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Zapata, Mexican Peasant Hero

A. Korneichuk

Sinking of the Fleet

Two Scenes from a Soviet Play

ACT 1—SCENE 1

Night—Somewhere in the distance the roar of exploiting shells and the rattle of carts can be heard. The siren of the lighthouse moans in the harbour.

A large reception room in a general's house. Delegates from the ships are standing, listening attentively to the forceful speech of the chairman, who addresses himself principally to a group of five men, standing a little apart from the rest. The five are representatives from the destroyers—Spitfire, Relentless, Impetuous, Hadji-bey and Kertch.

Nagar: (Chairman of the meeting) You're against, you say? Whom are you waiting for, then? The shells are bursting nearer and nearer. The houses on the outskirts are in flames already. You can hear the commissary-carts with supplies careering down-hill in their panic, crashing headlong on the stones and being dashed to smithereens in the bay. Men and arms mixed up in a bloody mess, groaning, dying, and cursing you and your Commissar with their dying breath. It was he who led the sailors to the hills. It was he who led them into a trap. . . . *(The representative of the Hadji-bey springs forward at this point.)*

Representative of the Hadji-bey: Stop! One word more against the commissar, and though I'm a non-party delegate from the destroyer *Hadji-bey* I'll talk to you with my Mauser! *(Pulls out his revolver)*

(A number of gleaming revolvers can be seen as the delegates surround the chairman, glowering at the representative of the Hadji-bey)

Nagar: Look at this, boys! Here they are, the delegates of the warships, the revolutionaries of the Black Sea Fleet. Liberty, Revolution, Democracy! The Commissar has led your comrades to their death, and this fellow wants to shoot— whom does he want to shoot? Here, shoot then *(Strikes himself in the chest)* at the Revolution! Shoot, I say!

Rep. of the Hadji-bey: Aye, well boys, put up your guns! If the Revolution has a mug like that (pointing to Nagar) I can tell you that I, Mayak, will be ready and willing to spit on it—and clear out to the harbour to fish for gudgeon. *(He turns and goes out.)*

Nagar: Keep calm, comrades, we've got to finish. In a few more hours the fate of the Black Sea Fleet will be decided. There's a break in the front. What next? I'm asking you, delegates of the battleships. It's too late to retreat, and there's nowhere to retreat to anyhow. The only thing we can do now is to listen to Colonel Kobakha, the representative of the Ukrainian Rada. He's been waiting a whole hour for permission to speak. He wants to conclude an agreement with us. We are still being asked, mind you. *(A dusty messenger from the front runs in)*

Man from the Front: Orders from the Commissar at the front! *(Hands a sealed letter to Nagar)*

Rep. of the Kertch: What's going on at the front?

Man from the Front: The Commissar's ordered us to retreat. They're pressing us hard, those reptiles.

Nagar: (After reading the letter) The Commissar orders us to raise steam and evacuate, and then open fire from the battleships. *(To the man from the front)* Tell the Commissar we'll get everything ready. You can go.

Man from the Front: Right!

Nagar: If we don't decide the fate of the Black Sea Fleet now, tomorrow nobody will trouble to ask us. I appeal to you, delegates of the warships, to say plainly who is ready to listen to the colonel? Battleship *Liberty?*

Rep. of the Liberty: Ay, Ay Sir! Battleship *Liberty* is ready.

Nagar: Battleship *Free Russia?*

Rep. of Free Russia: Ay, Ay, sir! The battleship *Free Russia* is ready.

Nagar: Destroyer *Audacious?*

Rep. of Audacious: Ay, Ay, sir! Destroyer *Audacious* is ready.

Nagar: Destroyer *Resonant?*

Rep. of Resonant: Ay, Ay, sir! Destroyer *Resonant* is ready.

Nagar: Destroyer *Vigilant?*

Rep. of Vigilant: Ay, Ay, sir! Destroyer *Vigilant* is ready.

Nagar: Submarines?

Representatives: Ay, Ay, sir! Ready!

Nagar: Destroyer *Impetuous?*

Rep. of Impetuous: The *Impetuous* is ready to listen to the colonel from the Ukrainian Rada, but won't be answerable for his life.

Rep. of the Liberty: So you're against?

Rep. of Swift: Wait and see!

Nagar: I'm putting it further to the vote. Destroyer *Kertch?*

Rep. of the Kertch: We're against.

Rep. of the Free Russia: What, another against?

Nagar: In a few hours time you won't be asked. History will decide your fate.

Rep. of the Kertch: To hell with history! All aboard the battleships. All hands to the torpedo tubes, to the gun turrets! When the Commissar and Strijen and the committee men come back from the front, just let history in a German helmet show itself on the sky line and we'll give it hell!

Nagar: That'll do! We've been listening to this sort of thing from you all night. Who else is against?

Representatives: The *Spitfire* and the *Relentless* are against.

Nagar: Then it's only the minority that's against. Call the colonel *(two men go out)* I'm warning you that we've guaranteed him safety. Whoever dares to touch the colonel will answer with his life. *(The colonel enters)*

Rep. of the Relentless: Set a time limit.

Nagar: Sh—sh!

Colonel: I will be brief. Is this the time for talking when the blood of a nation is being spilt? Your task is to end the shedding of the blood of democracy. Friends! The Central Ukrainian Rada asks you to remember who you are. You are all Ukrainians, sons of the golden steppes, descendants of the glorious knights of the great Ukraine, who once ploughed the Black Sea in your canoes and won yourselves a name all over the world. And now—which of you will rise against history—your own history? I appeal to you to put an end to this struggle betwen two sections of the same democracy, between brothers. . . .

Rep. of the Spitfire: (interrupting) Brothers! Look, mates, here's our little

brother! Come to my arms, sissy, I want to hug you for joy! (*Goes up to the colonel with his arms flung wide)* I'll give you a hug that'll squeeze the very soul out of you. *(The colonel recoils)* Come to my arms, little one!

Reps. of the Liberty and the Free Russia spring forward and shield the colonel, crying: Stand back!

Rep. of Spitfire: Aye, they won't give us a chance to have a nice little heart to heart talk, brother! We'll surely meet again, though—Well, get on with the gabbing then.

Colonel: (altering his tone) I suggest that you should recognize the Protectorate of the Ukraine over Sevastopol, in which case I can guarantee full security of person to you and all democratic organizations. If the terms of the Ukrainian Democracy are accepted and the yellow and blue flag of my government is hoisted on the warships then no one will fight you. Not one German will advance on Sevastopol—I shall prevent them, I shall stem the German advance.

(*The representative of the Kertch goes silently up to the colonel, looks him up and down)*

Colonel: What do you want?

Rep. of the Kertch: I'm very interested in you. (*Stretches out a hand and feels the material in the colonel's coat)* This cloth now—it's of German manufacture, isn't it?

Colonel: This cloth (*glances down at himself mechanically)* it's foreign, of course. But what about it?

Rep. of the Kertch: It's clear enough.

Rep. of the Impetuous: Why does the Ukrainian Rada regard the Black Sea Fleet as its own? Who gave it the right to think that?

Colonel: In accordance with the Third Manifesto the Black Sea Fleet with Sevastopol, its base, belongs to the Ukraine.

Rep. of the Kertch: What garrison will be kept in Sevastopol and for what purpose?

Colonel: The garrison will consist entirely of Ukrainians and it will be held there in case of attack by Left elements and also to prevent any one party from usurping power. We are out for democracy.

Rep. of the Kertch: Frightened of the Bolsheviks, are you?

Rep. of the Impetuous: That's enough.

Rep. of the Spitfire: Weigh anchor!

Nagar: Sh—sh! Silence!

Colonel: (Sharply) Your Bolsheviks have been smashed to smithereens at the front. I am advising you to accept my suggestions at once without further discussion. In a few hours it will be too late, and the streets of Sevastopol will run with the blood of the democracy, the blood of our own brothers! Well, I have said all I had to say. I am allowing you two hours to think it over and give me an answer. That's all! *(He turns impressively and goes out)*

Rep. of the Impetuous: Is that an ultimatum? Get out! The traitor!

Rep. of the Kertch: Aha, so they spat in your faces, did they? Lick your chops now, you damned jelly fish!

Rep. of the Liberty: It's you who are spitting at us. That's enough now! Who do you think we are? We're Ukrainians too, and we've no reason to fight against our own folk.

Rep. of the Kertch: And who are we, I'd like to know? We're Ukrainians too, aren't we?

Nagar: Make up your minds, delegates. It's one of two ways you've got to take. One will take you to the last port left to us, Novorossiisk, which isn't a base, and has no coal, and where you'll only be able to put off death for a few days at most—and then what? . . . And the other way is for us to hoist the flag of the Ukrainian Rada on the ships and start negotiations with the German staff on an equal footing.

Rep. of Free Russia: The battleship *Free Russia* is ready to hoist the flag of the Ukrainian Council.

Rep. of Liberty: We'll join you.

Voices: So will we—and so will we. . . .

Nagar: Who else?

(There is a sudden clatter outside and the Man from the Front rushes in. His clothes are torn and he wears spurs)

Man from the Front: (Hardly able to draw his breath) The Front is broken through. The enemy is at Sevastopol already. The Commissar wants to know why the battleships are silent? Who's countermanded his orders? The Commissar wants to know what you're doing—the Commissar orders you to open fire. . . . *(a long pause follows)*

Nagar: Go back to you Commissar and tell him that the delegates of the squadron will decide everything this very minute. That's all, you can go.

Man from the Front: What shall I say to the Commissar? *(the representative of the* Impetuous *springs forward)*

Rep. of the Impetuous: So you're countermanding the Commissar's orders? Then tell the man the truth at once, you God damned liars, and stop trying to get around it!

Rep. of the Liberty: Tell the Commissar we're not going to obey his orders any longer. Full stop! We're going to hoist the yellow and blue flag. . . . Go and tell him that.

Man from the Front: I won't go. I can't, I can't tell the Commissar you've betrayed the Revolution. I can't. *(to the representative of the* Liberty) Go and tell him yourself. I'm not going back to the Commissar with that message—not for anything!

Rep. of the Impetuous: Get along now lad. You can tell the Commissar that if the battleships run up the yellow and blue the destroyer *Impetuous* will run up the black flag, and so will the *Spitfire* and the *Kertch.* And we'll roam the seas like the Flying Dutchman and force them to obey the Commissar's orders.

Rep. of the Liberty: We'll treat you to a broadside that'll be a lesson to you!

Rep. of the Impetuous: And we'll mine you and send you to the bottom. Follow me, boys, let's get to the torpedo tubes! Come on to the gun turrets. We'll give you hell! *(Goes out)*

Nagar: A fair wind to you! Go, if you want to! *(They all laugh)*

Voices: Go to hell! Get out! Weigh anchor!

(Catcalls, whistles and laughter. Suddenly from behind the columns, the Commissar appears, followed by the woman Oksana, *the ship's boy, a sailor with an accordion, and Red Guards armed with bombs, rifles and revolvers.* Gaidai *and* Oksana *support the wounded Commissar.)*

Commissar: Halt!

(The laughter suddenly ceases. They all turn in his direction and stand transfixed.)

Rep. of the Kertch: Commissar. . . . Commissar!

(*The Commissar sets aside* Gaidai's *and* Oksana's *supporting hands and staggers forward. He looks slowly around, striving to grasp what has happened.)*

Commissar: The front's broken. . . . To the ships with you all! And you, Nagar, you'll answer to me out at sea for this . . . you'll give me reasons for not sending help when you were told, for the battleship's silence while we out at the front were being. . . . Yes, you'll answer to me yet.

Nagar: At this meeting of the delegates a resolution's been passed to remain in the harbour, hoist the flag of the Ukrainian Rada and open negotiations with the German high command.

Commissar: What? You did that? *(a pause)* Who passed this resolution?

Nagar: They did—the delegates.

Commissar: I see the bo's'ns are here. What have you done?

Rep. of the Impetuous: We voted against it, Commissar. We're putting out to sea by ourselves. . . .

Nagar: We're not holding you back if you want to go. We never held anybody. Well, now the meeting of the delegates of the fleet is resumed.

Commissar: The meeting of the delegates is finished. You can all go.

Nagar: We've been elected by our ships and no one has the right to disperse us.

Gaidai: (Whipping out his revolver) Weigh anchor!) *(Fires into the air)* Traitors!

Red Guards: (Shouldering their arms) Come on now, get out of here, quick!

Gaidai: Quick march—if you're still fond of life! *(Turns to the commissar)* All clear, Comrade Commissar.

(The commissar sways. They support him) Commissar: (heavily) All aboard the ships.

Oksana: Hush, Artem! Not a word out of you, do you hear? You've started the blood flowing again.

Commissar: Let me sit down *(An armchair is pushed forward)* Come nearer. Ah . . . But it's hard. . . . *Kertch, Spitfire, Impetuous*—are you all here?

Reps. of the three destroyers: Ay, ay, comrade!

Commissar: Turn the torpedo tubes on the ships that run up the yellow and blue flag. Signal to them: "Disgrace and death to those who stay in the harbour." *(A pause)* But don't fire until I reach the flagship.

Reps of the destroyers: Ay, ay, Commissar! Destroyers *Kertch, Impetuous* and *Spitfire* are ready for the fight.

Commissar: (to Strijen) Off with you to the battleship *Liberty* to the stokers in the engine room. Give them my orders to get up steam without delay. The ships must put out to sea at once. Anyone aboard who raises any objection is to be shot and heaved overboard. *(He closes his eyes in agony)*

Strijen: Ay, ay, Comrade Commissar. *Goes toward the door, then suddenly halts and turns)*

Commissar: That's all, Vanya.

Strijen: Artem Maximovich—you . . . . I—

Commissar: It's all right, Vanya, lad, goodbye. Find out what the admiral and officers are up to . . . . Give the stokers my . . . .

Strijen: I'll tell them everything, don't worry. *(Goes over to Oksana)* There's horse and cart waiting outside. Make your way carefully . . . . to the flag ship.

Oksana: Alright, you'd better be going.

Commissar: And what about the admiral and the officers? Whose side are they on just now?

Gaidai: If the admiral goes against us, I'll take him over to the conning tower, myself, and shoot him.

Oksana: Anyone can shoot, even this kid *(pointing to the ship's boy)* That's easy enough. But who'll lead the squadron out to sea then? Who knows the chart of the mine field? Who'll deploy the squadron out at sea and prevent it being blown up by its own mines or by the German submarines? Have you thought of that?

Commissar: I'll go and see the admiral on the flagship in a minute. *(He attempts to rise, but cannot)* It's hard, comrades.... I'll just rest a couple of minutes. . . . My feet burn so and my hands—my whole body's afire. . . . Just a couple of minutes rest and then. . . . Just wait a couple of minutes, will you?

Ship's boy: Rest yourself, Uncle Artem, and then we'll be off to the ships and out to sea. I'm going to be a sailor, you know. Wait till I put on my sailor's togs and a revolver in my belt. . . . Then we'll smash the counter-revolution together. . . .

Commissar: Yes, yes, sonny, we'll be aboard the ships in a minute! We're retreating—Sevastopol's beaten—the last port—call up the wireless cabin.... Get in touch with Moscow. Hold Headquarters . . . storm the . . . storm.... There go the destroyers one after another!

Oksana: Artem!

Gaidai: You .. .

Commissar: Tell the ships... the Independence... are counter...

Gaidai: (softly) Ay, ay, Commissar!

Oksana: Carry him to the flagship at once.

Gaidai: But he's all on fire. *(Turns away abruptly)*

Commissar: I feel a bit easier now, comrades. . . . What are you all looking at me like that for eh? We'll come back here yet.... Now then, cheer up! Play the song about the stoker, lad. *(To the sailor with the accordion)*

(No one moves)

Commissar: Now then, look sharp. . . .

Gaidai: Play it for an old stoker, lad, the song about the stoker lost at sea.

The sailor unslings his accordion and plays, Gaida *sings softly:*

The billows are rolling out yonder,
Away on the boundless main.
We've a long way, mate to wander
Before we sail home again.
The fire in the stoke-hole's drawing bad,
The steam in the boiler's done.
And my stoking days are over, lad,
Before they've well begun.

Commissar: Get in touch with Moscow—Headquarters—orders.

Gaidai: (singing) Over screw and stern the billows roar
As they sweep away to the main
And the mother who weeps on the far-off shore,
Will ne'er see her son again.

(The sailors quietly pull off their caps as they stand around the dead Commissar. Strijen *comes silently out from behind a column. He takes the sit-*

uation in at a glance, and removes the cap heavily from his head. He passes it over his face, wiping away his tears.)

Strijen: (Controlling his emotion with difficulty) The admiral's refused to lead the squadron out to sea. . . .

(They all start, turn and stand transfixed. It grows dark.)

SCENE 2

(The rear-admiral's house)

Sub-Lieutenant: (Humming Lenski's aria from Eugene Onegin) Where, are you now, my golden days. . . . Ah, Lenski, Lenski! If you only knew how Knoris envies you—with an almost painful envy! To die of love so effectively that generations of fair ladies weep every evening over you at the close of the third act. I'm going to be shot too, but no one will weep tenderly over me. . . . Bos'n Kobsa, do you like this song? Have you ever heard it before?

Kobsa: Yes, sir, I think I have. In Kiev, a long while ago. . . . I'm very fond of songs, I can't help but be fond of them, sir. Our folk are all musical. And as for the theatre and dancing why, permit me to say, sir, there isn't a single Ukrainian in the world who hasn't been on the stage some time or another. We all go on the stage; every one of us has been an actor at one time. It's in our blood, you might say.

Sub-Lieutenant: And have you been an actor, too?

Kobsa: Yes, sir. And what an actor! More than once at school I acted in *Natalka Poltavka* or *Satan With the Barrel*—and when I'd come out on the stage in my thick coat and shout: "Hey, you Cossacks, from beyond the Rapids!"

Sub-Lieutenant: (sharply) Attention!

Kobsa: (Drawing up smartly and to attention) Yes, sir.

Sub-Lieutenant: You've got a voice that carries all over the deck!

Kobsa: Yes sir.

Sub-Lieutenant: (Taking out his cigarette case) Do you smoke?

Kabsa: Yes, sir.

Sub-Lieutenant: Here you are, then.

Kobsa: Thank you, sir. *(Lights his cigarette)*

Sub-Lieutenant: Where are the respected delegates?

Kobsa: Holding a meeting aboard the battleship.

Sub-Lieutenant: What, another meeting? Well, I suppose they'll go on meeting till the Commissar comes to scatter them. Idiots! They ought to be shot!

Kobsa: Let them hold their meetings. The battleship is on our side, sir. And early tomorrow morning the town will be occupied and then—that'll put the tin hat on it for them. Only we should lay mines around the harbour to prevent the destroyers from getting away.

Sub-Lieutenant: Just let them try it. One volley from the battleship and they'll sink like lead.

Kobsa: We've got to give the squadron to the Ukraine with all the destroyers intact and then we'll decide whom to send to the bottom.

Sub-Lieutenant: You're quite a politician, Kobsa. I mean it. You're a cunning fellow, like every little Russian.

Kobsa: Like every Ukrainian, sir. There are no "Little Russians" nowadays. We're speaking of the Ukraine, a rising power and of her government, the

Ukrainian Rada, which tomorrow will possess its own fleet and become the master of the Black Sea.

Sub-Lieutenant: The Ukraine will be the master of the Black sea? Well, you're lucky; tomorrow we'll raise your flag on the Flagship and Sub-Lieutenant Prince Knoris, an officer of His Imperial Majesty's fleet, will salute the yellow and blue flag of Bo's'n Kobsa. . . . We're living in a remarkable time, really, why, tomorrow you may even become a sub-lieutenant. . . .

Kobsa: Tomorrow Bo's'n Kobsa will be a full lieutenant.

Sub-Lieutenant: A lieutenant indeed? So Bo's'n Kobsa is actually dreaming of being a lieutenant. What impertinence! Attention! *(Boatswain draws himself up at attention)* Right turn! Quick march! *(Boatswain marches round the room while the officer looks at a magazine.)* Halt! *(Goes up to him)* Do you understand what you've just said, you mug?

Kobsa: The shells are coming nearer and nearer, sir. In a few hours Sevastopol will be occupied by our troops. Tomorrow Sub-Lieutenant Knoris will be Vice-Admiral of the Ukrainian Fleet.

Sub-Lieutenant: What? I'm to be vice-admiral? Stand at ease, Lieutenant Kobsa. Do you understand what you've just said . . . my friend?

Kobsa: Yes, it'll take place at daybreak. Some will go to the bottom while the others—the others will watch the yellow and blue flag being hoisted triumphantly on the mast of the flagship. At a sign from the vice-admiral the band will play and the salute of guns from the battleships will shake the very hills. It will be the first salute to the Ukrainian Rada.

Sub-Lieutenant: You're a regular poet, Lieutenant Kobsa.

Kobsa: At one time—in school, I used to write verses —that weren't too bad.

(Enter the Rear-Admiral Granatov, *Colonel* Kobakha *from the Ukrainian Rada and the captain of the flag ship)*

Captain: Knoris!

Sub-Lieutenant: Yes, sir!

Captain: Are the officers in the saloon?

Sub-Lieutenant: Yes, sir. *(Goes out)*

Admiral: And what are you doing here, bo's'n?

Colonel Kobakha: Bo's'n Kobsa is waiting for me.

Kobsa: Yes, sir. The sailors of the squadron have asked me to tell you, sir, that they're ready and willing to die for the Ukraine.

Colonel: Tell the sailors, bo's'n, that the Ukrainian Rada has always had implicit faith in the splendid patriotism of the Black Sea Fleet and that it will never forget its loyal sailors. You may tender the sailors the Government's warmest regards and gratitude.

Kobsa: Glad to be of service, sir! The sailors are ready and willing to die for the Ukraine if they're led by Rear-Admiral Granatov.

Admiral: (To the sub-lieutenant who enters at this moment) Knoris! A tot of whiskey for the bo's'n to drink my health!

(Knoris obeys. The boatswain stands holding it for a few seconds then grunts out "Hurrah" and tosses it off. He salutes and goes out.)

Colonel: (to the admiral) The sailors are with us, you see, Admiral, Whoever is against us, goes to the bottom tomorrow. We shall clean out the Fleet in a single day. Permit me to assure you more, Admiral, that my government is extremely gratified to accept your consent and will make your heroic action

known to the whole nation and reward it accordingly. My government and my people will welcome Rear-Admiral Granatov and you.

Captain: We are glad to be of service to the people of the south of our country—our great Russia.

Colonel: (Drily) You meant to say the people of the great Ukraine, I think?

Admiral: Yes, yes, of course.

(The colonel salutes and goes towards the door, escorted by the captain who stops him on the threshold)

Captain: Have you been in the Ukraine recently, Colonel?

Colonel: I was there just a fortnight ago.

Captain: Permit me to ask you a question—it concerns my private affairs: I have an estate not far from Poltava. It's been wrecked—rather, hasn't it? Do you happen to know?

Colonel: Let me assure you that everything will be restored to perfect order. It's a matter of honor with us.

Captain: Thank you, Colonel, thank you very much. I've always been a bit of a Ukrainophil. Please let your government know that I've always been fond of the Ukraine, especially around Poltava.

Colonel: With pleasure! *(Salutes and goes out, attended by the sub-lieutenant.)*

Admiral: Lieutenant, early tomorrow morning without fail, the destroyers must be taken out of the harbour and left in the roadsteads. The colonel promises a great deal, but what will General von Arksen say in the morning! I think, however, that the Colonel and his government are entirely dependent on general headquarters in Berlin.

Captain: Yes, sir.

(The sub-lieutenant enters)

Sub-Lieutenant: The officers are waiting, sir.

Admiral: Ask them to come in here. *(The sub-lieutenant goes out again)*

Admiral: Sub-Lieutenant Knoris must deliver a letter from me to General Krasnov today without fail. *(Enter the officers and the sub-lieutenant)*

Admiral: Are they all here?

Sub-Lieutenant: Yes sir. All except Lieutenant Korn from the *Kertch.*

Admiral: Has he been told?

Sub-Lieutenant: Yes, sir.

Admiral: Very strange. . . . Sit down, please. Have all the sentries outside the houses been checked?

Sub-Lieutenant: Yes, sir, all in order.

Admiral: I hope the situation is quite clear to all of you, gentlemen?

First officer: If we don't raise steam at once and put out to sea, the fleet may remain in the hands of the Ukrainian government, the Ukrainian Rada.

Second officer: We must get up steam at once—the German reconnoitering patrols are practically inside the town, they may seize the artillery ashore and close the harbour with a barrage of fire.

Third officer: And what next? We'll have to return to the last port on the Black Sea—in the name of what? For the sake of exactly what idea?

Fourth officer: You mean we should wait until the sailors from the Baltic arrive and teach our sailors to organize a sort of massacre of St. Bartholomew of their officers? And they'll tie rails to our feet to make sure we'll stand up like candles on the bottom of the sea.

Admiral: If this prospect appeals to any of you, you have my permission to get up steam. I should like you to tell me at once, please, which of you is

willing to put out to sea? *(Smiles)* I see that you all understand the situation perfectly; therefore I've changed the order to put out to sea. I'm answerable to Russia for you and the fleet. The Commissar and his gangsters may destroy us first and afterwards—when they are on the verge of destruction themselves —the fleet of our great country. The fleet will still be necessary. Therefore, tomorrow we shall hoist the yellow and blue flag of St. Andrew. Is this quite clear, gentlemen?

First officer: But suppose the destroyers put out to sea? They've got the Commissar and his committee men aboard. They may oblige us to go out to sea.

Admiral: Let them try to turn the torpedo tubes on us; we'll open fire on them from the battleships. In order to fight us they will have to leave the harbour, and I have given instructions for the outlet to be closed with mine nets. The mine field has been changed and no one can leave. Please listen attentively to the wireless message I've just received from the Ukrainian Rada in Kiev. *(Lieutenant Korn enters)*

Korn: Excuse me for being late, sir. I was delayed by the committee on the destroyer.

Admiral: What's happening on the destroyer, Lieutenant Korn?

Korn: They're preparing to leave. They're waiting for your orders, sir.

Admiral: I have already given orders. . . . *(a pause)* to close the harbour with mine nets.

Korn: Then we're not to put out to sea? What's happened sir?

Admiral: You are late, Lieutenant, so you'd better listen to this wireless message that's being sent in my name and yours. I'm sending it to Kiev now *(reads)* "Kiev, Ukrainian Rada, Brothers of the Ukrainian Rada! On April 20, 1918, the Sevastopol Fort and the section of the fleet stationed in the vicinity of Sevastopol, hoisted the yellow and blue Ukrainian flag. Awaiting orders. Regards. Rear-Admiral Granatov." [1]

Admiral: I hope you are all quite satisfied with the wording of this message.

Korn: So we aren't putting out to sea, then?

Admiral: As you can see, Lieutenant.

(A long pause)

Korn: I can see treachery, Admiral.

Admiral: Kindly remember, Lieutenant, that you're not abroad your destroyer in the presence of a gang of bandits in sailors' uniforms, but in the presence of the Rear-Admiral of the Black Sea Fleet. You seem to have forgotten that you're a mere parvenu among the officers of the Russian Navy. It's a great honor for you to be here at all, taking a share in our historical decisions. You seem to have forgotten how to behave in a manner befitting the rank of a naval officer. Attention! *(They all pull themselves together)*

Korn: I have never forgotten, sir, that I'm a parvenu here. I shall never forget that it's thanks to the war and you that Engineer Korn has had to obey your orders these four years. Unfortunately, sir, this is not the time, nor have I the opportunity to thank you. . . . Shells are bursting over the town already. The wounded men from the front are lying there and you've closed the outlet with mines, and locked them in so that the enemy will be able to shoot them down easily. But is this treachery, Admiral? No, this is much worse than treachery! We ought to put out to sea at once!

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[1] This is the actual text of a radiogram sent by Rear-Admiral Sablin to the Ukrainian Rada.

Admiral: It seems to me, Lieutenant, you ought to take off your sword at once and leave us.

(A pause)

Korn: (Looks at the officers and the admiral, then slowly unbuckles his sword) Take it, sir.

Sub-Lieutenant: (Pulling out his revolver and springing forward) Traitor, you want to betray us!

(All the officers rush forward and surround Korn)

Voices: Traitor! Shoot him! Shoot him!

Sub-Lieutenant; Put him against the wall! Put him against the wall!

Admiral: Halt! Attention! Not another word! What were you going to do, lynch him? What's all this about putting him against the wall? Is this a group of naval officers before us—or a Bolshevik committee? Shame on you,

Admiral: Take him into the yard and there—by the shed—very quietly without any noise *(a pause)* do what's necessary.

Georginov: Yes, sir.

(A pause)

Korn: So this is the end, Admiral?

Admiral: Go!

(Korn turns on his heel and moves toward the door. When he reaches it, shouts and shots are heard from outside. All halt thunderstruck.)

Admiral: Who's there?

(The chief of the guard runs in)

Chief of the guard: The sailors came, sir, and drove away the sentries. They're coming here, looking for you. . . .

(Noise increases)

Admiral: Keep them out! *(At this moment* Gaidai *and the armed sailors rush in. The officers retreat before them. There is a long pause. The sub-lieutenant tries to slip out by another door.* Gaidai *notices this.)*

Gaidai: Don't be in a hurry, Sub-Lieutenant. . . . The house is surrounded anyhow.

Sub-Lieutenant: (Bewildered) You're mistaken. I'm no coward . . . I . . .

Admiral: What do you want?

Gaidai: The squadron is waiting for the admiral's orders to open the harbour and put out to sea. We've come to escort you to headquarters, to the flagship.

Admiral: The squadron's not going out to sea.

Gaidai: Why?

Admiral: I've not received any orders to that effect from the center. Are you aware that, according to the Treaty of Brest, we have no right to put out to sea? To go out to sea will mean breaking the Treaty of Brest and exposing the Russian Republic to the attacks of the German troops. Moscow will not consent to this. Without instructions from headquarters I cannot put out to sea. I shall not permit a single German soldier to board the ships and I shall wait for instructions from Moscow. I am answerable to the Revolution for the fleet.

Gaidai: But there is an order out. . . .

Admiral: Show it to me.

Gaidai: (Searches for the order—then pulls out his revolver) Here it is! *(With their guns in their hands the sailors range themselves at his back like a wall.)* Admiral! The Bolshevik Committee asks you to lead the squadron out to sea immediately. Admiral! The Revolution asks this of you. . . . *(the sailors press forward).* For the last time we are asking you to give us a reply. In another minute it will be too late, Admiral. It will be too late, officers!

(A long pause)

Sub-Lieutenant: (In an alarmed tone) Admiral Granatov . . . Admiral . . . sir. . . . *(a pause)*

Admiral: (To the sub-lieutenant) Hold your tongue! *(To Gaidai)* Very well, I agree. Staff officers—all aboard the flagship!

Gaidai: (Drawing himself up and addressing the sailors) Attention! Dress! The Admiral of the Revolutionary Black Sea Squadron! *(The sailors draw up and present arms. The admiral looks at them in astonishment and raises his hand slowly in salute. The officers follow suit, and they pass slowly between the threatening ranks of sailors.)*

Gaidai: (After them) Left, left, left, gentlemen! *(To the sailors)* Step out, lads!

(Light fades)

Curtain.

Translated from the Russian by Anthony Wixley

Peter Quince

Revolt of the Damned

An American Short Story

He sat just so. An inch forward would slosh him over to the next bed; an inch backward would flounder him weakly into the sag of his own, his buttocks scraping the rough floor through the flour-sack, striped convict suit. It took less effort, when he sat up, to scratch his body with short, broken fingernails. In the nearby corner Genonie stood stripped against the wall. Aspen, another cracker, squirted his groin with a spray-gun. The air was fouled with kerosene .Jud wished he had the guts to get himself sprayed. But he shuddered at the thought of revealing his scrawny body to the hard eyes of the prisoners. He looked at his hands. Wedges of skin had been cruelly torn out of the soft palms. But it did not hurt. He was too tired to hurt, too tired to sleep, too tired, almost, to scratch. White and yellow specks of bloated lice crawled over him. Wherever the lice touched, the flesh quivered in little autonomous areas. Jud closed his fists into knots of repulsion. Then his fingers clawed out and retched viciously at his skin.

After a while he got stiffly to his feet and shuffled along the narrow aisle between the rows of broken beds. The four links between the shackles riveted to his ankles dragged the floor. He stopped before the sheep-herder's stove and leaned over to its warmth. Above him a single gasoline lantern, dangling from a beam, swayed irritably to the sharpening wind. Jud bent over and gently caressed his festering ankles. From a far corner of the barracks, where a group had gathered, Jud heard talking.

"You can't show me a criminal in the joint!" A voice called to Jud. "What are you in here for?"

"Ridin' the freights."

"Where are you heading for?" Jud shrugged his shoulders. "Looking for a job?"

"I don't know," said Jud wearily. "I guess so, but I don't know." He shuffled off, in his heavy laceless shoes, to gaze vacantly at the sheepherder's stove.

"Not a crime among us," the voice continued bitterly. The conversation subsided when One-eye Will, the guard, came to the double-barred doorway and peered in between the chinks that were large as the logs themselves.

Under muzzles of shotguns, the next morning, they were herded into the grub shack. In small dirty cans which once had held tomato or vegetable soup, they were passed weak, tinny coffee. Jud warmed his swollen finger-joints against the can, then carefully lifted it to his mouth. The edges, which had been opened with cleavers, were sharp as razors. Jud ate his heavy tasteless cornbread with the dull apathy of the stunned. It was still dark when the prisoners were counted out. The ground lurched up and hit Jud in the face. A bit of stubble had caught at the links between his feet. The short, sharp exhalations of breath that passed for laughter, prodded his eardrums as from a distance. He rose slowly, like an animal broken of spirit but not dead as to flesh. The prisoners, with Jud wedged between Heavy and Pretty Boy, got seated on the flat, ten-ton truck, and as they rolled out to the job hands cupped themselves gratefully about the brownpaper cigarettes that had

been lighted. A road was being raised four or five feet above the level of the surrounding soggy countryside.

The majority of the convicts were ranged in the bottoms. Under the watchful eyes of the guards they bit lumps of heavy red clay from the ground and hurled it over the surveyor's line where a chosen few raked and graded. Harry, who was digging next to Jud, muttered: "Machinery'd do in an hour what it takes us a day. But it costs something to keep up machinery." Jud made no answer. He raised his hands to reach the top of the long-handled shovel. The spade was rounded and would not take the weight of the foot. He pressed downward with all his one hundred and twenty-one pounds. The shovel cracked the top soil. He leaned forward and backward, loosening the clump of clay. Gripping the shovel in the middle, swinging all his strength, he threw the dirt. It hit the surveyor's line, balanced and dropped on the right side. All the long morning, while the sun broke the chill, while the heat increased until it was difficult to breathe, he lifted clumps of clay and hurled them at the line. Often as not they fell back. He knew dimly that something was wrong. He should have been sweating. Instead his face was powder-dry, gray as fog, and strained like a high note sung off key. Black splotches danced before his eyes. Suddenly sweat broke over and drenched him. He raised a hand. The guard caught his eye and nodded abruptly. Jud dropped his shovel and shuffled away from the road toward the brush. In full view of the gang he dropped his trousers and crouched on his haunches.

It seemed he'd been there only a minute when the guard yelled out, "What the hell yuh doin'? Sleepin'?"

When Jud returned to his shovel the guard continued: "An' doan let me heah yuh askin' again t'day." He addressed everyone. "All right, come an' get it!"

The truck was drawn up off the road. A guard ladled watery fluid surrounding rare islands of potatoes into battered tin pie-plates and passed them to the prisoners patiently waiting in line. Jud, as usual, was so slow as to be last to receive his portion. Yesterday Heavy had given him one of his squares of corn bread and it vaguely occurred to him that maybe today. . . . His hands trembled with anticipation and in his eagerness he trod on the heels of the convict ahead of him. "What's the rush?" the convict growled. "You'll get your slopgut quick enough." The bottom of the blackened pot rose to Jud's eyes as the guard balanced it to get at what remained. The plate shivered a little as Jud held it out. The pot was tilted precariously. Into the plate ran the watery mixture, followed by the slop of occasional potatoes. When it seemed there was no more there came a suprisingly heavy plop. A burned potato, but a big one, Jud thought. He prodded at where it had disappeared under the soup. It gave sickeningly. Quickly his fingers picked it up. It was a drowned mouse, the flesh boiled soft. Without a word he flung it into the guard's face.

II

The sun beat down with equatorial intensity. Jud turned his face upward swallowing great gulps of sultry air. He closed his eyes against the sun. Swamp flies descended on the back of his neck where the welts of a rawhide whip showed, or buzzed angrily over his head. It was Jud's second day in the "box." For his "rebellion" he had first been handcuffed to a post and beaten. When he came to he found himself in the box. The box was built like a coffin

standing on end. It was too short for him to stand upright, too narrow for him to sit on his haunches. But for a knot-hole in the door, which gave him a limited view of the green slope above the barracks, he could see, through the barred roof, only a square of sky. During the night the box was placed on its side, some bars removed and Jud could stretch out. With dawn the guard retrieved Jud's filthy blanket and left in its place a two-inch square of salt pork and a pint of water. "Don't eat or drink," he had been warned by a friendly trusty. "He's liable to put salt in yer water. One kid went blue crazy." To screen himself against temptation, Jud dumped the water and threw the salt-pork away as soon as the guard left.

The itching of the wounds on his back drove him frantic. His knees blistered with the constant contact of the rough boards. His tongue thickened in his mouth as it slowly carressed the dry, cracked lips. He heard himself screaming for water. A jay, perched on a magnolia tree on the edge of a clearing, stopped its chatter, and after one startled look at the box from which the frenzy of sound emanated, took hasty flight. Jud began to cry weakly, and with shuddering little sobs. He pressed the bruised fists, which had beaten in vain against the door of his cage, against his face.

"Who's all theah?' a voice lifted to carry only a short distance, called out. Through the knot-hole Jud searched the slope before him. Visions of escape sent the blood beating furiously in his temples. "Who's theah?" the voice repeated.

"Me," Jud called thickly. "Where are you?"

"In the box. Are you the li'l white boy from up No'th?"

Tears of disappointment rushed to Jud's eyes. "Yeh," he managed to answer. "Who are you?".

"They calls me Buck," he replied. Jud remembered him, the huge, night-black, beautifully muscled Negro with the dark hate showing in his eyes; the Negro who drove the "or'nariest" mule team in the gang, drove the team humming a single half-sad infections tune.

"What yo' in fo'? Freight ridin'?"

"Yeh."

"Mmmm, man! That's bad. Stol' a ride, huh? How much yo' get?"

"Six months," said Jud. "How long you in for?"

"Eleben months an' twenty-nine days."

"Gee," said Jud, "what'd you do, killsomebody?"

"No, leastways, not yet. Ins'rruction."

"What's that?"

Buck scratched his head. "Jinin' a union, Ah guess. Yeh, tha's ins'rruction." They lay quiet a little while. The Negro hummed. Then his dark, rich voice formed words.

Swing low, sweet I.L.D.
Comin' fo' t' go mah bail.
Swing low, sweet I.L.D.
Comin' fo' t' go mah bail.

Ah looked out yondah,
An' what did Ah see,
Comin' fo' t' go mah bail?
The Comunist Pahty an' the I.L.D.
Comin' fo' t' go my Bail.

Swing low, sweet I.L.D.
Comin' fo' t' go mah bail.
Swing low, sweet I.L.D.
Comin' fo' t' go mah bail.

A scraping sound as of something heavy being dragged across the ground reached Jud's ears. It continued between gaps of utter silence. Close beside him the Negro chuckled. "Buck?" Jud called. He squirmed about to glance through the knothole. The Negro's box lay a few feet away. "Christ, how'd you do that?" Jud asked incredulously.

"Pried me loose a board," Buck laughed. "Ain't fixin' t' fit no coffin nohow. Ah ain't."

"Can you get out?" the white boy asked excitedly.

"Ah reckon," Buck answered.

"Look," said Jud nervously. "It'll be dark in a couple of hours. We'll make a break for it, huh? Both of us. We can get out of this god-damn country. We'll go north. God, can you imagine! In two hours we'll—"

"Hush!" the Negro broke in. "Yo wants 'em to heah? Besides, Ah ain't fixin' t' go."

"Why not? Jesus, we can make it! There's a river a couple of miles through the swamps. We can lose 'em before they set the dogs on us. I tell you we can make it, Buck. We got to! There ought to be a way we can get my shacks off Then—"

Buck was silent for a long time. At last he said: "Ah jes' can't go. Th' I.L.D.[1] can't 'peal the case of a 'scaped prisoner."

The boy's pleading gave way to anger. He began to curse. Then he cried. The Negro talked, his voice gathering passion. "Ah reckon yo' doan allow how us sharecroppers live. Workin' sunup t' sundown. Ebery season endin' with more money owin' t' the boss. No clo's fur mah kids, an' sech. All year 'roun' jes' a li'l beans, yellers an' tatters fer eatin'. The boss, he keeps the books, and theah ain't nobody nohow what eber gits a dollah cash in hand. Tha's how 't were till the Union acome. It say, Why fo' poor white man fight poor black man? It say, Jine hands an' fight the boss what keep you in misery an' your kids outa school." The boy's whimpering had ceased. He listened as the Negro explained in halting words, the crushed life of the southern sharecropper; the coming of the Union that brought black and white in one front against their enemies; the Union which allowed them to raise their heads and say, Man, ain't we som'pin'! He heard how they had banded together to prevent the eviction of their Union vice-president; heard how, in the cool misty dawn, they had defended their homes with guns. "An' when they done took me," the Negro concluded, "an' framed me, the I.L.D. say, Buck we'll 'peal your case. So Ah can't go now, could Ah?"

III

Back in the barracks, the days merged slowly into one another. Gradually Jud's muscles toughened. Sometimes he caught himself humming the half-sad tune he had heard Buck sing. Every day, with the noon meal ladled out, the guard dipped the muzzle of his shotgun into the soft, top-dirt and drew a line across the road. "Niggers on one side," he said. "White trash on t'other." Jud and Buck got as near to the line as they dared, and when they thought the guard was not looking, they talked. In these whispered consultations Buck

[1] I.L.D.—International Labor Defense

taught the boy how to rest while seeming to work. He urged Jud to eat everything, even the greasy squares of fat served at breakfast.

"We got somethin' t' live fur," he said.

"Sure," said Jud. He wondered. But he rolled up his overlong stripes to fit as neatly as possible over his laced shoes. He tore a strip out of his underwear to use for a handkerchief. While there was no soap available, he still tried to wash his face once a day.

Late one afternoon Gobbles fell suddenly over his shovel. There was a threshing of arms and legs, beating at the earth, and at his lips, a froth of blood. The guards roughly deposited him on the flat truck, and a Negro drove back to the barracks with his agonized burden. When the convicts returned that evening a friendly trusty cautiously mentioned that he had discovered evidence of newly turned earth in a strip of woods beyond the cook shack. No one dared put into words the fear that it was a grave. Yet no one ever saw Gobbles again.

Gobbles, Jud had learned, was a sailor. He had jumped ship in Mobile because of a severe case of gonorrhea. He had hoped to get across to Pensacola, where the Naval Hospital was located, to get treatment. Unable to secure a ride on the highways, Gobbles had taken to the freights. When caught and delivered to the chain gang Gobbles had spoken to the Warden of his case. "The doctor won't get around till next week," the Warden said. "You'll have to do like the rest of the boys till then." Gobbles slid out of his trousers, showing the Warden his swollen testicles. "Too bad," the Warden said, and sent him out to dig great chunks of red earth for the roads that would slide smoothly away from under the wheels of luxurious cars. And before the doctor got around, the twenty-year old Gobbles fell over his shovel, arms and legs beating at the earth that demanded so much of him.

None of the prisoners gave their right names. There was Heavy, a sometime machinist. Georgia Boy was a sixteen year old vagrant. Dad was suspected of being a dope fiend. He had nightmares, and would bite at his arms. Genonie was the syphilitic. There were the usual Slim and Shorty. Raincoat had a penchant for invading restaurants and making off with the article after which he was named. Little Wop had been arrested for vag. He had had thirty dollars on him but the sheriff who had picked him up could only count up to two. And with the law stating that anyone having less than four dollars came under the category of a vagrant, Little Wop found his way into the chain gang. There was Pretty Boy, for whom all the convicts tried to make things less hedious. There was West Virginia, who ran away from the coal mines that killed his father. There was Paddy, the genial, harmless Irishman. There was Harry, Heavy's partner, quick and clever with his fists. There was College who still expected a money-order from home.

Riddles had come to the chain gang with a vacant look in his eyes. Bastard, who in turn had been preacher, professional gambler and pimp, said: "Everything's a riddle to him. The difference between him and us is that he tries to figure it out and we pretend to know." Riddles was troubled with a bad appendix. The doctor gave him some pink pills and ordered him out to work. When Gobbles was brought in on the truck he found a final resting place beside Riddles.

Youngstown, who was tolerated only because he had the knack of putting things aptly into words, said: "You gotta die here to prove you're sick." An ingrown toenail, appendix, gonorrhea, syphilis, immovable bowels—the cure-all was two or three pink pills.

The quick-fisted Harry liked to prove things to himself. He borrowed a pill from Dad, who couldn't sleep; from the camp cook, who didn't believe in taking them; from Raincoat, who had developed a rash under his arms; from the syphilitic, Genonie. Jud got Harry a cup of water. Together they compared the pills under the swinging lantern. They tasted them with the tips of their tongues. They dissolved them in water. Then they rolled themselves cigarettes, Harry with a flick of his fingers, and Jud with clumsy stubbornness. They looked at each other. Harry's eyes were hard and bitter. They understood each other, these two.

One day the camp cook suddenly ran from the cook shack to the edge of the clearing, climbed a tree, and swung himself out on a branch. He began to jabber and drool. He refused to come down. He had gone "nuts." His bowels hadn't moved for more than a week.

On the job the following afternoon it had begun to rain. It was the habit of the guards to order the convicts to the truck only after they were certain the rain would continue for some hours. As a rule, by the time a decision was reached everyone was thoroughly soaked. On this day Georgia Boy, the sixteen year old, started trotting toward the truck before the order had been given. Without warning, One-eye Will, the guard, somehow under the impression that the boy was trying to escape, threw his shotgun to his shoulder and pulled the trigger. There was a roar and a belch of flame. Missing Georgia Boy about ten feet, the bird shot spattered all over the back of Paddy, the Irishman.

The impact knocked Paddy to the ground. Blood spurted from his mouth and ears. That evening Harry and Jud, with the aid of a kitchen knife smuggled in by Bastard, the new cook, took turns at carefully cutting each piece of shot from Paddy's back. Paddy had yellow, dull, broken teeth. He bit his lips until they bled. He bit through a doubled-up blanket. Pretty-Boy cried. The sweat ran down into Jud's face.

There was no sleeping that night. Paddy's broken, agonized breathing could be heard throughout the barracks. A handful of convicts played poker with a homemade deck of cards and split matches. Dad, the suspected dope-fiend, came out of a dream with a series of heart-breaking screams. Everyone looked up, Pretty-Boy shivering and Georgia Boy with his chin thrust defiantly forward. Heavy lifted the old man into a sitting position and with one blow skillfully knocked him into unconsciousness. "Next time," said Heavy, "one of you bastards'll have to take the job."

They gathered about the sheepherder's stove. Jud shoved a piece of "lite-wood" into its maw. They sat quietly for some time, smoking. Harry stirred. "First," he began softly, "there's a rat in our slop. Eat or starve. We ate. There's Gobbles an' Riddles, which is us with a different name. Then Georgia Boy goes for the truck with damn good reason, and the son-of-a-bitch, Will, lets go and catches Paddy all over the back with bird-shot. Just luck he didn't pull the other barrel. That's buckshot! It would a killed him. You know who had to play doc. Me and Jud. And a kitchen knife. We got no way of knowin' if blood-poison'll set in." He pulled on his smoke.

"What about the roaches, and crabs and body-lice. God damn it!" said College, "I can't stand it. I don't mind the food, but them god-damn lice!"

All took their turn enumerating their grievances. "Sure," said Harry, passing on his butt, "but what are you gonna do about it, talk?"

A silence fell on them. "I know," Jud suddenly heard himself saying. "Strike."

Harry flashed him a look of swift approval. "Yeh," he said quietly, "strike. We can do that and take a chance of winnin'—or we can just rot waiting to go to where Riddles and that sailor kid is now!" They talked for half an hour. Everyone but Dad, who could not be trusted, and Aspen, a local citizen who had been jailed for making moonshine, and was on friendly terms with the guards—at the moment he slept heavily in his bed—pledged themselves to come into the strike. The next morning they were to refuse to go to work until conditions were bettered. The cook was to smuggle in double portions of cornbread for breakfast. Then, when ordered to count out, they were to look to Harry to do the talking.

"We're workin' a private road now," said Heavy. "I know for sure it's got to be finished in two weeks. If we can hold out a couple of days we'll win."

They were rising to go to their beds "Where'd you ever hear strike?" Harry asked Jud. "You couldn't a worked much at your age."

"In the box. The darky, Buck, he was lyin' alongside. Gee!" Jud paused. "What about them—the darkies? Ain't they gonna come in?"

"Them no-good niggers! What the hell you want them for?" demanded West Virginia, who had overheard Jud's question.

A club banged on the double-barred door. "Git' t' bed! The whole mess of you!" the guard's voice ordered.

IV

When the order to count out was given only two men moved; Dad and Aspen. The others continued sitting before the plank tables, never saying a word.

"Count out!" One-eye Will ordered.

Harry stood up. "We ain't countin'."

"What?"

"We ain't countin'."

One-eye Will shouted for the other guard. They whispered to each other for a moment, then, with nervous guns trained on the prisoners, they ordered them all to undress to their underwear, and one by one, march into the monkey cage. The monkey cage was a structure about half the size of the barracks, with a solid cast-iron floor, and roof and sides of iron lattice work strengthened with a framework of wooden beams. It was raised on wheels. When a convict was taken out of the box in an unconscious condition, he was thrown into the monkey cage, and into this cage, which could adequately hold six people, twenty-one prisoners were herded.

The guards withdrew well out in the open and spoke in undertones. The men turned to Harry. "What now?" asked Little Wop.

"They gotta give in," said Harry. "Heavy heard the Warden telling the surveyor the job's got to be done in two weeks. We just sit tight. I think," he said in a low voice that clipped each word short, "I'd just about kill anyone who went back on us now." The way he said it was not easy to forget.

With the approach of sunset Harry demanded that they be brought something to eat.

"Only them that works eats," said Will, and he conceived the brilliant idea of sitting the two "faithful" where they might eat their supper in view of the prisoners.

Suddenly Dad, the dope-fiend, kicked the small table over, spilling the food into Aspen's lap. He calmly strode to the door of the cage and cried: "Let me in there. I'll be damned if I eat while my friends go hungry!"

As night drew on the air chilled, and the convicts huddled together for warmth. Jud crouched next to Genonie, who grinned away the fear in the boy's eyes. "Nothin' t' be afert of," he said. "We all git it on the hill, us uns working in the mills. Worse'n dandruff. Yuh ain't catched syflus yet, yuh won't I reckon."

Harry moved to the edge of the cage. "We want some wood for a fire." Jud rose to his feet.

"Only them that works gits fire," Will replied.

"This is the last time I'm gonna ask," said Harry.

"Only them that works—"

Harry turned. "Think those planks'll burn, boys?" He indicated the framework of wooden beams.

Heavy tugged at a beam. Half a dozen hands, including Jud's, reached out to help. The beam squealed as it gave. In a few moments a dozen pieces were available. "Who's got some matches?" someone yelled.

There was a complete silence. Jud's heart dropped. Everyone was in his underwear. Then his eyes fell on Dad, who lay half asleep in a corner of the cage. Roughly he shook him into wakefulness, then waved aloft a box of matches. Before long a fire was going in the center of the cast-iron floor.

"Put out that fire or I'll shoot!" Will had approached the cage, poking his shotgun between the bars.

Harry turned Little Wop out of the way of the gun and placed himself so that the muzzle pointed directly at his belly. "Shoot, and be damned!"

Before the disgust of Harry's curled lips, Will hesitated, then retreated to consult with the other guard. The prisoners let go their breath, and talking excitedly, crowed about the fire. At about midnight, help arrived from the county seat in the form of two deputies. Threatened again and again, the prisoners still refused to put out the fire. Finally, under cover of three shotguns, the door of the cage was thrown open and one of the deputies entered, scattering the fire. No one moved.

Pretty Boy began to curse. The fire was rebuilt. The mood of the men grew ugly. Jud found himself swearing with the rest, thrusting his face out between the bars, viciously spitting words in the direction of the "Law." The aisle which had been created for the deputy on his first entrance narrowed precepitably with his second trip. And again the wood was nursed into flame. This time, afraid to enter themselves, the guardians of the law forced a Negro trusty to do the work for them. A revolver was placed in his hands with orders to shoot if he was molested. Having reluctantly entered the cage, the Negro was immediately tripped, severly beaten, his gun taken away from him, and he was thrown out.

"Youngstown," Harry yelled, "throw that goddamn gun out! Now!" Jud grabbed at the gun and threw it between the bars, where it dropped at the feet of the startled guards. "Jesus," Harry continued, "that's all the reason they'd want to shoot us down like a bunch of rats. It was all planned. I was a sap not to see it sooner:" He pressed Jud's arm. "Good kid."

Thereafter, for the rest of the night, the fire continued to burn; the cage was no longer invaded. Toward dawn, tired of inaction, unable to sleep because of cold and lack of room, Jud began to hammer at the iron lattice work with a chunk of wood. In a few moments everyone who could find a piece of wood joined him. The sound produced, coupled with an occasional frenzied yell, resounded through the air. They kept this up until the first hint of dawn brought the Warden, who had been sick the past few days,

to the scene of trouble. His face was pasty under the still burning pine.

"What the hell's the trouble?" he asked the guards within hearing distance of the cage. Will replied in an undertone. "Strike, huh?" He faced the cage. The prisoners had grown quiet. The Warden spat. "Hell!" he said.

"I had Mr. Willis phoned," said Will. "He figgers we just got t' git the job done on time."

The Warden did not seem to hear. "Gittin' feisty, eh? Well," he turned sharply toward the guards. "Put the niggers to work. Work 'em twenty-four hours a day, but get the job done. We'll starve this trash out!" He turned on his heel and strode away.

V

For two days after Harry got out of the box Jud was unable to find an opportunity to talk to him. His chance came one morning when the flat truck carried them out to the job. "Did they beat you much?" he asked.

"Some," said Harry shortly. He turned away.

It was as though Harry had struck him in the face. When the truck stopped Jud hobbled off, found himself a shovel, and got into the bottoms. He worked furiously all morning. His heart was like something hopelessly weighted. When spoken to his answers were morose, clipped. At noon Jud took little interest in the food. His cigarettes were sour as spleen.

Several days passed. Jud lay on his bed reading a month-old newspaper that had somehow found its way into the barracks, and was now worn to tatters with the passage through many hands. A figure sat down beside him. "Harry!" said Jud. He checked himself.

"Sorry, kid," said Harry. "The guards had me pegged." Jud sat up abruptly, his face shining. "Gee! And I thought it was because I—"

"Suggested strike? No?." He patted Jud's arm. "Listen," he lowered his voice. "They had Buck, the nigger, in a box, too. They put him in because he was trying to get the other niggers to strike with us, I couldn't talk to him long. Will heard us. It didn't do us much good," he said wryly. He rolled a smoke and passed the makings to Jud.

"Harry, why don't you call, 'em Negroes?" Jud asked with a rush of emotion.

"Huh?" said Harry. "Oh, sure. Just never thought of it, I guess."

"Thanks," said Jud shyly.

They smoked. "Listen," said Harry. "The mistake we made was not to let 'em in on the strike. Next time," he threw a look at Jud who nodded eagerly for him to continue, "we gotta change that. That means we gotta talk to the guys in here."

"Sure," said Jud excitedly. "We can count on Heavy, Pretty-Boy, Raincoat—"

"Wait a minute. Take it easy," Harry laughed. "We'll go over that. But you got a special job. This—Negro, Buck, trusts you. At lunch every day the guard still cuts a line across the road to separate the,"—he grinned, "Negroes from the whites. When we're ready again—"His voice lowered until it was barely audible.

The sun rose and went down. Three weeks passed. And every day saw two figures, one a magnificently muscled Negro and the other a slim white boy, draw closer, inch by inch, to a line artificially made by an underling of the southern bourgeoisie.

Alexander Barta

The Village Is Saved

A Short Story of Hungary

The village lay at the foot of the mountain like a mouse in the paws of a lion. The houses grew on one another's shoulders, entirely unlike the villages in the plains, where the lilac and yellow painted houses look like string of pearls in the distance.

So long as there was still some woodland to be cleared of stumps a faint smoke could be kept up over the hearth. Since this work also failed—after the overthrow of the Reds most of the woods remained with the Czechs, and the native lumberjacks could not compete with the Czech enterprises—the village was doomed to ruin.

Sixty three peasant homesteads! One poorer than the other. Because anyone that had money or horses had long fled from there. Some fled as far as the Argentine. Of those who stayed some went to the neighboring city where there was an iron works, others sought work in the vineyard and a few even went to Budapest. Most of them however, came back before long bringing nothing with them except their trembling knees. For a long time it was entirely in vain that they ran weeping to the Bureau of Forests, to their deputy, to the priest of the neighboring village—no one offered any help. The villagers had already given up all hope. Then one day a full page article appeared about the village in a Pest newspaper. "Save the Pure Hungarian Village" the article was entitled. It proved to have been written by a friend of the deputy, a journalist.

And wonder of wonders! One day in autumn a light rig stopped in front of the house of the chief (Schultze lived in the larger village nearby). It was neither a holiday, nor Sunday, yet the priest and an elegantly dressed city man stepped from the rig. Within ten minutes the community chief had drummed together the entire village. When they were all assembled before the house, the priest made a speech to the people. What he said was more beautiful than any sermon. The misery of the village, he said, had shaken the conscience of the country. Writers, journalists, congressmen and prominent men generally in the capital had joined to help the village. They had thought of all sorts of plans to help them. They investigated the possibilities of having them go to some other part of the country where the state would furnish them cheap land to settle on. But they found this would not do. In the first place there were too many farmers as it is and secondly, there was no money available to help the migration. Instead of this they decided to turn this little village with its wholesome mountain air into a famous sanatorium. "This gentleman comes directly from Budapest entrusted with the pleasant duty of communicating the glad tidings to the village. Listen carefully to the details and thank the Budapest gentleman."

The city man spruced himself.

"Countrymen! Let me tell you than what it's all about. It amounts to this —to begin with the most important thing—that the village is to have a monthly income of 800 pengo."

The villagers opened their eyes wide. They crowded closer.

"The work is easy, even if at first somewhat strange. But you must not

get scared—this is only the first step to develop the village into a sanatorium. Countrymen! So that we understand one another thoroughly let me be plain —it means that every honest family is to give board and lodgings to one harmless lunatic. . . . You understand me, don't you? It is not madmen, but harmless lunatics, among whom there are often highly educated persons. . . ."

A deathly silence ensued. The priest hastened to break the icy silence with his pleasant warm voice.

"It is only a question of getting used to it, my faithful ones. These poor sick ones will not harm a fly on the wall. They are only unfortunate creatures of God; a decent god-believing person cannot refuse to help them, particularly when he helps himself by it as the Creator wants us to do."

There was an imperceptible movement in the ranks.

The city man spoke up again.

"The upkeep is insignificant. Most of them cannot eat much anyhow and they should not be overfed. It is the same about lodgings. They will spend the night wherever there is room for them. The pay is not high, but not to be disdained. One must take into consideration that these sick ones are a burden upon the state, no one pays for them. . . . In a word: the state pays 16 pengo a month for each patient. In addition each patient receives a straw mattress, a blanket, two sets of underwear besides half a kilogram of soap a month and a bottle of bitter medicine in case the patient begins to get restless."

On mention of the money there was quite a stir.

"Whoever wants to take a patient must register with the village chief."

That was what the city man said.

"God be thanked! . . ." said the people as the city man and the priest got into the rig again.

"Forever, amen. . . ." responded the warm voice of the mild, smiling Father from the receding rig.

For sometime now the village has been living on its patients. Most of them were really as the priest had described them. Silent simpletons. Poor people for whom no one paid and about whom no one cared. There were also a few crazy gentlemen among them. Unfortunates neglected by their families. The most interesting one among them was the cadaverous Aron Faluvegi with his goat's beard. Before the war he was a notary in the town of Siebenburgen. After the occupation by the Roumanians he spent three years in prison for irredentist propaganda. After serving his term he fled to Hungary a great hero. But in Budapest he was not received with open arms by the irredentist Count. He was given a job as a clerk which he soon lost. Then he wasted away in an abandoned freight car until he lost his mind.

Aron Faluvegi wrote a fresh memorandum about the injustice done to him and addressed it to someone else everyday. In the end he was writing to the Pope. In his complaints he always spoke of another clerk, Ignatz Varro, who crowded him out of his position, claiming that this Varro was a Roumanian spy, whose real name was Csicso Mirescu. In his complaints he further claimed that this same Varro-Csicso Mirescu was not only a Roumanian spy, but of Jewish descent and demanded that his blood be investigated. Faluvegi always wrote his complaints in the morning and then he read them to the chickens. He had gotten the fowl tamed by bread crumbs and they followed him like chickens after a setting hen.

If the rooster began to crow distractedly while Faluvegi was reading his complaint it would get him into a furious rage.

"You dirty Cohen!" Faluvegi would shout, his goat's beard trembling with emotion. "Do you think I don't know you have changed your name to Cock?"

Spitting and sputtering he would leave the frightened fowl fluttering away to all sides and run to the post office in the next village.

There was much laughter about Faluvegi at first. It could almost be said he had given a tinge of gaiety to the misery of the village. The other patients were no worse. They ate very little, the poor souls ate themselves mostly.

The first Christmas passed peacefully. But the longer the winter lasted, the somberer life became in the houses. After one lunatic made an attempt to throw a small girl with flaming red hair into the creek, a creepy unrest took hold of the village. The patient was transferred to the city and people quieted down again. But after this incident they found fewer occasions to laugh at the doings of the lunatics.

Months passed. In almost every house a quiet lunatic sat still in some corner. Occasionally one could even be utilized to help with the chores. To some houses they were an absolute stroke of good fortune. Nevertheless, the entire village breathed more freely when the days finally began to get longer. Many had quietly decided to give up their patient again as soon as things got a little better. At the end of the year however the vast majority of the villagers renewed their contracts. . . .

The second winter began badly from the very start. One patient set fire to his host's house at night. The fire happened to be noticed quickly and extinguished and the patient transferred immediately, but after that no peasant went to bed untroubled.

But who would think of sending a patient back in winter?

And wouldn't a hundred others fight to get him? The peasants from the neigboring village already looked envious.

The winter will soon pass—they thought—Spring will come and sweep the terror out of their heads with its golden broom.

When a woman gave birth to a monstrosity however, all words of self consolation failed. The villagers barricaded themselves against the patients at night and avoided them during the day. Women and children would awake full of fear, especially when the patients were restless at night.

A heavy pall lay over the village. But one had to bear it and grin because this pall was also his livelihood.

The villagers became even more taciturn and involuntarily adopted some of the habits of the patients. At first they did not like to admit this even to themselves, but later it became quite obvious when one or another would crawl out of bed at night to see whether the house was not on fire.

It proved to be hard earned bread, this taking care of the patients.

But the second year passed. The village breathed more freely. Perhaps there will be some kind of work this year. The great silence in the forest must come to an end as must that thing the name of which they had learned from the newspapers. Like the name of some terrible disease: the crisis.

But the crisis did not come to an end. And most of the villagers renewed their contracts again in the fall.

This fall began even worse than the previous one. The patients had also changed. In the first place they were more restless at night. There were some even violently insane among them, whose hosts were afraid to report out of fear of losing their 16 pengo a month. Everyone was afraid, everyone trembled before the coming winter.

Then it happened that one moonlit night Aron Faluvegi killed the village elder, Stefan Szekeres. The poor old man vainly protested that he had

nothing to do with the Roumanian spy Varro Csicso Mirescu and that all his ancestors had been devout Christians.

After three days deliberation the village decided to hush up the murder.

They were afraid they would lose all their patients if it were reported.

An uncanny silence and anxiety spread. No one was sure of his life. No loud talking or any laughter could be heard in the village. More and more of the villagers spent the night awake, watchful. And gradually the peasants became as silent and as shaky as their patients.

After about a month—they believed no one knew about it, but the neighboring village had already begun to whisper suspicions—news of the murder of Szekeres reached the gendarmerie. The gendarmes found the corpse and took the host together with Faluvegi because the case had not been reported.

Within two days a commission of medical men arrived and began to examine all the patients in order to determine which of them were dangerous and should be transferred to the insane asylum in the city.

The villagers had not brought their horses for inspection during the war with as much anxiety as they brought their patients before the commission. Each praised his own patient. He was such a quiet, mild mannered patient. But the commission had to be strict as the opposition press had raised a big racket about the case. When a rumor spread that half the number of patients were to be transferred in the middle of winter the entire village assembled before the house where the commission sat. At first they stood about quietly enough. Then a stone flew at the window. The commissioners had to flee without their overcoats. The peasants chased them beyond the village limits with dung forks and sticks.

Next day, however, the commission came back with strong police protection. When news of their coming reached the village everyone locked himself in. Doors and gates were barricaded.

The gendarmes forcibly broke into the houses. But they met the bitterest opposition everywhere. The patients howled and the hosts defended their patients desperately.

After his experience in the first half dozen houses the chief physician of the city insane asylum, all scratched and bearing marks of battle, had to call the affair off.

"The entire village is affected," he told the other members of the commission. "It is a mass psychosis." The case must be thoroughly investigated as it is unique in the history of medicine."

The commission retreated to study the case.

Since then the village is quiet.

Only at night someone might howl; whether it is a sick one or a villager the commission will have to decide.

What is important is that the Hungarian village has been saved.

Translated from the German by S. Kogan

WRITERS ABOUT THEMSELVES

Oscar Maria Graf

Heritage

A Fragment of Autobiography

The noted Bavarian author

I was born on July 22, 1894, in the little village of Berg near the Stornbergersee in Upper Bavaria. Formerly inhabited by a few fishermen and peasants, the village suddenly became an historical landmark and owes its prosperity to this fact. The mad Bavarian King Ludwig II was drowned there on Trinity Sunday, 1886. Since then his castle and its park became a point of attraction for tourists. Romantic legends sprang up in the course of time. Numerous tourists come every summer, buy admittance, and wander through the half empty castle sniffing up the atmosphere of all the "historical landmarks." The business-keen villagers quickly took advantage of the favorable situation, organized a "Tourist and Beautifying Society" and did some profitable advertising. Rooms and houses for rent were very much in demand every summer. The village stores profitably handled "Souvenirs of King Ludwig and Berg Castle." The fishermen built family baths and boat renting piers. The inn keepers renamed their inns to "Restaurant" or "Hotel zum König Ludwig," there are also several cafes of this name. The peasants made profitable speculations with their parcels of land on the lake and became well-to-do. Now there are quite a few rich villas in the village and on the beach.

It can easily be seen that the inhabitants of my home village have good reasons for being monarchists. A king and his unusual death proved very advantageous to them. Piety and devotion went hand in hand with their own interests in the most natural fashion. But nothing is immutable and, everything depends upon circumstances. The opinion of the villagers took an opposite swing when, during the Weimar Republic days, ex-Crown Prince Rupprecht decided to settle at the castle and close the park to tourists. The flow of tourists threatened to stop. Every citizen felt himself wounded to the quick. The "immutable devotion to the lord's castle" only returned after the ex-crown prince completely abandoned the idea.

My father was the village baker, my mother the daughter of one of the neighboring peasants.

My ancestors on father's side came to Bavaria from Sulzburg about the middle of the sixteenth century. They were mostly itinerant waggoners and also made wooden hay-forks, vegetable spades and cooking utensils for the peasants. My grandfather, a man about six feet in his stocking feet, was the first to settle down in Berg, plying the same trade. He had many children and was very poor, but all his life he was sure of a sudden turn of luck, of a miracle, that would make him rich over night. Poor folk were not held in great esteem by the peasants. Consequently this otherwise good and sober man became a passionate lottery addict. As his sparse earnings barely met the needs of his large family they must have felt the pangs of hunger everytime he bought a lottery ticket, spending his last cent on it. He was a taciturn man, strict with himself and with his family. Much later my father told me how when a child he was occasionally forced to make a trip on foot to the town of Stornberg with an empty stomach and in rags in the depths of winter to buy a lottery ticket. As he had no adequate shoes, his feet froze.

In the end my grandfather died in as great misery and poverty as he had lived. My father went out into the world, learned the baker's trade and covered half of Germany in his wanderings. Some of the family got married and moved to Munich, a sister married a Czech miner and emigrated to America with him. Ever since then it became a tradition in our family that at least one from each generation must go to the United States to look for his fortune. Some of them did get fairly well-to-do.

On mother's side my ancestors have been Bavarian peasants since ever and a day. The traits of the peasant and the openhearted craftsman are therefore well blended in us children. This heritage became of great use to me later, when I began to draw characters from these class groups in my books. The peasant in my part of the country looks down upon the artisan and trader and never quite considers them his equals. This experience and direct knowledge of relations made it possible for me to grasp what was essential in these contradictions. My first novel *Chronicle of Flechtling* (1925) shows the struggle of my ancestors against the native peasantry from this point of view.

My mother gave birth to eleven children and twice came near dying. One recollection of those days is indelibly engraved in my memory. I was five years old then. One evening the villagers gathered in front of our house. They knelt on the street and prayed many rosaries for a "someone" very ill. This "someone" was my mother. She lay in the big bed in a high fever after giving birth to a child and hovered between life and death. The people's faces were earnest in prayer and they accompanied their prayers with sighs. All of a sudden a light showed in the room where my mother lay, then the window opened and my mother appeared in it.

"I am not dying, it hasn't come to that yet! You can all go home," she said quietly and simply. The amazed villagers were stunned, but finally rose and wandered silently away.

Eight of the children grew up, three died. The five boys learned the baker's trade at home. My oldest sister became a milliner, another a dressmaker, and the youngest learned the barber's trade. Then the oldest boy, Max, fell early in the war in Flanders, and Emma, the dressmaker, died when she was barely twenty-six.

As there was a small farm along with the bakery, each one of us children had to do our chores in the stable, cattle barn, work in field and woods. Thus we learned all the peasant lore. We were not treated gingerly. Everyone had to work as he could and if one weakened the ridicule of the others was merciless. This gave one both an inner and outer robustness. A sort of mad pride

in outstripping and outdoing the others took fast hold. At the same time there was a sort of dry lack of love among us. This later turned into a constant opposition that was almost akin to a silent enmity. There was no tenderness lost among us.

My Mother

My mother considered ceaseless, patient toil generally the greatest virtue. She was by no means given to pride, but without ostentation she was proud of the amount of work she could do. And only one that could toil as tirelessly and to the same effect could command any sincere respect as far as she was concerned. She secretly despised all "fine folks" even though she was amiable to them as a business woman. Such idlers, in her opinion, did not know "of what use man is on Earth." Until her very death she would get up at four in the morning and seemed to tire only when she sat down in the evening. Then her eyes would usually close while she was still at supper. She would brace up, eat a little faster and smile almost shamefacedly. Praise embarrassed her. Vanity was foreign to her.

Ever since her fifth child she suffered from an ailment which caused her much pain and frequent blood poisoning. The disease was called "redstream" and the villagers held the belief that the wound must be kept open otherwise the "bad blood" would get into the body and surely cause one's death. Mother would therefore only wash her bleeding feet nightly and do her day's chores as usual. She was puzzlingly merciless to herself and never spared herself in the least. I remember once she had to take to bed because her feet now refused to function. The district doctor came and drew a long face. He was a very gruff man and this won him the confidence of all. "Yes, Mrs. Graf," he said, "looks like we'll have a corpse on our hands soon! You must not get up for some time at any rate, understand?" My mother nodded slightly (with a smile). When the doctor came again three days later she was standing at the oven. The doctor raged and stormed, told her she must be mad and ordered her back to bed. She was entirely undisturbed and said serenely: "Yes, yes, doctor! And who'll do the washing? Who will do my work for me?" *Her work*—that was her one and all. She did not take to bed then and her feet got better after a while anyhow. She had an iron constitution, as they used to say. She endured much pain and only very seldom complained. With all that she was mild and cheerful and eagerly clung to life. Only when she had to lie down sick did she feel useless, uncertain and truly unhappy. Once only did I see her really angry,—that was when, out of fear that she would again get up too soon from a sickness, we tied her down to her bed.

She thought very simply and acted likewise. She never understood intricate ideas or complicated feelings. We once asked her: "Tell us, mother, did you love father when you married him?" She smiled as if this were the oddest sort of a question to ask, and answered: "Hm, hm, I guess I had to." She said this calmly and frankly. It was just part of life to marry a man, have children, to become somewhat exhausted with work in time and to finally die. Anything beyond that "was not right." She was a mother and that's all. That was her attitude to all the villagers and relatives. A child was born, grew, went to school, matured, grew a beard and married. To her he always remained her boy.

We children often importuned her with our demands to the extent that she became melancholy. We lied to her and used all wiles to gain our end. Her broad face would get sadder and sadder. It hurt her not to be able to

give us what we wanted, because she was unusually kind and totally without any demands herself. She could not contradict or argue. She was perfectly helpless before any demand, believed everyone and anything and listened naively to any argument without finding anything to be said against it. A dispute among those near to her caused her great anguish. She suffered intensely if relatives or we, children, were angry among ourselves and always tried to effect a reconciliation. Such yielding unassertiveness is usually called lack of character. But patience and tolerance were her most profound characteristics. "It is not always the other one's fault," was her saying when bitter feelings came out or some injustice came to light. She herself never lost her temper. What she loved most was peace. That is why she hated the war. It took people away from their accustomed work, tore sons away from their mothers, brought misery and pain and was of no use. Harmony among people, however, made life tolerable. "Mother," asked one of my brothers once, "what would you do if, for instance, Bavaria became French?" She looked at him uncomprehendingly and said: "Well, I guess we should have to keep on working as we do now." I never heard her say "my country." She clung only to the soil from which she came and to the people she knew. One of my brothers who had grown rich in America once came to visit us. He brought his own automobile and took mother on a trip to Rome. She was unhappy all the way, everything was strange and uncomfortable. When they came back and she dismounted from the automobile she exclaimed, really relieved and happy, "This is the best moment of the entire trip."

She liked amiable people who never quarrelled, were gay and did not put on airs. They were like her and she enjoyed spending Sunday or a holiday afternoon with them. On such occasions she would tell stories of the past in her broad cheerful way and peculiarly enough it was always some object, some thing, that brought the story to her mind. An uncle, for instance, kept puffing at his pipe unceasingly. This reminded her how as a child she once pissed into the pipe of a hired man who had the habit of leaving it in a field ditch. She mimicked how the man vainly tried to light the moist tobacco after the haymowing was over. She would laugh till the tears came to her eyes. Rough jokes she considered the right thing in this social circle and the broad, robust peasant humor suited her perfectly. More finely attuned souls would surely have found this simple hearted entertainment rather indecent. She thought it nothing out of the way. If one looked at her then, unobserved, the impression she made was of one who had never been really young and had never grown old. She seemed to be the same throughout all the years: full of vitality to her last breath.

Her sore feet notwithstanding, she danced the customary dances at marriage feasts even when she was seventy and performed all the customary functions.

She had no intellectual interests. The only thing she read beside her prayer book was the "church news." She was a devout Catholic but not bigotted and tolerant to people of other creeds. Her religion was just as much a habit as her work and she followed her precepts with great sobriety. Since childhood she belonged to a religious order that imposed upon every member the duty of saying twelve „paternosters" daily. It was hard to cnceive when she got the time for it, and when I asked her about it once, she said quite soberly: "Well, where can I say my prayers? In the outhouse—that's where I have most time for it." She did not see that this could be laughed about. She prayed, she confessed, went to communion, because it was the custom to do so. She never thought about it. Generations before her had believed

likewise, it must therefore be the right thing. Nevertheless she did not consider the "sacred things" particularly marvellous. There was something human about it for her. On the occasion when my brother took her for a ride to Rome she joined the many pilgrims that came to kiss the Pope's hand. She was really disappointed about it. "My God, our Pope, hm . . . he doesn't look like much. . . . He seems to be a very ordinary man," she said and showed with her hand about how tall he is. "Well, he is about this big—no more." And she reminisced what a stately man King Ludwig was, what large hands he had in comparison to the unsightly (ordinary) Pope.

"Yes, but the Pope is holy," I mocked a bit. She did not notice the irony. "Yes, he is holy, but they could have found a bigger man just the same," was her serene reply.

We children lost our faith in early youth and despised all religious customs. That pained her, but when the priest reproached her about it once, she only said: "My God, father, what can I do about it. I guess *I* shall have to do the praying for them." She could not argue and convince anyone. She was always a silent example, that's all. There was no fanaticism or stubbornness about her. She avoided people who possessed those traits, they instilled a sort of secret fear in her.

Her heart felt the injustice of things in the world, but who could change that? We can only be good to one another. There were poor and rich—she was on the side of the poor and oppressed all her life long. Riches, grandeur and "posing" did not go with her. There was something unreal about it to her. She probably believed implicitly that such things must blow up sooner or later, must have a terrible end.

There was only one just leveller for her—Death. No one could evade Death. And like all good Catholics she held the unshakable fundamental view that comes from the helpless melancholy of every living creature: "All that is must go! Man is nothing but a lump of clay after all. So why all this vanity, why make such a fuss about ourselves?" This was the source of her great good nature and of, perhaps, an almost nihilistic lack of comprehension for all seeming human greatness.

Death howered over all of life. Death was mightier than all human handiwork. Fear of Death filled all her simple thoughts and feelings just because she was so healthy and clung to life with every fiber. That was the source of her humility. I inherited perhaps most of her traits. . . .

My Father the Baker

My father was different entirely. Rebel and freethinker, he was subject to a sort of liberal patriotism. He mistrusted priests and was constantly at war with all officialdom including the mayor and school teacher, but particularly the police and judge. He would get into a raging dispute with them on the least provocation and often had to pay considerable fines for derogatory remarks. He was convinced that everyone in public or state service "lived on money stolen from honest citizens." At times he would be passionately engrossed in some such feud and spare no money, wile or imagination. He outdid himself in schemes and tricks with thievish delight. The only thing he prized was the justly deserved popularity obtained by dint of personal ability. He liked men who were always ready for a fight and witty inn entertainers. With such he gladly got drunk and was then merry with a broad, loud and incontinent gaiety.

He had wandered about a great deal and finally rose from poverty to be-

come a well-to-do bakery owner. The war of 1870-71 tore him away from this again. He was wounded at Orleans and remained with a stiff hand all his life. He laid plans for the new campaign to re-establish himself again while still at the hospital. He did not let himself be simply discharged from the army and "gotten rid of" with a mere pittance. He stayed until he had managed to get a war pension. When he came back home he began again from the start in the dilapidated house mortgaged to the limit. The obstacles seemed insurmountable. The subborn unyielding brothers and sisters fought every inch. For days, months, years this war at home kept up. The villagers despised him for his poverty. Peasant-like, everyone baked their own bread. A baker seemed superfluous to them. No one gave him anything on credit and quite a few would have liked to see that "fellow" broken. There was some field and woods attached to the house which could then be gotten cheap under the hammer.

"And just because it came so hard, I struggled for it," my father said much later, quite proudly at times, and he would conscienciously enumerate all his old enemies. He distrusted even the best neighbor since then. He remained a peppery fighting cock and a hard boiled egg. "It's just the same in little matters as in big ones," was his favorite saying as he compared his struggle, his home, his slow rise, with a state. He was more far sighted and tenacious than was supposed. He discounted all possibilities quite soberly, although there was no pedantry about him. His marriage with my mother roused the indignation of all the natives round about. "Such a beggar to marry the daughter of a peasant!" But she brought him a dot of a thousand gulden, a cow, two beds and a woman in the house that could be useful. One finally got a little bit out of the jam. The enterprising man established a general store beside the bakery. Everything that was purchased had to be paid for spot cash. Fearfully my mother saw the money she had brought melt away. According to old peasant tradition this money was to be kept for only very bad times. My father was furious when she failed to understand what he was about. His enterprising spirit and her peasant steadfastness clashed. She cried bitterly and was sure they would be beggared within a few months. He attempted again and again to explain things to her, show her his calculations. She could not understand it and only looked on helplessly. That made him even more angry and he would sputter and curse. The neighbors who heard him roar, gloated over it. He could curse in masterly fashion and keep it up for a long time.

The business did not seem to prosper. It meant hard work and wasn't without its mishaps. Mother prayed secretly. Then an unexpected piece of luck came. The king and his court occupied the castle. That drew a great many gentry who settled in the neighborhood. The business at once began to flourish. There was a swing upward. Amazed and vexed the villagers saw the cantankerous baker undertake his first house alteration. Building remained his greatest passion all his life and shortly before his death almost an *Idee-Fixe*. Perhaps the once oppressed and despised man only wanted to make his triumph visible by having built the biggest and best looking house in the village in the course of years. At any rate after he had built it he went further and built a modern concreted sewerage settling pit into which the fluids of the dung heaps flowed and, partly filtered, seeped into the ground. A neighbour liked the idea and built a similar one. My father then let the builder draw up a new set of plans and one fine day there was digging going on again. Thus new settling pits grew up all around the village and everyone shook his head over it. The old man would inspect some new

settling pit built and satisfactorily murmur: "Ours is still the best. No one far and wide has one like it."

About the time of the first upswing the king's secretary came to the little bakery. The envious neighbors, all full of curiosity, gathered about the windows. The high dignitary offered father the title of caterer to the court. Father sent a swift look at the window and said, shaking his head: "Thanks, very much, your excellency! Too great an honor for me! Thanks very much, but I don't want any more than any other honest business man that does his duty and pays his taxes. I am glad his majesty likes my bread. That is a great satisfaction! Thanks very much, your excellency, but the title won't do! I am the 'Berg baker' and I want to be nothing else as long as I live." The great lord was astounded and continued to expostulate but father stubbornly insisted on his refusal. Titles and official advancement were obnoxious to him. Luckily the refusal of the title did not have any untoward effect upon trade, but his boldness gained for him the envious respect of the villagers.

My Father the Philosopher

My father was a newspaper reader and he occasionally read books on history which he got by subscription. What he read made him thoughtful. He would talk about it and ordinarily ended with an oddly resigned remark. One could see he often wished to discuss these matters but there was no one to discuss with. That was why he was glad we children began to read books at an early age. I never could fathom the reason why we became such passionate readers of books. As soon as we got through with a book father would ask what it was about. He listened attentively and was quite obviously happy when we retold well what we had read. Then he would begin to explain it all in moralising fashion. Singularly enough, he would always refer everything back to himself, whether it was about a conquered tribe of Indians or about a hero who finally came out victorious. It was always he and about him. Some one had told his story! He would go into pathos and if we listened attentively he would call us "bright children" and pass his hand lightly over our heads.

"You just mark this," he would end, "it is October 28 today. In exactly a year from now remind me of what I said." Once I did remind him of such a talk. He had forgotten about it long ago and was finally vexed with me when I repeated what he had said and I got a good box on the ear for it. He was probably ashamed to have let such phrases and extravagant statements slip off his tongue in a sentimental mood, as he was usually very reserved. Fundamentally he was very shy and would not let anyone see into him. If he thought he had betrayed himself in this respect he would quickly switch to some rough joke or make some sarcastic remark. In this he showed a very lively imagination.

My father was rather slim and not very tall. His longish face was marked by prominent cheekbones and deep-set dark brown eyes. His long mustache was very pointed at the ends. My mother was somewhat bigger and much more solid-boned. Her face was broader. He did not give a rap for his own external appearance. He was always dressed rather shabbily. But he was not averse to have the womenfolk dress up and my mother's almost stubborn simplicity vexed him occasionally. It gave him so much more pleasure therefore that his daughters were "flashy" when going to church or to a ball. He felt flattered when people spoke about it but hid this under a mask of loud gaiety.

We children sang as we went about delivering bread and to judge by the praise of the villagers we must have had fair voices. Now and again someone would say to father: "Baker, today your kids sang again like larks." He would answer jokingly: "They were only shouting because they were hungry!" But we never knew want and hunger at home.

My father never did have any clear idea of historical connections. He was only interested in great historical figures and judged many of them by their pictures. If the face was a sympathetic one to him—the man was without fults. But unorientated and unconnected as his views were, with all their oddness and ludicrousness, he brought those personalities humanly closer to us than any book or teacher. No one ever made the causes and essential significance of the various wars so clear to me as my father, although his assertions were mostly of his own invention and had nothing to do with facts.

"Mark this, my lad," he told me once about the Thirty Years War, "one must look behind the facts." And he tried to explain: "Commander Tilly and Wallenstein fought with each other because they couldn't come to terms about the forests. The Tillys owned the woods all the way into Bohemia. But Wallenstein said: Hold on there brother, everything on Bohemian soil belongs to me—you can do as you please in Bavaria. . . . They quarrelled and made war only on account of some lousy wood."

"Only on account of some wood?" I asked disenchantedly—because a child looks for the heroic in the stories of the past and for romantic heroes in war.

"Yes, only because of some rotten wood," my father confirmed and thus shattered my first illusion. I realized then that behind all those famous wars there was nothing but avaricious interests of some exploiters.

When I was about eight years old a new parish priest came who was very intolerant to all who entertained other beliefs. He told many derogatory stories about the devilish doctor, Martin Luther, and represented the latter as a paragon of all mortal vice. By chance we told about this at home and my father flared up in rage.

"What? Is that what he told you?" he raged. "Luther was a courageous man. The Catholics don't like him only because he saw through their swindles. The pope at that time played havoc with our beliefs generally. He lived in wealth and plenty and devoured the Peter's pence. It was a real swindle: whoever gave enough money for the pope got 'absolution'—was forgiven all his sins. . . . That Doctor Luther saw through the swindle and said you can't buy forgiveness for your sins with money, the Lord God needs no money and neither should the Pope. . . . That's why they persecuted him, those fellows from Rome and now Luther is painted as a devil! Bah! Don't let them tell you such stuff and nonsense!. . . . Don't you believe this new parish priest! And if he doesn't like it tell him your father told you so. . . ."

We didn't contradict the parish priest, but neither did we believe what he told us, no matter how well he did the telling. We gradually began to doubt.

My father liked Wallenstein too because he wanted to command his army himself and eliminate the king. He liked King Ludwig I because this king made Munich into a capital city by his artistic joy in building and because he was really quite a civilian all his life. He had a special place in his heart for Bismarck whom he had seen twice during the war. He knew no more about him than that he had opposed unafraid, the megalomaniac young Kaiser Wilhelm II, drank a lot and spent little money on clothes. "But look at him—a man, every inch of him!" my father would say, pointing to Bismarck's picture. Men who could handle a bottle well won his heart generally. "Only when

a man has had a drink does he really show himself," was his dictum. I must admit he was quite right in this.

He hated sanctimonious hypocrites, picayune crawlers and conceited fools, and, though he wore his iron war cross proudly, he had no use for "soldiers or military heads." His opinion was that only those who didn't get on in life, stuck to the army. He possessed considerable discernment, as far as people were concerned, and his hard life made him sceptical. No one could tell him black was white. Though in time he was generally well liked, he never had a real friend. This may have been due to the fact that he loved people as a phenomenon and found them entertaining but never liked anyone in particular. He transmitted this trait to his children. The chance of the moment dictated his bottle companion. After they had gone their ways they had nothing in common. He found the dry unequivocal vulgarian to his liking. If the chap had some wit he would even win his heart for a while. He had no respect for rank, birth or wealth. He only appreciated what he found directly in a person to surprise and entertain him.

One could thus come to believe my father was incapable of loving anyone. No one can, of course, really see what's going on within others. But people are nevertheless supposed to have souls.

In spite of all their quarrels, my father and mother lived together very well. They supplemented each other. She worked untiringly and seemingly without any aim. He thought everything out, regulated and distinguished between the useful and the fruitless. She was timid, he venturesome. Thus they matched. He wanted her to stop working so hard and be more sparing of herself after they had become well-to-do. He was touched by her immutable matter-of-courseness and unpretentiousness, her untiring diligence and altogether too anxious frugality. As with the years he became more and more sickly and could not work very hard any longer, he felt indebted to her. She had never had anything really beautiful, any really great joy. He proposed she take a trip to the bathing places or a longer cure at one of them. To him nothing was too expensive for her sake. But she could never understand such reasoning and found the proposals a frivolous wanton. That depressed him very much. In the end he stayed home mostly and drank Affenthal red wine because the doctors forbade beer. He became morose and grumbled a lot to himself. He had a particular liking for the peasant saying:

Time goes—
The candle flickers,
The wife dies,
The man sinks,
And nothing matters.

"Nothing matters"—as much as to say it has all been useless. Hope and love and trouble and endeavor had all been in vain.

As we all stood around his deathbed, our faces full of concern and tearful, he pulled himself together once more, vented a few anguished curse words, trembled and fell back dead. He was not quite sixty when he died. A rainy fall darkened the windows.

It was 1905. I was in the sixth grade at public school and the youngest of five brothers, eleven years old then.

My mother died almost thirty years later. Also on such a day in autumn, on September 27, 1934. I was at a banquet of Soviet writers in Tiflis at the time and had no word from home for a long time. I had no idea she was on

her death bed at the time and in my toast spoke about her and her simple life. I had seen her last in 1932. We were standing in the cemetery of our village church near the family plot. Less than four months later I had to leave my home country. While an emigrant I only seldom got a few lines from my mother. They were always the same. "Dear Oskar, how is everything with you? When shall I see you again?" Nothing more. The awkward letters were the only things that betrayed the silent ache of a great longing such as only the much enduring could feel. . . .

In between my father's death and hers there had been a world war, a German half-revolution, inflation, the Kapp and Hitler putches, the beginning of the Third Empire and all my inner development. I have tried to show this truthfully in my two books *We Are Prisoners* and *Wonderful People.* The heritage from my parents, however, seems to me to have been only indicated. That's why I have written this amplification.

Translated from the German by S. D. Kogan

A MEXICAN ARTIST—HIS WORK

Jose Clemente Orozco

J. C. Orozco

Biographical Notes of the Artist

Born November 23rd, 1883, in Zapotlan, State of Jalisco, Mexico. Parents, Ireneo Orozco and Rosa Flores, both natives of Jalisco and descendants of early Spanish settlers.

Attended public schools in Mexico City.

In 1900 was graduated as an expert agriculturist from the National Agricultural School of Mexico.

1900 to 1904 attended the National University of Mexico, specializing in mathematics, at the same time studying architectural drawing in the School of Fine Arts.

Worked as architectural draftsman for the architect, Carlos Herrera of Mexico City.

Decided in 1909 to become a painter and began intensive formal course of self-training. Drew and painted the human figure from life and made anatomical studies.

1915. First one-man exhibition of paintings and drawings in Mexico City.

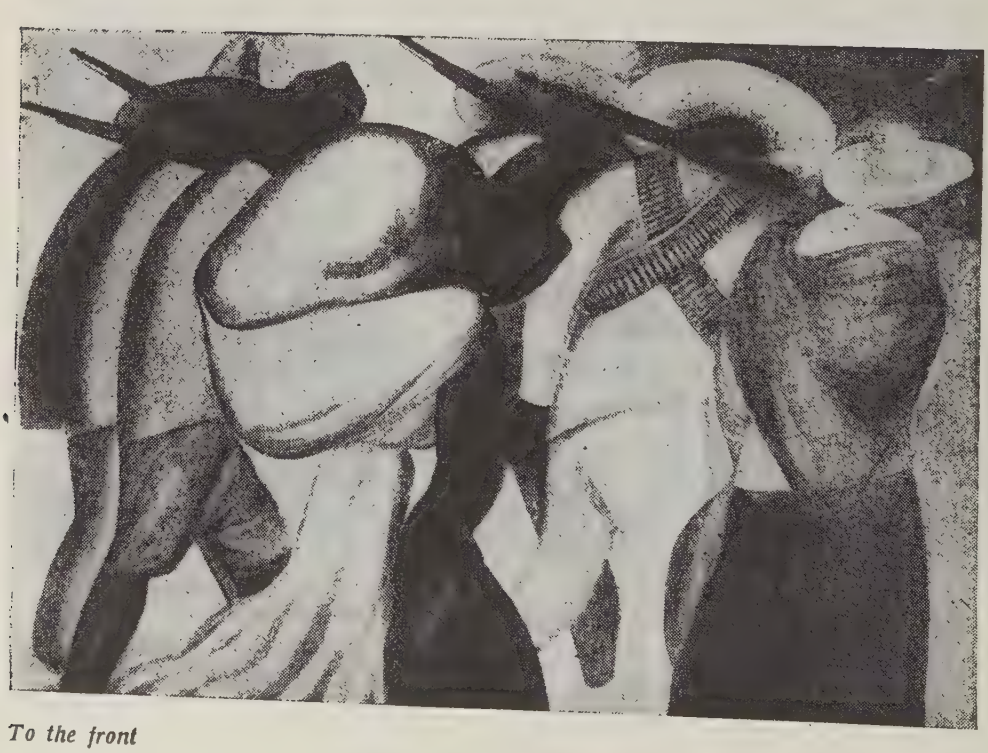
1917. First visit to the United States, remaining two years in California.

1922 to 1927. Fresco murals in public buildings in Mexico. National Preparatory School and House of Tiles (Casa de los Azulejos), Mexico City, and Industrial School, Orizaba.

1927 to 1932. In the United States, Numerous exhibitions in all parts of the country and exhibition of drawings in Paris and Vienna. Painting of this period includes fresco murals at Pomona College, Claremont, California; the New School fo Social Research, New York City, and Dartmouth College, Hanover, New Hampshire.

Summer 1932. First trip to Europe, visiting England, France, Italy and Spain.

Sorrow



To the front

The Return

Execution

Detail from a Mural in Mexico City

ARTICLES and CRITICISM

A. Lunacharski.

Basic Problems of Art

Analyzing Plekhanov's Views on Art

In his work of laying a Marxian foundation for literary criticism, Plekhanov came into conflict first of all with the subjectivists, the epigones of the great enlighteners and the vulgarizers of the basic principles put forward during the best period of actvity of the civic intelligentsia.

While for the period of enlightenment itself the characteristic attitude to literature was primarily a publicistic one—that is, the evaluation of the facts of life through literature and the evaluation of literary works according to the progressiveness of their tendencies,—the sociological school of subjectivists (Mikhailovski *et al*) converted this into a peculiar sort of all-embracing social principle.

In the end the subjectivists were wont to consider the "critically thinking individual," in other words the intelligentsia, or, as Plekhanov wittily remarked, "people not lower in rank than an eight class official,"[1] as the moving forces of history. Consequently, that portion of the intelligentsia which, in the pitiful social conditions of old Russia, seemed the most powerful influence, the writers (especially the publicists), were bound to be held the very salt of the earth, the motive force of all progress.

It is perfectly evident that any writer with tendencies not progressive, as progress was then understood by the intelligentsia, was considered an evil intentioned person sabotaging the general cause. Issuing from this one could construct a graduated scale of writers according to their progressiveness, according to the definite tendencies they showed in their works.

This point of view was represented as the direct continuation of the work of the great Russian critics of the sixties and, barring, of course, conservative journalism which led a very reserved and inconspicuous existence, relying almost totally on the support of the government, this point of view predominated.

With the growth of capitalism, however, a new section of the intelligentsia appeared. Although they tied up with expanding capitalism they were afraid to come out directly as its apologists, and simply renouncing, very energetically at times, the old Narodniki ideas, they adopted apologist positions.

This was facilitated by the crash of the practical revolutionary Narodniki movement on the one hand and by the possibility, on the other, of posing in imitation of Europe where literature and criticism was becoming more and

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[1] An eight class official—in the original "Kalleghski assessor" which, in the tsarist hierarchy was an official ranking eight in order among lower officials and usually implied possession of more than a common school education. We use the equivalent term "eight class official" as coming closer to English conceptions than the entirely strange "kallezhski assessor"—*Tr.*

more esthetic, as the proponents of Europeanising Russia by furnishing cultural surroundings and entertainment to the increasing numbers of the wealthy bourgeoisie who had had a taste of civilization and were inclined to act the Maecenas, as well as to the richer sections of the intelligentsia who earned large incomes with the growth of capitalism. This was reflected in the attempt, among other things, at a revolution in the field of evaluating critical methods and of literary values generally, made by Volynski and the *Severny Vetsnik,* later to be continued by all sorts of esthetes, symbolists, decadents, etc.

Plekhanov understood, of course, perfectly that literature has a social significance and that a literary work can be analyzed from the point of view of the good it may or may not do to the proletarian forces growing within Russian society. But he understood just as perfectly that art achieves its full significance only then when the ideas so beneficial to society are clothed in artistic form, in other words produce their effect not by force of reason but by force of image.

Plekhanov noted both of these phases on various occasions. But, primarily for purposes of the struggle against both purely publicistic and purely esthetic criticism and comparison of their methods with those of the Marxian one, he advocated the scientifically genetic analyses of the phenomena of art.

Although he laid a brilliant foundation for such objectively historical critical analysis of works of art and gave some excellent examples of its application. in the attempt to emphasize its advantages over both purely publicistic and purely esthetic criticism, Plekhanov did not, it seems to us, make a proper synthesis of these methods. As we shall show in detail later, there was a sort of eclecticism about Plekhanov's literary criticism as he admitted, with various reservations, both publicistic and esthetic criticism even while emphasizing quite sharply the extreme correctness of the genetic method which says distinctly that criticism cannot raise the question of "must" for a work of art.

It must be kept in mind that this defect in the structure of Plekhanov's theory of criticism is also one of its merits and is entirely due to the period in which he wrote. Perhaps such polemical emphasis was necessary in defense of the Marxian historico-genetic method in order to decisively annihilate the one-sided subjectivism of the "publicists" and the gourmet-like impressionism of the esthetes who vainly tried to mask their dilletanteish "ohs and ahs" by falsely borrowed phraseology from idealist philosophers.

Plekhanov was too perspicacious, clever and broadminded to take an uncompromising stand on genetics. In many of his articles he seems to stop and think of what logical place to assign to publicistic and esthetic criticism before delivering the crushing blow to them. But his fundamental tendency of determined defense of the new genetic point of view against the evaluational point of view did not fuse harmoniously with his own theory of evaluation although Plekhanov made several very interesting attempts at such fusion.

This phase of Plekhanov's activity as literary and art critic is exceedingly important. We shall therefore be compelled to return to this question again and again in the course of this study. Our task in studying Plekhanov's views is to establish an organic connection between the three points of view—the genetic, publicist evaluational and esthetic evaluational (which require criterions while the genetic one does not)—by overcoming some of Plekhanov's biases.

It is perfectly clear that the evaluational point of view was bound to be a secondary matter to Plekhanov, if for no other reason than because neither

he nor the party of which he was then the foremost representative pretended to exert any tangible influence on the course of the development of literature. Plekhanov was an underground worker, an emigrant. The greatest effect he could possibly achieve was precisely in establishing the basic principles of Marxism by profound Marxian analyses of what was taking place and in prospect. Should Plekhanov have adopted the point of view of what should be and have begun to apply publicistic or esthetic criticism of the literature of his time, it would have been merely ludicrous, because totally futile. The influence of social democracy was then very small and hardly a single writer would have paid the least attention to Plekhanov.

Compare that with the present situation, when the government and the party leading it are vitally interested in giving literature definite form both in subject matter and style. Literature has become a very important instrument in the organization of the masses, in raising their cultural level and in directing the course of cultural development of the peoples of our country. Under such circumstances a critic who considers it a crime for a Marxian to approach literature from the point of view of what it should be like would be a monstrous menshevik.

Is a passively genetic approach to current literature even possible in our day? If we even go to the best in search of such values as could be of assistance to us in the building of today, it stands to reason that with respect to the present, genuine Marxian criticism must be an aid, in some cases even a teacher, to the writer, making plain to him the great social order placed by the revolution and reflected in the gigantic construction efforts of the Soviet Union.[1]

The reader should not be surprised therefore that we devote particular attention to this phase of the matter in our discussion later. Plekhanov gives a great deal of food for this as, in polemics against Chernishevski, he undoubtedly strained the point and we must now correct some of his excessively severe tirades against the thoroughly conscious and definite "utilitarian" approach to literature practised by Chernishevski, Dobrolubov and others of their school.

In his *Unaddressed Letters* Plekhanov draws a critical line of distinction between his above mentioned theory and some other teaching on the essence of art and its place in human life.

One of the most important theories of this sort is that of play. It is a fairly old theory and was presented with particular force by Friedrich Schiller. Art, originating in play, was juxtaposed to labor, originating in want, in the spirit of high romanticism peculiar to Schiller. This, as Plekhanov has explained in his articles on romanticism, was due to the fact that people like Schiller (or rather people of a period like that of Schiller's) could accomplish nothing in the field of labor, which gives practical results, and consequently grasped the more readily at any limitation, including the glorification of free play and its highest form—free art. In his *Unaddressed Letters* however, Plekhanov merely mentions Schiller, taking the principles laid down by Bucher and Spencer as the expression of this theory.

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[1] In this respect it is worth while to recall Lenin's famous saying on the fusion for us in principle of theory and party adherence: "The materialist uncovers the class contradictions and thus determines his point of view.... The materialist is on the one hand more profoundly objective. He does not confine himself to pointing out the necessity of the process but finds out what class determines this necessity. On the other hand materialism implies, so to say, party adherence, compelling us to frankly adopt the point of view of a definite social group when evaluating any event."

Basing himself on an incorrect analysis of the social life of savages Bucher reaches the conclusion that: "Play antecedes labor and art antecedes production of useful things."

Spencer, though he does not deny that play may be useful indirectly in exercising some of the organs of man or animals, claims that play is primarily such functioning of the organism as does not pursue any direct useful end but gives pleasure by itself.

Plekhanov refutes this principle of Spencer's with great ease, gracefully one could say, by the mere analysis of how animals or children play. It develops that there is no play of either animals or children that is not in imitation of grown-ups or the work of grown-ups. A kitten playing with a spool of cotton is imitating the cat catching a mouse. Wild animal cubs at play imitate fights which will later be serious business. Children play with dolls, play soldier, etc.

Going more deeply into this principle, Plekhanov notes that the very pleasure found in play must first be sought for in work activities. He quotes Wundt: "Life's cares induce labor and, little by little, man learns to find pleasure in applying his strength usefully." Thus Plekhanov comes to the conclusion that: "play originates in the endeavor to recapture the pleasure found in applying strength usefully." He illustrates this thesis excellently by descriptions of dances of savages imitating animals and explains them as play, repeating the pleasures of the hunt. "Play is the child of labor," concludes Plekhanov.

All rhythmic motion in man, according to Plekhanov, are simply "repetition of the motions of a worker." So how could they antecede work?

Further Plekhanov emphasizes correctly that the Spencerian principle does not sufficiently reflect the biological significance of play:

2 Play, especially with young animals, has a definite biological purpose. With animals as with man, the play of the young represents the exercise of parts useful to the individual and to the entire species.

There is one more objection to consider. Grown-ups frequently play like children—but on closer examination it develops that in the primitive stages it is not at all play but a sort of ritual, a sort of ceremony, which seems to us entirely lacking in usefulness but which, to the primitive mind thinking in terms of magic, should influence surroundings. From this point of view, work is an activity of man which actually changes his surroundings in some useful way, while magic is an activity of man which in his imagination influences nature in devious ways defined later, in the animistic stage, as influencing nature through the spirits ruling in it.

Plekhanov correctly understands this principle. He writes:

The North American redskin dances the "dance of the bison" when he has not come upon the bison for a long time and is threatened by starvation. The dance is continued until the bison appears and this is put into causal connection with the dance. Leaving aside the question of how such a causation comes to their minds, as this question does not interest us here, we can assuredly say that neither the "dance of the bison" nor the hunt which follows upon the appearance of the animal can in such cases be looked upon as mere play. Here the dance itself proves an activity with a definite utilitarian purpose intimately connected with the principal life activity of the redskin.

On the whole, Plekhanov devoted too little attention to the significance of magic in the development of art. We now know that these primitive ceremonials gave rise to all sorts of church rituals which exerted a powerful influence on art—the cult with all its acts and accessories which constitute a great tier in human art; on the other hand—from this also developed the

theatre which has been of greater significance in the history of mankind than, perhaps, less synthetising and less effective form of art.

This is not meant in reproach to Plekhanov, because a great special chapter (in fact a whole series of volumes) in Marxian theory of art could be devoted to the examination of magic forms of art and inserted into Plekhanov's general system without in the least infringing upon it.

It is self evident that any attempt to represent all art as originating in magic (and such attempts have been made) must be rejected categorically, because magic itself is really a primitive form of labor or, rather, a very important admixture to all the labor processes due merely to those primitive errors and vague theoretical ideas man guided himself by (instead of later science) in mastering primitive technique. This is why his technique proved thoroughly fantastic in many respects and unsuited to his real surroundings. This part of primitive technique which embraced all sorts of rituals developed beyond control of reality to some extent and assumed the most monstrous forms in the matter of tabus, totems, sacrifices, exorcisms, etc. It was all the expression of the will of social man, i.e. of society as a whole. Social man (society) worked out definite methods of behavior in this field. The individual perhaps introduced only very insignificant variations. On the whole, however, it was a totally necessary product of social life growing up beyond the will or consciousness of the individual and thoroughly subjugated individual personalities.

At the base of all this primitive magic or primitive religious creativeness lay husbandry and economic relations. Sex played a very important role in these economic relations. But this phase of the matter has also been greatly exaggerated and the tendency to reduce the main determinants of the social behavior of primitive and savage man to sex as has been the case with all sorts of Freudists is also erroneous. Engels himself, however, assigned a definite role to the forms of family in primitive ideology. The establishment of the precise interrelation between primitive economy and the primitive family is a subject requiring further researches (the labors of Kunow, Eldermann and others are directed to this end).

Plekhanov took into account the age theory (The theory of the birth, maturity and decline—*Tr.*) which is being revived to some extent in Spengler's works. Spengler, however, only repeats in a more brilliant but also more friable form the theory of cycles of civilizations upon which Draper built his history of civilization. Something similar to this in the history of art (cycles, though not with respect to age, but still necessary uniform cycles and transitions from one form to another) has been proposed by F. I. Schmidt, the Russian art critic, who considered himself a Marxian.

Plekhanov did not know yet all these works published later, but there was even then some serious literature in defense of the theory of cycles, to admit which one must evidently concede a total discrepancy between economic relations and culture, that is subject economics itself somehow to a principle so foreign to it as that of the age of development or some other such neces sarily cyclical principle.

This does not, of course, mean to reject the possibility of repetition in history of more or less typical periods and of even sequences of periods with more or less considerable changes between one and the other. On this, for instance, W. M. Fritsche built his *Sociology of Art* to a great extent.

On examining some of the ideas of this sort of Mme. De Stael, Guizot, Taine and others, Plekhanov quite correctly compares them to another, no less

artificial theory trying to pose as a bio-sociological one—namely, the race-theory. Wherever we examine concrete facts we find profound changes in the culture of any given race depending upon changed conditions. The more general the condition the more the similarity, independent of race. The more different the economic conditions prevailing with people of the very same race, the greater the difference between them. Plekhanov gives numerous most interesting examples proving this.

Evidently the so-called "natural development of the human mind" (upon which Guizot, for instance, based his explanation of the development of culture in antiquity, although he noted quite distinctly that the motive force in the history of modern civilization is the class struggle), is also an abstraction requiring critical examination in the light of concrete facts. Plekhanov correctly points out that the facts of recent history were better known to keen historians like Guizot, hence they more readily discerned the real motive forces. The world or antiquity they conceived in toto and the inner mechanism of its history remained misty.

One cannot therefore but agree with Plekhanov when he says:

> In order to understand the history of art and literature of a given country, therefore, it is necessary to study the history of those changes which have taken place in the conditions of its inhabitants. This is—an undisputed truth.

What is still somewhat unclear, is the question of the interdependence of economic power of a given society, and its cultural progress, particularly and especially—the progress of art (including literature).

> Mme de Stael knew that modern peoples, irrespective of their achievements of intellect, have produced no poetic work which could be considered greater than the *Iliad* or *Odyssey*. This circumstance threatened to shake her assurance of the continuous upward growth of perfection of mankind and she consequently would not relinquish the age theory inherited from the eighteenth century as it furnished an easy way out of the difficulty.

Plekhanov does not agree with Mme de Stael and points out that she—like Guizot—adopts a more concrete point of view as soon as she turns to modern peoples.

Very well. But is the fact itself of the great artistic heights of the *Iliad*, the *Odyssey*, Greek tragedy, Greek sculpture, Greek architecture unshakably true? More than that, is it true that maturity—at least within the confines of that literature which we know up to now, of bourgeois literature, does not always go hand in hand with the growth in quality of artistic product of a given people?

This question cannot but be put now that the famous passage from the proposed introduction to *Zur Kritik der politischen Oekonomie*, which must have been known to Plekhanov, has been published and in which Marx adopts this view entirely.[1]

There is of course not a bit of "Draperism" in this. Marx does not at all think that there is any immanent law according to which the social organism goes through childhood. adolescence, maturity and old age. Marx, at any rate, cannot be suspected of not understanding the role played by the class struggle and to what extent the class struggle is based upon the economic circumstances which give rise to these classes!

That's not what we are after. It is necessary to verify critically the principle that a certain anthropomorphism carried over into nature and surroundings is a condition for great poetry, great artistic work.

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[1] We omit this widely known quotation from Marx which Lunacharski cites in full —Ed.

Primitive man lives to a great extent in a world of poetry, that is, his idea of surrounding nature, of social forces, of himself and so on is to a high degree subjectively creative. But to consider this poetry for that period of human development is, of course, essentially impossible. To him it is by no means poetry as distinguished from reality. Subjectively he considers this world created by his social imagination, advocated and established by the guardians of tribal tradition (the sorcerers, priests, etc.), as the real world and the real world only partially seeps through into this imaginary world.

At the other pole we have the scientific engineering world of the modern technically foremost bourgeoisie. All anthropomorphism has been completely taken away from nature. Nature is regarded entirely as a causal and lawful chain of phenomena. More than that the bourgeois scientific engineering attitude towards reality tends to consider the phychic element itself, human thought, as a little understood, uselessly superimposed phenomenon. The psychic element thus proves to be a significant element in the great automaton of the universe. The tendency is to reduce "psychic" life to chemistry and physics and all the phenomena of the world finally to a "dance of the atoms."

Such is the mechanistic view of life which corresponds to "mature" society. By "mature"one evidently should understand a more critical, more practical attitude to reality, an undoubtedly greater accuracy of knowledge of nature and technique and a disdainful attitude to all that was previously held as a basis of belief and determined the view of life as so much fiction. Under such circumstances some of the great charm of the creative order evaporates and art can no longer play a leading role.

The Greece of antiquity at the time of its golden age found itself at a period when it already understood the "poetic" principle, that is, the principle issuing to a great degree from the imagination in the artistic depiction of the world. The gods themselves in Homer are already presented not so much religiously as artistically. But the myths nevertheless possess not only great freshness but also tremendous force. There is a sort of semi-confidence in them. It would seem that such a state of the human mind is one that assigns to the imagination a prominent place in culture and at the same time demands that works of fiction be socially extremely well regulated.

On such a basis, if, as happened in ancient Greece, a society arises which is fairly strong or even just stable, then, at the culminating point of domination of the basic classes which determined this society (an aristocratic, semi-aristocratic, although nominally democratic, citizenry of some Athens), we get most remarkable works of art which do not lose their force of conviction , as Marx points out, to posterity.

What is of interest to us here is, of course, not any attempt to revive the age theory based on the external form of an expression of Marx's (childhood). What is important is to establish the possibility of a considerable discrepancy between the curve of economics and the curve of art: the first may turn sharply upward and the second go downward at the same time. A human society may command great scientific knowledge, tremendous technical forces and be artistically barren.

It seems to me that it would be exceedingly rash and entirely wrong to pick up a word dropped by Marx and amplify what he failed to amplify, and might have turned in an entirely different way if he had, and on such a basis claim that Marx thought the artistic heights achieved by ancient Greece would never be duplicated or exceeded. This seems to us entirely wrong and Marx could never have come to any such conclusion.

Really—dialectic materialism is something radically different from the mechanistic materialism of the typically bourgeois scientific engineering view of the world. Inherent to Marxism is the view of matter as something eternally alive and constituting an infinitely diversified whole, in which the processes taking place do not resolve themselves to the mere displacement of particles in space but include entirely regular qualitative changes. Marxism does not bar thought or consider it an unnecessary appendix, a sort of incomprehensible mask of material processes. Marxism considers thought a quality of live matter, a quality appearing wherever matter is organized in a definite way.

It seems perfectly clear to me that on a basis of such a philosophy of the world the profoundest cosmic poetry is possible, that this is a source generally for vital poetic creativeness which discovers a profound connection between man and the universe, between the so-called living and the so-called dead. The subjects of the comparatively poor didactic poems which Schelling wrote on the evolution of the world as it appeared to him could come to life again with extraordinary splendor and infinite variety, no longer on a basis of evolutionary idealism but on a basis of dialectic materialism.

Under socialism mankind will be freed from heavy care and the "bread problem" and a continually greater amount of time will be available for other than economic activities. This is one of the forms that leap from the kingdom of necessity to the kingdom of liberty of which Engels spoke.

Freed from the duty of excessive labor, man will unfold a much greater creative activity of imagination than at any other period.

From these roots an art will grow more powerful, courageous, wise and truthful than Greek art and be no less fresh and young.

Childhood to the individual is irrevocable. But the conception of "childhood" and "maturity" become extremely relative in sociology. Future generations may witness a wonderful synthesis of a new happy childhood and a stable human maturity. And this is all only possible, of course, if socialism triumphs.

But perhaps we should reach the conclusion, in spite of Marx's perfectly clear ideas just recited, that there really is no criterion for the comparison of the art of different periods?

Plekhanov gives the following interesting excerpts from Taine's *Lectures on Art:*

> The new method I am attempting to follow and which is beginning to find its way into all moral sciences, consists of viewing all human works and particularly works of art, as facts and phenomena which indicate characteristic traits and seek the causes—nothing more. Science, thus understood, does not condemn or condone, it only points out and explains. It does not say: "disdain Flemish art—it is too crude; admire only Italian art." Nor does it say: "disdain Gothic art—it is morbid; admire only Greek art." It leaves everyone free to follow his own tastes, to prefer that which conforms to his temperament and study with closer attention that which is more agreeable to the development of his spirit. With respect to art itself it is equally sympathetic to all its forms and all schools, even to those that seem diametrically opposed: they are considered different manifestations of the human spirit.

And Plekhanov hastens to agree with this principle:

> Thus things must necessarily present themselves so long as we stay on purely scientific grounds: esthetics—science, does not give us any theoretical basis, supporting ourselves on which we could say that Greek art merits admiration and Gothic art condemnation or the reverse.

Immediately following this, however, we are somewhat amazed to find Plekhanov writing:

Things are entirely different, of course, the moment we leave the province of esthetics. Works of art are phenomena and facts that have their origin in the social relations of people. As these relations change so also the esthetic tastes of people change, and consequently also the works of artists. The man of a given social period will always prefer such works of art as express the tastes of the period. In a society divided into classes the tastes peculiar to the period are apt to be different according to the position of each class. And since every given art critic is himself also a product of his social surroundings, his esthetic judgement will always be determined by those surroundings. He will therefore be unable to avoid giving preference to one school in art or literature over another, opposed one. All this is quite true, but it does not in the least impugne either Bielynski or Taine. It, on the contrary, only proves that they were entirely right in denying the absoluteness of all art criteria. Whenever such criteria are accepted, scientific esthetics becomes an impossibility.

And so, any given are critic is a product of his social surroundings and cannot exercise esthetic (sic!) judgement independent of his surroundings. He must judge things from the angle of better and worse. Bielynski and Taine however, are right, according to Plekhanov: there are no absolute criteria of art and the science of esthetics is impossible if such criteria are adopted.

Let us drop the question of absolute criteria. There are no absolute criteria. But Marx does put himself the question whether it is possible to establish according to some criterion whether a given social order is higher or lower in type. And Marx, as is well known, answered: the criterion according to which it is possible to judge the relative value of social orders is the development of human wealth. Or, if this dry term is to be changed into a more concrete one, we should say: that social order can be considered higher which facilitates most the greatest development of all abilities and capabilities inherent in man.

We thus have such a picture. At any period, ours included, there can only be critics whose judgement corresponds to their convictions which are determined by their class and through it, by their period. But in addition to these, it develops, there are also some such critics as not only the bourgeois Taine, who naturally would wish to adopt an eclectic point of view—a view implying that all periods are of equal value, but also Bielynski and Plekhanov. Such critics would say to us, common critics:

"It is true, no critic (so Plekhanov would have it—'no one' except Plekhanov himself, evidently, who proves, in this case, to be exempt from the social law) can escape the prejudices of his period, consequently you also have subscribed to such prejudices. You also evaluate different works of art and find one period better—another worse. But you are miserably mistaken, you are in the thrall of your class feelings. But we, a special order of Marxians (or predecessors of Marx like Taine and Bielynski), we are not swayed by any class prejudice and we declare that your evaluations are all vanity of vanities, that they are the purest sort of subjectivism while in reality, objectively, every work of art, if it only expresses its period, is a great masterpiece and can not be compared with the product of any other period.

We should then answer our unexpectedly "beyond all class" Marxians:

We greatly suspect that you— just like us common sinners—can not be exempted from the general law according to which your esthetic (precisely esthetic, as you expressed yourself) judgement reflects the interests which sway and stir you—social class interests. But you wish to resist such an "obsession." You wish to be beyond all classes, above all classes, on the heights of a perfectly objective and purely scientific point of view. From this purely scientific point of view there prove to be no criteria in the history of culture by which one could find one period of greater merit than another. Even if you do extend your "criterionlessness" only to esthetics, permit me to tell you that this is an intellectual point of view becoming to Taine, less so to Bielynski and less than that to Plekhanov though the latter frequently

broke away from it and has the justification that inasmuch as he was conducting a hard struggle against the subjectivists and wished to refute them as completely as possible, he had to present Marxian objectivism as glaringly as possible. But we sinners and class bound ones are not at all prepared to admit our point of view a hopelessly subjective one. We assume that when the proletariat prefers socialism to capitalism it does not only reveal *class subjectivism* but also defends the *objective* development of mankind. We also assume that art cannot be torn away from the base on which it grows and that, evidently the higher the social base, the mighter and happier will be the society; the better the prospects for "the greatest development of all abilities and capabilities inherent to man" (evidently including also artistic ones), the higher the art of that society. From this point of view we do not consider it impossible esthetically to consider which period—the middle ages, say, or Greek classicism—is closer to us, builders of socialism.

This is by no means a judgement beyond the province of esthetics because, as a matter of fact—and Plekhanov himself explains this superbly—there is no such thing as an esthetic judgement outside the pale of human life. Inasmuch as art is always a social expression, we as well as the estheticians have to take it as the expression of some society.

Let us compare then, which society, which culture, which art gave greater possibility for development of all human abilities—the middle ages with their mysticism and Gothics or the world of antiquity? Remember that the bourgeoisie itself when it began to feel its strength always inaugurated, by way of its best representatives, a "renaissance of Greek principles" in one form or another.

So we can say that antique art is esthetically closer to our period.

But—Plekhanov would object—that does not prove that it is of a higher order than arts less close to your period, since everything is relative.

This would be true—should be our answer—if the social bases themselves would also be lost somewhere in the immeasurable space of relativity. But they are not. Since the Socialist era is the highest of all that have existed, all those eras that come closest to it are also of a higher order than those that are further from it. The esthetics of socialist society is the expression of free man that has made the leap from the kingdom of necessity to that of the consciousness of organized man, and is esthetics of the highest order. Its subjective and objective significance there coincide. It is subjective because it is the expression of the real interests, the real mode of thought and feeling of the given era and given class. It is also objective because the given period and the given class (the proletariat) are objectively of a higher order than previous eras and classes. This would seem clear?

We shall return to this several times later on and develop the thought from other angles, as Plekhanov also returns to it and develops it in a great variety of ways. The essential idea has already been stated here. It follows from our argument that it is incorrect to say the critic must not analyse a work of art from the point of view of what it should be like. And we emphasize that for our time it would be monstrous to adopt Plekhanov's position. The critic examining in our day works of art of our own period—or even of past periods, inasmuch as we "master critically" the past as Lenin has recommended— and rejecting the point of view of "should," that is of their greatest possibilities of serving the cause of socialist construction. would be a very odd critic and no one would consider him Marxian.

It cannot but be regretted that in the passage quoted above (and several others) Plekhanov suddenly tries to put up an impenetrable wall between the

science of esthetics in which there are no criteria or rather, in which there are only criteria taken from the same period as the given work of art, from a sort of "beyond esthetic" point of view where class interests and similar subjective forces hold sway. Here Plekhanov abandoned the point of view which synthecizes subject—object. Here, it seems to us, he failed to make ends meet.

What place does Plekhanov occupy in the field defined by the two esthetics: the esthetics of "art for art's sake" (with the condition of its being subconsciously useful) and the esthetics of "art which is socially useful?" (with the conditions that the product is unquestionably artistic).

Plekhanov here adopts primarily his objective point of view which, it is quite self evident, is a mighty and necessary one for any work on the nature of art criticism or the history of art. We must add, on our side, that both points of view very frequently prevailed at one and the same time and conflicted powerfully, being the expressions of the ideologies of different classes of one and the same society. Plekhanov does not ignore this phase of the matter although he leaves it somewhat in the shade. He proposes the following thesis: "The tendency to art for art's sake arises when there is a disagreement between the artist and his social surroundings."

This thesis is a very keen one and Plekhanov, as usual, supports it with a tremendous number of brilliant examples. On the basis of an admirably worked out example of the French romanticists, he shows how they could not but have a horror for "utilitarian art" inasmuch as they abhored—and rightfully so—their surrounding bourgeois world with its ideas of utility.

According to Plekhanov, those classes, on the contrary, tend towards a utilitarian art, which have direct creative problems, in other words, classes in power, which are hither changing the world or actively opposing such changes.

Plekhanov very truly notes that the utilitarian view-point on art is by no means organically a part of particularly revolutionary or radical views.

"I must add," he writes, 'that any given political power always prefers the utilitarian view on art, insomuch, of course, as it concerns itself with this matter altogether. This is really self evident: it is to its own interest to direct all ideologies towards the serving of the end it serves itself. As political power, though sometimes revolutionary, is generally conservative and often even reactionary, it is quite evident that it cannot be taken for granted that the utilitarian viewpoint on art is mainly held by revolutionary or generally progressively minded people.

Notwithstanding this objectively perfectly correct conclusion, I beg to call particular attention to the Plekhanov statement that "any given political power prefers the utilitarian viewpoint on art." It is perfectly evident that the political government in our country, being unquestionably a revolutionary one, the most revolutionary government that has ever existed in the world, also cannot but be inclined to a utilitarian piont of view. It is also evident that its utilitarianism will be an absolutely different one from those Plekhanov brings for illustration (from the time of the reign of Nicholas I) in his essay *Art and Social Life.*

In another passage he is even more definitely emphatic:

"The utilitarian view on art is just as agreeable to the conservative mind as to the revolutionary one. The tendency to adopt such a point of view involves only one condition necessarily: a live and active interest in a certain—it makes no difference which—social order or social ideal—and wherever this interest disappears for any reason this tendency also disappears."

Strictly speaking—this is already a definite evaluation. Under such circumstances one can by no means agree with Plekhanov when he declares, time and again, that when we thus establish the connection between the two points of view with the different social orders we can no longer put the question as to which point of view is preferable. How so? the Marxian reader cannot but ask amazed. Just because the utilitarian viewpoint on art is also agreeable to the aristocracy dominant in a given society we cannot determine which of the two utilitarianisms is best? We quite evidently can.

Similarly, if we have two social orders, one of which evinces "a lively and active interest in the social order and social ideal" and of a very high calibre at that (is permeated by a truthful idea and not by a false one— to use Plekhanov's terminology), while the other has lost all interest in activity, can we really hesitate to decide which of the two is *objectively* the higher order? (I call attention again to the objective criterion given by Marx for comparing social systems as cited by me previously).

In the same essay—*Art and Social Life,* Plekhanov also asks the following question: "Let us go further and investigate—which of the two opposing views on art is more advantageous for the success of art?"

This is a very interesting way of putting the question.

Rejecting (vainly, in our opinion) an objective stand, frankly admitting that periods when conservatism which retards human developments puts utilitarian art at its service as well as periods (and classes) which, due to unfortunate circumstances that reduce socially-utilitarian viewpoint on art, are of a lower order than periods that forge ahead with full force.—Plekhanov nevertheless wishes to, at any rate, put the question as to which of these points of view is more favorable to the development of art itself.

Here we come across a most curious judgement of Plekhanov's. He writes:

> Turgenyev, who disliked the advocates of the utilitarian viewpoint on art very much has said: the Venus of Milo is more unquestionable than the principles of 1789. He was entirely right. But what is to be inferred from this? Not at all what Turgenyev wished.

Plekhanov points out that some races and some periods would not have found the Venus of Milo an ideal.

> But the Venus of Milo is "unquestionably" attractive to some portion of the white race. To this portion of the race she is really more unquestionable than the principles of 1789. But why? Because those principles express relations corresponding to one definite phase of development only of the white race—the era of the establishment of the bourgeois order in its struggle against the feudal one—while the Venus of Milo represents an ideal of womanly charms corresponding to many phases of that development. Many, but not all.

It is self evidently not my aim to find an absolute criterion of beauty that would make the Venus of Milo, objectively, the most beautiful type of woman. It is quite conceivable that a Negro may find her lacking in a dark skin and other features of the Negro race. But if we leave aside all questions of race and consider womanly beauty as represented by the Venus of Milo only as beauty of a definite stock, will it not develop that womanly features like those of the Venus of Milo represent an ideal which not only corresponds to many phases of development but precisely to the best of them?

In fact Plekhanov writes later:

> The Christians had their own ideal of womanly beauty. It can be seen on Byzantine icons. It is well known that the worshippers before those icons had their "doubts" about the Venus of Milo or any other Venus. They considered them she-devils and destroyed them whenever they had the oportunity. Then came a time when these antique she-devils again found favor in the eyes of the white race. This period was preceded by a movement for freedom among West European city burghers, a movement which found its

most vivid expression precisely in the principles of 1789. Hence we can say, Turgenyev to the contrary, that the Venus of Milo became more and more "unquestionable" with the maturing of the European population for announcing of the principles of 1789. This is no paradox—it is a naked historical fact.

But did an "earthly" ideal triumph in this case? Shall we agree with Plekhanov that it cannot be decided what is to be esteemed higher as an artistic achievement: the greatest embodiment of the "earthly" ideal or the highest expression of the Christian mystic ideal?

We shall not speak of the fact that our feelings—the feelings of the more advanced people of our age—are aroused at the mere idea that one can hesitate upon a choice between these two ideals—to such an extent are we, materialists, permeated by the consciousness that the earthly happiness which socialism will bring is something more concretely beautiful than any "cherubic" dreams of an "immaterial" heaven. But can we not say from a purely objective point of view that when a "dispute" arises "about tastes" between the idealist and the materialist, the artistic views of the materialist are as unquestionably and objectively higher than the artistic views of the idealist as materialism is higher than idealism? Would it not otherwise be tantamount to admitting that materialism and idealism are also a matter of taste?

It is quite well known that to convince an idealist by logic, if his class background resists it, is a futile endeavor.

What could one say about a Marxian who would deliver himself on such a dispute in this fashion: "O my idealist friend, you are as much right as I am, there is no objective point of view here. My ideas correspond to the position of my class in my time and yours are due to that of your class. I cannot think otherwise than I do; neither can you. Consequently, our dispute is useless." An "objective" individual, free of all class prejudice (Plekhanov and such like Marxians) should logically say:

Both the one and the other point of view are equally true, because they equally express their particular eras; neither can objectively have any advantage, nor can they be reconciled. The thing will simply be decided by the struggle.

What could one say about such a Marxian? Could one really come to the conclusion that if the great test came, and in a civil war or a universal world war the idealists should overcome the materialists it would mean that idealism has proved its superiority in the only way possible on earth?

I beg to differ. We do not share this point of view. We know that such a triumph of idealism would mean the decline of all human culture.

It is better to adhere firmly to Marx's objective criterion.

It is very interesting to note that Plekhanov himself quotes a thought of Bielynski's in which the latter departs very seriously from the principles of strict objectivity so dear to Plekhanov.

Bielynski who justly asserted in the later period of his literary activity that never and nowhere has there been any pure, unconditional or, as the philosophers say, "absolute" art, allowed, however, that the paintings of the Italian school of the sixteenth century approached the ideal of an absolute art to a certain degree as they were the creations of a period when "art was the chief interest, exclusively the preoccupation of the cultural sections of society."

This quotation is an exceedingly interesting one. Of course there never has been or can be, from our point of view, an absolute, unconditional, art. But when Bielynski nevertheless suddenly admits that "Italian painting of the sixteenth century approached the ideal of an absolute art" we involuntarily ask: how did Bielynski account for this, psychologically?

Really now, there is no absolute ideal, so how can one judge whether a given art "approaches" such an ideal? Bielynski points out that this came about as a result of the extraordinary interest taken in art by the cultured

A new Mural by Joe Jones, American artist at the Commonwealth College, Mena, Arkansa

sections of society. But the cultured sections of society have also been interested in art at other times. It is hard, for instance, to conceive a more esthetical period than the eighteenth century in France (Louis XV and his court). This section of society probably spent greater sums of money on art than any court during the period of the renaissance. Outwardly, art played a veritably gigantic role in the life of these drones. But these drones of the end of the eighteenth century were not very sure of their tenure, their roots were rather rotten and their art was somewhat rotten so that, notwithstanding it occasionally reached a remarkable subtlety in various fields, this art would not for a moment have been considered by Bielynski as approaching an "absolute art."

And Plekhanov soon declares that the works of art so dear to Bielynski's heart were a "characteristic artistic expression of the triumph of the earthly ideal over the Christian monastic one" and that "great force and healthy joy" which had "nothing in common with the pious virgins of the Byzantine masters" are manifested in them.

That, then, is the explanation! It seemed to Bielynski that an art approaches the absolute, not because he had found the absolute, but because he compared this art with that of other periods and, perhaps not altogether consciously, accorded it preference just because and insomuch as "great force and healthy joy" were so tempestuously manifested in it.

But, I ask the staunch adherents of Plekhanov's views, how shall we reason? Shall we insist that from the viewpoint of esthetics though, as Plekhanov himself has explained, it cannot be torn away from life, the era of pious fasting and mortification of the body must be placed on a par with periods of force, health and joy?

In spite of the labored objectivity dictated by reasons of polemics, Plekhanov himself instinctively adopts this point of view. Talking about the merits and defects of the bourgeoisie realistic school and other bourgeois trends, Plekhanov notes that the artists are about eighty years behind their time and should march in step with the proletariat instead. He wrathfully refutes the opinion that the proletariat is supposedly also infected by the bourgeois spirit:

> It is ludicrous. Richard Wagner has long ago shown how lacking in any basis are the reproaches of such gentlemen that the working class movement for freedom is

bourgeois. According to the extremely just opinion expressed by Wagner, an examination of the matter proves that the working class movement for freedom is a trend not towards the bourgeois but away from the bourgeois to a free life, to "artistic humanity."

Both Wagner and Plekhanov are, of course, entirely right here. Plekhanov is also right when he further agrees with Flaubert that "virtuous books are false and a bore" only adding: "This is because the virtue of present day society, bourgeois virtue, is false and a bore."

He says:

In socialist society a passion for art for art's sake becomes a purely logical impossiblity just as there must come an end to the vulgarisation of public morals now an inevitable result of the efforts of the ruling class to maintain its privileges..

Explaining:

The endeavor to be useful to society which is the basis of the virtue of antiquity, is the source of self sacrifice and a self sacrificing act can easily and, as history shows, often has become a subject for esthetic treament. It is sufficient to recall the songs of primitive peoples or, not to go back so far, the monument to Harmodius and Aristogiton at Athens.

Further Plekhanov comes to a conclusion which must be examined with great attention.

I am trying, according to the well known saying, not to weep or to laugh but to understand. I do not say: the modern artist "must" draw his inspiration from the proletarian movement for freedom. Not at all—an apple tree must bear apples, a pear tree pears and artists holding a bourgeois viewpoint will inevitably rise up in arms against such a tendency. The art of the period of decline "must" be decadent. This is inevitable. And it would be fruitless to "protest" against it. But, as the *Communist Manifesto* justly says, in periods when the class struggle approaches a climax the process of dissociation of the ruling class reaches such a high stage within the entire old society that part of the ruling class splits away from it and joints the revolutionary class which carries the banner of the future. Just as part of the aristocracy once joined the bourgeoisie, part of the bourgeoisie, particularly bourgeois ideologists who have risen to a theoretical understanding of the entire course of history, now joins the proletariat.

When one thinks himself into this remarkable passage, one can see that up to the point when it refers to the *Communist Manifesto,* it is permeated by the most genuine fatalism. This should be grist to the mill of V. Pereversev who so insisted on the fatal predetermination of every artist.

And really, who can say to the artist: "You must become a proletarian

artist" when in another sense of must—in the fatalistic sense—he is bound to be a bourgeois artist as "the apple tree must bear apples?"

The example chosen by Plekhanov is exceedingly inapt as modern gardening proves that an apple tree may bear pears. Even if not to go so far, in the sense of the "trick" of it—which would be tantamount to having a sculptor, for instance, take up music—but to keep within the limits of reality, a wild apple tree, in the hands of a good gardener, can be made to produce a variety of cultivated sorts of apples.

But it is not necessary to rely on gardening experience, because in the second part of the passage Plekhanov himself, supporting himself on Marx, refutes the first part (of the passage). It develops that bourgeois ideologists can rise to a theoretical understanding of proletarian ideas. What remains then is only the question: can we do anything to have as many great artists as possible who are on the wrong road now, "when the class struggle is reaching a climax," turn in the right direction? And we are beginning to think more and more that we could prove a determining force in this respect.

Plekhanov says that—

> Among bourgeois ideologists who go over to the side of the proletariat we find very few artists. This is probably due to the fact that only those who think can "rise to a theoretical understanding of the entire course of history," and modern artists, unlike the great masters, for instance, of the Renaissance, do very little thinking.

So artists think too little while the great masters of the Renaissance period thought a great deal. Doesn't it follow from this that the artist of our day *should* think more? And cannot man *arouse* thoughts in others? Cannot a party which considers agitation and propaganda one of its most effective weapons, *should* not such a party arouse the artist to thought and direct it in healthy channels—channels which Plekhanov himself thinks healthy, since he says:

> However it may be, one can say with certainty that any more or less important artist can unquestionably greatly increase his power if he should steep himself in the great ideas of the modern movement for freedom. It is only necessary for these ideas to become part and parcel of him, that he express them precisely as an artist.

To many it seems that there is nothing left to argue about after this. Some even say: "There was nothing to argue about—Plekhanov, as you see, understood all this perfectly well himself."

I beg to differ. There is an evident discrepancy in Plekhanov's ideas here and it must be settled finally.

If we should adopt Plekhanov's point of view and examine objectively (which is a prime duty of any Marxian) both his point of view and the one we have defended, we could say: Plekhanov's point of view *should have* coincided with that period of Marxian thought when it did not feel itself a power which can change conditions including also the creative ideas of the artist, it corresponded to a period when it was more of an observer and could only explain, when, using Marx's own words, it "interpreted the world" of art and held that such is its only lawful mission. Our point of view corresponds to a period when Marxian thought has become, in our country, a power, when it wants to *change* the world, including also the world of art, wholly in accordance with Marx's fundamental idea of the role of philosophy, or any theoretical labor. And as we are living in our own period and not in Plekhanov's we must rid Plekhanov's views of that which was an effect of the weakness of his period.

I do not consider it necessary to quote passages from the afterword to *Art and Social Life* devoted to me, personally, and dispute them. This can be

done elsewhere, in fact has already been done. I must note only one thing. Plekhanov then distorted my first objection entirely (uncounsciously, of course). I never could have demanded of Plekhanov (and there is no trace of any demand in any of my writings) any absolute criterion. But what Plekhanov altogether slanderously attributed to me was that I supposedly denied the possibility of judging objectively whether "a given artistic work was well executed." I have never dreamt of denying such an objective possibility. In my dispute with Plekhanov then, I only claimed one thing: that it is possible to compare not only individual works of art produced by the same period, that is, works which issue from one and the same principle, but also the very esthetic principles of individual periods.

Although we have no absolutely ideal society, we have criterions by which we can judge what is progress and what is regress in a society. Together with Marx, we consider socialism the greatest social achievement we are now aiming to reach. The Earth has not seen any such thing before. Consequently although we do not possess any absolute artistic truth, those esthetic theories (just as those philosophical or economical doctrines) which organically fuse with our socialist ideal, with the modern advanced labor movement, we consider unquestionably of the highest order.

Plekhanov was compelled to admit this partially, even though with various circumlocutions, in his later recriminations. As he acknowledged the esthetically positive value of the great liberating ideas of our time, it only remained for Plekhanov to say it (which he, however, never would, as he did not wish to divorce his beloved "objectivism")—namely, to say that our great liberational ideas are great not only for our time but also for all past times, that it cannot, consequently merely be said that socialism is, of course, not only objectively possible in our time but also a morally great idea; however, there have been other periods which can pretend to similar grandeur inasmuch as they were the natural product of their time.

To wind up. Every cultural phenomenen is the natural product of its time. But times change and they are not without their difference. We completely reject all theories of cycles a la Spengler, who claims that the peaks are equally grand in any period if one only finds in them their adequate expression. Not by any means. Human progress is a real march forward. It is, of course, not a simple straight line as naive progressivists once thought, it follows a zig-zag course, a stirring and dialectical course. But with socialism, for which we are struggling, which we are already building, we shall really reach heights never reached before.

We must stop briefly on some individual studies devoted to various artists. In some magnificent essays on the works of Uspenski, Karonin and Naumov, two features stand out with special vividness:

In the first place, inasmuch as these writers devote much of their attention in their works to publicistic subjects Plekhanov also (and perhaps not so much also as by personal preference?) assigns a great deal of space to the form of criticism he was inclined to half condemn in Dobrolubov—that is the type of criticism which, using art as a pretext, discusses primarily the basic economic questions of their time and country.

In the second place Plekhanov insists with particular fervor in these essays that the publicistic bias was most harmful to the Narodniki writers. This trend was most vividly developed by V. Vorovski in his essay *More About Gorki*. There it is stated very plainly that the writer whom life drafts into its service proves to be in an intolerable position, as the endeavors of

the writer to respond to contemporaneity and uncover the tendencies in it leads to his work being stamped with a lack of artistry.

Vorovski himself, however, quotes examples which completely refute all he has stated so categorically. Thus Vorovski says that the Russian literature which is of a tendacious character, in other words, that Russian literature from which one can reach social conclusions—is below all criticism. How such a statement came to be penned by Comrade Vorovski it is hard to imagine. Are such unquestionably tendacious writers as Nekrasov, Shchedrin, etc., really below criticism? But aside from the fact that the most conspicuous tendaciousness never prevented either them or Aeschylus, Aristophanes, Dante, Hugo, Byron, from being great poets, the opposite examples quoted by Vorovski again convince us that his judgement was biased and was a direct inference from some almost similarly categorical statements of Plekhanov's.

In fact, Vorovski refers to Tolstoi's *War and Peace*. He asserts that this is a book lacking all tendaciousness, that it is creative work beyond all classes, that there life is really given in all its fulness, objectively, and so an. But we know very well that *War and Peace* is a polemical work, taking issue at once against the rising bourgeoisie and against the revolutionary intelligentsia which was the offspring of this rising capitalism and fought against it. We know that Tolstoi, contrary to Vorovski's claims, selected his facts, rejected all those which did not help the apotheosis of the nobility (serfdom, for instance), that he most decisively distorted facts and did so consciously, in order to prove his thesis. It is precisely a reference to Tolstoi, even to his most virtually objective writings, that brings up an entirely different question: how was such a degree of convincing realism as was produced by Tolstoi's great art possible with such exceedingly false ideas (see Plekhanov on Ibsen) and such a shameless treatment of fact?

Plekhanov sympathetically quotes a passage from Bielynski:

> Woe to the man whom nature has made an artist, woe to him, if, dissatisfied with his own path, he throws himself onto a strange course. An inevitable descent awaits him on this new path, a descent from which it is not always possible to get back to his own path.

Explaining:

> These lines recall his principle, which includes into his esthetic code that the artist does not think in syllogisms but in images—a principle from which it follows that an artist of genius may occasionally be a very poor thinker.

An artist may be a poor thinker. Does it not follow that the artist is always a rather poor thinker and does it not also follow that, everything else being equal, the artist who is also a keen thinker is of a higher type than the talented artist who is a poor thinker? It seems there can be no two opinions on this. But the powerful thinker-artist must evidently try to express his thoughts in his writings. The question then resolves itself merely to whether he will be able to express them completely in imagery. Those works of art which are charged with a tremendous amount of thought, like Turgenyev's best novels, do not at all bear against publicistic tendencies as the long discussions with which his novels are filled seem, in the mouths of living characters, merely part of the chain of vivid action which are the feature of the novel. Even from this point of view only one must say that Plekhanov's judgement, expressed in a general form with respect to Gorki's didactic novels, is wrong. A powerful thinker who thoroughly understands Marxism and is also a great artist can preach and preach in imagery.

We are inclined to put the question even more sharply. What if we have before us a work in which not all the ideological values are expressed in imagery and the author also comes out directly with some so-called lyrical propaganda, directly addressed to the reader? Such is the case, for instance, in Chernishevski's novel *What Is To Be Done?* Plekhanov is inclined to think this novel relatively a weak one artistically. I think this is due to the fact that Plekhanov was to some extent under the sway of aristocratic-bourgeois esthetics from under which Bielynski also did not fully escape inasmuch as he insisted so energetically on the existence of a sort of impassable barrier between artistic publicistic work and "fine literature." Plekhanov in any event understands the tremendous influence enjoyed by Chernishevski's book on his contemporary society. And would it not be a complete application of the "should" idea, and a distorted application at that if we should say that, from the point of view of esthetics, Chernishevski was wrong in writing *What Is To Be Done?* And so were the thousands upon thousands of readers wrong who read this novel, as we are told, with veneration, like a new bible?

The question of the subjectively lyrical principal in a work of art cannot be rejected just in order to cater to remnants of aristocratic estheticism, and I may say that both Plekhanov's and Vorovski's somewhat disdainful attitude to tendaciousness is just such a remnant.

I cannot but point out, however, that it was Plekhanov's constant, firm conviction that every work of art had an ideological content. But it is not entirely clear how Plekhanov understood this ideological content—whether as something cognized by the artist and organically connected with his work or as something not entirely cognized, so that to the author his work seems only imagery, while what this imagery means and what inferences they suggest—this is not clear to the artist. It seems to me that this must remain vague even to the most careful reader of Plekhanov's works.

Translated from the Russian by S. D. Kogan

I. Robin

In Gabriel D'Annunzio's Garden

An Account of a Visit to the Home of a Fascist Hero

I have always loved the Lago di Garda more than any other lake in Italy. Its wide, blue, dreamy expanse lulls you with its tranquillity. You can drive round it in a fast car in about two hours, watching the changing views that offer themselves at every bend.

A blue mist hangs over the lake. Large and luxurious villas are hidden in trees and shrubbery where impoverished princes live in seclusion. The hills gradually merge into the rocky face of the mountain, penetrated at numerous points by road tunnels.

Traces of Greek, Roman and Etruscan civilisation here have been preserved. These heights were fortified by the Romans to protect the Italian peninsula from European barbarians. During the middle ages the lake was under the cruel sway of Verona and later passed into the hands of the magnificent noisy republic of Venice. Napoleon was charmed by the beauty of this lake and planned building a palace here. Before the World War half of the lake belonged to Austria and half to Italy, but after the war Italy took it completely into her own hands.

A boatman bringing me to the island lazily finished his story and ended with a sigh:

"There is as much water in the Lago di Garda as there has been blood spilt for it."

And there is a great deal of water in the Lago di Garda, in this bright blue mirror, three hundred and sixty five square kilometres in area.

On the Lago di Garda D'Annunzio has his residence. Beyond Gardona, after passing a magnificent hotel and park, a wide smooth road turns off to the right from the main road and leads to *Vittoriale* (Victorious).

Here D'Annunzio is passing the remainder of his days. Far from the crowd and hidden behind a high wall this leader meditates upon his life's achievements.

During the "Third Italy" period he was the most popular and fashionable writer in Italy and preached estheticism, amoralism and individualism. He was the prophet of the aristocratic "superman" who lived only for beauty and pleasure and despised the "common herd" and "low bred" upstarts.

There was nothing stable about D'Annunzio's character. The famous Oriani described him as "that refined little fairhaired rhymster who listens with his eyes and thinks with his ears." He was an idealist, a naturalist, a Nietzschean, a symbolist and a mystic in turns. But throughout these mutations he remained a patriot and eventually developed into a jingoist and a fascist.

D'Annunzio's opinions about literature greatly shocked his friends and fellow writers. The same Oriani once wrote in a letter to an intimate friend. "I should like to see you in D'Annunzio's set and watch your face when he is giving his views on French literature. He says for example that in Victor Hugo there is a complete absence of any political idea and that Balzac is absolutely impossible to read. I believe these outrageous views are perfectly sincere. D'Annunzio is one of those people for whom

anything which differs from themselves is lifeless and valueless. D'Annunzio, intoxicated by his own fame, flits like a butterfly over the highest works of art and that is what makes him think that he is above them and will live longer than they."

N. Minski, telling of his meeting with Maeterlinck recalls by way of contrast how D'Annunzio "whenever you meet him immediately begins telling you his schemes, informs you of his past and with perfect sincerity announces that he is a great artist, expecting you to declare him the genius of the Italian Renaissance. You can see D'Annunzio at one glance like a mansion with all its doors and windows open," Everything in him seems to be shouting aloud "look at me, admire me, rejoice in the privilege."

In 1897 D'Annunzio stood for parliament and the member for Beauty, as he was dubbed by politicians of the time, was warmly received by the new house. For three years he entertained and shocked the house with his mishievous antics. Then one day he veered round from the extreme reactionary right wing to the extreme left, socialist wing. But his new constituents mistrusted both his right and left wing views and he was never again elected.

D'Annunzio's literary and to a certain extent his political activities brought him popularity, and he gained access to the society of kings and the upper few. The aristocracy carried this little Benjamin of theirs in their arms, because he sang their praises in nearly all his works. In 1887 in his play *Fame* which was produced in Naples, D'Annunzio called for a new regime to be raised up on the ruins of democracy (that democracy, as he put it, which had been suffered too long). At the time the play awoke widespread indignation, but twenty-five years later Italian fascism rehabilitated D'Annunzio's fame. D'Annunzio believed that the world had been created for such as he and lived the sort of life that is popularly regarded as a fairy tale kind of existence.

He looked upon himself as a superman and persuaded others to take the same view: "I also have been marked with a sign, and I am not afraid to state that it is a sign of vocation and election."

However when in 1908 a certain Madame de Tebbe predicted that he would die on July 17, 1909, this "Elect of God" was persuaded that his end had come, and worked up the whole Italian press about it. Having the same belief in Madame de Tebbe as he had in St. Francis he began at once to prepare heroically to meet his end. He made out a most detailed inventory of all his possessions, furniture, books and clothes, valued them at one and a half million lire, made his will and after handing it into his bank (the clerks thought his valuation of his estate a trifle high) prepared to die. The seventeenth of July arrived. On that notable day the doomed man preferred not to sit at home and went out to wander through the streets of Florence. It is said that he just escaped being hit by a tile falling from a roof. The possibility of dying in such a fashion offended his esthetic sensibilities, so after lunch he mounted a spirited horse and set off at a gallop. But he did not succeed in breaking his neck. In the evening he attended a solemn mass in thanksgiving for the divine mercy that had been shown him.

In his writings D'Anunzio does not hesitate to describe his most intimate experiences and often embellishes them and smacks his lips over them, as he throws them out into the street to be eagerly snatched up by the sensation-loving public.

Duse's meeting with D'Annunzio cost her much suffering and was one of the tragedies of her life. A plebeian, who had been born in a railway

carriage, the bare legged daughter of a family of gypsy artists, little Eleanora from the time she was four brought to the footlights all the charm and fullness of her half-tamed, passionate nature. The charming melancholy character that she created in the course of her life, and whose experiences became part of herself, forced her audiences as they watched her, to enter into her sufferings and her childish joys.

Feeling deeply all her life the emptiness and triviality of the plays in which she had to act, Duse dreamed of a new theatre for the millions where she would be able to speak with the people in a language they could understand.

"In art to stand still is to go back," was this great actress's motto. She came to D'Annunio in the hope that with him she would form a new theatre and make him write new plays. All her life Duse was unsatisfied with her acting and only happy when she was seeking something new. D'Annunzio, the individualist superman, did not seek anything, for he was so intoxicated with his own fame that he believed he had reached the heights of "immortal excellence." The idea of a theatre for the "mob" did not appeal to him. Is it surprising that Duse, feeling the injury that had been done to all that was best in her, realised the falsity of her position and left D'Annunzio and the stage. In her solitude this greatest of all actresses watched the events of the Russian revolution, believing, in the words of her friends, "that it was in Russia that the truth of tomorrow was being forged."

D'Annunzio has described his meeting with her. He pictures himself as a young and lusty, golden haired poet, and his friend as a fading woman trying to warm her aging body in the arms of a passionate youth. After a short love affair the young poet ordered her to leave him and bring him a young and attractive maiden.

Old age advanced and love departed. D'Annunzio could only speak of himself. His sun was setting. The crowd might gradually forget him. This must not be allowed. So with his customary zeal he began to transfer his activity to other spheres where every now and again for the benefit of the mob he would let off some new rocket that quickly fizzled out.

Nobody's voice was louder than D'Annunzio's in 1914 in persuading the masses to enter into the imperialist bloodshed. The thunder of guns and the groans of the dying inspired him to write martial and jingoist poems. He celebrated the methods of modern warfare and especially aeroplanes, in which he dreamed of bombing the Austrian capital. Later, following ancient precedent, he took Fiume with a handful of men on warships, and reigned supreme for a day or so like a warrior of old.

Kings and diplomats smiled condescendingly as they watched the military operations of the obstreperous D'Annunzio but they tried to restrain him if he showed any signs of exceeding the limits set by their own plans. D'Annunzio found the necessary words and poetry and pose to compromise and retreat.

The bourgeois public watched D'Annunzio with unconcealed curiosity, expecting some new rocket to be let off at any moment, forgetting that age was doing its work on their chosen idol. Then D'Annunzio, patrician to the marrow of his bones, after quarreling with the diplomats, attempted to head an Italian Federation of Workers on the Sea, not in order to defend them from their exploiters, but merely because it was an opportunity of startling the world in a new role.

Several years later the leader of Italian fascism, Mussolini, visited

D'Annunzio, now turned hermit, and the king awarded him the title of Prince of Monte Nivoso.

The new "national hero" had been canonised.

At the gates of Vittoriale there are a couple of fascist police officers in full uniform. When we had approached to within a few paces of the gates they politely signed us to stop. One does not penetrate into this holy of holies without special permission.

I decided to walk round the place. A sturdy man of advanced years walked beside me, sucking a pipe. Although it was a hot day he had on a warm suit and a tight gutta percha collar without a tie. He turned out to be a vinegrower from the neighbouring village, and told me how the commander proposed to leave a large sum of money after his death, perhaps as much as a million lire, for the village people, that he had spent a great deal on the church, which he was renovating in the style of Vittoriale, and that the king of England had recently sent him a golden goblet set with jewels.

The man was apparently pleased at having the opportunity of impressing a foreigner with his intimate knowledge of D'Annunzio's social affairs. Through the thick trees I caught sight of a large fully equipped warship standing in a garden. My guide told me that the King of Italy had ordered a warship to be sent to Vittoriale as an immortal monument to the commander. It was no easy matter bringing this ship, which had taken part in the Fiume preparation, on to such a hill. A special road had been made for it and for several days the ten horses strained and pulled before they had dragged its steel plates and guns to their present site. The ship was then set up, given a coat of paint, and the guns were put in their places. The warship on top of the hill is now a public marvel and attracts the curious from all parts. People come and gape at it from a distance.

I asked why one could not go inside Vittoriale and why it was guarded by the police. My companion looked at me in astonishment and even stopped sucking his pipe as in an almost injured tone, he explained that the commander was a very important person, almost on a level with the king.

"Are they going to build a wall here," I asked by way of changing the subject, pointing at some large stones against the enclosure. My companion went purple and an angry light came into his small eyes.

"Use those stones to build a wall?" he exclaimed. "Why those stones are more than two thousand years old. The commander ordered an ancient Roman amphitheatre near Verona to be dismantled so as to build a mausoleum for him. He wants to lie under sacred Roman stones. Build a wall with them indeed!" And muttering something uncomplimentary he quickly fell behind.

But luck was in store for me. In the evening on the square opposite the villa I was unexpectedly hailed by a fair haired Milanese of my acquaintance. Over a cup of coffee in a quiet little restaurant he told me his depressing story. Like hundreds of others like him, after leaving the university he found that he was needed by no one. His hopes very soon gave place to despair. Threatened with starvation he was forced to take the job of agent in a wholesale clothes warehouse. The manager very soon went bankrupt and my Milanese friend only succeeded in getting a month's salary. After that he worked in an advertising agency where he earned 200 lire a month, and then as "agent for female talent for the cinema." In the end he had left Milan and come to Lago di Garda in search

of a job. Here he had found a department store which had to be liquidated and this relieved him of having to hunt for work for a whole two months. We sat late over our cup of coffee. My Milanese friend knew many interesting places and many stories about them. He knew everyone and everyone knew him. What about going to Gorgese Island? He could show me a wonderful palace and the place where the owner of the island had recently been drowned. He was up to all the ropes and could "fix things up." An idea struck me. Very cautiously and after much beating about the bush I at last told him how I had been seized with the obstinate desire of getting inside Vittoriale. He was clearly somewhat nonplussed but I had listened so sympathetically to his story and had told him so many interesting things about the Soviet Union (he immediately wanted to go there after what I told him), and we had dined so well together that he could not bring himself to refuse, and promised to try and fix it up.

The next morning he appeared after breakfast. He had succeeded in "fixing it up" and was in great spirits. His uncle, the local doctor, was on good terms with the notary and the latter was neighbour of the architect who was responsible for the internal decorations of the villa.

A flimsy enough connection, one might think, to enable one to gain permission to enter this remarkable place.

The day was warm and sunny. We walked slowly along the shore of the lake, with its hotels and small, sleepy windows looking out onto the lake, its noisy groups of English tourists and occasional artists alone among the rocks. On Salo Square my friend pointed out a sturdy fairhaired man, gazing into the blue waters of the lake. He looked about 40.

"That is D'Annunzio's son," whispered my companion. "He lives somewhere and does something but he never has any money. His father is inaccessible to him. He came here ten days ago and put up at a cheap hotel. Everyone at the hotel knows that he hasn't a centesimo in his pocket. They feed him and make his bed in the hopes that somehow or other the money will be forthcoming.

"For ten days he has been trying to get to his father, but D'Annunzio shut himself up behind his castle walls and refused to see him. Occasionally a motor car is heard purring at the gates of the lake. D'Annunzio's son runs after it and shouts something or other, but the car drives on and the man inside, with bare pate and deep furrows on his face does not notice him. D'Annunzio lives in another world.

"The French journalist, Paul Brignet, who visited D'Annunzio some years ago, writes, "His house is full of shadows, which he alone knows and with which he alone is able to talk. He seems to have forgotten all accepted divisions of the normal day. He sleeps for instance all day, gets up at night and asks for dinner at three o'clock at night, after which he works till morning. Suddenly he will take it into his head to rush into Milan. He is always dreaming and working at something. When you ask him what he is engaged on, he will answer modestly: 'I am producing my great work.' "

At the gates of Vittoriale I was met by the lanky architect. There was nothing Italian about this architect's appearance. All the same like a true Italian he considered it his duty to express his pleasure at seeing a Russian here for the first time, especially as he had always had unbounded sympathy with Russia. He loved the Russians, had many friends among them and was a great admirer of the Russian classics. His dream

was to visit the USSR and see the results of the first Five-Year Plan. There was a young man standing erect beside us whom the architect introduced as his assistant and entrusted with showing me round the place.

The gates closed behind us and we entered the courtyard. Before the war this villa, now renamed Vittoriale, had belonged to the noted German critic, Henry Tod. The critic left the place one night and fled from Italy when anti-German feeling was at its height.

After the Fiume victory D'Annunzio, having lost an eye and won five military decorations, retreated to this place with bitterness in his heart against the "weak-kneed patriots" who had "given in" to the allies. Here, far from the crowd, he began to rebuild the villa and turn it into a war museum, where every corner and every stone was to cry out in praise of D'Annunzio's exploits and D'Annunzio's victories. All the building work required by D'Annunzio made local business hum. Shopkeepers saw in him an important customer and eagerly delivered at Vittoriale all that the commander ordered. But suddenly he stopped paying. At first people received the rumour sceptically, but after a while they became alarmed. Finally it became a fact. The commander does not pay for what he orders.

He would not see anyone, but through his engineer he announced that he would not pay more than 50 per cent. The shopkeepers conferred together and agreed to 50 per cent. The rest they obtained from another source.

D'Annunzio was always in want of money, although he possessed a great deal. He pawned his novels to the famous Treves who gradually became his banker and financial adviser.

Once D'Annunzio found himself in financial difficulties. He wrote to Treves. "I cannot endure this poverty any longer. Just think, I have been forced to keep only seven dogs and three horses. I have lost many valuable and loyal friends...."

Now D'Annunzio does not have to ask for money. The treasury pays for him. Vittoriale is being rebuilt at the expense of the treasury, D'Annunzio having turned it over by deed to the State.

I was astonished by the first erection that met my eye. The engineer came to my assistance and explained that it was in the style of the territories where D'Annunzio had fought for Italy's greatness, a style with which I was no doubt unfamiliar.

"But what is the tower for on top of the building?" I asked. "Has every house in those parts got a tower on top of it?" The engineer smiled slightly and said that the tower represented the "commander's" victory over the territories whose style was represented by the building.

We approached D'Annunzio's villa. It had only recently been modest and unpretentious, but had now been renovated and stylised. Porticoes, loggios, pillars, steps and bridges had been added. The miniature Vittoriale is divided up into squares and streets each with its own name. Everything ancient is swept away. The wall at the entrance to the house is covered with the coats of arms of Italian towns which look upon D'Annunzio as their citizen. To the left there is a large statute of a naked woman.

In the courtyard a fountain with marble slabs is murmuring. Beside it there is a small shrine with a lamp that is never extinguished burning before some saint. There is a huge cedar of Lebanon at the entrance to the villa. Here there must be dead silence, because the small courtyard is called the "Place of Sighs." D'Annunzio chose an apt title for himself when

he called himself the angel of silence. The only thing that rouses him is the sound of bombs and the roar of twelve inch guns.

Opposite the entrance on a high mast there is a statuette of the Dalmatian Madonna. The commander chose it because she reminds him of Illyria, a country which has not yet attached itself to Italy and fighting for which D'Annunzio lost his eye.

We made a hasty inspection of the house. The commander might turn up at any moment. We hurried through the dining room, decorated with statues of Confusius, Buddha and St. Francis. D'Annunzio does homage to the wisdom of Confucius, the silence of Buddha and the holiness of St. Francis.

We passed through the music room where we saw the dark glitter of a piano in the gloom and good pictures and photographs on the walls. We caught a glimpse of a huge library with books in gorgeous bindings and came out on a wooden staircase leading up to D'Annunzio's work rooms, "whither the profane are not admitted."

A rustling was heard. The engineer became cautious and motioned to us to make off as quickly as possible. Through some stained glass panes I caught sight of a shiny bald head and a small book held by trembling hands.

We went out into the garden which was remarkable not so much on account of its cedars of Lebanon and its cypresses as on account of D'Annunzio's latest whim which has here been incarnated.

Here were debris of wooden columns, shrines with statues of the saints and beside them a machine gun and other trophies of war. I learnt that D'Annunzio had joined the Franciscan order. I would not have been surprised to meet him in a rough cassock with a crucifix on his chest and a rosary in his hands and to hear the patter of his wooden sandals on his bare legs. That sort of thing suits him, and it also suits him to take a rifle in his hand and march with it to the sound of military music.

In the depths of the garden a red light flashed out. We saw that the engineer had pressed a hidden button. We hurried in the direction of the light. Out of a cave lit within by a dim light a Franciscan saint was coming to meet us at the head of a flock of sheep. With a calm and peremptory gesture he was restraining a tiger ready to spring. The sculpture was extremely well done and the colour aptly chosen. Close by there stood a machine gun.

We went up to an arbour. Here everything was of marble. There was a marble table, marble armchair and slender Pompeian columns each crowned with an unfired shell. What would the gentle Eleonora Duse say if she were to enter this militarised marble arbour with some friends to listen to music?

In the garden there were a number of fantastic bridges each with a name of its own; the Bridge of Sighs, the Bridge of Hares, the Bridge of Desires and the Bridge of Iron Heads on which latter eight large artillery shells were placed. A tall statue of Victory representing D'Annunzio himself rises up in the middle of the garden. Here there is also a tripod with an everlasting flame to the memory of those who fell in the Fiume operations.

Suddenly I noticed a strange covered wooden construction that did not harmonise with the rest of what we had seen. The engineer noticed my astonishment and invited me to come nearer. It turned out to be a piece of stage scenery very well executed. It also had its history and had been left as a memorial.

In Italy there are no permanent theatres, no closely knit theatrical companies. Italian drama is provincial and conservative. Groups of actors who have come together by chance perform plays of past centuries which have even been tired of by visitors to health resorts.

The best actors of Italy, who had given their lives to the theatre, tried to create a real theatre. They knocked at the doors of powerful noblemen but were everywhere met with indifference, or at best a condescending smile.

Then suddenly a few years ago a well coordinated group of actors was formed who dreamed of resurrecting the classical Italian drama. But dreams were not enough. Money was needed. The group approached D'Annunzio. D'Annunzio rose to the occasion. He offered the actors the opportunity of using the open space in his garden for the first performance.

The enterprising manager decided to give an open air performance in D'Annunzio's garden as the surroundings made excellent natural scenery. Tickets were sold to all the notables at fabulous prices. On the day of the performance, D'Annunzio's villa was full of glittering uniforms and magnificent dresses. The scene was like a Royal levée. During the first and third acts the audience sat facing the South where the white half-ruined hut of Ladzaro and Aliggi had been most skilfully painted on a canvas, with the mountains as a background. During the second act the audience faced the north, where with the lake and meadows as background, a small cave had been built.

The unusual performance was an immense success. The dramatic company collected a lot of money and true to Italian custom went on tour and very soon fell to pieces. The scenery remained in D'Annunzio's garden and now serves as a reminder of that great day and of the chief hero of the occasion, D'Annunzio himself. D'Annunzio now dreams of building a theatre here for three thousand persons in which he will direct performances of his own plays.

The engineer led us to the hill where loomed the huge battleship *Pulia* which the King of Italy, in recognition of D'Annunzio's patriotism and his victories over the Austrians, ordered to be brought to Vittoriale. A number of pointed cypresses stood by the ship as though on sentry duty.

We were met by the only sailor on board. After saluting us he opened the entrance door and signed us to wipe our feet on the mat. The interior of the ship was a huge hall hung with the colours of the battalions in which D'Annunzio had fought. Here were also gathered trophies of war in the form of captured Austrian colours. Nailed to the wall were portions of wings of aeroplanes in which D'Annunzio flew over Vienna, an airman's clothes (presumably also D'Annunzio's) and in the corners there were the inevitable machine guns, shells and parts of a submarine. There was everything you could think of, in fact, down to the bloodstained rags of fallen soldiers. Everything spoke of war and of the horrors of the past and it was all collected together with the utmost scrupulousness, one might almost say with loving care, and placed here to the greater glory of the "hero." From time to time D'Annunzio comes in here and after some music has been played explains to his friends all the details of this strange memorial. He unfolds the tattered colours with shaking hands and speaks excitedly about the heroics of roaring aeroplane engines and of young pilots who have been killed. He tells of how the crew of the wrecked submarine embraced one another and met their fate. He recap-

itulates for the benefit of his guests the victories in the Austrian mountains and the foothills of Yugoslavia where thousands of Italy's sons had fallen, faithful to his commands. Sometimes in the middle of the night, tormented with loneliness and insomnia, D'Annunzio rouses up his servant, and at his summons three sleepy warriors arrive on the scene. D'Annunzio puts out the light and lights three torches. Then he begins speaking of the great mystery of the earth, of the Italian nation whose mission it is to free humanity from the present domination of the barbarians of democracy and fashion. They listen without making head or tail of what he is talking about. Their four torches light up the garden, which is weeping the tears of autumn, and they approach the warship looming in the darkness.

The commander gets up onto the captain's bridge, prays for a few moments, and then gives a command. The sailor obediently loads the guns.

The sky is lit up with a bright flash and from somewhere in the distance the thunder echoes back. Down below the people listen in alarm. The commander is merely recalling his past victories.

Translated from the Russian by N. Goold-Verschoyle

IN LATIN AMERICA

Sugar Cane — photograph by Tina Modotti

ARGENTINE

Paul Gonzales Tuñon Condemned to Two Years in Prison

Paul Gonzalez Tuñon, the Argentine revolutionary poet and journalist, has been sent to prison for a period of two years, accused of writing a poem in the weekly review, *Contra,* of which he was director, inciting people to rebellion.

Although the Argentine constitution decrees that the "Congress of the country does not possess the right to dictate laws restricting the liberty of the press," the police of Buenos Aires sent an official communication to the proper quarters stating that it agreed both to the suspension of the review and to the imprisonment of its director because of its tendency towards communism.

The organ of the International Labor Defense in Argentine, of which Gonzalez Tuñon was a collaborator, has started a campaign for his freedom together with that of Hector P. Agosti, a student of philosophy and literary critic; and that of P. Gonzalez Alberti, the economist, both members of the Communist Party in Argentine.

Paul G. Tuñon is a writer well known not only in the Argentine Republic, but also in Uruguay. Until quite recently he wrote for various reviews published in Argentine and Uruguay and was on the staff of *Critica,* a liberal newspaper published daily in Buenos Aires.

As a young man, he took active part in the Dadaist movement, which Oliverio Girando and Jorge Luis Borges brought back from Europe to the Argentine, shortly after the World War. In 1924 he worked on the review *Proa,* which was founded by the revolutionary poets, Francisco Piñero and Jorge Luis Borges, and in 1925 wrote for *Martin Fierro,* a review of national revolutionary tendencies and famous for its polemic against *La Gaceta Literaria* of Madrid—the ex-directors of which are important members of the fascist party under Gil Robles in Spain.

He published his first book of poetry when he was 23 years old. He traveled in the U.S.A. and France and on his return he infused a definite revolutionary spirit into his literary work. His last book *El Otro Lado de la Estrella (Beyond the Stars),* published after his travels abroad, still shows traces, however, of his former views. In his short stories published this year, Tuñon shows clearly, however, that he understands the role played by capitalist society.

On Tuñon's imprisonment, several writers and journalists of Argentine and Uruguay published protests on the outrage against the liberty of the press, subjected to the censorship of chiefs of police—an act which contains definite elements of fascism.

Argentine Intellectuals and the United Front Against Fascism

The weekly *La Batalla (The Battle),* an agricultural journal for workers published in the town of Rosario, in the province of Santa Fé, Argentine, printed a long manifesto signed by all the Argentine intellectuals. In 1918, these signatories had taken an active part in the reform movement in the university when they demanded and obtained the autonomy of the university.

The manifesto dealt entirely with the conflict against war—demanding universal peace in Europe and on the continent—with the fight against imperialism which despoils the continent of South America and the creation of a popular government which would guarantee democratic liberties; and finally the signatories proposed the realization in Buenos Aires, Argentine, of a continental congress of all the democratic powers in Latin America and to establish an official commission of the League of Nations which would deal with the questions of Chaco, Paraguay and Bolivia, among others.

The University Federation of Cordoba (Argentine)—the initiator of that famous movement in 1918 which demanded the autonomy of the university—a movement which many years later spread all over the continent—also published a manifesto.

At the meeting in which this resolution was taken, Julio Guerrero, ex-president of the Students' Federation in Paraguay and the well known Bolivian writer, Tristan Maroff, a sincere upholder of the Soviet Union and exiled for this reason to Mexico—were also invited to attend.

A special commission was set up to organize a demonstration of all youth organizations Socialist, Communist, university and members of the Radical Party, "Union Civica," as a protest against war and to demand peace and freedom for all democratic thinkers. This campaign would serve to tighten the bonds between the democratic parties of South America.

The Radical Party, Union Civica, which was in power until 1930, is one of the strongest parties of the petty bourgeoisie of South America. It fell from power as a result of a coup d'etat on the part of the military fascists. Today, the most influential intellectuals of the Union Civica party, together with the Socialists, Communists and University students, form the United Front against fascism.

Certain results have already been realized following the publication of the manifesto. In the city of Rosario, the Radical Party has placed all its members at the disposal of the United Front against fascism.

The movement of the United Front Against Fascism, which had its roots not in the capital, Buenos Aires, but in the surrounding country, has extended to the other towns of the Republic of Argentine, such as Tucuman, and has everywhere been warmly accepted by the intellectuals.

CUBA

Resumen, *Review of Events and Opinions*

The island of Cuba has its revolutionary press muzzled by the semi-fascist government of Batista.

The anti-fascist movement, is, however, so powerful that the government recently found itself powerless to supress the United Front Against Fascism and War.

The anti-imperialist conflict initiated in Cuba on the eve of the fall of General Machado, did not end here, but spread throughout the Caribbean Islands.

The first issues of *Resumen,* a weekly review published in Havana, strikingly illustrate the spirit reigning not only on the island of Cuba but throughout the West Indies.

The leading article of the third issue of *Resumen* is dedicated to the need for democratic elections in which the working masses of Cuba must have an active part in the solution of the island's most pressing problems: the need to establish professional organizations on a normal footing; to allow the workers the right to organize for a living wage; to restore seats of learning and establish a complete amnesty for political prisoners; to diminish the existing misery among Cuban peasants and permit every inhabitant democratic rights.

The leading article in this issue is on the Seventh Commintern Congress, summarizing Pieck's report, together with that of the Spanish and North American delegates.

An article is published in the same section demanding the liberty of the political prisoners who, 20, 15, 10 and five years ago were imprisoned in the Rotunda, a prison in Caracas in the Venezuelan Republic, governed under the tyranical dictatorship of Juan Vicente Gomez

A section is devoted to the legalization of trade unions and the establishment of a minimum wage for young industrial workers.

The literary and artistic section is given to an analysis of the new literary tendencies among the revolutionary writers of the island.

Resumen informs its readers of the Congress of Writers for the Defense of Culture, held in Paris, and proudly draws attention to the fact that "Indian America" (Latin America) is represented in the permanent presidium of the International Association of Writers by three of their best known writers, Pondal Rios, satirical journalist, Anibal Ponce, professor of philosophy at the University of Buenos Aires, (Argentinians), and the Cuban journalist, Juan Marinello.

For the first time, South American writers find themselves on a level with writers of all nations. Until now, South American literature suffered the same political fate as the nation—almost entirely suppressed. Only two or three of the greatest writers could enjoy the luxury of having their works translated into English or French.

To justify *Resumen's* pride, we draw attention to the fact that in the Soviet Union—a country in which the literature of nationalities suppressed under tsarism, has been revived—has translated South American work of a nationalist tendency into Russian. For example, the work of Rivera of Columbia, Azuela of Mexico, Icaza of Ecuador, have been published in the Soviet Union in popular editions of more than 50,000 copies, unheard of in the country of their origin.

Meanwhile the best work of South American writers, Mancisidor of Mexico, Humberto Salvador of Ecuador, Juan Marinello of Cuba, Ildefonso Pereda Valdez of Uruguay, Jorge de Lima and others of Brazil, Benito Lynch, Ricardo Güiraldes, Pondal Rios and others of Argentine, and the work of new writers of Chile, appears steadily in the Soviet press immediately after publication in South America.

International Literature congratulates *Resumen* on its work and wishes it a long and happy life.

CHILE

Events in the USSR

In Santiago de Chile, capital of the Republic of Chile, appears regularly the monthly issue of the "Asociation de Amigos de la U.R.S.S. (Association of Friends of the Soviet Union). In its issue No. 11, a section has been devoted to biographies of leaders of the Soviet Union, beginning with

the life of Stalin, and following with the life of Kaganovich and Molotov.

This review appeared regularly for a year. The first edition consisted of 500 copies. The last, No. 12, reached 10,000 and increased its pages from eight to 16. It is almost impossible to exaggerate the success of such an issue when taking into account the conditions prevalent in Chile and the character of the review.

The contributors of the review attribute this phenomenon to the growing interest and great sympathy awakened for the USSR, not only among the workers and peasants, but also among the intellectuals and other sections of the population of the Republic of Chile.

The organization of a campaign by the "Friends of the USSR" has been announced in a publication of *Hechos de la U.R.S.S. (Events in the Soviet Union).* The campaign, embracing all of South America, has for its aim, the defense of the Soviet Union. The review has also issued a circular to facilitate the study of the Russian language, as the "actual problems in Russia can only be understood by reading Soviet journals."

BRAZIL

Dr. Jeorge de Lima, of Porte Alegre, has published the new novel *Calunga.*

Dr. Jeorge de Lima was born in Alagoas, in 1895. Today he is one of the best known poets and prose writers of Brazil. His book *O Anjo* won the "Graca Aranha" national prize in 1934.

In addition to being a poet, Dr. Jeorge de Lima also practices medicine. It is not at all rare that important Brazilian writers are unable to exist on the proceeds of their literary labors. Industrial workers, peasants and students cannot afford the high prices of books under a government which has plunged these people into starvation and terror.

ARMANDO CAMPOS URGUIJO

TWO BOOKS FROM LATIN AMERICA

ECUADOR

"Huasipungo"

Until quite recently, Latin America was chiefly known for its bananas, petroleum, gold, sugar, silver, wheat, cows and sheep, hides and wool. The sonorous trumpets of Yankee and European imperialism knew no other strains. Somewhat later than others, the Japanese imperialist shopkeepers discovered meat in South America, and rich markets for their silks.

The European literati, such as Pierre Loti and Maurice de Kobra, in France; Ramon Gomez de la Serna and the Countess Pardo Bajan in Spain, fancied Latin America to be a land where the poets breakfasted on snakes in the morning, and in the afternoon recited cheap verses under the burning sun.

The natural march of history does not halt in South America and the Caribbean. The rich markets of yesterday are short of credits today, and, the rumble of revolution —that girdle which binds the world, from China to Cape Horn, up to the Equatorial line—is also heard there.

Contrary to the belief of the imperialist literati, Latin America has today its own revolutionary journals, and its revolutionary writers are now known by their comrades throughout the world

In their South American colonies the imperialists only saw the market: products to buy and sell. They were interested in culture only in the degree that it tended to safeguard the security of their markets. The Yankee with his Pan-Americanism, the Englishman with his free trade, and today the Japanese with his dumping of textiles have not given a rap for the national culture of South America. Bananas, petroleum, gold, guano, wheat, hides, the political bosses and cows were for them the sum total of Latin American culture. As for the national governments, if we exclude certain exhibitions of charlantanery with patriotic trimmings, they could not be concerned with national literature, inasmuch as the price of the concessions kept them occupied the greater part of the time in serving the interests of the various competitors.

The revolutionary writers of the world have lately turned their gaze upon the national literature of these countries.

Today it has almost become a commonplace to say that the South American and Caribbean writer, until a few years ago, and with significant exceptions, was the sort of "arty" dweller in the Ivory Tower that the France of Paul Valery gave birth to.

The Costa Rican poet, Ruben Dario, for the space of a quarter of a century held these countries spellbound with his Aeolian harp. His poetry—in French and Spanish—went the rounds of the resplendent salons of the banana, wheat and cow kings of South America and the Caribbean.

The Glory of Don Ramiro of the Argeninian landowner, Enrique Rodriguez Larreta, met with the same fate. The Mexican poet, Diaz Miron, did not travel a distinct road. They all failed to find material in their own lands and went seeking for it abroad.

Amado Vervo, a much discussed Mexican poet, lived for ten years among the thunders of a revolution which shook the very foundations of the country. His work—during that revolution—sings of medieval Spanish saints, of Thomas a Kempis, of pathological mysticism. The poet died of indigestion in a South American city while discharging the duties of an ambassador.

Others, like Alcides Argueta, of Bolivia, over a long period wrote novels centered around the native folklore of the steep hills of the Bolivian plateau, giving these novels a romantic, "typical" coloring, which bore greater resemblance to the Viennese operettas of the Hapsburgs, full of a gaudy sensualism, than to the misery and suffering in which dwell the Quichas of Bolivia.

There was, then, no national literature in South America and the Caribbean. What there was amounted to a French-Spanish school of phonographic copyists. The few rebel poets who appeared were made harmless by a governmental grant of a profitable sinecure.

South American national literature could be only a revolutionary literature. The *pelado* of Mexico, the *roto* of Chile, the *mensu* and *colla* of Argentina, the Indian of Peru, Bolivia and Ecuador, the Negro, white or Indian *peon* of Brazil, all the impoverished peasantry, did not offer sufficiently rich elements to inspire a tinsel poet or novelist, who advanced the excuse that these elements, due to their lack of culture, did not possess "spiritual" lives.

With the coming of the crisis there began a new epoch in South American literature. And a few years sufficed to put a complete stop to the import of culture.

Then the revolutionary artists and writers of South America and the Caribbean began to enrich world literature with their contributions, the contributions of novices, it is

Jorge Icaza

true, but contributions which come to us from the forests, the mountain roads and the pampas of an entire continent, the home of people who with their suffering, misery and hunger created the riches of more than one New York or London pirate and secured the wealth and livestock of the native landowners.

The crisis, crossing the fields of America, from the Cuban thickets to the Patagonian pampas, cried: enough of tinsel and velvet courtiers! Enough of words!

We have before us the novel *Huasipungo*, by a new writer of Ecuador, Jorge Icaza. The book appeared at the close of 1934.

The title of the book is a Quicha name by which the Indians of that country designate the small pieces of land which they cultivate.

The central theme of the book is one common to all South America and the Caribbean. A feudal lord employs his Indian serfs to build a road, with the purpose of effecting a profitable sale of the wood and oil lands which certain Yankee potentates have their eyes on. In order to accomplish this, it is necessary to liquidate the "huasipungos," cultivated by the starving Indians, on whose parcels of land is found the rich petroleum and wood which are the objective of the greedy lords of the dollar.

The construction of the road from the petroleum zone to the nearest settlement costs the lives of large numbers of Indians. Don Andres, the principal lessee, is in debt to his uncle, also a proprietor, who in his turn has certain unsettled accounts with the Central Bank, which he intends to liquidate with the aid of the American concessionaires. Uncle and nephew set to work with a will and—Yankee machinery.

Around this is woven the plot of Icaza's novel. And in these pages he has given all the tragedy, hunger, misery, and suffering of the Quichas of Ecuador.

The egoism of the proprietor who, whip in hand, orders the starving Indians to inter a cow which they have slaughtered that they might have something substantial to eat; the internment of the cow done so as not to excite (according to the proprietor) the Indians with the savour of meat, since otherwise they would later take pleasure in slaughtering all his livestock; the chapter of the Indian woman who is intoxicated by the decomposed flesh of the cow which the famished Indians have dug up; the masterful scene of the priest and the Indian who wishes to bury his dead wife, and the dispute over the price of the burial, all these chapters reveal Jorge Icaza as a forceful and talented writer.

Nevertheless certain chapters fall noticeably short of the vigor and warmth of those described above. For example, the tropical torment of the days on construction of the road, when this road has been extended far from the settlement and the Indians must sleep in the open and under the torrential rain; and others.

The book concludes with a native uprising of comparatively insignificant impulse and force, in view of the proportions of the tragedy—insignificant artistic-literary impulse, it is understood. The slogan *Nacauchie Huasipungo*, the approximate meaning of which is: "struggle for a piece of land," synthesizes all the battles of the Indians of Ecuador. This slogan might have had all the face which the author intended it to have without necessarily implying the successful establishment of a workers' and peasants' government. But the value of the slogan is diluted amidst the tumult, lost in the anemia of the struggle. And the struggles of the Indians are not as tame as one might suppose. Mexico provides an excellent example of that.

The fact that Icaza has introduced into his work many Quicha terms, commencing with the title and ending with the last lines of the book, without explaining them in Spanish, the language in which the book

Painting by M. Rodriguez Lozano-photograph by Tina Modotti

is written, is a decided difficulty for the reader.

The semi-anarchist theory which holds the insult to be expressive realism is disputable. Icaza uses and abuses the insult, and this seems hardly necessary for a revolutionary writer.

Jorge Icaza is withal a revolutionary writer of talent. His shortcomings will undoubtedly disappear when he acquires the technique and dialectic which are required to express a reality demanded by the revolutionary camp to which he has allied himself. Icaza has succeeded in communicating to us a part of the tragedy which is being enacted in Ecuador and which has its repercussions in the world. It can be said that the movement of socialist realism has been enriched by a new writer.

His book is being translated into Russian.

Editor's note: A section of this unusual novel will appear in a forthcoming issue of International Literature.

CHILE

"The Stokers" by Laurencio Gallardo

The prologue to this book by the young Chilean writer, Laurencio Gallardo, rapturously assures us that the sea is "a beautiful reality," "often falsified in literature," and affirms with a degree of sincerity which we do not question that Laurencio Gallardo has succeeded in synchronizing with "expressive intensity," the sea and the seamen with a "real reality."

The Stokers is the first book of this twenty-five year old writer. It is useless to load him with extravagant praise. It is a good book with all its shortcomings.

L. Gallardo writes of the life of the seamen working the coasts of the South Pacific. His book is an account of a voyage, from the time the crew is hired, until its return to port.

With the ship in the open sea, we are given a description of the stokers. And it is precisely here that Gallardo lets himself be carried, however ingeniously, into the deceitful field of the hackneyed, typical description of life aboard ship.

In their free hours the sailors talk about contraband, about prostitutes, about fights with South American ruffians. All pay respect to old Pablo, for he has enjoyed the most beautiful women of the South Seas and has killed the most valiant men, whom he has faced in all the seas of the world. The stokers' hours of leisure are utilized by a revolutionary to proclaim the collapse of capitalism.

The introduction of this theme is justified, but it is badly utilized. When the sailors mention Russia, the author would have been within his rights to have the revolutionary "comrade" establish a parallel with the Soviet sailors who arrive at the ports of the South Seas. Thus he would have attained two things. He would have illuminated the revolutionary's statements, that is, he would have given expression to an objective fact which was

a dream to the sailors who cursed their fate. Meaning, he would have utilized his material better. Such as Gallardo makes him out to be—and the whole book revolves around the adventures of old Pablo—his revolutionary appears before the stokers like the Musulman with his: "Allah is God and Mahomet is his prophet."

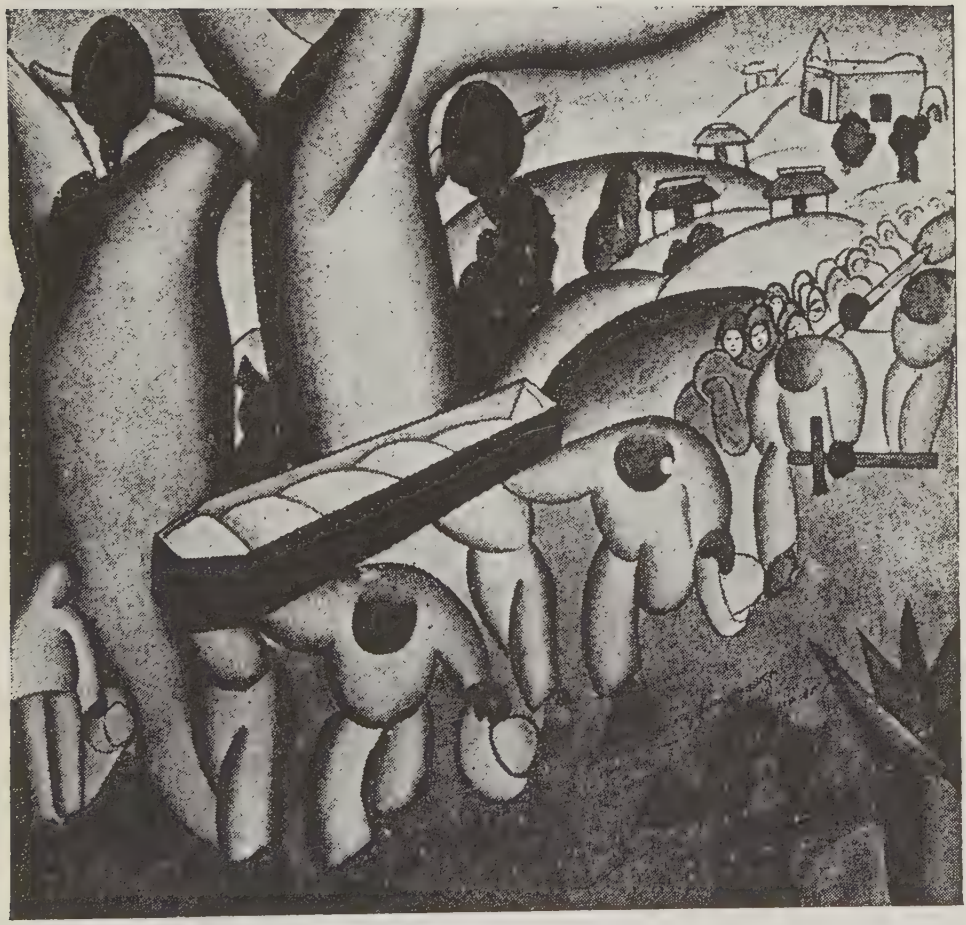
The book ends with the killing of Pablo, by a policeman who has shipped on the same boat in order to arrest him. Not for being a revolutionary, of course. Simply because Pablo, the night before, on his return from a voyage and on the point of leaving again, had disembowled the lover of his mistress. And this was the second man whom Pablo had murdered in the same port in a relatively short time.

Aboard the ships of the South Seas there are struggles of a social character, there are many organized workers; both deck hands and stokers are not indifferent to mass action. By reason of his position in society the seaman harbors a cordial hatred for the bourgeoisie. It is in this aspect of life aboard ship that one must seek the seaman.

Gallardo has sent a copy of his book to Gorki. By finding inspiration in that master, by studying him, he can give us a book of the seaman of the South Seas, not as a man of passions and vices, which he often is as a result of his environment and slavery, but as a social element, as a cell of the great social conflagrations of the epoch—as he also is in increasing numbers.

A.C.U.

TWO PAINTINGS FROM YUCATAN—
by FELIPE MENDEZ



The death of a worker

After the day's work

MARGINALIA

About a Polish Novel

Evening begins in twilight, merges into night. It is of the twilight of Polish actualities, that the woman writer Wanda Wasilewska tells in her *Picture of Day* published last year.

With a penetrating love she turns to simple people, whose desires are modest, whose calls on life are of necessity still less ambitious than their desires and whose thoughts are all in one: to live a quiet, calm existence, but an existence spent in endless toil. Their whole life is in labor and it is labor that constitutes their life.

Such is the mother of the worker Anatole.

"It was not at all sweet in her parents' home—not a bit of it. On marrying she had nothing to complain of. Her man was a good fellow, who never uttered a harsh word. But he suddenly died when Anatole was serving his apprenticeship. She was left alone with a house full of children. They were all adolescents and had already left school. The children began to work for a living, went out into the world. From the age of 12 Anatole helped the family as much as he could and the most dificult period was already over. But there remained a fear, a continual fear, as though something was bound to happen."

She felt a respect for everything that was stronger than her, was submissive in everything, and was continually fearful of the slightest changes:

"Once she complained to the priest while he was hearing her confession: she listened without a word to his admonitions about patience and submission—they struck deep into her heart. There remained for her to win a place in heaven by oppressive labor throughout an endless span of days and the price she had to pay was trembling hands, swollen eyes. She offered to her god the bitter words of offense that were spoken to her. She offered him her widow's mite. There was no place for revolt in her life of untiring labor and continual prayer."

But was this to be throughout the whole of her life? No, Wanda Wasilewska shows how the promise of a new life softens the stony despair which bent Anatole's mother to the ground.

We also see her son, Anatole, aspiring with all his strength to a different life, happy, free and pure. The path to happiness is through struggle. He understands this. In his person he embodies the purport of thousands of other lives, other longings, hopes, enthusiasm. Coal miners, transport workers, stokers, stevedores, carpenters, metal workers, smiths and stone workers appeal to him, share with him their thoughts and grip him with their hopes.

"Distant, far distant voices call: 'Anatole!' "

"They are calling him with imperative shouts. The words of a vow. A single sign. Steel words. A single law.

"Anatole hears.

"A fiery cupola blazes over the dark hall. Tongues of flame dart up. Lightning flashes intertwine. Bombs—one after another. Thrown by sure hands. By the hand of the stoker black from burns. By the hand of the stevedore, knotted with swollen veins. By the hands of carpenters and metal workers, branded with the marks of red wounds. Voices call without a tremor. The voice from the swollen lungs of the glass worker. From the tubercular lungs of the factory worker. From the brown, grey, white lungs of toiling men.

"A sudden thunderous whirlwind. Tongues of fire. A hurricane of flame. The thunder bursts, quick as thought. Over the bottomless abyss of poverty, pain and falsehood. Red, vivid words against the darkness of the world."

This symbolic picture conveys the world as it is perceived by Anatole. He feels himself, as an individual to be a part of the world, one of those who support it, bending under its weight so that a needless burden should not fall on the shoulders of comrades. This is the feeling of the collective. How repugnant is strength without thought, hate without love, or thought without strength, love without hate. Wasilewska paints touching, melodious word pictures of the love felt by Anatole for Natalka, of the blossoming of their feelings, of the nearness of the other when the whole world is seen in his eyes, eyes that show the way to the world and its struggle.

Wanda Wasilewska does not confine her well-documented tale to the facts of struggle—she portrays personal relations and family life. Concealing nothing she shows how distorted and crude are the family relations in the philistine circles of the lower middle class as well as in the homes of many workers. In portraying what is bad, she develops in her readers a love for what is good—a very necessary function, this, of the writer anxious to tell the truth.

The proletariat has no need of sweet descriptions, telling what good fellows they are when the authors lie and attempt merely to conform. No compromise!

The truth, that is what is needed. The proletariat is the emancipator of the whole of mankind from the mire of the old world, if only the writer sees the proletariat as a whole.

"Everywhere man is under the same yoke. Link is skillfully joined to link and the yoke is insuperable. Men are crushed to the earth so that they shall not see the wide expanses. Everything is planned to the smallest detail, every step is determined in advance for man the slave.

"Above the dark city factory chimneys and high steeples extend their hands in friendship. To their assistance hasten laws, prescriptions, codes. A broad shadow hangs over the lives, lives of the workers. Man puts his own head into the noose." He guards and strengthens the bars of his own prison, himself forges the links for chains that bind him. He hates those who try to break these chains. He has been taught to do so from generation to generation, from day to day, from hour to hour. He has imbibed this hatred with his mother's milk, has learned it from the counsels of his father and from the routine of daily life. With his shoulders he supports a tottering edifice."

These things are. But they shall not always be!

A strike proves a trial of strength for Anatole and his comrades, a trial that shows whether they are fit for life or death.

Is Anatole alone? This writer shows that a sense of responsibility and comradeship is native to the proletarian. Bread is distributed among the striking workers. There are many strikers but little bread:

"A dark, famished-looking man takes a long hunk of bread with an air of hesitation.

"'Hold on! Hold on a minute! Here's another!'

"'What do I need two for? One is enough....'

"'You've six children. Take it. Don't start talking.'

"The man shakes his head. He goes out with a slow, heavy tread.

"'How is that.... Two...' he whispers.

"Don't be a fool, why are you ashamed? You know you have nothing to eat. There is nothing to be ashamed about.'

"A thin girl stretches out a kerchief for her bread. Her eyes light up at the sight of the bread, round and smooth. Cautiously she descends the rickety staircase, pressing the bread to her bosom as if it were a valuable."

Wasilewska, is not of course a second Anna Seghers, who understands the role of the Communist Party as organizer in the working class movement. She does not show us pen portraits of Communists. Anatole is often presented as an idealist and dreamer. None the less, Wanda Wasilewska has written a courageous and stirring book about everyday people, about the proletarians of Poland, living in hardship and rising to fight for a new world.

A grave mistake was made by the critic Wislak, who in his preface to the edition of Wanda Wasilewska's novel, published by the Foreign Workers Publishing House of the USSR, writes that it contains almost fascist tendencies. What rubbish! What injustice to a writer who has found the right colors to portray the poverty and sufferings of the masses and sing their heroism as they storm the old world!

S. D.

CHRONICLE

USSR

The Soviet Union Preserves the Heritage of Tolstoi

Although scarcely any authoritative Tolstoi texts were published in connection with the centenary of his birth, celebrated in 1928, considerable work had been started long before then, in bringing out a complete edition of his writings. The first more or less concrete beginnings in this direction were taken in 1918, when under the chairmanship of A. L. Tolstoi there was set up a society for the study and circulation of Tolstoi's writings. Its basic object was to prepare for the press a critical edition of the author's works. This society, however, was entrusted with only one of two parts of Tolstoi's literary heritage, extending from the first of Tolstoi's known manuscripts to his writings published in 1878. The second part, the division being an arbitrary one, covered everything Tolstoi wrote from 1879 until his death and was relegated to a second editorial body under V. G. Chertkov. It was with this subdivision of labor that there began any more or less systematic work on the accumulated materials: preliminary study of the manuscripts, alloting them to editorial offices, description of authographs, deciphering of unpublished texts (including the rough drafts and earlier versions of the published writings) and so on. Parallel with these studies, the regular volumes of the edition were prepared for the press. However, these two groups of editorial workers engaged on one and the same complete edition, worked independently of each other This lack of coordination of principles and methods followed by the two enterprises was bound to affect the results of their work.

The actual preparations for publication were, it must be said, carried out in a haphazard way, without a definite view of tangible results. The work of issuing a complete edition of Tolstoi got really under way only in 1925 when the Council of Peoples Commissars of the USSR took up the question in preparation for the writer's centenary. To insure more efficient coordination of the two editorial groups resort was had to the services of Tolstoi specialists.

More than 90 Volumes

This "real jubilee edition," as it is described in one of the introductions, gives the first complete and critically verified text of all Tolstoi's writings, beginning with his youthful productions and ending with the philosophical articles and diaries of his last years. In addition to the usual texts of Tolstoi's works, the edition includes a wealth of hitherto unpublished material, consisting not only of complete productions but the rough draft of the various excerpts and the earlier versions including scenes rejected by the author, of his published writings. A study of original sources has provided material of great wealth and literary merit.

The study of Tolstoi's numerous manuscripts makes the new edition a unique one and insures the greatest completeness. It opens up the possibility for creating a truly authoritative text.

The scope of the edition, compared with the usual Tolstoi texts, can be seen from a mere enumeration of the new material included, and by a recital of the figures characterizing the undertaking.

Thus, of the material published for the first time, we may mention for example Tolstoi's youthful productions, seven plays written in the '50's, a number of publicistic works of the Crimea period, all his diaries, notebooks, 7,000 letters and so on. There are more than 90 volumes, as against 24, the number in the largest of the previous editions; even if we discount a large number of pages given over to commentaries, the actual Tolstoi texts (together, of course, with earlier versions of published works) are of highly impressive scope. In accordance with the plan of the edition—not merely chronological, the volumes fall into three series: 40 of them cover Tolstoi's "productions" in the strict sense of the word, both literary and publicistic; the second series (about 15 volumes) consist of autobiographical writings (diaries and notebooks); the third series (more than 30 volumes) consist of epistolatory material; the remaining volumes cover the biography of Tolstoi and various indices, tables of contents, etc.

To the editor-in-chief, V. G. Chertkov, the Soviet Government entrusted the general editing of the edition. Chertkov being a friend of the deceased writer, chosen by him expressly for this purpose. Tolstoi personally requested Chertkov to examine

Tolstoi's Work Room

after his death the unpublished manuscripts and to publish those which "will prove worthy of this."

USA

In American Revolutionary Publications

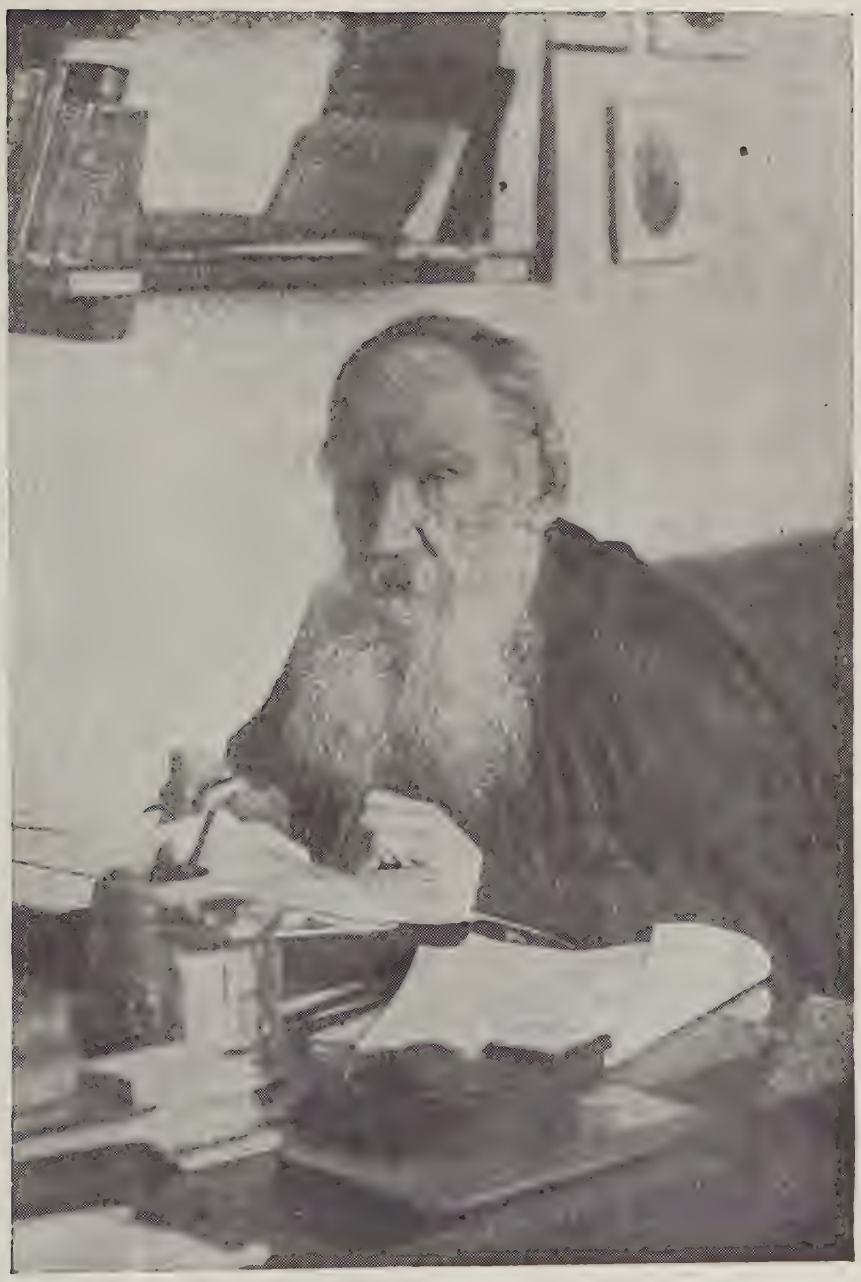
Recent issues of the American revolutionary press point to a steadily growing high standard. *The Daily Worker, New Masses, New Theatre, Soviet Russia Today, New Pioneer* and others cover their respective fields with increasing high quality and effectiveness. The cultural field particularly, is reflected in these publications as a growing force.

Established as a weekly at the beginning of 1934, the *New Masses* has firmly taken its place in circulation and prestige as one of the leading American publications... Ernest Hemingway was recently added to its list of distinguished contributors.

A late number is featured by a review of Sinclair Lewis' book *It Can't Happen Here*, by Granville Hicks, author of *The Great Tradition*. Hicks does not consider Lewis's book "a great novel. It is a political tract, a novel with a message, and it can no more be judged by ordinary standards than could *Looking Backward* or *The Iron Heel*." He tells the story:

"The novel begins in the spring of 1936, with the nomination of Buzz Windrip as the Democratic candidate for president. Competing with Windrip are Senator Trowbridge, a sober and intelligent Republican, and Franklin Roosevelt, running independently with the backing of liberal Congressmen and Norman Thomas. Windrip is elected, and on his inauguration assumes the power of a dictator, crushing opposition with his private army of Minute Men. The usual fascist policies are adopted; the breaking of the labor unions, the suppression of criticism, the burning of books, the redistricting of the country to facilitate Windrip control and Windrip graft, the establishment of concentration camps, the persecution of minority races and the use of elaborate ballyhoo to conceal the lowering standards of living. In 1938, Windrip is deposed by his secretary and brains, the homosexual Lee Sarason, who in 1939, is assassinated by Dewey Haik. A war is on with Mexico when the book ends."

The critic feels that *It Can't Happen Here* must "be discussed as a piece of political writing, and it might as well be made clear



Tolstoi At Work

here and now that Sinclair Lewis has written a courageous and tremendously useful book. If John Jones had written the novel, it would be considerably less important. But here is our illustrious Nobel Prize winner, whose poorest books cannot help selling. His tract is going to be read by tens and probably hundreds of thousands; editorials will be written about it; every women's club in the country will listen to a paper about it in the course of the winter."

Hicks finds faults and virtues in this latest novel by Sinclair Lewis. "First of all," he credits the author, "he knows that fascism is related to capitalism and that is the beginning of wisdom. Secondly, he realizes that fascist demagogues rise to power on the strength of their radical promises. And finally he is fully aware that the liberal suffers as much from fascism as the communist or socialist."

The critic points to weaknesses: "..It must be recorded that he seldom emphasizes the capitalist basis of fascism..The scope of the book seems needlessly limited. Lewis says nothing for example, about international reverberations of fascism in the United States...More striking is his failure to give the reader more than a sketchy idea of what is happening throughout the country as a whole.... Thirdly Lewis' liberalism, though genuine enough and in a way admirable, does not conduce to intellectual clarity." Hicks finds other faults in this novel, and is even tolerant of Lewis' fear of the Communists expressed in his references to them as "puritanical, hortatory and futile," etc.

He concludes: "This is a political review of a political book and the upshot of it is that Lewis has done a magnificent job so far as warning his readers against fascism is concerned, but that he has not understood fascism well enough to fight against it. But there is one literary comment that ought to be made. If it is not a great novel, it is a very significant phenomenon in the career of a highly important novelist. After a good deal of inglorious wobbling, Lewis has discovered the great issue of his day and he has not been afraid to tackle it. The effect on his future writing should be tremendous...."

In the same issue of *New Masses*, Joseph Freeman, well known poet and critic, whose new book *Personal Testament* is soon to be issued, writes an article on the recent interview given to the *London Daily Mirror* by Bernard Shaw, in support of Mussolini and against Ethiopia.

Analysing the war situation Freeman adds an analysis of Bernard Shaw as well. "With the passage of time," he writes, "Shaw's outlook on life has turned from red to white along with his beard. But his approval of Mussolini cannot be set down to mere senility. You have only to think of men like Andre Gide, and Romain Rolland and Maxim Gorki and the late Henri Barbusse to realize that even past sixty a mind may retain its sanity provided it does not bury itself in the prejudices of the propertied classes."

Freeman adds: "Three decades ago Chesterton called Shaw a seventeenth century Calvinist—which is to say a seventeenth-century bourgeois. Shaw believed that the elect do not earn virtue; they possess it. In nineteenth-century jargon, this Calvinist doctrine became the Nietzschean gospel of the superman. By the twentieth century, the superman emerged as Mussolini. In applauding the Italian dictator from the beginning Shaw was merely applauding himself at the end."

Prize Play in New Theatre

A feature of the November issue of *New Theatre*, one of the two leading publication magazines in the country, is the publication of a one-act play *Private Hicks*, by Albert Malz, prize winner in a contest sponsored by the New Theatre League and the American League Against War and Fascism.

Private Hicks deals with the use of the National Guard in a strike situation and is written by the author of the much discussed play *Black Pit*, produced last season by the Theatre Union.

The same number of *New Theatre* carries articles on the Soviet theatre by H. W. L. Dana, a review of the current American bourgeois theatre; an article on the latest film by Charlie Chaplin; various articles on the dance; and articles on fascist tendencies in the current films, as well as in open fascist organization in Hollywood. It is an issue sure to add further prestige to a growing magazine.

Timely Issue of New Pioneer

The children's magazine *New Pioneer* grows as steadily as any of the American magazines for adult readers. The November issue which arrives as we go to press is featured by a refreshing timeliness. A cover, and articles with maps and photographs on the Ethiopian question; a "letter" from the Soviet Union and a leading story on the plight of the American farmers, together with a new version of *Alice in Wonderland* on the American scene are all brightly written for children.

Two other features distinguish this little magazine: a wealth of beautiful and amusing illustrations by such artists as A. Redfield, Penny Kaye, Frances Russell and others; and a number of special departments on sports, book reviews, science and nature, postage stamps, etc.

100,000 copies of Soviet Russia Today

Among the fastest growing of all the American publications is *Soviet Russia Today,* under the able editorship of Edwin Seaver, author of the recently published novel *Between the Hammer and the Anvil.*

On the eighteenth anniversary of the October revolution a special number of 100 pages was issued in an edition of 100,000, largest in the magazine's existence. This special number included a list of noted contributors: Waldo Frank, Ernst Toller, Heinrich Mann, Romain Rolland, Maxim Gorki, Ilya Ehrenburg, Michael Koltsov, Martin Andersen-Nexö, Alexei Tolstoi, Valentine Katayev and many more. The issue was profusely illustrated with photographs; and drawings by Franz Masereel, A. Glintemkamp and William Gropper.

New Books:

From the Kindom of Necessity

Among the most significant of this year's revolutionary novels is Isidor Schneider's *From the Kingdom of Necessity.* It derives its title from a quotation from Friedrich Engels and throughout is permeated with a genuine working class feeling, warm and sympathetic.

Largely autobiographical, no doubt, it is the story of a Jewish family emigrating from Poland to the East Side of New York. It is here that the main character grows up and develops into a figure in the literary world.

While this main story is told effectively, the lesser characters in the book, the members of the family, the relations, the New York workers in the needle trades, social climbers, gangsters, and others are drawn with the skill of an expert craftsman and the understanding of a revolutionary.

The *New Republic* can well say the book is "seen through the eyes of a born story teller."

Isidor Schneider is literary editor of the *New Masses.* He is author of an earlier novel, *Dr. Transit* and two books of poetry, *The Temptation of Anthony and Other Poems* and *Comrade: Mister,* the latter also published this year and containing revolutionary verse which has drawn high praise from the critics.

The poetic quality of Schneider's work is also evident in his novel *From the Kingdom of Necessity.* Written without any literary ornamentation, it is simple, understanding, realistic—an invaluable addition to a rapidly growing American revolutionary literature.

Grace Lumpkin's A Sign for Cain.

Reviewing Grace Lumpkin's second novel *A Sign for Cain* in the liberal weekly the *New Republic,* Robert Cantwell, critic and novelist, points out that a good deal of the controversy over proletarian literature in 1932, revolved about this author's first novel *To Make My Bread.* This first novel, "foreshadowed, in both its strength and weakness, the type of proletarian fiction published in the next few years—a novel about a defeated strike, ending with the realization on the part of the workers of the monumental difficulties they were up against. The pattern has been repeated so frequently that it has been in danger of becoming a formula, like novels of the soil or novels about pioneers."

The critic finds a new and valuable contribution in *A Sign for Cain.* This novel is "an attempt to apply a Marxian analysis to a typically demoralized Southern family of the landowning class, and to picture an experienced communist organizer in action.

"The story revolves around Dennis, an intelligent and patient Negro organizer who has returned from the North to the Gault plantation, a run-down place burdened with debts and a notable absence of charm. Dennis is, sometimes excessively, a political figure, a conscious leader who has a clear concept of his task. He intends to use the plantation, where he is known, and where his mother is the Gault family cook, as a base while he organizes the share-croppers of the country side... The organization that he secretly establishes among the share-croppers is contrasted with the increasing disorganization of the landowners, as exemplified by the Gault family—one of the sons drinks heavily and neglects the plantation, a wealthy sister who is in a position to help them refuses to do so, the old colonel is dying of cancer, unable to take control... The climax of the story comes when Gault's son demands money from his wealthy aunt and kills her when she refuses. Dennis is arrested for murder. While the Negroes and their white supporters are sufficiently well organized to prevent a lynching, they are helpless when the murderer, fearing exposure if Dennis is released, enters his cell and kills him."

In the telling of this story, Cantwell finds that "In almost all respects *A Sign for Cain* is a better book than *To Make My Bread.* It lacks the fortright, unconscious air that gave grace Lumpkin's first novel both the pathos and the power of a good folk tale; at times it seems definitely artificial and stagey.

"But to compensate for this" Cantwell writes, "it is more consciously a political study—indeed, Grace Lumpkin seems to me to possess a clearer political understanding than any other American novelist."

Cantwell finds artistic faults in this novel. He writes: "As a political document *A Sign for Cain* is an enlightening book. Its weaknesses as a novel are obvious, and

arise principally from the fact that the characters are seen too narrowly in their social roles, that they are too consistently true to type, without the elements of waywardness and unpredictability that are as truly human possessions as eyes or class back grounds. *A Sign for Cain* is in fact a kind of skeleton of a major work. . . ."

He finds other faults in this novel but summarized his conclusions: "*A Sign for Cain* is a pioneering work, and its stereotyped characterizations do not invalidate Grace Lumpkin's contribution. She has shown that an analysis based on an understanding of the class struggle can throw its light on the commonplace activities of upper and middleclass life as well as on the explosions of violence during a strike. In the present status of the literary school with which she identifies herself, that demonstration is almost the most valuable that could be made."

Second Book Union Selection

In the American press a great deal of praise is being found for the second monthly choice of the Book Union—the late Henry Barbusse's *Stalin, a New World Seen Through One Man.* The first choice, *Proletarian Literature in America,* was also favorably received, and these first two selections have done much to increase the membership of this proletarian book organization.

Henry George Weiss' Lenin Lives

While the center of attention is now drawn to the leading figures in American literature who have thrown their energy and talent on the side of revolution, minor voices, the worker-writers, continue their work in the revolutionary press and steadily issue modest new volumes.

The latest is a book of verse *Lenin Lives* by Henry George Weiss. Beginning with the title poem and ending with "Into Your Teeth, Gentlemen!" a poem on Kirov and the defense of the Soviet Union, the book includes verse on all working class themes and some dedicated to revolutionary heroes. Many of these poems are exceptionally talented work, all of them a genuine expression of a worker.

In an introduction, Jack Conroy writes: "Weiss' poems have the sort of mass-appeal which characterized the songs of Joe Hill, which are remembered long after the facile bards highly praised in his day are forgotten in the dusty files of magazines or in unread books on library shelves. And Weiss' verse will live long in the hearts and minds of the workers. At their worst Weiss' poems never descend to the banality of much which is foisted off as "poetry" by solemn highbrow critics; at their best they are stirring and forceful trumpets to battle, not whines for pity."

For a number of years Weiss' poems have been appearing in the revolutionary press: *Anvil, Daily Worker, Southern Worker.* many others, including *International Literature.* And this first collection, *Lenin Lives,* shows us a talent deserving of much more attention. It is a genuine and full-blooded voice of a proletarian.

Soviet Theatre and Soviet Cinema in the U.S

A storm of controversy has been roused by the New York production of Kataev's *Squaring the Circle.* Liberties were taken by the translators and a mystical ending tacked on which vulgarizes the meaning of this well known Soviet comedy. Bourgeois critics have praised the play highly and received the changes as fitting. The proletarian audience in the cheaper seats, however, booed the revised ending. Stanley Burnshaw in the *New Masses* and Michael Gold in the *Daily Worker* have written bitter attacks against the translation and direction. Both critics have also taken occasion to point out the danger for Soviet auhors in entrusting their work to translators and producers who are enemies of the Soviet Union. *Squaring the Circle* was translated by Charles Malamuth and Eugene Lyons, who Gold points out "never lost a single opportunity to slander the Soviets. They have become typical Hearst intellectuals, who peddle their rotten wares with unblushing faces."

Youth of Maxim is *Immoral*

The Soviet film *Youth of Maxim* was declared immoral by the Detroit police department—and reaction never appeared more stupid and ridiculous. Writing about the case in the New York *Daily Worker* George Morris says:

"The original charge against the picture was not that it was immoral or anything of the sort. In fact, a permit was granted by the police five weeks prior to the day the ban was suddenly declared. Police Censor Koller was besieged by heads of organizations who insisted on a preview. They included the head of the Employers Association; the chairmen of the American Legion's Committee on Subversive Activities, and the Americanization Committee of the Veterans of Foreign Wars; the American Party; heads of Detroit University and Marygrove College, etc., etc.

After seeing the film they declared it to be pure Soviet propaganda for the overthrow of everything on the face of the globe."

In the testimony of the Committee, the first witness for the police was a Dr. George Derry, president of Maygrove College, "an

educator" for 33 years and holder of a number of high sounding educational titles. George Morris points out that it was this "sociologist" who gave a line for the witnesses to follow. This is some of his learned testimony after seeing *Youth of Maxim:*

"It was false as to historical facts, full of false suggestion and insinuations and tending to lodge in the mind of spectators that maybe Bolsheviks are not such a bad lot after all and that therefore one should lend a sympathetic ear to whatever lying propaganda came from a Communistic source.

"The suggestion is throughout that, inspired by Marx and Lenin, brutalities and injustices were done away with."

Morris advises:

"It was this learned gentlemen who discovered free love in the picture in order to find a basis for an immorality charge. He couldn't show specifically how but a "sociologist" can find a way. A woman in the same room with a man and a bed in the room. He likewise detected affectionate glances between the two. No, there was no kissing, nor embracing. But anyone with piercing eyes, like those of the professor, could see free love.

"Another guardian of morals was Father Joseph A. Luther, dean of men of the University of Detroit. He was mainly concerned with the effects of the picture upon the youth. With 96,000 youth between the ages of 16 to 25 in Michigan looking for jobs, such a picture is very dangerous, he judged.

"He too, found the picture immoral.

" 'Did you see anything indecent or immoral?' "

" 'I think in the broad sense the picture was indecent. Not that anything was shown directly, but it was there just the same for the initiate,' the Father answered.

" 'Did you discover anything pornographic in this picture?'

" 'Only by inuendo. The woman was living in free love.'

" 'How do you know she was?'

" 'Anybody who knows anything about Marx knows he advocates free love,' was the answer."

The best performance, the writer feels, was by the police censor Koller who "furnished some interesting entertainment by raising a fundamental question. *Youth of Maxim* he pointed out is the first of a series of three films. The next one is bound to be dynamite. It will show Maxim in 1917—DURING THE REVOLUTION!

" 'We don't know yet,' Koller told the court, 'Maxim may be Stalin himself.'

"Koller made another stab at proving that the picture is immoral.

" 'Did they kiss?'

" 'No.'

" 'Embrace?'

" 'No.'

" 'How did they make love, then?'

" 'Well, you see, they don't make love in Russia the same as we do,' this authority on films replied.

" 'In the period depicted by the film the Russians were stupid and not as sensitive as other people.' "

Similarly learned objections of the reaction are being raised against *Youth of Maxim* in other American cities. But the film continues to be shown nevertheless and is attracting an audience of thousands of workers, intellectuals and members of the middle class. Fascism has its difficulies in attempting to stop the march of revolution.

Soviet Writers—Yesterday and Today

Writing in the *Moscow Daily News* E. Gard draws a comparison between the situation of the pre and post revolutionary writers. He begins:

"A hundred years ago Pushkin complained bitterly: 'Why the devil was I born with brains and talent in Russia?'

"A writer's position in Russia was once tragic. Authors whose works were read throughout the world, in their own country either died prematurely or led the miserable existence of paupers and outcasts. Even 40 years after Pushkin, the poet Nekrasov in writing to his Russian colleagues said:

" 'Brother writers, there is something fatal in your lives. . . .'

There was something 'fatal' in the destiny of a Russian writer and it seemed to be inevitable.

"Radishchev, one of the first outstanding Russian writers of the 18th century, was sentenced to death for his book. Pushkin and Lermantov were killed in duels. Dostoyevski was exiled to Siberia. Turgenyev and Hertzen left the country. Garshin and G. Uspenski lost their minds; the former committed suicide. Nekrasov starved in his youth. Nikolai Uspenski cut his throat."

The situation is changed today. The millions of workers are an ever appreciated audience and the Soviets assure the writers economic well-being. Gard describes the home of writers in Moscow where:

"Each writer owns the apartment in which he lives. Bathrooms, telephones, balconies, garages in the backyard—all conveniences are provided to give the writer a comfortable home.

Here live Slavin, Ilf and Petrov, the poet Zharov, the playwright Bugakov, Vsevolod Ivanov, Konstantin Fin and many writers who have yet to make their names. In this house, the Government has created every opportunity to spur on talent and to develop abilities.

"The income of the Soviet writer is a good one, constantly increasing. Remuneration for a so-called printer's page (or a list, 16 pages) ranges from 700 to 1,000 rubles. If accepted for production, a play insures its creator a comfortable income for several years easing his mind from financial care and leaving him free for his next effort."

The warm regard of the Soviets for literature is not only for the new writer but also for those who have contributed in the past. Gard points out that:

"Many old writers receive a pension from the Government, have comfortable homes and their children are provided for as well. The descendants of former Russian writers also receive pensions. Among these are: the grandson of Pushkin, Nekrasov's sister, the widow of Dostoyevski's grandson, Garshin's widow, the descendants of Lermontov and many other lesser known or forgotton writers."

Lev Slavin-Journalist, Playwright, Scenario Writer

An example of the Soviets' concern about the writer is the story of Lev Slavin. In order to collect material for his scenario for the film *On the Big Road,* he was sent to Mongolia, traveling from one end of the country to the other, making a 5,000 kilometer motor trip and crossing the Gobi desert.

Lev Slavin's road was not an easy one. "In the days when men from 17 to 45 were forced into the tsarist army, Slavin a 17-year-old schoolboy was conscripted in 1916. Later he fought in the ranks of the Red Army. After leaving the army he worked as a longshoreman in Odessa, was a salesman in a grocery store, a librarian and a clerk. In 1923 Slavin came to Moscow and joined the staff of *Vechernaya Moskva. (Evening Moscow.)* Seven years later his first novel, *The Heir,* ran serially in a magazine and aroused the interest of readers and attracted the attention of critics.

That was the beginning of the swift and remarkable career of Lev Slavin, a talented, clever and subtle writer. *The Heir* went through three printings. Slavin's play *Intervention,* produced in the spring of 1934 by the Vakhtangov Theater, is still included in the repertoires of many Soviet theaters. *Intervention* has been put on in 57 cities in the USSR; even the theater-goers of Kamchatka, have seen the play. The scenario for the film *The Private Life of Peter Vinogradov* was Slavin's last work. He is now working on a play.

A Soviet Playwright About Floridsdorf

Vsevolod Vishnevski, leading Soviet playwright has this to say about *Floridsdorf,* a play on the uprising of the Austrian workers by the German Playwright Friedrich Wolf:

"It is a monumental political and Party tragedy. The agitational character of the play is not veiled. The play recalls Dimitrov's speeches at Leipzig and Moscow such is its political tone. Since *Sailors of Cattaro,* Wolf has lived through the rich experiences of 1933 to 1935, experienced the Nazi fire, escaped across the border, the life of an emigrant in Switzerland and France. He writes about the 1934 revolt in Vienna. It is a cry of woe, a family chronicle, a Party analysis of the revolt, praise, a summons and a pledge. . . .

"I worked on the translated version for the Vakhtangov Theater for nearly a year, a year which meant a step forward in my own experience. The play had possibilities for broadening its theme and I believe I was right in taking as a leitmotif the theme of the future, the theme of the future European Red Army. In each character I sought out the traits of the future soldier of the revolutionary army. The broad course of the theme leads from Cattaro, in historical retrospect through the 1934 revolt to the warriors of the future."

Scenes from the English version of *Floridsdorf* had appeared in previous issues of *International Literature* and the play has been issued in book form in Moscow by the Co-Operative Publishing Society of Foreign Workers in the USSR.

The Theatre Goes to the Village

In recent years, 77 kolkhoz theaters have been organized by the Commissariat of Education and its local organs. The success of these theaters has shown to what extent the peasants are interested in the art of the theater.

The recently organized branch of the Moscow Maly Theater in the village of Zemetchino, Voronezh Province, has proven a great success, arousing the interest of many peasants in acting. The theatrical troupe of 22 actors under the leadership of the Honored Artist of the Republic Platon, has played to approximately 30,000 people in the course of a year. Presentations which aroused the greatest interest were Ostrovski's *Poverty Is No Crime,* Gorki's *Yegor Bulichev,* and Gogol's *The Inspector-General.*

Active assistance is given to the local dramatic circles by the Zemetchino Theater whose "collective," which is divided into seven brigades, pays frequent visits to the various collective farms. With the news that one of Platon's theatrical brigades is expected at the kolkhoz of an evening, the members of the dramatic circle will drop all engagements for the evening and call a special meeting, which is of vital interest to all.

One of the kolkhozes, a sugar beet farm, has constructed what the peasants call a "cultural combine"—a covered wagon with sides which can be lowered to form an enlarged stage. The wagon, equipped with electricity and radio, is placed on an automobile chassis and thus driven across the fields, enabling the Zemetchina Theater to give performances in the field or forest.

Nationalities and the Theatre

In a tabulation of all dramatic works in the Tatar language, it was discovered that there are 910 plays, of which 790 are original and 120 translations. The latter include works by Shakespeare, Gogol, Ostrovski, Schiller and Moliere.

The first play in the Tatar language, *Bichara Kyz (Poor Girl),* was written in 1887. From that time until the Revolution, a period of 30 years, about 300 plays were published in the Tatar language. During the 17 years since the Revolution, 600 plays have been published. This year, this figure is expected to reach the 1,000 mark.

Soviet Cinema

The noted Soviet director A. Dovzhenko, writes of his trip to the Soviet Far East to gather material for his latest film *Aerograd,* recently produced. He and his company travelled for four months by train, hidroplane and boat. They went into the taiga, down into coal mines, by way of rivers and mountains. The richness and beauty of the country, so evident in Dovzhenko's new film, he describes:

"It often appeared to me that I did not spend my life in the right way and that I should have come here before. It seemed to me that I was no longer a producer but a partisan, a hunter and a Cheka official, and that I should not produce films but help reconstruct the country, reveal its riches, protect our remote borders from the enemies of the working class.

"These feelings of mine found expression in the speech of Glushak, the main character of the film; 'Fifty years that I spent in the taiga went by as if they were only one day, and I still keep wondering if there is such beauty or riches anywhere else in the world. No. Nowhere in the world can such beauty and riches be found!'

"During our trip we came across different people, from government officials to the collective farmers of remote villages. And eveywhere we felt the pulse beat of socialist exploration of the enormous natural resources of this young country and the unusual confidence prevailing in our border regions.

"Already during the journey I was conscious that many a wonderful film, story, novel and symphony might have been written to portray all that we had seen, while our task was to write only a scenario for a film. I decided then to select the most vivid of my impressions and embody them in the film *Aerograd.*

"As an artist and a citizen I did not fail to pay tribute to the beauty I was able to observe in this part of our great fatherland.

"*Aerograd (Air City)* therefore, appears to me to be not a product of imagination but a reality. It doesn't matter that the city does not exist yet. Sometimes I wonder if such a city has not been constructed while the film was being produced. There is nothing impossible in our country. Did not we build a new city on the coast of the Okhotsk Sea in an amazingly short time?

"In producing this film I wanted not merely to illustrate the measures carried out by the Party, Government and the working class but to sponsor them. And if the film appears to be poetic, it is because life is beautiful and our country is wonderful."

The Soviets and Folk Music

This is the story of 65 year old Alexander V. Zatayevich who collected more than 2,000 folk melodies of the peoples of Kazakstan and Khirghizia ... with musical notes for instrumental accompaniment. The work of one man, who had collected more folk songs than was done altogether in the 150 years of the tsarist times.

Twenty-five years ago, Zatayevich, a middle-aged man, had not yet realized his youthful dream of a creative musical career. He was then serving as a music critic on the tsarist *Warsaw Daily.*

In 1920, when Orenburg became capital of the newly formed Soviet Republic of Kazakstan, when famine, cold, epidemic and Civil War left its trail of dead on the streets, when native bards congregated in Orenburg from all corners of Kazakstan, Zatayevich, after five years of frenzied search for refuge, settled in the city. He played a piano in a restaurant to keep himself and family alive. He heard the native bards sing on the market place and in the new schools established by the Kazakstan Peoples Commissariat of Education. He felt himself a friend of the young Kazak people. He began to write notes for the native melodies which had never been heard outside of Kazakstan and Khirghizia. He traveled about, once for 700 kilometres on horse and cart, to penetrate deeper into the life of the people.

Today, Zatayevich has published three volumes of Kirkhiz and Kazak folk melodies. Romain Rolland wrote him that he had "caught the musical soul of the Kazak peoples." Maxim Gorki has praised his work. Eight of his melodies are used in the Soviet symphony *Turksib*. The Soviet composer Ippolitov-Ivanov, wrote that composers have in these collections a reservoir of untouched music to enrich old melodies. Many young Soviet composers have drawn on this immense reservoir.

AUSTRALIA

Australian Book Ban

Reflecting the widerspread opposition in Australia to the book ban (by which hundreds of books which freely circulate in England are banned as prohibited imports by the Australian Customs Department) is an open letter to the Prime Minister (J. A. Lyons), signed by 16 important citizens. The letter says: "Will you instruct the collector of Customs to admit into Australia those publications which circulate freely in England," and adds:

"Your Government prevents Australian citizens from reading important political and economic writings, which it is essential to study for an understanding of the world we live in. Books which are highly recommended by competent authorities in Britain, France and America, are banned from entering Australia. We believe that such a policy directly contravenes the principles of democratic government."

If he was not warned beforehand, that letter must have come as a shock to the Prime Minister, for there is no doubt of the power and influence of the signatories. They are Bishop Hart, Sir James Barrett, Sir Keith Murdoch, Sir Arthur Robinson, Professors F. Wood Jones, D.B. Copland, S. M. Wadham and H. A. Woodruff, Dr. Felix Meyer, Messrs Frank Tate, J. McRae (Director of Education in Victoria), H. I. Cohen, Theodore Fink, T. D. Oldham and W. Warren Kerr. Almost every section of bourgeois public life is here represented.

Probably the most powerful of the signatories is Murdoch, managing director of a big newspaper combine which is stretching like an octopus over and beyond the six States of Australia.

He is popularly supposed to have put the present Prime Minister, Lyons, in the position he now occupies; certainly the whole weight of the Murdoch press was thrown behind him at a crucial moment.

Theodore Fink, another signatory, is Murdoch's chairman of directors. He is Jewish, nearer 80 than 70, and with personal anti-Nazi tendencies. There are several leading scientific men among the others.

Such a letter, especially if backed up by determined action, is welcomed by every honest worker and intellectual. It does not mean, however, that mass action should be suspended in fighting the book ban. Some of the signatories to this letter are liberal and humanitarian by desire; most if not all, however, have their sympathies deeply rooted in bourgeois society, and several of them know the political position pretty well. While all quite rightly regard the book ban as insulting, some of them realise that the free admission of Marx, Lenin, Stalin, Palme Dutt, Ralph Fok and other banned Communist authors will give the militant working class new weapons in its fight against monopoly capitalism.

The workers and intellectuals of Australia must realise that the minimum demand of the Book Censorship Abolition League (that all books not banned in England should be admitted freely into Australia) should emphatically be only a minimum, not maximum demand. The Incitement to Disaffection Act in England, and the various blasphemy and indecency laws which have banned Hanly's *Boy*, indicate the danger of taking England as a model of literary democracy. There is no guarantee that the English government may not ban important works (Dimitrov's report for example) if proletarian vigilance is relaxed.

Meanwhile the campaign against the book ban in Australia remains a real united front issue, and if this united front also temporarily includes influential conservatives, so much the better.

The bourgeois Sydney journal *Smith's Weekly* devotes two columns to a list of books which Australians, unlike Englishmen, are not permitted to read, with Lenin naturally leading the list as the most-banned, with Ralph Fox (author of *Communism, Lenin,* and *The Colonial Policy of British Imperialism)* in the place of honor among English authors.

Among publications, *International Literature* and the American *New Masses* are included in the long honor roll of literature which, in official opinion, is dynamite to Australian mentality.

ENGLAND

Dear Dinamov:

Thank you for your letter and the criticism which I read with much interest—also for *International Literature.* The contents of this seemed to me of varying merit—some good, as the installment of the novel at the beginning of the magazine, (*Virineya,* by Lydia Seifulina—*Editor)* some poor, as the Japanese short story. You ask for suggestions for improving the magazine: but there is surely only one way of doing so—making sure that all the contributors have talent! Which is, as I know from my own experience of journalism, exceedingly dif-

ficult, because literary talent is so rare. In your case there is a double difficulty; for you need talent not only in the original contributors, but also in their translators. I have done a certain amount of translation and know how extraordinarily difficult it is to render the quality of the original writing—to find equivalents in one language for the surface beauty, the verbal texture of a work written in another. The number of good translations in world literature is remarkably small. For example, we in England have a good Bible, a good Montaigne, a good Plutarch, a good Rabelais—but no good Aeschylus, Sophocles, Euripides, no good Balzac, Gogol, Dostoyevski, and only a fair Tolstoi and Stendhal. You will certainly always find it very hard to find really good translators—harder perhaps than to find good original writers. In a review devoted to information and the discussion of ideas, this is not of great significance. But in one which, like yours, is devoted to fiction the importance of good translation is very great.

All this, I am afraid, is very negative; but then I know of no positive policy that will improve the quality of a literary review except that which I have given: the finding of people with talent. On the rest, such as printing *mise en page*, reproduction of photographs, etc., is secondary.

I am hoping that perhaps next spring I may have an opportunity for visiting the USSR—in which case I look forward to making your personal acquaintance and discussing the problems involved in your difficult task (and, considering its extreme difficulty, I think you produce a highly creditable result) at greater length.

Yours sincerely,

ALDOUS HUXLEY

La Gorgnette, Sanary, France

Editor-in-Chief SERGEI DINAMOV

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