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Kandalaksha — A Karelian Fishing Village. Showing the changes that have taken place here since the revolution. A composite painting by the German revolutionary artist — HEINRICH VOGELER

Lydia Seifulina

Virineya

Beginning a Soviet Novel to be Published in Full

FOREWORD

Lydia Nikolayevna Seifulina, the author of Virineya, *is a well known Soviet writer. She was born on March 22, 1889, at Varlamovo in the province of Orenburg. Her father was a Tatar. On finishing high school she became a teacher. For a long time before the Revolution she taught in schools, worked in libraries and sometimes acted on the stage. Her first literary effort was a story entitled "Pavlushkin's Career," published in a newspaper,* Soviet Siberia, *in 1921.*

Virineya *was first printed in the journal* Krasnaya Nov, *April 1924, and attracted the attention of a wide circle of readers. It received very favorable criticism and was subsequently published in several different editions. The following year the author, in cooperation with V. Pravdukhin, rewrote the story in the form of a play, which bore the sub-title of "Scenes from Country Life."*

The complete edition of Seifulina's works, which now includes many volumes, contains the Law-Breakers, Humus, *and* A Moujik's Tale of Lenin.

Virineya *has been published in most European countries. Because it has not yet appeared in English, we present the whole book to our readers (with slight cuts, due to its length) in three generous installments of which this is the first*—Editors.

In the forty-ninth year of his age the soul of Saul Magara was disquieted by God. It came all of a sudden like a seizure. At the uncanny hour of midnight Saul's wife awoke, glanced about the room and then uttered a frightened gasp.

"What's up with you, Saul? Is it your innards troublin' you or what? Eh? Your face looks terrible dark-like. I woke up all of a sudden as if someone gave me a dig in the side. Thinks I to myself—this is no hour for the lamp to be burning, and you not in your bed yet. What's come over you at all? Are you taken bad, man? There's holy water over there under the icon."

Saul's grey eyes, strangely darkened now, scowled at her from his knitted brows. He moved his broad red beard and gave a sigh so deep that it shook his great, well-knit shoulders. Then he said in a hollow voice:

"Don't bother me, woman. I've had a visitation. What his name was and where he stands with God—whether he's a martyr or one of the saints —I can't tell, but anyhow it was a holy man appeared to me. Standing there by the table he was—and called out to me angry like: 'Saul Astafyev Magara!' A puny fellow, not much to look at, to be sure, simple like, but his voice was all right. It sounded a bit like the magistrate's. I was that sleepy I couldn't tell at first it was a visitation. I thinks to myself, he's come for money again. I was swearing here in my beard: how's this, I says to myself, imagine the magistrate coming bothering me this hour of the night? And all the time something inside was telling me this wasn't him. I went that

cold inside 'twas as if my bowels were turned to ice, and my skin was covered over with goose flesh in fright."

It was not so much the moujik's actual words as the unusual abundance of them terrified the old woman. He had never been a talkative man, it was always hard to get a word out of him, and now to hear the way he ranted on.

"Oh mercy me! Saints have mercy on us! God Almighty, save us—Lookit here, maybe it wasn't a saint after all, Saul, but the Mordovka Strepetikha who's put a spell over you. 'Tisn't as if you was the prayin' sort, you ain't never been a godly man. Why should a saint bother to come to a man like you who doesn't deserve it? Say your prayers and say them properly: Now, then: And God shall arise and scatter his enemies."

Saul silenced her angrily:

"Keep your unholy woman's tongue still! Will you stop your clatter, you'll wake the young ones in the front room. This has got to be kept secret for a while yet. I'm only telling you because, after all, we've sinned our sins together, me and you. I tell you it was a saint with the name of God on his lips, and he commanded me to pray long and earnestly. God has lifted his holy finger and picked me out. That's what sent the chill through me. Three times I saw it—the visitation."

The woman groaned, hastily got into her loose bodice, and flung her shawl over her head. She crossed herself frequently as she dressed and murmured:

"Mother of God, save us! Lord have mercy on our souls! Holy—holy—"

"That'll do. Don't mother me. I don't want woman's sinful flesh defilin' my prayers. I'm just goin' to start prayin' myself."

He rose, bent his big body laboriously and knelt down. He remained kneeling and beating his brow on the floor until sunrise.

His heart was never the same again after that night. Even before that it had never been a light heart. His eyes had seldom been merry and he had never been able to laugh easily. In his fleeting moments of gaiety he would give a hollow grunt. About once in three years, when the mood was on him, he went on a spree for a long period. He was extremely rowdy when drunk and thrashed his wife and children unmercifully. He ruined his eldest girl's hearing that way, and she grew up a scared thing, deaf in one ear. Sometimes she would talk to herself as if she was silly.

The drunken fit over, he lived very soberly the rest of the time. People respected him for his thriftiness, and acquisitiveness. Now everything was changed. He threw the whole of the responsibility on the shoulders of his youngest daughter's husband. Gazing somewhere away over his son-in-law's head, Saul said in a stern and weighty tone:

"Don't bother me any more about the farm. Manage it any way you like. You can scrape and screw more out of it if you want to, or you can send it all whistling down the wind if you aren't strong enough to save. But I've something else to think about now. I've got to fast and pray and don't you go leading me into temptation, wanting to know this, that and the other."

Word was sent to the married daughters who lived in other villages. They hastened with their husbands to their father's house. The house was so packed with women that there was hardly room to breathe. Then the chattering and gossiping and ah-ing and oh-ing began. Saul stamped his foot threateningly, shouted at them and left the house. He built himself a mud hut out beyond the village. In winter he did his praying inside the

hut and in summer on a stone halfway down the hill. His family brought him, by his command, his meagre meals.

At first Lower Akgirovka was astonished. Then it began to respect Magara. The main thing was that it would look well in the eyes of God, for Magara would pray for the people from his village. Then, too, it was flattering: he was the first holy man produced by the Mordvinian-Russian part of Akgirovka. Of course, before Magara's time, there had been others from that district who had "got God." But they had been for the most part sectarians and Kerjaks,[1] fanatical folk from Akgirovka on the hill. Although Lower Akgirovka did what was expected of it in the way of christenings, weddings, funerals and confession of sins, it exhibited no zeal in these things. It lacked religious fervor. They belonged to the parish of Kuraiga, fifteen miles from the village, and divided from it by a river without a bridge. They had never built their own church and no one wanted to climb the hill to pray in the Kerjak meeting house. There were times when the river prevented them from going to church, and times when there was work to be done. Sometimes they put off going to church for quite a long time. The Akgirovka women had to be sternly rebuked from the pulpit by the Kuraiga priest in the hearing of the whole parish. Instead of coming to the "service for the purification of women after child-birth" on the fortieth day, as required by the church, they only came when they were about to go through a second child-birth.

So Lower Akgirovka stood by no means high in God's graces. Then suddenly this zealot appeared.

The news spread to the neighboring districts. With every year he grew stronger and better at the business of praying. In the third year, when Saul's knees had already worn a perceptible dinge on the stone, God appeared to him in all manner of visions and Saul began to prophesy. One Sunday he came into the village and announced to the old folks:

"The heavens are shaking. Your eyes can't see it but mine can. Too many folks on the earth, that's what it is, too many folks breathin' and shaking the heavens. I've seen a vision; and in it I saw crowds and crowds of people, some driving in carts, walking one behind the other, with their women and children and goods and chattels. And I saw a white Tsar, our Tsar, a Russian, sitting on his throne, stamping his feet on the floor, vexed like. Sure as fate, there'll be a war; it's got to be—to get rid of some of the people."

Three summers later the Akgirovka people recalled Magara's prophecy. The sunset flamed crimson, foretelling windy weather. But the night crept down softly, windlessly, over the land. The river spread its coolness abroad and drew after it towards the village the smoke from the fires of the riverside dwellers who were preparing their suppers in the open. The farmyards smelt of new milk, new mown hay and tar fresh on the cartwheels. With the setting in of evening people were ready to go to their rest. In the yards and houses the sounds of noisy day softened gradually till they died down for the night. All of a sudden, the heavy evening dust rose and whirled in columns along the village street, and the dogs barked furiously as a long-legged moujik galloped up on an undersized, sweating horse. The man was waving a stick with a red rag attached to it. The village elder's wife caught sight of him from the yard, and rushed into the house to fetch her husband.

[1] One of the sects who stood out for the preservation of the "Old Rites" against the innovations of the Russian Orthodox Church in the seventeenth century. These dissenters suffered persecution under Peter I for their determined opposition to his reforms; great numbers fled to the unpopulated tracts of Siberia and the North Caucasus, and some even emigrated.

"Come out quick! It's a man on horseback from the head village. With a bit of a red rag on a stick. Must have come after recruits. God Almighty, who'd have thought of such a thing!"

That night was an anxious one both for the folk in the valley and on the hillside where the Kerjaks lived. Lanterns were brought to the elder's house in Lower Akgirovka. Their feeble light flickering in the dense July darkness bred a feeling of helplessness and alarm. Unaccustomed lamps glimmered in the windows, the houses were lit up with the flames of stoves heated at this unusual hour. The hum of many voices rose and spread through the village. Piercing women's cries, the harsh wailing of old women and the bawling of children wakened and terrified by the confusion, mingled with the hollow voiced exclamations of the old men and the curses of the young.

The Kerjaks up the hill huddled in the office of the swarthy engineer in charge of the building of the railway. He carried on a conversation over the wires through a pipe hanging on the wall—a telephone it was called—and explained to the people:

"Germany will get the punishment she deserves. Very soon, too. . . ."

The people down in the lower part of the village had no one to appeal to for information. The school stood with closed shutters, the school-master had left for the whole summer. The elder rummaged about in the trunk, peppering his slow, reluctant movements with curses. He was searching for his insignia of office, a brass plate with his number on it.

The elder's wife kept inquiring in a whining, snivelling voice of the cross-eyed messenger:

"And who's the war with this time? Will they drive the boys a long way off?"

The cross-eyed one scratched his sweating back and replied vaguely:

"Seems like it's with Germany, but I don't rightly know. I'd no time to find out. The officer shoved me down the steps and told me to ride hell for leather. 'The recruits have to be in the town by tomorrow midday without fail,' says he. And it's two hundred versts to the town. We won't get there by nightfall, much less by midday. Even if the order was to be brought on a cart with fresh horses at each stage. Well, and what sort of carts are these of ours? Where would they get to? And it's summer time, and all—the busiest time of the year."

"How can they get there in that time! At their best they can only reach the head village by tomorrow midday."

"To go off so sudden like on the Tsar's service without a bit of a spree or anything to set them off. Why, I never heard nor saw such a thing in all my born days," and the old woman broke into bitter wailing.

"Miterka, my son, my little boy. Your mother bore and reared you and now where are they taking you to in the middle of the night? You're leaving us, deserting us—and who'll look after your young wife and your little son-and-heir. You're leaving your home, and your sisters and brothers, your father and me, your own mother who bore you."

A storm of short, passionate sobs drowned the old woman's long drawn-out wailing. Her daughter-in-law, Nastasia, dug her fingers into Mitri's drooping, dejected shoulders, and beat her head on his breast. Mitri moved his head in a comical way as if his collarband was too tight for him. He tried to loosen the woman's hands, saying with assumed gruffness:

"Aw, leave go of me! Whining! I'm not dead yet, what are you crying over me for? Come on now, lay the table. The stove'll go cold. Go on and bake what you was meaning to send with me."

The village elder rose stiffly from where he had been kneeling by the trunk. He looked at his son with cloudy eyes and then growled:

"That'll do you now, women. Get out the vodka. Used to be plenty of it about. Time was there'd be always a grand send-off for men going off on the Tsar's service; there'd be singing and a spree. Now we hear nothing but yelping and whining."

But there were neither songs nor sprees this time. The men left without any, of the drunken courage and boldness inspired by the Tsar's vodka. There was no licensed public house for the sale of liquor in the village itself and the supplies kept by the women who sold home-distilled vodka illegally proved insufficient to provide stormy merriment. The stoves heated out of their usual time refused to yield tasty buns. Bitter tears had blinded the eyes of the women who made them and their thoughts were not on their work. The sun was barely risen when the carts clattered out of the yards. The people poured out into the streets. Magara came tramping into the village in his long, homespun linen shirt down to his knees. The strips of linen wound round his legs in lieu of stockings were old and dirty. Angrily he shook his mane of faded red hair streaked with muddy grey and strode along by the side of the cart. The heart rending wails of the women hung over the road for miles. Old Fedot, who was stumping along tapping his stick beside Magara, comforted his own relatives in the cart with:

" 'Tain't for long—this war, you'll see. There weren't nothing to be heerd of it. Look at th'old wars, now. Why, you'd hear tell of 'em a year and more aforehand. Sodgers weren't never taken in sech a hurry afore. That'll be for putting down some rebels inside the country that they're calling up the men. Stop your yelping now, women. As far as I can see, your good men'll soon be home again."

But Margara declared in a penetrating voice that carried along the line of carts:

"No, it's going to be a long war! There are too many peasants in the kingdom of Russia, and there's not enough land to support them. The war won't stop till the Tsar's got rid of all he doesn't need."

II

Magara's prophecy came true once more. The second ploughing was coming round, and still the best of the men were spending their strength in the Tsar's service. The farm labor had to be done by women, old men, those of the young who were deformed and unfit for service and hired men from other parts of the country. Some of the rich had tried to buy themselves off, but even they were taken at last, if not to the war itself, at least away from home.

The Akgirovka women envied Mokeikha the midwife, whose son had returned to her that spring. True, he was small, narrow shouldered, hollow cheeked and coughed fit to choke sometimes. But still he was her own, and you could trust your own to do the best for the farm. It wasn't as if he had no arms or legs. He was sickly looking, of course, but he had nothing wrong with him that anyone could see. Fekla, the short, fat woman next door, would often loiter by the fence, wiping her kind, slobbery mouth and say fulsomely:

"You ought to live just to give God thanks for your good fortune. Your son's come home whole and sound to you and there's no talk of his being taken so far. Though everyone else has been taken, none but the old folk and the rotten folk left behind. And yours is still pretty lively, it seems. Look what a woman he's got too, without even a wedding ring to buy. There's sap in the

fellow yet, then. You wouldn't see a single young face in our village these days, they're all either grey headed or just little bits of lads. Sometimes you see these gov'ment folks, ingineers and them what are building the railway, or else prisoners, them measly Austrians and the like, but there's neither sight nor light of our own lovely boys. Never a word. In other places the leftovers are good-for-something, but here, well, they're that scarce. Vasska, they say, is working on the railway, is he? Or is it only an odd job he's taken on?"

Mokeikha, who was taking some old, much-washed rags off the fence, said reluctantly:

"An odd job. He's gone on an errand to take some paper or other to the Section Office," and hurried into the house. She dreaded the inquisitive neighbor's turning the conversation on young Virka, and she did not feel inclined to listen to hints and censure.

Spring waters gurgled in the hollows of the steppe. A horse could make no headway. But over the hills there were narrow tricky, unreliable footpaths. Vasska had been tempted by the pay offered. He had to carry a letter from the engineer to the section office eight versts away. The engineer had promised him ten rubles for doing it. Money did not lie so deep and heavy in the pockets of the gentry it could be easily stirred. Not like the moujiks' money—hard to move and to get at. Sure enough, that swarthy looking gentleman would add a tip to the ten ruble note. Since the railway was started the whole place had done better. Vasska was a long time coming home, though. The engineer seemed to be in a great hurry. He came in to Vasska's yard himself. Mokeikha caught sight of him through the window and ran out to meet him. She made him a deep, servile bow from the waist and chanted in a sing-song voice:

"Imagine the likes of you having to trouble yourself all along of my son. Lord have mercy on us! You must be very anxious. A moujik himself wouldn't be any too ready to walk down the street in such muck as this. It's a sin and a shame really, Vasska isn't home yet. Don't be too hard on him, though, sir."

Then in a rougher, more sincere tone she added.

"Like enough he's hurrying his very hardest, wet and cold and hungry as he is; he's never broken his fast all day."

Vassili had not only to bring a reply from the chief engineer, but tobacco as well. The swarthy engineer wanted to smoke and neither tobacco nor cigarettes were to be had in this hole of a place. There was, therefore, more annoyance than he had intended in his voice as he interrupted the old woman.

"Send him to me as soon as he comes," he was saying when suddenly the words died on his lips.

A woman was crossing the yard. People had grown plainer and more insignificant nowadays. Women's beauty, even, had grown somehow shallow and deceptive. It depended on clothes, on the efforts made to preserve it. But even in her faded, skimpy, town-made things this woman looked stately. She cast an indifferent glance at the man and the old woman. The glance of those large, though not round eyes with their hot flecks of gold echoed strangely through the engineer's heart. It was as if his own eyes had been longing to meet such a glance. With a queer pang of pleasure he recognized them and retained the memory for long afterwards of an olive skin, with a faint, rare color in the cheeks, of lips that were not bright red, and looked somehow unkissed, of severe, sharply marked eyebrows and the hint of dull red in the smooth brown hair. He could not drag his feet out of the yard. He hesitated and then said in an undecided, almost embarrassed way:

"Perhaps I'd better wait here. He'll surely be home soon."

The old woman responded reluctantly: "Just as you like. It's getting on for night-fall, he ought to be here soon."

The other woman came out of the house carrying a full bucket of dirt and slops.

"Stand aside, sir, for fear I splash you," she said in a hostile tone.

The old woman suddenly collected her wits about her:

"Come inside, sir, if you don't mind. We aren't very smart, but it's better'n standin' in the yard. Come in, please."

He followed the old woman against his will, feeling all the time that it would be better for him to go. Stammering slightly, he asked in a low voice:

"Who's that?. . . . Your daughter?"

The old woman's lips tightened grimly.

"My son's woman," she replied shortly. Then, unable to restrain her bitter indignation, she added:

"She's not his wedded wife. We keep her just as she is. Ever hear of Antippe the Kerjak? Well, it's his niece. From such a God-fearing house. Seems to have taken a fancy to us, weak and sickly though we are, and came running to Vasska one night. They'd been living in the town this three years without being married. She's only been here a fortnight. Such a disgrace to bring down on his mother's house. Now, maybe, they'll get lawfully married. I've a deal to stand from the neighbors just now because of them. I never heard of such a thing in all my born days: that my family should be disgraced like this! There are all sorts of stories about her, too, about Virka. I'm only telling you because you'll have heard it, like enough, from other folks. Ill fame gets about in no time."

Then she pulled herself together once more and said:

"Come in and sit down."

With a flick of her apron she cleared something from the bench by the table in the corner nearest the door. Then she passed her rough hand over the clean wooden table top. Her dejected glance took in the whole of the low, cramped room. It had been tidied and yet it was not fit for a gentleman to sit in. She sighed and retired into the background. The engineer sat down. He wanted to question her further but felt shy. He tried a few flabby sentences about the spring, questioned her awkwardly and incoherently about her farm. A corner of the wooden bed covered with a soiled patchwork quilt kept getting in his eye. It was offensive. Impossible that she of the severe, pencilled brows should sleep on such a bed. And not alone . . . He felt uneasy again when she came in, and for some reason found it necessary to explain:

"I wanted to wait here till I get the answer to my letter. I'm not in your way, am I?"

She gave a crooked, little unkind smile.

"I don't suppose you'll wear out the bench sitting on it. And how could you be in our way?"

She took down a coarse woolen stocking from the shelf, seated herself quietly by the window and began to knit.

"You don't belong to these parts, do you—er—I don't know your name?"

She looked at him out of the corner of her eye and laughed. The gleam of white teeth and the frankness of her smile made her face look simpler and much more youthful.

A slightly stupid expression of admiration came over the engineer's face.

"They call me Virineya. It's a Kerjak saint's name. We have our own saints. You're awful curious about me, aren't you, sir? Better talk to Ma here. She's lived longer'n me and got more to talk about. And it's my opinion you'd

be better at home sitting in a nice clean room than smelling our moujik stink in this place. If Vassili brings back what you asked him to, we'll see you get it."

Then with a sly smile she added: "I'll bring it myself."

"Yes, do, please. I'm willing to pay for the trouble. Otherwise, it looks as though I'd have to wait a long time here. I live a good way off. Over yonder on the hill. If you wouldn't mind . . . Your husband will come back very tired, no doubt, so either you or someone else—Fetch it or send it by someone, please."

He tried to speak casually; his voice was stern, but his eyes betrayed his eagerness and his feeling of having been slighted. He got out the word "husband" with difficulty. Virineya sensed this. She cast a sidelong glance at the old woman and said curtly:

"We'll send it to you, no matter by whom. Not for just thanks, of course, you'll pay. Hey, wait a minute!"

She caught sight of Vasska through the window.

"Here he is and he can hardly drag a leg after him. So you can get it now, what he's brought."

She went to the door. Before she reached it she glanced back and said severely:

"After a tramp like that you ought to give him a bit extra, even without our bringing it to the house to you. Another fellow wouldn't go for four times as much. It's no joke—along that slippery bank and through icy-cold water."

The engineer hastily pulled out his note case, but Virka had already left the house. He thrust fifteen rubles into the old woman's hand. She recoiled, overjoyed, almost terrified. Then she babbled in a thin, wheedling voice:

"We're always glad to do anything we can for you, I'm sure, sir. We'll do our best . . . Thank you kindly, sir. Whenever you want us, you've only got to call us."

She stood there bowing, but her heart went out to her son. If only the gentleman would go quickly! Her son came in blue with the cold, and sat down by the stove. A fit of coughing racked and twisted him. Between the coughs he gasped:

"Chilled to the bone. . . . Virka, give the gentleman . . . this packet—and this as well . . . It got . . . a bit wet, I got into some water."

Another fit of coughing shook him. He got up the phlegm with an effort and spat into his fist. The engineer did not look at him, although he had noticed with unconscious satisfaction Vasska's faded, meagre appearance as he entered the house. He had sent Vasska on the errand without actually noticing what he was like. Now he had a good look at the fellow. He accepted the damp package from Virineya with a smile.

"Oh, never mind. I expect it was difficult to keep it dry on a tramp like that. It's tobacco, it can be dried, and I've got a little stock of cigarette papers still. I suppose I'll be able to read the letter, too. Some of the writing's a little smudged, but not a great deal of it, thank goodness. Well, thanks very much."

Virineya's brows drew together. "Sending a fellow on a tramp like that with the roads in the state they are—all for a bit of tobacco."

She shook her head reprovingly. "The gentry are mighty impatient. If they want anything, they must have it at once, no matter what comes or goes. Just as if it was real need—imagine bothering about a bit of tobacco like this . . . Did he pay? Who'd he give the money to?"

At that the old woman cried angrily:

"The money's paid, the money's paid. Here it is, I've got it. You ought to say 'thank you' to the gentleman for his kindness."

"Oh, he's terribly kind, I'm sure! Vasska'll be laid on his back again now. He's got a chill."

This angered the engineer

"Well, that's not my fault, is it? Good night. Thanks."

He hurried out of the house, thinking about Virineya.

"She's a knowing one—must have seen something in her time. . . . The grasping kind."

But he dreamt of her at night, and his dreams threw him into such a heat that sleep left him. He went out on the porch of the house and sat till dawn listening to stirrings of spring. He always kept himself well in hand; did gymnastics unfailingly every morning and led a sober life. He never had much to do with women, except when it was absolutely necessary. He maintained a sensible, wholesome clean attachment in the town, and avoided the eager soldiers' wives hereabouts, for fear of ruining his health. He was looking forward to his holidays and devoting himself meanwhile to his work. He regarded ambition as a noble sentiment and began his career well. This was only his second job. The railway would soon be finished now. The war had deprived him of workers and means. But it was drawing to an end at last. There was no need to hurry to the town now. Urgent construction work had released him from military service. He regarded an indulgence in rash and promiscuous love affairs as filthy debauchery. It was not the first time that the sight of women of the type he found desirable had suddenly inflamed his senses, but always before he had been able to repress these sudden outbreaks. There had never been pangs of yearning like these. It was his thirty-first spring, and before the encounter with Virineya, he had been dreaming of a woman of his own, someone untasted and desired. His last letter to the woman who lived in the town had contained an unusual amount of feeling. Loneliness and the way he was circumstanced had affected him. The vast, untraversed steppe, powerfully fertile, lay in the embrace of the hills, the peace of which was now disturbed for the first time by explosions. The earth lay expectant, breathing of spring and full of significant longings. Men and cattle—all living things dwelt here in wise and perfect obedience to the immemorial law of life: they were born and lived for the purpose of giving birth to life. To bear fruit, to give offspring to the earth and to one's kind—that was the reason for this disturbance in the blood of the young and healthy; it was not a hankering after the sickly lascivious pleasure of the town. It was a powerful desire that had come now to disturb, a passion that bound soul and body in one whole. The desire that created life. Some animal instinct told him that Virineya, too, longed for just such a passion. He did not put the thought into words or was he even conscious that he must see her and live and breathe near her. He flung himself down from the porch and out into the open. He hung about Virineya's cottage for a long time. It was just before daybreak. The street was deserted even by the raw young fellows who had learnt on account of the war to gad about until the small hours. Only the barking of the dogs disturbed the stillness of this early hour. A cold white daybreak was dispersing with its everyday sobriety the intoxicating spell of the night. He turned and went home at a brisk pace. Had he come earlier, at dead of night, he might have seen Virineya by the fence. She had been very slow about going to bed the evening before; had spent a long time arranging the pillows at the head of the bed. Then she got up and looked out of the window. It was curtained with the darkness of the spring night. She moved about the room vaguely as if she was not thinking of where she was going. The old woman

lying on the shelf of the stove gave an angry groan, and grumbled in a hollow voice:

"What are you creeping about the house for at this hour? It's your evil conscience won't let you sleep, I suppose? Rousing Vasska from his hard earned rest. Try going through the steppe hollows in spring yourself. Another young woman, one with a morsel of conscience, would take pity on my old bones. They want a bit of quiet at night. Instead of that, the very minute I close my eyes, it's clip, clop, clump, clump! She can't even behave like other decent folks—she's always got to be larking about. Or maybe it's the street calling to you, you want to be out gallivanting again? Well, go. Everybody knows, a woman who's married afore she's churched is ready for any who fancies her."

To this tirade Virineya replied in a low voice:

"Stop your nagging, old one. If you go too far you'll be sorry. It won't be just out in the street I'll go. I'll clear out for good, and you'll never see sight nor light of me."

"Oh, mercy me, won't that upset me! You'd think we'd sent a match-maker for her, and she was a great catch! Whereas we all know she came running in under the gate like a mongrel bitch. It wasn't the first gate, either, she crept under, maybe."

Virineya said nothing. She lay still on the bed. But the old woman's thoughts were busy. This good-for-nothing disreputable Kerjak woman had brought neither wealth nor glory to the home. Nothing but sin and shame. Antippe the Kerjak had not forgotten to this day how he had found his gate smeared with tar on account of his niece's loose ways. He hated Vasska and had done all he could to ruin the lad and snatch his means of livelihood away from him. Vasska was a carpenter, and a house painter, and a stove layer, in a plain, simple way. God had answered her prayers and let her keep this one son out of all that had been born to her. Three had died in almost the same hour, of some throat disease. The fourth had been devoured by a hog while she herself had been hard at work in the fields. Vasska was the only one she had managed to save from clutching death, from God's fierce grasp. That was why he was like an ulcer in his mother's heart. She allowed no one, not even herself, to touch him carelessly. When he grew up and refused to do the peasant's work he was born to, and left for the town, she forgave him without complaint. Though he acquired nothing more valuable than a pair of town-made boots, a couple of waistcoats and a gilt watch-chain, she did not reproach him. She got along somehow in the dilapidated house until he came for the first time. The joy of seeing him alive, her boy she had prayed back from God and cared for, blinded her eyes. She did not blame him for his sickly looks, nor fret about the poor pay he earned. To get food for him she worked hard as a midwife, laid out corpses and cured toothache by conjuring and spells. They managed to get enough to eat, thank God, and she was satisfied. Then in an unlucky hour that Virka had got hold of him. Virka had led the old woman into a sin for which there was no forgiveness. She had not told Vasska's mother that she had been living with him for three years in a union unblessed by God. And the old woman in her joy at seeing her son back again had blessed her with the holy icon, just as if she was a properly married woman. It was this that was itching her heart now. The gossips had spread it all about the village.

"Imagine, Mokeikha the midwife went and blessed that woman of her son's with the icon. What a fool she made of herself! It was an awful sin and there's no getting away from it."

If Virka had only behaved in a quiet, obedient way under such a burden of disgrace; but she would give way to no one. She was wearing Vasska out. A wild one like that would wear out a man with two lives. It angered God and drew down his wrath on the whole family. Virka never thought of crossing herself. The old woman could nag her and threaten her as much as she liked but Virka would only laugh it off as if it was a joke. "Ah, yours is the church God. He wouldn't care for my crossing myself before him—me being born an Old Believer and all."

As she lay listening to Vasska's difficult breathing, and pictured to herself the healthy young Virineya lying beside him, hatred scalded the old woman's heart. You could see at once that Virineya wasn't the right sort, she was thinking. She was a hussy. For though she was healthy, she had none of the calm, featureless, shapeless plumpness of a decent woman. She looked like an unmarried woman with her straight body and her face that had not grown flabby. The old woman grew more and more fidgety. Her voice rose to a squawk with spite as she said:

"God always leaves the belly of an unclean woman barren. It's the fourth year you're living with Vasska now. I don't know how long before that you were living with someone or other but anyhow it's the fourth with him and you've never had a child and you're barren still."

At that Virineya sprang out of bed. Vasska turned and woke, groaning:

"Where are you going, Virka? Why can't you settle down! Go to sleep!"

Then a fit of coughing racked him. Virineya cried in a ringing voice unlike her usual quiet tones:

"Hold your tongue, old one, will you! Better not to have any children at all than a miserable creature like yours. I'm sick to death of your Vasska. The very breath from his mouth stinks and when he mauls me with his slimy hands of a night—it's more than I can stand . . . When I remember it in the daytime I can't hardly swallow a morsel with disgust!"

Vasska's cough choked him. He groaned: "Vi—ir—ka!" and was silent. But Virineya went on stringing her words together swiftly, passionately, in a sort of desperate anguish.

"It's a bitter cup of sorrow you're draining the lees of, old one! There's little enough joy in a woman's life, as you know yourself. Her good time's as short as a hen's beak. I've found that out already, young as I am. That's why I don't bother to answer back when you insult me. I feel sorry for you. But you've never had any pity for me, you're always trying to get a nasty dig at me. I'd like to ask you, what sort of sin had you on your soul that you bore such a rotten child? I'm good to the eye and sound in the body, and still, it's these four years I'm going about barren as if there was a curse on me. I see plenty much worse than me, bad women, lazy women, and still they have children of their own. It isn't for fun I'm staying with a disgusting fellow like this, but for a child. The doctor in the town told me that even consumptives have children. But it isn't the case with Vasska; it isn't so much the consumption ails him, as that he's no good as a husband. The doctor says—'you'll never bear a child from that husband.' I'm not the crying sort but I cried bitter when I heard that. For what does it matter that we're often in want, that we're to watch every bit goes into our mouths? Somehow or other I'd have got enough for the child to eat even if I had to wear myself to the bone to do it! Those women yonder in the town envy me my flat belly, but I'm a peasant woman, born and bred, and I know that even a bitch can lick her pups and take a pride in them. It's only I that am left barren—wearing myself out and bending my back laboring for a rotten fellow I don't care a scrap about. What

for? What has he got to show? Do you see anything to boast about in this son of yours? Maybe you think he's a grand worker? A—ay—he only makes soot when he breathes!"

She broke off as if the words choked her. Vasska croaked:

"That'll do now, that'll do . . . Talk quieter. I've listened to you blaming me so often, I can listen once more. And you, mother, stop nagging the heart out of Virka. She's quiet and obedient enough with you as it is. 'Tisn't out of spite she's talking like that now. . . . Virka-a, lie down. Go to sleep. If you don't want to sleep with me, lie down on the bench, then. We've talked enough, now forbear."

Vasska's gentle, pleading voice ate through his mother's heart like a sharp knife. He was actually giving in to this slut. His mother scrambled down off the stove in comical, pitiful haste and as she scrambled, she screamed:

"You came yourself—You came running to Vasska yourself at night! Who asked you to come I'd like to know. You crept in like a snake, and now you're blackening the fellow! Why did you come then, you ought to have found out before, you hussy. I'll scratch your shameless eyes out for you if you dare to say such a thing again! It's a lie! It's a lie! It's all because of your dirty sinful ways God doesn't send a child to your womb."

The old woman came nearer, her uncovered head with its thin, untidy, grey hair rolling about on her shoulders in helpless rage. She stretched out her bony fingers. Virineya could not see the old woman's face, but she caught her hands, and pushed them aside. There was no roughness in the gesture and she was about to calm the old woman with a quiet word, when Vasska suddenly rose in bed and began to abuse his mother:

"What do you come interfering with us for? What do you want? You've had your own day, haven't you?—well, then, go and sleep on the stove and leave us alone. What are you coming between husband and wife for? Get out! Don't dare to touch my woman. I'll not let you lay a finger on Virka."

That set Virka boiling again. There was real venom in her voice this time as she cried:

"Shut up, you sickly, rotten thing. You'll not let anyone lay a finger on Virka indeed! If anyone was to lay a finger on you yourself, you'd fall to pieces. You make me sick! I've had enough. I've no more patience left. I ran here of my own free will. I've kept my word. I've never left you these three years. And you sticking up for me! Lie where you are and die! Nobody needs you. You're not even enough to be taken for the Tsar's war."

"Virineya!"

"Virineya! What do you want with Virineya? She's nearly twenty, this Virineya. She's just remembered her name. I went into this myself, without priest or God to bless me and no one to pray for me to be faithful to the one moujik and no other. And still I've been faithful. I said no to many a decent healthy fellow for your sake. All because I kept my word to you. I was the one wanted to be your wife, I got into this, and I've stuck to it and lived like a wife. Now I've done my share and I'm finished with it! I've had enough. I've no more patience left. You can rot your life out without me! But I'm strong and healthy—you can't drag me down into the grave with you anyhow. I don't want you! Let your own mother look after you. I don't want to do it any longer. I'm young and still I never see a single hour of fun! I'm clearing out!"

She banged the door behind her and ran out into the yard. Vasska's strength returned to him all of a sudden and he got up and went swiftly out after her.

"Vira—Virineyushka!"

He croaked there a long time, pleading with her. His bent form shook; death had marked him already for its own. She ground her teeth and wrung her hands in despair.

"What are you hanging round me for? Hungry for someone live and healthy, I suppose. You ought to be thinking of your grave instead of about me. Go along into the house, you poor ailing creature! I'm coming too. Now, then, come on."

She returned to the house, and lay down on the bench by the table. The old woman on the stove was whimpering to herself like a child but soon she was silent. Perhaps she had fallen asleep. Virineya rose. She warned Vassili very sternly, pronoucing every word clearly:

"Don't follow me, I shan't run away. My heart feels like to choke me. I want to stay in the yard awhile and get a breath of fresh air, then I'll come back. Do you hear? But if you come after me I'll run out of the yard, I swear I will! You'll never see me again."

She went out. Vasska tossed and turned for a long time. Then he got up and went into the little passage. He opened the door very softly and stealthily like a thief, as if it was a strange house and he was afraid. He listened, holding his breath, but did not dare to go into the yard. Virka was one to keep her word: not like other women. She had threatened to do it and she would do it. Fever shook Vasska's frame. His movements became uncertain and clumsy. He lay down on the bed, and groaning, pulled over his shivering bones the old sheepskin coat that had been his father's. His breath came in quick gasps. He forgot about things, even about Virineya, and floundered through delirious, changing dreams.

Virineya stood by the fence. A rollicking wind full of fresh moisture blew in from the fields. The confused roar of the rejuvenated, swollen river and the stormy spring waters in the hollows of the steppe—grew ever louder. The sky was pitch dark and seemed to retire from this importunate noise. The street was dark too, and silent. From the neighboring farmyards came the sounds of the cattle early astir and the strange, incomprehensible murmurs of the night. Lame Fedka had finished playing his accordion. The girls had sung their songs and gone. The heavy foot steps of the lads too young for war service, could no longer be heard. The young folks who had been so rowdy in the street yesterday evening were silent now. Affectionate couples hid in the quiet of this sweet and secret darkness. They were enjoying their one carefree hour in the succession of heavy days, each one like the last, each one a strain, each one smothered in household cares.

But Virka had let herself be cheated of her carefree hour, had wasted her best years, and received neither child nor intoxicating pleasure in exchange. She had had none of that pleasure with Vasska. It had all turned out a mistake. The old woman, had, as it were, rubbed salt in the wound. Not an hour longer could she stand it! Tomorrow morning it was to be goodbye, to the mother-in-law who had no affection for her, goodbye to the weakling who disgusted her, to the house that was never gay. Yes, she had run there by night, but she would leave it openly, in the broad daylight.

She drew her stern brows together and tightened her lips as she went into the house. Vasska was in the grip of his fever, and did not heed her coming.

III

Vasska could not get up the next morning. He lay on his back with a dull face and wet lips. He either dozed, opening his eyes very often, or lay exhausted. Perhaps he was going to die? Virineya glanced at the grey face,

sticky with perspiration, at the hands flung out limply over the quilt, and thought to herself:

"No, the time hasn't come yet. He's not ready to leave this world yet; he isn't weary enough. He's just worn out with his coughing and croaking. He'll get up and drag himself round a bit longer!"

She gave the house a thorough tidying—for the last time. The old woman cast sidelong glances at Virineya now and again, but did not open her mouth to scold. Then she went and stood over her son. She gave a sigh of profound misery and began to sprinkle him with holy water, calling on God and the saints in a hollow whisper.

"Our Lady of Kazan, plead for us! Mikola the Merciful, holy saint of God! Vassili of Thebes, our guardian angel, preserve us! Pantalemon the Healer! Oh, Lord, God Almighty!"

She could not say what she wanted, or formulate what she was praying for. It wasn't ordinary words God needed, but stern, incomprehensible ones. And of these she had none. She only knew everyday words, quite unsuitable for God. Therefore in her inarticulate helplessness she could only mutter the names sadly, hopelessly. Her head rolled about comically, and the back that had borne so much sorrow was bent almost double.

Virineya looked at the old woman and her lips suddenly twisted as if with pain. She said angrily:

"God, God—it's all God with you—Like enough, your God's gone and died on you long since. How many years is this you've been praying to him. Better take a rest awhile!"

Then she went out, banging the door behind her.

The old woman gave a gasp of horror and cast a frightened glance at the dim icon. Her legs trembled—she could hardly reach the bench. That accursed one would call down worse trouble on them yet.

"God in Heaven, take no heed to the words of that one! Mother of God plead for us!"

Virineya was walking quickly, bareheaded as she had run out of the yard of the man who sickened her. Her face was dark and scowling and hard thoughts raced through her head. The old woman had set another old grievance smouldering, a bitter grievance against God that Virineya has had for many a year. Her father had worn himself out over God, had wandered about the world, searching for the Kingdom of Righteousness, and spent all his strength for God. He had searched for God everywhere, had tramped over many roads and even roadless places. His children he had given into the hands of a stranger who treated them harshly. And in return for all that God had sent him a hard end in a dangerous place, far away in Siberia. The mother had been struck with the same crazy godliness as the father. She went about to relatives straining herself doing work beyond her strength in order to keep a bit in the children's mouths, and still found time for hours in convulsive prayer. These prayers and fasts and bowings and scrapings took her off before her time. Then Virka had risen against God with a fierce fanaticism only equalled by the devout parents. That was the chief thing that prevented her getting on with her uncle. She was well able to work. She had a sound, strong body, but a rebellious heart. She cared nothing for other people's notions. As she was hurrying along the street this morning, she panted angrily and was oblivious to what was going on around her. She almost ran past Anissia's house in her haste and indignation. The jolly soldier's wife had always been pleasant and kind to Virka. Perhaps it was because the more respectable women treated her to the same hard, gimlet glances as

they did Virka when they encountered her at the well. They would stare after Anissia with tight lips. There was talk in the village that as soon as her husband had been called up she had begun to misbehave herself. But to all this talk she only vouchsafed a gay, careless laugh by way of reply. She was merry and shameless. It was just this ready, light laughter that appealed to Virka. One got so sick of listening to the everlasting reproaches. Virka remembered the soldier's wife today. Surely the woman would give her shelter for a couple of days and then—well, she would see better what to do then.

Anissia was at home, preparing some kvass that promised to be fairly intoxicating. She did not work like other women did—in silent, tense vexation or else dissatisfied grumbling. She was more like a girl, to whom work was no burden. She sang in a high voice:

And she said as she saw him from the door,
'Well, I got rid of that one e—e—asy!'

Virineya gave a short laugh.

"Well you're surely a gay one. Singing so early in the morning. It's easy to see you haven't got too much to do. Good morning and how are you?"

"Good morning, girl. It's a sight for sore eyes to see you. The times I've asked you—and you never came once. I stopped expecting you. Yes, I can do my work when I like, I'm a soldier's wife. I've fed the children, given them a rap or two just to keep them in order and sent them out to play. Why shouldn't I sing? The army's paying me for my husband, and the Lord Almighty's thought fit to take his father and mother to himself, so that they wouldn't be nagging and worrying their young daughter-in-law. I've a foreign hired man, a war prisoner, doing the work of the farm. And I'm brewing a drop of nice lively kvass. Why shouldn't I sing, I'd like to know?"

Her small, bright eyes sparkled. She was short and rosy-cheeked, with a strong, well-knit body, and light, deft movements. Virka laughed again. This time it was a more open laugh.

"I've come to you in sore need. Would you give me shelter for two or three days? I've left Vasska."

"You don't say? Couldn't stand it any longer, I suppose? I often wondered at your patience. Well, stay here a while, if you like. You can do a bit of work about the house and the yard. And you'll make enough for your food by taking on some odd jobs for each day."

"They say women are taken on the railway nowadays."

"That's true. You can get work alongside those builders . . . Have you left him for good or do you think you'll change your mind?"

"No, I've left him for good."

Anissia shook her head. Her hair was bound up in a gay handkerchief.

"Women have got terribly free and easy this year. I'll say this much of myself: I've got a husband I like, it isn't as if I'd taken a dislike to him or couldn't think about him. When I was seeing him off and saying goodbye to him, the hot tears rolled down my face, but for all that—I'm having a good time without him, you see. Maybe he'll kill me when he comes back. He'd have some reason for it, I know. Still, I don't want to waste my best years. They say women used to wait for ten years at a time for their husbands without getting into trouble. But we're too weak for that. And as for you, I thought you were the respectable sort even though you weren't properly married. Oh, well, it's easy seen there's a queer lot of

women going these days. We'll live as long as the sun shines on us, I suppose. Now wash these pots for me, will you, while I go for some seed to the Mordvinian woman. She has good up-coming seed, if they haven't taken it all yet."

With that she left the house.

Virineya did not need to look for work on the railway for some time. Anissia's neighbor ruptured herself. The woman had been managing by herself while her husband was away. She was afraid to risk the temptation of bringing a hired man into the house, so she did the work with the help of her mother-in-law and the children. Now she had injured herself lifting too heavy a weight. The mother-in-law, who had been blind for a year, came round to Anissia's next day. After praying in the corner by the icon, she said:

"Goodday to you. I've been told the Kerjak woman is here under your roof. Vasska, Mokeikha's son's woman. Is she here or not?"

Anissia's ringing tones replied:

"Yes, she's here, grandmother. Why, have you come to make a match between her and Vasska? This is not the time, Lent isn't over yet. And indeed he isn't very tasty even for Lent. The woman's tried him once, and run away."

"Shame on you, you hussy. Nobody'll ever come matchmaking for her now never fear. We have so many we have to pickle them, nearly, or marry them off to old widowers. Who'd have a sinful woman like Virka, I wonder. Virka, come a bit nearer, will you? I can't neither hear nor smell you."

"Here I am, old one. What do you want me for?"

"Come and work for us a while. We'll pay you in wool or whatever else we can. Have you heard what happened to the woman of the house?"

Virineya settled her shawl over her head and said impressively:

"Well, alright then. I'll come for as long as I'm needed. It's all the same to me where I earn my bread. But I'll tell you one thing: if you throw my sins in my teeth, I'll bang you one with the poker, never mind how old you are. I'm sick to death of all this clacking about me."

Virineya went along with her. For a whole week she worked for them, and they asked her to stay the next. The woman of the house was slow at getting well, in spite of the fact that her mother-in-law went to ask Magara to pray on his stone for her, and Vasska's mother came to bind her stomach and say spells over it. The father-in-law promised to go for the ambulance man from the railway hospital, but the roads were too bad still. Four times Vasska came through the darkness to beg and pray of Virineya to return. He breathed with difficulty and his steps were uncertain, but still he came. He had got over his chill. His time was not come yet. He argued heatedly with Virka in the shadow of the shed in the yard. But he slunk away home alone each time, his head between his hunched shoulders, like a beaten thing. When he came the fourth time, Virka called out from the doorway:

"You're here again, are you, you disgusting creature! You always come when it's dark and no one can see you, but everybody knows it all the same. You ought to be ashamed to let people see you hanging round my skirts. Clear out! You've nothing to say to me. It's all been wound up and the thread's broken off, and it'll take more than a complaining word to join it again!"

But Vassili did not go at once. He crouched by the fence, hunched up as if his thin, shrunken form had already withered. He stood there stifling his choking cough. The old father-in-law, who was coming out just then to lock up the barn, noticed him and rebuked him angrily:

"Be off home with you. What are you messing about here for? If you want a woman and you've no lawful wife, there are plenty more to be got, aren't there? There ain't enough men to go round. What are you shaming yourself for?"

Virka heard them from the doorway. She picked up a faggot and darted out.

"Begone, else I'll give you a whack with this. You've made corns on the very heart of me. I jump up in my sleep when I remember your sticky flesh of a night. I'll knock you out with this—it's all the same to me if they hang me for it. You can hardly breathe. Now then, are you going to clear out?"

At first, when Mokeikha was summoned to look after the sick woman, she would not deign to glance at Virka, even though the girl had to pass her now and again as she went about her house work. When Mokeikha's work was at an end and she was going away she stopped Virka in the yard to say:

"You went away, but you left the smell of your unclean, wanton skirts about the place. The dogs are on the scent of the bitch all the time."

Virka's lips twisted: she moved away from the old woman, flinging over her shoulder:

"Burn a bit of incense and it'll drive out the smell, maybe, and stop your son from following my trail all the time."

Then Mokeikha said impressively in a hollow voice:

"Stop a minute. I've something to say to you."

Virineya stood still. She glanced round at the old woman and asked:

"Well? What else have you to say. Hard words can't break any bones this time. I don't even bear you any ill will. You've enough to bear, I'm sure, having a son like that. Well, what is it?"

The old woman's lips tightened grimly, but she said quietly enough:

"That black looking engineer came asking for you. Said he wanted you to wash and scrub for him. I wonder what place he wants you to scrub."

"Well, go on."

"What are you telling me to go on for! Go on and scrub for him if you want to. Or maybe you've fixed it all up already? Has he promised you big money or are you going for nothing?"

Virka laughed good naturedly.

"It'll be neither loss nor gain to you, anyhow. Go off home, old one. You can't hurt me, you can't get at me no matter how you try. I'm sorry for you. I hated your son, but just now I began to pity him, all through you. He's wearing himself out and wearing you out. If you could both quieten down a bit and forget I'd be real glad for you, honestly I would. Goodbye, grandmother."

She disappeared into the house, leaving the old woman choking and speechless with fury. She could hardly drag herself out of the yard. How the hussy talked! For all the world as if she was a respectable woman! While she, an old woman, had stood meekly like a slip of a girl and listened to her. God in Heaven, why should her grey hair and her few remaining years be disgraced in this way. She wept far into the night.

IV

There was no sense in the old woman's reminding her of the engineer, thought Virka. It wasn't as if he had taken her fancy so greatly, that she thought of him often. Still, somewhere away at the back of her mind lurked a memory of him, perhaps because no one had ever cared for her except Vassili, who disgusted her. Anissia had only taken her up out of curiosity. There had been a lot of talk about Virka and Anissia would like to sound her and find out what sort she was. Now, that gentleman had seemed to take a fancy to her at first sight. And he hadn't forgotten her yet. She had been looking to Vasska then for affection. She broke off this train of thought angrily:

"Ah, to the devil with all of them. When a woman's got work to do, she doesn't think about men. I'll stay as I am. One was enough for me. And God knows he's enough to get rid of."

The sick woman got well. It went hard with her, but still she got up, and began, little by little, to take up her household duties again. Although it was a pretty well-to-do family and they could easily have afforded Virka the bit she ate, the woman was thrifty like all peasants, and did not believe in wasting even a crumb. As soon as ever she was able, she limped over to the stove and said:

"Now then, Virka, out of the way . . . I'll do it myself."

Virineya understood the woman very well. She would have acted in exactly the same way herself. She looked at the woman with approval and said:

"Do you feel better again? That's grand. You'll be better still in the morning and then you won't need me any more. I'll clear out tomorrow."

Next morning she went back to Anissia. There was a cloud over Anissia's cheeriness. She looked wan, and hollow-eyed, and her expression betrayed anxiety. While they were milking the cows that evening, she said to Virka:

"I feel terrible uneasy, as if something was gnawing at my heart. There's been no letter from my husband this long time now. Either he's badly wounded or else dead. Or maybe the Germans have got him."

Virineya suggested discreetly:

"Maybe someone wrote and told him something about you."

"What, that I'm carrying on with the Austrian prisoner, you mean? Then he'd be sure to have written back through his relations to blame me for it. No, I can't help feeling there's something wrong with him. I'm off my food for I don't know how many days now, and my head goes round."

"What do you want with him, Anissia? You've disgraced him . . ."

"I've disgraced him? How have I disgraced him? I didn't bear a stranger's child to eat his bread, did I? I'd never think of doing such a think! I got rid of two of them already, soon as I found myself that way, and I'll get rid of the third, if I find it's that that's upsetting me just now. Your Mokeikha's the best of the women for this sort of thing: she has a light hand: And as for the rest of it—well, young blood—you know yourself how it is. I don't suppose he's been all this time without a woman, either. It's like as not he'll bring some bad sickness back with him. Goodness knows, we have plenty of these kind of husbands here, ruined for life. Such things will happen. Well, he'll come home and beat me, I suppose, cripple me maybe, and then we'll start living together again. If he should happen to kill me in hot blood he'll be sorry afterwards. I'm a good worker—I'm strong. Disgraced him indeed! Stand still, old cow, will you—hey! What are you kicking out for? Stand quiet now, there's a good cow . . ."

When she had finished milking she made the sign of the cross over the cow and said:

"I think I'll go and see Magara, and ask him to pray for my poor soldier husband. And maybe he'll foretell something or other. You look after the house while I'm away. They say Magara made up the prayer they write out and send to the soldiers. The soldiers think a lot about it. It keeps off bullets that might give them their death wound. Our fellows carry it next their hearts when they're going to battle. When Mitri, the eldest son of the village elder was killed, Vasska Terekhin took the prayer off his dead body, and wrote home to Mitri's folk that he was going to keep it for himself."

Virineya gave a deep sigh.

"Yes, they're a stupid lot in our village! If the bullet killed the fellow then it looks as if the prayer couldn't save him? So what was the use of it!"

"Well, what of it? God willed it so and therefore he closed his eyes to the prayer as well. If Mitri died, it was meant to be—right from the time he was born. The prayer helps other fellows. Write it out for me, will you, you're a good hand at writing."

"I'll do nothing of the kind!"

"Well, don't then, you godless hussy! I'll find someone else to do it. Look after the house anyway, it's getting late. I'll take something to Magara and ask him to pray."

The people's belief in Magara was growing stronger. They came to his stone from distant parts, bringing gifts with them. But it was not for love of gain that Magara served God. He did not touch the offerings; they lay there by the stone, and ultimately disappeared. A shawl that had been brought to him was afterwards seen on one of the refugee women from Akgirovka. Still, the people persisted in bringing their offerings. Anissia made up a bundle of eatables, adding a ball of woollen yarn to it.

"You'll see to the house, won't you? My Austrian will be late home. He asked leave to go and see his own folk at the barracks. And when the children run in, give them something to eat and send them to bed."

"Oh, all right. I'll give you the rough side of my tongue some day for what you've said to me. I don't like it at all. Still you're not the spiteful sort. I'll let it pass this time. Go along wherever you want to. I'll see to the house, I've nowhere to go."

Virineya stood in the vegeable patch gazing up at the cranes in the height of the sky, listening to the evening sounds from the farmyards and drinking in the scents of the earth and the wind. Her face looked wan, her eyes wistful. She was reluctant to break the spell of her mood by going indoors. Suddenly the engineer came up to the fence. She gave a start when he called out in a low voice:

"Virineya . . ." adding slowly, "Avimovno . . ."

He had not been able to get her out of his head all the week. She had made a very strong impression on him. He had found out everything about her, thinking that whatever was bad in her past would turn him against her and drive her out of his head. But it only inflamed his desire. Today he had found out where she lived and his feet had brought him to her of themselves.

Virineya soon recovered from her astonishment.

"Oh, what a fright you gave me, sir! Where'd you turn up from?"

Her face did not lose its calm expression. She did not speak angrily now, but rather wearily.

"You've been asking for me, I hear. The old woman told me you were round to see her."

"Yes, I didn't know you'd left them."

"I don't see how you couldn't know. In the village we know everything about everybody and you've been making a lot of inquiries about me, I heard. You may not have known where the cottage was I'm living in, but you couldn't but know about Vassili and me. There was no sense in your going to ask the old woman about me, though."

"But honestly, Virineya Avimovna," he began.

"What are you talking so grand to me for? Dragging my father's name in. His Kerjak bones would turn in his grave if he knew. I find it queer, it makes me ashamed. Folks like us aren't used to it; we only call very old women by their full names."

"I wanted to see you very much, Virineya—Vira—You know how it is: sometimes you see a person for the first time and it seems as if you've known her for ages, you feel drawn to her. You spoke so crossly to me that time. And so little . . ."

Words came slowly to his lips, while all the time he was thinking:

"This isn't the way, this isn't the way to speak to her."

The mildness of the evening cast its spell over him, and he did not feel his ardent desire; he had lost his grip, for the time being. All he wanted was to stand like this a little distance away from her, and gaze at her submissively and feel how astonishing and how dear she was.

Virineya's eyes met his and a faint color came into her cheeks.

"It doesn't look well, you standing here like this," she said in a low voice. "There's enough talk about me as it is."

"But why?" he asked in alarm. "Can't one even talk to you? Can't one even carry on an ordinary conversation? Don't go away, please. Let's go for a walk away out there beyond the village."

Virineya gave a soft, deep laugh and shook her head.

"What next will you think of? You can stand and talk to me if you like, I don't mind. Their gossip doesn't hurt me. I'm used to it. Women hate me because of my good looks. They seem to think I want every man I see, and they grudge him to me."

She spoke thus simply and quietly of her beauty. Not in a coquettish, boastful way, but truthfully. "Darling," thought the man; he was in love with her. She gazed past him with eyes that were strangely quiet and said:

"It was the same in the town. I learned to cook the way they do in gentlemen's houses, and to wash their clothes and iron them as they should be ironed, and still I never could keep a place for long. And it wasn't just because I had no passport. That was all the better for them, they got me cheaper. It was all because of the women's jealousy. The mistress would notice how her husband or her follower, maybe, was hanging round me, like you are just now, and she'd start to snap at me. Well, and not being the patient, forbearing kind, I'd start to snap back. And then, I'd be out of my place in no time . . . But there was one—such a queer one."

Virineya gave a little giggle at this point.

"Although they were gentry, they hadn't too much cash. They were very ill paid, very educated people, both of them writers. They were always writing and going to—what do you call the place—bah, I've forgotten these townified words—to the publishers, I think it was. They used to give me books to read, that were made in that same publisher's. Such dull, dry books they were—all about poor folks. I used to take the books, of course,

but I didn't read them much. And they would talk to me—this couple I worked for—and tell me that we were all equal, moujiks and gentry. Very tactful and nice, they were. It was a bit dull. They were too nice, really. Still, it was all right. I ate the same food as they did, and they never abused me. Then I noticed the master began to come into the kitchen very often when the mistress was out. He'd talk of this, that and the other—just like you're doing, now. Well, and I was always frightened the mistress might be vexed. Vasska used to be courting me then and he was very uneasy about it, too. As for the mistress—well, you know, she would be all right for the town; she wore glasses on a long cord and thin sort of curls. But she was the sort we'd call withered and sour. And although the master was kind, and polite to her, still it was easy to see he fancied something a bit richer—more fun. Well, and at last she noticed. She didn't get mad or pretend she saw anything. Then once she came and said to me: 'Let's talk things over, Virineya.' Well, she talked a lot. She said it was only common, lower middleclass women who stuck tight to their husbands; she wouldn't, she said. 'If you want him, you can have him,' she says, 'and I'll leave him.' And I up and said, 'I don't want him at all and if you don't believe me, you can dismiss me. I've got my own fellow, he may not be up to much, but still he's mine, and your own husband's not much better. He's about as good as my Vasska to look at, only he's educated.' 'No, no,' she says, 'why should I dismiss you, let's talk things over.' I'm sure she talked it over twenty times, at least. I'd rather she beat me than worry my head off like that. So one fine morning I got up and left them. That kind of jealousy is worse than scolding."

They both laughed gaily and Virineya concluded, still laughing:

"Yes, she had me really bothered with her 'talking it over.' I was dying to go back to the village, where things are simpler. If they want to give you a whack they do it without talking. 'Come on,' I says to Vasska, 'let's go back home. If we've got anything to bear it'll be easier to bear from our own folks. Whenever the women at home offend me I'll remember those educated folk and things won't seem so bad.' They're spiteful, our women, but they don't set traps for you. And those others, they don't blame you outright, but they have ways of getting at you with words that drive you crazy."

"But isn't it dull for you here? You were used to the town after all . . ."

"I never got used to it a bit. If your heart's light you're happy anywhere, but if it's heavy, no matter where you go you're sick and weary. And then we've no time to be dull when we're hard at work. I used to read books a lot when I was a girl, but now I don't seem to care for them. Now, when I've finished my day's work I just stand awhile like this, looking about me—and then go to bed. And I sleep longer on Sunday."

"I can send you books, if you like. I've got some very interesting ones, novels and tales."

"I used to be a regular terror for reading novels. I hid them from my uncle. What a lot of work I did those days, too, and still found time for reading. On summer Sundays I'd run away and hide in the steppe."

"I'll send you some books . . . . I'll bring them tomorrow."

Virineya made a little gesture and laughed.

"Don't bother. I wouldn't look at them nowadays. After all I'd read, I went and got mixed up with a consumptive. What are you laughing at? It's true enough. People in books are so nice. There's plenty about love, too, of every kind. But our moujiks don't carry on that way. They don't waste

many words even on the girls and as for their wives they'd never think of having a chat with them. Now and again they might call their cow 'my beauty,' or say a kind word to their horses when they're calling them, but to their wives—never. They take themselves wives for work, and for bearing children, not for affection and the rest of it. They may pity their cattle at work, but never their wives. Whether they're rich or poor, they treat the women just the same. The poor are better off in that way, perhaps, because they don't make so much fuss about the work and the farm. Well, and so it came about that what I read in books was different to what I saw about me. I didn't care for any of our fellows. I used to run out of the house secretly in the evening because when I was a girl I liked a little fun, but I turned them all away from me. They didn't take my fancy, somehow. They weren't in the least like the people in the books. But Vasska, he wore town clothes and had town ways. A quiet chap, he got round me with soft words. He wasn't like these village lads—he was too thin and timid. So I stuck to him."

"But you don't care for him any more, do you?"

"I've been letting my tongue run away with me. I never talk much, that's why when once I start I say too much. But you came to see me about something, what was it?"

Her glance was no longer open. Her lips were compressed. The engineer's remark had banished the mood of frankness. He could have beaten himself for his tactlessness, but he did not know how to resume the conversation.

"It's like this, you see—I wanted—do you know anyone hearabouts who would do my washing for me?"

"Oh, I can do that. I know how to do it the same as they do it in the town. But I charge a good bit."

In a business like way she told him what she would charge. Compared with local prices hers were very high. But he could no longer be vexed with her. He was only sorry that the other Virineya, she of the clumsy, but earnest, touching speech, had vanished. This was quite a different Virineya; a hard, calculating peasant woman. In a mournful tone that seemed incongruous to the words he was uttering, he replied:

"Very well then, I agree. When shall I send it round to you?"

"Where to? I've no place of my own. I suppose you have a kitchen there. If I can't wash in the kitchen, there's the bath house in the yard. I know that house. It's Silantyev's. I'll come and do your washing in the bath house—the first Monday in Passion Week. I'll finish working for Anissia the end of this week. Have you got soap and blueing or should I buy some?"

The blood throbbed in his heart, at his temples. So she had agreed to come to his house, had suggested it herself. She would be alone in the bath house, in the yard all day. Perhaps the washing was only an excuse, and she was really attracted to him, but did not want to admit it. In his excitement he could scarcely grasp what she was saying, and said hastily:

"Yes, of course . . . . Here you are? Will it be enough?"

She saw that it was too much, but she said calmly:

"Oh, I expect it'll be enough."

She took the money and left the garden to go into the house without once looking back.

Translated from the Russian by Anthony Wixley

(To be continued in the next issue)

Lev Nikulin

Cruelty

A Short Story of Present-Day Germany

Burns fell in the dark from a sharp and sudden blow in the back. His chin knocked heavily against the brick floor. Instinctively he tried to raise his hands but the effort caused him fresh pain. The handcuffs cut through the flesh, piercing to the bones. He became sick from the salty taste of blood in his mouth.

He looked around. He was in a narrow hole of a cell almost completely dark. The light fell through a crevice in the iron door.

He became filled with irrepressible, impotent fury. He understood what had happened. He, a subject of a foreign state, with a name famous throughout Europe, had beeen seized from behind the back and handcuffed like a common thief. During the interrogation he had been twice hit in the face. The only thing the man in the uniform of the shocktroops had asked him was whether he knew Conrad K. and whether he had not visited that gentleman's former apartment the evening before. And when he had answered that he was a foreigner, a man famous throughout Europe, and had demanded that his consul should be informed of his arrest—they hit him, Burns, twice in the face. A loathsome bitter taste filled his mouth. Tears scorched his eyes. He shuddered and wept. He, a strong man of forty, an athlete, an excellent marksman, had been put in handcuffs and thrown into a dark hole.

What then, could they have done to his old friend Conrad K. if they had dared to treat so dastardly a foreigner that had arrived as a tourist on a trans-Atlantic steamer flying under a foreign flag! He called to mind the high smooth forehead, the gray hairs and the slightly hoarse voice of his old friend. He pictured him as he had seen him two years ago in the library at Munich. Burns spat out blood and opened his eyes. It was dark. He sat for a minute with his eyes open. Suddenly he realized that he was not alone.

On the brick floor a man was lying prone. The man did not move. Perhaps it was a corpse?

Burns leaned down. The man had a body. Through his tattered clothes showed his chest, bony knees and bare feet. Burns examined the man's face. It was a horrible sight.

"I understand," Burns thought. "They want to show me how I must look in a mirror."

From behind swollen brows the man's eyes glowed faint in their narrow sockets. The man, who had been badly beaten, was looking at Burns. "They left me my mouth," he suddenly exclaimed in a young, sonorous voice. "They left me my mouth so that I could tell you you were a bastard."

"Why are you swearing at me?" asked Burns.

"They left me my mouth," the man repeated in the same sonorous voice. He spoke as though raving. "They left me my mouth so that I could give the names of those who draw up the leaflets and distribute them among the workers in the shops . . . It's good that I can speak. I can tell you that you are a viper and a spy. Anyway I'll say no more."

"I am not a spy," Burns said in a low voice. "I can swear that I am not a spy. You think, perhaps, that they sent me in to you?"

"Anyway I'll say nothing. Mother told me . . ."

"He is raving," thought Burns. "Of course he is raving."

"Mother said, 'You were born in a damned year of war. We ate substitute food when I was carrying you. You were born a puny creature. You are a starvling. When you have a toothache you cry like a little one. What are you doing? What movement are you joining? They beat up the likes of us in a terrible way. You puny creature, you will never endure such torments . . .' "

The man grew silent and moaned:

"Ah, if only you were not a spy."

"I am not a spy!"

"No matter what you say you will learn nothing from me." He now spoke as though weighing his meaning. It seemed that the words could not come from that beaten trampled body.

" 'Yes,' my mother said, 'you are a starvling, you cry when your tooth aches. They beat the likes of us up terribly in prison, you will never stand it.' What is pain? I have innured myself to pain. I started by pinching myself until the blood came. Then they took me. Try to understand, if you are a spy. There you are lying on the floor and they beat your lungs and liver. You keep silent. They go mad from fury and beat you all the more. You keep silent. You begin to grow numb. There is a limit to pain. It can reach the point where the nerves no longer feel it. You become free of your body. You sort of split in two and see from the outside what they are doing to you. How can you take revenge on them? By keeping silent. You say nothing and you conquer them. Were you ever beaten before?"

"Never," answered Burns.

"That's bad. You said 'never' very proudly. Who are you?"

"That does not matter. I am not a spy."

"There is another thing. When they perform all their tricks, you understand that their infamies cannot go unpunished. A normal human being would never go as far as they do. They can break your ribs but they go mad themselves. They are mad as it is—mad dogs—that's all. They have disgusting nerves. With such nerves they cannot win. Am I right?"

"You are," answered Burns.

The man that had been beaten lay quiet. Burns examined him from head to foot. He was only a lad. Where did he get his strength?

"Are you here long?"

"I was taken on Wednesday."

"His sixth day," thought Burns. He felt a desire to speak. He was in the grip of nervous excitement.

"Listen, lad," he said, "yesterday I took Voltaire from the ship library. I wanted to study his style. I stopped at the place where a description is given of the youth Dela Barres. The legs of the prisoner undergoing torture are crushed together by means of boards. A wedge of iron or wood is hammered between the knees and boards which breaks the legs. After fainting Dela Barres was revived with a few sips of wine; without betraying his sufferings he said that he had no accomplices . . ."

Blood gurgled in his throat. He spat it out and continued:

". . . It was truly a dreadful scene. Five hangmen had been sent from the capital for the execution. All that I remember of the letters I received from Abeville is that he appeared on the scaffold firm and courageous. . . . Now what I want to tell you, lad, is this—'You can not imagine what aversion this fact aroused towards them,' that is what Voltaire wrote nearly two centuries ago. What does it all mean? Where are we? What year are we living in?"

Burns was himself again.

"Yes, that is so," he thought. "I have not uttered those words. I imagined it all. I must be raving."

His head rubbed along the wall until his face hit the stone floor. Strangely enough he experienced instant relief. He moved a little and felt that his hands were free.

"If you please," he heard a soft oily voice.

He was helped to his feet. He opened his eyes and his hands. Five men in uniform were standing at the open door.

"If you please," repeated the oily voice.

Burns stepped forward. He was unsteady on his feet, but he was being held by the arm as a precaution. Just before passing out through the door Burns looked back. A circle of light shed by a lantern illuminated the figure on the floor. The lantern was immediately extinguished so that Burns could see nothing.

"This way if you please," said the insistent voice of a man in mufti.

The iron door closed tightly behind him. Burns walked down a corridor. The gentlemen in mufti politely showed him the way.

The five men in uniform remained in the cell.

Burns shortly found himself sitting in a clean, light room. The polite gentlemen in mufti bowed to him:

"I am extremely sorry," said the polite gentleman, "that this terrible mistake has happened. The man who caused you such offense and worry will answer for his mistake."

Burns said nothing.

"You can wash your hands here. Your shirt is stained—we have prepared a new one for you. You will find your passport and pocketbook in your coat. When you have tidied yourself we shall call a taxi. You will be taken to the steamer."

The man paused for an instant and then added:

"Yes, we should be extremely obliged to you if you could forget this incident. You are a journalist and, of course, you have many other subjects to write about—Am I right? This affair would lead to no good—you will find eau-de-cologne in the next room."

It was still light when Burns climbed the gangway. Above the ship waved the flag of his country. After changing his clothes he went up to the saloon, as he was unable to bear being alone. Ladies in evening dresses and gentlemen in black suits were reading the program of the evening's concert. An Irish clergyman was praising a sixteenth century organist and sculptor. A diplomat's wife was talking about Claudelle's poetry. How terrible that he had not been elected to the academy.

He grew dizzy. The face of the man who had been beaten . . . round and glittering and horrible . . .

The feet were pressed between boards . . . Five hangmen . . .

He thought he was going mad.

Translated from the Russian by Padraic Breslin

Manuel Domingo Benavides

The Last Pirate in the Mediterranean

Excerpts from a New Spanish Novel

Over the roads of Spain speeded Juan Albert's auto. A spare car reconnoitred up ahead.

Albert sat in silence, between a doctor and a prison official who had attached himself to them at the last moment. The millionaire was bothered by that scoundrel's presence. For a robber the sight of a hold-up is intolerable.

"Step on it!" he ordered the chauffeur.

The machine leaped ahead. The needle of the speedometer trembled responsive to the revolutions of the motor. A hundred and one! A hundred and two. The wind flapped its wings against the windshield; the asphalt road disappeared beneath the car's belly. The toy-like posts and trees along the roadway flashed by in dizzy procession.

From beneath his sharply protruding forehead, Albert's eyes gazed fixedly through screwed-up lids at the distant goals towards which the car was speeding.

. . .When Primo de Rivera cleaned up the politicians of the monarchy he had also been obliged to flee; that time he chose the French border. Today he chose to flee to the South. Why? From weariness.

"Seventeen months!" he exclaimed.

After seventeen months in jail, with friends in the government and the hopes of an election which would make him a deputy, he had lost his faith in mankind. He had lost his self-control.

"I want to be free!"

"You're already free!" observed the doctor.

He bit off the end of a cigar and lit it, and, wrapped in the smoke of the tobacco, for which he paid two reales and sold for one peseta and eighty centimos, he began to chat with his own impatience.

He felt unsafe as long as he remained within the borders of the republic.

"Speed her up, fellow!"

"We're already there, don Juan."

"That's why I want you to go faster!"

Crossing the frontier they shifted cars. They were expected. And Albert filled his lungs with the air from the crest of Gibraltar.

The international telephone wires began to buzz on his behalf.

With Madrid:

"Listen Majol . . . Yes, I'm all right, thank you . . . Be extremely careful in your comments and continue the campaign against the socialists. You'll soon get even with them . . . call Ruiz to the phone . . . Listen, Ruiz, hold on to the railway certificates; inside of a year they'll be double their worth. If not Diego, then his boss'll raise the rates."

With Paris:

"Tell Malvy to see about the compensations on the oil . . . Sell the Municipal Loan Bonds, and if there's a new issue, buy it up at twenty and resell it. . . . "

With Orán:

"Albert speaking . . . Cut down the bundles of 'La Flor de Mayo,' and increase those of the 'A B C' . . . And no smuggling for the present. The Government Monopoly has already been choked."

Gibraltar was to his liking; far from the rabble of bankrupt politicians, writers and financeers. To hell with the lot of them!

No, he didn't feel bad at all. The climax came when the Spanish High Commissioner for Morocco conveyed to the English authorities the wishes of the Spanish Government that Albert be watched. Soon afterwards an agent appeared, a jovial fellow, and remarked:

"I know you're a generous person; I'm hoping you'll invite me to breakfast."

"If you care to."

"And for supper too," added the agent.

Albert flew into a rage.

"And if you would be good enough, and permit me to put a cot up in your bedroom . . ."

Albert flecked the ashes from his cigar, shrugged his shoulders with a tortoise-like gesture and mumbled:

"I am extremely sorry, my friend, but I can supply you with neither breakfast, supper nor sleeping quarters."

"You mean to say that you intend to resume your journey?"

"By the first steamer."

With a knowing grin the agent exclaimed:

"I am exceedingly sorry to be deprived of your company, senor Albert."

Albert saw him out with a nod, his cigar between his lips.

The telephone rang.

"Who's calling?" His Excellency inquired.

"Mister President, I have just been informed that don Juan Albert has escaped from prison."

"You're crazy!"

"He's escaped, Mister President!"

"With whose permission?"

His Excellency continued to insist:

"With whose permission? . . . It's utterly senseless. Why did he escape? Find out immediately."

He spoke with repressed anger, piqued by the shameful irony of that unusual bit of news.

He called on another telephone:

"Have you been informed, Minister, of the escape of Albert?"

The minister, a gloomy and indifferent Asturian, had to make an effort in order to remember who Albert was.

"Is it possible?"

"But you?"

"I'll find out right away, Mister President."

His Excellency summoned the General Director of Safety. The General Director of Safety likewise knew nothing. Excitedly, Diego issued a stream of orders:

"Issue detention warrants . . . Guard the frontiers."

"In a fit of anger he stretched his arms over the map of Spain, as though he wanted to squeeze out the soil of the whole peninsula and catch Juan Albert.

But what good were those short arms of his?

He thrust his hands in his pockets, realizing the futility of his gestures.

"Tomorrow my enemies will be talking of suspicions of complicity . . . And the thousands of Spaniards who hailed the republic on the day the republic placed Juan Albert in prison?"

Heavily he laid his head against the back of the presidential armchair.

Thousands of Spaniards regarded the punishment meted to Juan Albert as a confirmation of their faith in the republic; and now they will hold him responsible . . . How should he convince them?

"They'll be convinced!" Diego suddenly told himself.

And a great weight seemed lifted from his mind.

For many months the newspapers and magazines had been making money hand over fist. Hack writers and adventurers of every shade conjured the legend of a policy of persecution; and on the standard of the Catholic and monarchist press the figure of Juan Albert appeared before the readers as the monstrous victim of republican hate and socialist fury. An enterprising man had been accused of the sole crime of having a fortune. Albert was rich; Albert was clever; Albert was generous. With his millions he aided the development of industry and the prosperity of the nation . . . Good Albert! Noble Albert! Poor Albert!

"Have you heard the news, general?"

"This Albert turned out to be a first-rate strategist," the general observed.

"Do you know about it, Judge?"

And the Judge replied:

"I have always maintained that it was an arbitrary act to keep a man in prison without just cause. Crimes must be proved, and if there is no proof there is no crime."

And no one heard the unanimous voice of the crowd, which kept its silence, without shouting:

"Stop thief!"

Albert and Albert's press had stupefied the Spaniards with a deft campaign that threw a smoke-screen over the truth. And the thousands of dupes, those who live in poverty and those who live in luxury, and the respectable and the non-respectable women, winked at each other knowingly, when they heard of the flight of Albert, Albert who carried the country's conscience in his suitcase.

"What have you to say to us regarding this escape?" the newspapermen plied the Prime Minister

And the Prime Minister answered petulantly:

"According to reports which have reached the government, Albert had sufficient time to get to the border."

His Excellency called up the Ministry of Home Affairs. The Asturian minister lugubriously supplied him with the first election returns.

"Bad news, Mister President. The rights are beating the republicans in almost every province. In Salamanca, Burgos, Toledo, Zaragoza . . ."

"How about Madrid?"

"The Socialists are on top."

"And in Pontevedra?"

"Pepe Luna has received the majority."

"And how about us?"

"The votes of the Agrarians and of the Accion Popular may save us from disaster."

"Well, no one will be able to say that we stacked the elections. We hold legality, Mister Minister, above our own interests. Long live the republic!"

"Long live our president."

By then Albert was in France. He too had been elected deputy.

Diego—Diego the Cautious, Diego the Wise donned his Masonic cloak. The golden symbols glittered against a dark blue background. The lodge had been enthusiastic.

For "loyally, honesty and ability," the District Grand Lodge had bestowed a new degree upon him.

And that was how Diego mastered one of the ten abstract notions of Aristotelian logic: the category.

He stretched out on a sofa, in the room where he had prepared himself for his initiation to the Pharaoh's mysteries, and clasped his hands over his stomach, which was already commencing to bulge.

From seminarist to bishop, from soldier to general, from apprentice to the thirty-third degree. In a normally ordered world a man without the hierarchical instinct is lost.

Such indeed had been the case with Diego.

"I am Diego the prudent, Diego the just, Diego the wise," he could now say.

But it had not always been thus. He retained the fresn recollection, and vivid image—an unpleasant recollection and a rash youthful image—of the neophyte filled with restlessness and vague aspirations, who blurred his eyes by reading red literature, and voiced his confused thoughts in the meetings of the Andalusian anarchists.

In these meetings Diego learned the art of elocution.

"Slaves, a free man speaks to you!"

He felt moved. The solemnity of the ritual, predisposed his mind to cogitation. He was pervaded by a religious emotion, a pleasant tremor clarified his mind transporting it to the world of the most sensual dreams: disturbing impressions of the surrounding world were thrust back by the silence and, in Diego's own case, by the voluptuous softness of the couch . . .

A tumult of strange noises broke in upon his solitude . . . The image returned of the rash youth with the flaming tongue, vehement gestures, full-throated shouts and flashing eyes.

"Slaves, a free man speaks to you!"

They called him Dieguito, which was well suited to his good-natured disposition. He worked as a notary's clerk in Seville: papers and twine, an hour-glass to measure the time spent copying last wills and testaments, adorned with the flourish "I certify," and the pen spatters ink on the copy of documents while you bid regretful good-bye to the waning light of evening and your lungs longingly take in the air from out-of-doors impregnated with the scent of orange blossoms.

It was Mondragon, or Abelardo Saavedra, or maybe Paco Sola, who said to him . . .

"Dieguito, you're a good talker, take part with us in our first action."

Diego vascillated. His anarchism was coupled with a certain reticence. He concealed it out of shyness. Those who knew of his redeeming passion were few.

His comrades were insistent:

"You've got to choose, Dieguito: either us or the notary."

"You," answered Diego, enthused by his ideal.

And thereafter he began to take active part in anarchist propaganda, arm in arm with Mondragòn, Curro Diego, Abelardo Savedra, Ojeda and Paco Sola. His words, with their suave inflections, and a stimulating Andalusian accent which served to clinch his argument, enflamed the workers. He became well-known among the poor folk of El Coronil and Moròn and the time came when he was acclaimed as the best propagandist of anarchist ideas in Andalusia.

As a teacher at the rationalist school of Utrera, which was inspired by the ideas of Ferrer, Diego taught his students the texts of the modern school, and lent the accompaniment of his baritone to the songs which he used to cultivate the children's minds.

Thus Diego orated, taught and sang; he wrote articles for *La voz del Terruno*, and *El Noticiero Obrero* . . . As anarchist and rationalist teacher he pinned his hope on one goal: "the redemption of the captives of the bourgeois regime." And all this for two pesetas—eight reales Diego received for spreading his creed. The anarchists held that a teacher should not earn more than a day labourer.

But then shots rang out. Beliefs found their targets in Barcelona, where the revolutionary general strike was declared in 1902, the year of the coronation of Alfonso XIII.

There were more shots the following years. The Civil Guard, always lavish with its cartridges, sent many a peasant to his grave in Alcalà and Guadaira.

The rationalist teachers of Seville province held a demonstration which was witnessed by the people of Moron. Diego went with them but his peace-loving nature, which seemingly was contradicted by his inflammatory tongue —"What is justice? The instrument of oppression of the capitalist classes. What is Liberty? The vain illusion of the enslaved"—recoiled before the unexpected contact with violence.

It would be wrong to say that Diego was frightened. His irresoluteness should be ascribed less to fear or cowardice than to his native caution. Caution, as was later proved, was Diego's most decisive quality.

The teacher of Utrera returned to Seville and forswore anarchism. Full of daring, nevertheless, he took up the fight against the Bourbons and joined the Masonry. The hunger and bombs of the anarchist struggle gave way to fraternal banquets and republican polemics.

One has to become one of the "illuminati," thought Diego.

Soon he was seized with the thought of death, which wormed its way through the chaos of memories, preceded by the echo of an unjust remark of Mondragon's "Dieguito, you are scatterbrained like a starving man." His puffy hands beat the air, seeking to repell the waves of his deserted comrade's voice and Diego stretched himself out on the couch like a corpse.

"I'll lie like this the day . . ."

He was about to cross himself when he remembered he was a Mason. He managed to tear himself from thoughts of death; and by a process similar to that which had enabled him to attain the noble knowledge of one of the ten abstract nations of Aristotelian logic, he acquired the feeling that he—with all the sixty-eight kilos of his weight, his striped suit and celluloid collar—was the living embodiment of an historic hour.

Before his astonished gaze streched the curved horizon of a vast vaulted sky. On the edge stood an eloquent leader with outstretched arms. The leader was Alejandro Lerroux.

But then a sudden change occurred before his mesmerized gaze. He lost sight of the leader—"Are you running away, Alejandro?"

Troubled by the emptiness of the horizon, he sought to summon the impassive and harmonius image of destiny, and in the end was frightened by the fantasms his imagination conjured up.

But this welter of images, where Lerroux and destiny played a role as yet unknown, prepared Diego's mind for the unexpected.

The Masonry is an international force. Don't rich industrialists, great thinkers, even princes of the blood and crowned heads belong to it? . . . A good orator—an orator like Diego—has lots of opportunity. The fact of having been in a notary's office does not invalidate political genius . . . Many famous men were anarchists at the outset.

There was a knock on the door.

"Who's there?"

A woman's voice answered:

"Destiny, Dieguito."

"What are you bringing me?"

"A silver tray."

"But what's on the tray?"

And the woman's voice sounded muffled:

'Oh, Dieguito! All your dreams are on it."

In the first days of December, 1933, leaftlets were circulated with the following manifesto:

"People: The C.N.T. and the F.A.I. call you to armed insurrection . . . We are going to make libertarian communism a reality. Private property will be abolished and all wealth placed at the community's disposal. Factories, workshops and raw materials will be seized by the organized proletarians and placed under the control of the work and factory councils . . . Workers living in filthy cellars must freely occupy the quarters of the wealthy classes. Stores and shops will be placed under the control of district committees, which will undertake the distribution of supplies and ensure the provision of the population. Banks will be placed under the guard of the revolutionary committee. The use of money will be abolished and likewise commercial practices . . . The C.N.T. and the F.A.I. will be represented by the colours red and black which will be hoisted on the buildings taken over by the people.

Fighters of the C.N.T. and F.A.I.! The victory of the revolution depends on your promptness and decision! Soldiers: Your fathers and brothers are taking over the means of production; don't let them be murdered. Place your arms at the service of the revolution which is your cause!"

His Excellency adjusted the knot of his tie before the microphone and said:

"Spaniards: again Spain has been subject to a disturbance of the public peace, a disturbance which the government warned you of, and which has had unfortunate consequences . . . . The government opposes the disorders with the law and the public forces, and carefully follows the course of events, in order, in case of necessity sternly to repress. No more than ever before we must rally against the disorders committed by a minority."

The Ministers applauded. His Excellency acknowledged the applause feeling somewhat weary. Round about people bowed. Diego had his eyes half-shut. In the end weariness of success won out: the horrors of Zaragoza, of la Rioja and of Huesca, the disaster of the Puzol train, which had run off an embankment with all its passengers; the machine gun hunts through the garrets of a zone where the rebels of Villanueva and Serena were interned, the savagery at Bujalance and the military expedition that ranged the Leon mountains in pursuit of the rebel coal miners.

His Excellency, who had the soul of a tango dancer, recalled his comments on other episodes, likewise victorious, in the history of the republic: "Mud, blood and tears . . ."

But amid his trials the thought sustained him that he had the help of the "living forces" of the land. He received patriotic offers from the Chamber of Property Holders and the Manufacturers' Federation. He was lauded at the gentlemen's clubs and praised in *El Debate* and *ABC*.

He had addressed all these people—proprietors and factory owners, readers of *El Debate* and *ABC*—through the microphone. He had spoken to them with the same modulated voice that had formerly so enflamed the anarchists of El Coronil and Moron. But what were those Spaniards thinking who are not in the habit of listening to what the heads of the government say over the radio?

It took him long to fall asleep that night. Sleep seemed to elude him. Whole hours passed in a wearisome stupor, plagued by hallucinations.

Again he saw the teacher of the rationalist school at Utrera, his pupils, ragged, ill-fed little children, who answered to the names of Bakunin, Eliseo, Libertad, Socrates . . . .

He asked them questions:

"What is justice?"

And they answered.

"The organ of oppression in the hands of the capitalist class."

"What is Right?"

"The privilege of the propertied."

And he had ordered the armed forces to fire on those children, who were men, in the year 1933.

"Shed only the blood of those who are guilty, only the guilty."

Bakunin, Eliseo, Libertad, Socrates were all there, lined up at the foot of His Excellency's bed. Eliseo was shot through the temple, a clean hole from side to side, Bakunin displayed a sinister gash on his chest, rent by the machine gun. Libertad had his stomach shot out. Socrates' arm had been shot off leaving a black stump on wich the blood coagulated.

The boys gazed at His Excellency, who pretended to be asleep.

Bakunin asked:

"What is justice, teacher, sir?"

And His Excellency laughed. It was gentle mirth, for the melancholy look of his former pupils amused him.

"What is justice, teacher, sir?" Socrates insisted.

"That was once upon a time," His Excellency answered. "It can happen to anybody! . . ."

After the suppression of the December movement, they asked Juan Albert what he thought of don Diego. Albert exhaled the puff of a cigar through his nose and casually answered:

"He's a Garcia Prieto with an Andalusian accent."

Many hundreds of thousands of years passed before life was born upon the earth and almost as many thousands more before man assumed his vertical posture.

But how many years were required by humanity in order to produce a pirate? What qualities existing in other men entered the process development that culminated in Juan Albert?

The expression of his face is that of a good-natured swindler. But his look sometimes acquires the glassy inflexibility of the homicide.

An anthropologist physician defined Juan Albert as a denegenerate. A man with a deformed head, short of stature, an excellent digestive system and an insatiable sexual appetite.

Albert often employed the following expression *Dinners o dinars,* which means that you pay for everything with either money or dinners. Such a conception of human relationships gives Juan Albert his standard of values. And when he organizes hunts on his estate on Mallorca, which ministers, generals and magistrates take part in, only he knows the price for the expenditures the hunt occasions him, and that price is that of a service rendered or a service he hopes to obtain.

"I pay you well, kill him!"

"I'll be put in jail, don Juan.

"I'll get you out of jail."

"You must persuade the minister to sign the concession."

"It's impossible, don Juan, he's an honest man."

"Then we must corrupt him."

"He spurns money."

"Maybe he likes women."

"He's a virtuous man."

"Maybe he has a prodigal son?"

"Now I remember, they say his father went bankrupt."

"He's as good as ours already."

Such was Juan Albert, who robbed both the money and the conscience of his country. One morning in 1931 he was sitting in a room in a Madrid hotel. With knitted brows he stared down at some figures.

"Seventy and eight hundred .... One thousand and forty-five."

He raised his finger from the paper and shouted:

"The scoundrels!"

He folded the paper and laid it on the table. He hoisted up his puny body and paced the room in his sloppy attire. His shirt-tails trailed outside his trousers, a habit which city life had not corrected. The Mallorcan peasants wear their shirts this way: a coarse linen blouse without a collar, that reaches to the knees.

He rang for breakfast. His eating filled the room with a savage noise. He used his fingers and a piece of bread to help his fork. Worries did not affect his appetite. His hands moved like spiders over the table and delved into the dishes. He devoured mouthful after mouthful, and an expression of contentment spread over his face.

He sent for his secretary, Bernardo de Alcudia, a hard-working fellow from the island of Ibis, who hoped some day to be nearly as rich as the rascally millionaire. The secretary entered with a folder full of papers.

"Who's come?" Albert asked him.

"Pepe Luna and Ruiz are waiting below. Don Carlos will be here at eleven with the speech."

Albert examined the papers in the folder. They were documents dealing with his business matters. He scented danger and wished to strengthen his position by a careful study of his affairs, open the eyes of his responsible heads and ward off harm from his threatened enterprises. At the time he had in his control:

A navigation company,

The electrical enterprises of the Balearic Isles,

Various tobacco companies in Argel and Oran,

The tobacco monopoly in the Zone of the Protectorate,

Two daily newspapers in Madrid and one in Mallorca, and

Sundry industrial securities. All in all his fortune could be figured at around two hundred and fifty million pesetas.

"Have you brought the newspaper clippings?"

"Here they are."

He began to read them. The first said:

"Annulment by decree of the concession given to Juan Albert."

"Thieves!" commented Albert, and continued reading:

"By royal decree and law of August 2, 1927 the dictatorship arbitrarily, directly and personally conceded to don Juan Albert, the tobacco monopoly in the markets of Ceuta and Melilla. On September 3 the contract was signed between the Keeper of the Seal and the above-named concessionaire. On that day a royal decree was issued approving the contract which bore the signature of don José Calvo Sotelo, minister of the department."

Further on the illegality of the concession was set forth and the concession declared annulled.

Albert turned to his secretary.

"Do you think they'll get the better of me?"

"Only if you let them."

All the clippings told the same story. They were of September and October 1931. Some of them quoted the findings of the Commission of Responsibilities, named by the first Parliament of the Republic to sift the charges presented against the servants of the king and against Juan Albert.

Albert flecked his cigar ashes onto the clippings.

"What do you say to that, Bernardo de Alcudia? 'Neither banker nor capitalist!' . . . isn't it laughable?"

He glanced at the watch, half-past eleven.

The waiter came to clear the dishes. He leaned over and whispered in Albert's ear:

"The girl's here."

"Show her in, and if Bernardo and Acedo come, tell them to wait a few minutes."

A young girl appeared in the doorway and looked at him.

"Come in, beautiful."

"The girl smiled coquettishly showing her teeth. She was a chit from Valladolid who plied the big hotels. She was greatly in vogue among the Catalan financiers and had been loved by two ministers.

"Why don't you fix your shirt?" asked the girl.

Juan Albert didn't like coquetry, however.

"Come in or stay out. Don't stand there wasting time."

The wench pouted.

"If you don't mind, I shan't undress."

Albert closed the door. Outside the footsteps of Bernardo de Alcudia and Carlos Acedo were audible.

Acedo was an old and canny politican, in his youth he had been an anarchist, along with Maeztu and Azorin; now that was all over long ago. The dictatorship cut short his career at a moment when he was about to become minister of a conservative government. He was versed in financial intrigue and knew all the details of backstairs dealing. He placed his services at the disposal of bankers and captains of industry. Albert paid generously for his advice. De Acedo had composed the speech which the smuggler was to make later in the day in congress, to defend himself from the accusations launched against him by the republican rulers.

The door opened and Albert appeared with the girl.

"I hope you'll excuse me."

"Under the circumstances . . ." assented Acedo.

"You have the speech with you?" asked Albert.

They entered the room. The air was charged with tobacco smoke. Scattered on the floor were numerous cigar butts. Albert put his hand in his pocket with the stealthy gesture of a man who hides in order to rob himself. He pulled out a cigar, gripping it tight between his fingers as though afraid it would be snatched from him. He bit off the end, and cocking his head to one side, with half-closed lids, he slowly raised the cigar to his mouth with one hand and spreading the other hand fan-like, he stirred the air.

Alcudia made haste to tender him a box of matches, which Albert deposited in his own pocket with a fake gesture of absent mindedness.

"That is already the third box today," mumbled Bernardo.

"Well, I'm listening, Acedo."

With a sly look don Carlos assumed an air of importance and steadied his gaze. He had written a speech that was suited to the man who was to deliver it and to the effect it was intended to produce.

It began with an exhortation to the parliament and the president to be patient with the speaker who was not a parliamentarian and who had come to parliament not to attack anyone but to defend himself from an accusation.

"This beginning," explained Acedo, "places you in the position of a man who does not want to fight, and who offers peace to the enemy, without, however, humiliating himself."

The speech was divided in three parts. The first served to present Juan Albert as the generous defender of the interests of the state. The second sought to destroy the legend that had sprung up concerning the origins of his fortune. In this part of the speech Albert was described as a capable hard-working man who, born of modest parents, had built up his huge fortune by his own efforts alone. It told of his first deals in real estate, financed by the Mallorcan bank, then he gave himself over to the tobacco industry, acquiring an interest in a factory of Argelia. It then went on to sing his praises as patriot, returning to Spain the money he had deposited abroad when the republic was proclaimed. The third part dealt with his relations with the dictatorship, relations which were proper, above-board and in no way open to censure. The speech ended with a short summary of how he, a son of the people, by virtue of his work and his knowledge of business, had attained his present economic position.

"Does it suit you?" asked Acedo.

Albert pretended not to hear.

"Leave it with me."

He had to learn the speech by heart—an easy task for his unusually retentive memory. The use of this faculty of his in figuring was the secret of some of his easy triumphs. Otherwise they would have broken the head of this mathematical Gargantuan, who performed arithmetical operations with astonishing swiftness.

The admiration which the dictator had harbored for Albert from the time when he first met him was largely based on the smuggler's wizard-like aptitude for figures. Albert read badly and wrote worse, but he could count excellently.

And for Primo, who had not forgotten his tortures as a cadet at the Academy every time he was called to the blackboard, Albert was a prodigy.

Left alone with Acedo's speech, the problem as Juan Albert saw it was not so much that of learning the speech as of finding the tone and gestures suited to its delivery.

He was sure of himself. However, since the fourteenth of April serious threats were hanging over him. He felt confident that they would do him no more harm than they had already done. Otherwise he would have taken flight. But to take flight now would amount to recognition of his guilt. He must remain in Spain and give himself to the enemy. He counted on the deputies pledged to support him. One or two ministers owed him money. Woe to them if they raised a hand against him.

Standing before a mirror, he raised his right hand and said:

"Gentlemen . . . ."

He gazed at his motionless face hardened to an icy stare.

"Gentlemen, before undertaking an examination of the subject under discussion . . ."

His voice was perfect, a firm tone, free from any trace of superciliousness. He clenched his fists.

"A day will come . . ."

. . . He took a glass, set it on the floor and placed his foot upon it. The glass broke under the pressure of his weight. With his heel he ground it to dust, gritting his teeth. Getting down on his kness he scattered the remains of the glass with his breath.

"This is how!"

His "This is how!" applied to the heads of all the republicans of the provisional government: the head of Azana and that of Prieto, that of de Maura and that of Largo Cabellero, likewise that of don Niceto Alcala Zamora. One head was lacking, that of don Alejandro Lerroux.

Albert wiped off his hands by rubbing them against each other and went out.

"Your shirt, don Juan," the waiter reminded him.

Albert tucked his shirt inside his trousers and went down to the hotel lobby.

Alejandro Lerroux had promised, thirty years before: "We shall capture the state and the reins of government and public property will be in our hands."

From Galicia, Pepe Luna; from Aragon, Marraco; from Valencia, Samper; from Murcia, Rocha; from Andalucia, Martinez Barrio; from Canarias, Guerra del Rio; from Extremadura, Salazar Alonzo; from the Balearic Isles, Juan Albert. They followed their leader's voice and formed a closed circle.

"Hurrah, Lerrouxists in the wilderness, hurrah!"

San Miguel de Pontenovo received Pepe Luna with open arms. Returning from Barcelona a wealthy man, he displayed his generosity, and defended a sane policy of order, of respect for the "sacred traditions," of "Long live Christ and King!" and of "Down with Marxism!". . . . What a reception they gave him! There stood the youth from Allariz, very round, very diminutive and rosy cheeked. He wet his pants seeing and applauding "El Moreno" and persuaded the peasants to vote for Pepe Luna, representative of don Ale, ". . . the ilustrious leader," he would add, "who will continue the history of Ferdinand and Isabella."

"El Moreno" named the youth from Allariz, who was the former head of the Patriotic Union, his political manager in San Miguel de Potenovo and departed for Pontevedra, Tuy, Vigo, La Estrada, Lalin . . . He was acclaimed in all the province, and young men of Allariz, Pontevedra, Tuy, Vigo, La Estrada .... were named Pepe Luna's political managers in their respective villages.

In '31, Salazar Alonso, during the election campaign for the Constituent Assembly, was speaking before some laborers; he recognised a landlord and pointed him out to the crowd:

"These are the ones you strip! They're your enemies!"

"You can't say that, warned his fellow campaigners, it's an incitement to lynch."

"The important thing is that it gets us votes," answered Salazar.

In the elections of '33 Salazar passed through the same villages followed by a procession of automobiles and surrounded by storm troops armed with asfixiating gas and hand-grenades. Before his speech a worker spoke, who began with the words:

"I come here wearing over my heart a bouquet of roses and lilies for the virgin and the patron saint of this village."

After which Salazar spoke:

"I come with the tricolor flag in one hand and the crucifix in the other."

They sent their blessings from Rome; the papal nuncio and Lerroux held conversations together; patrols of nuns—the white doves of the Lord!—made the rounds of the electoral college from morn till night. They asked money; they got money.

"Will you lower wages?" questioned the givers.

"We shall," anwered the askers.

"Peace, order, internal satisfaction! Peace and plenty! The Lerrouxists have won!.... Down with Marxism!"

From Paris Juan Albert took part in the fray and transmitted orders.

"The first defeat of the revolution. The government promises to oppose the revolution and wins by 238 votes to 54." (*El Debate,* February 8, 1934.)

"The head of the government declared in the Chamber, yesterday, that the time for contemplation is past and that he will vigorously oppose any attempt at violence." (*A B C,* February 8, 1934.)

The Zaragoza strike lasted 36 days; that of the Madrid metal workers lasted fifteen weeks.

The minister said:

"Article 556 of the penal code, which was repealed, must be put back into force: Those who combine in order to raise exorbitantly the price of labour will be punished."

"Down with Marxism!"

"Amnesty! The participants in the conspiracy of August 10 are set free."

Before the trial started the state prosecutor, Senor Anguera de Sojo, remarked:

"They've given me a spider's web without any threats."

In the preliminary investigation the declarations and the evidence were prudently altered. The prosecutor had to improvise his charges, convinced ahead of time of their futility. For everything had been foreseen and decided beforehand.

The debate had to be postponed until the end of the bullfight when the bullfight-fan deputies would return to the chamber. Twice senor Alba sent

to the ring for news of the fight. At last the fight ended and without any incident or hitch the three "quorum" votes necessary to "guillotine" the abrogation of the law of municipal districts, for the final approval of this project and of the law authorizing fifteen percent rise in railway rates.

Don Ale's minister of home affairs took a black-headed pin from his lapel and started to pick his teeth. From time to time he interrupted his task, pressing his lips and tongue against his teeth and sucked at the particles of food lodged in the crannies. With the whistling sound of air through a crevice, the extricated particles landed on the tongue of the curly-headed and expansive minister.

"I get quite as much pleasure out of it as from the butt of a cigar," he confided to his intimates.

A secretary entered the minister's private office.

"Senor minister, the striking field-hands, who are returning from the penitentiary of Burgos to their lands in Extremadura, have formed a demonstration which is heading along the calle de Alcala towards the Puerta del Sol.

"They are exhausting my patience, I tell you. It's time to punish them .... We'll see. Call out the storm-troops and the Civil Guard .... Wait!"

A recollection flashed upon his memory. When his father, more than a quarter of a century ago wanted to move from Extremadura to Madrid, to open a barbershop in the Spanish capital, one of those men of the Federacion de la Tierra, which he now was persecuting, had provided his father with money for the trip.

"How many Socialist municipal governments remain to be dissolved?" he inquired.

"Not one, your Excellency dissolved the last one a month ago."

Have tomorrow's issue of *El Socialista* confiscated, telegraph to Asturias that the governor imposes a fine of a thousand duros on *Avance* and that the leaders of the Youth be arrested ....

The landowners of la Ceda, in Salamanca, offer the agricultural workers 2.50 a day, but then they take it all back for board.

In Prieto the situation of the agricultural workers is tragic and the landowners offer wages of one peseta and fifty centimos a day.

Senor Gil Robles and Senor Casanueva oblige the Minister of Agriculture to refuse to expropriate a single hectare of the land belonging to the ex-Grandes of Spain.

The price of bread rises in Estepana.

In Alhama de Granada, more than seven hundred women and children organize a demonstration to protest against the rise in the price of bread. Several of the demonstrators collapse from starvation.

A destitute old man commits suicide by bashing his head against the wall .... A woman dies of hunger and cold in the doorway of the church of las Maravillas in Madrid ... On the calle de Ferrorcarril in Madrid the wife of an unemployed worker jumps from a balcony with her son in her arms. Driven to despair by his wretched economic condition a man commits suicide in Alcazar de San Juan by thrusting his head between two railway coaches .... A thirteen year old child who sees the members of his family dying by inches, kills himself with a bullet through his head.

Well, and how about Albert? Why at the moment of triumph did he not return to the land which so shamelessly was submitting to his governors? A country which was so much like the hare of his Mallorcan dreams. Husky

animal with a shiny coat and very tame . . . . You stroked its back and it grunted with pleasure. You plucked its hairs out one by one and it shut its eyes to hide the anguish they reflected. You punched its teeth out and it wagged its tail! . . . What a prize animal don Ale had caught in the hunt!

One day we received word that don Juan Albert had disembarked in Palma. He was returning at the same time as Calvo Sotelo and General Barrera.

The newspaper writer Majol celebrated his return with an article in which he said, among other things:

"Last evening there arrived in Madrid don Juan Albert, symbol of a Spain unjustly reviled, assaulted and oppressed."

Pepe Luna rushed to see the symbol.

"Are you satisfied, don Juan?"

And don Juan replied:

"Down with Marxism!"

Old and feeble, don Juan will go to his grave continuing to shout this warcry of his which on his lips has already lost all meaning. While stopping in Madrid he did not attend Congress; he was not once seen at the Palace. At twilight he sets forth by automobile and only gets out of the car outside the city for a few steps supported by those who accompany him. He goes to bed early, eats much and sometimes organizes a round of tute, his favorite game, at home. Sometimes, as though in his sleep, he asks:

"Is Largo Caballero alive? Isn't Prieto dead? And Azana?"

What does Juan Albert love life for? He has fulfilled his ambition. Great is his power. Minister and bankers bow before him, and his spirit has been incarnated and shall survive no one knows for how long in the foolish republic of April 14.

A forest of fists is raised in city and field. They are not swayed by the wind, those fists; they are shaken only by hatred with a mighty rhythmic pulse.

Whom do they threaten?

A compact mass of uniform silhouettes extends over the length and breadth of Spain.

Why are those thousands of young throats shouting?

What are they shouting?

Chests expand with the mighty wave of a voice which rises to the fists and transforms them into torches. It is as though the shout could be seen and heard. It seems to penetrate the ears and eyes.

They shout:

"Hang the robbers!"

And the shout is so certain, so clothed with living flesh and generous blood, so charged with wrath and anguish that on the sky of Spain again there looms the shadow of the gallows and shackles.

Translated from the Spanish by Edmund Stevens

Simahi Kensaku

The Blind Man

A Japanese Short Story of the Revolutionary Movement

Koga sat leaning against the wall for a long time with his legs crossed. Now that he could not read there was nothing for him to do. Sometimes he got up and paced the floor. The cell was three steps wide. In one minute he could walk the length of the cell and back. That meant 600 times an hour. By counting his steps he could walk a whole mile.

Walking like this always made him dizzy. Koga would then sit down again and tear at the hangings, pulling out the threads. He tried not to break them and it always gave him pleasure to pull out a thread whole. After fingering it he let his arms drop and grew pensive. He would get up again, tidy the cell and try to ease himself by doing physical exercises.

This morning Koga had repeated all this in order to kill time. He had sat down and turned his blind eyes to where he thought the window should be. It was the end of October. He could feel the warmth of the clear autumn day. It was the hour when the sun in its slow course heated the wall against which he sat. He moved his fingers over the cold stone wall and received from a small, a very small part of it, a slight sensation of warmth. Sitting there in the rays of the autumn sun that struggled through the high window of his cell, Koga pictured to himself how the yellow leaves were curling up on the tree that rose close to the other side of the wall. The sun warmed his dirty clothes. He sat there pensive a long time—he thought of himself as a helpless worm basking in the sun.

The morning life of the prison was borne along the corridor in a wave of sound—the swearing of wardens, the clashing of words, the banging of doors, the shutting and opening of locks and the whispers of the prisoners being led to the court house. All these sounds penetrated the thick wall to the inmates in their cells. To sit still in this noise was impossible; the men rose and tried to peer through the little windows in the doors. After midday everything grew quiet again. With his sharpened sense of hearing Koga detected someone's steps in the silence. They were approaching his cell and stopped outside the door. The door opened. "This way, this way," the warder commanded. Koga took his black spectacles from the table, put them on and after clamping the wicker basket[1] over his head, passed out. Without groping for support Koga walked down the familiar corridor. They turned to the right. Koga felt the warder at his side. The image of a hairy face sprang to memory.

"Where are you taking me?" Koga asked.

"To an interview with lawyer Sato."

When he entered the visitors' room, Koga felt that someone was waiting for him. He bowed and took a seat. The someone said in a thick bass:

"I am Sato. Let us be acquainted."

Koga then heard the sound of a brief case being opened and the rustling of papers on the table.

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[1] In Japan prisoners wear a basket over their heads to prevent them from recognizing one another.

"Yamada has told me everything about you," the voice continued. "It's too bad—your being blind. I can understand that it makes things still more difficult for you."

"Thanks. I must now put myself in your charge."

"The date has already been fixed for considering your appeal."

"Already fixed! They are very quick this time."

"I can't tell you the exact date but I understand it will be at the end of next month. I am anxious to know what you think about the case."

"It might be necessary to have it rushed through on account of your blindness."

"That would be good. In any case I should like to know the exact date."

This conversation made Koga feel uneasy. It was the first time he had spoken to Sato. His first defense lawyer had been Yamada, a personal friend and a landsman. Six months before in meeting Sato, Koga ceased to receive information from Yamada. Two months afterwards he learned that Yamada had been arrested while on the way to his office. Since Yamada, who had defended him at the trial months before, was now in prison, Koga felt that there was reason for alarm.

A month previously Koga had received a letter from Yamada's friend, Sato. "I shall shortly visit you," he wrote. Koga was glad that he had another defense lawyer—or rather was glad that it was Sato. Sato was a moderate liberal and the fact that he was taking up the case showed that people from the most varied strata of society were joining the movement in place of those who had dropped out.

"You have a most terrible affliction. I think you should be released on bail immediately. When did you become blind?"

"The fifth of August last year. I am ashamed to admit that at first I was like a man insane. I muttered all kinds of meaningless nonsense, tearing up and down my cell, not knowing what to do. But now I am more steady."

Koga spoke in a tearful, imploring voice. It is possible that everything had grown dim in his mind from the long time he had been in prison, and the harshness of the misfortune that had descended on him. His cheeks had fallen in, his chin had grown sharper; his face was small like a baby's. His eyes, hidden behind the black spectacles, were empty cavities. He spoke rapidly, spittle trickling from the corners of his mouth. Sato, who knew what a brilliant speaker Koga had once been, maintained a terrified silence and found it difficult to follow him.

Before his affliction Koga had put away every spare penny, spending money only on books and stamps. He had written a lot to his friends, both old and new. When he became blind, he felt that these letters had been his principal joy in life. When he was no longer able to endure the oppressive silence he would tear up and down his cell, beating his head against the wall. But today Sato had come to hear what he had to say. Koga spoke on and on, unable to stop. Suddenly he heard the warder present at the meeting rattle his saber and scrape his feet. Koga grew silent and apologized for being too talkative.

"Don't worry," said Sato. The lawyer then got down to business.

"Well, as I said, your appeal will be considered in about a month's time. These are a few questions I should like to clear up," Sato said, turning over some papers.

"As the main facts have been recorded, we need to add nothing. I should like only to know your present attitude and how you intend to act in court."

Koga seemed to fathom everything. Now it's all beginning, he thought. He became anxious and disturbed. The way he acted in court would decide his future. Koga sat silently, holding his head. After a while, he said that he would like to think the matter over and give his answer in ten days. Sato agreed to this. He put the papers back in his brief case.

"I shall come again soon. Take good care of yourself."

These words, quite harmless in themselves, sounded like a warning: "Don't take any false steps."

On reaching the door Sato suddenly stopped.

"Oh, I'd almost forgotten to tell you. I met Nagai Bisako today. She is very busy. She cannot visit you herself but asked me to give you these five yens. You don't want to send any verbal message?"

Koga was nonplussed but only for an instant. He thanked the lawyer and said that there was no message. Nagai Bisago was Koga's divorced wife.

It was evening when Koga was led to his cell. He heard the clatter of metal dishes, the scurrying of warders in the corridor. When supper was over, it was already night—he knew that because the sparrows that nested near the window had finished their song. Amidst the silence Koga tried to gather his thoughts. He recalled the whole of his past life, and only after exhausting each fact did he hide it once more in the recesses of his mind. He was like a baby pulling now one toy out of its box, now another. He mocked at himself for living in the past—but if the living had consigned him to death and he yet must live—what else remained. Bitter memories made way for pleasant ones. The past was revived and brought with it new emotions.

Koga had been arrested three years ago, in the spring. It was a hard blow to the young and still undeveloped organization. Remembering his comrades, Koga decided that he must bear himself in court in a way that would not incur the slightest reproofs. Koga instantly grew steady. He considered that by standing firmly, he could counteract the influence of those who wavered. He had thought the same when temporary reverses caused comrades to drop out of the movement. Koga was persistent and unwavering. He despised gentleness and all warm human feelings; his face was that of a man who has forgotten that there are such things as laughter, anger, joy and sorrow.

Koga had originally been sentenced to six months imprisonment but the trial revealed that he was implicated in another case connected with a strike. That was in the spring of the previous year. While the second case was being investigated he served his term on the first charge in the preliminary consignment cell. His forced labor consisted of putting glue on envelopes. On the third of August, when his term was nearly up, Koga went to wash in the prison bathroom. The bath, which was only once in five days, was a real pleasure for Koga, although only fifteen minutes was allowed in which to wash and dress. That summer was an exceptionally hot one. Prisoners often fainted. Some of them even went mad. A warder once said smirkingly to Koga: "If you ever had gonorrhea you better be careful. It goes to your head in this weather and makes an idiot of you."

The window of Koga's cell looked to the west and in the long summer days he felt as though he were being roasted. Utterly exhausted Koga would drag himself to the window and stand there with his mouth open like a fish, trying without success to gulp down some fresh air. Often on sitting down to work Koga felt dazed as before a fainting fit. When he struck his head on the table the feeling would pass. Sweat and vermin aggravated

his sufferings. All his ribs protruded as though he were after a severe illness. His young fresh skin had grown flabby and was covered with a rash. His clothes were so wet from perspiration that he could wring them by running his hands down his body. He suffered from continual itching. At night insects swarmed over his sweaty body. On shaking his mattress in the morning there was a scurrying of vermin, vermin that had sucked the blood of hundreds of prisoners. From all sides sounded the long sighs of men suffering from insomnia. The bathroom was so small that only one person could wash at a time. Koga was always the last to wash. The reason probably being that he was undergoing a regular prison term. . . . It was the same that time. The wooden tub was a receptacle for the dirt of the men that washed before him. Greasy little balls of filth floated on the water. On the bottom was a thick layer of scum. Water ran in stinking streams on the concrete floor. They all were accustomed to this dirt in the prison and it was even forbidden to call it dirt.

Lying back in the water Koga felt like an infant reclining in its mother's bosom. But the delightful sensation was only for an instant. Before him stood the warder shouting: "Your time's up, get out." Koga hurriedly washed himself. He opened the hot water tap but there was no more water. There was no cold water either. After dipping his towel in the tub, Koga rubbed his body and wiped his face from which were running streams of perspiration.

The bathroom door opened noisily.

"Get out," came the command.

Koga threw his clothes over his shoulder and left the bathroom. On getting back to his cell he saw little balls of dirt rolling on his hands and chest.

That was in the evening. During the night, while working in the dim light of the lamp Koga began to feel a gnawing in both eyelids. He paid no attention to this. It would not have surprised him if the pain was the beginning of an inflammation of the mucous membrane which often arose from dust and eye strain. Koga had had such an inflammation before. It had been cured but underfeeding could bring it on again.

The next morning he could scarcely open his eyes. His whole body was burning with fever. The lids were swollen and ached. He could feel a swelling under his ears. Yellow matter kept runing from his eyes. Could it be pus? Koga was alarmed and asked the warder to call a doctor. "What's wrong with you?" the young doctor asked in an offhand tone. He pressed his fingers against Koga's eyelids and jumped back the next instant. Yellow pus squirted on to his overall. The eyeballs were red like over-ripe cherries.

"Bad case," the doctor remarked.

Bandaging the eyes with gauze soaked in alcohol, he asked: "Did you ever have gonorrhea?"

On receiving a negative answer the doctor asked as if in surmise:

"You took a bath?"

"Yes, the day before yesterday."

There was nothing more for the doctor to ask. Koga was placed in the prison hospital. His eyes caused him great pain. His temperature kept rising and he was continually vomiting yellow matter. His eyelashes were removed as they hindered the eyes closing. The solution of lunar caustic which was dropped into the eyes caused them to smart and burn. Koga tossed and moaned.

"Well, nothing serious, I hope?" he asked the assistant doctor from time to time.

"I know nothing." That was the usual answer but Koga regarded it as an expression of extreme indifference.

One evening the doctor called his assistant. They whispered for a long time. Koga sensed the oncoming misfortune. Could it be really gonorrhea? He usually drove the thought out of his mind, but it always returned. He wanted to call the doctor but the words stuck in his throat. When the lights on the high ceiling went out, Koga wanted to weep. At night time he was filled with a sense of fear such as he had experienced before only in childhood.

One morning when Koga awoke there was a gray mist before his eyes. He tore off the bandage but everything was dark as before.

"Doctor," Koga shouted.

"Doctor," he shouted a second time.

There was no answer.

The usual morning sounds filled the corridor. Koga continued to shout. In one night the dreadful bacilli had destroyed the corneas. When Koga realized he was blind he sobbed aloud.

His smothered cries sounded all night, now loud, now soft, penetrating through walls and doors, filling the long corridors of the hospital.

Koga lay more than a month in the hospital. It was autumn when he returned to his cell.

Wearing black spectacles he walked unsteadily down the corridor holding on to a warder. To this day he could remember how the door of the cell banged and how the warder spoke about something, how bad he felt at that time. His six months had terminated while he was in the hospital. He was again under investigation. He had no idea how he had lived in the hospital. When he turned his mind back it was that very month he could not recall. There were only dim recollections, and it was difficult to say whether they belonged to his dream life or to his waking moments. He remembered that at first everything had fallen out of his hands, which only after a week became obedient to his will.

He remembered how he had to be fed for several days and taught how to feed himself. The recollections were scattered and broken. His mind was obviously clouded. With a broken spirit he faced a life which he contacted only with his hands. Beyond the walls of the cell events flowed with their usual severe precision; their course was in no way influenced by Koga's misfortune.

Prisoners continued to come and go. There was still the sound of keys turning in locks; night still followed day; the daily succession of events was the same. Nothing was affected by Koga's misfortune. The huge wheel continued to turn, regardless of the fortunes and misfortunes of individuals.

Koga felt himself to be as insignificant as a fly. At first he feared insanity. The shapes and appearances of objects to which he had paid no attention before he now regarded as beautiful and attractive. Koga would take up cups and teapots and caress them, delighting in their coolness. Gradually he developed an affection for these objects, began to love them. He often thought that he might succeed once more in seeing them with his own eyes. That desire was weakening his mind.

Koga's condition grew worse and worse. Such was his apathy that he said every night, "That's another day passed and a good thing too—somehow I've managed to live through." Koga had read somewhere that death is the

only deliverance for human beings and that suicide for them is a sweet dream. The knowledge that he could end his life if he wanted to relieved and steadied him. At times he thought that a boundless universe must lie on the other side of death, that death returns a man to the place whence he originally came.

What saved Koga from committing suicide was that he further developed his sense of hearing. Through that sense, extraordinarily sharpened, he was able to kill despair.

From now on the world consisted of sounds. Koga could determine how many people walked down the corridor at a time. Hearing a person's steps, Koga pictured his face and voice. Koga learned to tell the weather from the singing of the sparrows that made their nest under the prison roof. Flying in flocks the birds sang the whole day through. It delighted Koga to hear them sing. The thought pained him that after his case would be considered he might be transferred to another prison where he could no longer hear their songs.

Koga had often thought of his future—how would he live? He was beaten and crushed—nothing remained of the past. Koga heard a persistent, mocking voice—what sense, it said, is there in your being firm, in saying proud words—you who can do nothing?

Now there was nothing for him but to bow to fate. There was not a glimmer of light in the encompassing darkness.

The day of the trial drew nearer. A new question confronted him and called for a speedy answer—what stand should he take. It was necessary for him to reconsider his convictions. Koga ate scarcely anything and grew so thin that when Sato saw him he could scarcely believe his eyes.

Koga put to himself and answered no end of questions. True, he had suffered personal misfortune but what did the individual matter? Who was guaranteed against misfortune? No matter what troubles overwhelmed him he would never betray his stand so long as the causes which made him join the movement were still in existence.

With his sight gone he was an invalid, useless for the movement. But that did not mean that he should recant or announce that he had been led astray in the past.

At other times he would tell himself there was nothing terrible in abandoning one's convictions. But he would instantly put away the thought, calmly saying to himself: "Did you not know before that a man might meet with misfortune? You are not the only one who suffers. On coming here you saw many misfortunes. The day before yesterday one prisoner went mad. His yells are still ringing in your ears. No one denies that yours is a great misfortune, but are you the only one? And are you the only person who fights against injustice?"

But still Koga was not sure of himself. His alarm was greatest when he thought of his old mother. He had not seen her for a long time. On hearing of his arrest she had come up from the country, putting up in the city with some distant relatives. It appeared that she had heard about his blindness from the prison officials. When he became blind Koga refused to see his mother though she came to the prison several times. It was four years since he had seen her last. He had gone to the country after being released on bail. He had been arrested for taking part in a strike. His mother at that time lived in the house of his uncle, a merchant and a landowner.

He remebered that he had entered the house by the back door. He was met by his uncle and aunt, his mother meanwhile pretending to be busy in

the kitchen. At last she finished her work. Koga realized that she had been taking her time. Only when his aunt called her did she enter the room. Looking very sad, she said in a low, quaking voice: "Welcome home." Koga saw that his mother was suppressing her feelings and was on the verge of tears. In the gentle talk of his uncle and his aunt, Koga sensed a distinct note of reproach. His uncle told the latest news about Koga's old school chums. Many, the sons of landowners, were studying in Tokyo; others had found positions; some had married. All this was related not merely for the sake of telling the news. After his father's death Koga had gone to Tokyo to study, the money for this coming from the sale of the family property. Koga's mother had gone to his uncle's where she was to await her son's return. A year had not passed when she heard that her son had been arrested.

When at last they were alone Koga could see that she had aged greatly. Big tear drops streamed down her sunburned cheeks. Next day Koga started on a piece of work he had been commissioned to do in Tokyo. It would bring in some money. In the evening his mother sat next to him sewing. From time to time she asked him to thread the needle. Koga did this quickly. He also helped her to wind the thread. Her eyes sparkled with an affectionate gleam. She asked no questions about Koga's life, nor did he tell her anything. The mother believed in her son. The boy whom she heard called a bad man had grown still dearer to her.

Three months had passed like this. The day of his departure drew near. One evening Koga took his mother to see a play in a progressive, nearby town. She was disappointed that it was not the Kabuki but enjoyed the spectacle with childish glee. It was a play about a mother and a son, obviously based on Gorki's *Mother*. When they returned home she said: "The play was well acted. Just like you and me." She added that she would like to see the Kabuki once more before she died. Koga took his old mother in his arms and pressed her to himself: "Mother, I shall take you to the Kabuki in Tokyo."

Two days after this, while his mother was in the fields, Koga left the house never to return. He left a short note with the money he had received for the work. She was to have visited him in prison. Recalling her slender figure Koga often thought about their future meeting.

But she remained in the country for a long time. It was quite recently she had come to the city. Scared by the automobiles and street cars she had walked to the prison that struck terror even into the hearts of the city's inhabitants. Trembling at the noise of the iron doors and the harsh voices of the warders, she sat in the waiting room asking those around her to read the number of her turn that was printed on a small card. Koga pictured her as a small, gray haired woman, with frightened, unsteady eyes. She often scribbled messages on little scraps of paper. The warder would read them for Koga.

One more question Koga had to settle before the consideration of his appeal concerned his relationship with his wife, Nagai Bisako. She had been his wife and comrade. After arrest, he had written to her that she might forget him and regard herself as free.

Koga considered it wrong to keep his wife bound, as he did not know how long he would remain in prison or whether he would live to finish his sentence. Koga had a poor opinion of his comrades in prison since their attitude to their wives was in no way different than that of the feudal lords; the comrades in the movement made their wives hold a subordinate position; it

was as though they were not comrades as well as wives; it was only the wife they remembered. The result was that most of the women dropped out of the movement.

Witnessing many such cases, Koga felt there was a need for a change in the old institution of marriage. His attitude to Bisako was determined by these sentiments of protest. In proposing to her that she regard herself as free Koga had implied at divorce, the more since a comrade had written to him in prison that Bisako was on intimate relations with Comrade Kamimura, a member like her of one of the radical organizations. Although Bisako visited Koga as usual and seemed to be the same as before he thought that she was unwilling to tell him about Kamimura for the reason that he was blind. It was then that he wrote her the letter. Bisako came to see him after that and said that she would continue to do so.

The trial was held in February. The cold penetrated to one's bones. Handcuffed, Koga was led to the prisoner's bench, wearing dark spectacles and with a warm gown on that his mother had sent. On removing the handcuffs the old warder whispered:

"That's the rule. There is nothing to be done about it."

"Are you Koga Riokishi?" the judge asked.

"I am," he answered in a low voice.

After the indictment had been read, the president of the court (as Koga thought at least) said:

"The prisoner lost his sight in prison."

It may have been that Koga was unduly suspicious but on being asked immediately after this about his present attitude it occurred to him that he was being given the chance of appealing for clemency or even of recanting Koga said that he had indeed lost his sight while in prison but did not say a word about what he had suffered.

"As regards my attitude," he continued, "it remains the same." When the court asked him whether it was worth his while defending his ideals, seeing that he could no longer work for them, Koga answered in a steady voice that that made no difference to his convictions.

The trial ended on this.

Koga's mother was in the courtroom when her son had come in wearing handcuffs and with a basket over his head. She turned to her companions—friends of Koga—asking:

"Can that really be Riokishi?"

When they answered that it was she turned to him with unbelieving eyes. When the trial was over and it became known that Koga was to be led back to prison, this quiet, pensive woman dashed towards her son with a loud cry.

She was not permitted to approach him and when one of Koga's comrades led her away, she took out her handkerchief and began to weep silently. One of Koga's friends wrote him all about this.

Ten months had passed since then.

Two days after seeing Sato, Koga was informed of the date set for his appeal. The ten days that Koga asked for in which to consider the matter passed quickly.

There were fogs in November and the cold from the stone floor got into Koga's bones. He began to cough badly and became extremely thin. The prison clergyman once put in an appearance.

"Your appeal will soon be considered," he said ingratiatingly after partly opening the door and sticking half his body through it.

Koga thought that he must have the same kind of ingratiating look. Koga knew perfectly well what he had come for and decided to answer no questions.

"Was your mother here?" Koga kept silent.

"Maybe you would like to talk with her before the appeal is considered? I can also talk to you."

Koga merely thanked him and then kept silent. The clergyman left the cell.

Next day Koga was brought before the head warder of the prison. Before asking about Koga's attitude he reminded him about his mother and then advised him to change his convictions. The head warder hinted that if Koga took his advice it would be easy to arrange his release on bail. Koga answered he would have to think the matter over and was taken back to his cell. As he was being led down the corridor his pale face could be seen through an opening in the wicker basket. There was a smile of contempt on his slightly quivering lips.

During the ten months that had passed since the trial, Koga had weakened physically but strengthened morally.

Shortly before his case was considered again, Koga wrote to his defense lawyer Sato that his position was unchanged.

Translated by Padraic Breslin

Ilja Barto

The Propagandist

Smoke hangs over familiar regions,
The wheat-fields are bare.
The master has torn up the grain by the roots,
My wasted village, my unfortunate,
I did not recognize you!
I did not recognize you!

Who stole the abandon of your songs,
The smiles of your youth,
The gayety of the hamlets and the girls,
The merry insolence of your young men?

The sun hangs like a suicide
Like a rotting corpse on every wind
Hunger, the propagandist of our thoughts
Strides among the tents.

Everywhere you could meet him—
In the suburbs, the villages and on the fields.
Men sleep with him in the cities
And share their meals with him.

He is in the huts—
He is silent in the machines.
He is the pale light in the eyes of youths,
He gnaws the heart with the teeth of a mouse—
He reaches the roots of the brain.

Beggars!
Thick as mushrooms
They swarm the streets!

Like the propagandist of the revolution
Hunger stalks among the tents.

Translated from the Czechoslovak by Ed Falkowski

LETTERS and DOCUMENTS

N. G. Chernishevski

Life and Esthetics

Beginning the Publication of a Russian Revolutionary Classic[1]

This treatise limits itself of the statement of general conclusions drawn from facts, confirming these conclusions only by general references again to such facts. This is the first point requiring an explanation. In an age of monographs, like the present, my work may evoke the reproach of being unmodern. The elimination of all special research may be deemed neglect or as due to the idea that general conclusions do not require confirmation by facts. But such an opinion could be based only on the external form of this work, not on its internal merits. The actual trend of the thoughts developed in this treatise is sufficient evidence of the fact that they have arisen on the basis of reality and that, for our day, the author holds in very little regard generally, flights of fancy even in the field of art, let alone in the field of science. The essence of the concepts set forth by the author is a warranty that he should have been only too pleased to have had a possibility for marshalling in his work all the numerous facts on which his opinions are based. Such a course, however, would expand the volume of this work much beyond the limits set. The author ventures to think that the general indications given by him will suffice to recall to the mind of the reader hundreds of facts in favor of the views set forth in this treatise and he therefore hopes that briefness of exposition will not be taken for paucity of proof.

But why did the author choose such a general, such a broad problem as the esthetic relations of art to reality for the subject of his investigation? Why did he not choose some more special problem as is generally done nowadays?

It is not for the author, of course, to say whether his powers are equal to the problem he wishes to solve. But the subject that has attracted his attention is one fully entitled to the attention of all those interested in problems of esthetics, that is of all those interested in art, poetry, literature.

It seems futile to the author to talk about the fundamental problems of science then only when nothing new and basic can be said about them, when the possibility has not yet arisen to see that science is changing its previously held views and to show in what way they must, most probably, change. But so soon as material for new views has been worked out on the questions our particular science is concerned with it is possible and necssary to expound these basic ideas.

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[1] In our last issue, *International Literature* No. 6, 1935, we printed an editorial introduction to this historical work. Included also were a number of quotations from Marx and Lenin, analyzing the importance of Chernishevski's work in the Russia of the last half of the 19th century. This introduction to our readers was concluded with the author's own introduction to his book—now a classic of pioneer revolutionary work on esthetics.

Respect for the realities of life and distrust of apriori hypotheses however pleasing they may be to the imagination—these are the tendencies now dominating in science. It seems to the author that if esthetics is at all worth talking about, our convictions on esthetics must be reduced to this new denominator.

The author, no less than anyone, acknowledges the necessity of special researches. It seems to him however, that from time to time it is also essential to review science from a general point of view; it seems to him that though it is important to gather and investigate facts, it is no less important to try and discover their meaning. All are agreed on the great importance of the history of art, especially of the history of poetry, hence the question also of what is art, what is poetry, cannot but be of great importance.

"All spheres of spiritual activity are subject to the law of ascent from the direct to the indirect. In consequence of this law an idea which can only be conceived fully by contemplation (cognition in indirect form) at first appears to the mind in direct form or in the form of an opinion. It seems therefore to the human mind that an individual thing, limited in space and time, corresponds completely to this conception, it seems that the given idea is fully realized in this thing, and that the general idea is fully realized in the particular given idea. Such a view of the thing is an illusion (*ist ein Schein*) inasmuch as an idea is never realized fully in any one thing; there is a truth, however, behind this illusion, because, to a certain extent, the general idea really is embodied in every particular idea and the particular idea is to a certain extent realized in the individual thing. This truth containing illusion of the full realization of the idea in a particular thing is the beautiful (*das Schöne*)."

The Beautiful

Thus the conception of the beautiful is developed in the ruling system of esthetics. Out of this fundamental view flow the following definitions: the beautiful is the idea in the form of limited manifestation; the beautiful is a particular sensual object which is imagined a pure expression of an idea so that there is nothing in the idea which is not sensually manifested in this particular object and there is nothing in the particular sensual object which is not purely the expression of the idea. The particular object is thus called the image (*das Bild*). Thus the beautiful is the complete correspondence, the complete identity of idea and image.

I shall not elaborate on the fact that the fundamental conception out of which such a view on the beautiful has been evolved has now been conclusively shown to be fallacious, nor shall I expatiate on the fact that according to this system of ideas the beautiful is an "illusion" due to the lack of perspicaciousness on the part of thought unenlightened by philosophy, before which the seeming fullness of manifestation of the idea in the particular object vanishes, so that the higher the degree of thought, the further beauty recedes, until we reach the point of highest development of thought when only truth is left and there is no beauty; I shall not dwell on the fact that the higher development of human thought does not in the least destroy the sense of beauty; all this has been said repeatedly. As part and parcel of the metaphysical system, the conception of the beautiful set forth above falls together with the system. But a system may be fallacious while a particular thought which forms a part of such a system, taken independently, may prove tenable on its own basis. It is therefore necessary to show also

that the ruling conception of the beautiful falls down before criticism when taken separately, independently of the metaphysical systems that have collapsed.

"That is beautiful in which the idea of the particular thing is fully expressed,"—translated into simple language means "that is beautiful which is superior to everything of its kind; which is best, so that nothing better of its kind can be conceived." It is perfectly true that a thing must be superior to its kind in order to be called beautiful. Thus, for instance, a forest may be beautiful, but it must be a "good" forest, with tall, straight trees, thick, in a word an excellent forest; a snag-ridden forest with low grown, rare trees cannot be beautiful. A rose is beautiful; but only a "good" rose, when it is fresh and has all its petals. In other words everything beautiful is the excellent of its kind. But not everything that is excellent of its kind is beautiful: a mole may be an excellent example of the mole species but will never seem "beautiful," the same can be said of most amphibia, a number of kinds of fish, even of many birds; the better the specimen of this type is for the naturalist,—*i. e.* the more fully the particular idea is expressed in it, the uglier it is from an esthetic point of view. The better a swamp is in its peculiar way, the uglier it is from an esthetic point of view. Not everything that is excellent of its kind is beautiful, because not all sorts of things are beautiful. The definition of the beautiful as the full correspondence of the particular thing with the idea of it is too broad. It only expresses the fact that of those things and phenomena which can attain beauty, only the best seem beautiful, but it does not explain why the orders of things and phenomena themselves separate into such as are beautiful and such in which we can see no beauty.

At the same time the definition is also too narrow. The statement "that seems beautiful which seems the realization of the 'idea' of the kind" also means: "it is essential for the beautiful to contain all that can possibly be best in things of this kind; it is essential that nothing good is to be found in other specimens of this kind which is not also present in the beautiful one." This is what we actually require of beautiful things and phenomena in those realms of nature where there is no diversity of type in one and the same kind of thing. Thus an oak can have only one sort of beauty; it must be tall and leafy; these properties are always present in a beautiful oak tree and there is nothing else that is better in any other oak tree. But already in animals we find a diversity of type among one and the same species as soon as they are domesticated. An even greater variety of type of beauty we find in man and we cannot even conceive of all the nuances of human beauty to be concentrated in one person.

The expression "what we call beautiful is the manifestation of the idea in an individual object" is not a definition of beauty at all. But it contains a modicum of truth—that "the beautiful" is an individual, live object and not an abstract thought. It contains also another mere hint at one property of all truly artistic works: their contents are something interesting to man generally and not only to the artist (this hint consists of the statement that the idea is—"something general, which holds always and everywhere"). Why this is so we shall see later.

Another expression which is often considered identical with the one above but really has an entirely different significance is: "The beautiful is the identity of idea and image, the complete merging of idea and image." This expression mentions a really essential criterion—only not of the idea of the beautiful generally, but of what is called a work of art: a work of art will

only then be really beautiful when the artist has conveyed with his work everything he wanted to convey. It stands to reason that a portrait is a good portrait only when the painter succeeds in painting the man he wanted to paint. But to "paint a face *beautifully*" and to "paint a *beautiful* face" are two entirely different things. We shall have to return to this property of a work of art again when we define the essence of art. Here, however, it may not be superfluous to note that in defining beauty as identity of idea and image, there is latent in this definition, which has in mind not beauty in live nature, but beautiful works of art, the germ or the result of the tendency of esthetics to usually give preference to the beautiful in art over the beautiful in nature.

But what is the beautiful then, if it cannot be defined as "unity of idea and image" or as "the full manifestation of the idea in an individual object?"

The new is not built up as easily as the old is destroyed and it is much more difficult to defend than to attack: it is possible that views on the essence of the beautiful which seem to me perfectly just ones may not seem satisfactory to many. But if my exposition of the esthetic conception issuing from the now prevailing views on the relations of human thought to live reality has not been full enough, or has been onesided or vague, these are, I am sure, not the fault of the conceptions themselves but only of my exposition of them.

The sensation produced in man by the beautiful is bright joy—similar to that which fills us in the presence of a beloved person.[1] We *love* beauty disinterestedly, we enjoy it, are glad of it, as we are glad of the presence of a beloved human being. It follows therefore that beauty contains something lovely, something that gladdens our hearts. But this "something" must be exceedingly expansive, all embracing, capable of assuming the most diverse forms, in a word, something general; because the most diverse objects, things not in the least similar to one another, can be beautiful to us.

Of all that is dear to man that which is most dear to him is—life; dearest of all, such a life as he should like to live, as he loves; then all life—because it is better to live than not to live at all; everything alive has by its very nature a horror for death, for non-existence, and loves life. And it would seem that the definition "Beauty is Life;" "that is beautiful in which we see life such as it should be according to our conceptions; that is beautiful which expresses by itself life or reminds of life"—it would seem that such a definition satisfactorily explains all cases which awaken in us the feeling of beauty. Let us trace the principal manifestations of beauty in various fields of reality in order to verify this.

To simple folk a "good life," "life as it should be" consists of having plenty to eat, living in a good house and having enough sleep; but to the peasant the conception "life" also always includes work: to live without work is impossible and besides, it would be a bore. As a result of a life of plenty with much work, but not so that it is exhausting, the young peasant lad or girl will have a fresh, rosy complexion—which is the first criterion of beauty to simple folk. Working hard, therefore sturdy, and having plenty to eat, the village girl will be rather stocky—this is also a necessary condition for a country beauty. The worldly, "airy," city beauty seems to the

[1] I mean that which is beautiful in its nature and not merely because it is beautifully shown in art. I mean beautiful objects and phenomena and not their beautiful rendering in works of art: a work of art, while evoking esthetic delight by its artistic merit, may call out pain or even disgust for that which is depicted.

country man decidedly "plain" and even makes an unpleasant impression on him—because to him "leanness" is a result either of illness or a "heavy lot." But hard work does not let one grow fat—if a village girl is fat it is a sort of illness, a sign of a "bad constitution" and country folk consider excessive stoutness a failing. The country beauty cannot have small hands and feet because she works hard—and folk songs do not mention such features. In other words—the description of beauty in folk songs will not contain a single attribute of beauty which would not be a sign of flourishing health and balanced strength of body, the consequence always of a life of plenty with constant hard, though not excessive, work. An entirely different aspect is given to the aristocratic beauty: generations of her ancestors have lived without putting their hands to work; due to an idle life little blood flows to the extremities and with every fresh generation the muscles of hands and feet weaken, the bones become more frail and the necessary consequences is—small hands and feet. These are symbols of a life which seems the only life worth while to the upper classes—a life without physical labor. If an aristocratic lady has large hands and feet, it is a sign that she is either poorly built or that she is not descended from a good old family. For the same reason the ears of the aristocratic beauty must be small. Megrim (the blues) is, as is well known, an interesting disease—and for good reason: due to idleness the blood stays in the central organs, flows to the brain—the nervous system has become irritable due to the general weakening of the organism—the inevitable result—sick headaches and all sorts of nervous disorders; what-ho! even disease becomes interesting, nay something to envy, when it is the result of the kind of life we like. Health, it is true, can never lose its value to man because without health it is hard to live even when rolling in wealth and luxury. Consequently a fine complexion and robust health continues to be attractive also to people of the world, only sickliness, weakness, languor, also seem attributes of beauty when associated with idle luxury. Paleness, languor, sickliness, have yet another significance for people of the world: while country folk desire rest and quiet, people of the upper circles, who know no material want or physical weariness but, for that, are often bored to distraction what with idleness and the absence of material cares, seek excitement, "thrills," passion which will lend color, variety and interest to their otherwise monotonous and colorless lives. But excitement and strong passions wear the human being out rapidly; so how can one fail to be charmed by the languor and paleness of a beauty since they are evidence that she has "lived much?"

Lovely, dear's a fresh complexion,
Youth's fine breath;
But cheeks grown wan with heartfelt passion
Are lovelier yet.

But while a taste for pale, sickly beauty is a sign of artificiality and sophistication, every truly educated person feels that true life is a life of mind and heart. Such a life lays its stamp on the expression of the face, especially the eyes, consequently facial expression, about which folk songs say very little, becomes of great importance in the conceptions of beauty prevailing among cultured people, and it often happens that a person seems to us beautiful merely because that person possesses beautiful, expressive eyes.

The Contrary

I have thus reviewed, as far as space would permit, the principal attributes of human beauty, and, it seems to me, that all of them impress us as beautiful only because we see in them manifestations of life as we see it. Let us now turn to the opposite and investigate when a human being seems to us ugly.

The cause of ugliness in the human figure generally will be pointed out by all as a poor figure—being "badly built." We know that ugliness is the result of disease or bad accidents which mar the human body particularly easily in the first stages of its development. If life and its manifestations are beauty, it is only natural for disease and its consequences to be ugliness. But a poorly built person is also ugly—only to a lesser degree and the causes of being "poorly built" are the same as those causing ugliness generally only in a weaker form. If a person is born hunch-backed it is the result of unfortunate circumstances when his body was just being formed, stoop-shoulderedness is also being hunch-backed, only to a lesser degree and is due to similar causes. In general a poorly built person is to a certain extent a distorted person; his figure does not speak of life, not of happy development, but of the hard features of development, of unfavorable circumstances. Now let us go over from the general outline of the figure to the face. Its features may be bad either by themselves or by their expression. We do not like in a face an "angry," "unpleasant" expression, because anger is a poison which spoils our lives. But a face is more often "unattractive" not in expression but on account of its features: facial features are unattractive in cases when the bones of the face are poorly organized, when ligaments and muscles bear the stamp of ugliness in their development more or less, *i. e.*, when the first steps of development took place under unfavorable circumstances.

It would be superfluous to enter into great detail to prove that beauty in the animal kingdom for man consists of those features which conform to the human idea of a life fresh and full of health and power. In mammals, whose organisms our eyes compare most nearly with the external features of man, what seems beautiful to man is rounded form, fullness and freshness; grace of movement seems beautiful because movements are graceful when a body is "well built, *i. e.*, reminds of well built people, not of ugly ones. What seems unattractive is—everything "clumsy," *i. e.*, to a certain extent monstrous to our conceptions, always making comparisons with man. The forms of the crocodile, the lizard, the turtle, recall mammals but in an ugly, distorted, absurd way; hence they are disgusting to look at. In the frog the unpleasant form is amplified by the cold slime which covers it, reminding one of a corpse —which makes the frog even more disgusting.

Nor is it necessary to enter into details about plants where we like freshness of color and luxuriousness of form, revealing freshness of life, rich in strength. A fading plant is not good, nor is a plant which has little vital sap, good.

Besides—the noise and movements of animals remind us of those of human life. To a certain extent the rustle of plant life reminds us of that too—the swaying of branches, the trembling of leaves—these are another source of beauty for us in plant and animal life. A landscape is beautiful to us when it is animated.

The reason I consider it superfluous to follow up in detail, through all the realms of nature, the idea that what is beautiful is life and particularly life calling to mind man and human life, is that there already exist several

courses in esthetics to which the idea is not foreign, that in nature that is beautiful which recalls man (or, to use their terminology, portends personality), which claim that the beautiful in nature signifies beauty only as a hint of man. Consequently, having shown that the beautiful to man is—life, it is not necessary to also prove that beauty in all other realms of reality, which becomes beautiful to the eyes of man only because it serves as a hint of beauty in man and his life—is also life.

It must be added, however, that in general man looks at nature with the eyes of an owner and what seems beautiful to him on earth is that with which the happiness and joy of human life are tied up. The sun and the light of day are beautiful also because they are the source of all life in nature as well as for the reason that the light of day affects favorably the direct vital functions of man, heightens organic activity in him and therefore also affects favorably our spiritual disposition.

It can be said on the whole, that on reading those passages in the latest works on esthetics where the various sorts and properties of beauty in reality are enumerated, one might think that, while consciously making beauty depend upon the fullness of manifestation of the idea, then authors subconsciously agree that fullness of life and beauty are in reality identical. And not only does this thought seem to be unconsciously the basis of their views on beauty in nature, in the very development of the general idea of beauty the word "life" is met with so frequently that in the end one might ask is there any difference between our definition: "beauty is life" and the prevailing one: "beauty is unity of idea and image." This question arises so much more naturally when the newer esthetics defines the "idea" as a "general conception which defines itself by the details of its real existence" and there thus seems to be a direct connection between the concept idea and the concept life (or, more precisely, the concept vital force). Is not then our proposed definition perhaps merely a transcription into more usual language of the same thing that is expressed in the prevailing definition in terms of speculative philosophy?

We shall see that there is an essential difference between the two conceptions of beauty. In defining beauty as the full manifestation of the idea in a particular thing we necessarily imply that "beauty is in reality only a phantom imposed upon it by our imagination," from which it follows that "beauty as a matter of fact, is the creature of our imagination, and in reality (or in the language of speculative philosophy, in nature) there is no true beauty;" and from the statement that there is no true beauty in nature it follows that "art has its source in the endeavors of man to supply the lack of beauty in objective reality" and that "beauty created by art is of a higher order than beauty in objective reality"—all these ideas are the essence of the now prevailing conception of esthetics and they are of such importance in that system not accidentally but by the strict logic of development of their fundamental conception of beauty.

On the other hand, from the definition: "beauty is life" it will follow that the true, the highest beauty is that which man finds in the world of reality and not that created by art: with such a conception of beauty in reality the origin of art is explained entirely otherwise: after which the very importance of art is seen in an entirely different light.

And so it must be said that the new conception of the essence of the beautiful, being a deduction from general views on the relations of the real to the imaginary world, will lead to a system of esthetics also essentially different from the systems prevailing of late years and in itself differs essen-

tially from the previous conceptions of the beautiful. At the same time it appears as their necessary further development. The essential difference between the ruling system of esthetics and the one proposed we shall see constantly—to point out one close relationship between them we shall say that the new view explains the most important esthetic facts which were brought out by the previous system. Thus, for instance, from the definition "beauty is life" it becomes comprehensible why the realm of beauty does not contain abstract thoughts but only individual things—life is seen only in real, live things while abstract, general thoughts are not a part of the realm of life.

The essential difference between the previously prevailing conception of beauty and the one we are proposing reveals itself, as we have said, at every step. The first proof of this can be seen in the relation of beauty to the sublime and the comic—in the prevailing system of esthetics the latter are considered together as subordinated varieties of beauty due to the different relations between its two factors, the idea and the image. According to the prevailing system of esthetics a pure unity of idea and image is what constitutes beauty: but not always is there perfect equilibrium between idea and image—sometimes the idea predominates and appearing to us in its totality, infiniteness, carries us away into the realms of the absolute, into the realms of infinity—this is called the sublime (*das Erhabene*),—sometimes the image predominates, distorts the idea, and this is called the comic.

The Sublime and the Comic

Having subjected the fundamental conceptions to criticism we must also subject to a similar analysis the opinions issuing therefrom—we must investigate the essence of the sublime and the comic and their relations to beauty.

The ruling system of esthetics gives us two definitions of the sublime as it gave us two definitions of beauty. "Sublimity is preponderance of idea over form" and "the sublime is a manifestation of the absolute." As a matter of fact these two definitions are as much at variance as we had found those two definitions of beauty to be. And really the preponderance of idea over form produces not a conception of the sublime but a conception of something "foggy," "indistinct" and the conception of "the ugly (*das Hässliche*);—while the formula, "that is sublime which evokes in us (or, to use the terminology of speculative philosophy—which manifests in itself) the idea of infinity" defines the sublime proper. It is therefore necessary to analyse each of them separately.

It is easy to show that the definition, "the sublime is the preponderance of idea over image, is inapplicable to the sublime after Fischer himself, who accepted it, did so with the explanation that as a result of the preponderance of idea over image (or expressing the same thing in more customary language: as a result of the force which manifests itself in the object overpowering all the forces that tend to confine it or, in organic nature, overpowering the laws of the organism which manifests the force) we have the ugly or the indefinite. Both of these conceptions are entirely different from the sublime. True, the ugly becomes sublime when it is terrible. It is also true that misty indefiniteness strengthens the impression of sublimity produced by the terrible or the gigantic. But the ugly when not terrible is simply disgusting or just not pretty; the misty and indefinite produces no esthetic effect if not associated with the gigantic or terrible. Not everything sublime is characterized by ugliness or misty indefiniteness; the ugly and the indefinite are not always of

the nature of the sublime. It is quite evident these conceptions differ from the conception of the sublime. Strictly speaking, "preponderance of idea over form" refers to that sort of event in the moral world and to those phenomena in the material world, when the object disintegrates from an excess of inner force; it is not to be disputed that such phenomena often are of an exceedingly sublime nature, but only when the force destroying the vessel which contains it already itself is of a sublime nature or when the object destroyed by it already seems to us sublime, regardless of its being destroyed by the forces within it. Otherwise we should not even think of the sublime there. When Niagara Falls shall have crushed the rock that forms it and thus have destroyed itself by its own force; when Alexander of Macedonia falls victim of his own excessive energy, when Rome falls by its own weight—these are sublime phenomena. But this is only because Niagara Falls, the Roman Empire, the personality of Alexander of Macedonia in themselves are of a sublime order. As they live, so they die; as they act, so they fall. The secret of sublimity here is not in the "preponderance of idea over phenomenon," but in the nature of the phenomenon itself—it is only the greatness of the crashing phenomenon that lends sublimity to the crash. The mere crash due to a preponderance of inner force over its temporary manifestation is not by itself a criterion of the sublime. The clearest expression of "preponderance of idea over form" we have in the phenomenon when the young leaf in growing breaks the shell of the bud which gave it birth, but this can by no means be referred to as a sublime phenomenon. "Preponderance of idea over form," the perishing of the object itself by the excess of force developing within it, is a distinguishing trait of the so-called negative form of the sublime from its positive form. It is justly considered that the sublime negative is of a higher order than the sublime positive because, it must be admitted, the "preponderance of idea over form" heightens the effect of sublimity just as the latter may be enhanced by a number of other circumstances as, for instance, by the isolation of the sublime object (a pyramid in the desert is more majestic than if seen among other majestic structures, or among high hills where its majestic impression would vanish). But the circumstance that heightens this effect is not the source of the effect. Besides, in the positively sublime there very often is no preponderance of idea over form, of force over phenomenon. Examples illustrating this are common in any course on esthetics.

Now let us take the other definition of the sublime: "the sublime is a manifestation of the idea of infinity" or, to express the philosophical formula in everyday language—"that is sublime which evokes in us the idea of infinity." Even a cursory review of the treatment of the sublime in the latest esthetics convinces one that this definition of the sublime is the essence of the ruling conception of it. More than that: the idea that sublime phenomena evoke in man a sense of the infinite also dominates the conceptions of people foreign to exact science; one rarely can find a book in which this idea is not expressed if there is the least, even most remote, pretext for it. Almost every description of a majestic landscape, every story about some terrible event, contains such a digression or application. Consequently the idea that the absolute is evoked by the majestic must be given more attention than the preceding one, of the preponderance of idea over form, the critical analysis of which we confined to a few words.

Unfortunately we cannot enter here into an analysis of the idea of "the absolute" or the infinite and show the real significance of the absolute in the realm of metaphysical conceptions. Only upon such an analysis can

the full inconsistency be seen of conceiving the infinite as the sublime. But even without entering into a metaphysical discussion it is easily seen from facts that the idea of the infinite, however understood, is not always, one could say is never, connected with the idea of the sublime. If we observe strictly and impartially what we experience when we contemplate the sublime, we will see that—1) what appears to us sublime is the thing itself and not the thoughts of any sort evoked by this thing. Thus, for instance, the mountain Kazbek is majestic by itself, as is the sea or the personality of a Caesar or a Cato. Of course, in contemplating a sublime object all sorts of thoughts may come to us strengthening the impression produced—but, whether such thoughts arise or not is immaterial and the thing remains sublime regardless. Thoughts and associations strengthening the impression arise with any sensation—but they are a consequence and not a cause of such sensation. If I stop to think of the exploit of Muzio Scevola, the thought may arise: "how great is the power of patriotism?"—but this thought is only a consequence of the impression produced upon me, regardless of this thought, by the act of Muzio Scevola and not the cause of this impression. Similarly the thought, "there is nothing on earth more beautiful than man," which might arise in me upon contemplating a portrait depicting a beautiful face is not the cause of my admiration of the portrait but a consequence upon what has struck me as beautiful in the portrait, entirely without regard to the thought it awakened. Hence, even were we to admit that contemplation of the sublime always leads to the idea of the infinite, the cause of the effect upon us of the sublime, evoking such an idea but not evoked by it, must lie not in this idea but in something else outside this idea.

On the other hand, upon analyzing the impression produced upon us by something sublime we discover, that, 2) the thing which seems to us sublime does not at all always seem infinite and may even be decisively contrary to the idea of the infinite. Thus Montblanc or the mountain Kazbek are sublime, majestic things, but no one ever thinks of them as infinite or immeasurably great as this would be contrary to the impression on one's eyes. The sea seems boundless when the shore is out of sight but all esthetic ians assert (and justly so) that the sea seems even more majestic when a shore is seen than when the shore is not seen. Here then is a fact revealing that the idea of the sublime not only is not evoked by the idea of the infinite, but may be (and often is) contradictory to it. The condition of boundlessness may be unfavorable for the impression produced by the sublime.

Let us go further and investigate a number of majestic phenomena that tend to heighten the effect produced by the sublime. A storm is one of the most majestic phenomena of nature—but it requires an exceedingly exalted imagination to see any relation whatever between a storm and the infinite. Watching a storm we admire it thinking only of the storm. "But, during a storm man feels his own insignificance before the forces of nature, the forces of nature seem to him to boundlessly exceed his own powers." It is true the force of the storm seems to us to exceed our own powers greatly, but even if a phenomenon does appear insuperable to man it does not necessarily follow that it should also seem immeasurable, infinitely powerful. On the contrary one watching a storm is very well conscious of its final powerlessness and that the first range of hills will unquestionably curb the fury of the hurricane, still the lightning. True lightning striking a man will kill him—but what of that? This is not the reason the storm appears majestic. When I see the powerful wings of a windmill turn I also know that should I get in its way the wing will break me like a frail stick, I "perceive the

insignificance of my strength before the force" of the windmill—but the contemplation of a windmill is hardly calculated to arouse in anyone the feeling of the sublime. "But in this case there does not arise in me the fear of harm to myself, I know that the wing of the windmill will not attack me, I do not have the feeling of terror inspired by the storm." That is very true, but this no longer says the same thing as before, this already says: "the sublime is terrible—ominous." Let us investigate this definition of "the sublime forces of nature" which is really to be found in esthetics.

The terrible is very often sublime—that is true. But it is not always so—a rattlesnake is more terrible than a lion—but it is disgustingly terrible not sublimely terrible. The feeling of terror may heighten the sensation of the sublime but terror and sublimity are two entirely distinct conceptions. But let us go down the series of sublime phenomena. We have thus far seen nothing in nature speaking directly of the infinite. Against the conclusion drawn from this it may be argued that "the truly sublime is not in nature, but in man himself." Suppose we admit this, though there is much that is truly sublime in nature. But why then does "infinite" love or a gust of "annihilating" passion seem "sublime" to us? Is it perhaps because the power of these tendencies is "invincible," "evokes the idea of the infinite by its invincibleness?" If so, the necessity for sleep is much more invincible: the most passionate lover will hardly be able to go without sleep for a week. Much more invincible than "love" is the necessity to eat and drink. The latter is a truly boundless necessity because there is no man that does not admit its power while there are very many that do not even have any conception of love. Many much more daring and difficult exploits are performed on account of these necessities than on account of "all-powerful" love. Why then are the thoughts about food and sleep not sublime while the idea of love is? Invincibility evidently is not yet sublime; boundlessness and infinity are not synonymous with the idea of the majestic.

One can therefore hardly agree that "the sublime is the preponderance of idea over form" or that "the essence of the sublime consists in that it evokes the idea of the infinite." What is sublime then? It seems to us a very simple definition of the sublime can be given which will embrace and sufficiently explain all phenomena that pertain to this realm.

"That is sublime which is much greater than the thing it is compared to." "Anything sublime is a thing that exceeds in magnitude everything with which we can compare it; a sublime phenomenon is one that is much more powerful than any phenomenon with which we can compare it."

Montblanc and Kazbek are majestic mountains because they are much more tremendous than any of the hills and mountains we are accustomed to see. A "majestic" forest is many times taller than our fruit or acacia trees and a thousand fold as big as our orchard or grove. The Volga is much broader than the streams Tvertsy or Kliasma. The surface of the sea is much more vast than the ponds and lakes the traveler comes across;— the waves of the sea rise so much higher than waves on these lakes, which is why a storm at sea is a sublime phenomenon even if it were not fraught with any danger. A fierce wind during a storm is hundreds of times stronger than a usual wind, its noise and roar much more powerful than the rushing sound of an ordinary high wind, it is much darker during a storm, approaching a black darkness; lightning is more blinding than ordinary flashes of light—and all this makes a storm a sublime phenomenon. Love is much stronger than our common everyday calculating experiences; anger, jealousy, any pasion generally is also much stronger than such everyday sensations

—hence passion is sublime. Julius Caesar, Othello, Desdemona, Ophelia are sublime personalities because—Julius Caesar as a commander of an army and a statesman was high above such commanders and statesmen of his day; Othello loves and is jealous much more passionately than ordinary people, Desdemona and Ophelia love and suffer with such a fullness of devotion as by far not every woman is capable of. "Much more, much stronger" —there is the distinguishing trait of the sublime.

Great—Not Sublime

It should be added that instead of the term "sublime" (*das Erhabene*), it would be simpler, more characteristic and better to say "great." Julius Caesar, Marius, are not "sublime" but "great" personalities. Moral greatness is only one particular kind of greatness generally.

If one should look through the best books on esthetics, he would easily see that in our brief review of what we include in the conception of the sublime or great all the most important varieties of the sublime have been dealt with. It remains to be shown how the view on the essence of the sublime we have adopted compares with similar ideas expressed in those books on esthetics now held in especially high regard.

That the "sublime" is a consequence of superiority over the environment is to be met with in Kant and after him in the latest works on esthetics. They say "we compare the sublime with what surrounds it in space; for this purpose the sublime object must contain subdivisions which make it possible to judge by comparison how much greater it is than surrounding objects —how much, for instance, a mountain is greater than the tree growing upon it. The calculation is so long that we are lost in it before coming to an end; we must begin our calculation anew because we failed before and we fail again. We thus come to the conclusion that the mountain is immeasurably great." "Comparison with surrounding objects is necessary for the object to appear sublime,"—this is a thought which comes very close to what we have adopted as the fundamental criterion of the sublime. This criterion is applied by them, however, only to the sublime in space while it should be applied by them, however, only to the sublime. It is usually said: "The sublime consists of the preponderance of idea over form and this preponderance, in the lower stages of the sublime, is recognized by comparing the object with surrounding objects with respect to magnitude," while it seems to us that what should be said is, "The superiority of the great (or the sublime) over the petty or common consists of its greater magnitude (greater in space or time) or in much greater strength (sublime forces of nature and the sublime in man)." From a secondary and particular criterion of the sublime, comparison and superiority in magnitude should be raised to a primary and general criterion of the sublime.

Thus the conception of the sublime adopted by us bears the same relation to the usual definition of it as our conception of the essence of beauty bears to the prevailing one—in both cases we raise to a general and fundamental principle what had been considered a particular and secondary criterion, masked from attention by other conceptions which we discard as superfluous ones. As a result of this shifting of point of view the sublime as well as beauty appear to us as more independent and yet closer to man than previously. Simultaneously our idea of the essence of the sublime conceives of it as an actual reality while it is commonly thought that the sublime only seems sublime due to the interference of our imagination which extends

to infinity the volume and force of the exalted object or phenomenon. And really, if the sublime were infinite, there could be nothing sublime in the world available to our senses and to our mind.

But, while according to our definitions of beauty and the sublime these acquire independence of our imagination, these definitions also bring to the fore their relation to man generally and to his conceptions of those things and phenomena which man finds beautiful and exalted. Beauty is that in which we see life such as *we* understand and desire it to be, as *we* like it; great is that which is much higher than the things with which *we* compare it. By a strange contradiction it follows from the previously accepted definitions, on the contrary, that beauty and sublimity are lent to things and phenomena by man, are the creation of man, but have no connection with the conception of man, with his views. It is also perfectly evident that the definitions of beauty and sublimity which we consider just, destroy the direct connection between these conceptions which are made to depend upon each other by the definitions: "beauty is equilibrium of idea and image," "the sublime is the preponderance of idea over the image." And really, accepting the definitions "beauty is life" and "sublime is that which is much greater than anything near or similar" we have to concede that beauty and sublimity are entirely distinct conceptions, independent of each other and subordinated in common only to the general conception, far removed from so-called esthetic conceptions—that of "the interesting."

If esthetics is, in content, a science of beauty, it has no right to speak of the sublime any more than it can speak of the good, the true, etc. If, on the other hand, esthetics is to be considered the science of art, then, of course, it must concern itself with the sublime because the sublime is part of the realm of art.

Conceptions of Tragedy

But speaking of the sublime we have not, thus far, broached the subject of tragedy which is usually considered the highest, most profound form of the sublime. The conceptions of tragedy now prevailing in science play an important part not only in esthetics but in many other sciences (like history, for instance), and even merge with current conceptions of life. It will therefore not be superfluous to go into this in detail to lay a basis for our critical analysis. I shall adhere closely to Fischer whose *Esthetics* is considered most authoritative in Germany.

"The subject is by nature a creature of action. In so acting he transfers his will upon the outside world and thus comes into conflict with the law of necessity ruling in the outside world. The actions of the subject necessarily bear the stamp of individual limitations and therefore destroy the absolute objective unity of the world. This infringement is his guilt (*die Schuld*) and it reflects upon the subject in that the outside world tied together by the chains of unity, is shaken as a whole by the action of the subject and as a result, the individual act of the subject draws an endless and unforeseeable chain of consequences in which the subject no longer recognizes his own act and his own will; he must nevertheless admit the necessary connection of all these consequences with his own act and feel his responsibility for them. His responsibility for what he did not wish but nevertheless did, results in suffering to the subject,—*i. e.,* there is a reaction of the interrupted course of things in the outside world to what caused the interruption. The necessity of this reaction and these sufferings is enhanced when the subject foresees the conse-

quences, foresees evil for himself, but falls a victim to them through those very means by which he sought to escape them. The sufferings may be enhanced to the point when the subject and his cause perish. But the cause of the subject does not perish altogether, it only seems to perish; the objective series of consequences outlasts the death of the subject and, merging gradually with the general unity, is purified of its individual limitations inherited from the subject. If the subject, in perishing, recognizes the justice of his sufferings and the fact that his cause does not perish but is purified and triumphs upon his death, then the conciliation is perfect and the subject outlives himself in his purified and triumphant cause. All this movement is called fate or the 'tragic.'

"There are various forms of tragedy. Its first form is the one when the subject is not actually but only potentially guilty and when the force, therefore, that kills him is a blind force of nature which proves by the example of the individual subject, who is distinguished more by the external brilliance of wealth, etc. than inner merits, that the individual must perish because it is individual. The doom of the subject is here a consequence not of a moral law but of accident which, however, is explained and justified in the conciliating thought that death is universal, necessary. In the tragic simple guilt (*die einfache Schuld*), potential guilt grows into actual guilt. But this guilt consists not of a necessary objective contradiction but of some sort of confusion connected with the activities of the subject. In some way this guilt infringes upon the moral integrity of the world. Through it other subjects suffer and, as the guilt is on the side of one only, it seems at first that the others suffer innocently. But in such a case these subjects would be pure objects to another subject which contradicts the conception of subjectivity. Hence they must discover in themselves a weakness by some error connected with their strong side and perish through this weakness: the suffering of the main subject, as the reverse of his act, flows from the guilt itself by virtue of the disturbed moral order. The injured subjects may serve as the instruments of punishment or the guilty one himself, confessing his guilt, may serve as such. Finally there is the highest form of tragedy—the tragedy of moral conflict. The universal moral law breaks up into particular requirements which may conflict among themselves so that in complying with one, man infringes upon another. This struggle resulting from inner necessity and not from accidents may remain an inner struggle within the heart of one man. Such is the struggle within the heart of Sophocles' Antigone. But as art personifies everything in individual images, the usual struggle of two requirements of moral law is represented in art as the struggle of two persons. One of two contradictory tendencies is more just than the other and therefore stronger; it first vanquishes everything that opposes it and thus becomes unjust as it crushes the just rights of the contrary tendency. Now justice is already on the side of the vanquished and the tendency essentially more just perishes under the weight of its own injustice and the blows of the contrary tendency which, injured in its rights, has with it, at the beginning of reaction all the force of truth and justice but, upon triumphing, falls in exactly the same manner into injustice which results in death or suffering. This sort of tragedy is excellently developed in Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar*. Rome is tending to a monarchic form of government; Julius Caesar is a representative of this tendency; it is more just and consequently more powerful than the contrary trend aiming to maintain the old established order in Rome; Julius Ceasar triumphs over Pompei. But the old order also has the right to exist and in the person of Brutus

it rises against its conqueror. Caesar perishes. But the conspirators themselves write under the consciousness that Caesar, who perished at their hands, was greater than they and the force which he represented rises again in the Triumvirate. Brutus and Cassius perish but Antonius and Octavius speak their regrets about him on Brutus' grave. Thus the contradictory trends are finally conciliated. Each trend is both just and unjust in its onesidedness and this is gradually smoothed out by the fall of both. Out of struggle and death arises unity and a new life."

The Problem of Fate

It is evident from this exposition that in German esthetics the conception of the tragic is united with the conception of fate so that the tragic lot of man is usually represented as the "conflict of man and fate," as the result of the "interference of fate." The conception of fate is usually distorted in the later European literature that tries to explain fate in accordance with our scientific conceptions, even connect it with such. It will therefore be necessary to restore it to its pristine purity, getting rid of the unsuitable admixture of scientific notions which are essentially contradictory to it and showing the full vacuity of the conception of fate, hidden in the later alterations to make it fit our ideas. The ancient Greeks, *i. e.* before the Greek philosophers appeared, were the ones that had a live and genuine conception of fate, such as is still alive among many Eastern peoples; such a conception of fate dominates the stories of Herodotus, Greek mythology, Hindu poems, the *Thousand and One Nights,* etc. As regards the later transformations of this basic conception under the influence of conceptions of the world brought by science, we consider it superfluous to enumerate these and even more so to enter into detailed criticism of them, because they all, like the conceptions of tragedy of later esthetics, represent an attempt to reconcile the irreconcilable —the fantastic imagination of the semi-barbarian and science. They suffer of the same inconsistencies as the conceptions of tragedy in modern esthetics, the only difference being that the strained connection of contrary principles in the older attempts at conciliation were more evident than in the conceptions of the tragic which are built up with great dialectic profundity of thought. We therefore find it superfluous to discuss all the distortions of the conception of fate, and think it sufficient to show how crudely the prime foundation sticks out from under even the latest, most artful dialectic clothes in which it has been dressed by the now dominating esthetic view on tragedy.

People that have a genuine conception of fate understand the course of human life thus: if I will not take any precautions against disaster I may survive and almost always will; but if I do take precautions I shall most surely perish, and perish through the very thing in which I sought safety. I am about to take a trip and take various precautions against accident on the way; among other things, aware that I may not always find medical accessories on the way, I take with me several flasks of most essential medicine and hide them in the side pocket of the carriage. What should necessarily happen, according to the ideas of the ancient Greeks? My carriage should be wrecked, the flasks fly out of the pocket, and in falling I hit one of the flasks with my head, the flask breaks, a piece of glass enters my brain and I die. If I had not taken this precaution nothing serious would have happened; but I wished to take precautions against disaster and perished from the very thing in which I sought safety. Such a view of human life conforms so little to our ideas

that it could interest us only as something fantastic; a tragedy based on the idea of fate prevalent in the East or Ancient Greece, would sound to us like a fairy tale spoiled by being made over. And yet, the entire conception of tragedy prevailing in German esthetics is an attempt to bring the conception of fate into agreement with modern science. This introduction of the conception of fate into science through esthetic views on tragedy was done with extreme profundity, showing how great intellects labored to reconcile ideas foreign to science with scientific conceptions. But this very thoughtful attempt is decisive proof of the fact that such attempts can never succeed. Science can only explain the origin of the fantastic notions of semi-barbarian man but can never reconcile them with truth. The idea of fate arose and developed in the following manner:

One of the effects of education on man is that, in broadening his vision, it makes it possible for him to understand phenomena unlike those he is accustomed to in their true significance. To the uneducated mind only customary phenomena seem intelligible and all others, alien to the direct realm of his vital functions, seem incomprehensible. Science brings man understanding of the fact that inorganic nature and plant life differ from human life and that even the life of animals is not altogether like that of man. The savage or semi-barbarian has no conception of life other than the one he knows directly as human life. It seems to him that a tree talks, feels, has pleasure and suffers entirely like man; that animals act consciously, just like man, that they can use human speech and do not do so only because they are sly and hope to gain more by silence than by speaking. In the same way he imagines the rock and the river to be alive; the rock is a petrified giant who feels and thinks, the river a naiade, a water nymph, a water sprite. An earthquake in Sicily is the result of a giant on whom the island has fallen shaking himself to throw off the weight. The savage sees human-like life throughout nature, all phenomena are, to him, produced consciously by human-like things. Just as he personifies the wind, cold, heat (remember the story of the dispute between the wind, the frost and the sun as to who is stronger), disease (stories about cholera, about the twelve sister-fevers, about scurvy—the latter among the Spitzbergen settlers)—he also personifies the power of chance. It is even easier to ascribe such things to the arbitrary actions of a man-like creature than to explain in such a way other phenomena in life and nature; because it is just such chance happenings that can evoke, sooner than the phenomena due to other forces, the idea of a whim, of arbitrariness, or other such traits which are characteristic of the human personality. We shall now trace how this view of accidental happenings as the actions of some man-like creature develops into the properties ascribed to fate by savage and semi-barbarian peoples.

The more important an undertaking ventured upon by man, the more conditions are required for it to be accomplished exactly as intended. Conditions, however, will almost never be met exactly as man figures. Hence an important undertaking is almost never accomplished *exactly* as contemplated. This chance that disturbs our plans seems to the savage, as we have said, the act of a man-like being—*fate;* all the properties ascribed to fate by modern savages, many Eastern peoples and the ancient Greeks, follow automatically from this fundamental characteristic noted in the case of chance or fate. It is evident that it is precisely the most important matters that will be the playthings of fate (because, as we have pointed out, the more important a matter is the more numerous the conditions it depends upon and consequently the greater the field for chance). Chance frustrates our calculations, likes to mock

at man and his intentions. It is impossible to foresee chance and it is impossible to tell why it happened thus and not otherwise, hence fate is capricious, willful. Chance is often fatal to man, hence fate likes to harm man, fate is evil. And in fact with the Greeks Fate was a misanthropic woman. An evil and powerful man likes to harm the best, the wisest, the happiest people—it is such Fate loves to kill most of all. A wicked, capricious and very strong man loves to show his strength by telling the one he wants to destroy, "I am going to do to you this or that; try to struggle against me," so Fate also announces her decisions in advance in order to have the wicked joy of proving to us our powerlessness to struggle against her and laugh at our puny, unsuccessful efforts to struggle against her, avoid her. Such ideas seem strange to us now. But let us see how they are reflected in the esthetic theory of tragedy.

This theory says: the free acts of man disturb the normal course of nature; nature and its laws rebel against the one that infringes on their rights; the consequence is suffering and death to the one that acted and the more powerful the act the more serious the reaction—"because everything great is doomed to a tragic lot." Nature is here represented as a live thing, exceedingly irritable, exceedingly finicky about its inviolability. Does nature really feel injured? Does nature actually avenge itself? Of course not. Nature proceeds according to its laws without knowing man or his deeds, his happiness or death. Nature's laws may and often do affect disastrously both man and his activities—but it is on these laws that all human activity is based. Nature is impartial to man—it is neither his friend nor his foe, it is sometimes a convenient, sometimes an inconvenient arena for his activities. One thing is not to be doubted—every important undertaking of man requires a powerful struggle with nature or with other men. But why is this so? Only because no matter how important an undertaking may be in itself, we are not accustomed to consider it important if it can be accomplished without a powerful struggle. Thus breathing is the most important thing indeed to man—but we pay no attention to this activity at all because usually there are no obstacles to its accomplishment. To the savage who feeds gratuitously on the fruit of the bread tree and to the European who obtains his bread only by the hardest work tilling the soil, food is equally important. But gathering the fruit of the bread tree is not "an important" business, because it is easy, tilling the soil is "important" because it is difficult. Thus not all things essentially important require struggle, but we are accustomed to call important only those essentially important things that are difficult. There are many precious things that have no value because they come to us gratuitously, like water or sunshine, there are also many important matters that we do not consider important merely because they are easily accomplished. But suppose we agree with customary phraseology and consider only those matters important which require a great struggle. Is this struggle really always tragic? Not at all—it sometimes is tragic and sometimes not, as the case may be. The seafarer struggles with the sea, encounters storms, reefs,—his field of activity is a very hard one. But is it necessarily a tragic one? For one ship that is wrecked by a storm against a rock hidden under the water there are hundreds that safely reach port. Suppose a struggle is always necessary—but a struggle is not always an unfortunate one. And a struggle with a happy outcome, however hard it may have been, is not suffering but pleasure, not tragic but dramatic. And isn't it true that if all necessary precautions are taken the struggle will always end happily? So where is the necessity of tragedy in nature? The tragic in the struggle with nature is a matter of chance. This alone already wrecks the entire theory that sees in tragedy a "universal law."

"But society? But other people? Does not every great man have to withstand a hard struggle against them?" Again it is necessary to point out that not all great events in history are associated with hard struggles, only we, in our abuse of language, are accusomed to call events great only when they are associated with great struggles. The baptism of the Franks was a great event, but was there a great struggle connected with it? Nor was there any great struggle connected with the baptism of Russia. Is the fate of great men tragic? It sometimes is and sometimes is not, just as the fate of common people; it is not at all necessarily tragic. And it must be added that the lot of great personages is usually much easier than the lot of common folk—and by the way, not on account of any special predisposition of fate to the notable ones or evil disposition towards common people, but merely because the former possess greater strength, intellect and energy so that other people have more respect for them, sympathize with them and more readily cooperate with them. While people are inclined to envy other's greatness, they are even more inclined to respect greatness, society will venerate great people unless there is some special reason, by chance, for society to consider the person harmful to it. It depends on circumstances whether the fate of a great man will be tragic or not, and there are much fewer instances in history of great men whose lot was tragic than of such whose lives were very dramatic but by no means tragic. Croesus, Pompei, Julius Caesar had tragic fates, but Numa Pompilius, Marius, Sulla, Augustus had very happy lives. What could one call tragic about the lives of Charlmagne, Peter the Great, Friedrich II, Luther, Voltaire, Goethe, Walter Scott? The lives of these men were full of struggle, but generally speaking, it must be admitted that success and happiness was on their side. And if Cervantes died in poverty do not thousands of less famous men die in poverty although they no less than Cervantes could hope for a better end, and being insignificant, do not come under the law of tragedy? Chance strikes impartially both great and little and just as impartially favors both.

Weakness and Moral Guilt

But let us go further and from the general conception of the tragic proceed to the tragedy of "simple guilt."

The ruling theory of esthetics maintains that "the character of every great man always has some weakness; in his actions the great man always commits some error or crime. This weakness, error or crime destroys him. And yet they necessarily lie in the depths of his character so that the great man perishes from the very thing that is the source of his greatness. There can be no doubt whatever that such is often the case in reality. Endless warfare raised Napoleon high and also overthew him. The same thing was true to an extent of Louis XIV. But it is not always so. The great man often perishes without being to blame for anything. Thus Henry IV perished and, together with him, Sully. To a certain degree we also find in tragedies such innocent deaths in spite of the fact that their authors were tied down by their conceptions. Was for instance Desdemona really herself the cause of her own destruction? Anyone can see that it was only the sly wickedness of Iago which was the real cause of her death. Are Romeo and Juliet the cause of their own destruction? Of course, if we shall insist that everyone that dies is necessarily guilty of something, then we might accuse them all. Desdemona would be guilty of being innocent and consequently incapable of foreseeing calumny; Romeo and Juliet guilty because they love each other. The idea however of seeing everyone that perishes guilty is a cruel and strained idea. Its connection with the

Greek idea of fate and its various metamorphoses is quite evident. We might point out just one side of this connection: according to the Greek conception of fate man himself is always to blame for his destruction; if he had acted otherwise he would not have perished.

Another form of tragedy, the tragedy of moral conflict, esthetics infers from the same idea only taken conversely: in the tragedy of simple guilt the basis of the tragic fate is the imagined fact that every misfortune and especially, the greatest misfortune—death, is the result of a crime. In the tragedy of moral conflict modern esthetics issues from the notion that a crime is always followed by punishment of the guilty either by death or by the pangs of conscience. This notion also has its source in the tradition of the Furies that persecute the criminal. It is understood, of course, that by crime here is meant not infringements of the law, punished by the state, but moral guilt generally which can only be punished by a concatenation of circumstances or public opinion, or the conscience of the one guilty.

As far as punishment coming from a concatenation of circumstances is concerned, it has already long been a subject of laughter, that in the older novels "virtue always triumphs in the end and the wicked are punished." Many novelists, however, and all authors of treatises on esthetics would have it that wickedness and crime are unfailingly punished in this world. And thus the theory originated that they are *always* punished by public opinion and conscience. Not all moral transgressions, by far, are condemned by public opinion, however. And if public opinion does not stir our conscience it will in most cases remain quiescent and if it does waken, will soon quiet down. Every educated person now understands how ridiculous it is to look at the world with the eyes of the Greeks of the time of Herodotus. Everyone now understands very well that there is nothing inevitable about the destruction of great men, that not every person that perishes does so for his sins and that not every one guilty of crime perishes. Not every crime is punished by the courts, public opinion, etc. One cannot therefore but admit that the tragic does not always evoke the idea of necessity and it is not at all the idea of necessity that is the basis of tragedy. So what is the essence of tragedy?

Tragedy is the suffering or death of man—this is entirely sufficient to fill us with horror and sympathy even if no "infinitely powerful and invincible force" is manifested in that suffering or death. Whether the suffering and destruction of a human being are the result of chance or necessity they are equally awful. We are told that a "purely accidental death is an absurdity in tragedy,"—perhaps this is so in tragedies composed by authors, it is not in real life. In poetry the author considers it a bounden duty to "deduce the denoument from the plot itself," in life the denoument may be perfectly accidental and a tragic lot may be purely accidental without ceasing to be tragic. We agree that the lot of Macbeth and of Lady Macbeth, necessarily following from their situation and acts, is tragic. But is not the fate of Gustav Adolfus, who perished so purely by chance in the battle near Lutzen, just when he was on the road to triumph, any less tragic? The definition:

"Tragic is that which is terrible in human life," it would seem, fully covers all tragedy in life and art. True, most works of art call for the addition "the terrible which strikes man more or less inevitably." But it is subject to doubt as to the measure of justice in art representing the terrible as almost always inevitable, when in most cases in life it is not at all inevitable but purely a matter of chance. And then it seems that only the habit of seeking in every great work of art "a necessary sequence of events," "a necessary development

of action from the essence of the action itself" makes us find willy-nilly a sort of "necessity in the sequence of events," even when it is really not there, as in most of Shakespeare's tragedies.

It is hard not to agree with the current definition of the comic as "the preponderance of image over idea," in other words, "inner emptiness and insignificance covering itself by an exterior having pretension to content and real significance." But it must be conceded that the conception of the comic is excessively restricted when juxtaposed only to the sublime in order to retain the dialectic method of developing conceptions. The comically petty and comically foolish or dull-witted is, of course, the opposite of the sublime; but the comically ugly and comically disfigured is the opposite altogether, of beauty and not of the sublime. According to Fischer's own exposition the sublime may be ugly—so how can the comically ugly be the opposite of the sublime when they differ not in essence but in degree, not in quality but in quantity—when the ugly and petty belongs to the category of the comic while the ugly and huge or terrible belong to the category of the sublime. It is perfectly evident that the ugly is the opposite of the beautiful.

Translated from the Russian by S. D. Kogan

(To be continued)

Caricatures of the delegates at the American Writers Congress by WILLIAM GROPPER, PHIL WOLFE and RUSSELL LIMBACH — from the New Masses

ARTICLES and CRITICISM

By Alan Calmer

A New Period in American Leftwing Literature

About the Organization of the League of American Writers

The first revolutionary writers' congress in a capitalist country opened in New York City on the eve of May Day 1935. It marked the beginning of a new period in American leftwing literature. However, it was not a new and isolated event in American culture. Its full meaning can be understood when it is seen as a continuation of the rich heritage of anti-capitalist, pro-labor literature in the U.S.

That tradition extends back for more than half a century. The revolutionary songs and ballads of the "Molly Maguires" and the Knights of Labor, and the Socialist belles-lettres composed by German-American men of letters after the Civil War, represent some of the beginnings of American workingclass literature.

In the songs of Joe Hill and the early Socialist fiction of Jack London and Upton Sinclair, American labor literature moved closer to the mainstream of our native letters. In the next decade, something like a school of revolutionary writers developed around the old *Masses* and *Liberator*. However, even then workingclass literature touched only the periphery of American letters, just as many outstanding authors of the time remained on the outskirts of the labor movement.

The *Masses-Liberator* stood on the fringe of the little magazine movement which, with the literary "renaissance" of 1912, became the focus of advance-guard literature of the period. Most of the contributors to these publications were literary rebels or rebellious bohemians. In these periodicals they made faces at the commercial magazines and at what they thought was society in general; but they lacked any understanding of what was basically wrong with contemporary society. Some of the more socially-conscious writers gathered around the *Seven Arts*. But they, too, were largely indifferent to the roots of the social evils of the time. They envisioned, along with the editors of *Poetry* and the *Little Review*, a "renascent period" in American literature that would rival the age of the Elizabethans—a renaissance in art so widesweeping that it would "rejuvenate" American *life*. Their idealism ran aground on the rocks of the imperialist war.

In the period of post-war disillusionment which followed, the literary rebels beat an even hastier retreat from the perplexing social problems of the age. As in similar periods of history, the artist who was at odds with society sought refuge in his art. He tried to shut himself off from the social environment which he loathed.

This was also true of most of the members of the newer generation who came of literary age in the early twenties. The creative work, as well as the manifestoes in their little magazines reflected their negative attitude toward social questions. Many of them became refugees in southern Europe where they published little magazines in which they toyed with literary forms.

A few of them remained at home during the middle twenties and printed magazines following in the tradition of *Seven Arts*. Like the editors of the latter, they were groping for a vital social literature grounded in American soil; but like their predecessors, they talked rather vaguely of an indigenous mass culture which they saw in national, not class terms.

The literary experimentation in Europe grew more frenzied as the twenties moved forward. It was all over when *transition* came out for the right of the poet to invent his own language at the moment when the capitalist crisis was serving foreclosures on ivory towers and eviction notices on grimy garrets.

During the "prosperous" twenties, many of the leading contributors to the old *Masses* "retired" from revolutionary literature. But a few members of the newer generation, pupils of Dell and Reed, followed the direction in which the early *Masses* had pointed. In 1926, they founded the *New Masses*. Although this small group of writers around the latter magazine stoutly defended the revolutionary position during the last half of the twenties, their writing struck only a minor chord in American letters.

It was not until the beginning of the present decade, with the coming of the "depression," that something like a major movement toward the left began. An increasing number of American authors followed the course which had been charted by Jack London and Upton Sinclair, by John Reed, and by Michael Gold, John Dos Passos, and Joseph Freeman.

The economic crisis of capitalism threw the spotlight on the decadence of bourgeois life and culture. Sections of the intelligentsia began to examine the foundations of capitalist society which they had not questioned in the twenties. Those intellectuals who dug into contemporary social questions with honesty and determination, turned against capitalism. Some of them participated in the work of the revolutionary labor movement. They went to the strike areas in Kentucky and Pennsylvania. They began to write reports of industrial conditions throughout the country.

Another Generation

But the first proletarian literature of the crisis was not produced by them. With the beginning of the thirties, still another generation was knocking at the literary gates. They entered the literary scene when the "prosperity" of the twenties was setting. Some of them, coming from the same middle-class background as their elders, were trying to shed their moon-calf habits. A few emerged from the mills and factories, but even they had picked up some of the baggage of their predecessors. They grew up in the pages of the *New Masses*. They organized John Reed Clubs throughout the country. They published new little magazines, of which the sturdiest proved to be *Anvil, Dynamo,* and *Partisan Review*.

With the development of the economic crisis, the growth of the American Communist movement, and the dissemination of proletarian ideology in the U.S., the old literary groupings split sharply. Members of the "middle" and "lost" generations joined the younger proletarian writers, as well as the "black sheep" of their own generations in the attempt to create a new class literature. Already this literature has reached heights which have won the acclaim of the most reactionary critics.

This is particularly apparent in the recent rise of the professionl proletarian theatre and in the steady appearance of outstanding workingclass novels in every season's publishing lists. Almost all of the new talents in the American theatre are closely identified with the revolutionary labor movement. And if

the artistic excellence of dramas like *Stevedore, Black Pit, They Shall Not Die, Waiting for Lefty* cannot be disputed, in the field of the revolutionary novel the achievements are equally incontestable. *The Shadow Before, The Land of Plenty, The Executioner Waits*—to mention only a few prize samples of the rich harvest of proletarian fiction—are recognized even by bigoted critics as outstanding contributions to American letters. One can scarcely think of a single prose artist whose first work appeared in the bourgeois press at the beginning of the decade who is not a revolutionist today. Proletarian literature, which was once little more than an offshoot of labor journalism in this country, has become the strongest current in the mainstream of American literature. As Granville Hicks has pointed out, the heirs of the "great tradition" in American letters (which he traces in Emerson's "confidence in the common man," in Thoreau's attack upon the "shams and oppressions" of his age, in Whitman's "kinship with the workers and farmers," in Howells' sympathy with the labor struggles of his time, and in the development of the realistic novel) are the revolutionary-proletarian writers of today.

In the first years of the great economic crisis, revolutionary literature was created within the organizational skeleton of the *New Masses* and the John Reed Clubs. In recent years, after the tailspin of American capitalism and the ruthless attempt of German fascism to exterminate culture, the movement toward the left among American authors has proceeded so rapidly that all existing groups were found to be too narrow to encompass the varied activities of revolutionary culture in the U.S.

The chief shortcoming of the revolutionary cultural movement was characterized at the second national conference of the John Reed Clubs in 1934 as the old malady of sectarianism. This was evident in the rigorous demands made of sympathetic writers—that they become Communist authors or join the enemy. While the more enlightened Communist writers and Party leaders sharply attacked this tendency for years, it remained one of the internal ailments of native revolutionary culture. Speaking at the John Reed conference in the name of the Communist Party, Alexander Trachtenberg told the young writers gathered there, that "our cultural allies are very dear to us. . . . In attempting to win them to the movement, we must not be impatient with them and demand that they toe-the-line like members of the Communist Party."

Pointing to these handicaps, the delegates to the conference instructed their executive committee to take the initiative in sponsoring a broad conference of leftwing American authors to discuss and attempt to solve some of their problems. A number of revolutionary writers who had not functioned within the John Reed Clubs were enlisted. Preliminary discussions were held. A new organization committee was formed, which gradually involved more and more sympathetic writers into the leadership of the committee which issued the "Call for an American Writers Congress" at the beginning of 1935.

The American Writers Congress

The call was endorsed by more than two hundred American men and women of letters, representing every group or tendency in American literature of the past several decades. Authors who figured prominently in the 1912 poetry "renaissance" of middle-class letters; members of the "objectivist" and other schools of verse which rose and fell quickly in the latter nineteen-twenties; as well as the younger revolutionary poets who have emerged out of the Communist movement, came as delegates to the Congress. Some of the

best novelists of the past three generations—Robert Herrick, John Dos Passos, Josephine Herbst, for example—were among the signers of the Call. Many of the molders of literary opinion since the war spoke at the Congress—among them Waldo Frank, Kenneth Burke, Lewis Mumford, Matthew Josephson, as well as Malcolm Cowley, Granville Hicks, Joseph Freeman, Michael Gold. Outstanding dramatists of the twenties and thirties—John Howard Lawson, Virgil Geddes, Sidney Howard, Paul Peters, Albert Maltz, Clifford Odets—were among the signers and participants.

Representatives of the youngest generation of Communist writers came from all sections of the country: the fiction writers, Nelson Algren, Jack S. Balch, and Meridel LeSueur came from the Midwest; Tillie Lerner and Sanora Babb from the Pacific Coast; the group of young poets, Alfred Hayes, Kenneth Fearing, and Edwin Rolfe; the short story writers, Ben Field and Edwin Seaver, and the literary critics, Wallace Phelps and Philip Rahv, who edit *Partisan Review* and the Negro critic Eugene Gordon were also present. A number of Negro poets, including Langston Hughes, Sterling Brown, Richard Wright, Earl Sydnor, were also among those who responded to the manifesto issued by the Congress committee. One of the most important delegations came from Vera Cruz and Mexico City; among its members were the distinguished Mexican writers, Jose Mancisidor, editor of *Ruta,* and Juan de la Cabada. Cuba was also represented. Foreign-language authors in the United States, of whom the most prominent is Moishe Nadir, Jewish poet, were among the delegates. Friedrich Wolf brought greetings from the German revolutionary writers. Andersen-Nexo, Maxim Gorki, Henri Barbusse, Louis Aragon, Leonid Leonov, Ivanov, Boris Pilnyak, Tretyakov, Agnes Smedley, Anna Seghers, Johannes R. Becher were among those who sent greetings to the Congress, as did also the Chinese League of Left-Writers.

With all or these groups represented at the Congress, it was natural to find that extreme literary differences existed among them. Many of these conflicting literary interpretations were voiced in various papers read at the Congress. Even the book-reviewer for the New York *Times* admitted "there was little disposition to dictate either subject material or schematic approach." Earl Browder, who was invited to present the position of the Communist Party toward literature, at the opening session of the Congress stated the attitude of the Party in a prose so clear and direct that its meaning could not be misinterpreted.

"We would desire, as far as we are able," he said, "to arouse consciousness among all writers of the political problems of the day, and trace out the relationship of these political problems to the problems of literature.... By no means do we think this can be achieved by imposing any pre-conceived patterns upon the writer. On the contrary, we believe that fine literature must arise directly out of life, expressing not only its problems, but, at the same time, all the richness and complexity of life itself. The Party wants to help, as we believe that it already has to a considerable degree, to bring to writers a great new wealth of material, to open up new worlds to them. Our Party interests are not narrow; they are broad enough to encompass the interests of all toiling humanity We want literature to be as broad."

The role of the Communist Party in the Writers Congress was described by Kenneth Burke, in an article published in the *Nation,* as follows:

"While attempting to enlist cultural allies on the basis of the widest possible latitude, this congress was unquestionably made possible only by the vitality and organizational ability of the Communist Party. . . . I can state with some claim to 'impartiality' my belief that no other organization in the country could have assembled and carried through a congress of this sort. The results justify the assertion that those who approach the issues of today from the standpoint of cultural survival must have sympathy at least with communism as a historical direction."

In spite of the literary differences expressed at the Congress, there were certain issues on which there was universal agreement. One of the principal themes of the Congress was the relationship between literature and the workingclass movement. It ran through the twenty-five to thirty papers read at the various sessions. Malcolm Cowley talked about what the workingclass movement can do for the writer, Isidor Schneider dealt with mass poetry, John Howard Lawson with the theatre and the proletariat, Jack Conroy with the worker as writer, Joseph Freeman with the tradition of labor literature, Kenneth Burke with the use of symbolism in proletarian writing, Waldo Frank with the values of the working class writer. As these papers were read, it was obvious that they were more than critical appraisals of the connection between the growth of literature and the progress of the workingclass movement. Each address was also a personal testament, a concrete affirmation on the part of its author, that the very future of literature is inseparable from the future of the proletariat.

All of the papers stressed an even sharper conclusion—that not only the development but the very fate of culture is bound up with the fate of the proletarian movement. Particularly in the papers dealing with war and fascism was it made clear that the alliance between workers and writers is part of a wider alliance of all oppressed social groups for the defense of culture and progress against capitalist reaction.

Creative Writers Only

One of the characteristics of the Congress was the fact that it was restricted to authors of belles-lettres. Political, historical, and scientific writers were not invited. The reason for this was misconstrued by some commentators. John Chamberlain, writing in the *Saturday Review of Literature*, pointed to the "failure" of the Congress to discuss the problems of the latter type of author. "Without wishing to cast any aspersions whatsoever on poets, novelists, and dramatists," he wrote, "I must say that they seem far less important to political change than the writers on social problems." This may be true; but it is totally irrelevant. The Congress was called for the purpose of discussing the problems of the imaginative writer and not of the historian or scientist. It was not a question of their relative importance. Such a discussion was sorely needed. It had never been held before. The movement toward the left among American poets, novelists, and dramatists had become a widespread phenomenon. Writers from every literary school and walk of life had been affected. Most of them had lived in virtual isolation from each other, working with tools and materials new to them. This was their first opportunity to get together. It would be ridiculous to assume that the Congress solved their problems or resolved their literary differences. But it gave them a chance to visualize some of their achievements and obstacles in a clearer light.

The League of American Writers, an organization of the broadest character, was formed at the Congress. It is led by Waldo Frank, whose critical and creative writings are well-known in Europe and South America, as well as the United States. The executive committee also includes Kenneth Burke, Malcolm Cowley, Joseph Freeman, Michael Gold, Granville Hicks, Matthew Josephson, Henry Hart, Josephine Herbst, Edwin Seaver, Alexander Trachtenberg, Harold Clurman, Alfred Kreymborg, Isidor Schneider, Genevieve Taggard, John Howard Lawson, Albert Maltz. A National Committee of approximately forty other American authors was also elected at the Congress. It includes Nelson Algren, Newton Arvin, Michael Blankfort, Van Wyck

Brooks, Sterling Brown, Heywood Broun, Fielding Burke, Erskine Caldwell, Robert Cantwell, Harry Carlisle, Eugene Clay, Merle Colby, Jack Conroy, Edward Dahlberg, James T. Farrel, Kenneth Fearing, Horace Gregory, Langston Hughes, Robert Herrick, Sidney Howard, Orrick Johns, Joshua Kunitz, Tillie Lerner, Meridel LeSueur, Robert Morss Lovett, Grace Lumpkin, Lewis Mumford, Moishe Nadir, Clifford Odets, Paul Peters, Rebecca Pitts, William Rollins, Lincoln Steffens, George Sklar, Richard Wright, M. J. Olgin, Maxwell Bodenheim, Joseph Opatashu. As this list indicates the National Committee includes representatives of most of the groupings—literary and geographical—that have contributed to American letters of the twentieth century.

CZECHOSLOVAKIAN PAINTINGS By VIOLA GUNTHER-SCHULHOFF

The Sooting Gallery

Alfred Durus

Viola Gunther-Shulhoff

On the Work of Czechoslovakian Painter

The paintings of the artist, Viola Gunther-Shulhoff, of Prague, are distinguished by their exceptionally vivid imagery and by the high quality of their workmanship.

Viola Gunther-Shulhoff is one of those artists who draw their material from the horrible and fantastic manifestation of capitalist reality. She utilizes this material in exhaustive fashion, reflecting this "best of all possible words" which repels her, and which she nevertheless depicts again and again, reducing it to a common denominator: "show-booth" or "street-fair."

Portraying a beggar woman, a gambler, a petty bourgeois, the artist fixes them, as if it were, to her canvas, lays them bare with her scalpel; and the world, under the strokes of her brush, is transformed into a showman's booth. And in this peculiarity lies the weakness as well as the strength of this talented artist.

In what does her strength lie?

In her portrayal of the frightful and repellent manifestations of the capitalist world Viola Gunther-Shulhoff displays an artistry equalled by few contemporary western painters. The types whom she so accurately depicts are without exception reflections of the social maladies of capitalism.

Until 1930 Viola Gunther-Shulhoff worked in a hospital. Here she moulded wax figures of various parts of the human organism, stricken by some disease.

The artist's subsequent work is essentially a succession of such figures. The sole dif-

The Circus

ference is that they are much more artistically executed.

It would be only a half-truth to say of her paintings that they stamp her as a "Verist" in method.

"Verism" as an artistic method substitutes reality's surface appearance for reality itself; it applies the method of unverisimilar and fantastic exaggeration. Confining itself as it does to depicting the surface appearance of reality, it sets up obstacles in the way of the correct elucidation of social relations.

In her paintings Viola Gunther-Shulhoff strives to reveal social relations as they actually are, to expose the laws which govern and underlie the apparently chaotic social life of the capitalist world.

Her weakness lies in the fact that as yet these strivings remain tendencies, and do not find full reflection in her work.

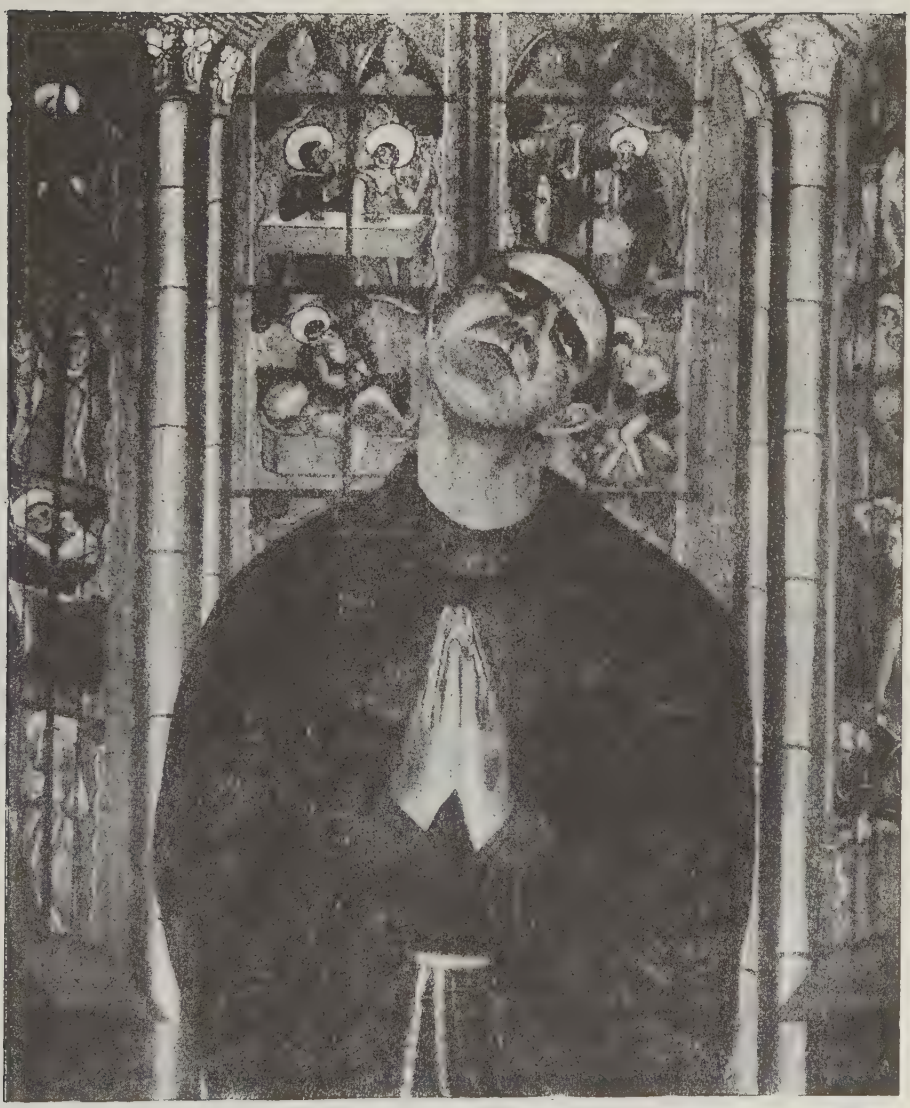
The excessively grotesque and fantastic character of her images prevent a clear view of the interrelations and contradictions of social reality.

Nevertheless, it is already clear that in her artistic development Viola Gunther-Shulhoff is moving from "Verism" towards Realism.

Viola Gunther-Shulhoff was born in Prague in 1896. In 1916 she settled in Dresden, in order to study art. Here she studied in a commercial art school, the completion of which did not at that time give women the right to enter an art academy.

Since 1924 she has lived in Prague. She had devoted herself entirely to painting only since 1930. Prior to that time she was forced by material considerations to decorate fabrics and lamp shades.

Viola Gunther-Shulhoff writes: "In 1931 several of my pictures were exhibited in Prague. But thereafter I began to avoid these exhibits; for, owing to the high entrance fees, they are accessible only to the well-to-do public, whereas I am solely interested in exhibiting my pictures to the masses, among whom I have always found greater understanding and interest in my work than among the educated people of bourgeois society."



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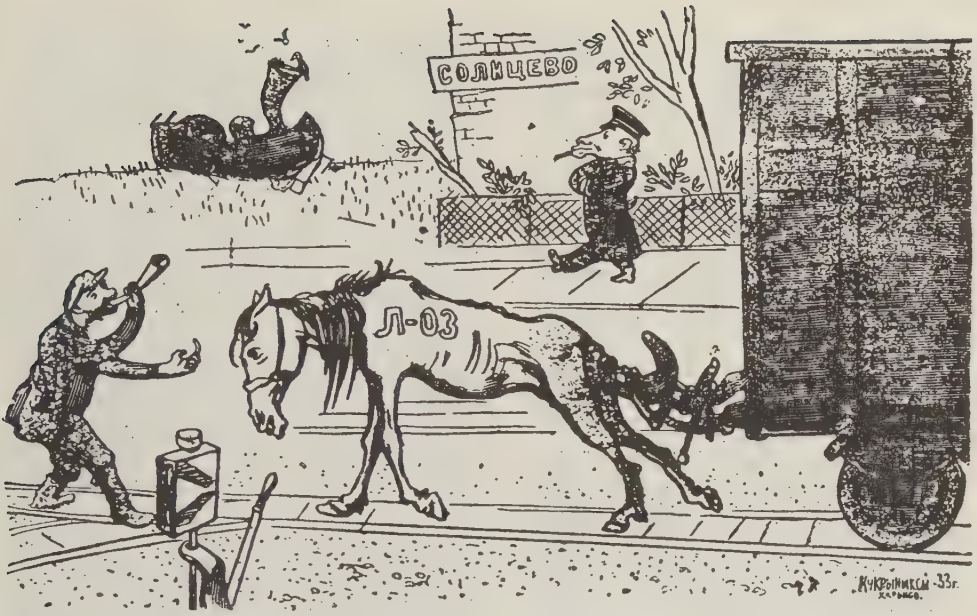
Sale of Blessed Candles



S. Urnis

Kukryniksi: Three Soviet Artists

The Story of the Most Popular Cartoonists in the Soviet Union

In 1921 a group of students of the Tashkent Art School having received passes to the Petrograd Academy of Arts and to the Art School of Higher Art set out for the station to buy tickets. Among the students walked Mikhail Kupriyanov, a tall curly-headed fellow wearing a sports cap, an Austrian great coat and boots with puttees.

The station master was reluctant to believe that so many artists had gathered in his station at once and demanded that they produce their drawings. Bundles, trunks and cases were opened up, the students spread their drawings out on a huge table covered with brown linoleum. Apparently the station master liked their drawnings, for he promptly gave the artists a special car to Moscow.

Prior to his entering the Tashkent Art School Kupriyanov, together with his brother Vladimir, had engaged himself as an unskilled worker at the "Coklyuta" coal pit in Turkestan.

He did not go to the pit, he remained to work in Tashkent at the managing office of the pits as junior mechanic. Later, having entered the art school, he became almost entirely dependent on his younger brother for support. Vladimir fed him and a whole roomful of artists, mostly on rice.

Kupriyanov's first days in Moscow were taken up with bustling around. He had his pass to the Academy of Arts. But it was hard to get a ticket to Petrograd so the Tashkentians, having arrived at the School of Higher Art decided to remain and he agreed. But where would he put up? The students' dormitories were as overcrowded as a bee-hive.

In 1921 the civil war ended, many of the youth went straight from the army to studying, and added to them were many people from the provinces, where scarcely any institutions of higher learning existed at the time.

The Tashkentians trudged through the whole nine stories of the dormitory and at length found a large room in the basement. There were no windows and the janitor warned them that the former occupants had had typhus, but there was no place else to live in so they sent Kupriyanov, he being the tallest, off to unscrew a light bulb from somewhere.

They froze in the room, for fuel they split up doors and fences. In the night the rats ate up a loaf of bread together with the pocket that contained money belonging to the

student Maslatsov, now an actor at the Meyerhold Theatre.

The cellar inhabitants dispersed. Koshkarev and Kocykh received places on the ninth floor.

Going to visit them, Kupriyanov lost his way and landed in a large hall with an oil lamp hanging from the ceiling; in the semi-darkness seated at a table was a small man with a big Caucasian cap stuck over his ears using a wooden spoon; he was eating cod liver oil from a soldier's mess tin. This provided the idea for the drawing "Kathe Kollwitz."

Around about this same time in the corridor they ran into a student with a profile like a dried herring; he was carrying a dead pidgeon at arms length:

"Look, fellows, it didn't die of itself, someone killed it, don't you think?"

Finally someone, feeling sorry for him said that the bird had obviously been killed, probably by a stone. The pidgeon was eaten.

Many students fled from Moscow.

Enter the Second Character

While the poligraphic student Mikhail Kupriyanov is getting settled, hunting for work and little by little beginning to study, let us have a look at what another student—Porphyry Krylov—is doing. They do not yet know each other. They had met several times on the stairs, but Krylov did not take to the tall fellow with his pince-nez and his hair almost down to his shoulders and baggy chequered shirt. He remained one of a "priest of art," clad in the inevitable peasant blouse and with a regulation beard, a pipe in his mouth and wearing a fancy brimmed hat.

The "priests" looked down upon the remaining students of the School of Higher Art. Krylov, along with the rest, not having a middle schooling he was still studying at the rabfac. The "priests" sought to ignore the rabfac students altogether.

In the autumn of 1921 the influx of entrants to the newly rearganized Higher Art School was enormous. Competitive try-outs were held.

The seventeen year old Porphyry Krylov, a worker in the tool department of the Tula munitions factory arrived in Moscow with his water-colors. He was sure there would be no examination, and was utterly unprepared for try-outs. The examination came as a complete surprise.

An old woman sat on the platform. Around her it was so crowded that one had to sit right at her feet and draw with a very pronounced foreshortening.

He drew in charcoal for two days. The judges of the tryout stood behind Krylov's back, looking at the drawing. They liked the bold foreshortening and the old woman's huge black nostrils. Krylov had already finished the drawing when a fellow from Kiev came over, and noted that the drawing was good, except that the old woman's ear was set too far back toward the nape of her neck.

The mistake was obvious, and Krylov righted it then and there.

To the drawing of the old woman and a still life he added his old water colors and he was accepted in the pictorial arts faculty.

Krylov spent his first year of study under the guidance of Alexander Alexandrovich Osmerkin. From him he learned pictorial art or, as Osmerkin somewhat pompously termed his subject, representation with color of form in space. But here it is appropriate to go back to Kupriyanov.

From the basement Kupriyanov moved to apartment number 81. He was lucky. Here it was warm and clean. Beds with blankets stood in rows. But it was impossible to live on the stipend and he had to find some work.

Together with Semyon Chuylovich he took up sign-making.

One freezing day they made a sign on the window of a grocery. Instead of the word "Cocoa," Kupriyanov wrote "Cokao." They quarrelled with the owner. "What's the difference, everyone will know what it means." No, the owner wouldn't pay them until they redid it. It was not so easy to find sign-making work. They solved the problem by a simple trick: they removed the signs and the store owners would then order new ones.

Krylov painted children's games and tin soldiers.

They seized on any work that came along. Once they played a prank on one rather gullible fellow by telling him that at the hippodrome they had decided to repaint the horses.

"The present paint has become shabby."

Believing them, he went to the hippodrome and spent a long time looking for the man in charge of painting of the horses.

In 1922 Kupriyanov, happening to go to the rabfac, saw Krylov's drawings on the wall newspaper. He liked the drawings very much. Their meeting occurred very simply. Kupriyanov was just out of the hospital after typhus, and with his hair cut short, he no longer resembled a "priest" of art. This helped him break the ice with the exceedingly shy Krylov.

Together they set about designing the school wall newspaper, *Red October,* and working on the magazines *Printer,* and *Moscow Printer,* when they made a drawing together, they signed it Kukry (Ku-priyanov, Kry-lov) or Krykp (Krylov, Kupriyanov).

Niks (Nik-olai Sokolov) at that time was still living in Rybinsk working as a clerk in the regional committee of water transport.

In the margins of the outgoing correspondence file he drew caricatures of his fellow office workers. The *Kukryniks* came together two years later.

Porphyry Krylov was an eager fellow. He started in the department of pictorial art, but on the side he also attended the polyghaphic department, he learned graphic art. He wanted to know how to draw on stone. in addition to this he was a member of the executive committee of the Higher Art School and of the student committee of the rabfac.

His active figure was a familiar sight in his khaki gym shirt, khaki pants and khaki canvas sneakers. Clad winter and summer in the same khaki and with his shaven head, he did not look like an artist.

Enter No. 3

Meanwhile Sokolov lived in Rybinsk and worked as a clerk for the regional committee of water transport during the day, and spent his evenings at the Proletcult art studio. At the studio he designed decorations and settings for the municipal theatre and for clubs, he studied pictorial art and festival decorations.

In 1923 at the competitive examinations, the teachers were already considerably stricter and more exacting. Out of two hundred applicants, only seventy were accepted.

Sokolov was late for the beginning of the examination and when he entered the hall and saw the drawings of the entrants, he was smitten with stage fright. There was nothing simple about the way they drew: with angles, crosses in manners that were uttterly incomprehensible. At that time, the youth, especially the youth in the provinces, was strongly under the influence of the "left" front in art, and espoused futurism, cubism; Vruel, indeed, was numbered among the cubists. The more incomprehensible a drawing, the more highly it was valued.

Sokolov chose a plaster head and drew it in pencil, plain, just as he saw it. A nose like a nose, an ear like an ear.

A peasant with a huge beard and a Russian shirt who was ambling about the hall—obviously the caretaker—came over to Sokolov's drawing and asked:

"Whose drawing?"

"Mine," answered Sokolov.

"It stands out above all the others in the competition."

That, as Sokolov later learned, was the rector of the school, Professor Favorski.

Sokolov entered the graphic faculty. The first course was like a special kind of bath house. The newly entered students had to be cleansed of affectations in their drawings which served to hide their utter ignorance of drawing. Forms of discipline were imposed: space, light, weight, volume.

Captain of the Ship in Samara

Rector Favorski demanded from the students:

"Draw a woman, render the form of her body in such a way as to make one feel that your pencil has adhered to nature, learn to make convex objects."

In the evenings the first year students squatted on their knees in the dormitory and pasted together "convex objects" out of paper and cardboard. Then they drew them. They learned to know the form of things and their position in space.

At the time when Kupriyanov and Krylov were cooperating on the *Printer*, Sokolov drew portraits at Sukharevka.

There were many curious incidents; once he drew an elderly bald merchant, who ordered that in the portrait his hair be brushed and parted in the middle.

"My head may be bald now," he said, "but formerly it had hair growing on it."

Sokolov drew him with hair.

Once—it was in 1924—Sokolov drew a couple of caricatures for the wall-newspaper. The make-up men of the wall-newspaper, Kupriyanov and Krylov, liked the drawings; one of them was placed in the next number.

"Work with us, if you want to," Kupriyanov and Krylov told him.

Sokolov took a liking to these keen boys and their work and he agreed.

Thus began the Kukryniksi.

At the outset their work together on the wall-newspaper did not create a collective. In addition to them the talented artist Kanevski also took active part in the wall-newspaper. It would have been hard all at once to say how they were grouped. All four were equally gifted, keen minded and enthusiastic.

The three students merely liked each other, and by degrees, they were brought together by one genre: caricature.

Sokolov did not get room in the dormitory. But this did not discourage him, he lived with friends, here and there, for weeks at a time.

He stayed with friends of his mother's, from Rygnikov, on Palchikov Pereulok. In the adjoining room lived a barber, a gay, sociable fellow. On Sundays the barber worked at Sukharevka, under the open sky. He sat his clients on a chair which he brought along with him, hanging the razor strop around his neck.

Past the barber's chair streamed the motly crowd at Sukharevka.

Every Sunday Sokolov set out along with the barber to see "nature." He merely enjoyed watching everyone. It was already the time of the NEP. The bazaars were stocked to overflowing but the student still went hungry. At last Sokolov settled in a permanent place, on the courtyard of the school in a large third floor room. There were representatives of every faculty here. Pictorial art, ceramics, woodcut, sculpture, and textile design—all in all seventeen people. To keep from freezing at night Sokolov piled all the available undershirts and sacks on top of him.

The sculptor, Shemlyakin, only had dinner once that whole winter; he lived on dried food, but he worked like a machine, with amazing tenacity. In the evenings, while they were studying, the students would start at the sudden touch of his fingers, feeling their shoulder muscles or the crook of their elbows through their clothing.

You could not bring a model up here and none of the comrades would have dared undress in that ungodly cold. He worked by the touch system.

At the end of 1924 a caricature appeared in the wall-newspaper of the art school with the intriguing signature *Kukryniksi.* The caricature trenchantly satirized current shortcomings of the school. But the important thing was the fact that a collective drawing was something new in the history of art.

The instructors and students regarded it as the prank of some inventive fellow. But the first caricature was followed by other and better ones, and soon the readers of the wall newspaper became accustomed to the signature *Kukryniksi.*

The Kukryniksi cartoons continued to appear there regularly up to 1928.

Three Artists On the Road to Fame

Porphyry Krylov successfully finished the rabfac in 1923 and continued to live in the dormitory of the art school, in apartment number 85, sixth floor, first entrance.

Sokolov, having at last landed in the dormitory, lived in apartment number 6, fifth floor, second entrance. The dormitory rooms of Krylov and Sokolov adjutted on the same wall.

And then, one winter evening, the door to Sokolov's room was opened and the tousled head of Kupriyanov poked in. He had heard that a cot in that room was being vacated, and asked if he couldn't move in here. The cot, still warm from the previous occupant, was taken over by Kupriyanov. Henceforth two of the Kukryniksi lived in one room; they could communicate with Krylov simply by tapping on the wall. This made their work considerably easier. In order to appreciate the joy of the friends over this you would have had to have been living in the dormitory at that time.

There they continued to live almost until they finished the School of Higher Art.

People began to notice the Kukryniksi. Throughout 1926 you came across the trio's signature below drawings in the magazines *Komsomol* and *Worker-Peasant Correspondent.* These cartoons served as entry card to the magazine *On the Literary Post.*

Starting almost with the founding of the magazine their sharp pencil moved among those circles regarding which M. Gorki wrote in his article on the Kukryniksi:

"In literature there always was and still is much that is ludicrous, the writer is used to regarding himself as a man and something more, even though that something be nothing but a wart on the end of his nose or the swelling of inordinate self worship."

In the pages of the magazine there first appeared the cartoons which were later compiled in the album *Near-Portraits.* Thus it happened that for the following five years the Kukryniksi were mainly known as masters of literary caricature.

In cartoons a bureaucrat is usually drawn as follows: blunt forehead, superciliously pursed lips. He is fat and necessarily sits at a desk provided with a telephone and an enormous inkwell. That is as stereotyped a formula as the inevitable kulak in high boots with a watch-chain on his belly, or the social democrat who invariably looks an officious lackey or cocky petty broker.

In cartoons on literary topics there are always figures of the "average type" of literatteur, consisting of a face with a pointed

beard, a felt hat or a panama, pince-nez, frock-coat and a slightly bent back. Under his arm he carries a manuscript or a briefcase. This literatteur formula—the product of the unimaginativeness of the cartoonists who draw him—existed and continues to exist, even though Soviet writers have nothing in common with this type.

The Kukryniksi, working on a critical magazine, approached their work in a new way. In not one number of *On the Literary Post* will you find a drawing of the "arithmetical average man." Their drawings deal with living people.

Working on literary material, the Kukryniksi learned to observe people, things and events; and not only their external aspect but their inner makeup which "it is hard for the naked eye to detect, since, as we know inner deformity is very often and very artfully concealed by a pleasant exterior." (M. Gorki). Friendly cartoons in such cases are far from friendly.

The artists were still students. Sokolov studied under Nikolai Nikolaich Kupriyanov. A lively pedagogue and artist with an original style of pictorial art, he gave his pupil the assignment of illustrating Babel's stories.

"More initiative! More life and more of your own in it."

Sokolov worked away with enviable satisfaction.

In the evenings, together with Misha Kupriyanov, he played in the school's improvised orchestra. Sokolov played a Hawaiian whistle. Kupriyanov percussion instruments. This orchestra enjoyed popularity not only within the walls of the School of Higher Art, it performed at other schools.

Sometimes Sokolov and Kupriyanov danced, impersonating Pat and Patashon. Long, lanky Kupriyanov and the small blond Sokolov with big dreamy eyes. They even stayed at a rest home free of charge one summer as artist entertainers. Without any qualms, the artists spent several idle months at the rest home.

They loved life in its noise and action, and all this was utterly suited to their happy work.

By now their drawings were already appearing in the magazines *Projector, Smena* and the newspaper *Komsomolskaya Pravda*.

In 1927 Porphyry Krylov successfully finished the faculty of pictorial art. The decision of the metal workers union of Tula, indicated in his traveling paper: "sent to complete his artistic training . . ." was thus fulfilled.

As soon as he finished the School of Higher Art, Krylov became an aspirant and was appointed instructor of a class in pictorial art in the fourth year of the rabfac, the very rabfac where he had received his middle schooling. As an aspirant he worked for a year and a half as assistant to the artist P. P. Konchalovski.

But he nevertheless continued to be Kry—a component part of the collective Kukryniksi.

Mayakovski Gives Them New Work

Once the Kukryniksi had dinner at the Hertzen House. Mayakovski came in and sat down at their table.

It turned out that he had long been hunting for the Kukryniksi. He asked the three artists to do the sets for the first three scenes of his play *Klop* (*Bed Bug*) which Meyerhold was producing at his theatre. The first three scenes deal with bourgeois life and people. Mayakovski was sure that no one could do a better job of the sets than the Kukryniksi. The remaining five scenes, which portray our future society, were to be done by Rodchenko.

"Yes, but we have never worked in the theatre!"

"So much the better."

They agreed, and the Kukryniksi, together with Mayakovski, went to see Meyerhold.

They decided that the first half of the play must be set among the most commonplace things of daily life. The spectators should see familiar objects on the stage.

On that same evening the Kukryniksi set forth to hunt out the most unprepossessing barber shop they could find. They came across it not far from Trubnaya Square. They each had a shave and a hair cut; they gloated over the flower embellished mirror, the attire of the barbers and the customers; they mentally noted the shapes, arrangements of the bottles and jars, the subjects of the oleographs, etc.

All this was needed for one scene of the play, which is set in a barber shop.

Next they went to look in the Moscow shop windows. The choice of commonplaces turned out to be enormous. They bought flowered and striped mufflers, ties of absurd hues. Venuses, holding pink lampshades like umbrellas. They "drew" sets from everyday things. The costumes for Mayakovski's play they bought at the Moskvoshvey store on Triumphalnaya Square.

They worked in a room at the theatre that had formerly been the pidgeon roost for the pidgeons that played in *Les*. Mayakovski would come to the room, which retained the smell of its former inhabitants and watch how the Kukryniksi worked on the settings. At the dress rehearsal the Kukryniksi were panicky, but the opening calmed them down. The public liked the play.

Later they were to have more confidence in their theatrical work.

In 1931 they brilliantly designed the sets of *Trevoga (Alarm)* at the Theatre of the Working Youth.

In 1932 *Gorod Glupov (City of Fools)* was

to be rescued by settings of the Kukryniksi. With this play they came forth as full fledged theatrical artists and, furthermore, they worked out every mis en scene together with the director.

Here as theatrical artists they shape the action of the play.

They brought to life the characters of Saltikov-Shchedrin, showing them in the setting of nineteenth century Russia.

In 1930 they drew the illustrations for Alekseyev's *Bolsheviks*. The artists became so interested in the subjects of the illustrations that they decided to paint some of the main ones in oils. Thus from the pages of this book there originated the canvases which were later gathered in the series *Civil War, Entry of the Whites, Messrs. Interventionists, The Funeral of the Commissar, etc.*

In 1932-33 the artists' desire to "master" the subject, to give a synthesised portrayal of the enemy in the time of the civil war, culminated in the famous series of canvases *Generals*.

In the summer of 1931, at the request of M. Gorki, the Kukryniksi showed him all their work—paintings, caricatures, cartoons, posters, book illustrations, etc.

Gorki liked the work of the artists and, having advised them to arrange an exhibit he undertook to write the introduction for the catalogue.

In a personal conversation with them and in an article, Gorki made note of a one-sidedness in their subject matter.

"They, so it seems to me, specialized too much in literature and literary figures.

"But one cannot limit oneself to drawing only redheads or only brunettes. We live and work in a country and under conditions which give us exceptional right to mock and laugh. Our enemies are serious enemies, but never before were enemies as open to ridicule as our enemies.

"It seems to me that the Kukryniksi turn their eyes more often to Europe, across the sea, across all our frontiers. There is as much here that is funny, as there is despicable."

Their conversation with Gorki and the opinions of the visitors to the exhibit, which coincided with the writer's advice, steered the creative powers of the Kukryniksi out of their narrow channel.

In the exhibit, held in 1932, aside from their other work, there appeared a series of drawings *Old Moscow* dealing with sordidness and banality in the streets and squares, apartments and back stairs, kitchens and rubbish heaps of the old city.

Soviet Artists in Action

In September 1933 the Kukryniksi's first cartoon on the subject of transportation appeared in *Pravda*. The artists brought their sharp pencil to the pages of this fighting Bolshevik newspaper.

This is worth telling about in more detail.

In mid-September, 1933, at twelve o'clock at night, the three young artists set forth with worker shock brigaders of the *Pravda* on a raid to investigate the working and management of the Kharkov railway junction.

In the station Kharkov-Sortirovochnaya, where the collapse of management had assumed especially threatening proportions, to the artists' question as to how the work was going, the station master Yezherski replied:

"Business is elegant with me!"

This was obviously hot air, dust in one's eyes. While one of the artists talked to Yezherski, the other two made a drawing of him and within a few days a cartoon appeared in *Pravda*, where this windbag was depicted with portrait like resemblance, and his "elegant" business as a background.

On that night in Kharkov the artists covered twelve miles of railway junctions in search of material. They sought to express, not the general features of the serious situation on the southern railway line, but specific individual instances, and this approach sharply differentiates them from other caricaturists.

In *Pravda* the Kukryniksi began with railway transport. Their pencil traveled the tracks through Tagil, Kharkov, Sverdlovsk. They were on the southern line, to Tsermsk, Ekaterinsk.

"The manager of the Tsermsk line, Comrade Mironov, reports that a checkup on the facts as to slovenliness on the part of the executive staff of the Tagil station (cartoon of the Kukryniksi "Gallery of the Tagil Commanders") corroborated the truth of the material in *Pravda*."

Such items appeared in *Pravda* after almost every caricature by the Kukryniksi.

Along with their newspaper work, the Kukryniksi illustrated books and painted large canvases. Here is a sample workday of the Kukryniksi: On the floor is General Alekseyev. His picture is needed for *The History of the Civil War*.

General Alekseyev appears in the foreground and behind him a gallows, flail and shackles. The background is spread with India ink. Krylov is drawing the gallows and flail. He has already begun on the shackles, when Kupriyanov notices that perhaps the chain should be longer and that its end should disappear in the background.

They lay the drawing on the floor, look at it from a distance and decide that the background is too dark—it should be toned down and then the general's face would stand out better.

With erasers Kupriyanov and Krylov start lightening the background, one from the right, the other from the left.

Having finished erasing, Sokolov, with a fine point adds a few hairs to the general's whiskers.

This pleases everyone, but now they don't like the way the things in the background are drawn.

It occurs to Kupriyanov that it would be better if the gallows, flail and shackles were done lightly, with a fine point. That is a happy thought and Sokolov, having erased the things drawn in India ink, draws them with a fine point.

The rope should be thicker, like a cable, says Kupriyanov, and he draws it accordingly.

Again they set the drawing on the floor and look at it. It seems to Krylov that the general's face is not sufficiently expressive. He looks at a photograph of Alekseyev, makes a "general-like" face and stomps about the room with an emphatic military tread.

"He should be a foul-mouthed, military looking old fellow," says Krylov, "even though he's got one foot in the grave by now, both in his bearings and in his gait he retains that old guard military bearing."

They decide to give him more ferocious moustaches.

That is about how their collective work on a drawing goes.

The faculty and habit of basing their work only on concrete things and phenomena is borne out by any of their works.

The artists do not invent Ostap Bender when illustrating *Twelve Chairs* by Ilf and Petrov. They find a character among their acquaintances, with the same appearance and behavior as the hero of the book. Ostap Bender is drawn from a person now living in Moscow.

Klim Samgin in the illustrations to Gorki's novel is likewise not a fiction.

This general tendency can be traced through all the work of the Kukryniksi.

Each of them also possesses his own individual works. Krylov for instance is a well known painter, Kupriyanov and Sokolov do excellent water colors. If an exhibit were made of the artists' individual creations no one could tell that they were the Kukryniksi.

But a common notebook of subjects and sketches, a common work-room, common table, paper, pencil, and paints, common tastes, common earnings, which are always equal, common trips at the behest of the editors, all this goes to make up a creative collective.

If the third is ill and they have to work in two, it makes things considerably easier if the sick one is in the same room. He may keep quiet or even sleep, but his presence facilitates the work. They are used to being three together.

A great human friendship, dating from the School of Higher Art, an intense interest in their pleasant work, is the cement that unites the artists.

The nineteenth century French painter, Paul Gauguin remarked about the caricatures of his contemporary Daumier: "A caricature ceases to be a mere caricature from the moment when it becomes art."

The great artist's words are fully applicable to the Kukryniksi.

The work done by the Kukryniksi, will go down in history as monuments of our time. And more than one generation of artists will learn from them.

Translated from the Russian by Edmund Stevens

THREE CARTOONS by KUKRYNIKSI
(Three Soviet Artists)
From Their Book "Old Moscow"

Moscow Street Scene

Old Sukharevski Market — Now a wide open square, one of the beautiful spots in Moscow

The maze of old Lubyanka Square. Now widened, the old Chinese Wall done away with — another proof of the steadily more beautiful Moscow

LITERARY PORTRAITS

Franz Leschnitzer

ANNA SEGHERS: German Writer

My first impression associated with Anna Seghers I recall not as something read but as something spoken—a speech she made. It was shortly after the public trial in Moscow of the wreckers of the so-called "Industrial Party," a short time after the Ramsin trial, that I saw Comrade Anna Seghers for the first time and also heard her speak at a public meeting in Berlin. The meeting took place in the large hall of the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra; the meeting was called by the "Society of Friends of New Russia" for the purpose of telling the broad masses of middle class intellectuals the real truth about this trial of the wreckers after the bourgeois yellow press had lied and distorted the truth about it. The large hall was crowded to capacity, in fact overcrowded, when the meeting was opened by Comrade Arich Baron, president of the "Society of Friends of New Russia" (he was arrested immediately after Hitler's accession to power and soon afterwards foully murdered in prison). Surrounding Baron in the presidium on the platform were Arthur Holitscher and the comrades Egon Erwin Kisch, Professor Felix Halle and Anna Seghers. The audience listened intently but with the restlessness peculiar to mass meetings in politically tense times, to the speeches of Holitscher, Halle and Kisch. As Comrade Anna Seghers took the floor, however, the hall suddenly grew very still—there was such silence that to use the stale phrase, "one could hear a pin drop." Why this sudden silence? Was the name of Anna Seghers better known than those of Egon Erwin Kisch, Arthur Holitscher or Felix Halle? Not at all; outside of purely literary circles this writer was hardly known at all then; and at best it was known that she had received the (somewhat discredited) Kleist Prize for her not very popular novel *Revolt of the Fishermen.* (On which Piscator's film, under the same title, is based.) Anna Seghers was no fascinating beauty. She did not say anything more profound than her predecessors. She only gave a more detailed, perhaps more graphic, picture of the trial—

Anna Seghers

a picture of the appearance and behavior of the wreckers and of the attitude of the broad masses towards the trial in which they were tremendously interested. On the other hand Kisch, Holitscher and particularly Halle had tried to give a psychological, political and juridical analysis of the Moscow event. Not what, but how Anna Seghers spoke was the unforgettable experience for the audience as well as for her colleagues in the presidium. Holitscher rested his head on his hand and stared at the speaker; the audience sat literally "spell-bound," with great wide open eyes and heads stretched forward, with the same far-away expression that one is more accustomed to see in that hall on the faces

of music lovers when a more esoteric concert is given. In an icy-cold, femininely soft but strong voice Anna Seghers brought out sentences of an artistic finish one had never before heard in an impromptu speech. And her speech appeared to be completely impromptu as she held no brief or notes of any kind in her hands, nor was there anything of the sort on the speakers' stand. She kept her calm eyes on the audience and without any pauses or the slightest hesitation built phrase on phrase in masterful fashion, as an architect builds a beautiful structure stone by stone. Listening to these finely constructed sentences I (and I am sure I was not alone in this) kept wondering: "Now she will slip and fall!" But with uncanny calm, without break or halt, the wonderful, tortuous stream of this speech flowed on. Its course wound like a noose about the imaginary necks of all the real wreckers of socialist construction in the Soviet Union. Suddenly we all became aware of the profound, significance of this trial.

I later found out that Anna Seghers had written this half hour speech and had learned it by heart. . . .

The Precise Artist

And this fact seems to me more interesting, more symptomatic and essential than thousands of other things about the creative methods of our proletarian revolutionary literature. It reveals the fundamental feature of the creative work of the writer Anna Seghers—and more than that, at least one basic feature, unfortunately not always to be found but always desirable, of the work of all the writers of our class: the tendency to formal exactitude, precision, accuracy, genuineness, in a word to quality. It must be added that the particular conception of quality held by Comrade Seghers is suspiciously close to that held by the formalist both in theory and practice. I have already said that the main thing about the Seghers speech at the meeting mentioned was how and not what was said, the form and not the content; the same holds true for this writer's written works and should hold true since even her spoken words were, so to say, unprinted written matter! And by this "how" and form, not only her written style is to be understood, but also and mostly what Nietzsche has called the "thought style." Comrade Seghers "thought style" is a psychological feature corresponding entirely to the formalistic feature of her written style. Among German proletarian writers Anna Seghers is a psychologist par excellence.

This is both praise and condemnation. In fact more condemnation than praise! Praise only insofar as in the infantile proletcult days of our literature psychology was ignored to such an extent that a temporary reaction of the exaggeratedly psychological, verging on psychologism, was not only understandable but even seemed justified. But as a stable creative method psychologism is all wrong—and unfortunately it is the stable creative method of the writer Seghers. It is a method she has mastered beyond comparison, but it is also a method entirely unsuited for the handling of the social and political thematics of socialist realism. By means of this method a craftsman like Anna Seghers can penetrate to the deepest recesses of any creature's soul as with an x-ray; but the clear and unambiguous questions of political reality which as a communist, ergo a socialist-realist, she should answer just as clearly and unambigiously, in such questions she is apt to fail. Her first, prize winning novel *Revolt of the Fishermen* tells us a great deal about the psychic peculiarities, about the stirrings and desires, the mode of thinking and the instincts of these singular sea coast folks—but almost nothing at all about the class basis which is after all at the root of these as of any psychic peculiarities, of these as of any stirrings and desires, modes of thought and instincts! The same holds true for the main characters of Seghers' second book—*On the Way to the American Consulate,* and even more so all the characters of her third, her most popular and most discussed book *Wayfarers.*

The first page of this novel contains the phrase "Soviet Hungary was gone"—the last page deals with a Polish prison and an old Polish revolutionist encouraging a younger one; between, with almost unexampled power of language and psychologic profundity, the struggle of the Wayfarers is described—that is the struggle of the most active Party members of the Communist International with fascism, partly frank, partly masked as "democratic" and military-dictatorial. Old and young industrial workers, peasants, dyers, wood-choppers, intellectuals—among these, two Chinese students—struggle against fascism in Hungary, Poland, France, Italy, Bulgaria, Roumania and China. Personally they do not know one another, only seldom do their paths cross on the thorny road of illegal work which nevertheless unites them closely. Her theme does not yet include German fascism—national socialism: the book was published before the "Third Empire" broke out. But the absence of the theme of Hitler-Germany is not a very serious thing in this case, as what is typical of fascism as the most brutal and desperate attempt of the monopoly capitalistic bourgeoisie to obtain a mass basis for its dictatorship, comes out marvellously in this book. In the foreground is the revolutionary movement of the proletariat and its leading spirit—the Communist International which knits all the foremost fighters in the proletarian struggle for emancipation closely to-

gether even though they are constantly watched, persecuted, arrested, tortured and often foully murdered.

It matters little that the book does not mention the struggle between the Communist Party of Germany and the national socialists just as it is by no means to be held against the book, as some critics do, that Anna Seghers "unfortunately forgot these same people, the Wayfarers, in their work in the Soviet Union." There is no question at all of "forgetting": the reason socialist construction in the Soviet Union is not touched upon by the writer in this novel is rather in the intentionally tragic undertone of the book. Such tragedy is much more effective than any revolutionary trumpetry. The book ends, as mentioned, in a Polish prison. But the strength, the Bolshevist firmness, the iron resolution of the prisoners is conveyed to the reader with such force that the tragic ending does not leave him in a depressed condition, in a defeatist mood, but rather awakens his revolutionary indignations. For the sake of such an effect the writer could well forego a closing hymn to Soviet wayfarers.

Her fault is not in "forgetting" the subject of Hitler-Germany and the subject of the Soviet Union, nor in the apparently depressed-defeatist ending. Her fault is here, as in her other works, in her purely psychological method. Again we learn as good as nothing about the social peculiarities of the class circumstances and the class struggle of the proletariat in the seven different countries through which the action of the novel takes us; again we learn only the psychic peculiarities of the inhabitants of these countries. This goes so far that in describing a Party meeting of Communists of various nationalities we find out everything about the national psychological idiosyncrasies of every one present at the meeting but not a word about even the order of business! It goes so far that in describing a house to house agitation the writer shows not so much the agitators as the embarrassment of the agitators! The novel as a whole would be immeasurably more valuable if Anna Seghers had given form to the social conflicts with the same masterful skill that she gave to the psychological conflicts—especially since her mastery of language is as amazingly perfect in this work as ever. As far as style is concerned she is master of all phases of language: from crudest slang to finest coinage—which never becomes an end in itself however.

The charming but dangerous peculiarity of her method can best be demonstrated by a concrete double example. For this purpose let us look at two tiny, yet altogether, characteristic short stories, which she published in two revolutionary proletarian magazines, for comparative study:

CHAUFFEUR'S LICENSE[1]

Among a group of suspected civilians imprisoned by the Japanese military police in the cellar of a requisitioned house in Chapei, there was a small bald man not under forty; his clothes not even especially ragged. The face of this man, as if rumpled by thinking, did not differ much from the other faces there, which turned alike within an hour under pressure of the thought of what awaited them. A Japanese sentinel in precise uniform stood in the cellar doorway, on his open face the firm, unshakable conviction that it is his duty to stand here and guard these people that are under suspicion of shooting at his countrymen from ambush.

Suddenly the door opened and a Japanese officer entered followed by some soldiers whom he ordered to search the prisoners thoroughly for the last time. The face of the bald man did not change in the least—the hands going over his body and his clothes did not disturb his thoughts. Then there was a pause. A bit of paper missed before was found in his coat: the chauffeur's licence of Wu-Pei-Li. The Japanese sent one of his men to report on this and the man came right back with orders. Wu-Pei-li was taken out of the cellar to the yard and then through the gate into a second yard where the garages were. There he had to wait under guard, perhaps the first to hear the verdict.

Then two orderlies, three general staff officers and two civilians came out of the nearby house. A map of the country was spread out before him and a route pointed out. The thoughts of Wu-Pei-li turned from inevitable death to the small red dot behind the forts. The Japanese brought a car out of the garage. Wu-Pei-li had to take the driver's place with the cold muzzles of revolvers in the hands of the civilians against his temples. The general staff officers entered the automobile. "Give it all the gas it will take!" He let out the clutch and sounded the claxon like mad—the wild hard sound of the Japanese military auto, the noise of which had maddened him day and night before and maddened him now. They went through Chapei torn by shots and teeming with helpless humanity by long lines of fleeing refugees. The ribbons of road as he passed them wound about his heart. He felt the muzzles of the revolvers, hard but no longer cold. They sped over quay, along the broad highway leading to the bridgehead. To right and left stone balustrades becoming iron ones on the bridge. The eyes of the officers on his back, the revolvers against his

[1] *"Chauffeur's License,"* appeared in the magazine *Linkskurve* (No. 6, June 1932), "The Square," in the magazine *Unsere Zeit* No. 9, September 1934)

temples controlled his every movement, but the tremendous tension behind those temples—the mission and the struggle with the decision—they did not see. They had already passed the balustrade, the river was already under them. At that instant the chauffeur Wu-Pei-li realized what was wanted of him. He made a sharp turn and the auto with its general staff officers, the two civilians and himself, in a curve that will forever remain burned into the memories of the masses, shot into the Yangtse.

THE SQUARE

Right after the arrest of her father, Marie was sent to the country. When, months later, the child came back with her mother to their home put back in order, the first thing she noticed was the square. Every thing was changed: the scratched and trampled floors were freshly oiled, the closet broken open and turned upside down was back in place, chinaware instead of books behind its glass doors, grandmother's tallboy stood where father's bed had been before and on the spot where father himself had been standing then the clock stood now. It was a new and comfortable home, but the square they could not wash away. The picture had been torn off the wall and thrown into the stove, but they forgot the small dark square on the faded wall where the picture of Thaelmann had hung.

As soon as she saw it Marie remembered the picture that had hung there. She immediately understood why everything was changed. She understood they wanted to fool her. She looked about and from the dyed old dress her mother wore suddenly realized her father was dead and she wondered how he died. She understood that her mother was afraid and wanted to deceive her child and that it was useless to ask. In order to hide her face Marie put her nose to the cake and went up to the clock. In order not to talk she swallowed piece upon piece of cake although it tasted sandy. Her mother was glad when Marie later went to school properly and adapted herself. She sang what she was supposed to sing. She drew and embroidered swastikas, there was a Christmas tree and for Easter they painted eggs. But no holidays and no parades, no music nor the face of her mother or any other human face on earth could cover the little square Marie saw before her always. Had the one that was dead by some magic put a wonderfully colored, radiant picture there, it would have been nothing to compare with this square. In the treacherous quiet of the spotlessly clean room the park demonstration, the real May Day of last year, came out of the square. Father had handed her over to Albrecht who first put her on his motorcycle and then raised her to his shoulders. She soared above the heads of the people with the flags and some other children, just as high as the flags and the face of the speaker. His bald head glistened in the sun. His fist shot out over the barrier at short regular intervals and threw words like stones.

Her father was dead, murdered, but Albrecht may be well and alive. Marie always hoped she would come across him, find him. Over the respectably spread table, by the indifferent faces of mother and grandmother, Marie stared at the square, the hole in the wall.

The uniformity of method according to which both of these short stories are constructed is striking. Although the first, deals with action, the second with an emotion, there is something decidedly common to both small cameos: the psychological effect of an "inanimate thing," of an object—in the first case the chauffeur's license, in the things the writer has "emphasized" in the simplest imaginable and at the same time, subtlest way possible: by emphasizing the words "chauffeur's license" and "square" and these words only. The psychological calculation extends even to typographical directions! All social circumstances and premises of the action and emotion dealt with are considered extraneous matters and therefore simply ignored. All facts, all things substantial are only indicated insofar as it is absolutely essential for the psychological study not to remain suspended in airless space.

But Comrade Seghers has shown by inordinately valuable short stories she has lately written in emigration, that she not only desires but is also able to write things effective for the broader and, especially, the proletarian masses of readers. Her anti-fascist sketch "Our Father" is a piece of fine literary lace work of national socialist terror as well as the heroic pride and unbreakable sureness of the fighters in the class struggle continually opposed to it. Her reportage "The Last Steps of Koloman Wallish"[1] is an able massing of facts. In the interval between these two pieces her novel *Head Price* appeared which, alongside with all the best features of her work, suffers from all the accumulated defects to a greater degree and, in regrettable contrast to *Wayfarers*, is really defeatist and only depressing in political perspective. Nevertheless, as "Last Steps of Koloman Wallisch" proves, in emigration she is still growing in her art as a fighter in the foremost ranks of revolutionary world literature.

Translated from the German by S. D. Kogan

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[1] *International Literature*, No. 5, 1935

LETTERS FROM WRITERS

ENGLAND

Economic Collapse of the Artist

Signs: In England today there are clear signs of the situation as regards the abnormal economic position of the English artist. For some time past letters have appeared in the radical press discussing the rapid increase of unemployed and unwanted artists. The labor market is full of them. Various unsatisfactory schemes have been put forward for utilizing their energies and making them fill a useful part in our contemporary economy. With no practical results.

Some months ago a Government commission composed of business men and artists was appointed to investigate the situation. With no practical results as yet.

Art and Industry Exhibitions are on the increase. They are intended to bring the business man and artist together. They have not shown any practical results as yet.

Among recent exhibitions may be mentioned: 1) The Art in Industry Exhibition held at the Royal Academy (the die-hard home of the conservative forms of art—in painting, sculpture, draughtsmanship and architecture—and hitherto close to commercial art and craft). It was opened with much pomp and ceremony and proved to be a manufacturers' and shop-keepers' exhibition almost minus the artist. The few examples of productions by the studio artist showed that the latter lacked a knowledge of the fundamental principles of Art in relation to Industry and the Home. In particular in meaning and motives of decoration. It was a display of extravagant luxuries that would have pleased William Morris, and it revealed that our chaos in artistic ideas and things is now completely chaotic.

2) The L.C.C. (London Country Council[1]) Exhibition of Art Schools products, organized at a cost of 500 pounds. Number 1 was a business man's exhibition suggesting that the business man is not interested in the artist but employs his own staff of technicians and designers. Number 2 was the opposite. It was a display to which the young students of 19 in the L.C.C. maintained and aided London School of Art, contributed examples of glassware, furniture, textiles, etc., with the object of persuading business men to buy designs and to employ the young students. But English business men are interested in processes, especially the manufacture of artificial silk. They do not lack designs. All they want are freakish novelties with money in them. The big furnishing shops show that manufacturers are interested in the production (and faking) of antiques and of the wild abstraction in recent non-representative painting. This is merely a continuation of the fashion set by the great department stores in Paris just after the war. The stores were filled with facsimile productions in textiles, ceramics, furniture, etc., of the forms and colors contained in the paintings and sculptures of Picasso, Braque, Matisse, Leger, Laurens, Gris, Derain, Severini, Marie Laurencin. This commercial exploitation of the extreme Cubist, Futurist, and other geometrical schools of painting reached its apotheosis in the fashion parades of decorative arts and architecture held in the Grand Palais, Paris. Here the cult of the non-popular, non-representative and of non-sense took on such extravagance as to appear the last cry in

Editorial Note: *While we find this letter highly informative, revealing the difficult situation among the artists in England today, we are not in entire accord on some of the points raised by Mr. Carter. Though he does not intend to, we feel that because of his emphasis, he may give some of our readers the impression that he is opposed to government support of its artists. We also wish to point out, that after all, comparatively few artists today are being given these opportunities for study. Among other points, there is the steady growth of the revolutionary Artists International. Though small as yet, this group in its exhibits, discussions and other work, has already secured the cooperation of some of the outstanding British artists. It is true, as Mr. Carter points out, that the great majority of English artists are still under the influence of bourgeois ideology. It is also true, that like writers and artists in other countries, an increasing number of British artists are turning towards the revolutionary movement. Calling attention to these facts, however, we are pleased to print these notes on the situation of the British artists today. Mr. Carter is a writer who has always held the respect of his readers not only in England, but in other countries as well.*—Editors.

[1] *The London Local Governing Body tied to the Government. In 1905 was made responsible for educational organization. Is a part of the State machinery and is referred to, here, under the general term State.*

bohemian plus commercial decadence. Geometric architecture or cubist picture displayed Japanese fashion upon a blank wall, and each requiring human beings like geometric patterns clothed in harmonious color to match. The novelty seeking English business man trained in this tradition has little or no use for the designs and energies of students trained in the principles of popular Art in relation to Industry. And the sight of the contributors to the L.C.C. Art and Industry on their knees begging for his patronage was not likely to melt the big, bad business man to tears. In fact the L.C.C. Exhibition did very little indeed to show how Art and Industry may be brought into touch.

3) The English Artists International Exhibition. Another sign of the times. Another symptom of the crisis in the art world. The International represents the attempt to persuade the disillusioned English artist to organize and play a definite part in the life of the new proletarian culture. The exhibition contained the first seeds of the attempt to induce the hitherto individualistic painter, sculptor, draftsman, art and craft designer to express proletarian ideas and values. It was useful in revealing the limitations of these art workers, in a lack of proletarian spirit and vision, and the seeming inability to relate the industrial worker to his industrial background. It suggests however, that there is a body of artists in this country capable of being of use to the Workers' movement. But there are the economic aspects of the proletarian Art movement. They present a hard problem which I shall not discuss here.

4) Another sign appears in the increasing literature of Art and Industry. More than one academic writer is seen explaining and justifying the effect on manufacture of the newest extravagant forms of painting, an effect that shows itself in the production of commercial objects similar to those in Paris as described above. Writers of Professor Herbert Read's standing, a professor who is doing more than any writer to bring the non-representative painter and business man together, have one serious failing, they do not appear to know what Art is. And their writings form an object lesson in how to confuse art, craft, technique, in the true Stunt Press fashion, beyond meaning.

5) The correspondence and literature of protest. The big Art in Industry Exhibition has had the effect of calling forth a number of letters protesting against the futile attempt to inflate Art in the service of the business men and for the main purpose of money making. At least one book has appeared aiming to remove some of the nonsense by which Art has become surrounded. Herbert Furst's *Art Debunked* as its title implies has this purpose.

Causes: Let me consider some of the causes of this extremely abnormal situation. They reside partly in the Government, partly in the artist, and partly in the business man. 1) The spendthrift attitude of the Government.[1] 2) The anti-social attitude of the artist. 3) The money-mad attitude of the business man.

In London today there are a number of State L.C.C. maintained and aided Art Schools established to afford instruction in principles of art and art in its relation to commerce. There are similar schools all over England with similar methods and results. In these schools the State and Municipality supports students with scholarships and bursaries, and having made them efficient art and craft workers sends them home to abject poverty. The State has no further use for them. It is estimated that the annual expenditure on technical and Art Schools in London is 800,000 pounds. In 1933 the technical educational expenditure was 1,413,005 pounds and the income from students' fees, 161,250 pounds. The balance of over 1,000,000 pounds came from the public pocket in rates, taxes, etc. As the State does not provide students with work after they leave the Schools, it is not hard to believe that the greatest part of the 1,413,005 pounds is wasted capital.

To my knowledge this kind of thing has been going on for the past thirty years. Actually it has gone on much longer. During this period millions of pounds have been wasted on the training of students for whom there has been no place in Industry or Social Life. I can best illustrate the truth of this by means of a personal story.

In 1906 I was living the life of a half-starved artist, unpaid social worker and writer of socialist plays in a block of horrible slum studios at Chelsea, then London's chief Art center. Herded together in this den were a number of struggling and starving artists all picking up a bare pittance on sweated art labor and, like myself, living on a few scraps of food a day. The fact that it was a time of cheap money made no difference, for it was also a time of cheap labor, of labor exploitation, of mad profiteering. One of us was a young struggling sculptor, whom I shall call R. He had passed through the State Art School at South Kensington and was able to describe the process and the result. How the state made him an efficient art worker and what it cost the country. I persuaded him to write his story down in full intending to publish it or use it in a play. Unfortunately circumstances prevented me from doing either, and not till today have

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[1] *The L.C.C. wasteful spending policy unchecked by the Government.*

I had an opportunity to make use of his experience.

It is a very instructive story, and, what is more, a typical one. It differs very little from the present day art worker's story. The difference is one of degree of impoverishment, of the condition of the artist made steadily worse by the war and shocking after war economic crises which have given rise to economic wreckage. The economic crash has impoverished the old art buying public beyond recovery; banished the rich art patron; produced a new tasteless profiteering class, set up a demand for cheap and nasty imitations. The day of the home is gone, the large individual one family house is doomed, vast many storied blocks of one-room flats with blank walls, or walls decorated with the family washing and wardrobe, are the fashion. The big family mansion with ample wall space for great masterpieces, and spacious corridors for sculpture, is now a tenement dwelling accomodating a dozen or more middle class impoverished families. These are but a few of the changes the effect of which has been to drive the artist from his studio to a make-shift garret, or on the crowded street with his odds and ends of mid-Victorian pastoral pictures.

R. was born in Lancashire in an industrial environment that should have put the artist in him to the service of the workers. It was one of the hells of Industry that in the 1890's rotted the diaphram of England as with leprosy, where the blue sky was blotted out with an infernal black pall, where the earth was scorched with an endless volcanic twilight, where the slave making machine cluttered up factories and horrible homes with the dehumanised forms of men and women, and the Capitalist-Exploiter-Profiteer was God. It was in fact Lancashire in England's Paleotechnic period of the history of the Machine and Industrial Revolution. But R. saw none of the true meanings of these things. True to the bohemian intelligentsia to which he belonged he simply exclaimed, "I have got Art in me. I must get it out." So he entered a State Art School for the purpose of studying drawing, modelling and design. The State received him with open arms and proceeded to spend heavy sums on him in order to help him get "the Art out." The experiment cost Lancashire 260 pounds in fees and scholarships. Having reached a point at which it could not be of further use to him, the State School turned R. out.

Then came a period of drifting in the search for permanent work. He put his hand in turn to lithography, wood-engraving, photographic reproduction, Jacquard designing. He studied processes of weaving, calico print designing, and he won an exhibition prize that enabled him to come to London where, wanting more instruction, he entered the South Kensington Art School. Here the story of wasteful expenditure was repeated. In the course of time he cost London 120 pounds for tuition, 150 pounds for materials, 200 pounds for traveling scholarships, 300 pounds to 400 pounds in prizes. He came in fact to represent a State outlay of about 1,000 pounds. He was a national asset capable of doing first class skilled work of national importance as a sculptor, or art and craft worker.

But the Government had no use for him. Though the spirit of a New Age was about, though there was a civic renaissance, though radical reformers were demanding the removal of the spawn and offal of the Industrial Age—slums, workhouses, prisons, barracks—though town-planning city embellishment, and garden suburbs were occupying the attention of the builders of an improved society, the Government saw them not. A dozen ugly houses a day, a hundred a month, a thousand a year, passed unnoticed. Capitalist millionaires, candidates for immortality, were left to exploit the hygenic and garden suburb movements. They spawned Public Libraries, Wash-houses, Baths. Enmeshed their workers in industrial garden cities the better to get the utmost work out of them. They were left unhindered to apply their own commercial standards of health, education and beauty. The artist was left to starve.

R. left the Art School, tried to make a living, struggled for a time in a small studio, black, damp and muddled with things, as though someone had poured through the broken top light, chairs, tables, modelling-block, camp-bed, wet clay, tools, dirt. Three months of this and one day the human being in him got the better of the slave. He rose in revolt, saying, "I have had enough of this hell. I am sick to death of this damned country that leaves me with my skilled hands at the mercy of dirty profiteers. I am going abroad to a foreign land that is waiting for me and is only too willing to make use of an artist that has cost England 1,000 pounds, and for whom England has no use." Having said that he went.

I could tell stories of other skilled artists who despairing of encouragement from England for their creative side, looked towards Soviet Russia as a land that welcomes artists and craftsmen of recognized gifts, and fully equipped to participate in fine national work. And who being debarred by circumstances from venturing forth, remained to sink with their fellow artists in distress.

To sum up the three attitudes:

1) The attitude of the English Government towards the artist. It is seen in the training of the art student at immense public expense with no public work or gain to follow. A few students may, if they

choose, become mechanical art masters and mistresses. The majority must go forth to increase the thousands of artists who have nothing before them but destitution and idleness for their skilled hands. Who, moreover, are without an organization to make known and widely understood their desperate case, and to project them.

2) The attitude of the artist towards life, especially social and industrial life. The chief characteristics of most English artists, as yet, especially those which especially distinguish them from the Soviet artists, are too well known to need description here. They have no civic or social consciousness. They are not citizens. They are bohemian emotionals and intellectuals, independents, above class and detached from the broad stream of social life. The instinct of low acquisitiveness and the fossilized sentiment of love of property rule England as of yore. It has increased and strengthened the new myths and superstitions of the Financial and High Finance Age. It has deified money. It has popularized the mad game of buying and selling Money for Money's sake. It has tied money hunters to the wheel of chance more securely than ever. And the artists? They are money slaves. They are the instruments of the big money makers. They fall in love with wonderfully pretty bits of nature, with pretty bits of household and street furnishings. They are in love with their ability to draw and use color in a pretty non-social way. All but a few who constitute themselves the hierarchy or autocracy of the art world and look down upon their fellow artists.

3) The attitude of the Business Man towards Art and the artist. The English business man's chief characteristics are also well known. Today he is the outcome of the Age of High Finance. He is solely concerned with the great traffic in money. He sees everything human and otherwise in the light of money. Goods are an investment, so are human beings no matter what their mind or status may be. In view of what the Millionaire Stunt Press does to foster the love and greed of money in the public mind, he has an easy task in making victims. He has no use for Art and the artists unless they appear as sound investments, as ideas with money in them. He is willing to inspect Government systems for moulding art workers, but if they have not a money look, he simply buttons up his pockets and returns home where he proceeds to mould his own staff of "art and industry" slaves—art and technical workers who are fully acquainted with the conditions of design and workmanship in relation to the raw materials and markets that must fill his pockets. Having done this he contracts to supply the Government departments with "Art" goods. The employment of the State made artist or the instinctive selfmade artist, and the education and improvement of public taste, do not interest him unless they mean solid wealth, in which case he buys up the one and the means to the other lock, stock and barrel. The truth is, that with few exceptions the average English business men have no "Art" in them, and are almost devoid of taste. The business man's whole dependence in production therefore, is placed on those who can be trusted to put trade and profit first. One employe who can turn out highly profitable commodities is worth to him a thousand who are capable of throwing off only art wares that make art lovers happy but do not SELL. This attitude towards the production of cheap and tawdry goods, and the buying up wholesale of profit making freakish designs capable of frightening little children to death, is no good to the mass of unemployed artists and does not make for the desired union of Life and Industry and Art.

HUNTLY CARTER

London, England

Revolutionary Literature for the Young

Where is our revolutionary literature for children? Even in the Soviet Union (where I write these lines) editors, publishers, and booksellers, are asking the same question. Even here, where the cultural needs of youth are catered to as never before in human history, there is a shortage of one thing —books which breathe the authentic spirit of the new world.

In capitalist countries the situation is, naturally still worse. Whereas in Britain, for example, even the bourgeois firms will publish quantities of revolutionary works for adults, their children's lists remain little changed from those of half a century ago. The parent can buy as much "subversive" literature as he can pay for, but he will find it hard indeed to corrupt his children in the same way.

An analysis of the stories read by the modern British boy reveals the following main types, each bearing the clear impress of bourgeois ideology:

(1) *Adventure* in the wild places of the earth, usually involving a considerable massacre of "natives." These stories are full of colour prejudice, notably against the brown and yellow races, and "dagoes," while there is corresponding glorification of the "Britisher."

(2) *War*—the last and the next, both given a romantic halo. The future-war group of stories exploit the boy's natural interest in aviation and science. The favourite enemy is the Soviet Union (just as prior to 1914 it was always Germany).

(3) *Mystery.* Apart from crime stories (whose popularity is not without signifi-

cance), there is the Secret Service story, in which the position formerly occupied by the German spy is now taken by the bearded and sinister members of the G. P. U. who are plotting the destruction of the world.

(4) *Historical* (less popular nowadays, because still written in the outmoded "cloak-and-sword" style). These are aristocratic in sympathy, and any hero of humble rank usually ends up with a dukedom or its equivalent.

(5) *School stories* invariably depict the upper-class boarding school—as it was fifty years ago. In the cheapeat "comic" or novelette which reaches the children of the workers, schoolboys are depicted in the uniforms of Eton and Harrow. Never by any chance does a tale tell of the elementary schools which the readers themselves attend.

This is a fair analysis of juvenile literature in Britain. With obvious modifications, I imagine it would fit other capitalist countries. I do not believe boys are satisfied with it. When I taught, I heard occasional criticisms of books which were too ridiculously at variance with known facts and real life. But children will read anything rather than nothing. Until a new literature arises, they will continue to swallow this nauseating pottage of nationalism and class-prejudice. They will grow up the more ready tools of fascism, and their inbred prejudices will make them doubly hard to win to the workers' side.

What to Write

This we have to do, then. To build up, alongside the growing revolutionary literature of the adults, a corresponding body of literature for the young. It is very little good our famous writers turning their hands to it and saying: "All right, I'll dash off something for you." We must create our own juvenile writers, who choose this genre seriously as their special craft, and make a study of the technique with which they can successfully approach the child. Our editors and publishers (despite their hunger for material) must set their faces resolutely against anything which falls below a certain standard. And above all they must guard against the type of material which, while ideologically excellent, lacks the action and interest essential to the child's enjoyment—in short, the type of story some people would like a child to like, but not the kind he *will* like.

Luckily there is no shortage of themes ready to the pen, each brimming with picturesque action and drama. When I think of all the stories I myself should like to write, I see in my mind's eye a whole room lined with volumes! Human history waits to be rewritten, episode by episode. Let us make a start with Spartacus, the Peasants' Revolt, the French Revolution, the Paris Commune, the Mutiny at the Nore... Then the modern epics of Vienna, Asturias... Mystery stories? What about the underground activities in the Fascist countries? And the wreckers in the Soviet Union—why not a new type of detective hero, the G. P. U. "Bogey-man" himself as he really is? Adventure— we can find plenty in the tales of the Soviet pioneers, whether in the *Chelyushkin* among the ice-floes, or southwards among the Pamirs. Even school stories come within our field, for we can write of the schools as they are in capitalist countries, dramatising the fight for milk and boots, the struggle against Empire Day, and the like.

These are just a few ideas. I should like to develop each one myself, but life is too short.

Technique. I was tempted to say to myself, once, "Forget all about it. The thought that you are writing specially for children will make you self-conscious, and cause you to 'write down' to them." During my brief and inglorious career as a teacher (an invaluable experience for a juvenile writer, by the way) I learnt the fatal results of "talking down." It is the writer's greatest danger.

How to Write

So when I started, light-heartedly and almost accidentally, to write for boys, I made this rule-of-thumb: Write exactly as you would for grown men, except for the exclusion of sexual love.

Actually, of course, I soon found that I was instinctively developing a technique. I was keeping my vocabulary within bounds of length and familiarity; avoiding abstractions; maintaining a brisk interplay of dialogue and action, with a minimum of description; drawing simple, bold characters, without subtle mixtures of good and bad qualities (which confuse the sympathies of the young reader, however artistic they may be!); and maintaining interest by the good old method of transferring the hero from the frying-pan to the fire, and back, as often as it could be done in 45,000 words. There is nothing novel or revolutionary about this. The revolutionary element lies in the theme to which this well tried technique is applied.

In only two small ways did I strike out for myself. Believing that the dwindling popularity of the historical story is largely due to its theatrical-costumer's atmosphere, I sought to freshen the air with up-to-date and colloquial dialogue. In this connection we must remember how quickly children's colloquialisms change, and that the racy slang of our own schooldays is already antiquated. Therefore it is important to listen to the talk of the children round us, and check the authenticity of the dialogue we have written.

My second mild innovation—the staccato verbless sentences and the significant rows of dots which are sometimes so eloquent—I have decided, regretfully, to abandon. Readers have brought it to my notice that a child's book should be suitable for reading aloud— and an irregular style of this kind needs an expert adult reader. Similarly the child reading silently to himself is hampered unless the sentences conform to the grammatical rules he has been taught.

Writing for the younger child is another, and much more difficult, problem. How can we reconcile the natural desire for fantasy with the truths we wish to express? I am sure it can be done. There is an interesting pioneer example in *Martin's Annual,* published in England last winter, where, in a delightful story whose title I forget, T. H. Wintringham deftly blends the modern child's interest in machinery with his primitive love of fantasy—and gives the whole a class significance!

There is a strike on. A little boy falls asleep and dreams. All the motor-bicycles in the showroom come to life and talk (each in distinctive tones and with a character appropriate to its horse-power, make, etc.!), and eventually, starting their own engines, they rush off to play their part in the strike.

This, I fancy, is the type of thing we need. The point is, we need so much more.

Today I passed through the beautiful children's bookstore which has just been opened in Moscow. I saw the crowds of youthful customers eagerly lining the counters, or going away to the tables and chairs provided, to crouch over their spoils. And as I surveyed the still all-too-sparcely covered counters and shelves, I said to myself: "There is work here for plenty of us."

Moscow. USSR

GEOFFREY TREASE

(*British author of* Bows Against the Barons, Comrades for the Charter *and* The Unsleeping Sword)

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTES

CUBA

REGINO PEDROSO

Auto-Bio-Prologue
A Poet Now in Prison for His Political Activities

Name—Regino Pedroso.
Age—In what I have hoped, dreamt, lived, 100 years; as concerns the revelation of the realist truth, five years; as concerns pure biologic fatality, was born in 1898.

Place of birth—within a narrow political geographic concept. I was born in Union de Reyes, Matanzas province, Cuba. But I might say, more dialectically, that I was born in the world.

Race—human; pigmentation, black-yellow (without any other mixture).

Places of study—the shops, the fields, the factories and the sugar plantations.

Ideology—son of America. Born in a country politically and economically enslaved by Yankee Imperialism; classified by traditional concepts of bourgeois religion, philosophy and science as an individual of inferior race—Ethiopic-Asiatic—belonging, a proletarian, to the most oppressed and exploited class; what could my ideology be, with those three fatalities, geographic-historical, ethnical and social-economic? . . . That which comes from Marx, finds its synthesis in Lenin and today surges into the world with the International of Justice.

Objective and criticism—to contribute to the affirmation of a social lyricism in this young American land.

We believe in the excellence of art as the supreme manifestation of beauty, but we only understand and justify its utility and eternal reason when it tends to reflect and interpret the anguish, dreams, desires and disquiet of great masses of men.

This supposes, naturallly, an acute sensibility before life in the creative artist—and life is a tragedy!—a pupil open over the flesh of emotion, in order to look at the world and feel it; a maturity of thought realized in the heat of living and, finally, a definite return from the lands of dreams.

When the poet has come this far, he shall no longer feel the fresh coolness of immaterial things. His unedited song shall have coagulated into the cry made muscle, he shall no longer bring the pure voice of virgin gladness, and his pupils, now dilated by the horizons of the world, shall no longer reflect only landscapes of dead images. Before the spectacle seen, he shall have lived in himself his own spectacle, and when he sings he shall go inevitably through the same clamor, to the tragedy of men.

Then, if the feeling is deep and communicates a beauty of thought or the tremor of a new emotion, and if it succeeds in awakening a sentiment of social justice or human preoccupation, then is well worth the sacrifice of the pure voice and the simple mental game for the new expression, which is, now, a fire in men's souls and a call to their consciences.

But if art thus becomes politics, then we shall have to admit, without reservations, that a politics so arrived at is also, humanly, esthetic.

Auto-criticism—this book comes with me, or rather, I came with it under the tragic sign of our times. Like a dying dog which still barks at us of the past.

Nevertheless, we surge into the present under the imperative of living fully a new era, or else be strangled.

Had we come earlier, the songs and the landscape would have been other.

Perhaps, from yesteryear, beautiful constellations of words still glitter over the old, distant roads . . . .

It was dawn. I did not know my own voice, and I no longer even lived my own sorrow.

Later—in the sleepless inquietude of things—I asked myself many questions which have now found their answers. It is from that moment—not from the remote yesterday, but from the immediate yesterday, that several poems have found their way hither They belong to the work which I would have done five or six years ago. They are reflections of the esthetic-individualist conception of life and art which I then held.

I would have preferred that my present work appear separately, completely unchanged from my previous work. But this book marks fatally the rhythm of my life. And just as my life, although cut from yesterday's night by the light of a new day, has not ceased—biologically—to be itself, so this book drags behind it, although pared by the sickle of a blank page, and without other nexus than the flesh of a common binding, an idealist past. But I have wished to indicate here the process of inquietude—perhaps a trifle anarchist—which formerly lighted me the way.

I can say, then, that such are the bitter currents through which, almost naturally, I have reached these seas. They have, therefore, their full justification here.

But since that time life—that is to say, the felt reality, has become a shadow upon our hearts, although our eyes now see deeper than ever into the profound darkness. And now we sing what we see, what we live: the anguish which embitters our mouths, the anxiety of the morrow which inflames our pupils and, above all, this slave misery of today which cakes between our hands.

All the immense night violated by gestures and torn by cries . . . .

Proclaims: finally, once the man be known, and that, in my judgement, is the essential thing—no merchandise should pass through the customs houses of the future unless the traveler be scrupulously identified—so much fraud can cover a personality! I believe that I have the right, more so than anyone else, to introduce my book.

I shall declare, then, that I come from the *Proletariat,* and here I am with the future of this baggage of leaves . . . .

But with the inquietude with which an impatient traveler might say to the inspector who scrutinizes his bags: trinkets, cigarettes, clean linen and so forth, upon reaching this frontier of the public, I shall briefly explain, perhaps a little nervous at the prospect of an examination, but sincerely convinced that I carry neither opium nor contraband opportunism: *We,* poems.

Havana, Cuba

BRAZIL

JORGE AMADO

Jorge Amado, the son of peasant parents, was born in the city of Ilheos, the State of Bahia, Brazil, in August, 1912. He passed his infancy on the cocoa plantations. He began his studies in San Salvador, capital of the State of Bahia, where he worked in a printing shop and managed reviews. In 1930 he went to Rio de Janeiro to study at the university and in 1931 he published his first novel *The Land of Carnival,* a book of satire, portraying the inquietude of the Brazilian youth of that period.

Returning to the cocoa plantations of Ilbers, he published in 1933 the novel *Cocoa,* a document of the life of the peasants on the cocoa plantations, exploited by the great plantation owners. The edition of the book was seized by the police of Rio de Janeiro, and when its circulation was permitted the edition was rapidly exhausted.

In 1934 Jorge Amado published *Sweat,* a novel dealing with the condition of the workers in the State of Bahia. This novel was translated into English.

Jorge Amado has directed and worked on the editorial staff of several cultural reviews in Rio de Janeiro. At the present time he is working on a novel *Jubialia,* dealing with the situation of the Negro race in Brazil.

URUGUAY

ILDEFONSO PEREDA VALDES

Born in Tacuarembo (Republic of Uruguay) in 1898. Commenced his literary career in 1920 with the review *The New,* a vanguard review which introduced to Montevideo the latest French schools: creationism, cubism and the Spanish Ultraist school. Then collaborated on the Spanish review *Ultra,* in which Gerardo Diego, Eugenio Montes and other contemporary Spanish poets first appeared.

Since then he has published *The Illuminated House*—poems—1920, *The Book of a Girl Collegian*—1925, *The Archer*—literary criticism—1925, *The Guitar of the Blacks*—poems—Buenos Aires—1927, *Cing poemes Negres*—verses translated into French, *The Cross of the South*—1927, *Anthology of Modern Uruguayan Poetry*—Buenos Aires—1927, *The Black Race*—poetry of the blacks, *African songs*—Afro-Montevidean Song Book—1929, *Chaplin's Dream*—stories—1930, *Music and Steel*— poetry—1931.

Since 1932 he has dedicated himself to the essay and to revolutionary poetry. He dates this evolution from his disaffiliation with the Socialist Party. Since then he has worked in the International Red Aid as defense attorney, presides on the Anti-War Committee of Montevideo and is an active member of the Confederation of Intellectual Workers—being one of its founders—and editor of *Movement.*

Has published *The Intellectuals and the War*—and has ready for publication *October 25th*—revolutionary poetry. This year the publishing house "Friends of the Rio Plata Book" will publish his work, *I Also Am America,* a series of studies on the black race .

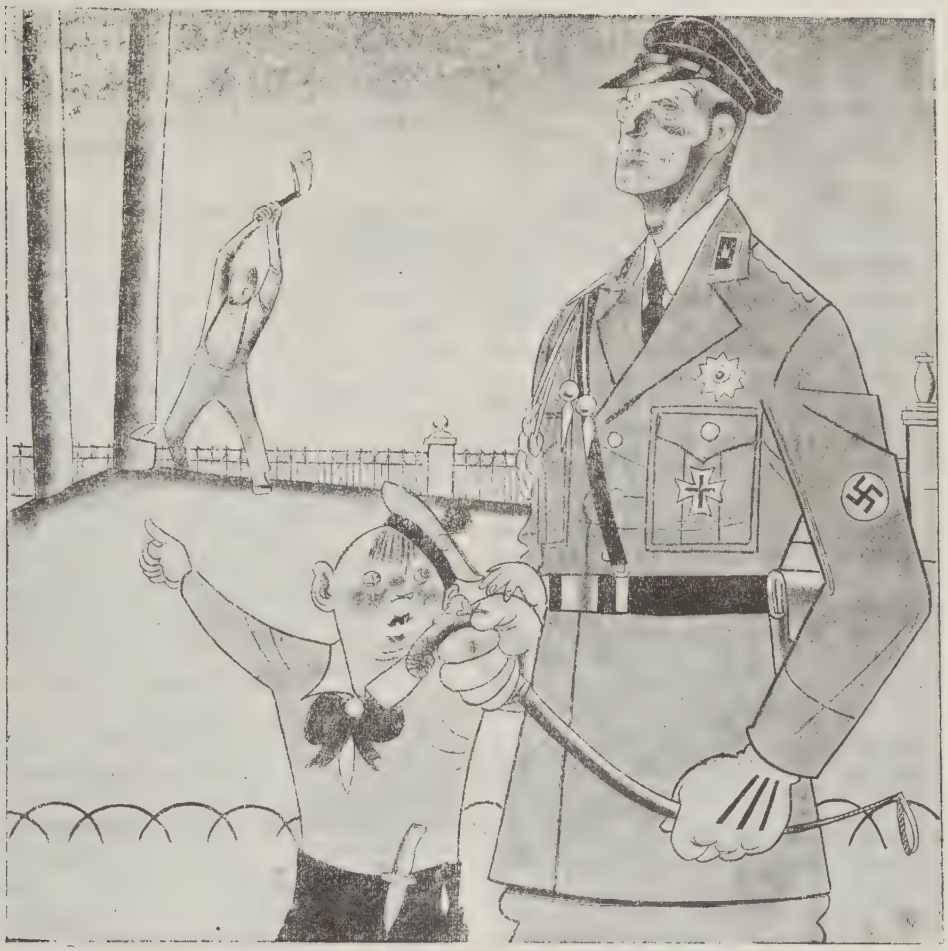
Pereda Valdes is professor of Castillian language and literature at the University of Montevideo and lectures on the Marxist Interpretation of Literature at the Popular University—the only workers university of Uruguay.

FRANCE

VICTOR MARGUERITE

Victor Marguerite, honorary chairman of the "Société des gens de lettres" (Society of Literary Men), was born in Blida, December 1, 1866.

After a brilliant completion of the Lycee Henri IV (Laureate in the competition) and the publication of books of verse, he entered military service in the Spahis (French Colonial Troops in Algiers), later transferred to the First African Rifle Corps, which was at one time commanded by his father, the hero of Sedan, and in 1891 entered the Seamur Cavalry school. In 1896 Marguerite resigned with the rank of a liutenant of dragoons and dedicated himself entirely to literature.



At the Concentration Camp: "Papa, are axes also used to cut wood? I tnought they were only for cutting off heads" — A cartoon by the Soviet artist U. GANF

In collaboration with his brother Paul he wrote twenty novels, among them *The Disaster, The Commune, New Women, The Prism* and others.

In 1905 Marguerite was decorated with the Order of the Honorary Legion and elected chairman of the "Société des gens de lettres" (1905-1907).

In 1906 he separated from his brother, began to work independently, and attained world fame with his novels *The Prostitute, Young Women, Gold* and others.

Victor Marguerite is a journalist. Since 1896 he has written for the most outstanding French journals, battling for social reform, and writes weekly literary-critical feuilletons.

Marguerite is a dramatist whose plays are presented at the Comedie Française, The Odeon, The Parisian Theatre and elsewhere.

The genius of this writer, who has been subjected to the cruelest criticism, is now devoted entirely to the struggle against war.

A friend of Soviet ideas and the immense constructive activity of the Soviet Union, Victor Marguerite recently became a member of the Association of French Revolutionary Writers and Artists.

CHRONICLE

FRANCE

A Renaissance of the Short Story

The problem of the state and development of the long novel, which has been rather wittily dubbed the "novelriver," and, in this connection, that of the passing of the short story, is now the subject of heated dispute in France.

The Parisian publishing firm *Nouvelle Revue Française,* with the aim of encouraging this genre, has promised to publish a series of model short stories, with the extremely optimistic heading: "The Renaissance of the short story." Paul Morand, author of the celebrated *Open All Night,* has been invited to edit the series. It is proposed to include the following stories, 1)*The Sphinx* and other of Poe's horror stories, 2) Charles Bredain's *Resplendin,* 3) Joseph Conrad's *Folk,* 4) Drieux La Rochelles' *The Dairy of a Mistaken Man* and others.

Recently the monthly journal *Revue des Vivants* published an article by Jean Prevost, entitled "A Renaissance of the Short Story," which was devoted to this question. Below we give a translation of this article.

"'A Renaissance of the Short Story,' thus Paul Morand, whose success is based on the stories in *Open All Night,* and who wishes to resurrect the genre. In a foreword written by Morand to the unpublished short stories of Edgar Allan Poe he recalls its laws: the short story is the result of painstaking work, and not of hurried, rough drafts, to a much greater degree than the novel it requires finish and perfection.

"But why, in view of Morand's own success, is the short story so obviously on its death bed? The explanation is to be found, above all, in material conditions. An idea for a novel pops into a writer's mind. But the matter stops there. The 'novel' reposes in a drawer, for the author of course needs money and so he carves a short story out of this material. In the happy days of the 'Editions de Luxe,' naive publishers used to order stories from all well known authors, with the intention of publishing them in the form of attractive little books. Since the order was paid for in advance, the author did not give himself great pains, and usually submitted his weakest things. The public finally grew tired of reading bad books and the 'Editions de Luxe' passed from the scene. In the meantime the novel continued to flourish and many authors began to think: 'Why should I waste an idea, a subject and characters on a simple short story when it can all be used for a novel?' Now we've come to the very root of the matter. Contemporary literary technique opens up splendid vistas before the long-winded writer. How distant from us are the childish ideologies: the sound imitations, the exclamation marks of old Alexandre Dumas! Today any writer can run on for a hundred lines to describe his reflections as, let's say, he ascends in an elevator. Proust, and especially Joyce, have given us, together with their impressive masterpieces, a horrible example; they have created, through their splendid psychological studies, a peculiar sort of rhetoric waterlogged with psychology. The novel has changed into the novel-river, while the short story has become the novel.

"To this state of affairs the public's want of culture has also contributed. Now that no one understands the meaning of words any longer, no less than three metaphors are required to make each word significant. Consequently one and all write voluminously, considering it necessary to repeat the same phrase six times in order to be sure that it reaches the reader. The true model of contemporary style is the wordy newspaper advertisement.

"If the short story should, however, be resurrected, it would do away with all existing literary principles, for the short story, in which each circumstance has significance, demands that the author select from life only that which is required by the given theme and that means that each sentence must be in its proper place; that each word must be weighed. Then it will become as difficult to write a prosaic work as a prosaic poem."

A New Book by Vaillant-Couturier

Of late a regular feature in *l'Humanité* has been a questionnaire conducted by Vaillant-Couturier among French working youth. The questionnaire, entitled *The Misfortune of Being Young,* found wide response among all layers of the working youth. Hundreds of agitated and moving letters came in answer. Now these letters, brought together and

given literary form, have been issued as a separate book.

J. Freville writes: "This book is something more and better, than literature. It is life itself, life from day to day, seized in its very essence, the actual life of millions of human beings condemned by bourgeois society to inaction, degeneration and hunger. All these workers, clerks, peasants, artists, students, technicians who have written their answers to Vaillant-Couturier merge their voices into the single cry of a class which suffers, hungers, strains towards the dawn of revolt and battle. This book is a unique document, a remarkable example of revolutionary literature, indicating what the literature of tomorrow may be."

Further on Freville comments enthusiastically on the authors' vivacious, pure and simple language, on their sparkling irony and wrath, directed against the capitalist system. In conclusion, Freville contrasts the fate of the worker in the capitalist state and in the USSR. By way of illustration he gives extracts from the book *Those Who Built Stalingrad,* recently published, presenting the epic of socialist construction and the joyful life of millions of workers in the USSR.

"Your Enthusiasm is Great"

The young French writer, Paul Terrase, writes to the IURW:

"I am not writing to you in regards to my literary efforts, but only in order to share my feelings with someone in the great land where all mourn for the loss of the giant plane.

"I never saw this great aeroplane, but in the paper there was a photograph of the 'Maxim Gorki' over the Red Square, escorted by two planes of the ordinary type. Looking at it, I could imagine the masses of grief-stricken people, all those who felt the dark shadow fallen upon your land. Like all of you, I want to overcome in myself this momentary weakness, for I believe that your enthusiasm is so great that you will be able to find men to take the place of the dead pilots and engineers, and to build other planes in place of that which was destroyed."

"May My Joy Remain"

In his last letter to the editor of *International Literature* Jean Giono writes:

"I am sending you my new novel *May My Joy Remain.* This is the last book of a series of panic dramas. Now I shall begin the Symphony of Labor. I shall call the first volume *Choral for a Mountain Clan.* A socialist exile, hunted by the police, finds shelter in the mountains. A mountain flood destroys all the meadow land. The only salvation for the dwellers in the plain is to move to the heights. There is pasture land on the sides of a high mountain, but the cattle cannot make its way there. The exile, who is a navvy by profession, suggests the construction of a road which would lead to the pasture. From all this you will understand how the action develops further."

Recalling with enthusiasm his conversations with comrades who had visited the Soviet Union, Giono writes:

"In the end we shall conquer. Of that there can be no doubt. My task is to bring to men the assurance of victory and the urge to attain it. And that is what I do.

"At the present time I am studying the addresses delivered at the Second Plenum of the Union of Soviet Writers. In his address Maxim Gorki said all that should be said."

The Time of Scorn

The publishing house N. R. F. has issued Andre Malraux's new book, *The Time of Scorn.*

On this occasion the gifted writer has chosen for the background of his new novel the night and horror of the Third Empire, unrolling a staggering picture of human existence in the fascist torture chambers and concentration camps, shut off from the outer world by wire entanglements and inexpressible human sufferings.

The hero, Hans Kasner, is a German communist who has been arrested and enclosed in one of the stone cages of Moabid Prison. The National Socialists wish to identify the prisoner. For them the communist Kasner is a living legend, one of their most irreconcilable and dangerous opponents. Kasner understands that a single false move, a word uttered in his sleep or while awake may betray him to the fascist hangmen. And, clenching his teeth, he passes through all seven circles of this new hell, each day subjected to refined tortures and mockery.

Although, in a foreword to the book, Malraux writes that his principal aim has been to portray Kasner and his conception of the meaning of life and only in a lesser degree to reveal the situation in the German concentration camps, his book is a passionate accusatory document which will make hundreds of thousands of hearts beat faster.

SPAIN

Ramon J. Sender's New Play Secret

Ramon J. Sender, who has written extensively on questions of dramaturgy and the film, has now completed his first play.

Manuel Domingo Benavides, Spanish novelist, a part of whose latest book appears in this issue

(It will appear in a forthcoming issue of *International Literature.)* Its subject is the cross examination of two workers—members of an underground organization—in a Barcelona prison by General Galofen. One of the two men, put to torture, is almost ready to reveal the "secret store of arms," indispensable for the strike which is in preparation. The other worker, noticing the condition of his comrade, agrees to tell the general all, on the condition that he will be given the opportunity to flee to America and that his comrade, who might prove an inconvenient witness, be put out of the way. The general, overjoyed, gives the order to "arrange the flight" of the other worker, i.e. to kill him in the prison yard. The order is carried out. Assured of the death of the man who he is convinced might have revealed the secret, the arrested worker, turning to the general, says: "Now you can shoot me also. Only we two—he and I—knew the secret." The play ends as the electric lights on the stage go out—a sign that the strike has begun in the city.

Written in a very forceful but simple language, Sender's play indicates his great talent for the theatre. His *Secret* is full of the genuine pathos of the revolutionary struggle, of revolutionary actuality. We can say with assurance that Sender's play is the best that has been written of late by Spanish writers for the revolutionary theatre. For Sender himself this new play is a great step forward.

Sender sent this play to the IURW accompanied by a letter in which he tells of his financial difficulties, resulting from the fact that not a single Spanish publishing house will issue his book. "The bourgeoisie is celebrating its short lived triumph," writes Sender, "our life in this country is becoming unendurable. I am considering emigrating with my family to South America, where I shall perhaps be able to enjoy the one possession of my life—independence."

Adding that he had begun to work upon a new play dealing with the murder of workers in the village of Casas-Viejas, Sender concludes his letter with the declaration that his position remains as before, that of an active fighter against fascism and war.

We May Not Shrink Before Sacrifice

Ramon J. Sender writes to the editor of *International Literature*:

"I am very glad that you liked my *Secret.* If I had one quiet minute at my disposal, I would write a number of little one-act plays, similar to *Secret.* I already have the rough drafts. Just the same, some day I'll write them, although here it is impossible to stage them, while it would be extremely difficult to publish them. From time to time I shall send them to your journal. Furthermore, as soon as (I enclose this in parentheses) I shall again be able to devote myself to the luxury of 'writing,' I shall send you my autobiography, which you requested in your last letter.

"I am extremely pleased that you so deeply felt the 'secret music' of my little play. And in fact we may not shrink before sacrifice, if we wish that tomorrow there may arise a humanity free from the very necessity of sacrifice. Here, among us, these words have full dramatic actuality. Fortunately, almost all understand them."

"I Feel Your Grief"

The IURW has received a letter from the Spanish writer Manuel Benavides, author of the book *The Last Pirate in the Mediterannean* (in this issue) in which he writes:

"At the very minute in which I was leaving my home to attend the showing of the news reel of the May Day celebrations in

Egon Erwin Kisch famous German revolutionary writer, and Katherine Susannah Prichard, Australian novelist, together with two representatives of the Friends of the Soviet Union. Photo taken on Kisch s visit to Australia when he was arrested and had his leg broken in his attempt to land despite the prohibition of the Australian authorities

the Soviet Union, the paper brought the news of the catastrophe to the 'Maxim Gorki.'

"I immediately remembered all of you, my comrades, those whom I know and those with whom I am not as yet acquainted. I lived the grandiose parade of the working masses on the screen. I saw Comrade Stalin's gesture, when, lifting his head to the Moscow sky, he followed with radiant eyes the flight of the 'Maxim Gorki' preceded by squadrons of planes. Together with you I feel your grief. I cannot find words to tell you how deeply I am touched by the decision of your leaders to answer the blow of fate by the construction of three giant planes.

"My letter pursues no other aims, and it seems to me that I have nothing to add."

GERMANY

Beethoven and the Premonitions of Herr Heiss

The *Pariser Tageblatt* recently carried a note that the publishing firm Lutolfa in Braunshweig had published Alfred Heiss' book on Beethoven.

The foreword to this, apparently, inimitable work declares: "Not a single student of music, except Heiss, has succeeded in penetrating Beethoven's creative secrets and tracing them to their very depths. His discovery is a true key, without which the comprehension of Beethoven is unthinkable. It was not today, but thirteen years ago that Heiss discovered in Beethoven, and specifically in his *Heroic Symphony,* a premonition of the appearance af the People's Chancellor Adolph Hitler."

It is very difficult for us to comment on this "valuable" piece of information, which we take from the foreword to Herr Heiss' book. The point is that the "clairvoyance" of this talented "art specialist" properly belongs in the field of spiritualist seances, table tappings, fortune telling with coffee grounds, black goats and similar deviltry.

It remains for us to hope that in his succeeding treatises Herr Heiss will continue to amaze the world with his remarkable insight. It may be that listening attentively to Wagner's *The Death of the Gods* some fifteen or twenty years ago, Herr Heiss already sensed that certain gentlemen in the National Socialist Party would rudely slit the throats of other gentlemen in the same party, and while in Shumann's lyrical motives, which Heiss heard in the cradle, he foresaw the peaceful, joyful life of the German people after the announcement of general military conscription. In any case, his work, together with the publishers' foreword, gives an exceedingly vivid picture of the artistic heights which the brown bards have attained.

Title page of the new book of political cartoons by Jacob Burck, American artist, whose work has appeared in recent issues of International Literature

Black Lists

The *Pariser Tageblatt* advises that the head of the imperial chamber of literature has now defined more exactly his first decree concerning literary censorship. In the future the chamber will issue a special list of books which are "dangerous to National Socialist culture." The distribution of these books, either for sale or in libraries will be strictly forbidden.

Apparently the pillars of German culture are not satisfied with the first "selection" of "anti-cultural books." Apparently it is recognized that the flames of gigantic bonfires, which devoured the most valuable productions of human genius, do not constitute a sufficiently strict filter. Now is to come prolonged tedious work—the study of the entire book production of the Third Empire. It will be necessary to make a careful study of each book in order to determine with microscopic accuracy to which lists it should be assigned—the "black," or the "gray," providing for the removal of books from the windows of bookstores and guarding youngsters of up to 18 against their pernicious influence. It would be extremely interesting to know what books will not enter into these lists and how the Imperial Chamber proposes to act in regard to the books of "unified" authors! In all likelihood special "brown" lists will be issued.

POLAND

The Poor Don't Buy Books

The Polish newspaper *Kurier Poranny* published an article in which a number of prominent figures gave their opinions as to the causes of the collapse of the Polish book market.

In the opinion of Professor Krzirzanowski the high price of books has contributed to the fall in demand. The director of a large publishing firm and chairman of the Polish Society of Publishers, Doctor Piontek, states that in spite of the fact that books are expensive, nevertheless in the last two years 117 publishing houses have gone bankrupt. Two publishers have committed suicide.

Books are commonly issued in editions of from 1,000 to 3,000 copies. "An edition of 5,000 copies," declares the newspaper, "is considered a great achievement. But the demand for books and the state of the market does not only depend upon the prices fixed by the publishing house, for the significance of the book in society lies above all in that it is a reflection of the participation of the broad working masses in the cultural life of the land. If the masses find themselves in the extremes of poverty and are thus deprived of the possibility of participating in the solution of the problems which are bound with their fate; if the unemployed, for whom the slightest expenditure on books is unthinkable, are today counted in the millions, then the book vegetates in a narrow circle of the privileged; it assumes the role of a plaything and becomes an embellishment of emptiness and indolence." "In view of the situation," concludes the paper, "even the lowest prices cannot effect and increase the number of readers."

About Soviet Dance

The *Kurier Poranny* has published an article by Ostrovski-Naumof, devoted to the art of the dance in the USSR. The author of the article pays particular note to the ballet *The Flames of Paris* and the ballet of the "National Republics," whose representatives will participate in the International Dance Festival to be held in London.

"Small wonder," writes Ostrovski-Naumof, "that a country whose system has a socialist character should display an ever growing interest in the folklore of the individual sections of this great land." The author believes, on the basis of the responses and publications which he has received that the dance in the USSR is developing along two lines; 1) the reproduction and restoration of

the traditions of the ballet and 2) the cultivation of the national folk dance as an inexhaustible source of new artistic inspirations.

The newspaper *Kurier Literatsko Naukovi* has published a number of articles by the Polish regisseur, V. Dobrowolski, who in the summer of 1934 visited the theatres of Moscow, Leningrad, Kharkov and Tiflis. Dobrowolski gives a favorable judgement on the great number of performances which he saw, and concludes with the following words: "Only there did I feel with full force the strength and meaning of the theatre as the most significant art for the masses."

Poles on Soviet Literature

Two volumes of Panfyorov's novel *Brusski* have come out in a Polish translation by Kasimir Maliaewski. The *Kurier Poranny* which gives this information, adds that the book enjoys great popularity in the USSR and that two million copies of the work have been published.

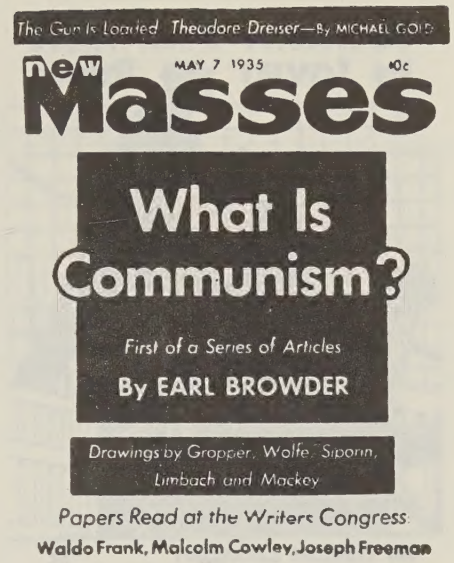
In answer to a questionnaire to the representatives of literature, art and science on the question "What was the most interesting book which you read in 1934?" two Polish writers, Yuli Woloshinowski and Ludwig Wolski, named Sholokhov's *The Quiet Don* and *The Soil Upturned.*

Gazeta Polska has printed a review of A. Tolstoi's novel *Peter the Great.* Giving a short summary of its contents, the reviewer writes: "The continuity of the action, the plasticity of the types, the detailed description of the life of the past, the freshness of the literary approach and the attractiveness of the theme prove that this book is one of the great achievements of Soviet literature."

In the newspaper *Kurier Literatsko Naukovi* appeared a review of Bruno Jasienski's book *Man Changes His Skin,* translated into Polish. Warning that the novel is issued in an abridged and mutilated form, the reviewer nevertheless considers it possible to state that it is written "in the spirit of the Five-Year Plan, while its style is extremely lucid, clear and full of interesting dialogue."

CZECHOSLOVAKIA

The Musical Research Seminar of Masaryk University in Bruno organized two evenings of Soviet music. The newspaper *Moravoke Slovo* notes that the audiences particularly enjoyed the music of the composers Myawkovski, M. Chemberdzhi and A. Dovedenko. The newspaper *Lidovi Novini* writes: "The evening of Soviet music gives a picture of the composers' feverish creative activity. The compositions of heretofore unknown composers exhibited the fresh melodies of



Cover of the New Masses, *leading American weekly, beginning a much discussed series of articles on Communism by Earl R. Browder, secretary of the American Communist Party*

peoples which only began to develop culturally under Soviet power."

A play based on Sholokhov's novel, *The Soil Upturned,* had its premiere at the Prague Municipal Theatre in April. It is planned to stage a number of Soviet plays, among them Kaverin's play, *The Abduction of Mr. Robinson.* The Prague Theatre plans to stage M. Gorki's play *Enemies* in the very near future.

The journal *Index* in Bruno speaks of the staging of Soviet plays in Czechoslovakian theatres. The Bruno Municipal Theatre is giving M. Bulgarov's *Zoikin's Apartment,* The Municipal Opera is staging Rimski-Korsakov's *The City of Kitezh,* Shkvartin's *A Strange Child* is running at the Bratislav State Theatre, while the Prague Theatre of Burian is presenting Gorki's *Yegor Bulichev.*

USSR

Alexander Korneichuk, a Soviet critic writes: "The government and the Communist Party create the necessary environment for the advancement of writers, and I want to read to you here a few lines from the decree of the Central Committee of the Communist Party characterizing the exceptional care given and attention paid to our young gifted writers. This decree makes it obligatory upon all the publishing houses of the Soviet Union Republics:

Cover of a new pamphlet issued by the American Friends of the Soviet Union

"'To gather and organize around themselves all the young and promising writers, help them raise the standard of their culture and general and specialized knowledge. To pay particular attention to the advancement of new authors from among the foremost workers, collective farm peasants and the engineering and technical personnel. To render assistance to the new authors, to arrange within the time limit of one month, at all publishing houses of the Soviet union special consultation bureaux and study rooms where the authors may get comments and advice with regard to all manuscripts handed in by them, regardless of whether they have been accepted or not.'

"This historical decree of the Central Committee of the Communist Party is being successfully carried out by all the publishing institutions. They are carrying on systematic work with the beginning authors. In three years the Moscow magazine publishing houses have printed the works of 800 young authors. The number published by central and local newspapers, provincial magazines and publishing houses is too large to be circulated. The beginning authors do not only write, they are also given the widest opportunities to publish their writings.

"In Moscow alone there are 120 literary circles. *The Peasant Newspaper* has organized 528 literary circles in the villages. These circles are conducted by writers and critics and the best among the students of these circles are transferred to higher seminars and from there to special courses given by the Board of the Union of Soviet Writers. These authors publish their first writings in the factory and collective farm papers. In Moscow alone there are more than 300 printed factory newspapers, and each has a separate literary column or even page.

The greatest Soviet writers conduct literary lectures for the young workers in which they share their experience in creative work with these workers. Stenographic reports are made of these lectures and they are sold in pamphlet form.

In Moscow, Leningrad and Kiev workers literary universities have been founded where the most talented young authors are studying and new cadres of Soviet writers are being raised.

Editor-in-Chief SERGEI DINAMOV

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