstanding activity in spreading the Mohommedan faith. Yes, Rakhman-Ayaz was going to reform the whole population of the steppe, to replenish it with enlightenment, sciences and learning, to revive Mahommedanism and bring the "crescent of Islam" from Bokhara to the foot of his mountans.

Njur-Tash kept pawing my clothes. Her eyes sparkled. How clean she

would make me! Nothing but my eyes seemed clean enough to her, and only because they were grey.

"I'll kill you if you don't love me," she observed calmly.

I left the tent a little confused, bumping into the calves and mares as I went.

So I was quite grown-up now!

I went a long way out into the steppe on the pretext of looking after the hobbled horses, and there I danced and jumped about for some time and made up a poem in the Kirghizian language. It ran something like this:

For the sake of a girl I rode to the fair,
To the fair of Urlyutyup.
For the slippers I bought her
I paid forty thousand rubles
But no price is too high for her kisses!

When I returned, Nyur-Tash was standing near our shop and Feodor was spreading out silks.

"Name whatever price you like," she was saying. "My father will pay because I love your shop-boy. Name your price. Although you are a knave, still love can make even a knave beautiful."

"No one could help loving a father like yours. Just allow me to go and let him know your wishes—not about love, but about the things you are going to buy."

I recited my verses to her.

She burst out laughing in Feodor's face, and he fancied that he had found the cleverness he had been looking for all his life. Each of us was satisfied, but for different reasons. I helped Feodor to get out the "foreign" velvet and the gold tinfoil. This velvet was indigo in color; it was light and soft, with a marvellous pile. It had come to our steppe from distant France, and cost eighten rubles a yard. The name of the firm that made it was woven along the selvedge.

"And here's tin-foil fit for a king!" he said. "There's no doubt but that if the Khan buys this velvet, he'll want to fix up a king's crown for himself, too. A temporary one—until he can get a solid gold crown. If only I could manage to put up the price to a hundred and fifty rubles a yard! There are twenty-five yards in this piece."

But Nyur-Tash turned away from the velvet. She looked at me and said to Feodor:

"I love him."

We got ready for dinner. She ordered me to clean the spoons, and set my fingers so cleverly on them that the spoons soon shone bright as new. Wherever she went, she got rid of dirt and dust.

"Cleanliness suits her," said Feodor fawningly.

I felt uneasy. Was every kind of love disquieting like this, I wondered. Just before sundown Nyur-Tash was about to kiss me on the cheek, but turned and pressed her lips to mine.

Next day I got up as soon as it was light, and cleaned the kettle and washed the cups with soap. Then I fetched sixteen bucketsfull of water from the well and washed the wheels of the carts. I washed the horses' manes and plaited their tails, cleaned the harness and rubbed fat into the collars.

Sultan Rakhman-Ayaz, stout and sleepy, came out to see our wares. We laid down a new felt mat for him. It was hot. The sun was right over our

heads. The other Kirghizians sat shyly further off. Nyur-Tash stood beside me at the counter.

"What shall we show you first?" asked Feodor. Today the sultan seemed a sleepy fellow to me, what we call a lazybones. He pointed to me sleepily.

"We have the finest wares," Feodor began.

"My daughter has confessed all to me—"

The Kirghizians sitting around echoed the sultan's sigh.

"I shall not sleep for many nights," Rakhman-Ayaz continued slowly. "Had I been other than I am, less noble and less modern, I would have spat in that young fellow's face and said: 'Harness your wagons and go!' The kalym-money has already been paid for my daughter: she has a rich bridegroom awaiting her. And she confesses to me her love for a common shop assistant. It's a disgrace! A shame! But still, I want to admire the taiga and the sea with her and take her with me when I travel to Paris and America. She is my own flesh and blood. She will kill herself if I refuse her this boy."

I moved nearer to Nyur-Tash and the sultan went on:

"If only this shop-boy had black eyes, he would be quite handsome, but he looks as though someone had washed his face with dirty milk. Our tribe has always had stupid tastes, by the way."

I cast down my eyes.

"You must not take offence if an old man speaks the truth, young man. Never take offence and you will go far. Do you want to marry the girl? What is your name?"

"Vsevolod."

"I'll give her to you in marriage, Sivolot. Do you want her?"

"Yes, I do!"

Then the sultan went away.

Feodor's respect for me was growing by leaps and bounds. This was a grand plan he had thought out. And what foresight he had shown! Who else would have thought of the French velvet! Now he would be able to sell not only the velvet but all the goods we had in the wagons, all that remained in the warehouse at Urlyutyup. The sultan asked us to supper! He was going to kill a foal—ten foals perhaps—and hold a three day feast! What was to be done if this daughter had fallen in love with a Russian? It was a pity, of course, that the Russian was not an officer nor even a merchant, but only a shop-boy.

"I believe I'm only fifteen, and they don't let you marry till eighteen," I said.

"Yes, but Cossacks are cunning dogs. We'll fake your documents."

I danced in the steppe once more. I was so happy—I could not even make up verses.

The sun was just setting as we approached the sultan's yurt.

The high hill was carpeted with white felt. Below stretched the dry, stony valley.

Feodor had eaten nothing all day, so as not to spoil his appetite for the feast. He made me put on a clean shirt, cut me off a length of silk for a sash, and lent me his best comb for the time being. He trembled with greed; he was terrified to think he would have to forge the documents declaring my age to be eighteen instead of fifteen. He was terrified of my father's wrath, although the knew nothing whatever about my father or his character.

"You're marrying a heathen, after all. She may be a sultan's daughter, but still the Cossack women won't let her into their houses."

"We'll go away somewhere."

"Where'll you get the money? I'm taking all the sultan's money from him. So you'll be dependent on me again, Sivolot. And the sultan I'll turn adrift like a beggar!"

Kirghizians were riding up to the white carpeted hill from every side. Each rider in turn held Rakhman-Ayaz's hand in both of his for a long time. Soon the white felt carpet was covered with the many-colored coats of the Kirghizians. Nyur-Tash sat beside me. The servants, purple in the face and shining with sweat, carried round huge troughs of boiled meat. The largest of all they placed before the sultan.

Rakhman-Ayaz picked out a fat piece of horse flesh and popped it into my mouth.

"O-o-oh," the Kirghizians grunted respectfully.

"Yes, that's the way it is," said Rakhman-Ayaz, as he wiped his greasy fingers in his beard. "That's the way it is. My daughter loves a shop-boy; it will become known all over the world that I am modern and learned. Learned men say: 'Why torment and oppress your children? Let them go their own way and you, who are old, go yours.' Isn't that right? I want to see the forests and the ocean, and they only want to see their own hearts. So let them lie in the yurta and look into one another's hearts."

From somewhere in the back rows a voice asked:

"Does the shop-boy own many head of cattle?"

"He owns no cattle."

"Is his father a merchant?"

And from still further back:

"Or an officer?"

Rakhman-Ayaz replied:

"No, his father is a mullah."

"In a big town or a smallish town?"

"His father is a mullah in the village called Lebyazhi. The shop-boy is a poor, stupid fellow, but my daugther is very self-willed, and what can I do with her, if I respect learning?"

The front rows replied:

"You do well, Rakhman-Ayaz."

"Of course I do well! You, my kinsmen, are grieved that the shop-boy owns no cattle. But I will show you now how many head of cattle he will have, should it happen that I die or become kind and generous."

Feodor Malykh leaned over and whispered in my ear:

"He'll fool you yet! Better rely on me, Sivolet."

A casket was handed to Rakhman-Ayaz, and he fumbled about for a long time among papers bearing coats-of-arms. Then out of the depths of the casket he fished a big, purple silk handkerchief. He blew his nose in it, then waved it high over his head.

A rider galloped straight into the sunset, the pearly moonlight glinting on his back.

Before we had finished the second trough of boiled meat, a hollow murmur welled up over the steppe. With a wave of his handkerchief Rakhman-Ayaz pointed to the last traces of the sunset fading in the sky. Nyur-Tash leaned over to me and held out the cup of koumiss, pointing to the place where it had touched her lips. I drank it off.

In a disconnected hurried manner Feodor Malykh began to tell the sultan

about the wonderful velvets. The sultan was not listening to him. We were all looking towards the sunset.

Down below in the valley herd-boys in great shaggy caps rode by, waving their crooks. Then the herds passed.

First came the young, unbroken colts—in a continuous stream that lasted three hours. Behind them thundered the heavier horses, used for riding. They neighed lustily. The smell of their sweat filled the air. A cloud of dust hung in their wake. Then the mares sped by with their foals around them. Their backs shone glossily in the light of the sickle moon. The cattle swept through the valley in a cataract the breadth of a street, horns weaving in and out in an intricate pattern, oxen lowing, calves leaping. At last, with a clicking of a host of tiny hoofs, the sheep passed, Somehow I remembered the sound made by their clicking hoofs for a long time afterwards.

Feodor Malykh leaned heavily on my shoulder.

"How do you like that for a farm?" he kept muttering. "What a herd, eh? I'll never be able to steal all this."

I had been getting thoroughly sick of Feodor Malykh for a long time now; sick of his nasal voice; sick of the way he let things fall as if he had no fingers. What was he so pleased about tonight? It was all perfectly plain even to me, blinded by love as I was. That the sultan, on learning of his daughter's love, should agree to the marriage—such things might be! But that he should call in the herds from the whole steppe the same day! Imposible! Surely Feodor Malykh knew the laws of the steppe as well as I did. My heart ached: had the sultan merely been waiting for a pretext to show off his herds?

The herds still kept coming. It was getting light. Horses again. Now they came in groups selected according to their color. First came the white, looking like rosy wisps in the foggy dawn. We were dead-tired and could hardly hear the thudding of the hoofs and the cries of the herd-boys. Many of the Kirghizians who had drunk too much koumiss were already asleep.

But the eyes of Nyur-Tash sparkled as brightly as before, and as before the sultan kept talking of a journey to distant lands. He would bring back a motor-boat from his travels, he declared. Feodor Malykh whined: "And where's the water to come from? Sultan Rakhman-Ayaz would ride in his motor boat on camels. Or put it in the sleigh. Rakhman-Ayaz yawned. I was dying to sleep. I was sick to death of thinking about love and riches.

A Kirghizian who was sitting opposite me suddenly asked:

"What about his faith?"

"Faith is faith," observed the sultan, yawning. "No matter how elaborate the shell, if there is no kernel in it, you won't get any fruit."

"That's just what I'm saying."

"Then apparently we agree with one another, so we might as well go to bed."

The man pointed to me.

"But what about his faith? He is of one faith and his wife of another."

"He is of one faith?"

The sultan stroked my head.

"This poor shop-boy will outdo everyone with his imagination. And the boy and the girl will both be of one faith, because only to the true faith may such herds belong. What has his own faith given him? This?" And he pointed to the sleeping figure of Feodor Malykh. "The boy's faith will be the true faith. Go and sleep my son."

I struck Feodor a blow on the shoulder. He swayed and sat up. Then I said to him softly:

"I don't believe in either one prophet or the other. I don't believe in Mahomet, nor in Christ, nor in Buddha. And besides, I'm not going to shave my head and have these circumcision rites performed on me."

Feodor stared at me with sleepy, angry eyes. He was slightly alarmed; how many obstacles had risen up before him all of a sudden! He was to be frustrated once more in carrying out his plan for a large-scale robbery! This Russian, this Christian, this pious and godfearing Cossack had been ready to sell me. How lonely I felt, how sorry I was for myself! I turned to Nyur-Tash and said slowly:

"I don't want to be a Mohammedan."

"Our faith is much cleaner and tidier than yours," replied Nyur-Tash.

The expression of her eyes had altered. They condemned me now. I realized I would never be able to convince her. Then, sadly, I rose and, drawing myself up to my full height, shouted:

"I don't want to be a Mohammedan!"

Rakhman-Ayaz was listening approvingly to the murmurs around me.

"Shop-boy," he said, "you are silly and ignorant. And you will never be learned. What is faith to a learned man? Learning alone is important to him, and only the possession of herds will bring you learning, and not this—" He gave Feodor a contemptuous little kick. "There is much that you have not yet learnt, shop-boy. With my wealth you might have extended my tribe to the blue sea itself. Ships are all that my tribe lacks."

"What?" I asked, not understanding.

"Ships! It is time for Rakhman-Ayaz to break down the barrier of the sands and sail the blue sea."

"You are right!" the Kirghizian agreed. "It is time for us to become sailors."

Rakhman-Ayaz waved his silk handkerchief right and left. The Kirghizians drew back. I made a rush for the outlet. I ran.

The sultan roared with laughter. The people around him held their sides laughing. They turned away. Some even rolled over on the felt rugs, screeching with laughter. Long peals of laughter, humps and ridges of it, now rising steeply, now thudding and falling. Their laughter scared me. It seemed to squeeze my heart tighter and tighter. The Kirghizians became mischievous and poked my ribs with—"Kht! Eh! Heh!"

"You're just a fool!" Nyur-Tash called after me.

Tipsy Feodor was led away.

The drivers hastened to harness the horses.

They laid Feodor inside one of the wagons on a bale of cloth. I tried to swear at them. We ought not to go before we had done some trading. But the drivers scowled at me and cast frightened glances back at the sultan's yurta. I understood what they meant.

The horses set off at a rapid trot. The whips of the drivers whistled through the air.

We drove along the edge of the valley. The grass was all trampled by the countless herds that had passed. The smell of them still hung over the grass. It reminded me of a river drying up.

Feodor Malykh slept sweetly. The mountains were as high as ever, but the village of tents was out of sight long ago. I seemed to be in a semi-conscious state.

"Who's that?"

A rider was galloping in the wake of our carts.

"Maybe someone forgot his pocket-book at the feast?" the drivers conjectured.

A beaver hat bobbed up and down, the peacock feathers in it nodding gaily.

At full gallop Nyur-Tash leaped out of the saddle into my cart. Her horse ran alongside, watching me. The drivers stopped the wagons at once. They had no desire to die for having carried a girl away.

"You're fools!" Nyur-Tash cried to them.

She kissed me. I cried. She wiped away my tears with a big silk handkerchief like the one her father had used to summon his herds, and tied it round my neck. Then she laid in my hands a piece of scented soap wrapped in shiny red paper with a picture of a very black Persian in a very yellow turban, a little mirror and a comb in a pink case.

In silence Nyur-Tash leaped back into the saddle, lashed out with her whip at the driver who was hurrying her, and turned her horse's head. I wanted to ask her what she thought of her father now, but the tears choked me.

The wagons moved on again.

Translated from the Russian by Anthony Wixley

Oil

A Soviet Girl Writes to a Friend

"Plenty of news, as usual. . . . Shabsovich has been given a prize for the cracking process, and is going about all dressed in 'foreign-made' from head to foot; the chiefs have been promoted. When they heard of his success it opened their eyes; they decided he had something in him. . . . . I have stopped meeting him now on account of this. The succesful lad seemed to feel that he knew the truth of things hidden from eyes of ordinary mortals like us, and has become so 100 percent and orthodox (ortho-fox, as Kharchenko calls it) that you can't get him to budge. . . . I saw him a couple of days ago and he asked me why I didn't congratulate him. I said, 'Whom? You or the government?' He evidently saw what I meant, and just said, 'Ring me up some time, will you?' His spouse got wind of it in no time. Yesterday the telephone rang: 'Klavdysha, we've got a pass to the best cooperative store now, if you should need anything like underwear etc. I said I hoped I'd be able to last on my own cooperative store pass until the World Revolution came. . .

"And . . . about myself. You may as well know that I am the general secretary of the Oil Syndicate now. I was chosen for the job long ago, but I always refused. The reasons I gave were that I was unsuitable for office work and that I wanted to enter the Industrial Academy. The question was brought up four times before the Party Bureau. I had to agree in the end, and I don't regret it. From here I can get a clear picture of the whole business. I have managed to get one or two things done; organized an expedition to our part of Sakhalin, pushed on the prospecting. Am very busy with the Oil Institute. Zinaida is here with me. She is quite well, but pretty near her confinement. There have been many sudden changes, though. . . . She did not tell her Max Alexandrovich (I call him Max-and-Moritz) about her pregnancy till it was rather late, she was four months on the way. He registered solemn rapture, dealt her an icy kiss on her brow and then gave her to understand that he was just on the brink of a great scientific discovery, that this thoughts were far from everyday affairs. that it would be difficult to imagine anyone less suited to family life than he, Max Alexandrovich Sholomovich; but that, of course, he would never dream of shirking his responsibilities, and so on and so forth. . . Zinaida, being a real twentieth century type cried a bit but controlled herself. She lay awake nights, felt as if she was suffocating, and craned her neck this way and that. As soon as it was daylight, she rushed off to the Steel Institute, looking simply terrible in her old skirt, with her hair not done. She asked Max to forget what had happened the day before, and said she would have an abortion but she would never forgive people for it. . . . All this took place in the corridor of the Institute, crowded with people. Max-and-Moritz kept turning red and then white and muttering:

" 'We'll have to ring each other up, arrange to meet—'

"Zinaida would not wait for him to finish, she rushed off to me and announced:

" 'I'm not coming to work tomorrow!'

"That got my goat. I didn't think it necessary to hold in any longer and I gave her hell. Just imagine—a woman well on in her thirties, no beauty to boast of, a decent moujik wouldn't even wipe his nose with her—she ought to think herself lucky if this Max-and-Moritz fellow should want her even if it wasn't by her he was attracted but by her aristocratic ancestors and by the novelty of her being of a different race. Now that she got this baby from him she ought to stick to it and bring it up. . . . These Jewish half-breeds are often very good, as we know. Look at Anna's sample. And then, when is she to have a baby if not now while her belly muscles are still working and she can still feed her offspring. But she had only one answer for everything: 'I can't bear to think of my child having no father!' As much as to say: the nineteenth century is still going on and Papa-the-General will come out of his study with the icon and curse her (or did they do that without the icon?—I'm not sure how they used to curse), and the girl would stow the infant in an orphanage or find it a foster mother in the village.

" 'Nonsense, Zinaida,' I said to her, 'other days, other ways, we'll manage without any Max-and-Moritz.'

"No sooner had I stopped speaking than I was called to a meeting. The question of Victor Andreyevich was very urgent at the time. We had just received the decision of the Central Committee of the Party to raise the figure formerly fixed by the Five Year Plan to forty million tons of oil by 1932. The working out of the material was entrusted to the planning department, in this case—Victor Andreyevich. He shut himself up in his room, then summoned me and showed me a letter. It was addressed to the presidium of the Supreme Economic Council. The gist of it was: I give up all responsibility for the planning department. I regard the fixing of the figure at forty millions tons as arbitrary. More than a third, it is suggested, can be obtained from oil fields which have not been prospected. This means counting your chickens not merely before they are hatched, but before the eggs are even laid. . . . Furthermore, with regard to the cracking plant, we are jumping, according to the new plan, from the three available installations to one-hundred-and-twenty in the last year of the Five Year Plan. And this in face of the shortage of metal and the fact that we are not yet familiar with the extremely complicated cracking process. . . . The letter concluded: like all other mortals I favor a much quicker pace, but—I feel it my duty . . . and so on and so forth. . . I read it through. He asked me:

" 'Shall I send it or not?'

"I said: 'Victor Andreyevich, your conclusions and your whole outlook are unacceptable to me, but I do not think I have the right to advise you to conceal your views. . .'

"He sent the letter. The Supreme Economic Council reared up on its hind legs, so to speak. We called a meeting. Bagrinovski came as a representative from the Supreme Economic Council. They nailed up a map of the Soviet Union with the new oil deposits, with oil derricks and pipe lines. Bagrinovski said:

" 'Ours is a country with a new blood circulation . . . '

"At the meeting the young engineers of the violent type demanded that Victor Andreyevich should be brought to his knees. I spoke for forty-five minutes. 'Although we don't doubt Professor Klossovski's knowledge and good will, and have in fact, the greatest respect for it, we refuse to make a fetish of figures, as he does,' this was the idea I was defending.

" 'We refuse to recognize the multiplication table as a rule for state-craft. Could we have predicted, taking plain figures as a basis, that we would fulfil the first Five Year Plan for the production of oil in two-and-a-half years? Could we have said, had we taken plain figures as a basis, that, beginning from 1931, we were to increase the exports ninefold and come out on top, second only to the United States?'

"After I had finished, Muradian got up and criticised the direction of the pipe-line from the Caspian to Moscow. Victor Andreyevich sat making notes without saying a word. His cheeks turned red, an old man's red—a sclerotic flush. I felt sorry for him, I did not stay till the end. I went back to my office. Zinaida was still sitting there with her hands clasped.

" 'Are you going to have the baby or not!' I asked her.

"She looked at me without seeing me, her head rolled about, she spoke, but there was no sound.

" 'There are just the two of us, Klavdyusha,' she said. 'I and my trouble, like a hump someone has stuck on my back .... And how soon everything is forgotten, why, I can't even remember now what it is to live without trouble ...'

"And as she spoke her nose seemed to get longer and turn red, and her big moujik cheek-bones (the gentry often had those kind of cheek-bones) stood out ... I thought to myself: 'Max-and-Moritz wouldn't be exactly inflamed with passion if he saw you now.' I shouted at her and sent her off to the kitchen to peel the potatoes ... Don't laugh, when you come we'll make you do them, too. We've been given such a short time to do the specifications for the Orsk Plant that the draughtsmen and engineers have to keep at it day and night. Vassena peels them some potatoes to eat with their herrings for dinner, or tosses them up an omelette—and then they are at it again. So Zinaida went off to the kitchen. A minute later I hear a shriek ... I rush in and there was my Zinaida stretched out on the floor with nothing but the whites of her eyes showing and not a stir out of her pulse ... There were the three of us, Victor Andreyevich, Vassena and I—and we had no end of trouble with her. We sent for the doctor. She came back to her senses at night, and she touched my hand—you know Zina's extraordinary tenderness—I could see that things had burnt out in her in the last few hours and everything was being born anew ... There was no time to lose.

" 'Zinusha,' I said, we'll ring up Rose Mikhailovna (she's still our old court physician in cases of this particular kind) and tell her you've changed your mind about going ... May I ring her up now? ...

"She signed to me: 'Yes, go and ring up.' Victor Andreyevich was sitting by her on the couch, feeling her pulse. As I was moving away from them, I heard him say:

" 'I'm sixty-five, Zinusha, and my shadow falls feebler on the ground day by day. I'm a scientist, an old man now, and God has willed it (it's all God with him, you see!) that the last five years of my life should coincide with this—well, you know what—with this Five Year Plan .... Now I'll not have a minute to spare, a minute to think of myself, until my death ... And if it wasn't for my daughter coming in the evenings and slapping me on the shoulder and my sons writing to me now and then, I'd be so downhearted, I can't tell you. Have your baby, Zinusha, Klavdia Pavlovna and I will be its patrons.'

"So the old chap went on muttering and I rang up Rosa Mikhailovna to say—it's like this, dear Rosa Mikhailovna, Zinaida promised to go to

you tomorrow but she's changed her mind and... Then a nonchalant voice comes over the phone:

" 'It's splendid that she's changed her mind, quite miraculous...'

"Our 'court physician' is just the same as ever: rose pink blouse, English skirt, marcel wave, showers, gymnastics, and all...

"We got Zinaida home, I tucked her up as warm as I could and made some tea. We slept together—and cried and recalled things, talked everything over, and, mingling our tears, fell asleep. My 'devil' sat quietly working, translating a technical book from the German. You wouldn't know my 'devil' now, Dasha—he's grown so tame, shrunk into himself, quietened down. It torments me. All day long he keeps his nose to the grindstone in the State Planning Department, and in the evening sits over translations.

" 'Zinaida's going to have a baby,' I told him. 'What shall we call the boy?' (no one even thinks of it's being a girl). We decided to call it Ivan—we're sick of Yuri and Leonid... He'll probably be a rascally fellow, with sharp teeth—enough for sixty. We've got plenty of petrol ready for him, anyhow. He'll be driving the girls off on motoring trips to Yalta and Batoum, not like our trips, just barely out of town, as far as Sparrow Hills...

"Godbye for the present, Dasha. The 'devil' is writing you separately. How are you getting on?

Klavdia

"*P. S.* I'm scribbling this at work, there's such a row going on overhead that the plaster's falling down. Our house, it seems, is pretty sound still, so we're adding another four floors to the original four. Moscow is all rooted up in trenches, piles of pipes and bricks everywhere, the tramlines are all mixed up, and the machines from abroad turn their elephants' trunks and roll, and clatter and there's a smell of tar and a smoke like a house on fire. Yesterday in Narvara Square I saw a young fellow with one of those huge faces and a shiny shaven red head and an ordinary Russian blouse with no belt and sandals and no socks. We both went jumping from one mound to another, one knoll to another and as fast as we scrambled out, we tumbled in again...

" 'That's what she looks like when the battle's at its thickest,' he said to me. 'The front line is in Moscow now, Miss, the very heart of the fight's here.'

"He had such a good-natured mug, smiling there like a child—I seem to see him still...."

Translated from the Russian by Anthony Wixley

August Cesarec

An Evening Interlude

Excerpt from the Croatian Novel The Sterling Youth

The novel *The Sterling Youth*—Croation title *Tslatni mladic*—dates from the first years after the introduction of the Obznana law against Communism in Yugoslavia; it shows the illegal Communist movement and the beginnings of what has become known as "Yugo-Fascism." Scene of action: the Croation village with its Republican-minded peasants (Kral), and its petty bourgeoisie, personified in the Smooch family. The main character, "The Sterling Youth," is the Yugo-Fascist student Pankratz. His counterpart is the hetman, a typical intellectual, who through inner conflicts gropes his way towards Communism. The following chapter, dealing mainly with conflicts in the Smooch family, constitutes the prelude to the clash between these two main characters.

Dinner had started, and when Mitsa and Pehpa, after having dished up everything, finally sat down too, it proved to be as abundant and wholesome a meal as ever. Thanks to the good food, the Registrar's face was beaming with satisfaction and finally Vasso too smiled at one of his jokes.

From the adjacent room, however, Mrs. Resika was clamouring in a disgruntled voice for her supper.

This was just being brought in to her by the pale, flaxenbearded, consumptive-looking Russian, dressed in a military outfit, Mitsa's lover, whom she had chosen to be her second husband. Scolded for his slowness by Mrs. Resika, he slipped back into the kitchen with a languid smile, after having called out "Good appetite!" to everybody.

"And who is with the people in the barn?" asked old Smooch anxiously, in spite of his depression and thoughtfulness; hitherto the Russian had been serving the people in the barn.

"Gone, they are, all of them Bachushka! Paid they have been, and gone they are. They say that is is raining," the Russian replied in a singing voice, rolling out the words from underneath his tongue as if chewing hemp.

"And Kral? Offer him something to eat also!"

Kral refused however, and asked only for gin. The Russian was going to bring this to him, following the remarkably quick assent of Old Smooch when he was held back by Mitsa. Casting a glance at the empty seat between herself and Pehpa, she said rather disdainfully.

"Then, also bring a plate for yourself, Senosha, and have supper with us!"

He stopped short, a smile on his face, without uttering a word. Only Vasso grunted;

"What next!"

"What next?" Mitsa, offended, took up the remark, "if I so choose, you will sit at dinner next Sunday, with him as my husband."

"That'll be a wedding without me!"

"Much do I care! You just do as I tell you Seryosha," Mitsa went on, turning round. But the Russian had already left the room and did not return—obviously not wanting new quarrels to break out on account of him. And precisely to scold him for his shyness and to fetch him in all the same, Mitsa got up. But under Seryosha's quiet demeanor, a strong and apparently pursuasive character was hidden, for Mitsa returned alone, and without looking annoyed.

"I still owe you some money, hetman."

"Never mind your debts. You'll pay the money back when you are independent. I know from the time when I was at the cadet's school what a student's life is like. You just come along to me. You, in the city, have got comrades you can open your heart to, but whom have I got here? So, that's understood?"

For a moment, the hetman looked up at Vasso. Vasso had cast a brief reproachful glance at him, but had then mixed again in the conversation which was being carried on by the Registrar, much to the delight of the women folk, and, though to a lesser extent, also of Yoshko. He was telling about a comical film which he had seen recently in town.

"The actor's name was, let me see . . ." he couldn't remember, "Harry Lloyd, I believe."

"Lloyd George?" Vasso interrupted.

"Nonsense, that's a statesman," Yoshko retorted seriously.

"If it is Lloyd," Vasso persisted, "he must be an Englishman. But it is also the name of an English shipping company. Queer, everything in England, and all Englishmen have the same name. But you are mistaken?"

"No, I remember now! Harold Lloyd!" the Registrar exclaimed triumphantly, recalling the name at last.

Punkratz had been listening to the conversation. Now he turned again to the hetman, and patting him on the back, he said:

"All right, then, I'll come. Are you sure though, that you've still got that wine you had at Christmas?"

"A little is left of it. Not much it is true, but it'll do!" The hetman's eyes twinkled gaily. Then he lapsed into his usual thinking attitude—stretching the corners of his mouth apart with his two fingers. He looked more drunk than contemplative, or than trying to arrange his thoughts.

"You know," he said after a while, "I'm fed up with this business! I'd like to change my job!"

The Registrar went on telling Harold Lloyd jokes and the company was laughing boisterously. Pankratz thought that he had misunderstood the hetman.

"Wha-at?"

The hetman took his fingers from his mouth and pulled a wry face.

"What kind of a soldier am I anyway? As a matter of fact, I never really wanted to be a soldier. My father was an officer and he wanted me to be one too. But after all, the Military Academy of Vienna-Neustadt (a suburb of Vienna) may also open other alleys—for instance a career of some kind of private clerk. . . . Don't you think so too?"

Pankratz knew these moods of the hetman of getting fed up with the military service and starting to dream about a civil job. He knew too, that these were only whims of a soft-hearted weakling.

"No doubt about that. But what's wrong with being a military man? At the present time, that's the privileged caste."

"That's just why—privileged! Why should I be better off than others on whom I'm living? Because I protect 'em? Whom am I protecting against whom? That's just it. . . . To eat and to drink, one has enough, and even power, if one wants it. But what do I want power for? My mother gave up her job as a teacher because she was not even able to order children about! Besides, all this has no moral basis, my dear sir. Was that, for instance, moral, what happened in Kral's case?" he added, thinking of Vasso. "You just come to see me." He bent over closely to Pankratz, his breath smelling of wine. "I'll tell you some stories! Ha ha ha! That was a scandal at the

ranch! But why speak about it. There are more interesting things. Only yesterday I was looking through my library. My books are now in order,—they are standing in line just like soldiers. But what's the good of it all. Just as useless as a row of soldiers."

"Are you still unable to read? You complained about that some time ago. What about Schopenhauer?"

"Schopenhauer, you say?" He crossed his arms and stared at the floor as if delivering a monologue. "Yes, he used to be my catechism. I really don't know which of them I revered more, him or Nietzsche. Ah, Nietzsche! Just think, during the war, the Germans published a war edition of his works so as to make the cadets do their murderer's work for German imperialism with even greater enthusiasm. I myself have experienced how in Poland, my major had a Jew shot and out of the poor fellow's coat pocket precisely that war edition of Nietzsche was peeping. Since then, I have lost my taste for supermen. I can't even think of them as not wearing uniforms. Indeed, wasn't that the beginning of everything for Nietzsche—the victorious uniform before the gates of Paris? And yet, Nietzsche was marvellous—don't you think?"

With a jerk, he looked up at Pankratz. Pankratz had not read anything of Nietzsche; he had as little interest in books as for the hetman himself, who was then really talking to himself. Nevertheless, Pankratz always managed to hide his ignorance under a smile, thus making even the hetman believe that he was so taciturn only because of his superiority. Now he also smiled in a supercilious way, nodded his head and said:

"And what more?"

"What more?" The hetman pushed the glass away he was about to empty. "Do you know what until this day, has remained my greatest passion?—*Faust*! You certainly know better than I what that means!—*Faust!* Why only yesterday I was glancing through it again, and once more I discovered, once again I had to admit, reading it perhaps for the eighteenth time, that I simply don't understand it any longer. Is it too difficult for my brain? Or has something got parched in there, like the boots of a recruit after maneuvres?" he asked, tapping his forehead. "De Vigny's book about the ups and downs of a soldier is alright,—but perhaps something has dried up in here just the same, because the eighteenth time, I no longer understand what I understood the second and third times. Hm," he drawled, beginning to stare again at the floor—"and why is it that just this Goethe is worrying me, I wonder. Let me see, how did they call him—wasn't it Nietzsche himself who used the expression . . . —'the cheerful and harmonious Olympian among the Europeans, the prototype of the perfectly harmonious European!' And this most harmonious European, who should be an example of how to be cheerful and happy—what was he doing and thinking when he wrote *Faust*? That book was his great confession and for forty years, if I'm not mistaken, he was writing it, as his masterpiece, his life work. And this life work proved to be a tragedy. Now I ask you, how is one to understand that! How can a man be an example of cheerfulness and at the same time be able to write so tragically about himself? Perhaps because actually, there is more good than evil in life? And if Faust really frees himself, but dies nevertheless, and Mephistopheles lives on—the evil remains! Then Schopenhauer is right! But I ask you; I have read somewhere that *Faust* is the spiritual essence of modern Europe. So, in fact those people are writing with pride that the essence of our life is tragedy! And then one is expected to go and strive for something! No, it seems to me that in spite of everything, Schopenhauer was right with his suggestion to destroy life. But, why hadn't he, in that case,

drawn the consequences for himself, but instead enjoyed life—that is according to what they write about him,—with senile perversity, clinging to it as a miser to his money. And which of the two was wrong: his philosophy or his life? It would be best, of course, if there were no wrong paths at all, neither in philosophy nor in life, and to my mind—sorry if I'm boring you—the best philosophy would be the one which, without conflicting with life, could say: Life is good, good for everybody. That's after all what your ideal Communism aims at, isn't it? Truly a wonderful ideal!"

The hetman had risen and then suddenly stopped short, because Pankratz had burst out laughing uproariously. Quite abashed, the hetman looked around. All were silent and all staring at him, especially Vasso. And in the midst of this laughter, he heared Pankratz say:

"Some caliber, those eyes of Vasso!"

As the hetman had continued, his eyes glued to the floor without heeding anybody, he had talked himself more and more into a passion and had gradually attracted the attention of the others. First Vasso began staring at him and then the Registrar stopped speaking. At the end, a silence had fallen during which only the hetman went on talking. Pankratz saw this all, but thinking the hetman ridiculous and intending to make him look even more ridiculous, he had purposely not warned him. And now, seeing the hetman's embarrassment, he laughed even louder. He restrained himself quickly, however, when Vasso with his bulging eyes almost devouring the hetman, remarked:

"And what kind of a preacher have YOU become, in place of Pankratz? Only this afternoon you declared that Pankratz and his Communism were not worth a rap!"

In his bewilderment on coming back to earth, the hetman's first reaction had been to smile naively, but on hearing Vasso's remark, he became serious and blushed like a girl.

"Not quite like that!"

"Why—there are witnesses here to confirm it!" Vasso was referring to the Registrar who although having laughed, upon this became serious and looked at his watch.

"First you repudiate him, and now you talk with him again and praise Bolshevism! And you, a hetman who has sworn allegiance to his king!"

This eternal vigilance of Vasso's was still another of the plagues which weighed upon the sincere and generous hetman, the more so since he recognized that he was chained to a soldier's career. Too weak to make any other decision, he was forced simply to submit. And in much the same way, as he himself realised, he had restrained himself that afternoon, when during the conversation between Vasso and Pankratz he had not come out with his opinion and later on, when talking to Vasso, had lowered his voice. Even now, he had not gone beyond a certain measure of repudiation, yet his honor did not permit him to dwell on this alone. Vasso had hit him on one of his softest spots. The attack had been quite unjustified, for after all, he had spoken only on subjects about which any university professor may speak freely. And quite by the way, he had mentioned Bolshevism. Sympathising in his heart of hearts with it, the hetman now began to defend it:

"And what about it?" He was obviously too nervous to be convincing, or to command attention. "Bolshevism is a world movement, created by the Slavs, it is not only Revolution, but also a philosophy, a religion, and every intelligent person must take his stand on it!"

"So I am a fool then, eh? To take a stand, indeed! But you have done it

FOR Bolshevism, for that robbery, treachery, that Jewish concoction. Everyday the papers write about it! And all THAT you praise! You, an officer!"

"The papers! Which of those journalists has been in Russia. My dear friend, I am a man—and not *only* in uniform!"

"Thank you—and I am to understand that I am a swine in uniform?"

"Almost!" Pankratz exploded, bursting with laughter, regretting his remark at once, however, because the quarrel between Vasso and the hetman had been amusing him.

Vasso jumped up, threatening Pankratz with clenched fists and almost hurting his wife in the proceedings. She too was exasperated by Pankratz's remark, while Vasso fumed with rage.

"You just shut up! You'd better go and hide yourself so that you're not in the way! Who are you anyway, what are you? Living on charity and blowing yourself up! Do you suppose that the house will go to pieces without you?" All this Vasso had intended to tell Pankratz on leaving his mother-in-law's room. Now it flowed from his lips without restraint. And because Pankratz, without replying with a single word just kept smiling, Vasso turned again to the hetman—"And you,—chattering with such a Bolshevik good-for-nothing, you invite him to your place! Let me speak!" he shouted when the hetman made an attempt to interrupt him—"If our subordinates only knew that!"

"Then you would probably be promoted to First Lieutenant for stupidity!" Pankratz said, almost convulsed with rather unnatural laughter. The hetman also rose, and stretching out his hands and spreading his fingers, he remarked with astonishment:

"You really look ridiculous to me, Vasso. After all, he is your relative."

"A relative of mine? He? Not even one of her's," he pointed to his wife,—"and of nobody here. The bastard son of a cannon, and like all bastards—a Communist! And oh, so stupid you are too," he raved on, turning to Pankratz. But suddenly, he stopped short, as if somebody had torn out his tongue.

"Leave him alone, he looks nicer and cleverer when he stands!" Pankratz observed maliciously. The quarrel went on, galling and senseless, without anyone having the strength of character to stop it. Only Mrs. Resika would have been able to do that, but she was lying helplessly in bed, condemned to even more helpless cursing, which was heard even in the room.

"Leave politics alone, don't talk about that crap!"

And as if awakened by her curses, old Smooch recovered from his inertia; with an imploring look, he winked at the Registrar. The latter had got up and started putting on his coat. Saying that he would soon be along again, he left, without showing the least inclination to join his family squabble or political controversy. Mitsa followed suit, spitting with disgust:

"Bah! And they call that men! And then they say that we women are quarrelsome!"

Watch in hand, silent and happy at having got out of the dispute he hadn't sought, the hetman followed them with his eyes. The main storm had blown over. And this was perhaps chiefly thanks to Pankratz since he had checked his flow of replies to Vasso on hearing his grandmother from the next room. As a result only between Vasso and Yoshko, things remained to be thrashed out.

"Excuse me, I'm not a little snotnose! The idea of it! To pull me in a chair like that!"

"But why?" Yoshko tried to calm him down. "When you cannot see reason otherwise. . . . Why all this quarrelling? Just because Pankratz is a Com-

munist? And you know very well yourself, that for the last few months, he has been a Hanao-ist (*Ed*: Ha-Na-O *Hrvtsja Nacionalna Orladina*—Croatian National Youth) and God only knows what he is going to be next!"

"Hanao-ist! I know!" Contemptuously Vasso rejected Yoshka's argument. "That's all one and the same, Hanao-ist or Communist! Just read the papers, you can always find them on the same side. They shout for a Banus (*Ed*: *stadtholder*) and mean Soviets! We know very well that to them, Dushan's empire doesn't mean a thing." (Dushan's empire: the empire of Stephan Dushan the Great, during whose reign (in the Middle Ages) Serbia was strongest.)

Now that everybody had calmed down, Vasso was posing the lord, convinced that he had remained victor on the battle-field. And this actually seemed the case, for Yoshko, recalling his own difficulties in Emperor Dushan's capital, gave a reply which could not be considered as a real defense:

"Much do I care about Dushan's Empire! The truth of the matter is that you can only get somewhere in it if you are a Serbian and have some protection and money for bribing your way, on top of it!"

"What!" exclaimed Vasso indignantly, "and I suppose you haven't managed to sell army goods, eh?"

"True, but by means of bribery, and as a member of the Serbian Party. Anyway, its all the same to me," Yoshko smiled. "If I can remain what I am, I don't even mind calling myself a Serbian."

Vasso made himself comfortable in his chair. It looked as if he had completely forgotten what had just happened between him and Yoshko. In reality, he was just realizing it all very keenly and felt this the right moment to conclude his deal with Yoshko in a homely way. He touched glasses with him:

"Your health!"

And suddenly it seemed that Pankratz was spoiling the harmony and peacefulness of the atmosphere. He had got up and with his arms crossed, was looking steadily at both of them. The inevitable contemptuous smile on his lips, he was approaching Vasso and Yoshko who had emptied their glasses and had pushed them away.

"What are you up to now?" Vasso blurted out at him.

Just before getting up, Pankratz had noticed how the hetman who had been listening silently to the conversation between Yoshko and Vasso, for a brief moment had glanced stealthily at him. He knew what that glance meant; from previous experience, he knew that the hetman, although a Serbian himself, did not agree with the policy of the Serbians favored by the Croats. He was in favor of a brotherly Yugoslavian alliance which would not oppress the Croats nor discriminate against them. But wasn't the hetman thinking a little of himself in suggesting this? Hadn't he, himself, related once how they kept him in the provinces out of distrust, because he had been an active officer in the Austro-Hungarian army and at the end of the war had served in the army supply department behind the Salonika front. And Pankratz had agreed with his criticisms, had even induced him to go into detail. And out of consideration for such a man, he was to restrain himself? But why? As always, the hetman just appeared ridiculous to him, with his glances, revealing nothing but his naiveté; the hetman accepted his former convictions on face value and so quite seriously believed that he—and Vasso too—was a Hanao-ist and a Communist into the bargain. And just because of this naiveté, he could say what he liked without being pinned down to it, for he could say one thing today and a different one tomorrow and the hetman would believe

him again, just as always. Why should he bother about this man? What did he care about him anyway? His own relatives however,—about them he did care. True, his main concern was his grandmother but the others could not be overlooked altogether either. To break completely with them and outrage them too much, was senseless and to some extent, he had already overdone it a little. It was time, therefore, to make it up with them somehow. In any case, Yoshko reproached him for compromising him in the eyes of the government because of his membership to the Hanao. He had to keep friends with Yoshko, for if he failed in the city, he would withdraw into the business here. As far as Vasso was concerned—well why shouldn't he confuse the fellow a little? After all, he did like to make himself important!

"So, you'd like to know what I'm going to be next, eh?" he addressed Yoshko with a smile, which against his will was rather unconvincing. "And you think I'm not a relative of yours, don't you, Vasso? Well, perhaps I shall be one now that I've become a fighter for the state and have joined the Or-Yu-Na (*Organizousa Yugoslavenskih Nacionalista*—Organisation of Yugoslav Nationalists, i.e., of the first Yugo-Fascists in Yugoslavia).

"You?" exclaimed Vasso, suddenly turning round on him and looking at him suspiciously. "I wouldn't even take you in among my Macedonians!"

These Macedonians were soldiers under his command at the ranch; he considered them as a weak-minded, inferior bunch of contemptible scoundrels who had to be licked into shape by civilized Serbians.

"You don't believe me?" Pankratz couldn't help laughing. "And if I tell you that I specially came here today because this afternoon. . . ." He intended to tell the adventure he had had that day, but was interrupted by the arrival of a man, young, sunburnt and wiry, drenched through with the rain, who had suddenly emerged at the door, stifly drawing himself up to attention. This was precisely one of Vasso's Macedonians. He gravely announced to the hetman that the cart was waiting.

"Wait!" shouted Vasso, eager to know what Pankratz would have to tell, but immediately afterwards, he again shouted at the soldier with a great show of importance: "And where have you been all this time, you dog!"

The soldier did not reply for if anyone had a right to reproach him it was the hetman who had told him to come an hour earlier than he had actually come. The lieutenant himself had ordered him just for this time. He glanced questioningly at the hetman with an expression on his face as if he expected protection, rather than a reprimand.

"Ah, Husso!" the hetman gaily called out on noticing him. Getting up to put on his coat, he added, "You've turned up just at the right moment; I'm coming along in a minute." He was looking for his coat and found it (he hadn't got a sabre). "Are you leaving too, Vasso?"

Vasso still hoped to take advantage of his reconciliation with Yoshko and he was also interested to know what Pankratz had to say. So he refused curtly:

"I'm not going yet. You go on please, and he is to fetch me in an hour. In an hour, you hear?" he repeated, angrily turning on the soldier, offended because he had only addressed the hetman, without even answering him. "What are you standing about there for, as if you were made of stone? There's the hetman, help him on with his coat." He only added this in order to show up the hetman as a drunkard in front of the soldier. The hetman in his flustered state had been vainly trying to find the sleeve of his coat.

"At your service," Husso replied shortly. Then he saluted and hastened to the hetman who meanwhile had managed to find his sleeve and had put on his coat; he was now staring in surprise at Husso's dripping coat.

"Is it raining like that? Well, and why aren't you going Vasso?" he murmured, hesitating whether or not to stay a little longer. He was sorry that Husso should have to go out again in such weather. But at home, his mistress was waiting for him, a young and charming peasant girl, his servant. Only that morning when he had told her that he was going to be transferred in a few days, she had wept. "So there you are Husso. You'll have to do the trip once more in an hour," he said in a tone as if excusing himself. "Perhaps we'll go together, all the same?" he tried to mediate with Vasso.

"Never mind, he'll manage!" Vasso dealt peremptorily with him. "Let him change the horses."

"The horses! But for him too, it isn't very nice to travel about in the rain."

"For him? That's what he is a soldier for! As long as he can run after whores in worse nights. . . ."

"Husso? I'm sure he's never touched a woman!"

"You bet! Much you know about your people. Where were you last night?" Vasso addressed Husso gloomily. Husso was standing stiffly at attention, his lips pressed together, silent as the grave, his right fist clenched. He did his hatred with difficulty.

"All the same," observed the hetman in his dreary falsetto voice, "he's also a human being, I'm sure you've already bawled him out for that. Salute the lieutenant Husso, and come along. But first have a drink," he invited him. Yoshko, who had succeeded in quietening down Vasso, offered a glass of wine to the soldier. Meanwhile he started to leave. He halted a moment in front of Pankratz, screwing up his eyes indulgently. And swinging himself slowly on his legs, he said with a quiet smile:

"And as to your bluff a moment ago. . . ." he was referring to Pankratz's statement about his having joined the Or-Yu-Na— "we were just waiting for that as a parting joke! Ha ha ha! Let's go!" He wiped his tears away and became serious when he saw they were looking at him.

"And where is the Registrar?" The Registrar had not returned; Mitsa, who had just re-entered the room had seen him leave; in keeping with his old habit, he had disappeared without saying goodbye. "Well, goodnight then, goodnight!" The hetman bowed after having said goodbye to everybody, even to Mrs. Resika. Laughing he took Husso by the arm and steered his way to the door.

"This way, this way, hetman. Over there, the door is locked." Yoshko pointed him to the other way out but the hetman, not understanding Husso who was trying to make him grasp the same thing had already opened the door of the room where the performance had been given before and had discovered Kral there.

"Ah, Kral!" he said in a singing voice. "Just. . . ." he stopped, as if searching for words in order to express something. "You can also come along with us! It's in the same direction!"

"Hm," Kral snorted in reply. He was huddled up at the table in front of a glass of gin, his fingers in his mouth as if forcing himself to retch. Then, taking his fingers out of his mouth, he looked at the hetman, suddenly seemed to make an attempt at getting up but fell back helplessly.

"Of all things! You have ideas," Vasso waxed indignant at the hetman's

suggestion, "don't you start any of that nonsense! I've got to ride in that cart with my wife afterwards!"

"Well, and. . . ." The hetman turned away from Kral and started to snigger softly, perhaps out of embarrassment, perhaps without any particular reason at all. And once again he took his leave from all summarily, crossed the doorstep with Husso's help and stumbled across the yard, with Seryosha lighting the way with a candle he had fetched from the kitchen.

Translated by George Fles

Richard Wright

I Am a Red Slogan

I AM A RED SLOGAN,
A flaming torch flung to lead the minds of men!
I flaunt my messages from a million banners:
WORKERS OF THE WORLD, UNITE!
I AM A RED SLOGAN,
The axe that whacks to the heart of knotty problems:
STOP MUNITION SHIPMENTS!
FIGHT FASCISM!
DEATH TO LYNCHERS!
I bloom in tired brains in sleep:
BREAD!
LAND!
FREEDOM!
I AM A RED SLOGAN,
Brawny knuckles thrust in the face of profiteers:
EXPROPRIATE THE EXPROPRIATERS!
I AM A RED SLOGAN,
Lingering as a duty after my command is shouted:
DEFEND THE U. S. S. R.!
I haunt the doors of your mind until I am taken in:
SELF-DETERMINATION FOR MINORITY PEOPLES!
I am the one red star in the workers' black sky:
TURN IMPERIALIST WAR INTO CIVIL WAR!
I AM A RED SLOGAN,
The crest of the wave that sweeps to victory:
ALL POWER TO THE SOVIETS!

Willi Bredel

The Test

Excerpts from a Novel of Life in a German Concentration Camp

It is Sunday. A perfect October morning. Rays of sunlight break through the gay foliage of the trees on the other side of the prison-wall in the gardens of the inspectors' houses. Their branches are heavy with yellow pears and red apples. In the distance a milk wagon rides clattering through the Fuhlsbuettel streets. Over the prison the red weather-service airplane of the nearby airfield circles the cloudless sky.

Even the concentration camp is filled with a Sunday quiet.

The prisoners sit on their little stools, arms folded, and dream of the sky beyond the cross-bars of their prison windows, or wander restlessly to and fro.

The prisoners crouch in the dark cells, in a corner somewhere, and dream, as always, of light and sun and trees and birds; they are blind; they have no idea of how beautiful this autumn Sunday is.

Sergeant Major Harms is in charge of Sunday service. He plays the organ in the prison school. The chords ring solemnly through the prison silence. But several pipes are defective, and in the intervals between certain notes there are only wheezing sounds. Harms inspects the organ and sees that several pipes have been removed completely. "That's the limit!" he grumbles; he goes to the guard room, and tells Zirber of his discovery.

"Sure, didn't you know?" he answers, quite surprised.

"It's wonderful tin. That's why we have cruisers made of it. It works out wonderfully. Some of the men in cell 4 have shown surprising dexterity at the work!"

"What is it you build from the organ-pipes?"

"Armored cruisers! Small *Potemkins!* You must let somebody show them to you sometime. Teutsche has one; Meisel too, I believe!"

"And they're simply breaking the organ to bits?"

"It's true we're a 'concentration' camp, but organ music . . . really!"

"It happens with the commander's consent?"

"You're funny. You talk as if it were a crime! I've no idea if the commander knows about it or not. Maybe he has one himself, or would like to have one. The demand's great!"

Harms goes back to the schoolroom. He carefully examines the ruined organ, strikes chords to determine what pipes are missing or useless. While he sits absorbed in his play, a shot rings out.

"What now? Who shot?" He dashes out. Zirber is in the corridor already. They both run to the courtyard. The sentry at the wall waves to them.

"What? Where?" shrieks Zirber.

"A3, cell 4!"

Zirber and Harms run up the steps to section A3. Even in the corridor they can hear the groaning.

Sure enough, here it is. The fellow in cell 47 lies near the window shot.

Zirber opens the door. The prisoner, a youngster, lies on the floor, holding his head with both hands and groaning. The two sergeants approach him.

"D'you get it? Let me see!"

The prisoner removes his blood-stained hand from his face. Shot clean through. In through the lower jaw out again under the left eye. The blood runs down his neck.

"Looked out of the window, though it was forbidden, eh?"

The wounded man looks at the sergeant, his eyes opened wide with pain and fear. He nods.

"Swell business! It's your own fault, my boy! It was specifically stated that it was forbidden to look out of the window!"

Zirber and Harms stand in the cell perplexed. "Hell, on top of everything else one has to bother with these idiots?"

Zirber looks at Harms. "What shall we do?"

"Let's take him down and get the orderly. What else can we do!"

"Can you walk? . . . Come get up and come along with us! . . . Hold your handkerchief in front of your face so you don't dirty the corridor and steps!"

Doubled up with pain, groaning softly, the shot man follows the officers down the steps to station AI.

"Stand here!" Zirber points to the wall. "Or sit down on the floor if you can't stand!"

The prisoner leaning against the wall sinks to the stone floor. With both hands he presses the blood-drenched handkerchief to his face. He doesn't complain; only a monotonous moan breaks through the handkerchief and the hands.

The orderly isn't here! Harms stands at the telephone.

"Goddam! . . . Then you've got to call up Dr. Hedwig!"

"What's his number?"

"Haven't the slightest idea! You don't expect me to carry the whole telephone directory in my head . . . Call across the way again. If the orderly isn't there, let somebody else come. Anybody who knows something about bandaging."

An hour passes; no one comes to help the wounded man. He lies near the corridor wall and groans, "Help me! Help me!"

Zirber and Harms lock the door of the guard room.

The groaning and moaning grow into a reproachful cry:

"Help me! Help me!"

Sergeant Major Harms steps into the corridor. "Well, my friend, now you can feel what it's like. Countless numbers of our comrades lay like this, shot and stabbed by you. They died in just this kind of agony. Think of Heinzelmann! You can expect no pity from us."

"Help me! Help me!"

Harms goes away. Presently the sounds of the organ roll through the prison. But they cannot drown out the death-fearing, penetrating roar:

"Help me! Help me!"

Then Harms gets high-spirited and frivolous and plays whatever the chords allow. He plays a popular hit. *Sleep my little love, sleep on roses! Sleep my little love, dream of embraces* . . . The melody is torn by toneless intervals. And in these intervals the prisoner roars, shrieks, cries, wails: "Help me! Help me!"

The prisoners rebel. Stools are thrown against the cell doors. "Criminals! Murderers! Murderers!" echoes through the corridor. The outside guards come running through the court-yard, leveling their guns against the cell

windows. Zirber and Konig, the guards of the B wing rung from cell to cell and threaten everyone who makes noise with beating and darkness. Still the noise and the roaring grow louder and louder.

"You might as well call the hospital! Let them send an ambulance. But right away!"

Harms telephones. Konig and Zirber drag the tired, whining man to the coal cellar. They shut the cellar door. Now no one can hear his moaning anymore.

"I'll buy a couple of the trouble makers for myself," growls Zirber. "Such crust! The coolness of it!"

Ten minutes later an ambulance drives into the prison yard. Zirber and Harms go down the cellar. The wounded man lies stretched out on the coal-dust covered floor.

"And now he's unconscious too!" grumbles Zirber.

"We've got to drag him up. No reason why the hospital people should stick their noses in here! Let's go! Grab hold of him!"

An interne lifts the eyelid of the speechless man. "The fellow's dead!"

"What, he's dead already?" Zirber askes astounded. "Ten minutes ago he roared like a bull."

Harms fills out a provisional death certificate.

The ambulance, light and gay, drives out of the concentration camp, past the fruit trees and their riotous autumn colors in the gardens of the inspectors' houses, down Fuhlsbuettel Highway.

II. The Man Sentenced to Death

In the morning, while coffee is being served, Kalfaktor whispers to a prisoner that Comrade Harry Niehus had been sentenced to death. At breakfast they talk about it. Many know Comrade Harry; he was an officer in the illegal Red Front Fighters League.

"Incidentally there was no one killed that time at all!"

"In the clash on Holsten Street, didn't one Nazi get it?" "Nothing doing! Three of our comrades and two Nazis suffered knife cuts. But nobody was killed."

"And in spite of that the death sentence. That's the limit."

"Harry's that kind of fellow. I can remember on the steam boat excursion to Zollernspieker . . ."

The speaker stops; almost all the prisoners stand up. Fritz Jahnke who sits at the first table has vomited and has struck his head against his coffee pot. The hot coffee is running down his chest and knees.

Kreibel grabs hold of him, helps the pale, nauseous comrade to his straw sack. There the sick man lies motionless and stares into space with wide, frightened eyes .

"Didn't I tell you a number of times not to talk about such things," Welsen whispers to the other comrades. "You all know what's in store for him!"

The comrades take their seats. All are silent. The gulping of dry bread can be heard. A few start cleaning their basins at the faucet. They stole anxious glances at the sick comrade.

"What's the matter with the comrade?" Kreibel softly asks Welsen.

"Sh," Welsen whispers, "they want to chop his head off too!"

"My God! And why?"

"On a murder charge! Do you remember the clash on Gothen Street last year? One SA man was stabbed that time, and three of our comrades ser-

iously wounded, he among them. Five months he lay in the Lohmuhlen Hospital with a severe chest wound. He's charged with having fatally stabbed the Nazi."

"Does he admit it?"

"No, but the other accused claim that it's so."

"How is it possible that they squeal?"

"If you'd really like to know, how do you suppose they grilled them? Night after night. They couldn't recognize one another anymore . . . They'll take our Fritz's head off, that's sure."

"And he knows it, too?"

"Yes, of course!"

The morning incident is forgotten. The comrades wander up and down the cell, laugh and chat. They play chess. Card players quarrel with one another. Kohler, the tall SA man, reads for the second time *Lichtenstein* by Hauff, the only book in the place. A prisoner had secretly brought it along from the remand prison. The Communist youngster, Walter Korning, always cheerful, sits at the window, looks through the translucent milk-glass window pane at the houses over the wall, dreams and sings: *Even if our own brother betray us, our sun does not go under! . . .*

Kreibel looks at Fritz Jahnke, who still lies on his straw sack, and watches him in silence. The serious breast shot, the long solitary confinement, the nightly mishandling, have aged the twenty-five year old. At his temples the dark brown hair shines silvery. The eyes seem constantly to be seeking; they are always wide open, filled with terror, and motionless. He speaks little; for days on end, not at all. When he speaks of himself, he says laughingly. "I'm a lamb among ravenous wolves!" Then his eyes seem to swim in tears.

But Welsen says there are days when he is gayer and more exuberant than any one. He's an interesting story teller; a passionate chess player and can cheer up the comrades who get depressed. Kreibel studies the face; it is faded but at bottom radiant. It has grown terribly thin; the skin is tightly drawn over the bones, the cheek bones protrude sharply. The lips are unusually bloodless, as if dried out. Under the eyes are wide, dark rings. Kreibel shudders involuntarily; the comrade has noticed that he is watching him. He nods to Kreibel. The latter hesitates. Jahnke smiles and nods again. Kreibel slowly steps up to his straw bed.

"Comrade Kreibel, it's true I'm no Communist Party member, but I'm not a bad comrade. I'm sorry you never invite me over, when you tell the comrades stories."

"Comrade Jahnke, hereafter you'll be there!"

"Thank you . . . Were you ever in the Soviet Union?"

"Yes, three months, last year. I travelled through the Ukraine, the Donbas, and the Caucasus. In Dnieprostroi, in Stalino, Baku and Tiflis!"

"Please tell me what you saw. It was always my greatest hope to get to the Soviet Union sometime. Now nothing's come of it. . . Come, sit closer! Tell me about the workers in the Don area or the comrades in Baku. Won't you?"

Kreibel sits down very close to the comrade. He would like to embrace him, but he is embarrassed and gives it up. He tells about the dam in Dniepr and the new socialist city Dnieprostroi, of the metal works in Stalino, the workers there, the clubs and theatres. He weaves episodes of the civil war into his narrative, told him by the workers there, and doesn't forget the difficulties involved in the terrific tempo of socialist construction.

Fritz Jahnke listens to him attentively; his large eyes look into the distance, as if he can actually see there all that Kreibel describes.

"The production of naptha in Baku is increasing marvellously. Swell fellows, the oil workers of Baku. When the October revolution was practically victorious in Moscow, Petersburg and most of Russia, national struggles were raging in the Caucasus. There are many nationalities in the Caucasus and Tsarism incited them one against the other to be able to rule over them the more easily. The people of Azerbaijan murdered the Turks; the Georgians, the Armenians and vice-versa. For a time the Mensheviks had the upper hand and made common cause with the English, the Turks, and the white guards against the revolutionary workers. Once they handed twenty-six workers' commissars over to the Whites, who shot them at once. After long struggles and many sacrifices, the workers of Baku finally seized power. But the oil industry had been almost completely destroyed in the confusion of the civil war. Then the workers saw to it that Russia had oil and coal. They carried out the Five-Year Plan in two and a half years and today socialist Baku produces more oil than before the War. The workers live in beautiful, modern houses in the new socialist city of Armenikent situated on a high plateau overlooking Baku. The national fraternal warfare of the people of the Caucasus is over: Turks, Russians, Georgians and Armenians live in friendship side by side and together build a socialist society. The young workers study in the high schools and the technical institutes. There they become future architects of socialism. The beautiful villas of the former oil millionaires of Baku are now workers' rest homes . . ."

Kreibel is silent. He looks in the eyes of the comrade next to him and can't go on talking. The latter grasps his hand, presses it tight, and whispers, "Tell me some more!"

III. Voting in the Concentration Camp

Towards evening the prisoners in rooms AI and 2 are lead into the schoolroom. It is a large, square room with inclined benches arranged diagonally. At every row an SS man stands. Behind the seats, SS sergeants. In front of the benches, next to a blackboard, around a small table are grouped Captain Dusenschön, First Lieutenant Meisel, Lieutenant Harms and a few SS sergeants.

Dusenschön turns to the prisoners.

"When the signal is given, everyone gets up from his seat!"

The prisoners of the various rooms cautiously look at one another out of the corner of the eye. The sergeants watch too carefully. Still they can't prevent the prisoners from exchanging understanding looks.

"Attention!"

All at a time the prisoners get up. The sergeants lift their arms in the Hitler greeting.

The commander and a man with an enormously heavy jaw enter the room. The commandant nods. Dusenschön shouts, "Be seated!" The commandant and his guest take seats at the table. Dusenschön remains standing in a corner and observes the prisoners.

The commander, in brown buckskin uniform, lays his brown hat on the table and rises from his seat. "Senator von Allworden will deliver a short lecture so that you'll know what it's about when you vote tomorrow morning!"

Senator von Allworden steps in front of the table. The sergeants whip their

arms upward and cry, "Heil Hitler!" The prisoners remain motionless in their places and silent.

"Fellow Germans! Perhaps you are puzzled at my addressing you in these words; the fact remains you have been taken into protective custody for the protection of the new Reich. But I say quite deliberately: Fellow Germans. For we National Socialists know that Germany's poorest son is her truest and best, and that in the German working class, and more especially among those agitated by false leaders, namely the Marxist working class, the most worthwhile portion of the German people is to be found. It's true they're snowed under by rubbish alien to our people, but we know the time is not distant when you too will realize that the National Socialist is no enemy of the workers, but his truest champion; that the National Socialist state is not a state that ruthlessly exploits the toiling masses, but rather a state that represents the healthy balance of all productive sections of the population. Because you who today are prisoners held in protective custody are the National Socialist of the future; for this reason I address you as fellow Germans."

The SS sergeants keep a sharp eye on the faces of the prisoners. Their faces seem turned to stone; no one moves a muscle.

The camp commandant too watches face after face. He recalls the examinations of a number of them. How these fellows sit here, he thinks, obdurate and unteachable.

". . . And the League of Nations is nothing but a group of states that came out of the last unequal war the victors and would like to plunder Germany and keep her weak forever . . . The National Socialist Germany wants no war. At the head of today's government stand men who know the horrors of war and who will not thoughtlessly subject the German people to such sufferings. We're for peace and disarmament. But peace is guaranteed only if all nations disarm. It remains questionable when some nations have limitless armaments and force other nations to disarm. The League of Nations has declined Germany's proposal for universal disarmament in Genf. It likewise declined our requests for a stronger army and fleet after the stand taken by our neighbors. We owe it to our national honor to give the right answer. It has been given. Germany has stepped out of the League of Nations which is nothing but a league of nations hostile to us. Adolf Hitler now asks his people whether it is in agreement with this step. And you too are to decide.

The senator takes one step towards the prisoners who sit before him silent and remote, raises his hand in an oath, and pleads with them.

"Forget the wrongs that were done you, perhaps. Always remember that these men in uniform know only one great love before which everything else must recede—the love of Germany, of our fatherland. The German worker has had no real fatherland. We want to give him one. Help us. The more agitation there is against the Reich of Adolf Hitler, the harder it becomes to give the worker what's coming to him, the lighter it is for the unreasonable reactionaries, who place their profits before the fatherland, to conquer Adolf Hitler. That is why I conclude my short talk with the request: Vote 'yes' tomorrow. Heil Hitler!"

The commandant also has risen.

The prisoners are confused: some get up, others remain seated.

Captain Dusenschön orders, "Stand!"

Now all rise.

The SS sergeants sing:

The flags on high, the serried ranks draw closer . . .

Welsen looks cautiously around. Not one prisoner joins in the singing. Not one has lifted his hand.

SA men march in slow and steady step . . .

Even the two pimps and the pickpocket from room 1 are not singing, although the pimp's supposed to be a National Socialist.

The comrades shot by Rot Front and Reaction . . .

Sergeant Nusbeck who stands back of the prisoners whispers: "Join in, join in!" No one lets himself be bullied.

March in spirit here with us, in our ranks.

The senator and commandant leave the room. Captain Dusenschön commands: "Room I, step to the corridor!" Half of the prisoners present crowd to the door. No word is uttered about their behavior. Only the commands of the captains shatter the silence.

After the men in 1 and 2 had been marched back to their respective rooms, the prisoners in rooms 3 and 4 are led down. The meetings last until late at night.

SS man Fritz Gellert who belongs to the sentry of the concentration camp and sleeps in the tower, turns restlessly on his couch. He can't fall asleep. Tomorrow's the free day and he has visions of Hildegard, the slim, blond companion whom he had gotten to know last Sunday at the German Festival in Alsterdorf. Will she come? . . . Was her acquiescence seriously meant, or was it only a mood? . . . How should he behave in her presence? . . . Grab hold of her at once and keep kissing her? That's what most of them want . . . Fritz Gellert yawns, and stretches on his mattress.

His bed stands at a small oval tower window; he can see the gardens of the inspectors' houses and along the prison wall a bit. He sees the sentry take tired, slow steps and stop before the garden. For a few seconds he vanishes from Gellert's view. Then he appears behind the tower. An intelligent girl. It's a wonder she has anything to do with him. . . . When she speaks, he can only listen. How much she knows . . . And her mouth? . . . She has a lovely mouth, small, beautifully formed.

Suddenly Gellert is startled and sits bolt upright in his bed. Among the trees in the garden forms glide and are pottering about at the wall. Where is the sentry? Gellert looks hard once again. . . . It's no hallucination; there are people crawling on the wall. He jumps out of bed. What should he do? Wake his comrades? Alarm the sentries? That would frighten the fellows at the wall away. In moments like these Gellert has astounding clarity and power of decision.

Gellert quickly slips into his trousers and slinks into the anteroom. Here he telephones the two other tower watches of the old prison and the police station on Fuhlsbuettel Street. He notifies them in a few words and gives them instructions for encircling the criminals. Then he goes back to the dormitory and wakes three of his best comrades. He lets the rest sleep. They dress post haste, strap their revolvers on, and take their rifles . . .

They tell the guard of the inner gate of their discovery and as the sentry again vanishes for a few seconds behind the gate, they quickly run to the next inspector's house, and hide themselves in the shadows of the tall hedges at the garden fence . . .

Shortly after an armored police car whizzes by. A floodlight flashes and lights up the garden and the wall. One can clearly see several men running, ducking among the trees. From the other side come police and SS men, guns

leveled. The frightened forms rush through the garden to the gate. Here notified by the floodlights, the outer guard stands, gun grounded . . .

Six men come running out of the garden dash directly into the guard.

"Stop or I shoot!"

They're still only twenty steps from the guard. The fugitives hesitate a moment, then run on. They want to run past the guard and they run up to the inspector's house near which Gellert and his comrades lie. The fugitives are ten steps from the house. A shot rings out. The sentry in the tower has fired. One of the men collapses. Now the four SS men who have been lying in the shadow of the hedges jump up, stand face to face with the fugitives and aim their guns at them.

The five men surrender . . .

All in all, seventeen people are captured; sixteen men and one woman. The police wagon lights up the wall with the floodlight. Now one can see why the prisoners were busy at the wall. They've been sticking up posters. Communist posters. *Remember our murdered and tortured comrades in the concentration camps. Vote against the murder regime of Hitler. Vote: No!* stands in large red letters on the white background of the posters. Commands to clean up are promptly given: By the floodlights of the police cars, SS men and police scrub and scratch the posters from the wall.

The prisoners are taken to the A wing and showed into the school room. The shot man is put in an empty cell.

Captain Dusenschön, who to his exasperation, has come only after the arrest, races around the corridor like a mad dog.

"We'll give them something to remember their whole life long! . . . This nervy trash! . . . These scoundrels! . . . The dogs ought to be shot! They ought to be shot on the spot! . . ."

The SS sentries, and a few sentries who have come along, run helter skelter. Each one seeks his own particular method of punishment. Captain Dusenschön has a whip; First Lieutenant Meisel a horse whip; others have the legs of tables, broomsticks, wooden boards.

A wide staircase leads from the A station to the B station. The prisoners are led along these stairs; fifteen men and one woman. They must hold their hands behind their heads. Along both sides of the steps the SS men have stationed themselves with their improvised weapons. At the head of the stairs stands Meisel with his horsewhip; at the foot of the stairs stands Dusenschön with his whip. A few feet from the steps four sentries stand in steel helmets with guns leveled.

Captain Dusenschön commands the woman, "Step out!"

The woman small, about thirty years old—steps out of the double file of prisoners.

"Stand there, at the wall!" Dusenschön orders her. Then he shouts at the prisoners. "Down on your knees!"

The fifteen, their hands behind their heads, get down on their knees.

"And now hop up the steps. Nice and slow, one behind the other! March!"

The first ones hop towards the stairway, hop up the first step and already the legs of tables fly down on them and the broomsticks, the whips and the wooden boards. They stagger, several fall, but still they must go on hopping; those behind force them forward . . .

Below Captain Dusenschön stands and spurs them on; sends his whip whistling downwards, now on one, now on another . . .

When the first ones have reached the top step, First Lieutenant Meisel forces them to turn back. They must hop down the stairs again. That is much worse

than hopping up. Under the force of the blows they reel down the steps. One falls head first down the steps and remains lying below with gaping head wound . . . Again and again that night the prisoners have to hop up and down the steps. Their cries and groans sound through the whole prison. More and more of them streaming blood are dragged from the steps to the wall and left lying there.

The woman stands watching with tightly drawn mouth and wide open eyes . . .

Captain Dusenschön allows the prisoners to be beaten from one o'oclock at night until four. The SS men relax because they are getting tired. The broomsticks and woodenboards are broken to bits; they are beating the men with the end pieces.

Towards morning the victims are driven back into the school room. Those who can't walk are taken by the legs, dragged along the corridor and thrown to the others.

The arrested woman is lead to the guard room.

"A rope!" Dusenschön orders.

A sergeant brings a piece of cord. Dusenschön throws the cord to Meisel and commands:

"Tie the Communist whore's skirt over her head!"

A frightful, piercing cry. At the same moment several SS men pounce on the woman, gag her mouth, and bind a handkerchief over her head. Meisel and Platoon Leader Teutsch pull her skirt high and tie it. With one movement of the hand Dusenschön cleaned coats and belts off from the watchman's table. Meisel and Teutsch drag the woman to the table and pull her on top of it, Sergeant Major Harms and Nusbeck must crawl under the table to hold tight the wild lashing legs.

Dusenschön gives the woman a thorough beating. He accompanies every blow with the words:

"You whore! Goddam tramp! You Communist pig!"

. . .And blow after blow rains down on the woman's body . . . "Down from the table with her!"

Harms and Nusbeck drag her from the table by her legs.

Meisel unties the skirt. At this point the SS men are terrified by the eyes, wide open, blood shot, staring at them. She makes no sound after they remove the handkerchief and take the gag from her mouth. Her lips tremble. In her eyes lies mute horror.

She is locked in a dark cell in the cellar.

That morning it is Sunday, the day of the voting—Dusenschön accompanied by First Lieutenant Meisel goes to all the cells in the camp and tells the prisoners that the commander had promised him that right after the election releases would be granted to the exact number of the yes votes. The governor, Kaufmann, he goes on to say, had expressed the opinion that an amnesty on a grand scale would be carried through if the result of today's voting showed him that the inmates in the Hamburg concentration camp are fellow Germans who have inwardly freed themselves of Marxist agitation.

This awakens new hopes in the prisoners.

After the dreadful, sleepless night, the prospect of approaching release awakens new courage. The prisoners laugh, become talkative; each one hopes to be set free in the approaching big show.

It grows increasingly harder for the Communists to influence their fellow prisoners. In the last few days dubious characters are brought in: pimps,

pickpockets, homosexuals. Many of these criminals are ready for any treachery in return for privileges. The comrades in room 2 have also become more cautious after the incident with the Nazi: Welsen answers only the questions of comrades whom he knows well. There are two new people in the room whom the Communists don't trust. One is a jewelry robber often convicted before, who had served his term, and has been stuck in a concentration camp because of incorrigibility; the other is a homosexual who was arrested in woman's clothes.

This Sunday the food is unusually good: saurkraut and potatoes, gravy and knackwurst. The sergeants start affable conversations with the prisoners. The captain goes through the room; his face beams with kindly smiles.

In the afternoon the prisoners must carry tables and chairs to the corridor of Station A1. A tin screen out of the boiler room is washed and carried up. Behind this wall the prisoners are to vote. On the table a high, narrow box is placed. Captain Dusenschön and a gentleman from the State Bureau of Statistics take their places at the table. First Lieutenant Meisel undertakes the distribution of the ballots and the envelopes.

The voting begins with room 1. Platton leader Teutsch calls out seven names. Seven prisoners step forward, among them the two pimps. They stand in a line in front of the black tin wall, get two ballots from Meisel and an envelope, and after they have made the sign behind the wall, they must hand over the ballots and the envelope at the table. Then these are placed in the narrow wooden box one on top of the other. The nine prisoners are lead out of room 2, among them the jewel thief, the homosexual, and the seaman Kesselklein.

The business of voting takes up the afternoon. After the rooms comes those in solitary confinement. From Station A1 two prisoners are brought out; from Station A2, three. The majority of the prisoners may not vote.

After all the prisoners listed had voted, the table and chairs are carried away again; the tin wall is taken to the boiler room, and the official from the State Bureau of Statistics takes the wooden box with the ballots and goes to the commander accompanied by Dusenschön, Meisel and Teutsch.

Kesselklein has taken Welsen who has not been allowed to vote to a side.

"This voting is a goddam fake. They can find out now exactly how every single one has voted. The envelopes with the ballots lie right on top of one another and the voting is simply a record."

"Under these circumstances perhaps it would have been more advisable not to vote at all, to decline to vote!" says Welsen.

"The hell with it!" Kesselklein replies. "I put my cross on both ballots. They can go chase themselves!"

During the evening Captain Dusenschön comes to room 2. He is tipsy and no longer altogether steady on his feet. The prisoners lie on their straw sacks. Many are already asleep. He turns on the electric light and stutters:

"I only want to tell you that there's hope for you. . . . You voted . . . you shit houses . . . maybe by tomorrow . . . you'll be . . . with mama." Then he snaps the light out again and leaves the room. A bit later Lenzer comes in.

"Hello, you manure flies, would you like to know the result?"

A few of the prisoners lift themselves from their beds.

"Yes, Herr Sergeant!"

"Then listen! Two hundred and seventy three have voted; of these two hundred thirteen voted 'yes' thirty-five 'no' and seven ballots are void. . . .

You're surprised, eh? . . . And the first results outside . . . no need to speak of it. Tremendous victory. . . The jig is up at last! Nothing's been left of the Commune."

The prisoners discuss this extraordinary election in whispers late into the night. The sergeants are not so exacting today; they sit in the guard room at the radio, listen to the radio and swill.

Long before the whistle sounds in the sleeping prison, Torsten lies awake. The night is still pitchblack when the sergeants shout, "Get up! Every one out of bed!"

Torsten jumps up from his pallet, pulls his trousers on, makes his bed, smoothes the blanket. Then he starts his cold morning washing and does his gymnastic exercises.

A number of sergeants walk the length of the corridor talking loudly. He listens. They come nearer. He hears one say, "Come on! Let's go in!" The light in his cell goes on and the door is opened. First Lieutenant Meisel, Sergeant Major Harms and Sergeant Lenzer step in.

"Well, Reichstag Deputy of the Commune, what do you say now? The people have decided in favor of Hitler. Forty against two!"

Harms struts in front of Torsten. "Forty million for Hitler and scarcely two million for you!" It's all over with you now! You can't order anything anymore!"

Lenzer is completely potted and leans against the door post and stutters. "But . . . you won't . . . won't . . . now you won't . . . be beaten . . . any more . . . not beaten!"

"They call Fuhlsbuettel the SS hell!" Meisel now starts. He is completely sober. "The past will be child's play compared with what lies in store for those who continue their old propaganda work after this election!"

Torsten is silent. He observes the three different SS men. Harms though drunk is able to guard his dignity. He is well-groomed, has shining white teeth, and delicate coloring. Meisel, the smallest of the three, looks the most dressed up with his clean dark blue uniform, his white shirt and bright red tie. In contrast with him, Lenzer looks proletarian. His uniform is badly faded in spots; there is a dark band of sweat on his colored shirt-collar, and his face is course, heavy, and not clean.

"Can't believe it, what Torsten?" Lenzer starts again. The two others are shoving him out of the door.

Torsten hears them go to the opposite cell to tell the results there too, wild threats are hurled against those still to be brought in. Later Lenzer comes alone to Torsten's cell. He is somewhat sober now.

"You won't be treated badly anymore, Torsten. All are of the opinion that the old prisoners oughtn't to be mistreated anymore. . . . But the voting surpasses all expectations!"

"Forty million 'yes' votes?" Torsten asks.

"Yes, forty million!" Lenzer answers strangely proud. "And this will interest you. Hamburg voted unusually badly. Here the Communists were able to get their votes. . . . About a hundred and forty no votes. . . . But you yourself know, a port full of riff raff, shady elements and so—it's hardly a wonder!"

Torsten looks at the proletarian face. . . . He has heard the words in the guard room and gobbled them up. . . . These are not his own thoughts. . . .

"If the election success is really so terrific and Marxism is really wiped out, they ought to close the concentration camps and empty the prisons!"

"It's really so. Forty million against two; you need have no doubts about it!" Lenzer repeats with emphasis.

Torsten smiles and says, "I've other doubts!"

Lenzer looks at him astounded. Then he understands.

"You mean the voting results were falsified?"

Torsten shrugs his shoulders. "I'm a prisoner, Herr Sergeant, I mean nothing!"

"Adolf Hitler wouldn't do such a thing. Out of the question. That may have been possible with those who used to be in power, but not today. No, no, I don't believe it!"

The sergeant leaves the cell lost in thought.

After a few minutes, he turns back, opens the door and sticks his head in. "Be careful and don't say that kind of thing to anyone else!"

In the afternoon wild cries come from the courtyard, running and laughing. Torsten looks out of the window from a side. In front of the prison stand the newcomers, no doubt those who were arrested during the voting. The sergeants are so gay today that they devise special tricks.

The wheelbarrows used by the house wreckers are brought out, and the large, heavy truck on which stones are carried away. First the new prisoners must traipse around the courtyard with a wheelbarrow in which a prisoner is seated; then all must climb into the truck and two of the prisoners must serve as horses in front of the truck and pull it. The sergeants run nearby with whips, shout, "Hey!" and "Ho!" and with their whips drive the prisoners always faster and faster.

At the window of the guard room stand the medical orderlies and several police officials and are amused.

The game isn't wild enough for some of the sergeants. In the middle of the courtyard is a deep hollow fairly filled with rain water. The prisoners must ride the wheelbarrow side by side in and out of this hollow. Who doesn't succeed is whipped so long that he achieves it with his last ounce of energy or collapses.

Only at twilight are the prisoners driven back into prison. Eight of them, thoroughly exhausted, lie at the wall, panting and vomiting, and are pulled along by those comrades who have greater resistance.

Translated from the German by Anne Bromberger

Six American Paintings By LYDIA GIBSON

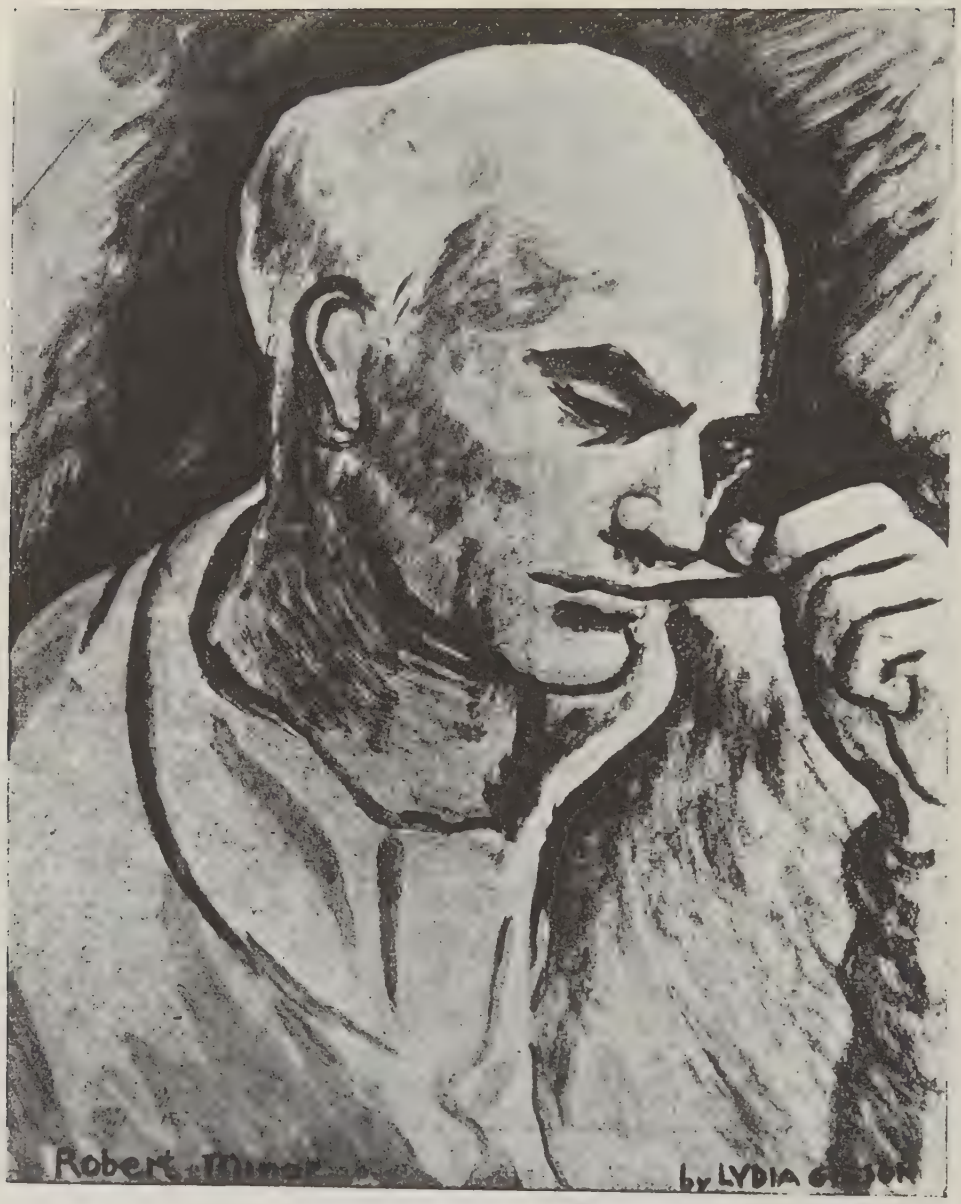
CAMPAIGN SPEAKER — Oil. A Negro girl, Bonita of Harlem, speaking on Imperialism

UNIT MEETING — Oil painting exhibited in Boston and New York

THE WOMEN'S AUXILIARY — Painted for the Anthracite Strike in Pennsylvania in 1928. Now in Union Headquarters at Cheswick, Pa

HARLEM WORKERS SCHOOL — Oil painting, for the lobby of the school, 1934. The director of the school, Willianna Burroughs, upper left, is shown teaching a class

IMPERIALISM — Oil painting now hanging in the Julio Mella Club of Cuban workers in Harlem, New York. First exhibited in New York, Chicago and Detroit



ROBERT MINOR — Tempera portrait of the well known revolutionary polttical artist and a leader of the American Communist movement

ARTICLES and CRITICISM

George Dimitrov

Revolutionary Literature In the Struggle Against Fascism

Speech at an Anti-Fascist Meeting at the Moscow Writers' House

Comrades, you all know that by evil irony of fate I proved to be in the dock with Van der Lubbe accused of setting fire to the Reichstag building. To me as a proletarian revolutionist, as a communist, it was evident beforehand that at the Leipzig trial a fight would take place between the German proletariat, the international proletariat and the bourgeoisie—that this would be an episode in the struggle between communism and fascism, between the proletarian revolution and counter-revolution. It is self evident that when a soldier is at the front he must fight—that is axiomatic. I had to fight against fascism, against national-socialism, against the capitalist system—in defense of the cause of the proletariat, of communism, of the Communist Party, in defense of the Soviet Union. That was as clear as that two times two are four.

But with my very first speeches at Leipzig I aimed to achieve also a number of immediate objectives. I confess that under the conditions at Leipzig and the situation of the fascist dictatorship in Germany at the time I was not very sure I would succeed in achieving those immediate objectives. I nevertheless thought it my duty to make the attempt and utilize everything possible to achieve those aims.

As a proletarian revolutionist, as a communist, what was I to try and achieve from the Leipzig tribunes? After the firing of the Reichstag a wave of unbridled, fierce onslaughts on the working class and, primarily on communists, swept over all Germany, as is well known. Thousands upon thousands were dragged into concentration camps, thousands upon thousands thrown into prison. It was necessary to regroup the forces of the proletariat, change the personel—replace those who were in concentration camps and in prison with new forces. This regrouping of the forces of the proletariat in Germany and of the Communist Party primarily, had to be accomplished under the cross fire of fascism. In the Moabit prison, during the short airings I got in the prison yard, I could see the mood change little. In April and May our revolutionary workers who were under arrest and imprisoned in Moabit prison went about with bowed heads. Depressed, they stealthily exchanged words about the movement of the German proletariat being badly set back. Some became faint hearted. June, July and August came—newly arrested comrades, workers, became more cheerful. The Leipzig trial drew the concentrated indignation of millions of German toilers against the fascist dictatorship, against the barbaric violence to the masses. Hatred of the fascist regime had to be expressed loudly at the Leipzig trial. The trial was a tribune from which one had to attack fascism, from which one had to show the communist and other workers, some of whom began to waver temporarily, afraid that the fascist onslaught was invincible, they had to be shown not only

that it is necessary to continue the struggle against fascism, but that such a struggle is possible; it was necessary to give a live human example of struggle against fascism. It was essential to encourage people, help the struggling proletariat gather their forces anew and throw elements of uncertainty and wavering disorientation into the midst of the national-socialist masses.

As you will remember, the struggle at Leipzig lasted for three months. All the corruption of German fascism with its judges, defense attorneys, prosecuting attorney, policemen, police commissars and all other police officials was exposed at the trial.

The accused represented a peculiar political bouquet. There were representatives among them of the most diverse sections of society, trends and types. The revolutionary part of the working class was represented and there was a representative of the lumpen-proletariat—the pitiful and yet tragic figure of Van der Lubbe! There was also a representative of the middle class elements in the labor and communist movement, of the remnants, survivals of the petty bourgeois, the official in the revolutionary labor movement; a classic type of this kind was the well known (I could say: once our comrade) Torgler.

Comrades, in this three months' struggle, communism, as it is known the world over, came out victor. Communism was victorious thanks to the world-wide mobilization of proletarian forces and all honest elements of the intelligentsia; it was victorious because there was, unofficial, it is true, and without any signed agreements, a united front of communist, social-democrat and other workers' parties against German fascism. Victory was achieved because in the very midst of the national socialist mass a strong opposition movement grew up against the provocations by national socialism and evident sympathy for the accused communists was evinced. During the last two months of the trial when the truth was coming out more and more clearly, even the national-socialist storm troopers and policemen expressed sympathy and respect for me. Hitler and his gang had to take cognizance of this frame of mind in their own midst.

I recall how Goering, the almighty lord of fascist Germany, came to the trial with some forty or fifty of his henchmen and, after I had been excluded from the trial room, he had to leave himself, besmirched in the eyes of his own followers.

At this gathering of Soviet writers I take the liberty of expressing my amazment that the Leipzig trial, such stupendous material, colossal capital of revolutionary thought and revolutionary practice in the proletarian movement, has never been in the least utilized by you. (Voices: *Right, Comrade Dimitrov!*)

I know several foreign writers—they, unfortunate people, do not want to write like bourgeois writers only about love, only lyrically, only about subjective experience. They would like to help the revolutionary movement of the proletariat. And these unhappy talented people sit and think what they have to write about. If they would only look at the struggle of millions, if they would look at the thousands of trials, strikes, demonstrations, skirmishes between the workers and their class-enemies, if they would look only a little more deeply into the material of the Leipzig trial—they would find excellent subjects. They would find a multitude of fine subjects.

Take the figure of Van der Lubbe. With him it could be shown how a worker can become the tool of his class enemy. On the negative example of

Van der Lubbe thousands of young workers could be educated and a struggle conducted against the influence of fascism among youth.

In different countries we experience various peculiar shifts in the labor movement. Comrade Smolianski has told a number of facts about the development of a popular front against fascism in Germany. At such a time revolutionary cadres are needed more than ever for the work of gathering forces, regrouping the forces of the proletariat, segregating the ranks of social-democracy, sobering the broad masses of workers. These cadres have to be trained, and they can be trained by live example in practical struggle and overcoming difficulties.

I think back: What in literature produced an especially strong impression on me in my youth? What influenced the formation of my character as a fighter? I can tell you frankly: it was Chernishevski's *What's to be Done?* (*Applause*). The firmness which I achieved while taking part in the labor movement in Bulgaria, the firmness, sureness and staunchness to the end of the Leipzig trial—this, I am sure, is connected in some way with Chernishevski's work which I read in my youth.

Where in our literature are the pictures of the heroes of the proletarian movement in Germany, Austria, Bulgaria, China and many other countries? Where are these examples that millions could emulate? Give us also *negatively* live examples, show people of flesh and blood, like Van der Lubbe, so youth could learn from live examples.

Literature plays a tremendous role in the problems of raising a revolutionary generation. Help us, help the Party of the working class, the Comintern,—give us a keen weapon in artistic form—in poetry, novels, short stories,—to use in the struggle. Help us raise cadres of revolutionists with your art!

At one time the revolutionary bourgeoisie fought lustily for the advancement of their class, using all means, fine literature included. What made a laughing stock of the remnants of knighthood? *Don Quixote* by Cervantes. *Don Quixote* was a powerful weapon in the hands of the bourgeoisie against feudalism, against the aristocracy. The revolutionary proletariat has need of at least one little Cervantes (*laughter*) who would give them such a weapon for their struggle. (*Laughter, applause*) Fascism is the last attempt of the bourgeoisie to restrain the wheel of history.

I read a good deal when I can. I must say I do not always have the patience to read our revolutionary literature. (*Laughter*) I can't and don't understand it, I am not a specialist. (*Loud laughter.*) But inasmuch as I know the masses, know the workers, their psychology, I say: no, this will not go with workers. The worker will look and see that there are no types there, no examples that one could emulate. He is not a revolutionary writer who only repeats: "Hail the Revolution!" Only the writer who helps revolutionize the working masses, mobilizes them for the struggle against the enemy, only such a writer can be considered a revolutionary writer. (Voices: *Right. Applause.*)

I hope you will pardon me if I seem rather brusque. (Voices: *Please. Right. Applause.*) I always call a spade a spade. I think that since the Union of Soviet Writers has been organized, you Soviet writers have received new conditions, new possibilities for such fruitful work.

The writers of the Soviet Union have the most favorable conditions for creative work. The writers of the Soviet Union live in a country where there is teeming activity in building, where great enthusiasm seethes and progress goes on with tremendous strides; the very atmosphere, the air in the Soviet Union is creative.

Revolutionary writers abroad have to overcome exceptional difficulties, poverty, at times stand prison and concentration camps.

It is decidedly essential to put creative art at the service of the proletarian revolution, in the struggle against fascism, against capitalism, in the struggle for the mobilization and revolutionary upbringing of the masses. It is essential that artistic work should revolutionize millions of workers outside the Party and with the social-democrats, popularize socialist construction and the great achievements of the Soviet Union. Creative art should be placed at the service of the great revolutionary ideal of the millions of workers of humanity. (*Applause. Ovations. "Hail Dimitrov!" "Hurrah for Dimitrov!" Great applause.*)

Translated from the Russian by S. D. Kogan

Theodore Balk

Egon Erwin Kisch and His Reportage

On the 50th Year of a Noted Revolutionary Reporter

A man is striding along the street late at night. His step echoes in the silence. The houses are dark, separate, distantly apart. Before one of the houses the man, whose steps were the only sign of life at this late hour, stops. He glances at the house. It is dark. He turns round and his steps resound until they are lost in the direction from which they came.

Who was this man? What did he want?

He was a newspaperman. A local reporter. The villa before which he had stopped is the home of a well known man bearing a name famous in the city. He is dying. Is he still alive or has he died? This the local reporter had to establish. Had the house been lit up, the morning edition of the newspaper would have carried the sad story, all ready and edited, plus a short biography of the dead man. The villa was dark, everyone asleep, so the dying man was still alive. The reporter goes home to bed, his day's work is done.

Egon Erwin Kisch, world known revolutionary reporter

Perhaps the reporter did not go home but turned up his collar and dropped into a night cafe, ordered a bottle of wine and was thinking. Not very concentratedly, not systematically, but as one thinks in the early morning hours after a day full of labors.

He thinks about his craft—it is not art—thinks about his career. Thinks, while printing machines are turning out his report on a fire in Warsaw, on a robbery in Karlin, on—well, the story about the man that hasn't died yet doesn't go in.

The house has burned down, the firemen came too late. A woman suffered bad burns, was taken to the hospital. The fire alarm didn't work right, the apparatus was faulty. He had also mentioned that motor pumping had already been achieved. Very well, people will read this tomorrow, no—today at breakfast. It will keep them as long as their cup of coffee—then his report has lived its day, has become waste paper at half a cent a kilogram.

It is the work of a coolie, this local reporting. The worst man on the staff is too good for it.

Had he written a short story in which he told about two people who were in that burning house and were in love, made love to each other

HENRI BARBUSSE

I add my voice to all the others that congratulate Egon Erwin Kisch, on the occasion of his fiftieth birthday.

Never were congratulations more in order than those addressed to this talented and energetic man who has so admirably understood the true role of the intellectual; the true social mission of the writer. He is one of those who from "reporting" from the art of direct observation, has fashioned pictures and frescoes directly based on the wide panorama of life—a literary genre of the first rank. And along with his talent he has applied his courage and his persistency as a fighter to the service of the great cause of human emancipation, of social justice.

More than anyone else, as secretary of the World Committee of Struggle Against War and Fascism I cannot forget and cannot fail to acclaim in proper fashion the heroic role which he has just played as a delegate and representative of this committee in Australia where he was acclaimed by the masses, and imprisoned by the Public authorities. To Egon Erwin Kisch, man of letters and soldier, writer and fighter, loyal and unswerving adversary of fascism, man in the full sense of the word, in the name of all our comrades in struggle I send the warmest greetings of admiration and gratitude.

Henri Barbusse.

mars 1935

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till late at night and how suddenly the woman cried out . . . and the man also soberly discovered the smell of fire, and—and—and . . .

Has the reporter been selected by God Almighty on the seventh day of creation to be the last man on the staff? Was there no place assigned to reporting among the Arts in nominating the seven Muses? Shall he drop the stuff, become a novelist, write stories that never happened, since the truth only brings contumely, since with every degree of truth the degree of art sinks?

Here, waiter! Another bottle!

Reporting. Take this Marco Polo, the Venetian traveler in China. He wrote about the face of the Earth, about people, about life and manners, about business—knowledge of Asia then, in the 13th century, did not go any further than what Marco Polo had put down in his book. "Beyond midnight there is Zorzania" (Georgia) he writes on page 65 of his travel book, "there one finds on the border a large stream of oil, and many camels can be loaded with it. This oil is not only used for food, it is also used as a salve to cure man and cattle from skin diseases as well as other ills; it can also be used as fuel."

Crude oil. Petroleum. Today no one perhaps reads Marco Polo any more. But he was read for hundreds of years until one day Rothschild and several other gentlemen put up oil wells where that "large stream" was located.

No, people had more important things to do than write about murders and fires—they became explorers, discoverers of new worlds, pioneers of the young European merchant capitalism. "This island brings more beautiful and more precious rubies than can be found in any other part

MICHAEL GOLD

Is Comrade Kisch really 50 years old? I can't believe it, and refuse to believe it. He is really 17 years old, and was born in Petrograd, with the Bolshevik Revolution. Fearless, insolent and vital, this proletarian youth goes around the world, from one capitalist nation to another. One day he is in South America, the next day in China or Australia or France. He swaggers in like a conquerer, sees with clear, youthful eyes all the sham and tyranny, and exposes it in a loud voice. And he laughs. He laughs like a mischievous Puck, he laughs like the street gamins of Paris who mocked at the aristocrats. It confuses the capitalists—they expect us to fear them, not to laugh at them. This proletarian youth has no respect for their most sacred institutions. He pokes a finger through the rotten fabric of their gaudy churches and parliaments and stock exchanges. He sees through their hollow amusements, their hypocritical moralities. He is everywhere, and he is always laughing with the cruel, truthful young laughter that destroys every tyranny and sham.

Here in America the liberal intellectuals assure each other that Communism crushes laughter and adventure in the individual soul, and is a dreary barracks that regiments everyone. One of our many sufficient answers to this lie is Comrade Egon Erwin Kisch. Who among the capitalist writers has as deep and hearty a laugh as this young globe-trotting genius reporter? Who of them is leading a fuller or more glorious life? Who of them knows and loves humanity as well, and the great adventure of living? This youth, with his enormous Bolshevik zest for experience, is he the creature of a barracks?

The art of reportage has been restored from its degraded position under capitalism through the work of Communist writers like Egon Erwin Kisch. In his hands it has become a great medium of satire and exposure and agitation. Through all his work radiates, too, the lusty spirit of the rising young class. I am glad to be a contemporary of Egon Erwin Kisch's; and I know millions of workers everywhere feel as proud and glad that he is our comrade. May there always be trains and steamships and airplanes for him to travel on, and may such laughter as his soon bring us a Soviet world!

MICHAEL GOLD

American novelist, playwright, author of Jews Without Money, 120 Million *and other books.*

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of the world . . ." Marco Polo reported about Ceylon. Which was a hint to the merchants of Holland, Spain, Portugal and England to steer their schooners around the Cape of Good Hope.

But this is travel literature, and there is something like it today too. It is something entirely different than local reporting . . . But is it really so totally different than local reporting? Of course. Foolish question. Strange lands, strange manners, my Pragueites have no idea about these things. On the other hand they know their Prague . . . do they really know all of their Prague by heart? I must think this over a minute.

But the waiter came and put a third bottle up instead of the empty second one and wine is the enemy of anything static, so the musings of the local reporter spin away from the fixed point.

Marco Polo, Christopher Columbus, Alexander von Humboldt, Stanley, Nansen. They were all engaged in science or business. They discovered America, Asia, Africa, the Arctic—it was interesting to follow their discoveries. But after them came others who described these lands more accur-

THE EDITORS

The most thunderous greetings on your fiftieth birthday are drowned out by the din and roar of the battle which you, Egon Erwin Kisch, our friend, comrade-in-arms and fellow writer, wage in the front line of the class struggle.

You are always in the thick of the fray.

You tread on the flaming path of struggle, for you are a revolutionary, for you are an artist of the new world. Love for the cause of the revolution and the dauntless struggle you engage in against reaction and fascism have raised you to the topmost peaks of literature, have armed you with tremendous creative power.

In these days we are with you and you are with us, here in Moscow, the capital of the world proletariat.

We clasp your hand, comrade Egon Erwin Kisch, the hand of a courageous fighter, an artist and a man.

EDITORIAL BOARD INTERNATIONAL LITERATURE

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ately and what was more important, changed these continents. What has become of their books? Nothing. Of their deeds? Everything. The world has now been discovered and besides you don't want to become a discoverer but a writer.

Not a discoverer—a writer. Not a reporter—an artist. Are these poles apart? Can't they be united.

Take Zola. Didn't he live in Hallen in order to write about the "Belly of Paris?" Didn't he make a study of mining, didn't he spend weeks among the miners in order to write his *Germinal*? Wasn't the ideal of this man a Claude Bernard, a physiologist, who makes experimental researches in life?

But what came out of it—a novel. Background of fictitious action, essentially true to nature but in detail the invention of the poet. The concrete, the real event, became raw material—the reporter was caterer of raw materials to the poet. Is this the final solution of the relation: reporter—artist?

So what is there left except to become a novelist—the reporter to be used as a springboard, as a solid background. Just as the cabin boy becomes a sailor, the apprentice, a mechanic; the medical student, a doctor. Halt! Wrong, all wrong! The cabin boy has learned nothing during his apprenticeship except what he must know as a sailor; the same with the mechanic and the doctor.

Mendeleyev worked out a table of chemical elements. For every blank space in his table he said: here an element of such and such molecular weights and such valency is missing. And such elements were afterwards really found. There is a blank space in the table of the arts—there is a lapse, the art equivalent of the report is missing. Reportage.

Discoveries are never accidental, they are "in the air." In Russia it was Mendeleyev who discovered the system of the chemical elements. In Germany it was Meyer. Neither do discoveries drop out of a clear blue sky, they have their material basis, their trail blazers, their forerunners.

The material basis of reportage is the newspaper. It exists by giving its readers news. The reader wants to have the log book of the world before him at breakfast. He wants to know what happened, why it happened and how it happened.

The trail blazers, the reporters. They have to be there, wherever anything happens, wherever the step of humdrumness suddenly stops. All this has little to do with art. Henry Stephen Oppert de Blowitz, "King of Reporters" and inventor of the interview, Jules Huret, reporter of industry and the society of the Third Republic, Stanley, the war correspondent, discoverer of Africa—of the *New York Tribune.*

The forerunners. The forerunners were not very plentiful. The writers of the bourgeoisie found their great form in the novel. Their researches were only preparatory work for their books. Charles Dickens must be mentioned. The sketches of the young reporter "Boz" about the contrasts in London are reportage.

The local reporter pulled his hat down lower and called for his "check!"

Was a decision rife in the local reporter, was his course clear before him? Not at all. The local reporter wrote his novel after this, a well received novel. The critics prophesied a Zolaesque, a Balzacian future for him. "The illumination of the milieu" wrote one critic, "is of such strength and so manysided that it gives a rare synthesis of impressionistic detail and plastic power. The mixed genuineness lends this extraordinarily alluring, wonderful book all the artistic charm it could possibly have. And the sun of Zola, lo! it smiles at us too." (Willi Handl in the *Oestreich Rundschau).* And another one: "... of a much different technique, schooled on the Goncourts and Zola, and yet much more: a human heart beats in these very documented descriptions, they occasionally breathe of Dostoyevski..." (Hermann Bahr in his book *1919*).

Goodbye, venereal word,—goodbye you bargemen, hop gatherers, prison birds, bums and vagabonds, from now on you shall find yourselves within the confines of art and who knows whether you will know yourselves again.

Goodbye old world that is so old and yet so new. Goodbye, goodbye you shaky stool of the local reporter, you are no longer worthy of having the behind of an artist on you.

Goodbye...

The heavenly stars of the romancer already wink at the new arrival, the earthly swarms of critics already discern a new star in the firmament of romance—but too soon.

At the last minute the local reporter jumped off the post chaise.

The world lost a great romancer in him.

But it won a Kisch.

It won Egon Erwin Kisch, the local reporter of the world, who discovered the old world and a new one to boot.

Since 1871 the world was living an apparently calm and well ordered life. Conflicts among governments were settled in evening dress; banquets and diplomatic negotiations were the battlefields. Here and there the generals turned up—that was to remind one that peace is only a diplomatic curtain.

The order inside the countries was of a similar nature. It was the calm before a storm. "1905" threw a blood neon-light over Europe.

Beginning with 1912 a series of conflicts and shocks shook the Earth: 1914, '16, '21, '23, '29, '33. '34... The meadows where sheep used to graze with untiring persistence, the field where grain used to ripen in cosmic trot, the human migrations—with the vegetating routine of birth

marriage, old age and death—everything collapsed like a poorly mounted stage, evaporated like a dream, like a tale of olden days.

Sheep no longer grazed on the meadows, no grain was ripening in the fields. Decaying bodies of men covered the meadows where sheep had grazed and on the fields where grain had been ripening—Death was rife and the routine from cradle to grave was interrupted during the best years by a sudden shell or poison gas.

A peace came then, a peace during which mankind, with tenfold energy went about rebuilding the world. And lo: twice as many sheep as before grazed on the meadows, the machinery at the factories hummed with tenfold horse-power, and the grainfields became ever yellower and more beautiful with the application of artificial fertilizer. Speculations of the gentlemen on the exchange and calculations of the gentlemen in industry were more frantic than common cannon and poison gas. Thirty million men were starving because the grain harvest was too abundant. Thirty million men went about in rags because too many looms were in operation.

Poetry? Imagination? All these Werthers dying of love, these Raskolnikovs murdering old women, these Idiots marrying whores, these weakling Don Juans that run away from women, even the hades of Rougon Macquart pale before this reality.

Then came uprisings, rebellions, revolutions. One was victorious. It wrote a most determined *finis* to a chapter in the history of mankind. Fifty thousand years of human development found their finale in the Russian October Revolution.

Reality became more fantastic than any poet's fantasy. Jules Verne's romances went into oblivion, reality had far outstripped them.

The time was ripe for putting the naked and sober report into gripping form. The time for a writer to report freshly-warm about a world in which today and tomorrow changed the face of the world with cinema speed. The time for reportage.

The mad reporter's course was straight, consistent, and—by no means mad.

He came in as a critic of society. Half a generation later we find him in this role again, only harder, wiser, more militant.

Kisch's critique of society began where misery streamed out of the body social, a body decrepit, cancerous, poisoning the air. It began with the discards, the pariahs, the scums which the ocean of life had thrown out on the shores of the city.

Kisch's specialty on the editorial staff was criminology. By calling Kisch inspected daily what the net brought in, the sinners against property rights and morals. Kisch knew the people that inhabit the police stations—pick-pockets, holdup men, second story men, beggars and all the rest that find their way to this rendezvous.

He followed their traces. They led him into darkness, into prisons, into dens, into the underworld of assorted whores—to places where misery is often colored by exotic brilliance. Some who started out at the same point—I am thinking of Albert Londres—get stuck in this milieu for life. They fight against white slavery, against Guiana and Biribi, they make war on insane asylums and colonial horrors without being aware of the great ocean whose wreckage they are describing.

Kisch started out to discover workaday reality. He began at the sweepings.

But even in his early reportage we also find things about raft men and hop gatherers. Kisch hired out to gather hops, to tend rafts. Raft men and hop gatherers are already wheels of the production machine, they are not scum, not sweepings. Not important wheels. The romantic Kisch picked raft tending as a profession that was dying out and hop gathering as a reservoir into which many of the sweepings were thrown.

The criminologist soon became the historian. No wonder. The boy Egon was born in a house over the door of which two bears are sculptured. The many-staired house looks like a stage setting from *Caligari* and the narrow winding street with its arch of the church of St. Michael no less so. Burgmayor Johann Nastoje, who carried the State insignia at the funeral of King Ladislau, once lived in this house of the two golden bears; also the Old City Primate Johann Kirchmayer; and the publisher of the Bohemian State constitution, Johann Kosorsky . . . lived there in the 15th, 16th, 17th, and 18th centuries. Underground passages were supposed to exist which led from the house to the Old City Ring and even up to the Tyne church burial chamber of Tyo-Brahe. In this old part of the city where every step led by some historical landmark the passion of the lad Egon arose for knowledge about the times when men went about dressed in vests and their heads fell in front of the Old City municipal state house—the outlines of the execution block are still there.

No text book, no work of history today mentions the name of Egon Erwin Kisch. Boredom has long become the criterion of the scientific. Nor is Kisch welcome as a debunker of idealistic falsifications. What business has such a fellow in respectable circles of professors ordinary and extra-ordinary.

Kisch the impressionist draws a panorama of life point by point with thoroughness. He wants an exact, true and absorbing description of what happened, what he heard, saw and experienced. Such is "Night at the Flop-House." Such is "Day at the Den." Such is "Day and Night of a Raftsman." How it got that way, why it is so, Kisch the realist refuses to investigate. The reporter must establish the facts. "The reporter is not tendacious, has nothing to justify and has no point of view. He must be an impartial witness and bear impartial witness which must be as reliable as it is possible to express . . ." (E. E. K.—*The Mad Reporter.* 1920). The reporter cannot be a faultless witness of an event. That is barely possible physically. The reporter must therefore have, as Kisch puts it, a "logical imagination. Because it is never possible to reconstruct a faultless picture of the case out of an autopsy of the place of action or the arena, the remarks of participants and witnesses, and the stated suppositions. The reporter must himself create the pragmatics of the event, the transitions to the achievements of the reconstruction, and only take care that the line of his statement should run to a hair along the known facts (the given points). The ideal condition is to have the probability curve drawn by the reporter coincide at all points with the chain of actual events; the harmonious course of the curve is possible and attainable with the determination of the greatest number of given points." (*Literary Echo.* Vol. 20, 1918, E.E. Kisch.)

Kisch's thoroughness in finding the "given points" determined his further development. Kisch is a man who for years and years has done nothing but contemplate life as impartially as possible, life above as well as below. Can such a man resist the logic of things which demands categorically one thing of him: not to consider them only as they are

in the average split second, but as they were before and will be later. Not only, using his terminology, to make autopsies of the corpse, but also investigate the history of the development and the physiology of the living. Can he withstand the logic of things that tells him: you have drawn a number of excellent, true, convincing pictures. I admit this. But are those "given points" the most important ones? And are not your pictures a jigsaw puzzle, made up loosely of chance portions of the picture? When you pick up something like that you see a detail true to life,—but is this the whole truth, can you conceive the entire picture in its development? For this you have to collect all the pieces of the puzzle. But how fit them together? According to what rules? This is a matter for thought. One must have a point of view. Otherwise everything remains just mere arrangement.

In your theoretical article you write, "The reporter is not tendacious . . . has no point of view . . " But does not your own practice refute you? Didn't you prefer to report on the flop house and hop gatherers rather than fashionable balls and tennis tournaments? Did you go to the property owners and directors in your researches or to the homeless and to the toilers? Was this choice accidental? No. You had a point of view: for the oppressed, against the oppressor.

It is not accidentally that reportage developed to its highest form precisely in socialist literature, where we find Kisch, John Reed, Upton Sinclair, Larissa Reissner, Ilya Ehrenburg, Tretyakov—against only one Albert Londres in bourgeois literature.

The reasons?

The reporter is compelled to observe the world daily and hourly. "Even the worst reporter," writes Kisch, "the one that exaggerates and is unreliable, delivers productive work: because he depends on facts, he must learn about them by seeing them, by conversation, by observation, by information."

"He depends on facts," not the facts of his reflections, the world does not depend on his imagination.

The romancer is also dependent upon facts, and naturally so. One may find out more about a period from the works of great romancers than from some thick books overladen with facts. The romancer can only more easily avoid this interpretation. He may see the world so much through his temperament only that in the end only his temperament and nothing of the world is left.

In his *French Campaign of 1792* Goethe reported on the condition of his four-horse chaise, on the frame of mind at the duke's general headquarters. "Everyone was cheerful, gay, full of hope and heroic. Some villages, it is true, began to burn, but in a picture of war some smoke is not inappropriate." Fire and blood streaming. But never mind, the style of the picture is correct and gives us pleasure. The poet avoids reality and reports on his own small ego. His work reflects his mental state.

The reporter never avoids things. He must get in contact with reality. The quality of his work depends upon the breadth and depth of his knowledge—provided of course, the ability to depict is there. The desire to give unbiased reports may bring even the bourgeois reporter to a point where the quantity of his great knowledge goes over into a new quality: understanding the relationship of things.

Reportage must be realistic if at all.

This is true to such an extent that we can safely say there is no prominent bourgeois reporter who would falsify things in his report. His bourgeois tendency expresses itself rather in the choice of subject, in remaining on the surface of things, in evading totality.

Occasionally only in the last. Take Albert Londres. Could a proletarian reporter give a more truthful picture of the hell that "Dante never saw," the hell of the military disciplinary colonies? The hell of Biribi? That of Guiana? That of the French colonies? Hardly. But what conclusions does Londres draw? That the disciplinary code needs modernization, that the scum of the French people should not be sent to the colonies and that people are bad. That's all.

But Londres' bourgeois conclusions pale before the weight of his realism. Pale for the reader, but pale also for the writer. To go from bourgeois realism to socialist realism—is a course that faces no writer so sternly and relentlessly as the reporter.

That is why the number of notable proletarian reporters is so great and that of bourgeois writers so small. Maturity of their talents, higher development—or flight before reality to the reception rooms of kings, presidents of republics and their ministers, that's all Mr. Knickerbocker.

At the beginning Kisch's reportage was amorphous, broad, epic. The reporter showed the panorama of life with all its purely accidental and trivial circumstance. Naturally he did not do this without some culling, without eliminating the spuriously accidental, without establishing a certain proportion in the selection of the thousands of impressions that streamed in upon him. It was a picture however, in which the casual still occupied a fairly considerable place. Take Kisch's war diary, his descriptions of the Balkan war.

Entirely different formulas, however, guide the reporter who is driven from description of the surface of things to their depths. Now the flatness of the picture is broken. The world becomes visible in all its connections and contradictions and in the eternal flux of things.

This process of clarification in Kisch did not take place with any frenzied speed, it took many years. The development of the man without a point of view into one with a point of view, of the impressionist to a dialectician, proceeded step by step while the reporter of exotic misery changed to the reporter of toiling humanity, while the anarchist changed to a scientific Marxian.

A Gablonz pearl, an Almaden ball of mercury, a grain of wheat out of Minnesota—what are these?

Karl Marx has scientifically analyzed the processes of their production in his *Capital,* has defined there the terms: commodity, value, surplus-value, profit.

Many years passed before a writer who had read Marx took these small matters in hand. Took them in hand, packed his trunk, and started on the journey of the grain of wheat. His way took him far from the fields, it led him to the fiftieth story of a Manhattan bank building, it threw him into the whirlpool of the Chicago pit.

The grain of wheat unfolded its shoots and the delicate green leaves became red with blood and wet with sweat and green with conference tables, tainted with misery and perfumed with luxury.

A grain of wheat from Minnesota.

A pearl from Gablonz.

The Professor of natural science determines the chemical formula, the hardness, the data for calculating.

The economist calculates the market price, the capital investment, the profits.

The writer writes about color and radiance. He associates with it the bosom of a beloved woman where such a bauble once was lodged. He closes his eyes and lets a vision rise before him about this bauble, a vision of baby hands whose tiny fingers close about this bauble, a vision of fat paws grasping the money, of black throats of Negroes about which the coins are suspended. Perhaps.

The reporter is not satisfied with color and sheen and associations alone are no help to him. He picks up the many traces that are embedded in this sadly scintillating microcosm and follows them in all the four directions of space and in all three directions of society. He studies the process of becoming, the technical process of crystallization. He gets acquainted with the people that occupy themselves with pearl production with those that find them as well as with those that take possession of them, sell them, ship them. He looks into their stomachs and into their homes. He then turns 180 degrees East, even if only on a chair in the library. He studies dumping in Japan, goes back to Gablonz where the glass blowers get together to strike against rationalization and then visits the tiny glass-cutting mill owners and reports on the pros and cons of these proletarianized owners.

Karl Marx has scientifically unveiled the mysteries of commodity fetishism and of the origin of value and surplus value.

Egon Erwin Kisch has taken up these traces in the literary field. He became the artistic monographer of commodities: coal from the Borinage, mercury from Almaden, baubles from Gablonz, cotton-goods from Shanghai. He has pictured all the exact figures, the misery and woe, all the luxury and riotous living which the silent commodity holds concealed in itself.

Kisch's little journeys to the past lend to his reportage the completeness of master paintings. Modern capitalism likes to hear itself glorified as the liberator of mankind from slavery. Liberty of the wage worker? I have never felt so intensively the illusion of this liberty as in Kisch's work on the Almaden mercury mines. In antiquity the worker in the mercury mines was chained. Later, those condemned to lifelong imprisonment were brought to Almaden and the prison cells led directly to the working places in the mines through a drift. Later yet anyone who accepted employment at Almaden was released from military service. "In the 20th century of madness this business reached an apex: it is necessary to drive them by force from the places of the chain-gang prisoners, eagerly the masses strive for the corridors where the breath of Death hovers and in vain . . . Who could ever have been able to imagine such a vision: an inquisition chamber where those tortured tremble with anxiety lest the screws are loosened, lest they be torn from the iron post, driven from the stretching boards."

This infernal vision of bourgeois progress Kisch drew out of everyday reality. The present he lights up with Bengal flares of the past throwing fantastic shadows in places where we had been used to see only the grey tread of humdrummery.

Thus Kisch became the reporter of the proletariat; Kisch dogged the heels of the exploiters and executioners, of the speculators and corpse robbers. Kisch followed the workers into sweatshops and mills. But he

has not yet followed the proletariat in its great battles, in its storming attacks and retreats, its strikes, uprisings and revolutions. The struggle itself Kisch has not yet made the subject of his reportage—although in his books on Asia and China the roar of battle can be heard, dampened and subterranean, it is true.

When, thirty years ago, the young reporter considered the pros and cons of his life-course during that midnight talk with himself, the form of his literary rebirth was not yet clear to him.

No wonder.

The novel has its heroes. For them the reader's love or hate flares up, the short story, the play. These literary genres have a long history behind them. Their form has reached a certain stability. Notwithstanding many transformations a certain skeleton always remains and is what we think of when we speak of the novel, poetry or the play.

The novel has its heroes. For them the readers love or hate flares up, with them he lets himself be won over for the one and against the other.

How is it with reportage?—this term was not yet coined then. What is its dynamics? Where is its specific form?

It is no easy matter to answer this.

Let us compare all that is today denoted as "reportage." Someone writes a biography of Madame Duberry and he calls it *grand reportage historique.* Someone makes a trip around the world and publishes his diary—: "A Reportage from All the World." Someone collects the reports of an Arctic expedition—it is reportage . I shall never forget how someone proposed that I write a "reportage" on the Spanish uprising although I myself was hundreds of kilometers from the scene of the struggle and had never visited Spain. Diary, biography, reports—everything is reportage.

The reporter may approach his work by various methods even such as are poles apart. He may consider the outside world as depersonified and he may take the outer world as a means to expatiate on his own inner life. He may write down everything that comes to his mind, he may select and consolidate.

The reporter Kisch does not reproduce the world impersonally, but as Kisch—and he is not all concerned with Kisch but with the world. The reporter Kisch notes every slightest detail—to sum them up in the briefest formula. This briefest formula of the reporter is not the briefest formula of the scientist. The latter is a mathematical one, an abstraction cleansed of all flesh and blood. The briefest formula of the reporter must not kill the life it is supposed to reproduce. How is this formula produced?

In the novel life is reflected in the consciousness of the characters.

In reportage it is reflected in the consciousness of the reporter.

The novel has its main thread. The life of its heroes.

The subject is the main thread of reportage.

The romancer does not have to hold to a definite concrete case. He may invent the action, he may disassociate people, he may consolidate two, three, five of them.

That does not mean that the romancer draws his experience from some heavenly source.

"Eh bien," writes Zola, *"en revenant au roman, nous voyons également que le romancier est fait d'un expérimentateur et d'un observateur: l'observateur chez lui donne la fait tel qu'il l'observe."*

As observers the novelist and the reporter go part of the way together. As *expérimentateur,* however, the romancer has a free hand. He *institute*

l'expérience, je veux dire fait mouvoir les personages dans une histoire particulière, pour y montrer que la succession des faits y sera telle que l'exige le déterminisme des phénomènes mis a l'étude." (Emile Zola: Le roman expérimental).

The reporter may not experiment with his people. Concrete life experiments with them, proves that a social law holds everywhere by an individual case The reporter must hold to this individual case.

Zola says: "The highest praise for a novelist used to be: he has imagination. Today the master quality of the novelist is his sense for the real (*le ses du real).*" This sense for the real is, as has already been pointed out many times, the prerequisite for every reporter. But only the prerequisite. Without imagination the reporter will never portray "the pragmatics of the event, the transitions to the achievement of the reconstruction." (Kisch) Without artistic imagination he will never be able to portray the world so that the reader not only understands but lives it through with him.

The reporter enjoys much of the poet's license. He may often go even further than the realistic novelist.

There are not a few examples of this in Kisch.

Take, for instance, "Six thousand times: nothing in!"

Only Kisch the atheist, Kisch the Marxian makes God Almighty leave his heaven to pay a visit to the "Central Casting Corporation" in the Western Building in Hollywood. There friend God gets the low down on supers and doubles, gets a glimpse at the card index where everything in types the world has is registered with name and address.

Friend God is here the reporter's poetic license, Kisch has St. Peter also at his disposal. But Kisch allows himself no poet's license when he reports on the contents of the card index and the usages prevailing at the "Central Casting Corporation."

About the police exposition in Zoppot Kisch lets a delegate report to a plenary session of a Ring society. The delegate is an invented one, the session is invented—but the report is strictly in accord with what the reporter was to show: the police exposition in Zoppot.

Kisch dares to use the people he needs for his purpose—this is permissible as long as the reports of these figures are authentic of what they think and do.

Reportage and the movies are young, very young arts. They have much in common in their dynamics. The closeup, illusion, sparingness of gesture, montage.

Sing-Sing. Death chamber with the electric chair. "The criminal is dead and is taken to the anatomy room where the doctors confirm what can become of a live healthy person within two minutes."

Illusion—the next picture follows the first without separating line.

"I recommend you take a look outside at the majestic Hudson playing football with shining opals while the sun is setting there behind the glorious palisades. The woods glisten, everything breathes peace and freedom. It is a joy to live."

Street in Shanghai. At the post on the crossing a sikh policeman.

Closeup: Black turban on the head of the policeman. Kisch unrolls this black turban. Unrolled with it is the history of the bloody taming of a warlike nation, of its domestication—now it stands there at the crossing in Shanghai as England's colonial watchdog.

Sparingness of gesture: A cotton kolkhoz in the neighborhood of Stalinabad. One day a delegation of peasants from Afghanistan comes to ask

that a kolkhoz be organized there for them too. It is explained to them that this can't be done. "What was the effect? They petitioned their bey in the provincial capital Mosar-i-Cheriff that he introduce a Soviet regime for them too."

Period. Can one say the following more strikingly or briefly in four sentences: 1) that collectivization brought well being to the Tadjik peasant, 2) that these peasants are not yet communists (otherwise they should have explained to the Afghans how kolkhozes are gotten—not by petition to the bey, of course), but that 3) They are Decidedly supporters of the Soviet system which has brought them the kolkhoz, and 4) that the propaganda effect of the Soviet idea on the peoples of Asia is not produced by "agents" but is exerted by economic, political and cultural advantages.

Montage: Two-color print of Tashkent. Tashkent is already most modern socialism. But Tashkent is also backwardness of the Middle Ages. This montage of "red" and "grey" is a masterpiece of dialectic montage.

The classsic form of reportage?

It is hard to answer the question.

John Reed's *Ten Days That Shook the World* and *Changing Asia.* Both classic reportage, both entirely different in structure. Here a frantic race through the ten days, there no time continuity whatever. The first one whole casting, the second built up of individual stones, in self rounded complexes. Also unlike are "I, Chassjad Nirkulan" where the biography of a woman is given neatly and simply and "Two Tone Picture of Tashkent" where pictures are mounted in film tempo. In the chapter on cotton the inspection of a kolkhoz is the occasion for economic journeys.

Reportage is a wild west region of literature, it offers the emigrant a wide field for pioneer work. It puts only two conditions to the reporter: his work must be authentic and concrete. It must convince the reader both logically and emotionally.

Kisch's life at this time.

The battle raged in Prague between Czech and German. It was an uneven battle:—behind those who called themselves German stood Vienna, stood the noble knights of Land, Sugar, Iron and Steel. It was the battle of the powers that be against the aspirations for freedom of a people. In this battle Kisch was on the side of the oppressed.

Before the war: Kisch donned the Kaiser's uniform.

The police and criminal reporter spent 266 days of his military term in the building at the Petrinergasse and Konigstrasse. Under arrest of the Prince Johann Georg von Sachsen Infantry Regiment No. 11. His conduct in the regiment was such that he was declared unworthy of the rank of a reserve officer. So Kisch stayed in the "common" ranks, in the ranks of those who are shouted at, cuffed and kicked.

War: With a pencil stub and a little paper Kisch went into the world war, not as the journalistic fresh and common soldier of the Prague army corps. He wrote down everything he saw. His pencil stub became a weapon, against war.

Civil War: The young anarchist Kisch criticized the Social Democrats from the "left." August, 1914, seemed to show he was right. But 1917 came and Kisch found out there were two sorts of Social Democrats—he saw the red flags over St. Petersburg and Kisch became a Communist.

After the War: In Germany, over the world. His books are his footsteps during these years. Better than any description they tell of the frantic race through time of the mad reporter. Not noted in his books of report-

age is one year he devoted exclusively to one cause: to free Max Holz from prison.

American Eldorado. Battlefield of China. Peace in Central Asia.

And again in Germany. Under the Third Empire. Imprisoned "for safety," confined. The hand that prepared the burning of the Reichstag also signed the warrant for the arrest of Egon Erwin Kisch. But Kisch's report on the dawn of the national "revolution" was the first indictment of the barbarism that has installed itself in the middle of Europe.

Now, as we write, Kisch is in prison again. He is in prison on the fifth continent which he had set out to discover for his readers. The circumstances are well known. The reporter Kisch was refused permission to enter Australia. There was the danger he might speak at the anti-war congress in Sidney. Kisch jumped overboard, broke a leg, was arrested and, brought before the police court, condemned to six months imprisonment as an illiterate and therefore undesirable alien since he could neither read nor write Gaelic. Freed on appeal to a higher court, he was again condemned to three months imprisonment. The logic of the business is not yet clear, but the fact is: Kisch is in prison.

Let us sum up the first 50 years of this life. It was a life lived always in the first fighting ranks. (Perhaps ranks is not the right word here.) If I were ever to write my autobiography, Kisch would say, I should entitle it: *Reminiscences of a Leftwinger.* As left winger the younster played football and as left winger he plied his pen.

Kisch has exposed the contradictions of these times with glaring light, has exposed oppression and wage slavery, has shown all the madness of this century on five continents and the sense of the new life on the sixth.

Kisch is the great reporter-prosecutor of the proletariat. He could be more if he were also the reporter of the struggling proletariat. But this is not a necrologue. And when we take an objective look at these 50 years of the life of our friend we know it is only a view of so many stages. And we await the next, Kisch's highest creative stage.

We are living in a different period. A bloody one. At a—it can be said—great period. We are living through the thirty vear war of the social revolution.

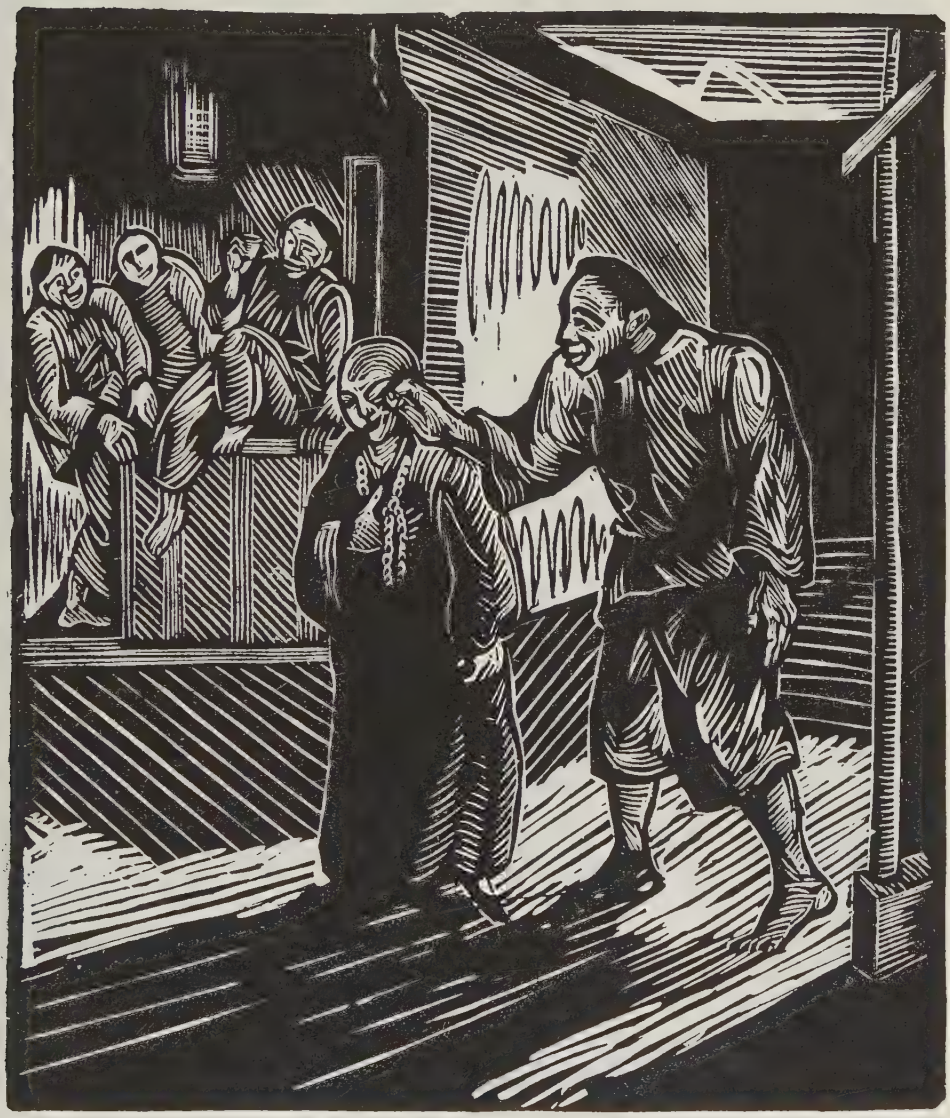
"Write this up!" we call to him.

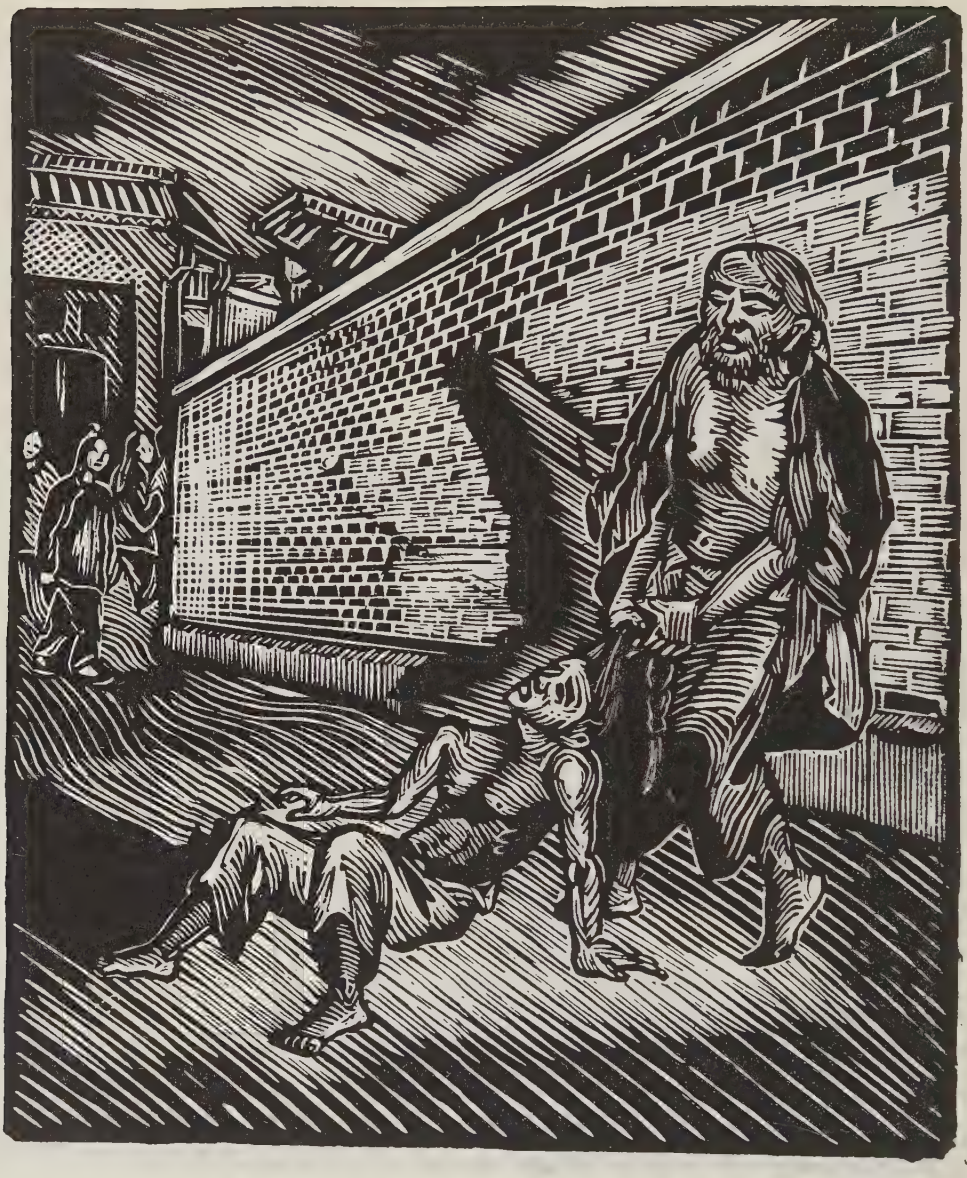
And we know he will.

Translated from the German by S. D. Kogan

TWO CHINESE ILLUSTRATIONS by TIEH KEN

(For *The True Story of Ah Q* by LU SIN)





Seki Sano and Yoshi Hiji kata

Japanese Literature in Military Hands

A Survey of the Latest Developments

"War is the father of creation, the mother of culture!" is the opening phrase of the booklet *Principles of Defense of the Country and Proposals for Strengthening It,* published by the War Ministry on October 2, 1934.

The policies of the Japanese bourgeoisie with respect to art have changed radically. The Japanese War Ministry has taken upon itself the initiative of putting through a number of measures with respect to art and the social and national policies of Japan. True, officially Araki is no longer in power, but that does not mean the cessation of his chauvinist policies. "Arakiism" persists in Japan as before. Anyone who knows the almost unlimited power enjoyed by the "Arakiists" in putting through their military policies will understand how easy it was for them to also dictate the country's policies on art.

"Arakiism" exerted first of all an especially powerful influence on Japanese literature. This found expression primarily in the organization of the "Society of the Fifth" (*Itsukai*) in February, 1932. This society included such well known bourgeois writers as Naoki, who died in 1933, Mikali, Hirayama and the well known illustrators of popular novels, Iwata and Takenaka, as well as others.

Naoki achieved popularity by issuing (before the "Society of the Fifth" had been organized yet) the so-called "Fascist Manifesto," the basis of which was the program of the War Ministry and the Nationalist Party.

In this manifesto Naoki writes:

"We can come to Socialism in Japan only by strengthening absolutism and war."

After a conference with representatives of military circles, at which the question of creating a "new literary trend" arose, members of the "Society of the Fifth" published their program, defining the position of these writers, consisting of the following demands:

1) Abrogation of the Washington agreement. This agreement is a disgrace for our country.

2) Exact instructions to the diplomats who are on the wrong track due to their pacifist ideas originating in the world war.

3) China is a special country, and, therefore, a special policy, not stopping at war, must be applied to it.

4) The coming of the Japanese to the vast unused territory of China is a positive factor both for China and for mankind as a whole.

5) Everything said above is the Eastern Monroe Doctrine and an imperialist doctrine, but this is the only possible policy from the point of view of saving Japan and the existence of China as a neighboring state.

After this, Naoki's novel *Tremors of Japan* appeared.

In this novel is shown a "revolutionist" mobilized before the occupation of Shanghai. His father had lost a leg in the Russo-Japanese war and he is being supported by his daughter, a waitress, the sister of the "revolutionist." On the day of sailing for Shanghai the "revolutionist" manifests his "convictions" by singing a revolutionary song at the pier instead of the national

anthem. As soon as he gets to the "front" in Shanghai, however, he turns into a hundred percent patriot glorifying war. "War," he says, "is the highest moral attainment, uniting people in one national feeling." And his father who has suffered for twenty-five years as a result of war, on getting a letter from this son telling him of the change that has taken place in him, exclaims, "Everyone that is not satisfied with society as it is—go to the front! There you will see everything!"

The essence of the novel is: Japanese nation—awake! War is the highest glory! Japan is intoxicated with its victories and its pride doesn't let it look soberly at war and at the dangers threatening it on all sides. This is what makes us tremble. "Beware of dangers!" Naoki exclaims at the end of his novel.

Naoki believes in dissolving the class war at the time of war, in militarism, devotion to the Mikado, patriotism. Soon after publication this novel was dramatized and staged in Tokyo by the "Sin-Kokugeki" group as the "First Heavy Shell of the Japanese Fascist Theatre."

Naoki wrote not only about modern Japan—he is also the author of a number of historical novels, like *Kusunoki Masasige,* a novel depicting the "wonderful" life, the "heroism" of the 14th century. This novel was a great success not only because it gives a vivid picture of life and manners at that time, when a desperate struggle for the throne of Japan was going on between two cliques and because the bourgeoisie tried to utilize this for the patriotic education of the people (stories about this struggle can be found in any text book)—this novel also gives a picture of a living "hero" of flesh and blood, skillfully making him "close" to the people. Skillfully utilized in the novel for propaganda purposes is also the feudal relationship of parents and children through the sentimental episode of the meeting of Kusunoki Masasige with his son. This is particularly important in the education of children in modern Japan because recently a strong leftward trend is noticeable among the youth, a situation that is very disquieting alike to parents, educators and teachers.

Naoki soon became a "hero" himself or, rather an agent of the military in literature. His last novel, *Kubu Daisi Kubu,* is not merely a religious novel, but a novel of "practical benefit" to religion. Naoki wrote it for the thousandth anniversary of the death of this Bonza, making him the central figure of the novel. He describes the life of Kubu telling of the great benefits he brought the peasantry not only by his prayers but also by his great knowledge of agriculture, thus uniting religion with practical life and science. This novel was published serially in *Asahi,* the largest bourgeois newspaper in Japan, at a time when the peasantry was greatly suffering hunger and poverty

Naoki became the leader among popular novelists and is still very famous The wealthiest bourgeois literary magazine, *Bungai-Sundsiu*, has established a Naoki prize for young authors of popular novels.

Naoki not only organized and guided the "Society of the Fifth" but also tried, with the support of Matsumoto, the ex-chief of the police department, to organize an "Imperial Literary Academy," in other words, a general staff of chauvinist literature; his death interfered with this plan.

Fascist Litterateurs

After Naoki's death, his colleagues succeeded in organizing a "Society of Culture of Japanese Youth" under the leadership of Eidshi Yoshikawa, an active member of the "Society of the Fifth." The newspaper, *Yomiuri,* (well known for its anti-Soviet articles and chauvinist propaganda) carried an item

on November 26, 1934 telling about the organization of this society heading the article "Mr. Yoshikawa, popular writer, heads ranks of patriotic movement."

The "Society of Culture of Japanese Youth" has its own organ, *Sun of Youth*, and intends to issue a book on social subjects as well as to build up a peasant library on the history of the village. The Japanese Minister of the Interior, Goto, has approved these plans of the "Society" and as a sign of approval presented it with the slogan, inscribed in hieroglyphics (which, according to Japanese tradition makes it a work of art), reading: Renascence of the village through independence." In answer to this Yosikawa printed this slogan on towels (the Japanese customarily use towels to tie about their heads when they work, to hold back the hair and perspiration), and distributed them among the members of the "Society." Who is this Yoshikawa? He made his literary debut in 1925. He is a very prolific writer. His collected works, published in 1933 ran to fifteen volumes. Yoshikawa writes only about the past—and that in such a fantastic manner that his novels practically are of a historical detective story character. To the great mortification of the Japanese fascists his books are not always of a distinctly fascist character although some of them, especially those on the subject of the support of the emperor during the reestablishment of the Meidsi dynasty in 1868 have a tremendous influence on the masses of readers and thus serve as a keen instrument in the hands of the military and the fascists of present day Japan. Finally, in 1932, Yoshikawa became an active member of the "Society of the Fifth." He is closely connected with two reactionary literary magazines: *King* and *Hinode* (*Sunrise*). He is quite famous among readers as the author of a great number of reactionary novels written in popular language.

Besides the "Society of the Fifth" and the "Society of Culture of Japanese Youth" there are many other organizations of a similar nature in Japan. There is the "Society of Patriots" (*Sokokukai*) with a membership of about ten thousand,—the "Union of Men Prominent in Art" (*Nihonsiugi-Heidsutsuka-Dumei*)—the "Society of New Literature" (*Sin-Bungaku-Kai*). The "Society of Patriots" unites almost all well known bourgeois writers and journalists and is led by Roikiti Kita, the founder of the newspaper *Nipon* (*Japan*) which is one of the most reactionary nationalist newspapers. This organization is part of the petty bourgeois wing of the reactionary, chauvinist movemen represented by the "Patriotic Labor Party" (*Airoku-Rudu-Tu*). One of the leading spirits in the "Union of Men Prominent in Art" is Riohei Utsida, a well known reactionary, the head of the "Society of the Black Dragon" (*Kokuru-kai*). This last organization has been in existence since 1901 and is one of the most popular nationalist organizations in Japan. The "Union" has departments devoted to literature, movies and the theatre. In its manifesto the "Union" declares: "The Union of Men Prominent in Art struggles through art for the subjection of the entire world to the Great Japanese Empire. In the fields of art and politics we shall conduct a struggle with pen and sword against the international movement in art. Anyone that is not with us is against us! This includes communists, anarchists, socialists and democrats."

But in spite of its declarations the "Union" has not produced a single work of art since its organization.

Other Fascist Literary Blossoms

The "Society of New Literature" was organized in March, 1934. In its program this society declares:

"The ruling class of Japan suppresses and stamps upon all the demands of the masses and stuffs them with decadent bourgeois literature. On the

other hand the bacilli of the anti-Japanese and proletarian multiply and poison the masses. We, members of the Society of New Literature will struggle for the creation of a new Japanese realistic literature, for a great increase in the cultural movement of the Japanese, against all literature that poisons the mind."

The organ of this "Society" is *New Literature.*

At the end of October 1931 the "Kaiso-Sia" publishing house, one of the largest in Japan, began the publication of the works of twelve of the best bourgeois writers, including K. Kikuti, O. Mikami, E. Yoshikawa, K. Sirai, etc. on historical subjects, principally on the restoration of the Meidsi Dynasty (1868). Proving that historical subject matter, promoting feudal ideas, loyalty to the Mikado, etc., are advantageous both for the writers and the Japanese bourgeoisie; this does not, of course, prevent a host of fascist writers turning out numerous novels on modern Japanese life. Yoshida, who is very popular among girl students, housewives, etc., wrote a play in 1932 called *Nice Little Soldier With the Gold Buttons.* In essence it is a song of praise for the Emperor's army. His hero is anxious to become a worthy soldier of the Great Japanese Empire. There is the Russo-Japanese war of 1904-05 but the "hero" is not mobilized. Mortified, he complains: "Are we to guard this little island? Why did we stay home when all have left for the front?" At last he is also mobilized and exclaims happily: "Now I will show them how to fight for one's country!" His superior officer tells him: "I shouted at you, beat you, but it was only because I wanted you to become more quickly a loyal son of the Emperor. My heart beats when I think that tomorrow you go to the front to lay down your life for your country. . . ." And the soldier, just as he wished, dies at the front . . . under a pear tree with the white petals falling on him. A sweet, sentimental scene!

This play was produced by the troupe of the well known actor, Itikawa Ennoske, who once (in 1931) was in sympathy with the revolutionary movement and produced the play *Descendant of Genghiz Khan* adapted from Pudovkin's Soviet film. After the war in Manchuria began Ennoske turned hundred percent patriot.

The military circles of Japan have a whole staff of writers specializing in military novels, short stories, and all sorts of anti-Soviet inventions. Among these are Sinsaku Hirata, Kioske Fukunaga, Tuon Sakuran (a colonel—the founder of military literature at the time of the Russo-Japanese war of 1905 and the author of the well known novel *Cannon Fodder*), Captain Matada—specialist on military films and the main figure in the making of the anti-Soviet picture, *Supreme Will,* Godsio, author of the fantastic novel *He Who Wins Last,* on the aggressiveness of the Red Army of the Soviet Union, etc.

The development of military propaganda literature can be divided into three stages. The first stage was the literature of a frankly military propaganda nature which appeared soon after the Manchurian war. The task for this literature was primarily to justify in the name of the "peaceful intentions" of Japan. Thus 1932 was the year of literature glorifying the war which aimed to "bring peace" to the Far East.

But sensing that the people were tired of war, the Japanese bourgeoisie were compelled to change their policies in art as in other spheres of culture and in economics .The slogan arose: "Manchuria is a garden of Eden. Japan must help Manchukuo in peaceful construction!"

And again all prominent men in art were mobilized in order to win back the confidence of the people. Since the economic and particularly the agrarian crisis did not abate but grew deeper daily, this stage could not last long.

The third stage was one of propaganda for militarism under the slogans "For a United Greater Asia," "For a Greater Japan," "For Defense of the Fatherland," "For the Emperor!" "Get Ready for the National Catastrophe of 1935-36!" And again a campaign for frankly military propaganda began, but on a much larger scale than in 1931-1932. Productions like the film *Supreme Will, Japan Moves North* are typical for this stage. This tendency is strengthened alongside Japan's foreign policy in leaving the League of Nations, the naval agreement, etc.

It is characteristic that even such a writer as Iwata, who has always been strongly influenced by modern French literature, particularly of the sentimental novel of a purely individualistic character, has recently written a play *East Belongs to East* on the subject of race conflict between an Eastern husband and his foreign wife leading to divorce. The main argument of the play is race purity and sounds very much like the fascist policies of present day Germany.

More in the Same Boat

We have already shown how the "Asakiites" utilized popular mass literature for their own purposes. But this movement also embraced so-called fine literature. Mosumi Fudsii has written a number of novels and plays about Manchukuo in which he praises this new government to the skies. He adopts the point of view of the Nitiren religion. Nitiren was a well known, energetic bonza who lived in the 13th century. His religion is considered most militant and has a defense of country tinge. It is perfectly natural, therefore, for this religion to be revived in present day Japan. The well known knight errant of humanist literature in Japan, Musiakodsi, a utopian and imitator of Tolstoi, descended from an aristocratic family, tried to organize a group of utopians into a "new" Japanese village, had no success in that and, together with his disciple Kurato, very popular some fifteen years ago and enjoying then great authority among the youth of the country on account of his play *The Buddhist Priest and His Disciples,* both bowed to the god of war and were swept along by the wave of chauvinism.

Musiakodsi has written a novel, *Nitiren,* tendaciously chauvinistic, in which he tells how Nitiren struggled by means of religion to save his country during the first invasion of it by foreigners. Another novel of Musiakodsi's, *Ninomia Sontokii,* tells of the life story of a village boy at the time of Tokugawa (18th-19th centuries). Musiakodsi tells how this Japanese Lomonosov succeeded in being of great assistance to the peasantry because of his tremendous diligence. The great significance of such novels, for present day Japan, cannot be ignored, as *Ninomia Sontokii* was read by every peasant and its teachings are believed and emulation of the life shown is being attempted to this very day.

His disciple Kurato, wrote in a no less patriotic vein. After years of inactivity he recently began writing again, producing the novel *Girl of Our Country.* The novel is of student life, showing principally the life of the girl students in present day Japan. Pointing out a "decline" of Marxist tendencies in favor of fascism, the author "proves" that the Japanese girl's heart can only be captured now by a gallant officer and neither the rich, good-looking bourgeois nor the obstreperous and indelicate communists have a chance. Defending the unsuccessful coup of May 15, 1932 as a putsh of Japanese women, the author makes one of the ring-leaders of the conspiracy the lover of one of the girls and tries to direct the reader's sympathies to him. At the

same time he paints the communists as beasts and enemies of the human race. A true fascist writer.

There are two trends in modern Japanese literature. One—the so-called "Renaissance" of literature, the foundation of which was laid by the well known writer, Fusao Hayashi, who stands on the extreme right wing of revolutionary literature. Leftist tendencies prevailed in the revolutionary literary movement in 1932, a sort of sectarian "revaluation of literary policies." Hayashi's profound "renaissance" of literature was practically a mechanical reaction to these "infantile diseases" of the revolutionary literary movement which were a great hindrance to the building up of a really fine revolutionary literature. Hayashi's proposal was supported by a group of writers who could not resist the rising wave of "popular stories." Under cover of the slogan "for a renaissance of literature" these writers began a study of bourgeois realism. Almost all were unanimous for a "return to Balzac!," "return to Dostoyevski!" These slogans, however, have not been realized in Japanese literature. At a period of storm and stress of Japanese literature this movement proved impotent. On the whole it was a protest movement against the rise of fascism in literature on one side and against the repressions directed against liberal tendencies in literature on the other.

The organization of the "Union of Free Science and Engineering" which is closely connected with the revolutionary and cultural movements in Japan, and its success in organizing widespread protest against the reactionary policies of the Japanese universities and the fascist regime in Japan, is to be explained by the fact that broad sections of the anti-fascist intelligentsia joined the ranks of this Union.

The School of Pessimism

Another tendency in present day Japanese literature is known as that of "literary unrest." A number of the essays in literary criticism of L. Shestov have been translated into Japanese recently. "Hope is gone forever but we have to live. There is a whole life before us. Even if you want to die—you can't."

This pessimism of Shestov's, the foundation for a philosophy of tragedy, has found a strong response among several groups of writers in Japan who consider that social conditions at present have reached an impasse. They engage in self analysis, dig into their own souls and run to scepticism. This is the origin of the "literature of unrest" created by the war and fascism.

An example of such "literature of unrest" is the novel *Escutcheon* by the well known contemporary Japanese writer Riiti Yokomitsu published during the summer of 1934.

It is the story of a young inventor, scion of an impoverished ancient family. It is a phantastic story recalling *Don Quixote*. He is always thinking about the welfare of the people and therefore trying to invent something useful. He is anti-capitalistically disposed and yet the family escutcheon is his inspiration.

The author shows a number of negative features of modern society, sees no way out of this, and simply declares that "such a great thing as justice one can only find in a society which is not dependent on private property." And further: "Be free. Why talk about justice when you are unable to free even your spirit? Freedom—that is great heartedness and consideration of one's feelings, emotions, ideas." His scepticism is so profound that it cannot be covered up by such sophisms.

One bourgeois critic ventures the opinion that these writers will find their way out in fascism and not in revolutionary literature. And it is perfectly

natural for the bourgeoisie to utilize these writers for their own purposes. In the spring of 1934 Matsumoto, chief of police and a collaborator of Naoki in organizing the Imperial Academy called a conference to which were invited such prominent writers as Tuson Simasaki, Susei Tokuda, Hakutii Masamuna, Kan Kikuti, Masao Kume, Uusao Yamamoto, Riiti Yokimitsu, Otokiti Mikami, Eidsi Yoshikawa (the last two, members of the "Society of the Fifth") and others. Present at this conference was also the chief of the Bureau of Social Education of the Ministry of Education. At this conference it was decided to assign a sum of 20,000 yen yearly for the purpose of stimulating the development of "pure" Japanese literature, the money to be distributed in prizes for the best books by young writers.

Another such attempt to "attract" writers was made in the fall of 1934 in the form of a mass meeting devoted to the memory of great dead writers since the restoration of the Meidsi in 1868. Even bourgeois papers got letters of protest against the attitude of the organizers of this meeting to such a great writer as Takidji Kobayashi who was not included in the list for the reasons: first—because he was a proletarian writer, second—he did not die a natural death (rather—he fell a victim to the terror of the Tokyo police).

A few months later Matsumoto gave an interview to the correspondent of one of the largest newspapers in Tokyo in which he declared that the ideal he is aiming at is the creation of a "Fifth International" whose center is to be in Tokyo and not in Moscow, and its problem is to be the struggle for the internationalization of the Japanese spirit and Japanism on a world scale). He considers this most important for the fate of mankind. Of course, it is also to struggle against the Third International. Matsumoto thinks on a world scale!

But not all representatives of the Japanese bourgeoisie and soldiery use Matsumoto's methods. They generally act according to a well considered and well laid plan, as for instance, their policy to the press.

In addition to the severest repression and the strictest censorship of revolutionary literature, arrests and imprisonment of revolutionary writers and artists—even such magazines as *Kaiso* and *Tu-kuron* in which articles of a liberal nature, or the work of a revolutionary writer sometimes appear, bearing such traces of censorship that it is often hard to discover what the author wanted to say at all—even such magazines are absolutely barred from factory, school, or public library.

If anyone in a village should happen to ask for these magazines his name is immediately entered by the police into the black list of "revolutionists."

Does this mean that all of Japan takes only to reactionary literature? By no means! The social and economic conditions of the toiling masses in Japan are so difficult that they do not easily swallow these rosy and tinted descriptions of the "wonderful" life of man. And these conditions of the toilers are getting worse continually, which not only does not make it easy for the war lords to struggle for a way out of the crisis by means of a war, but on the contrary, serves to strengthen the roots of the revolutionary hopes of the masses. This finds its expression in the revolutionary literature of Japan which has already a firm foundation in the present, and a glorious future.

Richard Wright

Ah Feels It In Mah Bones

Mister, things ain't never been all stirred up this way befo'!
It ain't never been that Ah couldn't place a stake.
Now everything's done changed, an' ain't nobody got no go,
An' all the folks talkin' 'bout something's goin' to break.
An' by Gawd Ah b'lieves it—
Ah feels it in mah bones!

Yes, sir! Ah sho thought for awhile things was goin' to pick up.
Ah was plannin' on winnin' rolls of yellow dough
An' long-lopin' mah old proud sweet stuff like a greyhound pup!
But shucks, seems like them days just ain't comin' no mo'!
The whole world just done changed—
Ah feels it in mah bones!

Look, here! It's done got so bad Ah can't even beg a dime,
An' mah bread-basket's a-swearin' mah throat's been cut!
Ah's done got as naked as a jaybird in whistlin' time
Tryin' to make mah old rounds on a empty gut!
Ah'm's got to make a change—
Ah feels it in mah bones!

Naw, Sir! Ah ain't a-worryin' no mo' 'bout mah brownskin gal!
Done laid mah razor down an' told mah spotted boys good-bye!
(An' even mah good luck-piece don't seem to work so well.)
Ah'm's ready—mah sail's set for whatever wind's in the sky!
An' brother, there's something a-comin'—
Ah feels it in mah bones!

Stalin speaks to the students of the Military Academy

S. Rasumovskaya

Sergei Gerasimov

An Estimate of a Leading Soviet Artist

Sergei Gerasimov holds an equally important position in both Soviet painting and the graphic arts. He is a great painter and fine draftsman. He works in water colors, oils and lithographs. He is a genuine artist, strict in his requirements to himself and to his art, consistent in his creative method. An exceedingly serious, profound craftsman, he is at the same time a very modest man, never making any noise about himself or his work. He works persistently on the solution of various art problems which life today places before the artist.

Sergei Gerasimov is one of a number of leading Soviet artists who have critically taken over and adapted what was best and most valuable in the artistic heritage of West-European and Russian art. With this artistic culture he approached Soviet themes, always aiming at a high craftsmanship.

He is one of our artists who, having begun to work in pre-revolutionary Russia, did not, upon stepping over the border of October, have to go through the difficult and tormenting experience of breaking with their old philosophy, shaking off the stultifying tradition of bourgeois art and culture.

From Village to Art School

A childhood amid working class surroundings (he was born in 1885 in the family of an artisan in leather) on the edge of provincial Mojaisk, a preliminary education at the village school and direct contact with the village and firm peasant traditions and order in the family—these were the cornerstones in forming the ideology and world philosophy of the future artist.

After graduating from the city school in 1901, Gerasimov left for Moscow. The profession of an artist, of which he dreamed since childhood, seemed beyond his reach. By chance, however, and without preparation, he entered the Stroganov School where he studied until 1906. Then he entered the School of Painting, Sculpture and Architecture. He graduated from this school in 1912.

This began his first independent period of work, the period of "becoming," of seeking themes, forms of expression, his first exhibitions. He exhibited as early as 1906, at the water color exhibitions of the Leonardo de Vinci Society. Gerasimov began with landscape, sketching from life, still life. He went the usual way of Russian pre-revolutionary artists, beginning at the line of least resistance—abstract, "apolitical" art. "Dawn," "City at Night," "Winter Night," "Girl With Flowers." But even then the artist was drawn from "lyricism" to more profound and complex thematic content. The inclinations and ideas of the young artist were definitely opposed to the "world of art" with its estheticism, styli-

October, 1917

zation, cult of subtleties of form and pessimistic, decadent moods.

The artist's healthy instinct, the clinging, firm, impressions of the social surroundings of his childhood and youth, urged him towards live observation, to virile fixation of the surrounding world. On the whole, for him this was a period of searching for the "picturesque," composition, form, color. A fascination for V. Serov at this period (later to reject him) resulted in a somewhat "picturesque" diffuseness of form and color splashes. At this time Gerasimov was working in water color exclusively. But his peculiar water color style, solid and thick, inevitably led to oils.

The war temporarily distracted the artist from his work. During the war he made only a few sketches and painted some small studies. The war played a great role however, in the further development of the artist. It compelled him to seriously and profoundly review and evaluate social relations with the result that his own social views and inclinations came out more clearly and firmly, determining the basic theme of his work: the peasantry, the village.

The Soviet Artist

Demobilized after the October Revolution, the artist at first selected a very modest field of action. He returned to pedagogy at the school attached to the Sytin typographical shops, reorganized it, together with a group of other artists (M. Rodionov, N. Chernyshev, M. Dobrov, A. Yakimchenko), and in 1919 the school became the "State School of Printing and Art of the Commissariat of Education." Here Sergei Gerasimov first took up lithography.

It must be said that drawing and lithography were at this period of more significance to Gerasimov than painting. He always used drawing to register direct observation and to fix surroundings. Here also the artist began to exercise social selection consciously and with conviction. He sketched workers, artisans, peasants. In these drawings, with one or two figures the artist sought composition, strength of form, correct structure of the human forms, characteristics of gesture, movement. His sketches of this period were strictly line drawings. Lines define the form clearly, here and there a dab of shading brought out volume. But gradually his manner of drawing changed, the line grew broader, stronger, the shading began to play a larger role.

Having found "his" subject in Soviet life, the artist did not tackle it at once in painting. He approached it by long and painstaking preparation, never forgetting the inseparableness of form and content, always intent on high perfection in painting. His painting at this time one could call a sort of closed laboratory experimentation.

The period from 1922 to 1924 was to Gerasimov one of strengthening positions achieved, researches for further ways of

Death of a Siberian Partisan

building up his own realistic artistic concepts.

A typical example is his *Self Portrait.* There is still a great deal of the previous solidity of form. For example, the sculpturally strong face, the folds in the shirt. But the sharpness of the modelling is gone, together with the graphic dryness of worked out detail. The immobile local color is missing, it is no longer statically welded with the form and its outline. There is no longer the previous imperviable solidity and heaviness. Colors gently begin to blend. The artist is seen groping for integral color composition. Sergei Gerasimov is all there in this portrait of himself, serious, self contained, collected. A calm, simple, sure pose, work clothes. The background is a room in a village house.

The artist approached the theme of the village more profoundly. He made numerous studies of peasants in a masterly way. The subject was "his own." His types were strikingly chosen. Here we have all of the changing Soviet village. These are no longer the "squalid mujiks" of pre-revolutionary Russia whom the artist had dressed according to his own class sympathies—now in dirty rags, now in bright theatrical costumes. Gerasimov took them as they really were. He studied the new peasant of the Soviet village; the peasant who, changing himself, was also changing the village.

A Trip Abroad

In 1925 Gerasimov went abroad—to Italy, Greece, Turkey. His short trip of about six weeks, practically made it only a museum excursion. There was too much for him to see in the field of art in such a short time. The artist wisely utilized his time not to work but to see as much as possible. He did bring back some sketches of Rome, Venice, Florence, the Acropolis, Constantinople; and it is to be regretted he has not found the time to work on these.

But he also brought home from this journey a tremendous store of artistic impressions of old masters, monumental frescoes, the heritage of antiquity in Italy and Greece, the old Italians, especially Titan, Michael Angelo, the Spanish Velasquez and the Dutch masters with their great Rembrandt. This was a treasure for the artist.

It also posed a problem as how to utilize this rich heritage. He was faced now with two new problems to work out—the problem of large, monumental art, and the problem of perspective and light color values in painting.

Gerasimov continued to work seriously on types. A great variety appears—the kulak, worker, Komsomol, the old fellow, etc. This accumulated experience in social and live charaters, and his new achievements in form brought him to complex thematic composition.

Fishermen on the Volkhov River

His first work of this type was *Village Soviet* (at the Voronezh Museum). The artist here shows a moment of debate. The three figures on the left are very good—the soldier from the front, the Party man and the Komsomol. The characteristics of the figure on the right, of the chairman, are not clearly defined. This is his first space composition built on light color values. The foreground is marked by the bright splashes of two figures, then two dark stains—the leather coat and the vest—and further, the figures are lost in the semi-darkness of the room. All color values are subdued to the predominating brownish-golden tone of the walls.

Another one of his best canvases, *Tanners* (Lanung Collection, Copenhagen) was painted during the same year. The artist prepared carefully for this painting making numerous sketches and studying work conditions. A grey, somber, wet basement. Light comes from a window. Leather is being extracted from a vat in the floor. Heavy, weary figures, back bent in customary labor—a picture of hard, exhausting labor. The lighting is subtle and complex. The light modulations are beautiful. Coming through the window the light seems to concentrate, brilliantly lighting up the central figure and dissipates again in the far corners where figures and objects melt in space and tone. In the treatment of the problem of complex lighting the attentive and close study of the great craftmanship of Rembrandt can be seen. The gamut of color is also subdued to the single but more complex tonality. Bluish-brown and bluish-grey merge with a silvery grey-green tone. Everything is diluted with white—this is the white lime dust that covers everything with a light coat.

For the tenth anniverasry of the October Revolution, Gerasimov painted the large canvas *Communists Come to the Village* (Tretyakov Gallery) ordered by the Sovnarkom. This is a very complex painting with many figures in the composition and social characterization of the types. It consists of two parts: on the left the group of Communists, together, compact, poured in one solid heavy splash of color. Three excellent characters. At the center, slightly to left—the figure of the Communist in the leather coat, speaking to the gathering. In the foreground the dark figure of the Red Army man with his back to us—a strong, calm figure, and alongside, the young woman Komsomol, strong, audacious. Opposite this group the crowd of peasants. It is a difficult task to show the various social contradictions of the class struggle in the village. The soldier from the front in the foreground one can see has gained some political education, is the first to respond to the call of the Communists; the poor peasant who meets the arrival joyously; the younger people listening attentively to the speech; then, a number of still distrustful and doubting persons, the good-natured old patriarch, frightened faces of women, and finally the keen sinister faces of the kulaks.

The artist has conveyed excellently the mutual influence of the two groups, the constant attraction and repulsion, has caught

the mood, the relationship. His types are here even more concrete, keener, even more "point blank" than in his previous work. The modulated color gamut conveys the variegated greyness of the everyday village crowd. True, in his anxiety to concretize color, the artist has weakened the tone. This subdues the sharp expression of action. The painting after all is more of a trial sketch than a final work. But even so the artist has shown his ability to generalize. With simple laconic means expressive characteristics of face and movement are rendered.

In addition to light and tone, the artist devotes a great deal of attention to color. He gradually breaks loose from the prison of the dark gamut of the old masters forging towards his own bright color scheme.

Artist and Revolutionary

A composition which practically sums up all the artist's researches of this period is *Fishermen on the Volkhov* (Tretyakov Gallery). He worked long and hard on this painting during three years (1929-1931). The artist made many sketches for it and studies from nature. In color and light effects, it is the most complex of Gerasimov's paintings. For the simple scene of fishermen lunching on a barge he chose a most difficult problem of painting against the the transition to evening. The painting is light at a difficult time of day for lighting, built on great space depth solved by the interrelation of composition and color lighting.

In 1929 Gerasimov traveled a great deal. His first trip to Baku, resulted in many drawings and several oil sketches. In 1931 he went to Arkhangelsk. This was a particularly interesting journey for him. Gerasimov had always been attracted to the North with its peculiar types, natural conditions, life. This opened up entirely new and rich painting possibilities for the artist: a multitude of studies, thematic and simple landscape—processes of timber workings, lumber operations, floating lumber, loading, stacking. The large canvas *Lumber Works* (at the Permanent Construction Exhibition) was the result of this trip. His last trip in 1933 was to the White Sea-Baltic Canal. He sketched the canal, fisher-kolkhozes, landscapes. Until now the only large canvas resulting from this trip is *The White Sea-Baltic Canal.*

The artist found the painting of *October* a difficult task. He gathered material for a long time, studied it at the Museum of the Revolution. The types were born of photographs of participants of the October battles, from faces the artist thought characteristic. The painting cannot be considered a finished solution of this important subject. However, with all its faults *October* was another achievement for the artist.

In the large panel for the VZIK School at the Kremlin, the artist returned to the subject that always interested him, the group portrait. This one pictures a talk of Stalin with the military students. The difficult compositional problem was solved rather well. Somewhat towards the left, is the figure of Stalin. A large group of students on the right. Some figures in the foreground with their backs to us lend movement to the composition. Color is put on in large, stable planes. The background is light, grey-blue-pistachio. The color of khaki dominates in the coats of the students. All included, despite the portraiture of individual figures drawn from life, this canvas is done in the manner of a monumental fresco.

The latest thematic composition, painted for the XV Anniversary of the Red Army, *Partisan Oath,* is the most successful of all his revolutionary subjects. Gerasimov approached this subject with his usual seriousness. He came in contact with partisan societies and direct participants of the Siberian partisan movements.

S. Gerasimov is a full grown artist, with an integral world philosophy, a serious and attentive approach to surrounding life, an individual and personal manner of artistic expression. It is a rare artist who does not make occasional unnecessary side steps and experiments. By consistent experiments and researches in form, composition, color, and manner he has grown as an artist.

S. Gerasimov draws only from concrete reality for the content of his art, endeavoring to express it in all its originality and movement. Accepting Soviet ideology from the very first days of the Revolution he keeps in step with contemporaneity and takes part in it actively. This is reflected in all his work.

Next Issue: Paintings of the Soviet Artist F. BOGOROTSKI

Trude Richter

Fascism and Language

"Language is the proximate reality of thought."
(Marx, Deutsche Ideologie)

Investigating the language trends of fascism is as illuminating as it is important. Illuminating, because the contradictory ideologies of the Nazis find their formal precipitate in language. Important because the German language is one of the cultural values that the victorious proletariat will inherit, or has already inherited. The German language,—the language of Goethe, Hegel, and Heine, and above all, the language in which *Capital* and *The Communist Manifesto* were written—is a highly developed cultural instrument, whose maintenance, enrichment, or decay is closely related to general cultural and political conditions.

To begin with, profound changes in the basic structure of a language: phonetic as well as etymological "linguistic revolutions," can occur only as a sequel to social revolutions. The rise of feudalism around the year 1200 and the rise of the bourgeoisie in the sixteenth to the eighteenth centuries were accompanied by tremendous linquistic changes, even though the latter do not always reach full maturity, as was the case in Germany. With the consolidation of new ruling class, a thoroughly refurnished language comes to the fore, reflecting the advance in the economic as well as the cultural field. Since fascism leaves capitalist class relationships untouched, and since it represents merely the final stage of declining bourgeois class rule, its linguistic consequences are confined to the promotion or suppression of already existent trends in style.

The language of imperialist Germany is a far from homogenous formation, corresponding to the complicated social structure of the country. Feudal reaction was never completely silenced in Germany; neither the Junker nor his petty bourgeois counterpart, the guild craftsman, vanished from the sociological scene. On the other hand, a powerful imperialist bourgeoisie and a strong proletariat grew into decisive political factors as the nineteenth century drew to a close. An army of millions of officials and office workers, the widely ramified stratum of small investors, arose for the first time in the cities, while peasant landed property, both rich and poor, persisted in various areas.

No less multicolored is the confusion of various ideologies, since numerous half-reactionary or wholly reactionary concepts have survived alongside progressive bourgeois thought and the revolutionary proletarian *Weltanschauung.* Style and language trends also differ, according to the differences in ideals and educational traditions of the several classes and sections of the population. It was from this abundant reservoir that the national socialists drew their language "program." Depending upon the immediate end in view, one tendency or another is diverted into the channel of the fascist movement. However boundless its eclecticism, its goal has always been unchanging: barbaric reaction.

"National Rejuvenation"

This is the official slogan of fascist language policy. As in most other fields, national socialism is here, too, merely continuing what reactionary bourgeois circles began long ago. Adolf Bartels, the senile literary pope of the Nazis, embodies in his aged person the adoption of the old Nationalist language aims. He and his ilk have been combatting every borrowed word; what is more, they want to purify the German language of "destructive intellectualism" in which they always sniff the Marxist, and usually, the Jewish element. They preach the style of the "clod," i.e. the return to a primitive peasant language. They are as little interested in the living, realist peasant language as in the actual interests of the peasants. For behind these purist demands there are concealed the reactionary anti-capitalist desires of the German Junkers, who long for the vanished blessings of feudalism.

It is characteristic of the intellectual and political degeneracy of the German petty bourgeoisie that it has always been ready to make propaganda for feudal ideologies. The fight against the enlightened intelligentsia of the big cities—left bourgeois as well as proletarian—was romantically clothed as a fight against "intellectualism and asphalt literature," while the backward, miserable existence of the impoverished small peasants and farm laborers was hypocritically glorified in bombastic,

primitive language. These tendencies, more than a century old, have come to life again in the national socialist "blood mysticism" and "contact with the soil." Today they are to serve as propaganda among the thousands of unemployed, who are compelled to work for the big agrarians for a plate of soup; in addition, they are to act as stupefying drugs for all the discontented and enlightened among the propertyless classes.

When the big bourgeoisie also demands this pure German language today through its political organs, the fascists, it champions its own interests, of course. It is interested in replacing internationalism within the proletariat by reactionary, chauvinist nationalism, which makes patient cannon-fodder out of revolutionary class fighters. It wants to prepare the workers' brains in such a way that they are no longer equal to Marxist concepts, so that Marxism becomes simply "inconceivable." The weapon employed for this purpose is the systematic use of a definitely non-conceptual, primitive language. This is quite frankly proclaimed by the leader of the fascist writers, Hans Freidrich Blunck, President of the Reich Chamber of Literature. He writes as follows in his programmatic article "The Right of the German Language" (*Voelkischer Beobachter,* Sept. 24, 1934):

"During the past few decades an effort has been made to establish equal rights in language usage by stuffing the so-called uneducated with borrowed words and foreign concepts [this is the stumbling-block!—T.R.], the belief that this meant elevating them. The endeavor failed. In the future we shall have to follow the other path, and find our way back to pure German word formations intelligible to everyone, which are to aid, and can decisively aid in *preventing the renewed production of a proletariat in later generations.*"

What he means is the new formation of a class-conscious proletariat. The class of the exploited "in itself" remains; but it should not be raised to the status of a class "for itself." Blunck also reveals the roads that are to lead to this goal:

"In order to form new words, easily understandable and intelligible, we shall delve more boldly than before into the boundless wealth of German root-words. We shall preserve fortunate new word formations in a new German Language Office, and insist that they be used . . . We shall not confine ourselves to clearing out the scientists' gibberish, but shall go after everyday matters as well." The conclusion of the article glorifies this obviously reactionary-dictatorial language policy in the following characteristic sentence: "Language and word, whose roots have flowed to us from four or five *Ewen,* must be kept pure and holy by us!"

This sentence is typical of the "nationally renewed" language, both in the impossible metaphor of the roots that "flow" and in the arbitrarily employed word *Ewen,* obsolete for the past 400 years, as well as in the illogical juxtaposition of "language and word." (Logically, it should read: sentence structure and word.) It is this very inability to write a precise German that has gained for Blunck, formerly a quite unnoticed poetaster, his present high post. In *one* respect that bold-face concluding slogan of his is really a language masterpiece: it has made the social, class background of its theme vanish completely, impressing the naive reader by a robust phrase.

Griese, Billinger, and all the other "countryside poets" write this kind of deliberately primitive German. The content of their writing is directly and consciously aimed against everything progressive, against Marxism, above all, of course. Since it is impossible to get anywhere in this respect by subtle logical argumentation—it might even stimulate the reader to do some thinking of his own—these writers resort to a purposely clumsy, meagre language, try to paste up the cracks in their logical structure with this formless mass.

Let us take as an example *Rosse (Horses),* a drama by Billinger, one of the plays produced most often during the past year. The title itself is an extinct word. It too demonstrates the spuriousness of the "folk" language. In this fascist piece of hack work, the fact of mass unemployment is expressed thus: "My three sons're back home again, the factory hasn't any use for them; the machine's already eaten up all the work in town."

The language is neither pure German nor a dialect, least of all the language of a rich peasant with a well-stocked stable of horses, whose sons don't have to go to work in a factory in town at all! The ancient threadbare argument against technology cannot stand any sensible dialogue—let's not start any debates!—that is why the complicated capitalist economic system is portrayed by the primitive image of a gluttonous cow. On this language level discussion is indeed impossible! Another reason for this speciously simple language is the hypocrisy of anti-technicism. Whereas in the play the "horse" is pictured as a holy thing in contrast to the devilish tractor, the parvenu postaster does not think of giving up his elegant auto. The big agrarians and the bourgeoisie keep on introducing the new machines wherever it increases their profits.

The prescribed purification of the lang-

uage is being carried out with extreme rigor in the schools, editorial offices, and government institutions. It is primarily aimed against words borrowed from other languages. This fight against the borrowed word has direct economic causes, in addition to the political ones. Every borrowed word that really penetrates into popular usage is tangible evidence of the intensive, fruitful contact of the country with other highly civilized peoples. These expressions thus taken over do not remain linguistic foreign bodies for a long time. They fuse with the language of the people absorbing them to the extent that the things they denote really become part of the daily life of the mass of the population. The greatest example of this role of borrowed words as a manifestation of mass cultural progress is offered by the Soviet Union. If hundreds of English, German and other expressions are enriching the language of the Russian workers and peasants today, it simply means that the victorious proletariat has taken over the latest, highest achievements of technology, science, and a cultural standard of living from other peoples and is using them in socialist construction to raise the cultural level of the whole working population. Fascism, on the other hand, systematically *impairs* the living standard of the proletarians, peasants, and petty bourgeoisie. For in the epoch of the general crisis the German capitalists, as well as the backward landed proprietors, can sell their goods in the domestic market at profitable prices only if they close their borders to cheaper foreign products. This monopoly policy not only raises the cost of living for the masses; it also lowers their living standard directly. Inferior domestic substitutes are used in place of the good imported raw materials. There is no longer any technical or scientific progress that helps the masses in any way. (At most, advances in fields that are aimed against the masses: the armaments industry, etc.) That is why there is no real incentive in fascist Germany for enriching the language with new, borrowed expressions. This economic state of affairs also plays a part in the demand for radical cultural autarcy, as is in combatting the use of foreign words.

"Steely Romanticism"

National traits are by no means the sole linguistic register played on by national socialism. It plays other tunes too, depending upon the given situation and the class composition of its listeners and readers. Let us examine, for instance, the following poem from the standpoint of its language type:

SWORDS

By Peter Hagen

[From the play *Lichtnacht der Wende (Light Night of Change)*]

Swords sing in the night
Thrown in a clashing heap
Sparkling with flashing splendor
Songs of imperious might.

Here we stand under proud flesh
Healing wounds of the fray
Hurling the swords on high
Steely victory choir.

Slender as flames of fire
Is the sheen of our blades
Sparks over country asleep
Flash like awakening lightning.

Swords sing in the night
Steel is—cruel and sublime—
Always as weapon and shield
Answer to insolent greed.

Which we under the proudflesh
Healing wounds of the fight
Throw in a clashing heap
Swords sing in the night.

Here the primitive language is deliberately avoided. Sentence structure and choice of words are extremely affected, even new words are coined, such as *Geglitz* (rendered as sheen, stanza 3). The purpose of the form is disclosed only through the content: the swords praised in the poem serve of course in 1934 merely as a symbol of modern military technique, (tanks, gas bombs, etc.). In other words, the poet glorifies the rearmament of present-day Germany. But not by protraying it realistically! On the contrary, an abstraction is made of everything concrete: all spatial, temporal, and specific circumstances are left out. Most important of all, not a syllable mentions the social basis and function of these armaments. What remains is a wholly isolated, wholly general concept, inconceivable in point of time and void of content: the weapon is praised—the "pure phenomenon" of steel is celebrated. But "there are no 'pure' phenomena, and there can be none, either in nature or in society" (Lenin, "Collapse of the Second International," *Collected Works*, Vol. XVIII, P. 300). Such abstractions, hostile to reality, pale and void of content, can never furnish the meaningful structure for a poem, for the latter is bound up with the portrayal of some sequence of images or thoughts, the reproduction of concrete definitions and connections. That is why stanzas or lines can be shifted about at will in the poem we have taken as an ex-

ample without the change being noticeable—the poem's chief artistic feature is its extreme poverty of content.

For this nothingness to appear as a grandiloquent something, aye, as "eternal truth," it must be clothed in a language that is also as far removed as possible from the tangibility of objective reality both in imagery and choice of words. Its tinny pathos and its affected language thus arise as the formal counterpart of its anti-realist content.

We should not have discussed this pitiable hack work in such detail if it were not characteristic of the fascist endeavors to revive expressionism in style. All the poem's features of form and content resemble the expressionist. Around 1920 the perplexed petty-bourgeois intelligentsia tried to find a way out of the chaos of war, revolution, and inflation (impenetrable for them) by tearing the phenomena of social life out of their casual concrete relationship, and proclaiming the meaningless abstraction thus obtained as the "pure essence" of things. Doing this, they were necessarily compelled to use unrelated hysterical outcries, exaggerations, choppy sentences and cramped pathos.

The creative method of expressionism and its language tendencies offer much that is attractive to the fascist esthetes. "Expressionism had healthy roots," was Goebbels' praise; he set it up as a model of a genuine trend in style. The very thing that characterizes expressionism as a symptom of the imperialist bourgeoisie's decay—its irrationalism, its rejection of casuality, its pronounced anti-realism—all that is praised by the Nazis as great art, since it serves as a pattern for their own aims in art: the absolute avoidance of any portrayal of social reality.

Only in this way can fascist themes be worked into "sublime works of art." The heroic "attitude" that the Nazis demand of their followers, the "roaring enthusiasm" for death as cannon-fodder, would reveal its true character at once if it were pictured in a concrete, realistic language, i.e. in its social context. Obfuscation and warlike ecstasy are produced rather by a cramped, pathetic speech, or as Goebbels phrases it: by "steely romanticism." Moreover, the continuation of certain expressionist language trends is the only cultural bait that the Nazis can offer the educated bourgeoisie. Such "sublime works of art" are the highest formal achievements of which fascist literature is capable.

"The Standard-Bearers of the German Revolution!"

Hitler would never have gotten his mass following among the peasant and the petty bourgeoisie, which helped him to power, if he had not stupified the masses with his unscrupulous agitation. This was done deliberately and methodically. With all their contempt of the "spiritless mass," the fascists knew how to pose as the friends of the exploited and oppressed. With cynical frankness, Goebbels subsequently disclosed the tricks that helped him and his ilk into the saddle. His propaganda did *not* try to convince the masses, but to "sweep over them like a fluid, to which everyone finally falls victim whether he wants to or not" (*Angriff*, May 9, 1933). The truth—for Marxism the chief argument—plays no part at all here. Lies, slander, betrayal, swindle—all of them are sanctified by success:

"It is just as naive to reject a certain kind of propaganda because of its methods. Propaganda is not an end in itself; it is merely a means to an end. If it attains its goal, it is good. If it dosen't attain its goal, it is bad. *How* it attains its goal is immaterial...for propaganda is a matter of the possibility of success" (Goebbels in the *Angriff*, May 9, 1933).

What is the language of these clever deceivers of the people, when they court the favor of millions? The answer is easy enough: *plain* speech for the plain man! The "plain man of the people," this principal addressee of fascist demagogy, is the impoverished artisan, peasant, small tradesman. The Nazis use his language and his limited reactionary views in their mass speeches. In terse, brusque sentences the most meaningless statements are proclaimed as if they were unshakeable natural laws: "Woman belongs in the home! The peasant is the vital source of the Nordic race! The Jew is to blame for everything! Marxists are subhumans!" This canon of Nazi wisdom is repeated untiringly until the brain reproduces it in sleep, like the Bible sayings that are drilled into children. That is how "faith" is bred.

Simplicity is aided by imagery. The untrained person does not think in concepts, but in images. How easily remembered was the 1932 promise of revenge: "Heads will roll!" How skilfully the agents of mass impoverishment select the tone to conjure up before the unemployed a community of interest with the parasites: "We shall restore the good old pea soup to its place of honor!" With this appetizing image the impairment of the people's nutrition, the monotonous mass feeding in the labor camps, are portrayed as achievements.

And then the *genuine* colloquialness! Even a speech most hostile to the people's interests wins the naive listeners when it is studded with unconventional idioms taken from colloquial speech, when it leaves the

rut of official and literary speech and adapts itself to the level of the uneducated listener. Goebbels is a master of the Pied Piper method: speeches interlarded with Berlin slang, jokes, etc. And the other Nazis have learned from him!

Above all, the language must be *emotionally stressed!* Exuberant emotionalism serves to blur lying false conclusions and poverty of thought. In his big Sportpalast speeches Hitler cries at certain points or gnashes his teeth with anger. Emotional anger. Emotional outpourings in language have just as suggestive an effect as this pantomime. The superlatives of emotionalism dominate. When an officially recommended book bears the brilliant title *Germany, Germany, nothing but Germany,* and when the Storm Troopers must sing *We fight for Germany, for Adolf Hitler we die* —these are the highest stages of chauvinist and "Führer" psychosis. They alternate with outbreaks of mortal hatred of Marxists and Jews.

Just as important a factor is the deliberately (one might say: emphasized) sloppy sentence structure. Contempt for reason, for the simplest laws of logical thinking, is implied in the neglect of any sort of sentence construction. The frequency of these offences proves to be symptomatic. Let us take at random one speech out of many! The Bavarian Minister of Education, Schemm, emphatically proclaims: "We are on the road to aggregate the German people into one closed community of will, and now that we have fortunately eliminated (!) professions, castes, classes, parties, opinions, economic and other divisions, and are about to eliminate the last vestiges, we shall not let this community be separated again by anything, not even by religious beliefs!" (*National-Zeitung,* Essen, Oct. 23, 1934). Such nonsense, which any schoolboy could refute, is the substance of most of the ministerial speeches.

But language demagogy can take an altogether different turn. Let us not forget that socialist ideas have been diffused in Germany for decades, nor that the Communist Party of Germany had a following of millions. For all the clear or unclear revolutionary circles the fascists speak the language of the *Rote Fahne.* Thus Goebbels chose the following for his *Angriff*: "For the exploited, against the exploiters!" Thus they coined the slogan: "Down with the money bag dictatorship!" Pseudo-revolutionary phrases such as the following characterization of a speculator, who "relying most shamelessly upon his well-stuffed moneybag, insults working fellow-Germans in a disgraceful manner, derides the toiling population, which alone makes possible all of his luxury," are scattered throughout the Nazi newspapers. Nor do the fascists shrink from direct plagiarism of Bolshevik quotations. Who does not know Stalin's saying: "The foreign worker and specialist must understand that work in the Soviet Union is something else than under capitalism, that it is not only a source of existence, but to a far greater degree is a matter of honor, of fame and of heroism." And in the *Voelkischer Beobachter* of April 11, 1934 we read: "The National Socialist sees in work not solely a means of earning money. For him work is first of all an obligation of honor towards his people."

The menace inherent in revolutionary language was clear to the men behind the Nazis, the big industrialists. Since the 30th of June such phrases are passing into the background more and more, but they haven't disappeared entirely. The Nazis, like so many others, have learned from the social democratic leaders that revolutionary speeches now and then can be extremely useful without imposing any obligations. But the situation is growing more and more acute. The more clearly the fascist deeds expose their socialist speeches, the more desperately must the Nazis hold fast to their phrases of "making the people happy." They must, and they will, be shipwrecked on this contradiction.

Trash is Trumps!

Who could have expected anything else! All the writers who are really masters of the German language are either refugees abroad or imprisoned in the concentration camps and jails. The best works of German literature were burnt on book-pyres. The road is now open for all the incompetents and sycophants. During the first year of fascist rule a flood of "national" novels, as shallow as it was broad, swamped the book market, so that the Nazis themselves were compelled to admit the shamefully low level of these productions. The books follow the well-worn track of dime-novel literature. Uncritical glorification of the existing state of affairs; no realistic description of all. The mendacious, stenciled portrayal corresponds to a faded, hackneyed language. It is a matter of course that the heroes in the latest, officially recommended novels are all called "Egon von Steiffeneck" or "Rüdeger von Riedwege," all sons of the landed nobility. They all have "beautiful, slender, strong hands." The sole innovation, compared with the novels of Courths-Maler and Co., is the "coordination" of the costumes and the stencilled transference of the action to the present. The language of the lyric poets is worse, if that is possible. What is printed as poetry in magazines or books

in Germany today—these hackneyed paens of war and horrible patriotic rhymes—represents a seriously low level of German language usage, because this alone is considered exemplary literary speech in present-day Germany, because there is no positive counterweight.

Is there really no such counterweight? Aren't there any educated, talented fascists? Haven't they also coordinated a few noted writers? Isn't there a possibility of maintaining a high language level? There is no such possibility, or if there is, only to a negligible degree. It is not by chance that the greatest and best stylists of an epoch always play the role of its most incisive accusers, whether we take the young Luther, Lessing, Voltaire, Marx or Ossietzky. Striking, living language is bound up with the proximately social content that corresponds to objective reality. The clarity of sentences reflects the clarity of thought.

But wherever it is a matter of precisely *not* portraying reality, *not* speaking the truth, but avoiding and preventing thinking, as in fascist Germany, even the most brilliant pens must grow rusty. A few examples of this necessary decay of language, which is the sequel to cowardly political turncoating, can be found as early as 1933. Say, Erik Reger, who critically portrayed the trust policy of heavy industry in sober, precise language in 1929, and who scribbles Rhine romanticism in 1933, with aphorisms and stylistic pearls such as the following: "Whoever doesn't come from the Rhine, is only half a man," or "This unrequited love of the landscapes (!) gave him food for thought." (Since when can landscapes love in vain?) Or, "Along the Rhine characteristics are always inherited from one's father," and the like folk language. Here the "national rejuvenation" has already borne fruit! The sudden drop in language level is a typical phenomenon in German literature and the German press today. Since content is the ultimately determining factor in the mutual interrelation of form and content, the development of literary language must finally lead to inflated pathos, false primitiveness, or colorless trash even in the talented coordinated writers.

Colloquial Language

For lack of space we shall confine ourselves to the barest outlines. Whereas cursing and coarse language are combatted in the factories of the Soviet Union, thus systematically raising the level of the proletarians' and peasants' colloquial speech, the fascist mass organizations are actually aiding in the spreading brutalization of the people. Take for example, the realistic reproduction of typical conversations in Storm Troop barracks and nationalist terror organizations to be found in revolutionary proletarian literature, as in Ernst Ottwalt, Walter Schönstedt, and others. The world of the trenches comes to life again or is taken for granted in this coarse army speech. The militarization of colloquial speech has become so widespread that it is even too much for the stomachs of old professional soldiers by now. A section chief of the Reichswehr Ministry, Major Foertsch, writes disapprovingly in the *Hamburg Fremdenblatt* of Nov. 12, 1934:

"The soldier sees with uneasy feelings how military terms, formulas and concepts are being more and more used in the speech and written language of the civilian, even where they are unsuited to the matter in hand. They 'exercise' what they can practise and train. They 'advance' and 'break in' where they aim at success. They see 'breaks in the front' where they recognize defects. They 'put in shock troops' where they want to eliminate mistakes. They make 'training grounds' out of their field of activity. . . ."

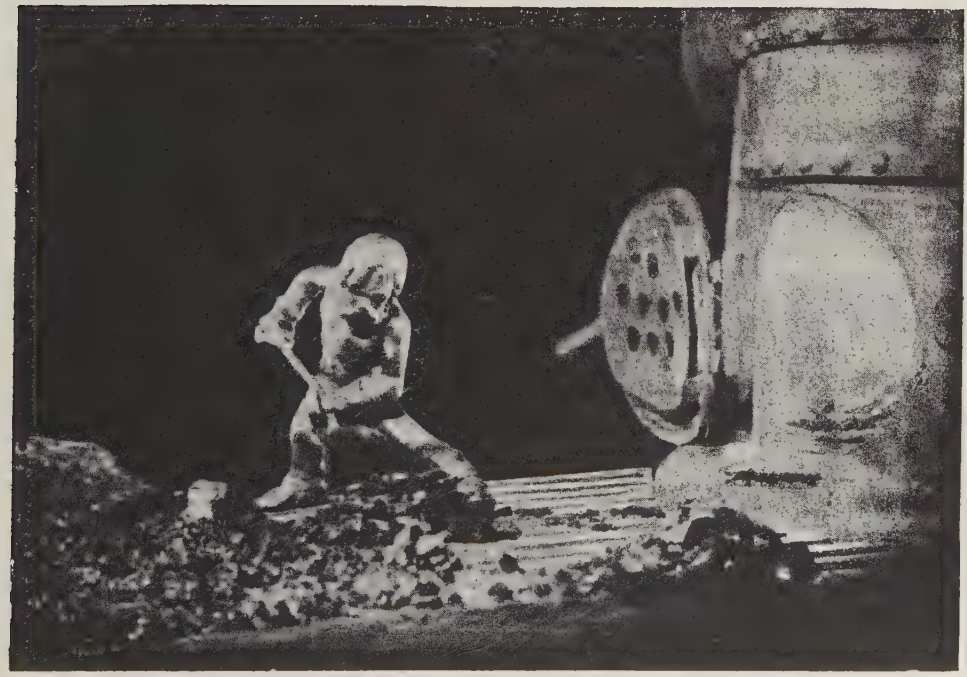
A few dozen unpleasant cursewords play a major part, alongside the slogans of the day, in the miserable vocabulary of the brown hordes. There are numerous expressions for murder—for very good reasons: "knock cold," "lay flat," etc. This language betrays the degeneracy of emotional life, as well as the incapacity for logical thinking and objective discussion.

The barbarism that fascism has brought with it in all fields of cultural life, also takes possession of its most elementary expression, language. The significance of anti-fascist literature is therefore still greater—here alone is the heritage of the highly developed, rich German language conserved, until the time when there will again be a language culture in Germany as well.

Translated from the German by Leonard E. Mins

SCENES FROM THE NEW SOVIET FILM—

"THE NEW GULLIVER"



LITERARY PORTRAITS

Franz Leschnitzer

Erich Mühsam

An Account of a German Writer and Rebel

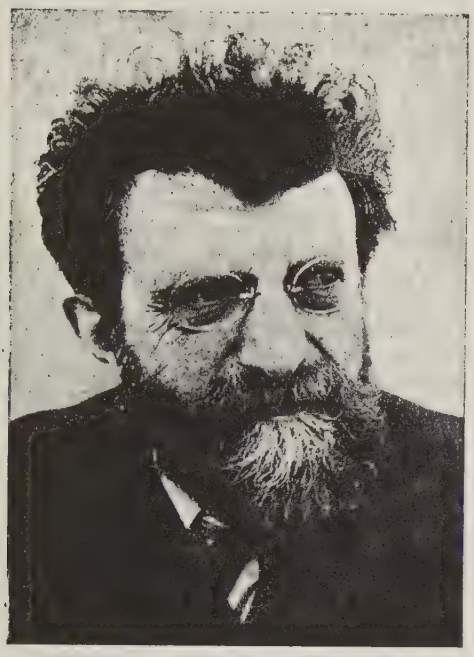
He was born in 1878 in a Jewish middle class family living in the north of Germany. Although his father chose the profession of a pharmacist for him upon his graduation from high school he was not the least bit interested. He was drawn to Bohemian life early: to that gypsy-like, unconventional life of artists usual in Germany at the end of the past century, particularly in Munich and in the suburb of Schwabing. True, the life of artists in Schwabing had nothing in common with the romantic Bohemia of Henri Murger's *La Boheme*. The unconventionality of the Schwabing artists, the "freedom" and "free living" of those musicians, painters, sculptors, poets, actors, newspapermen, critics and journalists had little of the romantic about it. The poverty which plagued the life of every one of them did not allow for the carefree life of the Parisian Bohemia which relied on the richer French rentier parasitic class. The Munich artists were mostly idle students or bankrupt aspirants to the professions. Products of middle class families, they had usually a scattered general education of the high school or college in the smaller university towns of Germany. Estranged from bourgeois life by the wreck of their careers, and still far from proletarian life, being still primarily bourgeois minded, they represented a section of society economically midway between the petty bourgeoisie and the working class, vegetating themselves and imagining, even boasting about being "in between the classes." Ideologically and politically their sympathies were nevertheless rather for the proletariat than the bourgeoisie.

Erich Mühsam grew in this section of society "in between the classes." He not only grew up in it, he also grew out of it. He gained considerable popularity with short, witty verse in the satirical magazine, *Simplicissimus,* published by the left bourgeois publisher, Albert Langen, sympathizing with social democracy. These verses were by far less irritation to the hundred thousand bourgeois readers than the caricatures by Th. Th. Henie, Olaf Gulbransson, Ernst Thony, Wilhelm Schultz and F. v. Reznicek, which also appeared in this magazine; or the polemics and pamphlets by Karl Kraus and Ludwig Thoma which the loyal German philistine swallowed lustily. Mühsam's verses of that period were spicy rather than stinging.

The satrical undertone of these verses, the ridicule of bourgeois comfort and patience was unmistakable; but there was also the soothing, kindly, harmlessly gay undertone: light satire and light humor combined charmingly. Artistically they were slight.

"The Eleven Executioners"

Slowly Mühsam developed a more serious vein. The change came at the "Cabaret of the Eleven Executioners" in Munich. This cabaret got its title from the fact that eleven authors used to appear there as "executioners," that is satirical "judges" of bourgeois society, principally, the "morals" of bourgeois society; among them were journalists like Emil Faktor, who later became editor in chief of the *Berlinger Borsen-Courier,* and such men of genius in portraying the decay of bourgeois morals as the dramatist, Frank Wedekind, then very young. The influence of the latter on Mühsam's development was very great. Almost all the verses Erich Mühsam then wrote and recited were socio-critical pieces on the type of Wedekind's work. What prevailed in this work was not so much the ideology of socialism as of anarchism. It was not surprising that these young "executioners" were closer to anarchism than to scientific Marxian socialism; that was a result of their class origin, a result of their endeavor to stay "between the classes," like sitting on two chairs, and still trying to present the cause of revolution (as if this were possible without the class struggle) with enthusiasm. Reading the verses, prose-polemics and pamphlets of young Mühsam today, one finds a seemingly incomprehensible mixture of ultra radical and highly philistine ideas at every step. On one hand, the young man let himself be carried away by his hatred of the bourgeois to a passionate repudiation not only of the bourgeois state, but of the state as a whole, with all its arrangements, laws and organization; on the



Erich Mühsam, German revolutionary writer murdered by the fascists

other hand—and dialectically considered, perhaps directly because of this—he took pleasure in disparaging historical materialism and Marxism generally. To the very end of his life Erich Mühsam remained a decided anarchist in politics and an absolute idealist in ideology.

Closer to Communism

Mühsam was a close friend of Landauer's, as well as of Kurt Eisner and Ernst Toller. All three were convinced pacifists even during the World War; all three stood closer to the USPD (the Independent Social Democratic Party of Germany) after the war than to the KPD (Communist Party of Germany). The only thing that at least negatively brought them close to the communists was their profoundly justified indignation against the betrayal of the German November revolution by leaders of social democracy. Mühsam has given deep expression to this indignation as a satirical lyricist.

In Mühsam's play, *Juda,* the only worthwhile play he wrote, he sharply settles accounts with social democratic leaders of the Ebert, Noske and Scheidemann ilk, branding them as betrayers of the cause of the toilers. To Mühsam the political tendency was always more important than artistic portrayal. Yet it must be said that he was a gifted writer of fiction and the essay, high above the average talent. His temperament led him to the political and he wanted to achieve more in politics than in poetry. The result was just the opposite. It must be admitted that in the collapse of the Munich Soviet Republic, of whose "independent" Social Democratic and Anarchist coalition government he was a member together with Gustav Landauer and Ernst Toller, he bears, although not alone, much of the blame for the catastrophe. His anarchist idealistic looseness, his bourgeois pacifistic soft-heartedness, his complete lack of contact with the masses of the agricultural proletariat in Bayern helped, even though unquestionably without his knowledge and against his wishes, to clear the way for the counter-revolution, the white bandits who imprisoned him and Toller and literally tore the noble Landauer to pieces. The heartless government of Herr v. Kahr, which established itself in Bayern after the fall of the Soviet government, condemned the "dangerous mutineer" (who never called himself a revolutionist but only a rebel) to fifteen years' imprisonment. (He was freed after seven years by the so-called "Hindenburg amnesty.") These terrible years not to be compared, it is true, to the gruesome subsequent "arrest for safety" under the "Third Empire," he spent together with Toller in the Niederschonenfeld prison. Toller wrote there his first explosive, semi-impressionistic drama *The Change* which was performed by the left bourgeois Berlin theatre "Die Tribune," while Mühsam wrote a number of poems in which his unbreakable spirit was shown forcibly.

How little he was inclined to submit to the powers that be Mühsam proved immediately upon being freed. He had already written an excellent poem, "Lenin," in which he showed himself more than ever a loyal sympathizer of our struggle. Although he never got off his anarchist hobby horse even after his imprisonment, he began to take a more intensive part in the activities of the revolutionary workers under Communist leadership. He spoke at meetings on the question of the confiscation of the property of the former princes, supporting the communists in this; he helped us in our revolutionary union work in the Union of German Writers; he took part in the preparations and organization of the Amsterdam International Anti-War Congress (August 27-29, 1932); he even put at the service of these activities the columns of his earlier magazine *Kain,* suppressed during the war.

The Brilliant Orator

When one heard him at this time as speaker at meetings or even as participant in discussions on political and cultural subjects, one understood the colossal effect he produced on friend and foe at the period of the Munich Soviet. One understood particularly the frantic hatred of his enemies. As a speaker he was an agitator and rebel of great power. I shall never forget two of his speeches. The first I heard in 1928 on the first anniversary of the electrocution of Sacco and Vanzetti. These two victims of infamous bourgeois class justice in the United States were, as anarchists, dearer to the anarchist Mühsam than others. His memorial speech was sprinkled with political errors, but the power of this speech was tremendous. It must be taken into account that Mühsam's appearance was not impressive. He looked like the typical representative of his social milieu, a Bohemian of doubtful sort. Dishevelled red hair, a wild full red beard, a pale face, his glasses crooked, necktie awry, he stood at the edge of the platform close to the public. . .in the assembly room of the former Prussian House of Lords *(Herrenhaus)* in Berlin, that high gathering place of the nobility and the most privileged, who functioned in old Prussia as the highest government body next to the monarch. The very contrast between the elegant hall and the definitely plebian external appearance of the speaker was exciting. And the contrast was strengthened by the no less violent contradiction between the solemn silence of the audience and the shrill cutting voice and frenzied gestures of the speaker.

I heard Mühsam speak a second time three weeks after Hitler's accession to power and a week before the Reichstag fire. It was in a Tetow street hall in South-west Berlin at the last session of the Union of German Writers. Carl v. Ossietzky had just spoken effectively in favor of a red united front and the left bourgeois journalist, Rudolf Olden, as well as our comrades Karl August Wittfogel and Heinz Pol spoke effectively. Then came Mühsam's turn and it was like the eruption of a volcano. It is still a puzzle to me how this meeting was allowed to continue to the end—the "normal" end in such cases was the interference of the police.

Murdered by the Fascists

It was not his fate to fight on in emigration and the struggle in prison was nothing like what he had known in Niederschonenfeld. He was doomed to experience the hell of the fascist torture chamber, the Golgotha of their concentration camp. On the night of the 27th of February 1933, Reichstag Fire night, he was dragged out of bed and arrested together with some hundred and thirty other Berlin intellectuals and brought to the Alexanderplatz police station; from there to an abandoned old prison in Brandenburg on the Havel; from there, on February 2, 1934, together with some hundred or so other prisoners in an open truck for three hours in the biting cold to the concentration camp in Oranienburg. He had been tortured horribly in Brandenburg. One of his companions in "safety arrest" from October 24, 1933 till April 28, 1934—Kurt Hiller, the very lively left bourgeois journalist who escaped and is now, in emigration, an active anti-fascist, reports: "I shall never forget the picture he made as he stumbled about one of those prison yards, pale, one ear turned into a thick swollen formless mass by repeated blows."

On July 12, 1934 the German press and agencies spread the report that Erich Mühsam had "strangled himself" at the Oranienburg concentration camp. Everyone who knew Mühsam knew that this report was a lie. Mühsam's proud courage was well known and the most gruesome tortures could not break it; everyone recalled Mühsam's determination to withstand persecutions expressed in numerous poems with deepest sincerity; everyone knew that the noose in which he was found "hanged by his own hand" was laid around his neck not by his own but by others' hands. The knowledge, first surmised, was confirmed by eye witnesses of the foul murder and especially by the report of our Comrade Werner Hirsch who was confined in the Oranienburg concentration camp at the time. It is known that on the night of the ninth of July Erich Mühsam was hanged on the wall of the closet at the orders of the brigade leader Eicke, a functionary of Adolf Hitler's bodyguard (SS) who was appointed commandant of this camp after the internal fascist massacre of June 30, 1934.

The memory of this bestial crime effects every sincere anti-fascist profoundly. We shall always remember the firm and courageous poet and sincere rebel. Like an oath, we repeat the passionate closing lines of Johannes R. Becher's poem on the death of Erich Mühsam:

We shall avenge you all,
Erich, and you, you too!

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTES

FRANCE

ROMAIN ROLLAND

Romain Rolland was born the 29th of January, 1866, at Clamecy (sub-Prefecture of the Nievre—formerly the duchy of Nivernais—in the center of France, between Bourgogne and Bourbonnais). Clamecy is a small city of 5,000 inhabitants on the Yonne river, a tributary of the Seine, in the foothills of the massive Morvan mountains which are covered with large forests, and where there are ruins and monuments of the ancient Gaul of Vercingetorix, of the Romans (Mount Beuvray, the former Bibracte, Alise St. Reine, the former Alesia, Autun, the ancient Augustodunum), and of the France at the time of the first crusades (Vezelai) and the beginnings of Gothic art. For several centuries the principal commerce of Clemecy has been lumber, which is floated down the rivers of the Morvan mountains as logs, and at Clamecy is formed into rafts, which the raftsmen guide through the Yonne to the Seine. These raftsmen constitute a population both independent and hardy, which more than once has manifested its spirit of rebellion against the government. At the coup d'etat of Napoleon III in 1852, it was one of the few towns of the province which rebelled. This uprising was heavily crushed. The guillotine was put into action, and several hundreds of the citizens were deported to Africa. Romain Rolland has set the action of his novel *Colas Breugnon* in the town of his birth, at the beginning of the 17th century, in the regency of Marie de Medici, after the assassination of Henry IV. But as the motto inscribed at the beginning of the book reads, "The good man lives still;" and the spirit of Colas Breugnon has been kept alive in the country side.

7Romain Rolland, noted French writer

Romain Rolland studied from 1873 to 1880 at the College of Clemecy. His father, Emile Rolland, was a notary. His paternal grandfather, of whom he has written a biography, was the "apostle of reason," Jacobin commissar, during the French Revolution. Marie Courot, his mother, was also of a family of notaries. It was from her that he received a large part of his talent, particularly his bent toward music.

The family took up residence in Paris in 1880-81 in order that the son might the better follow his studies. Here he finished his secondary school work at the St. Louis and Louis-le-Grand lycees. At the latter he was the classmate of Paul Claudel. In 1886 he entered the Ecole Normale Superieur in the Rue d'Ulm, a school for preparing university professors. Here he had as principal teachers the historians, Gabriel Monod and Lavisse; the geographer, Videl de Labtache; the literary critics Brunetiere and Gaston Boissier; and the philosophers, Boutroux and Brochard. It was then that he corresponded with Tolstoi and formed a personal friendship with Ernest Renan, then the director of the College of France. He also became the friend of Suares, who was his comrade at school.

In 1889, after he had passed the examinations for the license to teach philology and history in secondary schools, Romain Rolland was appointed for two years a member of the French Academy in Rome (the school of archeology and history situated in the Palazzo Farnese). While there, he worked in the archives of the Vatican. (He wrote a memoire of the nun Salviatti, who was sent to the court of France at the time of the sack of Rome by the Imperial

Armies). For two years he traveled all over Italy, and there he received the inspiration for a series of plays of the Italian Renaissance, the first of which he wrote at Rome. Among the friends he made in Italy, one became an important influence in the Revolution of 1848, shared the exile of Mazzini and Herzen in London, was the intimate friend of Wagner and Nietzche: Malwida von Meysenbug. (Romain Rolland has devoted an essay to her at the beginning of his volume of correspondence with her.)

Returning to Paris in 1891, he married the daughter of the philologist Machael Breal. In 1895 he received his doctorate of letters on a thesis on the history of music (History of the Opera in Europe before Lully and Scarlatti). And in 1897 he made his first appearance in the theatre with the production of his two plays, *Aert* and *The Wolves* (the latter inspired by the Dreyfus case, was played in an atmosphere of tense struggle before principal protagonists of the affair). There followed several dramas of the Revolution. *The Triumph of Reason, Danton,* and *The Fourteenth of July.* With several friends, he tried to found a Theatre of the People; and in his volume, *The Theatre of the People* he defined the theory and esthetics of it. At the same time he taught the history of art at the Ecole Normale Superieur and later at the Sorbonne; and he wrote articles, historical and critical, on music for *La Revue de Paris.* His principal articles published in this magazine and the leading musical revues of Paris were gathered together in the volumes: I *Musicians of Another Time,* II *Musicians of Today,* III *The Musical Travel in the Country of the Past.*

In 1901 the miscarriage of this project for a Theatre of the People, and personal events, particularly his divorce, led him to concentrate during ten years on a work, which was, at the same time, the life of a great independent artist, an accusation against the whole of the society of his time, and an appeal to action to all consciencious thinkers to unite against *"La Foire sur la Place."* This work was *Jean Christophe,* the six volumes of which were published between 1903 and 1912. They were boycotted by the big newspapers, but none the less they penetrated to the French public and to the outside world, first in the Anglo-Saxon countries, in Italy and Spain, and then in Germany. In 1913 it was resurrected by the Academie Francaise and awarded its Grand Prize for Literature. At the same time Romain Rolland published his three *Heroic Lives,* of Beethoven, of Michelangelo, and of Tolstoi. *Jean Christophe* finished, he wrote in 1913 his novel, *Colas Breugnon,* which was not published until six years later.

When in 1914 the war broke out, he had already achieved popularity. For several months he had been in Switzerland, where he went almost every year to work in the mountains. And not being compelled to give military service (he was then 48 years of age), he remained there. In a series of articles appearing in the *Journal de Geneve,* he raised himself in fight against the insanity of this war. At the same time he helped in the work of the relief of civil prisoners, established at Geneva by the International Red Cross. His articles against the war (gathered together later in a book, under the title of *In the midst of the Conflict)* brought upon him the wild anger of French nationalism. All the French newspapers treated him as a public enemy. He stood fire, and with Henri Guilbeaux and a small group of French refugees in Switzerland, he collaborated in the revue, *Demain,* (of Geneva) in which the influence of the great Russian exiles, Lenin and his companions, was soon felt. In 1917, despite the malicious campaigns against him, Romain Rolland received the Nobel Prize for Literature from the Swedish Academy. Returning to Paris in 1919 he published, one after the other, the novels, *Pierre et Luce, Clerambault, Liluli,* as well as a volume of essays on the war, *The Precursors.*

In 1922 he went to live at Villeneuve in Switzerland, where he is still. There he has led a continual social war, the principal episodes of which are marked in a volume of articles which will appear within the next few months, under the title, *Fifteen Years of Combat* (publisher Reider). He has relentlessly defended the cause of the Soviet Revolution. And in this same period he has published a series of books: on the New India: *Mahatma Ghandi,* and *The Lives of Rakakrishna and Vivekananda;* a set of plays of the Revolution, *The Play of Love and of Death, Easter Blossoming,* and *The Leonides* new studies of *Beethoven,* and on the top of this a vast novel cycle *The Soul Enchanted,* seven volumes of which form a sequel to the epic *Jean Christophe,* but which have as a principal hero a woman, and the last volumes of which take the part of the proletarian revolution and the new social order in the struggle against capitalism and fascism.

In 1934 he married Marie Kaudacheva, a Russian Soviet citizen, to whom he has dedicated the last three volumes of *The Soul Enchanted.*

January, 1935

Note: Revised by Romain Rolland.

LION FEUCHTWANGER

THE WRITER L. F., HIS WORLD AND HIS TIME

A Noted German Author Writes About Himself

The writer L. F. was born in the eighties of the past century in a Bavarian city called Munich which then had a population of 437,112. He was taught by a total of 98 teachers in 211 subjects, including Hebrew, applied psychology, the history of the Prince of Upper Bavaria, Sanskrit, percentages, Gothic and gymnastics but not including English, political economy or the history of America. It took 19 years of the life of the writer L. F. to thoroughly eradicate 172 of the 211 subjects from his memory. In the course of his education the name of Plato was repeated 14,203 times, the name Frederick the Great, 22,614 times, the name of Karl Marx, not once. During his examination for his doctor's degree he failed in Old-High German grammar and literature because he was not well enough versed in the nuances of unhorsing an opponent in tournaments. In the test on anthropology, however, he was very successful as on the query by the examining clerical professor: "Into what great groups are the properties of man divided?" He answered as was required: "Into corporeal and spiritual."

The capital of the country, Berlin, had, at the time the writer L. F. studied at the university there, a population of 872,394 including 1,443 actors, 165 generals, 1,107 writers and journalists, 412 fishermen, 1 kaiser, 9,213 students, 112,327 landladies renting furnished rooms and 1 genius. The writer L. F. spent 14 years in various schools and universities of Berlin and Munich, five and one-half months in military service, 17 days as war prisoner, and then another 11 years in Munich; the rest of his life he spent in comparative freedom. For a total of 3,013 days he did not have enough and for 294 days no money at all. He signed 382 lectures, held 412 talks on religious subjects, 718 on social, 2,764 on literary, 248 on questions of employment and 19,549 talks on everyday matters, especially about laundry, razors and heating.

At the prime of his life the writer L. F. was five feet five and one-half inches tall and weighed 135 pounds. He then had 29 of his own teeth including several spade-like, prominent ones and three gold-capped ones. He had thick dark-blond hair and wore glasses. He was fair at swimming but a poor dancer. He liked to eat all sorts of sea-food, did not like starchy foods, liked

Lion Feuchtwanger

his baths hot and hated dogs and tobacco. He was fond of good wine and tea, but drank little whiskey or coffee. He was rather inclined towards vegetarianism and was never chary in praise of the diet of the Hindu; in practice, however, he went in for lots of meat. It is not doubted that had he abstained more from meat he should have attained a greater age. But as it was he had at the prime of his life consumed the meat of 8,237 horned cattle, 1,712 wild fowl and 1,432 domestic fowl. Fish of the sea variety he consumed 6,014; fish out of brooks and lakes 2,738; numberless oysters, clams and so forth not included. Always with great relish though frequently depressed at the idea that so much life must be taken to keep up his own.

The population of Germany, at the time the writer L. F. was still included in the census, was 63,284,617 so-called souls. Of these 667,884 were employed on the railroads and post, there were 40,103 physicians, 856 critics, 8,287 writers, 15,043 midwives. There were in Germany at that time officially registered 461 idiots and complete imbeciles. The writer L. F. had the hard luck of having to deal with most of them. Three of them, by the way, are now high government officials.

His Own City

As regards the city of Munich where the writer L. F. spent the greater part of his life, there were in that city, on the last

year L. F. spent there 137 gifted, 1,012 above average, 9,002 normal, 537,284 subnormal persons and 122,962 complete antisemites. Of the 537,284 subnormal persons 8,318 now occupy high government offices or professional posts, of the 9,002 normal persons 112; of the 1,012 above average 17; of the 137 gifted ones —1. It is a proof of the extraordinary vitality of the writer L. F. that he could draw 407,263,054 breaths in the air of this city without any noticable harm to his mental well-being.

The writer L. F. committed 23,257 condonable sins, mostly out of laziness and somewhat phlegmatic pleasure seeking, also two serious sins. He did 10,000 good deeds, mostly out of a somewhat comfortable good naturedness and two really good deeds for which he is duly proud. He owned a house that was confiscated once; six times he was the possessor of larger fortunes that dwindled four and one-half times due to inflation and once due to confiscation. He was also a citizen and was once debarred from citizenship. When the national socialists came into power he owned 28 manuscripts, 10,248 books, one automobile, one cat, two turtles, nine flower-beds and 4,211 other items that were destroyed, killed, trodden down, stolen or otherwise taken away during house searches by the national socialists. The police declared three times that this was done upon orders of the Prussian Ministry of the Interior, four times that it was the work of communists who masked themselves as national-socialists.

The writer L. F. was married once. He saved one girl from drowning, two boys from going on the stage, six young men, not without some gifts, from becoming writers. In 106 cases of this sort he failed utterly.

The writer L. F. wrote 11 dramas, among these three good ones never staged, one very mediocre one that was performed 2,346 times and one really bad one which, as he refused permission to have it performed, was played 876 times illegally. In the mediocre one which was performed so many times, he never corrected a typographical error in the list of characters which made 41 lines senseless. These 41 lines were repeated in 2,346 performances by 197 actors without a single regisseur, producer or reviewer or even one of the 1,500,000 people that saw the play ever noticing it.

Literature, Writers and Dollars

Five hundred twenty-seven thousand copies of four novels by the writer L. F. were printed in Germany. When the writer L. F. declared that there were 164,000 sins against German grammar or German rhetoric in the 164,000 words of Hilter's book *Mein Kampf,* his own books got some notice—there were spread 943 extremely crude libels about him and in 1,584 government inspired newspaper articles and 327 radio talks his books were branded as poison for the German people. Twenty copies were also burned. The rest of the poison was sold with the blessing of the German government and by a German publisher in foreign countries so that the German government might get some foreign money with it. The German State Bank got, besides the confiscated account of the writer L. F., 13,000 dollars in this way and the writer L. F. 0 dollars. Upon which the officially subsidised mortgage company demanded of the writer L. F. that, since his house and property were confiscated, he cover the mortgage amounting to some 63,214 gold marks out of his later earnings outside of Germany, while the German financial authorities, because no taxes were paid on the confiscated property, imposed heavy fines primarily for "withdrawing capital."

The demands of the world upon the writer L. F. were manifold. He received 8,784 manuscripts of young writers for approval and they were hurt when it took more than two days to read their work. Eighty-four of these manuscripts were destroyed together with the writer L. F.'s own manuscripts by the national-socialists when they plundered his home. Seventeen thousand one hundred sixty-nine persons asked for his autograph, 826 ladies applied for the position of secretary. He had 202 relatives, 3,124 acquaintances and one friend. Of 52 close acquaintances 22 fell in four years of the war, 19 in two years of the reign of the national-socialists, 11 are still alive.

Two thousand forty-eight persons wanted the writer L. F. to tell them whether Christ compared to Shakespeare, compared to Bismarck, compared to Lenin, compared to Theodor Herzel, compared to Hitler was the greatest man that ever lived. Five hundred fifteen persons wanted to find out from him how "poetry" is made. He was called up 714 times on the telephone to be called *Saujud* (swine Jew) by anonymous persons. Two thousand eighty-four symposium questions he never answered. On the whole he got, in circuitous ways, 5,334 letters approving his activities from national-socialist Germany, in spite of the fact that those who wrote the letters went to a great risk.

The writer L. F. was perfectly happy 19 times in his life and profoundly distressed 14 times. Five hundred eighty-four times he was hurt and confused to the point of stupefaction by the imbecility of the world which does not lend itself to numerical expressions. Then he got quite inured to it.

Thoroughly aware that work does not balance with success and that the man does not balance with the work, nevertheless, if he were asked: "Are you satisfied with your life so far?" he would answer: "Yes. The whole thing can be repeated."

ENGLAND

JAMES HANLEY

James Hanley was born in 1901, of Irish parents.

He showed promise at school of being a brilliant scholar; his special subjects were mathematics and anything connected with literature, history, composition, and so forth. From the first he was unusually anxious to study, and took a scholarship at the elementary school. After passing the examination with flying colors, he was debarred by being a few months over age—a fact that he had kept secret from the examiners. This was a most bitter disappointment.

It was necessary for him to find work on leaving school, and he went to sea at the age of thirteen, but during those years of sea-life up to the age of seventeen, he continued to study with really fierce tenacity, and read all the classical literature he could lay hands on, studying the literature of nearly every country, though chiefly interested in French and Russian. Besides this he was studying navigation and seamanship, for he plainly took to a sea-life and had the makings of a good sailor.

During the war he was on ships engaged in carrying troops out East. In the third year of the war he deserted his ship and joined the army in Canada, seeing service in France until August 1918 when he was gassed and sent back to England. He was in the 1st Canadian Division on the Western front with the storm troops.

After the war he went back to sea again for a short while, and then worked on the railway, which he subsequently left during a strike.

Over the whole of this period he must somehow have found time to write a great deal, for I know of at least fourteen novels as well as numerous stories and articles. None of the novels were accepted being regarded chiefly as too revolutionary and destructive. He went through many phases of creative work at this time.

He wandered about from place to place, living a short while in Paris, but it was in Ireland that he wrote *Drift,* the first novel to be published after it had been the round of about thirty publishers. On acceptance of *Drift* he went to live in London.

Following the reception of this book the placing of other work was not quite so difficult, and for the last four years he has lived in Wales—the freedom and wildness of which suits his taste perfectly—working hard, writing four novels and many short stories. The last of the novels is the beginning of a comprehensive history of a working class family.

James Hanley, English author of Drift, Boy, *and other novels*

There is nothing outstandingly "Artistic" about the nature of James Hanley. He is very modest and unassuming about his work, though unshakably convinced of the value of his material. He will seldom discuss his own work, or indeed anything connected with his own intellectual life. He is a good talker, possessed of a turn of sardonic humor but he is a real lover of solitude, preferring to tramp over the windy, lonely mountains and moors with one companion, than to sit, dissipating thought in talk, in cities.

The factor that ranks next to literature in James Hanley's life is undoubtedly music, of which he has a profound love and understanding. In fact I have often heard him say that he would rather have been a pianist than an author. But alas—or perhaps fortunately for those who admire his work—that can never be, for his hands were too stiffened by hard work in early life, for him to ever be other than an amateur.

He likes to write in the sound of music, and I have known him to write for hours, playing a couple of records from Beethoven's *Geister Trio* over and over again.

TIMOTHY HANLEY

(James Hanley is the author of five novels: *Drift, Ebb and Flood, Boy, Captain Bottell, The Furys*; and book of short stories: *Men in Darkness*)

CHRONICLE

USA

New Publications

Among the novels and books of non-fiction announced for spring publication are: *A World to Win* by Jack Conroy—"A novel of the industrial age;" *Comrade Gulliver* by Hugo Gellert—"The story of a new Gulliver from Communist Russia who visits the United States. With many illustrations by the author." (Gellert's previous book was *Karl Marx's Capital in Lithographs*) *Moscow Yankee* by Myra Page—"A novel dealing with the lives of Americans working in Russia;" *From the Kingdom of Necessity* by Isidor Schneider—"An autobiographical novel;" *The Conveyor* by James Steele "A novel based on the lives of the Detroit auto workers (part of which appeared in *International Literature*); *Upstairs and Downstairs* by Joseph Vogel—"A story of a West Side Rooming house in New York City;" *An American Testament: the Narrative of a Life* by Joseph Freeman; *Puzzled America* by Sherwood Anderson "stories of miners, strikers, farmers, mechanics and all sorts of plain people;" *America Faces the Barricades* by John L. Spivak—"The result of a journey through the country undertaken by the author with the aim of finding out the temper of the American people under the New Deal;" and *Moods* by Theodore Dreiser—"Dreiser's reflections on varying aspects of life."

Soviet Authors in America

The spring publication lists include the following novels by Soviet authors: *I Love* by Avdeyenko; *Shvambrania* by L. Kassil; *The Iron Flood* by A. Serafimovich.

Among other books of non-fiction about the Soviet Union are *Stalin,* a biography by Henri Barbusse; *I Change Worlds* by Anna Louise Strong; *Soviet Journey* by Louis Fischer; and *Dawn Over Samarkand: the Rebirth of Central Asia* by Joshua Kunitz.

The American Revolutionary Theatre

A Theatrical Prize contest for short plays, conducted by *New Masses* and *New Theatre* brought further indications of the growth of the American revolutionary theatre. Writing of the results Herbert Kline sees "A new theatre being welded out of the suffering and struggles of the American people."

First prize for 30 minute plays went to Clifford Odets for his *Waiting For Lefty,* a play on a New York taxi strike which was such a great success when produced some months ago. Herbert Kline writes: "The quality that makes *Waiting For Lefty* so remarkable is this new playwright's ability to achieve and maintain what might be described as *absolute audience identification.* By combining the best quality of 'agit-prop,' direct appeal to the audience —with realism, Odets succeeds in involving us completely in the lives and struggles of his taxi-driver characters. By effective use of a technical device—'the flashback'—we are given, simultaneously, an insight into the background of the individual strikers and the story of the strike-meeting in progress. Clifford Odets is an actor in the Group Theatre company and has served as a director in the Theatre Union Studio."

Second prize also went to a play born directly of an immediate struggle.

"*The Great Philanthropist* the second prize winning play, came directly out of the Ohrbach (department store) strike. The Office Workers Union asked Philip Barber, formerly assistant to Professor Baker at Yale and now head of the Repertory Department of the New Theatre League, for a short play about their strike to be performed by the strikers themselves at a mass meeting to be held the following week. There were no plays dealing with department store strikes available so Barber went home and wrote a short realistic play based on a dramatic incident of the Ohrbach strike.

"Like Clifford Odets," the writer points out, "this new playwright brings a sure knowledge of the theatre to his writing. He makes full use of the stage and relies on crisp dialogue, dramatic situation and plot rather than on sharp characterization in *The Great Philanthropist.*"

Over a hundred and fifty plays were submitted in "the 40 minute" class, with but few ready for production. The writer points that "The best of these is *Road Closed,* a play dealing with the Iowa farm strike, by Philip Stevenson, author of *God's in His Heaven,* winner of the 1934 Theatre Union contest. Stevenson has a sure knowledge of the realistic one-act, one-scene play."

There were quite a number of other plays deserving special mention which The Reportory Department of the New Theatre League will revise with the authors in hope of having them available for production in a few months.

The report points out some disappointments among the successes achieved; the fact that not a single successful comedy was submitted and that none of the established revolutionary dramatists wrote any new plays for the contest.

New Play by Clifford Odets

While Clifford Odets' *Waiting For Lefty* proved such a splendid success, the Group Theatre presented his *Awake and Sing,* written some two years earlier. Michael Blankfort, writing in the *New Masses* finds faults here: in characterization, in dialogue and in ideological shortcomings.

The critic finds that *Awake and Sing,* is only part of what it might have been, but even so it is superior to most of the plays shown in this vicinity."

"It is worth seeing," he adds, " because Odets is one of the new revolutionary voices which are being heard more and more in the theatre; because he has something invigorating to say; because he says it in a fresh way. . . . He has a sure theatrical sense and he is growing into as sure a revolutionary understanding."

Meanwhile the press announces the presentation of a third play by Odets called *Till the Day I Die.*

Another Theatre Union Success

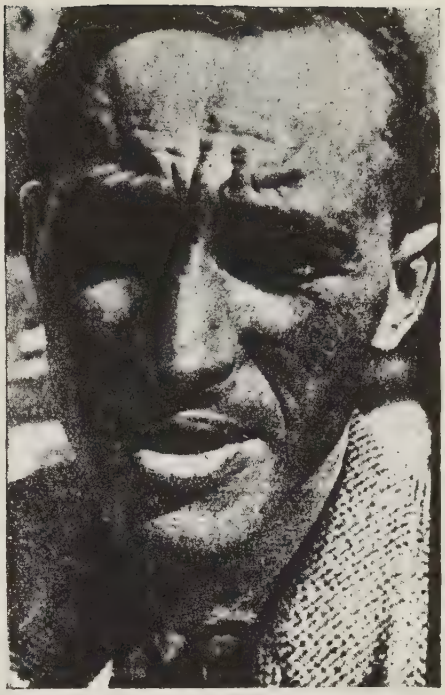
The Revolutionary Theatre Union of New York City has become a force in American dramatic circles. Their three great successes, *Peace on Earth, Stevedore* and *Sailors of Catarro* won the approval of the most exacting critics. Meanwhile workers attended by the hundred thousands.

Now the Theatre Union presents *Black Pit* by Albert Malz, a co-author of the first success *Peace on Earth.*

With this play, Robert Garland, dramatic critic of the New York *World Telegram* said, ". . .the Theatre Union has done it again. . . ."

In a review in the New York *Daily Worker* Carl Reeve writes:

"Black Pit brings to the people of New York City, intimate and realistic scenes of the daily lives of coal miners in a company 'patch.' Hundreds of such 'patches' exist—isolated in some 'run,' away in the hills where the company, through its company store, company union, company doctor, company houses, its blacklist and stool-pigeons, attempts to strangle real unions and maintain profits.



Jef Last, well known poet and prose writer of Holland

"The scenes of the mining camp, and the characters are alive and gripping, and are faithful and dramatic portrayal of what is happening today in the lives of the miners in many such camps."

While criticizing minor defects in the play, the writer finds this even better produced than previous plays and one of the best yet seen in the United States.

Theatrical Workers and the Class Struggle

The Ohrbach strike, subject of the prize-winning play *The Great Philanthropist,* mentioned above, was also reason for debate between executive board members of the Theatre Union who are of varying political opinions.

In the *New Leader,* socialist weekly, Samuel H. Friedman, one of the members of the executive board of the Theatre Union, ridiculed the action taken by nine members of the cast of *Sailors of Catarro* in picketing on behalf of the strikers. He cast slurs on the Office Workers Union who had organized this, and on the Communist Party.

Liston Oak, another executive board

Willi Bredel, German revolutionary writer, a section of whose personal story of life in a Hitler concentration camp is included in this issue

member appeared in the press in defense of the picketing actors. He wrote:

"I wish to state emphatically that Friedman's opinions are his own, not those of the Theatre Union executive board of which I am a member. As a communist, working in this association of individuals of varying political views and affiliations, for the production of plays dealing with the class struggle from the viewpoint of organized labor, I repudiate the attack on the action of the actors in aiding the Ohrbach strikers."

Liston Oak further pointed out: "Prominent writers had previously participated in in the Ohrbach picketing. Actors from the Group Theatre and other theatre organizations also picketed. This is an indication that writers and actors like other professionals and white collar workers are growing more and more sympathetic with the struggles of other members of the working class. The old attitude of the actor that he is 'artist,' not a 'common laborer,' that he is superior to others of his class is being replaced by militant class consciousness, and an understanding of the common interests of all workers and the necessity of solidarity against the capitalist class."

The writer offers a striking example of this solidarity between workers and artists. He concludes:

"It is significant that when it was announced from the stage (of the Theatre Union) that some of the actors were arrested on the picket line and therefore no performance could be given on Saturday afternoon, the overwhelming majority of the audience applauded, indicating again the wide sympathy for the valiant fight of the Ohrbach workers and for the sympathetic action taken by the actors."

Incidentally, this strike of by no means major proportions(yet the first strike of department store workers) together with the help of writers, actors and other workers in the arts, was a decided victory.

Panic *is Produced*

An interesting event in literary America is the production of *Panic,* a play in verse by the noted American poet Archibald MacLeish.

His previous work was held as containing definite fascist tendencies. Michael Gold saw in his work what he called the "fascist unconscious." John Strachey utilized this characterization, together with an analysis of Macleish's work, in *International Literature* No. 4, 1934, in the article "Fascism and Culture," which appeared in book form in the United States under the title *Literature and Dialectical Materialism* (Published by Covici-Friede, New York).

For this reason the publication of part of his play in *New Theatre,* a revolutionary publication, caused "a storm of controversy." Preceding an interview with Macleish, Edwin Rolfe, writing in the *Daily Worker* says: "As Herbert Kline, editor of *New Theatre,* explained it to me, the failure to include ample editorial explanation of the political basis for the publication of Macleish, who herefore has been critized for being 'Unconscious Fascist,' was responsible for a good deal of the misunderstanding."

Meanwhile the Ohrbach strike in New York, subject of the prize winning play, the controversy in the Theatre Union, and debates among writers and artists, included Macleish. He was one of those who responded to the call of the Office Workers Union to assist in the picketing.

To Edwin Rolfe, the poet explained, in answer to the question as to why he participated:

"Like a great many other people, when cases of social injustice are brought to one's attention, one is filled with a very strong desire to do something about it. As soon as I was informed of the Writers' Commission, I was glad to participate."

Macleish was impressed with the courage of the young strikers. About the treatment they received in the New York courts the poet said, "I don't think anything that happened to me in ten years has made me so mad."

The rest of the interview, dealing with various phases of his work was of extreme interest.

While *Panic* was published in Boston (by the Houghton, Mifflin Company) it was produced in New York under the joint auspices of the *New Masses* and *New Theatre*. A symposium followed the performance.

Writing about both book and production Malcolm Cowley, literary editor of the weekly *New Republic* says:

"Say this for *Panic*, that it brings a new intelligence to the theatre and embodies the results of the experiments made by modern poets. Say this for the author, that he has achieved a style, has written verse that is quick, flashing with images and fit to be spoken on the stage. Say this too, that he has chosen a major subject and has written about his own time. There is nothing easy or cheap about his work; even its faults are painstakingly honest."

The critic adds: "Macleish is coming down from his tower; he is close enough to earth to perceive that men's fates are not independent of their times, that even the most powerful financial leaders cannot guard themselves against a general catastrophe. He sees that their destruction as a class would bring a vast sense of release to the people over whom they have ruled. But he is still not close enough to see that their struggles, not against symbolic figures or forces looming invisiby *like the wind in curtains*, but against living people."

Orrick Johns, well known poet, found that "No dramatic verse in recent years comes nearer to recreating the role of poetry in English drama than the lines of Archibald MacLeish in *Panic*."

Johns found however, that "As dramatist, indicates that its author's talent is richly adapted to the theatre, and the feeling of the attentive spectator, moved by an imaginative living speech that he has not heard for a long, long time from actors . . ."

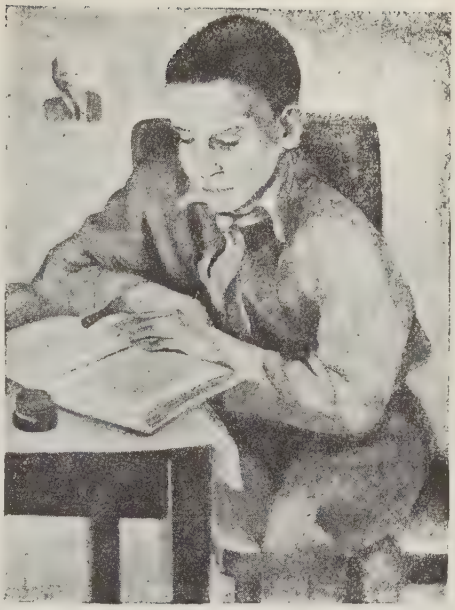
Johns found however, that "As dramatist, MacLeish has not reached the stature he has achieved as poet."

In the discussion which followed the production of *Panic*, V. J. Jerome pointed to the many virtues of the play. Among them, the verse pattern and the metrical scheme. Also: "Almost in the manner in which Wordsworth in England set out over a century ago, to capture the beauty of the common speech of men, MacLeish has woven into the texture of his lines the rhythms of current American speech."

The speaker found shortcomings as well. He says: "The play has as its theme the doom of capitalism, a doom that proceeds out of the very being of capitalism, organically, by an inexorable dictate. In this sense, *Panic* is, broadly speaking, an anti-capitalist play. . .

". . . .But this finale," the speaker pointed out, "the fall of capitalism, is conceived by the author in terms of automatic collapse." Jerome stressed the fallacy of this conception. He quoted Lenin's well known saying that "The bourgeoisie does not fall, the proletariat drops it. . . ."

The general consensus of the critics however, was that here was proof conclusive that another of America's noted literary figures was headed toward the ranks of the militant working class. It was an event both sides of the barricades took note of.

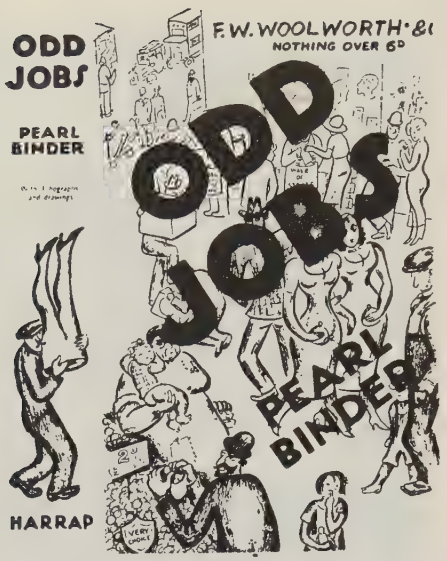


The Pioneer — a painting by the Dutch artist A. Van der Veer

ENGLAND

Pearl Binder's Odd Jobs

A book of more than ordinary interest published recently in London (by George G. Harrap & Co.) is *Odd Jobs*, by Pearl Binder, including ten authentic stories and many drawings by the author. The publishers announce, "Pearl Binder is one of the leaders of the young English graphic artists who, in reaction against contemporary decadence in art, are deliberately using the medium of lithography, with its magnificent satiric tradition, to expose social conditions of today. She came from Manchester to London ten years ago and her drawings and caricatures soon appeared in many newspapers



Jacket for the new book by Pearl Binder, British artist and writer

and magazines in Great Britain, France, the U.S.A. and the USSR."

Pearl Binder's work has appeared in *International Literature, Left Review* (England), *New Masses* (USA) and in a number of French and Soviet publications. She has exhibited in Moscow.

In addition to the wealth of unusually fine drawings in this book, Pearl Binder shows skill as a literary craftsman. The stories are told with the economy of the expert lithographer; they are sympathetic, satirical, always warm and human. Always not only colorful, but also understandable in terms of people we have met. *Odd Jobs* is so far above the usual production, in literary terms alone, that it is a more than welcome volume. The drawing of a splendid satirical artist makes the book doubly interesting.

Two New English Novels

Reviewing *The Time is Ripe,* a novel by Walter Greenwood, issued in the United States by Doubleday, Doran & Co., Granville Hicks, author of *The Great Tradition* writes:

"In most forms, but particularly in the novel, proletarian literature of Great Britain has lagged behind that of the United States. It is therefore both surprising and gratifying to find in one season two excellent revolutionary novels by English authors. One of these, Ralph Bates' *Lean Men,* Edwin Seaver has already reviewed in the *New Masses*—and very justly praised. The other is Walter Greenwood's *The Time is Ripe.*

"This is Greenwood's second novel," the critic continues. "His first, *Love on the Dole,* might legitimately be regarded as the best novel of the depresion that has appeared in any country. It is not the most harrowing, and it is one of the least militant, but it is uncommonly rich and full and many-sided."

The Time is Ripe, Granville Hicks feels, in an advance over the first novel. What concerns this critic however, is the fact that Greenwood is now a "city councillor in Salford, the scene of his two novels." He presumes that the author is also a member of the British Labor Party. He hopes this does not effect his work as a novelist and his sympathy for the worker. For, the critic concludes, Greenwood "has the ability to go a long way."

USSR

Maxim Gorki at 67

At the age of 67 Maxim Gorki continues to be active as ever. He attends meetings of writers, offers advice to beginning writers, answers letters from the peoples of the national minorities in whom he is especially interested.

He was cheered to the echo at the second All-Union plenum of Soviet writers where he made the concluding speech summarizing the achievements of writers and critics. This was not simply a eulogy. While he felt they had decided successes in creative work, Gorki found faults as well.

In his speech he described the transformation of the 17th century peasant into the socialist builder of today. This change, which he said, borders almost on the fantastic for speed and scope, has found little reflection in Soviet literature.

He pointed out that the activities of the class enemy, the kulak, were stil inadequately written of in Soviet literature. Children's literature, he felt, was still not receiving sufficient attention. He found that in criticism "insufficient vigilance" was manifested. He thought that it often lagged behind creative work. He called for closer co-operation between writers and critics.

Discussing the current state of literature, Gorki declared that the present large number of poets had failed to create an important stream of Soviet poetry. "The poems often attain a kilometer-length, but their social value is negligible."

Though he seldom attended the theaters his reading of many recent plays had convinced him that the playwrights were far from masters of their craft. He found the characters thinly sketched, unclear and not typical of their genre.

Writers and critics should make a thorough study of the past and present. "Only in understanding the reality of the past

Where Maxim Gorki was born — a painting by the Soviet artist Bogorotski

and the present can we arrive at that understanding of the future that is demanded by socialist realism."

Gorki and William James

Writing in the popular *Moscow Daily News*, A. Alexandrov says:

"Long before the Revolution William James, whom Maxim Gorki characterized as 'a philosopher and man of rare spiritual beauty' once asked the great proletarian writer:

" 'Is it true that in Russia there are writers, who come directly from the mass of the people and who are not influenced by any school in forming their art? I do not understand this phenomenom. From whence can emerge the desire to write poems—in a man of such miserable cultural environment, in a man who lives under the oppression of such unbearable social and political conditions?"

"But this was a fact, and it was only natural that in their quest for help and advice these men addressed the great proletarian writer, a man, who himself had to overcome numberless difficulties in order to be recognized and received in the ranks of professional writers.

"Unlike so many authors who do not read any books—except those written by themselves, Gorki is not only a great writer, but I—venture to say—a great reader, too.

" 'Between 1906 and 1910,' Maxim Gorki wrote in an article, 'Self-Made Writers,' published in 1910, 'I read more than 400 manuscripts—whose authors were writers from the people. The majority of these manuscripts were scarcely literate, they never would be printed, but there were revealed in them living human souls; in them was the direct voice of masses.' "

His interest in worker-writers continues to this day. He is interested in histories of factories. He corrects manuscripts of budding worker-authors. He offers them examples of what they should not write.

Gorki and the National Minorities

On the occasion of Kirov's death, Suleiman Stalski noted national poet of Daghestan wrote to Gorki:

"I hope you are well and flourishing. I send you my greetings and best wishes as the national poet of Daghestan. You must forgive me for not having visited Moscow in connection with the misfortune which has befallen our country. If it were not for

the difficulties of winter, the cold and my own weakness I should certainly have been with you. I am an old man, handicapped by my lack of strength, and the sorrow which has befallen us has weighed heavy on my shoulders and the shoulders of my fellow villagers, I would be with you. Here in our aul we feel the pain no less than our people in Moscow."

The noted folk poet tells Gorki of their history:

"Our Daghestan is a young republic. It will celebrate its 15th year in June, but it has already a fine, strong body and a clear vision. This country consists of rocks, ravines, mountains and rivers. In the Civil War the Party and the heroic Partisans had to overcome many obstacles in these mountains while today there are still hurdles to be surmounted. The same kind of rocks and ravines, of mountains and rivers have now to be crossed in the hearts and minds of men, because it is only since the Revolution that our peoples have struck out for themselves. Before they were in the position of forgotten and neglected stepsons.

"I think that it would be very interesting to relate how in our day and in our country the blind are being given the sight of their eyes, the deaf—hearing, the naked —clothing. We see this at very step and it hurts me that we have grown accustomed to it. There is nothing to cause surprise in this."

Suleiman Stalski then appeals to Gorki to send them Soviet writers to help in their celebrations. He says:

"I beseech you, dear Maxim Gorki to send four good, capable writers to attend our anniversary celebrations in June. Let them write a book about the mountainous land which has become a country of happy gardens, of clever, healthy youths. They will find many surprising things here and I am sure that the book would answer a real need.

"Although I am illiterate (I am dictating this letter to a neighbor) and although I am old and weak—my sight is beginning to fail me and my legs are growing unsteady—I am asking you to look into my request, dear Comrade Maxim Gorki. I hope to see you this summer. Give my warm greetings as a collective farmer to Comrade Stalin. Give my respects to your family.

"In heart and mind your friend,

Suleiman Stalski

The Village is now called Peshkovo

On a journey through the township of Kandabino, in the southern Ukraine, 40 years ago, young Maxim Gorki was startled by the heart-rending shrieks of a woman. The cause of these cries soon became obvious when he reached the throughfare. There, harnessed beside a horse and driven before a cart was a woman, stripped of her clothing, bending under the lashes of her husband's whip. Her husband, swarthy and bearded, stood up in the cart, the better to perform this task.

Surrounding this scene of domestic tragedy was a knot of sympathetic but terror-stricken housewives, and rough-bearded men of the village who jeered and urged on the infuriated spouse to greater exertions.

The gallant Gorki, outraged by the incident, threw himself in a fit of rage at the savage husband. In the ensuing scrimmage, Gorki was beaten by the bystanders.

Subsequently this incident was woven by Maxim Gorki into a short story that told in a nutshell the tragic subjugation of women, their inequality still attested to by the old peasant proverb urging good husbands "to whip their wives at dinner, and again at supper."

This incident of Gorki's early manhood was brought once more to mind when recently the venerable writer received a statement signed by the "new women" of Kandabino.

"We want you to see our village now! See what progress has been made by the women of Kandabino since the day when you passed through and saw Silvester Gaichenko beat his wife!" ran the message.

And indeed, what a striking list of achievements are set down to the credit of the women participating in socialist construction in the village! Vsevolodskaya, an outstanding collective worker, has been elected to the Ukrainian Government. Stepanida Turmanenko provides for her fam-

Alexei Tolstoi, noted Soviet novelist whose books have been printed in many countries

ily and ranks among the leading workers of the township.

Dunia Maximova, Komsomol organizer, resides in the very house once occupied by the brutal Gaichenko, while on the site of the ertswhile village tavern, a school and club have been built. Sasha Milenko of the Blue Dawn Collective has won all the GTO norms (Prepared for Labor and Defense) and carried off first honors in the district sprinting contests.

The village is described as wholly literate, and boasts an amateur dramatic circle. Women are no longer unequal before the law, nor does the husband have the right to beat his wife. Women, in fine, enjoy the full status of human beings, and no longer are considered inferior to their mates.

Greeting Gorki as "our first fighter for the emancipation of womankind," the women request his permission to alter the name of the village to Peshkhovo adopting Gorki's family name of Peshkov. The Kandabino collective farm has likewise asked permission to adopt the name of Maxim Gorki in the future.

Moscow Worker Writers

Young worker writers from Moscow factories recently celebrated the opening of their Creative Club with the headquarters at the Palace of Labor.

A number of young poets, workers in Moscow factories and offices and students in the schools, recited the best of their original works. Lugovskoy and Golodny, well-known Soviet poets, who lead groups in poetic composition, were present at the opening of the club.

At the club one can read the poet Mayakovski's notebook, with all its insertions and corrections. Two wall newspapers in the second room exhibit specimens of the work of club members.

A letter which Romain Rolland wrote in answer to Arkadi Severny, young discouraged worker writer, is exhibited. Rolland advised: "Don't complain because your books are not published right away. I wrote a dozen books before one was published."

The Soviet Writers Plenum

A demand for a higher standard of literary criticism marked the close of the plenum of the administrative committee of the Writers Union in March.

The Crimean writer, Iphin, told of the part played by literary critics in combatting nationalistic tendencies in Crimean literature. The problem of the theatrical repertoire was raised by Litovski, who drew attention to the great number of classical

Trade mark of the Co-operative Publishing Society for Foreign Workers in the USSR issuing many new literary works in English, including translations from the Russian and other languages

plays on the Soviet stage at the present time.

Libedinski discussed the "new actor," and new schools of acting. The re-education of the Soviet actor should provide a fruitful field for critical research, he claimed. Bolotnikov called upon writers to commence preparations for the forthcoming Pushkin and Rustavelli jubilees. He also reminded them of the approach of the 20th anniversary of the Soviet Union which he declared, should be celebrated with literary works of the occasion.

The shortcomings of literary journals were related by critic Rozhkov. The aims of Soviet literary critics were contrasted with those of bourgeois critics by Rosenthal. He said:

"While Soviet criticism lags behind our creative literature in achievements, it is, nevertheless, sounder at the core than bourgeois literary criticism, which does not seek its criteria in the ever-new demands of life, but continues to worship at the shrine of tradition and ancient formulas that only serve the cause of social reaction."

The widespread popularity of Shakespeare in the Soviet Union inspired the critic, Yuzovski, to call for the organization of a Shakespearean society. Greetings to the plenum from the Uzbek National Theatre were conveyed by Uzbek delegate Yaschi. The writers decided to send special greetings to the Uzbek Theater and to the Jewish Theater in Moscow, which is now celebrating its 15th anniversary.

The complete lack of contact between literary research workers and literary critics was discussed by Lezhnev. Surkov dwelt

Two more scenes from the new successful Sovie puppet movie The New Gulliver

on the problems of Soviet poets. Klimkovich, White Russian delegate, described the contemporary literary scene in White Russia, where he said, critics have recently waged war on the final vestiges of nationalism in White Russian letters.

The significance of the film *Chapayev,* as a contribution to Soviet art, was related by the critic, Kirpotin. Questions of literary technique were discussed by Kirshon.

The plenum closed with reports by Mintz on the progress of the "History of the Civil War," and by V. Ivanov on "History of Soviet Factories and Plants."

Ukrainian Poetry

The first volume of the first definitive edition of the works of Taras Shevchenko, national poet of the Ukraine has just appeared. Planned to consist of 10 volumes, the edition is being prepared with the cooperation of the Ukrainian Academy of Sciences.

Apart from the writer's poems, the volumes will contain his diaries and autobiographical notes, as well as unfinished fragments and the preliminary drafts of published writings. There will be a complete series of reproductions of his paintings and drawings, Shevchenko being famous as artist as well as poet.

The editors have made a point of restoring all those passages in Shevchenko's writings which were suppressed by the tsarist censor. In this way it will be possible for the first time to get a comprehensive picture of the poet's genius.

The volumes will be fully annotated, material for this purpose being drawn from the records of Shevchenko's revolutionary work among the Ukrainian peasantry.

The first volume includes all that Shevchenko wrote during the first eight years of his literary activity. It is planned to bring out the remaining nine volumes within the next two years.

A One Man Show

Poets a unique spectacle devoted to the memory of Mayakovski had its premiere recently in the Modern Theatre. The text was drawn from the writings of Pushkin and Mayakovski. This was in every sense of the word "a one-man show," as one actor, Vladimir Yakhontov, played the entire performance.

The new production is typical of the entire work of this theatre which has two aims: of being avowedly propagandist and of giving literary readings in the most effective and artistic manner possible.

Poets is the fourth big production which the theatre has put on. With *St. Petersburg,*

Vaudeville and *War* a technique has been developed compared to which Meyerhold's innovations are simple conservatisms.

In *Poets* the audience sees nothing on the stage except a curtain, a chair and a table, with the actor wearing an appropriate costume, but with scarcely any make-up.

If the Modern Theatre has only one actor, it has two producers, E. E. Popova and S. M. Vladimirski.

Among the forthcoming productions of the theatre will be a stage representation of the history of the CPSU.

Okhlopkov, Producer of Aristocrats

For the foreign visitor especially, one of the most interesting theatres in Moscow has been the Realistic Theatre, where Okhlopkov, young Soviet director is working out his ideas. Two seasons ago the production of *Razbeg* attracted attention. This year *Aristocrats,* based on Pogodin's novel of the White Sea-Baltic Canal has further established him as an innovator whose work deserves serious attention. A new theatre for his productions is close to being realized. About this theatre, Okhlopkov says:

"The public will sit on revolving chairs. The stage surrounds them, the walls opening, advancing, receding. The action takes place on all sides. Sometimes the stage will be in the center, a ring of spectators around it, and another stage surrounding them. They will indeed be in the midst of the action. Each play will require a different arrangement of seats and stage, as a battle requires a shift of guns and army for each encounter. If the best effects require the public to be in the cellar or on the ceiling that's where they should be. I want nothing static about my theatre."

About himself Okhlopkov writes:

"My theatrical career started as a 'sandwich man' for a little theatre in a provincial town. I was especially good," he said ruefully, "because I was so tall that placards I wore could be decorated with longer advertisements. My request for a chance on the stage was refused because I had no costume. But I finally was taken on as a stagehand. An actor fell ill once and I was given a small part."

The Revolution speeded up matters for him. He joined a young troupe and wrote a scenario for a mass performance which was staged in the open air at a May 1 celebration. He went to Moscow and was surprised to find that Meyerhold and others were thinking along the same revolutionary lines of staging as he. But he was disappointed in his first meeting with Meyerhold, who, he said didn't go far enough to suit him. He went back to the provinces and experimented further, returning to Moscow and studying for six years in the Meyerhold school. Then he went into the cinema. Later he came back to the theater to stay.

The Theatre and the Peasant

To meet the cultural demands of the villages, the Peoples Commissariat of Education of the RSFSR is planning to organize this year an additional 44 theatres for the rural areas. About 25,000 performances are to be given in 1935 by all the theatres organized the state and collective farms. Over five million people will be given the opportunity to see these performances.

The work of such world famous theatres as the Bolshoi and Kamerny Theatres among workers and peasants is already well known. Other established theatres are doing equally as well.

The company of the Vakhtangov Theatre in Moscow has patronage over the rural theatres in Gorki Province. Last spring the company organized in Moscow a seven-day seminar for rural directors and, later on, two-week courses for the actors playing in the collective farm theatres of Gorki Proince. These seminars were led by Shchukin, Zakhava, Tolchanov and other noted artists of the theatre.

Actors in the rural theatres, trained in Moscow and aided by the Vakhtangov theatre company, worked out plans for the rural troupes. In addition, the Vakhtangov Theatre sent some of its directors to several collective farms to help stage first performances. The repertoire of the collective farm theatres in Gorki Province is at present of such a diversity and high artistic value that a great deal of the difference between the urban and rural theatres has been obliterated. Collective farm theatres of Gorki Province have staged this year such plays as *The Lower Depths* by Gorki, *The Wonderful Alloy* by Kirshon; *Soil Upturned* by Sholokhov; *Time Ahead* by Katayev; *Storm* by Belotserkovski, and others.

The Peoples Commissariat of Education of the RSFSR has issued instructions to all heads of the regional and province departments of the Peoples Commissariat of Education to take up the question of making satisfactory arrangements for those working in collective farm theatres. In addition, local organizations have been requested to supply troupes with means of transportation for their regular rural tours.

Editor-in-Chief SERGEI DINAMOV

IN THIS ISSUE

Heinrich Vogeler—is a German revolutionary artist who has done work in various sections of the Soviet Union. His paintings hang in a number of galleries and public buildings and are shown often in Soviet galleries.

Vsevolod Ivanov—is a well known Soviet novelist and short story writer. He is author of *Partisan Stories, U,* and other books. He contributes to this issue from his latest book *The Adventures of a Fakir.*

I. Babel—is a Soviet writer whose books have appeared in a number of countries. He is best known for his short stories of the Red Cavalry and of the pre-revolutionary underworld of Odessa.

August Cesarec—is a Yugoslav revolutionary writer, author of novels which have placed him in a leading position among the writers of his country.

Richard Wright—Young American poet, is a frequent contributor to the *New Masses, Left Front* and other revolutionary publications. His verse, particularly in the last year, has at once placed him alongside Langston Hughes, Sterling Brown and other prominant Negro poets.

Lydia Gibson—is an American illustrator and painter. She has exhibited in many leading galleries and is an executive board member of the Artists Group of the New York John Reed Club.

George Dimitrov—courageous figure in the Reichstag Fire Trial needs no introduction to our readers. He is now at work in the Soviet Union.

Theodore Balk—Serbian by birth, is a prominent journalist and author of a number of books who has always written in German. His pen-portrait of E. E. Kisch in this issue (born in Czechoslovakia) is about a writer who has been a close co-worker and comrade of his for many years.

Henri Barbusse—noted French writer, author of *Under Fire, Chains* and other volumes of prose and verse is a leading figure in a world-wide organization of struggle against war and fascism.

Michael Gold—novelist and playwright, on the editorial board of the *New Masses,* is conducting a column in the *Daily Worker,* organ of the American Communist Party.

Tieh Ken—is a talented young Chinese artist whose work is beginning to attract a great deal of attention.

Seki Sano and *Yoshi Hidjikata*—are two prominent Japanese theatrical directors who are now working in Moscow. For their participation in revolutionary activities, especially for taking part in the last Soviet Writers Congress, both of them have been exiled from their native country. *Hidjikata* has had his peerage revoked and his property confiscated. *Seki Sano* spent six months in the United States on the way to the Soviet Union. *Seki Sano* is at work at the Meyerhold Theatre and *Hidjikata* at the Theatre of Revolution. They are now jointly at work on a play of contemporary life in Japan.

S. Rasumovskaya—is a Soviet art critic whose work has appeared in earlier issues of *International Literature.*

Trude Richter—is a German revolutionary critic. Her work has appeared steadily in the German and Soviet press.

Franz Leschnitzer—is a German critic and novelist, now at work in the Soviet Union. He is on the editorial staff of the German edition of *International Literature.*

IN THE NEXT ISSUE OF INTERNATIONAL LITERATURE

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LENIN ON ART by A. V. LUNACHARSKI

Also: A Story by Ivan Katayev — *Heart* (USSR); Reportage by Anna Seghers — *Koloman Wallisch's Last Journey* (Austria); Articles: S. Dinamov — *The Satire and Humor of Mark Twain;* I. Kashkeen — *Ernest Hemingway: A Tragedy of Craftsmanship;* S. Eisenstein — *Mei Lang Fang and the Chinese Theatre;* etc.

Other Stories and Articles — Biographical Notes — International Chronicle Paintings and Letters from Writers (Great Britain).

INTERNATIONAL LITERATURE

C O N T E N T S

№ 5 May 1935

Editorial Assistant WALT CARMON

In the Next Issue (№ 6) Beginning

LIFE AND ESTHETICS

BY N. G. CHERNISHEVSKI

Articles by SERGEI DINAMOV, EUGENE CLAY, SERGE TRETYAKOV and others Stories by I. BABEL, (USSR); JEAN GUEHENNO (France) SANDOR GERGELI (Hungary). Reportage — Literary Portraits — Biographical Notes — Letters From Writers and International Chronicle.