Workers of the world, unite

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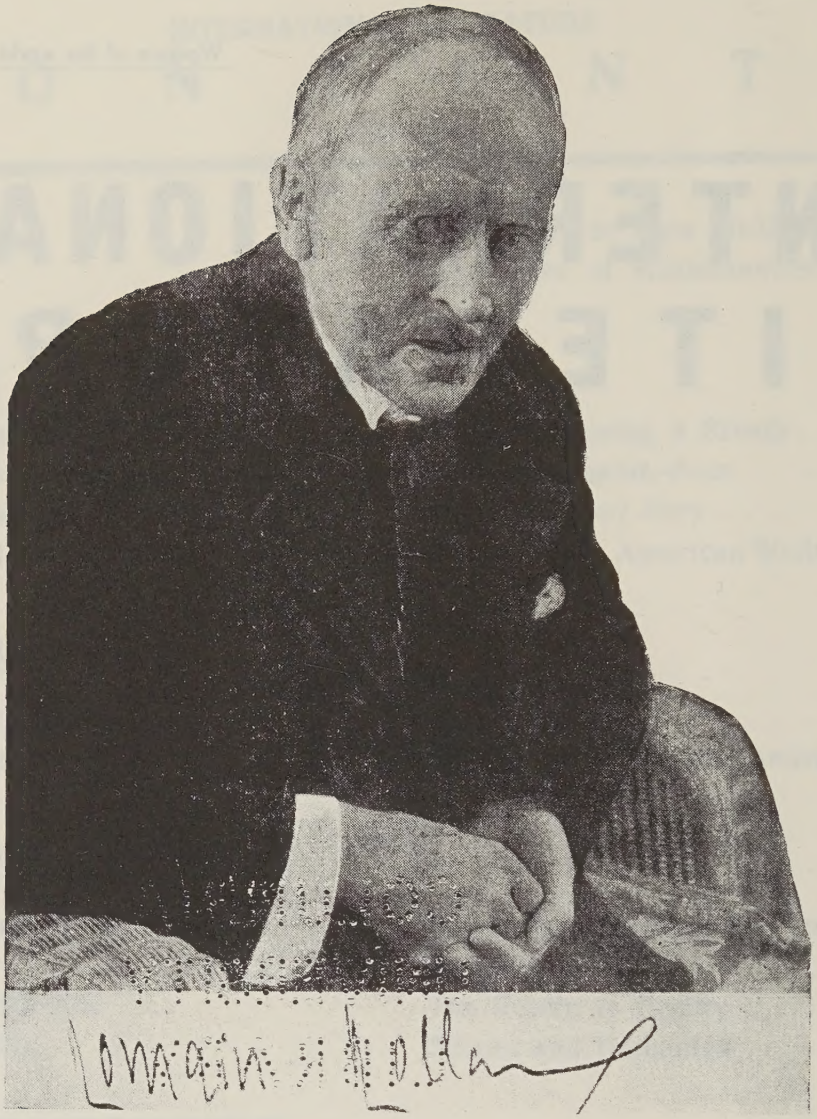

Romain Rolland, French Writer

"DEAR ROMAIN ROLLAND,

The editorial staff and the contributors of INTERNATIONAL LITERATURE *congratulate you—world renowned artist—on your 70th birthday. We wish you health, vigor and even greater power to carry on the struggle for the joyous happy tomorrow of humanity.*

Your path in a beautiful example of the life of a genuinely great man whose clear mind and warm heart are always dedicated to the truth.

The inciters of imperialist war know and fear you as one of their most intransigent opponents.

The fascists dread and hate you as one of the most formidable fighters against fascist barbarism.

The Soviet Union and the laboring peoples the world over love and honor you, their faithful and fearless friend.

We are confident that you will continue to consecrate your strength, your courage, your genius, your youth to the rising struggle for a young new world!

J. Stalin

Speech at the First All-Union Conference of Stakhanovites[1]

Comrades, so much has been said here at this conference about the Stakhanovites, and said so well, that there is in fact very little left for me to say. But since I have been summoned to the platform, I will have to say a few words.

The Stakhanov movement cannot be regarded as an ordinary movement of working men and women. The Stakhanov movement is a movement of working men and women which will go down in the history of our socialist construction as one of its most glorious pages.

Wherein lies the significance of the Stakhanov movement?

Primarily, in the fact that it is the expression of a new wave of socialist competition, a new and higher stage of socialist competition. Why new, and why higher? Because the Stakhanov movement, as an expression of socialist competition, contrasts favourably with the old stage of socialist competition. In the past, about three years ago, in the period of the first stage of socialist competition, socialist competition was not necessarily connected with new technique. At that time, in fact, we had hardly any new technique. The present stage of socialist competition, the Stakhanov movement, on the other hand, is necessarily connected with new technique. The Stakhanov movement would be inconceivable without a new and higher technique. We have before us people like Comrades Stakhanov, Busygin, Smetanin, Krivonoss, Pronin, the Vinogradovas and many others, new people, working men and women, who have completely mastered the technique of their jobs, have harnessed it and driven ahead. There were no such people, or hardly any such people, three years ago. These are new people, people of a special type.

Further, the Stakhanov movement is a movement of working men and women, which makes it its aim to surpass the present standards of output, to surpass the existing designed capacities, to surpass them—because these standards have already become antiquated for our day, for our new people. This movement is breaking down the old views on technique, it is shattering the old standards of output; the old designed capacities and the old production plans, and is demanding the creation of new and higher standards of output, designed capacities and production plans. It is destined to produce a revolution in our industry. That is why the Stakhanov movement is at bottom profoundly revolutionary.

It has already been said here that the Stakhanov movement, as an expression of new and higher standards of output, is a model of that high productivity of labour which socialism alone can give and which capitalism cannot give. That is absolutely true. Why was it that capitalism smashed and defended feudalism? Because it created higher standards of productivity of labour, it enabled society to procure an incomparably greater quantity of products than was the case under the feudal system. Because it made society richer. Why is it that socialism can, should and certainly will defeat the capitalist system of economy? Because it can furnish higher models of labour, a higher productivity of labour than the capitalist system of economy. Because

[1] Speech Delivered November 17, 1935.

it can give society more products and can make society richer than the capitalist system of economy can.

Some think that socialism can be consolidated by a certain material equalization of people based on a poor man's standard of living. That is not true. That is a petty-bourgeois idea of socialism. In reality, socialism can succeed only on the basis of a high productivity of labour, higher than under capitalism, on the basis of an abundance of products and of articles of consumption of all kinds, on the basis of a prosperous and cultured life for all members of society. But in order that socialism may achieve this aim and make our Soviet society the most prosperous, the country must have a productivity of labour which surpasses the productivity of labour of the foremost capitalist countries. Without this there can be no question of an abundance of products and of articles of consumption of all kinds. The significance of the Stakhanov movement lies in the fact that it is a movement which is smashing the old standards of output, because they are inadequate, which in a number of cases is surpassing the productivity of labour of the foremost capitalist countries, and is thus creating the practical possibilty of further consolidating socialism in our country, the possibility of converting our country into the most prosperous of all countries.

But this does not exhaust the significance of the Stakhanov movement. Its significance also consists in the fact that it is preparing the conditions for the transition from socialism to communism.

The principle of socialism is that in a socialist society each works according to his ability and receives articles of consumption not according to his needs but according to the work he performs for society. This means that the cultural and technical level of the working class is still not a high one, that the distinction between mental and manual labour persists, that the productivity of labour is still not high enough to ensure an abundance of articles of consumption, and, as a result, society is obliged to distribute articles of consumption not in accordance with the needs of the members of society, but in accordance with the work they perform for society.

Communism represents a higher stage of development. The principle of communism is that in a communist society each works according to his abilities and receives articles of consumption not according to the work he performs, but according to his needs as a culturally developed individual. This means that the cultural and technical level of the working class has become high enough to undermine the basis of the distinction between mental labour and manual labour, that the distinction between mental labour and manual labour has already disappeared, while productivity of labour has reached such a high level that it is able to ensure an absolute abundance of articles of consumption, and as a result society is able to distribute these articles according to the needs of its members.

Some think that the elimination of the distinction between mental labour and manual labour can be achieved by a certain cultural and technical equalization of mental and manual workers by lowering the cultural and technical level of engineers and technicians, of mental workers, to the level of average skilled workers. That is absolutely untrue. Only petty-bourgeois chatter-boxes can conceive communism in this way. In reality, the elimination of the distinction between mental labour and manual labour can be achieved only by raising the cultural and technical level of the working class to the level of engineers and technical workers. It would be absurd to think that this is unfeasible. It is entirely feasible under the Soviet system, where the productive forces of the country are freed from the fetters of capitalism,

where labour is freed from the yoke of exploitation, where the working class is in power, and where the younger generation of the working class has every opportunity of obtaining an adequate technical education. There is no reason to doubt that only such a rise in the cultural and technical level of the working class can undermine the basis of the distinction between mental labour and manual labour, that it alone can ensure the high level of productivity of labour and the abundance of articles of consumption which are necessary in order to begin the transition from socialism to communism.

In this connection, the Stakhanov movement is significant for the fact that it contains the first beginnings, still feeble, it is true, but nevertheless the beginnings of precisely such a rise in the cultural and technical level of the working class of our country.

And, indeed, look at our comrades, the Stakhanovites, more closely. What type of people are they? They are mostly young or middle-aged working men and women, people with culture and technical knowledge, who show examples of precision and accuracy in work, who are able to appreciate the time factor in work and who have learnt to count not only the minutes, but also the seconds. The majority of them have passed what is known as the technical minimum examination and are continuing their technical education. They are free of the conservatism and stagnation of certain engineers, technicians and business executives; they are marching boldly forward, smashing the antiquated standards of output and creating new and higher standards; they are introducing amendments into the designed capacities and economic plans drawn up by the leaders of our industry; they at times supplement and correct what the engineers and technicians have to say, they often teach the latter and impel them forward, for they are people who have completely mastered the technique of their job and who are able to squeeze out of technique the maximum that can be squeezed out of it. Today the Stakhanovites are still few in number, but who can doubt that tomorrow there will be ten times more of them? Is it not clear that the Stakhanovites are innovators in our industry, that the Stakhanov movement represents the future of our industry, that it contains the seed of the future rise in the cultural and technical level of the working class, that it opens to us the path by which alone can be achieved those high indices of productivity of labour which are essential for the transition from socialism to communism and for the elimination of the distinction between mental labour and manual labour.

Such, comrades, is the significance of the Stakhanov movement for our socialist construction.

Did Stakhanov and Busygin think of this great significance of the Stakhanov movement when they began to smash the old standards of output? Of course, not. They had their own worries—they strove to get their enterprises out of difficulties and to overfulfill the economic plan. But in seeking to achieve this aim they had to smash the old standards of output and to develop a high productivity of labour, surpassing that of the foremost capitalist countries. It would, however, be ridiculous to think that this circumstance can in any way detract from the great historical significance of the movement of the Stakhanovites.

The same may be said of those workers who in our country first organized the Soviets of Workers' Deputies in 1905. They, of course, never thought that the Soviets of Workers' Deputies would become the foundation of the socialist system. They were only defending themselves against tsarism, against the bourgeoisie, when they created the Soviets of Workers' Deputies. But this circumstance in no way contradicts the unquestionable fact that the move-

ment for the Soviets of Workers' Deputies begun in 1905 by the workers of Leningrad and Moscow in the end led to the rout of capitalism and the victory of socialism on one-sixth of the globe.

2. The Roots of the Stakhanov Movement

We are now gathered at the cradle of the Stakhanov movement, at its source.

Certain characteristic features of the Stakhanov movement should be noted.

What first of all strikes the eye is the fact that this movement began somehow of itself, almost spontaneously, from below, without any pressure whatsoever from the administrators of our enterprises. Even more, this movement in a way arose and began to develop in spite of the administrators of our enterprises, even in opposition to them. Comrade Molotov has already told you what torments Comrade Mussinsky, the Archangelsk saw-mill worker, had to suffer when he worked out new and high standards of output in secret from the business organization, in secret from the controllers.

The lot of Stakhanov himself was no better, for in his progress he had to defend himself not only against certain administrative officials, but also against certain workers, who jeered and hounded him because of his "new-fangled ideas." As to Busygin, we know that he almost paid for his "new-fangled ideas" by losing his job at the factory, and it was only the intervention of the shop superintendent, Comrade Sokolinsky, that helped him to remain at the factory.

So you see, if there was any kind of action at all on the part of the administrators of our enterprises, it was not to help the Stakhanov movement but to hinder it. The Stakhanov movement, therefore, arose and developed as a movement coming from below. And just because it arose of itself, just because it comes from below, it is the most vital and irresistible movement of the present day.

Mention should further be made of another characteristic feature of the Stakhanov movement. This characteristic feature is that the Stakhanov movement spread over the whole face of our Soviet Union not gradually, but at an unparalleled speed, like a hurricane. How did it begin? Stakhanov raised the standard of output of coal five or six times, if not more. Busygin and Smetanin did the same—one in the sphere of machinery construction and the other in the shoe industry. The newspapers reported these facts. And suddenly, the flames of the Stakhanov movement enveloped the whole country. What was the reason? How is it that the Stakhanov movement spread so rapidly? Was it perhaps because Stakhanov and Busygin were great organizers, with big contacts in the regions and districts of the USSR, and because they themselves organized this business? No, of course not! Was it perhaps because Stakhanov and Busygin have ambitions to become great figures in our country and they themselves carried the sparks of the Stakhanov movement all over the country? That is also not true. You have seen Stakhanov and Busygin here. They spoke at this conference. They are simple and modest people without the slightest ambition to acquire the laurels of national figures. It even seems to me that they are somewhat embarrassed by the scope the movement has acquired, beyond all their expectations. And if, in spite of this, the match thrown by Stakhanov and Busygin was sufficient to start a conflagration, it means that the Stakhanov movement is absolutely

ripe. Only a movement that is absolutely ripe, and merely awaits a jolt for it to burst free, can spread with such rapidity and grow like a snowball.

Why is it that the Stakhanov movement proved to be absolutely ripe? What are the causes for its rapid spread? What are the roots of the Stakhanov movement?

There are, at least, four such causes.

1) The basis of the Stakhanov movement was first and foremost the radical improvement in the material welfare of the workers. Life has improved, comrades. Life has become more joyous. And when life is joyous, work goes well. Hence the high rates of output. Hence the heroes and heroines of labour. That, primarily, is the root of the Stakhanov movement. If there had been a crisis in our country, if there had been unemployment—the scourge of the working class—if people in our country lived badly, drably, joylessly, we should have had no Stakhanov movement. *(Applause.)* Our proletarian revolution is the only revolution in the world which had the opportunity of showing the people not only its political results but also material results. Of all workers' revolutions we know only one which achieved some measure of power. That was the Paris Commune. But it did not last long. True, it endeavoured to smash the fetters of capitalism, but it did not have time enough to smash them, and still less time to show the people the beneficial material results of revolution. Our revolution is the only one which not only smashed the fetters of capitalism and brought people freedom, but also succeeded in creating for the people the material conditions for a prosperous life. Therein lies the strength and invincibility of our revolution. It is a good thing, of course, to drive out the capitalists, to drive out the landlords, to drive out the tsarist henchmen, to seize power and achieve freedom. That is very good. But, unfortunately, freedom alone is far from enough. If there is a shortage of bread, a shortage of butter and fats, a shortage of textiles, and if housing conditions are bad, freedom will not carry you very far. It is very difficult, comrades, to live on freedom alone. *(Shouts of approval. Applause.)* In order to live well and joyously, the benefits of political freedom must be supplemented by material benefits. The distinctive feature of our revolution is that it brought the people not only freedom, but also material benefits and the possibility of a prosperous and cultured life. That is why life has become joyous in our country, and that is the soil from which the Stakhanov movement sprang.

2) The second source of the Stakhanov movement is the fact that there is no exploitation in our country. People in our country do not work for exploiters, for the enrichment of parasites, but for themselves, for their own class, for their own, Soviet society, where government is wielded by the best members of the working class. That is why labour in our country has social significance, and is a matter of honour and glory. Under capitalism labour bears a private and personal character. You have produced more—well, then, receive more, and live as best you can. Nobody knows you, or wants to know you. You work for the capitalists, you enrich them? Well, what do you expect? That is why they hired you, so that you should enrich the exploiters. You do not agree with that? Well, join the ranks of the unemployed and exist as best you can. We shall find others, more tractable. That is why people's labour is not valued very highly under capitalism. Under such conditions, of course, there can be no room for a Stakhanov movement. But the case is different under the Soviet system. Here the man who labours is held in esteem. Here he works not for the exploiters, but for himself, for his class,

for society. Here the man who labours cannot feel neglected and solitary. On the contrary, the man who labours feels himself a free citizen of his country, in a way a public figure. And if he works well and gives society all he can—he is a hero of labour and is covered with glory. Obviously the Stakhanov movement could have arisen only under such conditions.

3) The fact that we have a new technique must be regarded as the third source of the Stakhanov movement. The Stakhanov movement is organically bound up with the new technique. Without the new technique, without the new mills and factories, without the new machinery, the Stakhanov movement could not have arisen. Without new technique, standards of output might have been doubled or trebled, but not more. And if the Stakhanovites raised the standards of output five and six times, it means that they rely entirely on the new technique. It thus follows that the industrialization of our country, the reconstruction of our mills and factories, the new technique and the new machinery was one of the causes that gave rise to the Stakhanov movement.

4) But new technique alone will not carry you very far. You may have first-class technique, first-class mills and factories, but if you have not the people capable of harnessing that technique, you will find that your technique is just bare technique. In order that new technique may produce results, people are required in addition, cadres of working men and women capable of taking charge of the technique and advancing it. The birth and growth of the Stakhanov movement means that such cadres have already arisen among the working men and women of our country. About two years ago the Party said that having built the new mills and factories and supplied our enterprises with new machinery, we had performed only half the job. The Party then said that enthusiasm for the construction of new factories must be supplemented by enthusiasm for mastering these factories, that only in this way could the job be completed. Apparently, the mastering of this new technique and the growth of new cadres has been proceeding during these two years. It is now clear that we already have such cadres. It is obvious that without such cadres, without these new people, we would never have had a Stakhanov movement. Hence the new people, working men and women, who have mastered the new technique constituted the force that shaped and advanced the Stakhanov movement.

Such are the conditions that gave rise to and advanced the Stakhanov movement.

3. New People—New Standards of Output

I have said that the Stakhanov movement developed not gradually, but like an explosion which shattered some sort of a dam. Apparently, it had to overcome certain barriers. Somebody was hindering it, somebody was holding it back; and then, having gathered strength, the Stakhanov movement broke through these barriers and swept over the country.

What was wrong? Who exactly was hindering it?

It was the old standards of output, and the people behind these standards that were hindering it. Several years ago our engineers, technical workers and business managers drew up certain standards of output adapted to the technical backwardness of our working men and women. Since then several years have elapsed. During this period people grew up and acquired technical knowledge. But the standards of output remained unchanged. Of course, these

standards now proved out of date for our new people. Everybody is now abusing the existing standards of output. But, after all, they did not fall from the skies. And the point is not that these standards of output were set too low at the time they were drawn up. The point primarily is that now, when these standards have already become antiquated, attempts are being made to defend them as modern standards. People are clinging to the technical backwardness of our working men and women, guiding themselves by this backwardness, basing themselves on this backwardness, and matters finally reach a pitch when people begin to pretend backwardness. But what is to be done if this backwardness is becoming a thing of the past? Are we going to worship our backwardness and turn it into an icon, a fetish? What is to be done if the working men and women have already managed to grow and to gain technical knowledge? What is to be done if the old standards of output no longer correspond to reality, and our working men and women have already managed in practice to exceed them five or ten times? Have we ever taken an oath of loyalty to our backwardness? It seems to me we have not, have we, comrades? *(General laughter.)* Did we ever assume that our working men and women would remain backward forever? We never did, did we? *(General laughter.)* Then what is the trouble? Is it that we have not the courage to smash the conservatism of certain of our engineers and technicians, to smash the old traditions and standards and allow free scope to the new forces of the working class?

They talk about science. They say that the data of science, the data contained in technical handbooks and instructions contradict the demands of the Stakhanovites for new and higher standards of output. But what kind of science are they talking about? The data of science has always been tested by practice, experience. Science which has severed contact with practice, experience—what sort of science is that? If science were the thing it is depicted to be by certain of our conservative comrades, it would have perished for humanity long ago. Science is called science just because it does not recognize fetishes, just because it does not fear to raise its hand against the obsolete and antiquated, and because it lends an attentive ear to the voice of experience, of practice. If it were otherwise, we should have had no astronomy, say, and we would still have had to get along with the outworn system of Ptolemy; we should have had no biology, and we would still be comforting ourselves with the legend of the creation of man; we would have had no chemistry, and we would still have had to get along with the auguries of the alchemists.

That is why I think that our engineers, technical workers and business managers who have already managed to lag a fairly long way behind the Stakhanov movement, would do well if they ceased to cling to the old standards of output and readjust themselves in a real and scientific manner to the new way, the Stakhanov way.

Very well, we shall be told, but what about standards of output in general? Does industry need them, or can we get along without any standards at all?

Some say that we no longer need any standards of output. That is not true, comrades. More, it is foolish. Without standards of output, planned economy is impossible. Standards of output are moreover necessary in order to raise the backward masses to the level of the more advanced. Standards of output constitute a great regulating force, which in production organizes the masses of the workers around the foremost elements of the working class.

We therefore need standards of output; not those, however, that now exist, but higher ones.

Others say that we need standards of output, but that they must immediately be raised to the level of the achievements of people like Stakhanov, Busygin, the Vinogradovas and others. That is also not true. Such standards would be unreal at the present time, since working men and women with less technical knowledge than Stakhanov and Busygin, could not fulfil these standards. We need standards of output that are somewhere midway between the present standards of output and the standards achieved by people like Stakhanov and Busygin. Take, for example, Maria Demchenko, the "five-hundreder" in sugar beet, whom everybody knows. She achieved a harvest of over 500 centners of sugar beet per hectare. Can this achievement be made the standard of harvest yield for the whole sugar beet production, say, of the Ukraine? No, it cannot. It is too early to speak of that. Maria Demchenko secured over 500 centners from one hectare, whereas the average harvest this year for sugar beet in the Ukraine, for instance, is 130 or 132 centners per hectare. The difference, as you see, is not a small one. Can we set the standard of sugar beet yield at 400 or 300 centners? Every expert in this field says that this cannot be done yet. Evidently, the standard yield per hectare for the Ukraine in 1936 must be set at 200 or 250 centners. And this is not a low standard, for if it were fulfilled it might give us twice as much sugar as in 1935. The same must be said of industry. Stakhanov exceeded the existing standard of output ten times or even more, I think. To declare this achievement the new standard of output for all those working with pneumatic hammers would be unwise. Obviously, a standard must be set which is somewhere midway between the existing standard of output and the standard achieved by Comrade Stakhanov.

One thing, at any rate, is clear: the present standards of output no longer correspond to reality, they have fallen behind and become a brake on our industry; and in order that there shall be no brake on our industry, they must be replaced by new and higher standards of output. New people, new times—new standards of output.

4. Immediate Tasks

What are our immediate tasks from the standpoint of the interests of the Stakhanov movement?

In order not to be diffuse, let us reduce the matter to two immediate tasks.

First. The task is to help the Stakhanovites to further develop the Stakhanov movement and to spread it in all directions throughout all regions and districts of the USSR. That, on the one hand. And on the other hand, it is to bridle all those elements among the business managers, engineers and technical workers who obstinately cling to what is antiquated, do not want to advance, and systematically hinder the development of the Stakhanov movement.

The Stakhanovites alone, of course, cannot spread the Stakhanov movement in its full scope over the whole face of our country. Our Party organizations must take a hand in this matter and help the Stakhanovites to complete the movement. In this respect the Donetz regional organization has undoubtedly displayed great initiative. Good work is being done in this direction by the Moscow and Leningrad regional organizations. But what about the other regions? They, apparently, are still "getting started." For in-

stance, we somehow hear nothing, or very little, from the Urals, although, as you know, the Urals is a vast industrial centre. The same must be said of Western Siberia and the Kuzbas, where, to all appearances, they have not yet succeeded in "getting started." However, we need not doubt that our Party organizations will take a hand in this matter and help the Stakhanovites to overcome their difficulties. As to the other aspect of the matter, the bridling of the obstinate conservatives among the business managers, engineers and technical workers, here things will be a little more complicated. We shall have in the first place to persuade these conservative elements in industry, persuade them in a patient and comradely manner, of the progressive nature of the Stakhanov movement and of the necessity of readjusting themselves to the Stakhanov way. And if persuasion does not help, more vigorous measures will have to be adopted. Take, for instance, the People's Comissariat of Railways. In the central apparatus of that Commissariat there was until recently a group of professors, engineers and other experts—among them Communists—who assured everybody that a commercial speed of 13 or 14 kilometres per hour was a limit that could not be exceeded without contradicting "the science of railway operation." This was a fairly authoritative group, who preached their views in verbal and printed form, gave instructions to the various organs of the People's Commissariat of Railways, and in general were the "dictators of opinion" in the traffic departments. We, who are not experts in this sphere, basing ourselves on the suggestions of a number of practical workers on the railways, on our part assured these authoritative professors that 13 or 14 kilometres could not be the limit, and that if matters were organized in a certain way this limit could be extended. In reply, this group, instead of paying heed to the voice of experience and practice and revising their attitude to the matter, launched into a fight against the progressive elements on the railways and still further intensified the propaganda of their conservative views. Of course, we found it necessary to give these esteemed individuals a light tap on the jaw and to very politely remove them from the central apparatus of the People's Commissariat of Railways. *(Applause.)* And what is the result? We now have a commercial speed of 18 and 19 kilometres per hour. *(Applause.)* It seems to me, comrades, that at the worst we shall have to resort to this method in other branches of our national economy as well, that is, of course, if the stubborn conservatives do not cease interfering and putting spokes in the wheel of the Stakhanov movement.

Second. The task is, in the case of those business leaders, engineers and technicians who do not want to hinder the Stakhanov movement, who sympathize with this movement, but have not yet been able to readjust themselves and assume the lead of the Stakhanov movement, to help them readjust themselves and take the lead of the Stakhanov movement. I must say, comrades, that we have quite a few such business leaders, engineers and technicians. And if we help these comrades, there will undoubtedly be still more of them.

I think that if we fulfil these tasks, the Stakhanov movement will develop to its full scope, will embrace every region and district of our country and will show us miracles of new achievement.

5. *Two More Words*

A few words regarding the present conference, regarding its significance. Lenin taught us that only such leaders can be real Bolshevik leaders who

know not only how to teach the workers and peasants but also to learn from them. Certain Bolsheviks were not pleased with these words of Lenin's. But history has shown that Lenin was one hundred per cent right in this field also. And, indeed, millions of toilers, workers and peasants, labour, live and struggle. Who can doubt that these people do not live in vain, that, living and struggling, these people accumulate tremendous practical experience? Can it be doubted that leaders who scorn this experience cannot be regarded as real leaders? Hence we leaders of the Party and the government must not only teach the workers but also learn from them. That you, the members of the present conference, have learnt something here at this conference from the leaders of our government, I shall not undertake to deny. But it also cannot be denied that we, the leaders of the government, have learnt a great deal from you, the Stakhanovites, the members of this conference. Well, comrades, thanks for the lesson, many thanks! *(Loud applause.)*

Finally, two words about how it would be fitting to mark this conference. We here in the presidium have conferred together and have decided that this conference between the leaders of the government and the leaders of the Stakhanov movement must be marked in some way. Well, we have come to the decision that 100 or 120 of you will have to be recommended for the highest distinction.

Voices: Quite right. *(Loud applause.)*

Stalin: If you approve, comrades, that is what we shall do.

(The conference pays a stormy ovation to Comrade Stalin. Thunderous cheers and applause. Greetings are shouted to Comrade Stalin from all parts of the hall. The three thousand members of the conference join in singing the proletarian hymn, the "International.")

Without Drawing A Breath

"What's that?" Varya asked.

Mesentsev wrinkled his brow and, as if he felt obliged to explain "glucose, turpentine, and rosin," said thoughtfully:

"That's a petunia, I believe."

Varya burst out laughing. Yet there was nothing funny about the petunia—a gay thing—like a dress with dainty little flounces. If she must laugh, why not laugh at the pansies—they looked like the girl-students of the Workers' School; one could hardly believe they were flowers on stems. And here was Varya laughing at the petunia. But perhaps it was not at the petunia? Perhaps it was at Mesentsev himself?

"Pet—unia. . . . So there are your flowers, Petka. Petka's petunias."

Mesentsev gave a disapproving lift of the shoulder.

"I don't see anything funny about it. It's just a name. Like Varvara, for instance. You people use some ridiculous words too. Yesterday Shurka asked me:

"Who's your pretty? Varka?"

"I couldn't think what she meant at first. We always say, 'your sweetheart.' Your pretty! That's funny, if you like."

But Varya did not laugh now. She was on her guard. She did not look at Mesentsev, but away from him. At the petunias, perhaps? How bright they were—all colors. But she was not thinking of petunias now. That disgusting Shura! Why should she want to know everything?. . . However, it didn't matter, but still—she had asked him. What did matter then? Mignonette was a thing you didn't notice at once, but how it smelt—like a tobacco plant—it made your head go round. . . . Very softly Varya asked:

"And what did you say?"

The stillness was riven by the screech of the neighbouring saw-mill: it sawed through the stillness as if through the fresh trunk of a tree, and it seemed as if tears—teardrops of resin—could be felt in the garden where Varya stood. The riven silence swept and Varya waited, but Mesentsev would not let himself go.

Where had they come from—those petunias—amid the wood-shavings and scrunching sounds? One might find out from the brother of that same Shura who asked such disconcertingly direct questions of dreamy Komsomols. This brother was called Vaska and, unlike his sister, did not concern himself about other people's happiness. He was busy with social work. He had reached the mature age of eleven and despised "sloppiness." On his table lay a grey, dog's-eared exercise book, the cover of which bore the printed warning: "Pioneers and school children, remember that the harvest mouse is the deadly foe of our socialist fields!" This sentence was augmented by a portrait of the aforesaid "foe." who was depicted squatting very appealingly on his hindquarters, scratching his muzzle with his forepaw. To tell the honest truth, the earnest social worker often dreamed when his eye wandered to the book, of "how jolly it would be to catch a harvest mouse like that fellow and keep it on the window-sill where it'd sit and scratch its little old nozzle everyday." For one thing, they soon learned to sit up and beg beautifully, these little beggars just

like the Ganshins' poodle. And then, one could find out from Ivan Nikitovich, how to order them to eat and drink in harvest-mouse language. Ivan Nikitovich would surely know. He had told Vaska that squirrels said "trun-trun." Of course, these were all dreams that came over him late in the evening, when mother called out: "What, dozing at the table again? Go and wash your feet and be off to bed!" Not much "trun-trun" about it: anyone could understand *that*. As for the contents of the exercise book they had nothing whatever to do with the question of the struggle with field rodents. They consisted for the most part, of reports of school meetings and on one page, disfigured numerous blots—*that* was Carrotty Kotik's dirty work—there was an explanation of the petunia question.

"I shall say a few words myself now"—it began—"in other towns the school children have taken trees under their special care for a long time now. It's easy enough. Each one plants a tree of some kind or other and keeps his eye on it to see that hooligans don't injure it and that it gets a chance to grow properly. And here we are missing everything—and so I move that we join in this campaign for cultivating plants and trees. The ground around Mill No. 34 is a regular wilderness. Of course, it won't be so easy to cultivate plants round here. It's pretty clear to everyone, I expect, that there's no proper soil—only a peat bog. What I mean to say is: this isn't the Crimea, no, not by long chalks! But I move that we fetch a few loads of soil over here ourselves and make a proper garden in front of the dining room. I move we get this planting business done in a month: so we'd better start dragging the soil here right away—all of us, except those who aren't strong, and, of course, the girls. Afterwards the girls can mark out the flower beds and plant different kinds of flowers. Only we've got to show everyone by the end of the month that we've fulfilled our plan. Now it's Manka Sokolitski's turn to speak."

Manka: "I protest *most emphatically* against what Vasska's just said about girls not being able to fetch soil. We can do it as easy as anyting, and we shall and beat you at it, so there! I'm going to promise for all the girls that we do this. So Vasska can just shut up!"

The resolution concerning the garden was passed unanimously.

This announcement was followed by a blot, Carrotty Kotik having jogged Vasska's elbow in his enthusiasm. After that came the petunias, and they were not alone: there were wall-flowers, tobacco plants, pansies, sweet peas, mignonette—quite a number of flowers. And in June, when the petunies were in bloom, the stars hid themselves modestly. Stars blossom out in August. Would Mesentsev confess before August came what he had replied to inquisitive Shura?

The stars were many and their names were wonderful: Cygnus, Sirius, Vega, the Great Bear and last of all, the delight of all sweethearts—the beautiful North Star.

Winter frosts would send the flowers indoors behind double windows and the country-women who were now creeping through the woods picking whortle berries or blueberries, would settle down to their bobbin-lace again. The bobbins were made from the wood of the bird-cherry or the honeysuckle. They rattled merrily, on, like a dream, streamed the lace in patterns named after insects and rivulets.

There were so many stars, and snowflakes and berries in the world. So many verses and couplets and doggeral rhymes and old songs and ballads and triolets and lays. Pushkin, the lover of the North Star and the old Lezgin who sang as he swayed to and fro, songs of Lenin and the story teller Stepanovna

—she who knew spells and incantations, she who had but two teeth and knew three hundred tales and all the words about the tender northern sun, she and Pasternak.

There was once a poet called Phoet, who wrote that a great man like Tiutschev "will never come to the Zyrians." The light of the North star reaches us after millions of years. The light we see now is the light of a period previous to man's appearance upon earth. Perhaps it is dead this star, though its ancient light penetrates like a memory through wild dark worlds. Last winter, in the "Red Forest" club in wooden Syktyvkar, the capital of the Komi, or, as they were called in olden times, the Zyrians, the Komsomol Sidorov had recited almost choking with excitement:

It is not of the past the roses sigh,
And the nightingale sings all night long. . . .

Thus the poet Tiutschev came to the Zyrians.

The government huts of the new capital had creaked under the snow, and it was not of the past, no, not of the past at all that the snowy roses sighed when, after the recital, Sidorov had gone out with Vassilissa, and they had lost themselves amid snowdrifts and stars and joy.

Then what was it the nightingale sang of all night long? And what was most important—why did Mesentsev not answer Varya for so long? The sawmill creaked and screeched madly—one must hurry, it seemed to say: the sirens of the foreign timber carriers rang out shrilly. Many with stripes and circles and stars. But what had they to do with petunias and bobbin-lace of the "spider" pattern and the star that would soon shine in Mesentsev's cap?

But why did he say nothing? Surely one could not listen to figures about the quantity of sawn timber for ever! Well? ....

"I didn't say anything to Shura. She only wants to gab. But I'll tell you, Varya"—

No, Varya did not want to listen. She took fright and said quickly:

"Better come down to the river."

The river was broad, there was no river; the river had merged with the sky, the day with the night, hand with hand, life with life, could you call that night?

Mesentsev remembered other nights, dark and close, full of rustling sounds and sudden squeals and a blackness so dense that one could not recognise who was alongside and not eyes but lips sought to know. In Voronezh, his comrades had been out with girls on the other side of the river. The dense night had gone to his head like wine. He had gone down alone to the river, trying to think about the grain collecting campaign or the work to be done among the boys in training camp. But the clear thinking of the daytime was impossible at night because of the whispering and the crackling of twigs and other people's happiness. There were nights in that part of the country but there was no Varya. Varya was here, on the banks of a big white river and she herself was big and white.

They had met in the club. She had asked him questions then about Moscow. Who would have thought that always after that he would wonder vaguely if Varya would come to the meeting today: who would have thought that it would prove necessary to ask her, her alone, not Kolka or Shugayev, how the Sorokin lathes worked; that he would "just happen to have a couple of tickets"—so he said, as a matter of fact he had begged them with difficulty

from Stein; and that after all he would not go to the cinema because Varya was on night shift? Who would have thought that a conversation about lathes or loggers would lead to petunias and Shurka's question?

There was no night and nothing could hide Mesentsev's embarrassment. It was fortunate at least, that Varya was not looking at him! Mesentsev glanced about him in bewilderment as if seeing things for the first time. Everything was rose-coloured and incomprehensible. The air was so transparent it seemed that if you gazed through it you could see the sea; the whole world. But one could not believe anything; even the most ordinary things were mysterious and phantasmal. The steamers resembled fabulous birds: a moment more and they would plunge into the waters or soar aloft. Why was the sky bathed in this ruddy light? Was dusk about to fall? Or was it the dawn coming? What did it matter anyhow? This was the northern night, created—now, smile, poor Mesentsev, do!—created for a lad and his "pretty."

Mesentsev did not smile, but growing bolder burst out at last:

"I'll tell you Varya—It's like this. . . . But you know it yourself. . . ."

With a gesture of despair he dashed away to a pile of lumber. The boards gave off a smell of tar. Varya went up to him and closed her eyes. They found themselves in the woods. The saw-mill screeched as before, but now it might have easily been mistaken for Tiutschev's nightingale. the bird that never sings of the past.

When they came to that world where words were used, where everything had its own name, where the screech of the saw-mill was part of the year's plan of work and the petunias were the pride of the "social worker" Nasska, where Shurka was ready to run all over the town merely to find out who was "courting" whom and where lay that 'love" about which so many books had been written—one would think all the forests of the north would not yield sufficient timber for the paper when they returned then, to the big white world—it was the second or third day of the six-day week in that world—they began to talk. They talked of various things and were rather absent and shy. They talked loudly, although in their hearts lay a great stillness undisturbed as yet. What had happened by the pile of lumber could only be guessed at by the way they smiled during the sudden silences that fell between them and also by the speech of their hands which carried on an eloquent and quite separate conversation full of passionate admissions and vows and pauses.

The steamers sailed down river towing the rafted timber. Barges were loaded with pulpwood, pit props, firewood.

The steamers bore names like *The Marxian, The Fierce, The Mass Worker* and *The Sturdy*. The huge trunks glided past importantly. The entire breadth of the great river was taken up with them as the ice-floes swept down river in spring time so the lumber swept down river now. It came from the banks of the Dvina, the stormy Sukhona, the Youg, the Vychegda, the the Vologda. It moved in obedience to the will of men, but it still lived the warm life of the tree trunk and seemed capable of stirring and feeling alarm. This was all the work of the Timber Export Trust; and from the banks it resembled the elemental migration of the woods.

In forty degrees of frost when ravens dropped to the ground numbed to the heart by the merciless cold, men had stripped off their coats in order to fell those trees with more ease. In the rough shanties cabbage soup was boiling, felt boots were drying and through the steam a husky voice was singing a song about the Red Partisans. The snow creaked under the sleigh runners. The trees crept down to the banks of the ice-bound river.

Then the sun blazed up, the ice shuddered and the trees pushed off from their native shores.

"Varya, I'm twenty-three. Do you know how old that tree is? A hundred. I'm telling the truth. Shtolov told me it couldn't be less than a hundred."

What a strange destiny for the tree! It had appeared in the world a century ago. The spring woods had been just as gay and bright then, the midges had hummed, the nestlings had chirped. No one ever came to that grove, only the heavy gleaming summer showers nursed the young sapling. It knew no people. It was indifferent to the fact that Pushkin, the lover of the North star, had been mortally wounded by a bullet. It never thought of Pushkin as having been cut down like a beautiful tree. It never heard the wailing of young serf-girls, given in marriage against their will. It knew only one thing in life: that it had to grow upwards. For a century it rustled lightheartedly among the blizzards and the cackling of the wild geese. Then people came and now the tree was floating down river; dead. But it was bound for the aviation works. It would soar aloft once more, higher than the tallest pine, higher than the midges, higher than the wild geese. No, it was not a corpse, it was a tender body, to which one might press close as to a loved one: it would then recall the noises of the forest and respond to caress with caress. Of this Varya and Mesentsev became aware, as they stood by the pile of fresh-sawn planks.

Said Varya:

"Number twenty-two section has turned out new samples of cases for bananas. They're for export. Do you know, Petka, I've never seen a banana. What are they like?"

Mesentsev wrinkled his forehead and said diffidently:

"They're round, I believe."

They both grew thoughtful; how vast the world was! Somewhere or other bananas grew like fir cones here at home. Perhaps bananas smelt like mignonette? But there were no bananas here. Then Mesentsev said:

"Oranges now, they're round. I tried them when I was in Moscow. They've a lovely taste. They're being grown in Batum. When I go to Moscow I'll get you some for certain. But there aren't any bananas in Moscow so far as I know. At least, not at present. There will be though, after a while. I was talking to Ivan Nikitovitch. You know, the botanist? He says: 'You can grow anything here.' Anything? Just imagine having melons at the North Pole. And there's nothing surprising about it. We'll put our shoulders to the wheel and they'll grow."

They laughed. They saw in imagination the ice covered with great striped water melons. When you cut melons open they were red inside. . . .

"I suppose," said Varya, "those oranges you were talking about smelt nice?"

The dining rooms where Varya had her dinner smelt of cod and cabbage. Life was coarse and rough like the bark of a tree. It was hard, oh how hard, to fell trees and make rafts of logs, and standing in the water, catch the great clumsy trunks with boat hooks; it was hard to drag out quickly the long boards in the saw-mill, for this strong hands and a strong heart were needed. But, after all, if one were to put one's heart into it, as the botanist said—and as Varya thought too—if one were to put one's heart into it, even those round bananas could be produced here. Mesentsev's hand, a broad, reliable hand, gripped Varya's once more. She laughed: how vast the world was!

If you took a better look—Varya screwed up her eyes comically it seemed as if you could see everything. There were ripples on the river. There was

Mudyug—the "Isle of Death." Fifteen years ago workers had been brought here. Officers, drunk with blood, and anguish, and fear, had shouted hoarsely, Hurrah! Firing had startled the seagulls. The angered waves had beaten against the stones. At that time young Vasska had not yet made his appearance, in the world and no one had thought of petunias. Further on, the sea-lions played in the surf. The inhabitants of the sea coast made their way to islands overgrown with moss and clubbed the comical, moulting wild geese. Further on still lay the pledge of high courage—the Pole, for the sake of which both the compass hand and the hearts of heroes leaped.

Suddenly Mesentsev's face changed. He exclaimed angrily:

"What a lot of logs! Has the log bar burst or what? Or have the logs been rafted badly? Now it'll drift out to sea. . . . where the foreigners are sure to be hanging about wating to pick them up."

The timber carrier *Stavanger* was rocking in the White Sea. The sea folk observed knowingly: "The Norwegians are out hunting." Upon meeting a Russian vessel, the Norwegian captain hailed it and shouted through the megaphone: "We're making for Archangel, for timber!" But he did not turn in the direction of Archangel. He sat sipping his coffee, rocking lazily in his chair. He was thinking of his family. They were far away from here: a clean street, where alongside the church stood a little house, within it there were palms and what-nots. It was time his eldest daughter was married. She was a *fröken* with blue eyes. She was fond of tennis and laughter. Was she fond of Pieter, too? Or of that long-legged Carl? But that was all one to the captain. He knew that love meant marriage, bed linen, silver, armchairs, krones and krones. The ship rocked and the captain rocked, calculating dreamily: if he could lay hands on some timber hereabouts, it would mean three thousand or maybe four.

That morning there was an atmosphere of dreamy quiet in the office of the Timber Export Trust Golubyev was looking at a map adorned with tiny coloured flags: two British, three Norwegian, one Danish, one Greek. The *Edda* was just now completing loading. . . . Golubyev drifted into a reverie. What a strange country! He had spent his youth far away from here in a little, hump-backed street in old Kiev. Yesterday he had been down at the timber wharf when they were loading the *Edda*. He had sniffed the odors of pitch, cod, and honey-sweet tobacco. He had seen a young woman on the deck of the ship, perhaps she was the wife or the daughter of the captain. Golubyev had suddenly found himself looking straight into her blue eyes and started. Surely he had seen those eyes before somewhere. But where? Just now, as he gazed at the map with its flags, he remembered: *"fru"* and *"fröken."* In books. . . . It had been ever so long ago—in that hump-backed street. Breathless from rapid walking and happiness, he had been telling Sonya Golovinskaya of that country where people love beautifully but unfortunately, where there are neither merchants nor banality, only eccentric lonely people and pines and *fröken* with blue eyes. Sonya had laughed derisively in reply.

His recollections were broken in upon by the telephone. Golubyev shouted: "What, burst?"

He flung down the receiver and, dashing into the next room, dumbfounded them all by a torrent of strong language.

"The log bar's burst! That means those Norwegians, damn them, will start swiping a whole lot up again! I wish they were in hell!"

The captain rocked himself to and fro and waited. Soon the old boatswain came in.

"Shall we start, sir?"

Only the sea and the gulls in sight. The sailors quickly salvaged the drifting logs. The captain chuckled:

"Queer folks, these Russians! Always talk, talk, talking. About their 'plan!' And they've no proper order."

The captain saw in his mind's eye a clean street, a small house, what-nots. That was proper order for you. Everybody going to church of a Sunday. The mayor, in a top hat. The wealthier folk in front, the poor behind. People knew the value of every penny there. *They* wouldn't let good timber go begging. There was at least five thousand krones' worth! It would have to be shared with the master, of course. It was high time the captain's oldest girl was getting married.

Mesentsev was talking now, but whether to Varya or himself, was not clear. "What a shame! If something's gone wrong with the log bar, why didn't the call in the Komsomols? They don't look after things, the swine! If one of them lost a kopeck he'd turn back at once, and run five versts to pick it up. And here are millions of money in danger, but you can't hammer it into his head that they're his own millions."

He turned to Varya and half bewildered and half pleased, said:

"Aye, Varya, we've a deal of work before us yet!"

Then, dropping his voice, he added:

"Sometimes,—it's disgraceful, I know, but I must tell you—it takes all the wind out of my sails and I let my hands fall idle like this."

Varya stroked the strong hand, now grown so dear: how could this hand ever fall idle in despair?

Mesentsev drew his hand away—he was excited.

"It was the same with the collective farms," he went on. "I went to Khokhol in the spring, and Egoritch drove me from the station. On the way he suddenly stops, gets down and picks up a horse shoe. 'That'll do for the collective farm. It'll maybe come in handy there,' he says, as importantly as if he was an expert from the Heavy Industries. I wanted to ask him: 'How's this, Egoritch? It was you, wasn't it, who used to bawl about the collective farm taking your last pair of trousers and that your wives would all be sleeping under one blanket, and that there was no sense in sowing—because the Bolsheviks would grab everything anyhow?' What a change! But I found out even stranger things than that. It seems they applied for proper drains to be made and water laid on. And they wrote: 'We want the water to flush with a noise same as in the town.' Now their potteries are busy making pipes. Then they built a "Rest Home" for the members of the collective farm. I looked in, and there was Egoritch as large as life, listening to the gramaphone. If you could have seen his expression—! I can't describe it. I suppose at one time he listened to the priest in church with something the same expression on his face. And he says importantly: 'Beautiful sounds, these.' You might think, Varya, it looks like something you've read about in the newspapers; one more achievement. But I was there when the kulaks were being dispossessed. They wanted to go for me, the low down blackguards. They all stood round me. The woman Markova screeching: 'Aha, you snotty-nosed whelp! Sold yourself to the Bolsheviks, have you? You've come to torment your own flesh and blood!' Then they dragged me off to the gully. And stripped me . . . Look, no, here on my shoulder, see the mark? I got

it that time. I was laid up a month in the hospital after that. But this time they led me straight to the office of the collective farm. 'You've got to have some tea,' they said. 'This is honey from our own hives.' At first I felt it quite painfully: why do you offer me honey, you devils, thought I, and never say a word of what I've got on my mind? Well, and then I thought: after all, what's the point of talking? Some have been deported, others came to understand things themselves, why not let bygones be bygones? I never tell anyone about this. Only you've somehow got me going today and I let it out. I want to tell you everything, show you everything, it seems as if a hundred nights wouldn't suffice for all of it. That was a rotten time! No, I shouldn't have said that—it was a good time. Always on the alert. Even when I was asleep I'd feel if my revolver was handy. I don't know where you were then, though? How did you get on?"

Varya said nothing. Mesentsev looked at her and repeated his question.

Then Varya said softly:

"I don't want to remember it. Tell me about yourself."

There was nothing sad in her words, yet sadness suddenly enveloped Mesentsev like a fog. His breath came heavily.

"Varya, what's the matter?"

Then Varya moved away a few paces from him and, lowering her eyes, said softly:

"Tell me, Petka, do you believe me?"

Mesentsev was astonished. He even stood blinking stupidly for a few moments. Then he muttered:

"Why are you asking me this?"

"Never mind, say—do you believe me?"

"Alright, I do. What about it?"

Delighted, Varya ran up to him, seized him by the hands and twirled them round as if she was dancing.

"What about it? I've got to be going to work, that's all about it. Look, it's past five already. I'll have to be at the works soon. I ought to be there the first now. I've been put on the Red List."

Mesentsev chuckled:

"You're a queer one. So close. Quite sad one minute and wouldn't say why, oh no. Even held her tongue about the Red List. Don't even give me a chance to congratulate you. I can't behave like that. Everything has to come out. Now I want to tell everyone how and what. Even the boards."

They both looked towards the pile. These were not mere boards. They were part of the forest—formerly—when there had been branches on them, and quite recently, about an hour ago when they had helped Mesentsev and Varya to say what otherwise could never have been said. Laughing, Mesentsev said:

"So that's how it is, Comrades Boards! Varya and I.... Well, and so on. To cut a long story short, you understand it yourselves."

2

That night was a wonderful one for Mesentsev and Varya, but the town never suspected it; the town lived its ordinary life, and if that ordinary life must nevertheless, be called mysterious, the blame should be laid on the rosy light and the sleeplessness, the heaps of papers, the dreams of some, the grief of others, all of which are, perhaps, the peculiarity of Arctic summer nights, well known for their habit of bringing confusion into

the calculation of time and into family life. Perhaps, too, some blame might be attached to the magnetic properties of the five pointed star that was visible even during the whitest Polar nights.

The loading of the timber ship *Edda* occupied exactly seven hours. Sorokin's brigade broke all records and Golubyev from Timber Export Trust, shook hands cheerfully with snub-nosed Pashka Sorokin. Golubyev was no longer thinking of Knut Hamsun or of the lumber adrift. He looked at Pashka and felt at rest.

"A record, you say?" said Pashka with a smirk. "Nonsense! I don't call that a record. If we could fly in the stratosphere I'd call that a record, but this. . . ."

Golubyev burst out laughing.

"This is not such nonsense, either, Pashka. Everyone has his own stratosphere. We live here down below as you might say, but when it comes to the point, we can fly."

This conversation took place towards evening. Afterwards Golubyev went to look at the transporters. Then there was a meeting. Golubyev insisted on a new bridge being built. Schultz raised objections: it was more than they could manage just now, the storming period was past, one must consider after all, what was within human powers. Golubyev angrily produced figures and coughed. At last, losing patience, he said:

"As for human powers—Well, leaving Mesentsev out of the question, since you think he's an exception; now, look at the stevedores. Look at Sorokin, for instance. They say he was a hooligan till a little while ago. Could do nothing but sing songs. And now? There's a flight to the stratosphere for you . . ."

Schultz glanced mistrustfully at Golubyev and, leaning towards him, said:

"You've been overworking yourself, Ivan Sergeyevitch. I'll bring up the question of a holiday at a rest home for you. You ought to take care of yourself. . . ."

Golubyev made a gesture of dismissal and went on: "But can't you see—a bridge like that would be such a saving of labour!"

After the meeting Golubyev went down to the timber wharf: the *Delphi,* a Greek timber carrier, was being loaded that night. The loading was being badly done, and Golubyev swore. Then he went home. Masha had left a glass of cold tea and two potato cutlets on the table. Golubyev began to eat quickly; then suddenly he felt his legs slipping away from under him. He smiled guiltily and lay down. Fröken, Kiev. . . . Pooh, what nonsense! Everything swam before his eyes. He felt as if he was dozing off. But he jumped up immediately: his heart hammering desperately in his breast. He wiped his moist brow with his sleeve. The words "There's the stratosphere for you!" rang quite distinctly in his head. Norway—Oh yes, what was that about the timber? He pulled himself together and sat down at the table. Five minutes later he was writing a report: four new *zapans*[1] were required. The Komsomols must be appealed to and brought in to help. The most reliable spots must be chosen, and the timber jacks placed right. He laid down his pen and fell into a reverie. There were not enough people! Then he saw before him the cheerful face of Mesentsev. He smiled and began to write about the timber jacks again. Mesentsev could be sent there!

At that moment Varya was looking at Mesentsev. The sirens of the steamers were going, the sawmill was screeching, life glided by like timber down stream.

[1] *Zapans* are shallow bays or inlets where logs are stored; they are closed off from the river by a bar of logs fastened together.

In what way did a night like this differ from an ordinary day? In that it held a little more melancholy and exaltation, the heart was a little more on its guard, the sky was pinker. But the sirens of the timber ships shrieked "Oh—ooh—oooh!" just as in the daytime, and the stevedores chanted to make their work go with a swing: "Now, boys, a long pull, a strong pull, and a pull al—to—gether!" And the windlasses creaked, and the timber trolleys rattled.

Through the broad streets, full of light and of people even at that late hour, strode a foreigner. He wore a wide coat with leather buttons. It might have been the captain of a timber carrier or a tourist. He spoke Russian well; evidently he had spent some time in the country formerly. His name was Johann Strom. There was a crowd of people busy at the corner of two streets. "Demolishing something," said Strom aloud. He crossed the square and saw more people. They were carrying bricks. "They're building something," he said to himself. He felt uncomfortable in this great, unquiet, windy country. Why had he been sent here? Krause was an ill natured fellow: it was he who had chosen Strom to be sent here. About some idiotic seeds. . . . Krause was working with the Swedes now. He was making a bit on it, too. But what had Strom to do with that. . . . ? He was sick of life anyhow, and here it was nothing but talk, and reports and figures. Strom yawned loudly amid the bricks and dust under the rose colored dawns.

Among the addresses and figures in his notebook aimless, scrappy notes were scattered. Yesterday he had scribbled: "Sheer senselessness. The Department of Foreign Trade is exporting everything: timber, sausage bladders and world revolution. I suggest that it should also export subjects for authors to write about. If I could write novels, I would soon get rich. There was a cathedral in Totma. I remember seeing it when I was here in 1926. Everything about it was rich and showy: the merchants had spared no expense. It was proudly exhibited to me: there was gold everywhere and everyone singing 'Halleluja!' Now the cathedral has been demobilised. The bricks were loaded on to barges, and went to build the Institute of Forestry in Archangel. S. told me today that one of the Totma priests—Tikhomirov was his name, I believe—started agitation in the market: 'The devil's storehouses must be burned down,' and so on. The priest was sent to the lumber camp. The rest is easy enough to imagine: no more Hallelujas. The priest asks dully: 'Have we to select certain trees for felling' and then goes on gobbling his cabbage soup noisily. By the way, I visited that Institute of Forestry. It was full of country lasses. Last summer they were milking the cows. Now they attend lectures on Marx and turpentine. Anything can be built out of bricks. But one asks oneself: who the devil wants all this? And first and foremost: what has it to do with me?"

Strom came to a standstill. An ancient wall with small windows cut in it and protected by bars, from which heavy iron rings drooped like ear rings. This was the customs house, built in Peter I's time. It was being demolished. People were in a hurry tearing it down. The stout walls melted as if made of ice. Shurka's shock brigade stayed to work overnight. Strom stood for a long time gazing at the cast iron rings, at Shurka's shock head of hair, at the heap of debris, gilded by the early sun. Strom made a wry face: this was the sort of thing they liked, he thought to himself. It was in one of their songs: "We'll dig down to the very foundations, and then—" And then—but that didn't matter. Yes, but he knew what that—"and then" meant: the Institute of Forestry. Or creches. Or an Agricultural Experimental Station for idiotic seeds.

Heavens, how boring it all was! He wished that Krause might die. Well, that one with the shock head of hair seemed pretty cheerful, anyhow. It would be hard to tell whether Strom was angry or envious. He put up the collar of his coat— the rawness of early morning made him uncomfortable—and went on his way.

The fate of the old customs house had been discussed that night by two people: Khrushchevski from the museum and Kusmin, the artist. They discussed not only that, but also white nights, and timber felling, and beauty. They had shouted, hurled accusations in each other's faces, flung down their cigarette stubs on the floor in fury, and dashed over to the window in turn. Each of them had talked of what was in his mind.

Khrushchevski was no longer young. In his student days he had been a Social Revolutionary. Then he had believed in nothing, except Mikhailovski the sociologist, and conspiracy. He had been exiled to the far north. He had married the daughter of a small merchant, acquired a family, settled down, became irascible, and then fallen a victim to a belated and misplaced love of art. He could neither paint landscapes nor play the violin. After the Revolution he went to work in a museum. He longed to save from ruin the beautiful tattered remnants of a dead world. He had asthma, eight children, a small salary and a very difficult job. He pleaded with the secretary of the District Soviet: "The icon setting weighs almost nothing at all and it's so beautiful—sixteenth century work!" He exhorted the collective farm people, who had made a granary out of the timber church of Our Saviour in the Meads, to spare the old frescoes. There was not enough bread or sugar or strength. His wife told him: "You'd do better to go and work in the Timber Export Trust. It has a good cooperative store for its employees, anyhow." But Khrushchevski still struggled on. He was saying to Kusmin at this moment:

"Was the customs house in anyone's way? Windows with rings to them—why, it was unique! Engels said: 'If you want to understand the new world, you must know the old.' Lenin was fond of Beethoven. Who knows, perhaps Beethoven helped him in some way in the struggle? I am convinced that in Moscow they would have understood this. But here on the spot! Not long ago I went to Great Ustyug. The Church of the Resurrection had been declared by the Department of Science to be unique. What titles there were in it. It was looted, thieves came searching for gold to exchange at the Torgsin store. Everything was smashed up. Not once, as you might think, but three times. And they don't want to set a guard over it. In these very boots—I had to step over the famous Stroganov icon, old manuscripts, books. Don't you call that a crying shame? You're an artist: tell me, what difference does it make who the original of a painting is, a shock brigade worker or a saint with a face like a dog. Just look at the way the folds of the drapery are painted!"

He was a queer fellow, this Kusmin! He was said to be an artist, but no one in the place had ever seen his pictures. Nevertheless, he worked from morning till night in his little room. There, among the tubes of paint, old canvases and cucumbers—he was fond of munching cucumbers— Kusmin laughed and gesticulated or sat without moving for hours, in despair.

He had formerly worked in a spinning mill He spent his evenings drawing. Once the correspondent of *Northern Truth* arrived on a visit. He noticed Kusmin's drawings in the wall newspaper and chuckled.

"These are splendid! You ought to go and study drawing and painting somewhere. You'll make a first rate artist by and by. . . ."

The correspondent went away, and after that Kusmin went, too. He was

lucky enough to be accepted in an art school. In his spare time he visited the museums. When he saw Rembrandt for the first time, he went cold inside and began to laugh senselessly. Chernishev asked:

"What's the matter with you?"

Kusmin made no reply. He wandered about the streets until late at night, colliding with the passersby. He grew haggard in a single day. Then he flung himself into his work with renewed ardour.

Once the professor in the art school said to him: "You'd better stop that kind of thing. That's Formalism. Why haven't you got the eyes in the proper place? They should be on a level with the ears, you know that yourself. And it's sheer stupidity to paint the cheeks green."

Kusmin tried to defend himself.

"But that's shade. You can see yourself—it's greenish."

"Shade is grey, and that isn't shade, it's Futurism."

Then Kusmin lost his temper and shouted:

"What sort of an artist are you? You're just a photographer! People'll be wrapping their feet in the rags of your famous pictures soon. What the devil's this, anyhow! I go and look at Rembrandt, and Veronese and Tintoretto and then a cheap little painter with a yardstick comes and demands 'Where've you put the ears—are they level with the eyes?' It's not a passport you're filling in: 'Nose—ordinary, eyes—grey, no distinct marks.' You ought to be downright ashamed of yourself! Why, in the mill we didn't even make a tablecloth without some sort of feeling and inspiration. And you want to paint the Revolution to order. I feel nothing but contempt for you!"

Kusmin was expelled with due ceremony. He went to the north. In order to earn enough to live on, he was now making models of the lumber mills or drawing posters of trees, mice, owls and so on, for the museum. He lived on the verge of starvation, but would not give in. Some said he was a little queer in the head, some asserted that he was a mystic. In the town there were two artists who were accepted by everyone. They did theatre scenery and the decorations for the office of the Party committee on great occasions. But Kusmin never met them: he preferred the lumber camps. Very often he went down to the *zapans*. There he used to draw and talk to the men of this, that and the other, and crack jokes. Among the workers he enjoyed the reputation of being a jolly chap. Sometimes Khrushchevski invited him to come round: they would argue all night long. Khrushchevski had never seen Kusmin's work, but something in the artist's personality attracted him. He thought, however, that Kusmin did not want to learn. Even now he was not looking at St. Christopher with the wonderfully painted folds of drapery. He preferred to gaze out of the window at the river, the barges, the forest.

"That's not it, that's not it at all," Kusmin said obstinately. "Of course, it's a pity when things are torn down senselessly, but that's a detail. If a hundred are destroyed, three hundred remain. Or else the other way about—anyhow, the number's not the point. Think of the people who have been killed! No. The point lies in something quite different. Oh, look at the light out here now! I say that disturbance is necessary. We have storms and calms, but in art there should always be a slight rippling of the surface. You said just now: what difference does it make, whatever you painted? That's nonsense. An image can drive one crazy. As for the way it's painted, that comes afterwards. That's for you to bother about—you people who do research work, that's for the history of art. But we must be a little bit crazy. You know, when a subject is first conceived, it's very dangerous. If it isn't born in time, it will smother you. Down on the *zapan* at Bobriki this spring I saw a funeral. A girl had been

crushed by a log. The coffin was put together quickly on the spot. Drops of pine tar fresh on it. The sun shining. A young fellow was standing by. There were no tears, but there was what could easily have turned to tears. Looking on from the side, you might think it was a carnival: the river, and the coffin lowered into a boat—as good as in Venice. There were flags, and heroic speeches: 'The raftsmen swear upon this grave to finish work by the 1st of August!' So there is no death. But still for one person in the world—she was not simply a shock brigade worker, but a Masha or a Shura, I don't know what she was called. Even if there is no death, there is grief. And if you say there is no grief in life—then that is real death. Why do I dwell on this so much? Because I want to prove that grief is ours, too, life becomes fuller then, and fights against death, see? I express myself very badly. As for painting?. . . It's all here inside my head. I can see the composition and the colours, but there's something wanting."

Khrushchevski looked at Kusmin with irritation.

"You need to study. How will you manage without learning from your elders? Listen, I'll tell you what else I saw there—in Ustyug. You've seen wooden sculptures, haven't you? Baroque, you know. We rescued about ten wooden images of Christ from different churches, thinking we could have them taken care of. The legs had been broken off some of them already. They were put in a shed, and there they sat, in a row, as if it was the waiting room in an office and they were wondering: 'What's happened?' Tell me, Kusmin: what's happened? Only don't equivocate, please. You know yourself I don't give a damn for religion. I'm talking about something else. I want to know what are we to do about art now?"

"Art isn't museum stuff," Kusmin shouted. "It's—a night like this, it's a shock brigade worker in her coffin, and her comrades marching, singing songs, and one—I remember him quite well—a big fellow in a shaggy cap, kept driving away the flies from her, and he wanted to cry and couldn't,—it's this and the way I go about like a madman—this is all art."

The sky was aflame and Kusmin by the window was lit up like one being burnt at the stake. But Khrushchevski was not looking at Kusmin, and only muttered.

"Devil knows what you're talking about! You're only a schoolboy yet. What are people talking about in Moscow now? Why, about the classics, and Greece and Raphael. Ancient art. . . ."

"There isn't any such thing as ancient art. Nor new art either. There's simply art. And it's silly to whine. Better for you to look around and see what an extraordinary life we're leading! It's ugly, you say? Of course, it's ugly. But saw it in two and look at the inside, at what is called the pith. That's a wonderful word! I tell you—after that funeral I could feel the very pith of me aching. Ask whoever you like—a lumberman, a raftsman—anyone will tell you."

Khrushchevski never found out what it was that any lumberman or raftsman could tell him, for at that moment someone called out under the window: "Sergei Vassilievitch, are you awake? Have you heard about the find?" Khrushchevski was downstairs in a moment, and running to the customs house, to the shock headed young fellow known as Shurka, who had attracted Strom's attention.

Scarcely able to speak for excitement, he rushed up to Shurka panting:

"In the wall. . . . They found it. . . A wooden figure. . . . Seventeenth century. . . . Venus. . . . Black. What have you done with it? What's up? Can't you understand?"

Shurka laughed.

"Oh—the doll, you mean? Yes, of course, there was one. Only they broke it. I didn't know there was anything special about it. The head's lying about here somewhere. We'll find it just now."

After a search among the debris, he found the head of the Venus, Under the broken nose someone had carved a devil-may-care moustache. Khrushchevski hugged the disfigured head to him in agony. Another minute and it seemed he would burst into tears. Something of his distress communicated itself to Shurka, who said kindly:

"You should have told us beforehand, how were we to know? Don't take on so! Let's get the main things done first and then we can make these dolls. Better ones than this, too."

But Shurka's words conveyed small consolation to Khrushchevski. He did not take his eyes from the lump of blackened wood. Then Shurka took a cigarette, and said, smiling dreamily:

"Here, have a smoke. What queer folks there are in the world, you know, something like you. For instance, in our village there's a fellow called Pakhomov. Died last autumn. A joiner by trade. but every minute of his spare time he'd be carving his dolls. He could do women and horses—anything you liked. I asked him once: 'What do you do it for?' And he was a stern kind of chap. 'Can't you understand why? To brighten things up a bit. You can't live on porridge alone.' And, you know, he did Lenin as well. A good likeness it was, too, only the head was very big. I asked him: 'Why didn't you make the head the proper size?' And he got mad at me. 'As if you didn't know yourself that Lenin was clever.' Ah, leave that old doll alone! Our chaps have done their worst by her: she's got no arms or legs, you'll never be able to put her together again. Have patience: there'll be better women than that made yet."

Meanwhile Strom was roaming about the long streets. He had forgotten about shock headed Shurka. He did not know what to do. He wanted to look in at the club for foreign seamen, but, after a moment's thought, turned into a restaurant instead. A day like this demanded vodka. Strom could be dry and precise. But sometimes things became unendurable: then be forgot his business, became talkative, even to the extent of making himself a nuisance to people, drank whisky or beer, started a conversation with anyone he met, and, if he happened to be in Hamburg or Rotterdam, coaxed a little human kindness from some cross and ill-favoured prostitute. It was this daylight night that had excited him this time. Yes, and in general, he was losing his poise lately: always asking the "why" and "wherefore" of things. It would be a good idea to break the too even course of his thoughts with spirits, just now!

The club, to which Strom had not gone, was noisy and gay. Forgetting for the moment the storms, the lonely night watches, and the bawling of the captain, the sailors were dancing with Russian girls.

Fair-haired John held Marusia Stepanova close. Marusia had been learning English since the winter. She looked fondly at her partner: he had such nice grey eyes. A salty smell of the sea seemed to come from his chest. He was probably an English communist. She smiled at him and the sailor smiled back at her. He was thinking to himself what pretty girls there were in this incomprehensible country. True, they could not dance very well, and then, of course, they were forbidden to dress smartly—so the captain said, but still they were very nice girls.

"Have you a club, too?" Marusia asked him.

"Oh, yes."

"And do you dance there, too?"

"Oh, yes."

Then Marusia, feeling vaguely slighted, gave an impatient little movement of the shoulders and demanded:

"When are you going to start your revolution there?"

John said nothing. He thought the girl must be joking. After a while he said:

"We have lots of fun. For instance, at Christmas you can kiss any girl you like under the mistletoe."

It was Marusia's turn to be silent. She did not understand what he was talking about. To her shame, it must be admitted that she knew few English words as yet.

Then they went out, clinging trustfully to each other. The rose coloured light illuminated everything around them. Marusia sighed: why wasn't this sailor a local fellow? Then they might have danced together, even discussed books together. . . . The colour deepened in her rosy cheeks, but this time the dawn was not to blame. What was wrong with him as a sweetheart? Marusia was just nineteen: it was time for her to be falling in love. Her friend Shurka had told her that Varya was keeping company with Mesentsev now. Of course, Mesentsev was a very nice fellow, but this sailor's eyes were much more tender. . . .

Here they were at the corner of Coast Street. Here they must part. But the sailor still held Marusia tightly by the arm. She felt suddenly shy and stood without moving. Then, after some hesitation, John drew out two pairs of silk stockings.

"Come along," he said.

For a minute Marusia stood like stone: what did this mean? Then she tore her arm out of his grip and cried:

"You swine!"

She fled, insulted. She was angry with herself most of all: how could she have ever compared him with Mesentsev? He was a Fascist, very likely. Or a murderer. Varya was right: she shouldn't go to that club any more. She would study her English at home. With the help of a dictionary. Or, perhaps, she might go to the club just occasionally, but not to dance. Only to talk: about books, and work, and the crisis. Why had he insulted her?

Marusia shared a room with Jenya Pyatakova, to whom she called out as she entered:

"Jenka, you were right not to go! Just imagine, what a swine I came across. Actually offered me stockings so as I'd go and sleep with him."

Retreating a few steps, she asked: "What have you been doing? Snoring?"

Jenya rubbed her eyes and replied:

"I don't know. What's the time? Two o'clock? Oh, then, I must have only just dozed off. That's a complicated book, that *Consuelo*. I couldn't put it down until I'd finished it. But the end is terrible. Listen. . . ."

The sparrows were chirping fussily under the open window. In low tones Jenya told Marusia of the sufferings of the unfortunate singer.

"Whenever there's a bad ending like that, I make up my own. Look here, they left children: Marusia, I think surely someone would take care of them. Some relatives, perhaps. Surely the children, at least, will be happy. What do you say, does it turn out like that or not?"

"Of course it does," Marusia replied sleepily. "And as for that sailor. . . . Well, there'll be a revolution in England sometime or other, I suppose!"

John stood for a long time at the corner of Coast Street, with the silk stockings tightly clenched in his big hand. He could not quite grasp what had happened. Everything had seemed to be going very well and then all of a sudden. . . . It was impossible to understand this country!

John wandered dolefully about the streets. He passed a restaurant. He looked at a couple enviously. Those were Russians. The girl wore socks, like the girl with whom he had danced. Evidently that fellow had better luck. Then John spat out angrily and said under his breath:

"You're all bitches, the whole lot of you!" But the girl did not hear him, and even if she did, —not all the girls in the town learned English.

In the restaurant there was a big palm made of dark green glazed calico. Beside the palm stood a waiter. He was dejected and immobile, he resembled a monument.

Engineer Zabelski and Belkin, the manager of the cooperative store, were drinking vodka with great concentration. The night, perfectly light, tried their red, inflamed eyes and they brushed it aside as one brushes away midges. Belkin even attempted a protest.

"Citizen, waiter, this is a disgrace! Why aren't there any blinds on the windows, I'm asking? What if I find it hard to drink in a light like this?"

The waiter did not stir. He merely mumbled sulkily:

"We only serve what's down on the menu. And you're not allowed to make a row here where foreigners eat."

Zabelski, waving a herring tail on the end of his fork, said:

"It was Zubakin's funeral the day before yesterday. You knew him, didn't you? Ivan Sergeyevitch. You remember, the bookkeeper in Timber Export. He died in the hospital, after they'd cut his belly open. Well, they were carrying the open coffin, and the fellows from the office were tramping along behind and arguing about what goods were being distributed today in the Class A cooperative and the wife howling like a hyena—everything in the proper style. All of a sudden, what do you think? Up jumps Zubakin in his coffin. Looked like as if the doctors who cut him up hadn't time to finish him off. The poor corpse, hearing all the noise, looked out to see what was up. Well, if you could have seen the sight! The wife and the fellows from the office took to their heels and scattered in all directions. Katz even climbed up a lamp-post. A militiaman pulled out his revolver and shouted: 'Halt, you blackguard! or I'll shoot!' to the corpse, mind you. Now how do you like that?"

Belkin stared dully at Zabelski, tossed off another glass of vodka and said:

"I like it very much. I always say the Bolsheviks won't even let a fellow die in peace. Have you read their latest? A dead heart beats, they say. It was in printed *Isvestia*. They even raise the dead, damn it! I'd expect anything of them. They started with frogs and they'll get round to the shock brigade workers eventually. You'll wake up one fine morning, and find there's a decree out 'Dying strictly prohibited to the toiling population.' See?"

Zabelski was tipsy. He shuddered and whispered to his companion:

"Chuck it, Vassya! Shut up! Do you hear, shut up! Else I'll scream!"

At a neighboring table sat Strom and Tomson, the Swedish captain. The Swede drank in silence, Strom was talking spasmodically, in hollow tones.

"Do you know what our neighbours are talking about? About death. It's the first time I've ever heard such a thing. That's what makes me hate this country—no one ever thinks of death. It's just one big kindergarten! They

bear children, build factories and—are perfectly satisfied. Tell me, what do you think about it, captain? Not about the Russians, about death?"

Tomson was chewing a piece of salted sturgeon, and felt irritated: this talkative German was hindering him from having his supper in peace.

"I? Oh, nothing special. I shall die eventually, I suppose. But I don't want to think about it at all just now."

"You brush it aside? You shouldn't do that. You'll have to think of it sometime. It's a devilishly hard role to die. Better to rehearse it a little. I tried once. Here, in St. Petersburg. It was in 1917. Well, there's no point in talking about that just now. But it was terrible. I'll tell you about something else that happened four years ago. I was married then. Perfect happiness. Then my wife died in childbirth. Do you understand what that means? I sat beside her and held her hand. And the hand was dead. I knew every mark on her body, it was the same as my own to me. And here it was—a corpse. I'm an unusually strong fellow, but I dropped down unconscious, like a weak girl. It seemed to me as if I, too, died. But when I came to myself, my first thought was: 'I'm glad I didn't die. I had loved her dearly, but I did feel relieved. You'll say, perhaps, that I'm a scoundrel. Don't worry—everyone's the same. Only it's very seldom anyone admits it. But when it's a matter of life and death anyone would betray anyone. It's a very serious matter—death. The only actuality, you might say. Here are these idiots demolishing and building and straining every nerve. Every man's a hero with them. And what for? They'll only die, when all's said and done. Like wretched capitalists. Like Mr. Ford's slaves. Like mice. What difference does it make what rag you wrap a corpse in? They smell the same. Forgive me if I'm spoiling your appetite. This winter I made the acquaintance of a journalist in Berlin. He's in a very big position now. He invited me to come and see him. He had a wife and every comfort—and as for himself—it would be hard to find a better fellow anywhere. Why, he didn't even forget to see whether the cat has had her milk or not. And yet—he told me himself that he had killed sixteen people—just like that. This wasn't sadism. But think: we have absolutely no power over our own lives. I may be run over by a car in the street any moment. But if we have other lives in our power and can give the order for someone to be shot, why, we grow in our own eyes at once. This becomes a substitute for immortality. For a thinking man this is the only way out."

Tomson wiped his mouth with his serviette and called out in an irritated tone:

"Waiter, my bill!"

The waiter was instantly transformed from a monument into a spinning top. Whirling and whispering, he presented the bill to Tomson. The latter paid it, and then, turning pale blue eyes like a baby's on Strom, asked him:

"Are you a fascist?"

Strom burst out laughing, for the first time that night. His laughter sounded like the hoarse barking of an old sheep-dog.

"My calling is that of a poet. Actually, I am the representative of the firm of Krause. A prosaic enough occupation. It's true I'm mortally afraid of death. The rest in day dreams plus fifteen glasses of vodka. For instance, I have never killed anyone in my life—yet. I'm simply a failure, as you can see."

Tomson rose. Strom attempted a smile.

"Good night."

He remained alone, repeating stupidly: "Good night, there's a good night for you. . . . it's just an ordinary night, that's all." The restaurant was rapidly emptying. Zabelski was dragged out, drunk. He resisted and Strom, sit-

ting there yawning, noticed the thick black dust shaken down on the waiter from the palm. At last Strom went out. He strolled over to the garden by the river. He knew there was nothing to go back to the hotel for: only an English novel with a mysterious detective for a hero, wall paper spotted with squashed bed-bugs, and sharp-faced, malignant insomnia. He no longer sought encounters or arguments with people. He sank down heavily, fatigued, on a bench, without immediately noticing that it was already occupied by a young woman. She, too, was gazing at the river. Her face seemed familiar to Strom. He had seen her in the hotel. She had probably been sent here on work. But what was she doing at the hour in the square? He raised his that and said politely:

"If it is against your principles to speak to strangers, please forgive me."

The woman turned to him and replied indifferently:

"Why should it be?. . . I'm accustomed to talking to strangers: I'm an actress. But what do you want with me?"

"Positively nothing. I'm just looking at the river, like you. I feel irritated, helpless, as you do very likely. These nights have their effect on one. And then there is no prospect of personal happiness for me. I'm here—for some reason or other. They keep pulling down and building up again. Sometimes it becomes unbearably dull, a child's game of building blocks. Sometimes one wants to let off a revolver. There remain—thoughts of death. The only thoughts worthy of a living human being. What do your countrymen think about? About the supply stores. Let's see what will have become of them in twenty years' time. When a man possesses a great deal, he begins to feel a delicious vacuum. By the way, I possess nothing at all: neither money nor family nor ambition. But I can well understand how tempting it must be: not to be. Add a brief negative to the auxiliary verb. But why am I saying all this to you? Don't be afraid—I'm not going to start courting you. For one thing, you are far too pretty for me, and for another thing, every scoundrel has his own code of honour. I started this conversation with you out of sheer boredom. And then I've had some drink today. But let us talk about you; you say you are an actress. I used to know actresses. They were frightfully silly and they always demanded presents every day. But what actresses were those? They were simply muck. But an actress gave me a real fright once. A famous woman, you've probably heard of her—Duse. She was in Munich. I saw her act, and something seemed to be knawing me in the pit of my stomach. Either it was much too clever for me or else, excuse me for saying so, it was downright childishness. How can anyone tear the skin from a human being like that? Better, surely, to find some means of growing a shell like a tortoise. Honestly! Duse was a genuine actress, though. Pity I never had a chance to talk to her. But to whom do I ever get a chance to talk? Merchants. Or officials. You, I suppose, are a great actress and you can. . . ."

Strom was no longer thinking of his companion. He was not even listening to his own words. His talk wandered on and on, aimlessly: like the wind that blew through in that big, as yet unplanted, garden, and raised columns of fine biting dust.

But Lydia Nikolayevna did not understand what was going on in Strom's soul, and on hearing the words "great actress" she was startled.

"Oh, but I'm not a great actress at all! I can't do a thing. I only left the studio last year. And, if it comes to that, I've no talent at all."

In starting the conversation, Strom had not been mistaken. His casual acquaintance was disturbed and enervated by the "white" night. After the show Lydia Nikolaevna had not gone home to the hotel. She wandered alone through the squares and along the embankment.

To her this unaccustomed light seemed extremely hard: she saw not only the faces of the passers-by, the steamers and the sky, but her whole life. She would be thirty that winter. It seemed silly to begin all over again at that age. It was clear that either she or life was to blame, but the fact was that they did not suit one another. At first life was identified with school. The other children had joined the local Pioneer detachment, and gone in for games and demonstrations. She had kept aloof. She had copied out Blok's verses *The Snow Mask* in her exercise book. Then she had taken in love with Kurganov. He had said: "The cells of the male are constructed differently from those of the female. You need a hero, I need a woman." She had wept, but had always been much too early in keeping appointments with him. Kurganov was life in those days. She had said: "I'm afraid to confess it, but I'm so happy." He had replied drily: "You ought to put down your name at the clinic for an abortion." After that the pianist Pevnev was life for a while. Then she got a job. She was sent to Cheliabinsk. There she met Koshchenko. They got married at the registry office. Her husband was a doctor in charge of sanitation. While he washed his hands he growled: "What a lot of lice in those barracks! Why haven't you got anything ready for supper?" She asked him, "What's in the papers today?" He replied: "Read it yourself," or "It's not for a head like yours." She found life very dull and began to meet a journalist called Lemberg. He talked to her about the Five-Year Plan, cast-iron, and appetite. Once he said unexpectedly: "What perfectly idiotic garters those are of yours: the things people invent!" Her husband heard of the affair and threw her out. She took her nightdress and her primus stove with her and went to Lemberg. He said: "This is no time to indulge in sentiment. And then, you surely see for yourself that there's absolutely no room for both of us in this dog kennel." She was alone again.

She remembered the day dreams of her childhood: Blok's poems, performances at the theatre, masques, rhythms, dreams. She made another attempt to strike a bargain with life. This time she entered a school of dramatic art. She threw herself into the work with senseless, furious eagerness. She was invited to evening parties, but declined to go. "Pooh!" said her comrades. "Setting herself up. It isn't as if she had any gift for acting." No one liked her.

Then she completed her course at the studio. She thought she would be acting in Shakespeare's plays But in the provincial theatres to which she was sent, she only played small parts in silly comedies. Once, for some reason or other, she was applauded. She smiled and when she reached the dressing room, burst into tears. And now someone had remarked: "You are probably a great actress. . . ."

"I act very badly. And then, what sort of a repertoire have we? I have to recite ridiculous verses like:

When the Komsomols are coming
Tipsy with the joy of work,
Then the plan is simply stunning
They are not the kind to shirk.

"What a choice of words! The audience yawns. Nobody cares for this: they don't and I certainly don't. I used to think that the theatre was a miracle. A great actress suffers, loves, and conquers. The audience in the stalls and the pit weeps and laughs: the world expands for them, they live the whole five acts of another person's life. . . . What absurd dreams! Now I know that it's simply because in the provinces there's nothing to do in the evening, and so people naturally drift to the theatre."

Strom was not attending to her. His mind was running on his own affairs. But the word "miracle" reached him. He chuckled:

"So you believe in miracles?"

Lydia Nikolayevna did not reply at once.

"I don't know," she said at last, "how you understand the word. I'm not speaking of miracles in the ordinary sense. I'm not thinking of saint's relics. I used to think the theatre was a miracle. I've told you about this. And just now, when you asked me if I believed in miracles, it made me think. I wanted to give an honest reply. Well, yes and no. I don't believe in them for myself. But there are things going on around me that cannot be called anything but miracles. Take, for instance, Ivan Nikitovitch Liass, the botanist. You've probably read about him in the papers. The things that man does with seeds! He's shown me some of the things and he said: 'Roses—real roses will bloom in the tundra.' It may be because I m very ignorant about those sort of things, but to me this seems a real miracle. I cannot imagine how the tundra can be transformed into a garden of roses, as if this was a southern health resort like Gursuf. Why didn't I take up something serious instead of the theatre? There would have been much more sense in it, more poetry, too. At the theatre I see nothing but slovenly work and a lot of scandal. I look about me—miracles are being done, while I have no share in them. I'm an outsider. Life here is extraordinary. Here's an example for you. Do you know a man called Golubyev? I thought you might, because you're here, very likely, in connection with timber. Well, in March, we were invited to play down on the Nikolina *zapan*. It had only just been built then and Golubyev was living there with his family—he has a wife and two children. A convict was sent there to work. He'd been convicted twice, once for a ghastly murder. Naturally, everyone protested. 'We don't want that sort here! Who knows—he may suddenly take it into his head to finish someone else off.' In short, they got thoroughly upset about it. Golubyev asked the man to come and see him, 'Look here,' he said, 'I'll fix you up in the barrack where I'm living. My wife and children are here and it'll be quieter for you. I trust you as I trust myself. So forget the past and if you had anything against anyone, it's all over and done with now.'

"And now, just listen: that murderer is first and foremost of the men down at the *zapan*. The workers think no end of him. He'd tear himself in pieces to help anyone. He's the best shock brigade worker: his picture was in the paper. Once he said to our actors, after performance: 'Why do you put on such rubbishy plays. Everything goes so smoothly and straightforward in them. Now, here am I, for example. I killed a man. So life was over for me. But Comrade Golubyev showed me he trusted me, and now I can live. What a play you could make out of this, a play that everyone would feel, yet you go on talking about your bonuses.' Now, tell me, isn't that a miracle?"

Strom was completely bewildered. People were fairly tearing the skin off him today. Every word was a torment. Worst of all, this woman was not making propaganda, or arguing or attempting to convince. She looked at him kindly, and Strom's face twitched painfully.

"That's *tic*," he explained. "Comes from nervousness. But that doesn't matter. You've told me of two miracles. Add a third: Johann Strom had just been crushed—by you. When they tried to throw him in the Moika Canal, he tore himself out of their hands. But now he is helpless. Perhaps what you say is stupid, but I am not thinking of that at present. I feel somehow frightened. It must be that I drank too much tonight. Now I'll muster my thoughts and put them in order."

He shook himself as if he had been in water, took off his hat and passed his handkerchief over his forehead. Then he said:

"Consequently, perfect calm. I have heard of this Liass. I would not mind making his acquaintance: those sort of problems interest me. If you could introduce me to him, I should be very grateful."

Lydia Nikolayevna smiled.

"You'd like to meet Ivan Nikitovich? Very well. He's a remarkable person. Do you know, he can talk to the Ganshins' poodle in dog language?. . . ."

Strom did not laugh. They both rose without speaking and turned in the direction of the hotel. They took leave of each other in the corridor. Suddenly Strom said with unexpected simplicity and straightforwardness for him:

"Thank you for not driving me away."

Then Lydia Nikolayevna felt sorry for him. "You shouldn't—" she said but found it hard to speak. "I'm terribly unhappy myself, but still I want to go on living."

When she got to her own room, she flung herself down on the bed. She wept—because there had been another bad show that evening, because she had got nothing out of life—neither love, nor fame, nor even a quiet corner for herself, and because on a wild night like this, it seemed as if one might do anything: go and live with that terrible man who talked of death as one would talk of felling timber: yes, go and live with him or throw oneself into the river at once. She wept for a long time. Then her tears came slower, there was a humming in her ears, her cheeks burned. At last she dozed off.

On entering his room, Strom verified whether everything was in place: the English novel, the traces of bugs, the white, sharp light. Then he locked the door, washed himself, changed his outdoor shoes for bedroom slippers and sat down in an armchair by the window. Before him lay his notebook. He turned over a few leaves with disgust, found a note with the name Liass and put a cross beside it. Underneath he wrote: "If I am not removed from here in a few days' time there will be a catastrophe. This is nonsense, too." He dropped the book on the floor. Gradually his eyes lost all expression. They became dull bits of glass: such as one sees in a stuffed animal. But he did not close his eyes yet. Perhaps he was able to sleep with them open, or, perhaps, having taken a temporary leave of life, he still kept his vigil although he no longer existed.

Somewhere over the wires Golubyev's order was being transmitted: the breach on the Veshnetsk *zapan* must be filled! The Komsomols marched past the hotel. They were smiling and it was clear to everyone now that the night was over and gone, taking all its spectres with it. The timber carrier *Elizabeth* had only now sounded her siren and departed, bearing Sailor John with her. He was off to the North Cape now. Khrushchevski was awaited in the museum. Soon Kusmin would bring him a model of rationalised rafting.

Belkin was starting out with a splitting headache for the cooperative store. If there proved to be deficits in the cash desk, he would have to refer to last night's dialogue under the green glazed calico palm. Zabelski would be put on the blacklist: this was the third day he had been on the booze. Marusia and Jenya was still thinking of the children of the unfortunate singer, while Marusia had apparently forgotten her Englishman. Only somewhere in the depths of her soul remained a faint regret; she would like the others to be jolly today, otherwise she would be very down in the mouth. Varya would be sure to laugh—how gay she was when she came to work today. Even old Shchukin smiled when he saw her: "You're very sleek today. Has your sweetheart made

you a present of a dress?" To which Varya retorted: "Dress or no dress, we're going to get married." She laughed herself when she had said it: funny, how quick it all happened! Marusia echoed her laughter. Yes, and Jenya, whose thoughts were still running on the children of the ill-fated singer, smiled too. "Good for you, Varka! In my opinion, there's no point in courting without that. There should always be a happy ending though. I'm not going to start a book for the future unless it has a good ending. Why should one torture oneself? If, for instance, the 1905 revolution comes in, I won't want to read it, because you can guess beforehand that someone will be hanged. But if it's about 1917, then, of course, it'll be cheerful. Now, Varka, let me congratulate you!" Varya suddenly became serious, knitted her brows, blushed and gave Jenya a smacking kiss. Then she grew thoughtful: where was Mesentsev now? Perhaps he felt quite different? Perhaps he had forgotten about Varya?

Mesentsev was marching along with the other Komsomols. They were hurrying to the wharf: the breach down on the *zapan* had to be filled. As they marched along they smiled. It was a fine morning, not hot as yet, and one could breathe easily. They were accustomed to night alarms, to dangers, to desperate toil that gave no quarter, that silenced even songs, when they could hear nothing but the thumping of their hearts. Here was Shumov. He had been at Bolshaya Zemlya, where he built a creche in a native tent for the Nentsi at shock brigade rate. Jarov felled timber and built a highway through the taiga from Syktyvkar to Ust-Vyma. Bocharenko had worked in Pechora. They had been searching for oil and pyrates, and found radium. Ivanov had helped to organise a reindeer breeding soviet farm far within the Arctic Circle. Schwartz had grown vegetables in the tundra. Gredin had spent two winters in the lumber camps. Kadrov had wintered on Kolguevo Island. They had all known cruel frosts, hunger, the heavy sleep of fatigue and frozen boards, heat, dense swarms of mosquitoes, in the forest, swamp, fever, the lives of lazy people, the hatred of the kulaks; a bleak, difficult manly life, only softened for a moment now and again by a kind word from some Varya, Marusia, or Jenya.

Who was that marching behind them? Ivanitzki. He had been one of those who had wintered on the islands. He had died of scurvy. After him came Perenossov: a century old pine had crushed him. Then Deuch: he had been drowned in the Dvina, while readjusting the bolts of the log bar in the *zapan.* Yushkov: he had been killed by kulaks at Krasnoborsk. Nikitin: a ladle of molten iron had descended on him—the revenge of a couple of dispossessed kulaks. Veritski: he had fallen from a mast while fixing a rope. Kovrov: he had lost his way in the taiga. They had found his body in the spring. All these died at their work. They died at the ages of eighteen, twenty or twenty-five. They had received a grim burial: a red pall had covered them, their mourners' eyes were dry. Death was dethroned, brought down to the level of a wrecker: no one wanted to listen to his footsteps. They were dead, these men, but they marched alongside the others, with Mesentsev and Shumov urging them on to the *zapan;* not a single log must be allowed to drift out to sea!

They tramped past the hotel, singing. They could still sing—but down there, when they would be up to the waist in water, when heavy timber jacks would have to be driven in, then they would not be in the humour for singing. As they marched they sang a song of some tender sweetheart, and then of people who had gone to their death. Of how, "on clear nights, and in gloomy weather. . . ."

Mesentsev was the last in the line. There was pure joy in his face. He was not thinking of Varya just now, but Varya had already become a part of that

world, in which the filling of a breach in the Veshnetsk *zapan* was no more distressing and no more difficult than the kisses by the pile of boards.

The over-loud singing startled Strom. He rose, and shut the window; then at last the heavy, fleshy eyelids closed in sleep.

3

"Here's your dress, keep it! What do I want with it? I might as well live in a nunnery as with you. When will I get a chance to wear it?"

The silk dress came fluttering in Genka's face. The door banged. Genka had only just time to call out: "How uncivilised you are, Lolka!"

But Lolka was already out of earshot. Left alone, Genka kicked the dress aside and said aloud: "The silly fool!" Then he picked it up and laid it on the table, which was strewn with odds and ends of wire, plans, files, strips of iron and little wheels. He looked at the dress for the first time and thought it pretty: it was green, with a low neck and two ribbons. Among the wire it looked out of place and rather touching. Genka felt depressed: he had done his best, and yet it had all turned out wrong.

Genka had been awarded a prize: the *Technical Encyclopaedia* and a hundred rubles in cash. He had first spent ten on wire, and bought two boxes of Northern Palmyra cigarettes. Then he had counted the remaining notes, and decided to please Lolka by giving her a present. He had gone to the store. There he met Shcherbakov, who was buying himself a shirt. Shcherbakov told Genka that it had been decided to build the bridge on his section. Genka felt indignant. "But this would be senseless! If you're going to build the bridge at all, it should be opposite Pushkov mill." Shcherbakov raised objections. They became engrossed in their argument. The saleswoman said: "Why don't you choose which you want, citizen? I've asked you about a dozen times already whether you want green or red?" But Genka replied, with a gesture of dismissal: "It makes no difference! The green will do." He did not even glance at his purchase. His head was busy with something else: that scoundrel Shcherbakov was ruining the whole job!

Nevertheless, when he arrived home, he called out gaily: "I've got a surprise for Lolka!" He thought she would be delighted, and laugh, and congratulate him on winning a prize. And now, Lolka had flung the dress back in his face. Green. She had worn green—a green knitted jumper—*then,* too. Perhaps that was why he had replied mechanically to the saleswoman: "Green will do." *"Then"* was a very long time since: two years ago. They met at the Plenary Session of the League of Communist Youth. Lolka had come from Kotlass. Genka spoke on the subject of the main report. He made a brilliant exposure of all the deficiencies in their work. He said: "We give very little attention to the inner world of the Komsomol. More understanding is needed!" Even the regional secretary of the Party had applauded him. Lolka was sitting beside him. She remarked: "It was splendid—the way you seized on that. Understanding is precisely what's needed." The meeting closed about seven. The delegates were given tickets for the theatre. Genka took two for himself and Lolka.

It was *Traviata.* Genka fidgeted all the time: this tearful tale irritated him. Then he kept glancing furtively at Lolka. She had golden down on her cheek and blue eyes. She never took her eyes from the stage and when the heroine had to say farewell to life, Lolka gave an audible sigh and pulled out her handkerchief. They went out of the theatre. A light summer rain was falling. With an embarrassed little smile Lolka remarked: "Of course, when you come to think of it, it's a silly sort of story. But the music's very pathetic. On

the whole this has been an unusually interesting day for me: the Plenary Session, your speech and the opera." She counted on her fingers: three events. Then, turning away a little, she added: "And I'm particularly glad we've met."

She wanted to go to the hotel, where she and the three girls who had come from Volodga with her were to be accommodated, But Genka said: "There'll be a lot of bed bugs there. You know what—come and stay with me. You have my bed and I'll sleep on the floor." Lolka agreed.

Genka could not sleep; he kept tossing and turning and thinking how queer it was to have her so near. Suddenly Lolka called to him, "You're not asleep, are you? Do you know what—" She did not complete the sentence. It was dark in the room and Genka could not look into her eyes. But still he understood. He jumped up at once and, groping for her hot cheeks, under the curls that had fallen over her face, he began to kiss her clumsily. "How queer—so quick!" the words flashed through his mind. But that was only for a fleeting moment and afterwards there was nothing but happiness.

Next morning Lolka went back to Kotlass to reappear a fortnight later with a comical trunk, decorated with painted roses. As if feeling it necessary to justify herself, she said: "It isn't my trunk, my mother gave it to me—you can see how countrified it looks." The trunk contained four chemises, a text book of forestry, Sholokhov's *Quiet Flows the Don* and a pair of new slippers which Lolka kept for evening parties. Her green jumper now hung on a nail beside Genka's fur cap.

Genka sighed: it was difficult to deal with women. They never reasoned about anything. If one could talk things over. But Lolka would not listen to conclusions, one was faced with the alternative of either petting or abusing her. She did not want to understand that his head was full of other things: He was in charge of construction, a shock brigade worker and the secretary of his Komsomol group. Then he was busy and worried over his invention—it seemed as if he had thought of everything, yet at the test it turned out that he hadn't. Then he started to learn German. He read a great deal. He had mastered *Anti-Duhring* and read Goethe not long ago. Now he had started on Stendhal. One must know everything, yet there was so little time. He was preparing for a tumultuous life on a big scale.

He told no one, neither Lolka, nor Krasnikova, nor his comrades, about the most important thing of all. One did not speak of such things. They sounded ridiculous: the dreams of a young provincial. But he would show them: he would be a leader yet! Now here was Lolka. . . . He said to her: "I want to be the secretary of the Komsomol first of all." She began to find fault with him: "Other people live their lives, but you're like a machine. Valtseva was asking me only yesterday: 'When are you going to the theatre with Genka? There's a very interesting play on now called *Fear*.' What can I say to her. My pride prevents me from saying anything. Will you ever take me to the theatre? Do we ever go out together? Do you ever read to me? We live like strangers. I can't understand why you're in such a hurry. You're a shock brigade worker, secretary of your group, you write for the papers, you've got to invent a crane—look at the stuff you've dragged home. There isn't room to turn here now. It's impossible to live like this, Genka! This isn't life, it's just a whirl. You want everything in a hurry. What am I to do then?" At this point Lolka would begin to sniff and the whole thing would end in tears.

Genka remembered how three years ago he had been sent on a geographical expedition to Ussa, to examine the location of some coal deposits. They had to pass through dense woods, where the boughs tore their mosquito masks. When Genka clutched at his face, his whole hand was covered with

blood. And he had not even a cigarette, or he might have kept them off with smoke. Even his eyelids were bitten. He could not see anything. Yet he had to go on. But even with the mosquitoes tormenting him, things had been easier then!

It would be difficult to say how it had all happened. At first they had talked a great deal to each other. Genka had told her about his travels, about people and about books while Lolka listened to him attentively. They did not quarrel. Only once they had a disagreement. Lolka said:

"Listen, Genka, why don't you go to a university? With the preparation you've had, they would take you at once. I think you'd make a splendid engineer."

Genka gave a scornful laugh.

"As if we haven't enough engineers as it is. Of course, you'd feel flattered, you'd like to be the wife of an engineer, but I'm dreaming of something quite different. Why should I go to a university? I'd get out of touch with the boys at once there. And that's not the thing now. You've got to be one with the masses, if you want to come out of the masses afterwards."

Then Lolka said.

"It's silly for you to talk like this. We have very few engineers who are any good. Besides, what sort of a Komsomol are you if you only think about yourself? It's all 'I this' and 'I that' with you."

Genka said nothing, but from the way he slammed his book shut, Lolka guessed that he was offended. She went up to him and stroked his coarse hair. He did not respond to the caress. They became friends again in a day or two, but never again did Genka confide his plans to her.

The real trouble began later, when Lolka became pregnant.

"You'll never convince me," said Genka, "that this is worth while wasting a whole year over. But, of course, you're built differently. I don't pretend to understand the specific qualities of women. Have the child if you want to. It's your own business, when all's said and done." Lolka shrank away into a corner, sat down with her back to him and took up her newspaper. But her shoulders shook; she was crying.

Then things grew even worse. Genka happened to remark once:

"I'll put Mesentsev's nose out of joint now. We'll see what tune he'll sing after Molotov's speech. . . ."

"What was the speech about?" Lolka asked.

"Oh, really this is too bad!" he flared up. "You've turned into a regular domestic creature. You don't even read the papers. How did this come about? When we got married, you were an active Komsomolka, and now? How do you expect one to talk to you if you don't know the simplest things?"

Lolka tried to speak calmly:

"It's quite true. Don't think I haven't cried over it many a time. But who's to blame? You might think of the time I've wasted standing in queues for your cigarettes. If I didn't you'd be grumbling while you sit reading: 'Not a single cigarette in the place!' And so I run about looking for them like a fool. And that's two whole hours wasted and sometimes three. Perhaps I could have read something in that time, too? It's the same with everything. The minute you want anything, it's 'Lolka, where are you?' or 'Lolka, get me this.' And then it appears I'm not educated enough for you. You're fond enough of talking to Krassnikova. She's got no cares on her mind, she can read all the speeches." Lolka had controlled herself very well up to this point, but when she reached Krassnikova she broke down.

Then a child—a girl—was born to them. Genka was not in town at the

time: he had been sent to Section Number Eight. He arrived home weather-beaten and cheerful. As he entered the room he called out:

"So, it's a girl? Fine! What have you called her? Dasha? Well, show us your Dasha, then." But he did not even glance at Dasha, and began to tell how he had found four inexcusable mistakes in the design for the dyke. Pronin had disputed the point with him, But Genka had shown him what.

Dasha howled for nights on end.

"Will you sit up with her awhile?" Lolka begged him once. "If I could get just an hour's sleep. . . ."

"Oh yes, of course. Do go and lie down. I'll look after her," Genka hastened to say. At first he examined this howling morsel with curiosity, as one would a new machine. He felt the soft skull, raised the child in his arms: how light it was! But he soon grew tired of all this. He remembered that next day there would be a meeting; he ought to be looking at Tomin's report on soil foundations. Lolka was awakened by the child's wailing. "I can't leave her with you for a minute! What a father!" she reproached him, but Genka was not listening to her. He was far away, building a highway in his imagination. He had effectively spoilt that insolent Pronin's game, and the secretary of the Party committee was shaking hands with him and saying:

"We'd never have done it without you, Genka."

It so happened that one evening Genka was sitting working with his wires. But he had a vague sense of things not being right. Suddenly he jumped up and ran over to Lolka. It was like the evening they had been to *Traviata*. Krasnikova might be cleverer but he loved no one except Lolka. So it seemed to him when, throwing back her head, he set to kissing her. But Lolka freed herself.

"I don't want this. Do you hear, I don't want it. I'm too stupid to talk to. This is all you want of me. But we're not back in the village now. I don't understand how people can do that sort of thing without any feeling."

She waited for Genka to argue with her, to tell her that it wasn't true, that he loved her: then a belated joy would have come to her. But Genka smoothed back his tousled hair, muttered coldly: "Well, if you won't, you won't," and sat down at his work again. True, his thoughts were far from the computation of angles but he sat there bent over his plans as if Lolka did not exist. She did not realize that he was ashamed and hurt, and lonely. Thus the difficult evening wore on without either of them exchanging a word. Next morning he threw himself into his work heart and soul and everything went on in the usual way.

Then misfortune came upon them. Dasha fell ill. The usual thing happened that happens in these cases: the doctor came and took various instruments out of his case. Lolka tried not to breathe, and the air was permeated with the smell of medicines, a peculiar silence and unhappiness. Once Nikolayev dropped in to talk to Genka about sending the Komsomols to the collective farm under their charge, but after a glance around the room, he said, "Oh, never mind, we'll manage it ourselves, somehow." Genka felt that Dasha was a part of his life, that he could not simply brush her aside, dismiss her as he had dismissed Lolka's complaints. Nikolayev was thinking the same: Genka was a father, therefore he could not sit with folded hands while his child was ill. Genka tried to meddle with things. He argued with the doctor. He looked up the word "croup" in the dictionary. He shouted at Lolka: "The milk's too hot, can't you see?" But he did all this in a way so characteristic of him that his anxiety seemed to Lolka to be something between

fault-finding and curiosity: he was studying the child's disease as he studied his cranes. . . . Then Genka retreated. It was a busy time: there was a breach in the work, the Komsomols were preparing for the conference, the talk was all of Mentsev, in short, Genka had his hands full. He forgot about Dasha. He became accustomed to her wheezing and the smell of medicine.

Once Lolka said to him: "Run to the chemist's for me, will you? I ordered the doctor's prescription to be made up. Only be quick!" Genka dashed out and down the stairs two at a time. At the chemist's he did not even stop to exchange a word with Vaska. But when he was near home, he ran into Mesentsev, who said:

"We're bringing up the question of Gudakov. The fellow's going to the dogs altogether. It's a pity, of course, but we'll have to exclude him."

Genka began to argue about it. He was of the opinion that it would be better to put Gudakov through a Party cleaning: the Kholmogory affair had been bad enough! Gudakov had been sent to the soviet farm for a couple of days when people had arrived from Moscow for stock breeders. He had stayed there ten days, doing nothing. Then he had brought back a young girl with him. The fellow was only twenty-two and this was his third wife. Well, supposing he had had a good time with the girl there, surely there was no need to kick up such a fuss! His wife was running all over the town, complaining to everyone about it and the non-Party people were jeering: "So these are your stock breeders!" In short, the least said about Gudakov the better. But Genka did not like Mesentsev and every suggestion coming from the latter irritated him. This was envy, more than anything else. Mesentsev had been held up as an example, he got on well with everyone, and was successful in everything, no matter what he took up. Genka did not realize that he was envious of Mesentsev. As a matter of fact, Mesentsev seemed to him stupid and self satisfied: the fellow talked brightly enough, but if you came to think of what he said, it was just nonsense! So Genka began to defend Gudakov warmly.

"You must not be careless with people like this. Remember how well he ran the campaign down on the *zapan*. And last autumn," Genka began to enumerate Gudakov's good qualities. Then he gave a start: "My little girl's sick. I was just coming from the chemist's."

"Why are you standing here then?" cried Mesentsev. When Genka ran up to their room, Lolka was waiting, dressed ready to go out, on the threshold. She had been about to go for Genka. As she snatched the bottle from him, she said softly: "I suppose you ran in to the club to argue with someone." Genka made no reply.

Next day Genka remained with Dasha while Lolka went for the milk. He went over to the baby's cot. Something he had never felt before came over him: he was terribly sorry for Dasha. Such a tiny little thing and so sorely tormented! He was suddenly conscious of being too strong and healthy. He listened to the wheeze that came from the tiny body, and a lump arose in his throat. He muttered. "Never mind, you'll be better soon. You're sure to be better soon." As if Dasha could understand. Then, hearing Lolka's footsteps, he hurried away and hid his face behind the newspaper.

Dasha died four days later. In the evening. Genka had run for the doctor, but before the doctor came Lolka had realised everything. She did not cry before him. Nor before Genka. She only said: "Listen, go out somewhere for a while, will you? I want to be alone with her." Genka meekly put on his cap and went out. He did not go to the meeting, nor did he seek out his com-

rades. He roamed about the streets, wondering vaguely: "Why did she send me away? I'm the child's father, after all. How strange—Dasha is dead and yet Lolka doesn't cry. . . . Crying, for Lolka was always as easy as talking for me. And now—not a tear. Why is it?" If Genka had been capable of crying, he would have cried out here on the embankment, amid the snow and the dim light from the street lamps. Tears are said to give relief. And he felt bad. Very bad. But he must pull himself together quickly. Soon there would be the conference. But no matter how Genka tried, he could not think of the conference. He was cold. He shivered, swung his arms to get warm, and at last turned homewards. With a furtive glance at Lolka, silent and motionless, he lay down in bed and pretended to be asleep.

Only Genka and Lolka attended Dasha's funeral. Lolka had neither relatives nor friends in the place. Genka wanted to mention to his comrades, but thought better of it: why should he? His sorrow was nobody's business but his own. If a Komsomol or a Pioneer had died—it would be understandable: they would make speeches and sing. But Dasha was hardly a year old yet.

An extraordinary silence hung over the cemetery, a silence that was unbearable. The grave diggers were in a hurry. The snow swallowed up every sound: only the distant voices of children came from somewhere beyond the fence. No one uttered a word. Lolka was weeping now but her tears were soundless and the frost dried them quickly, almost before they detached themselves from her eyelashes. A paper had to be signed. Genka took a long time cleaning his pen. Then it occurred to him that the grave was too shallow. True, the ground was frozen pretty hard. Then he thought it was a good thing this only happened once in a lifetime, else one would feel like strangling oneself!

After the funeral he went to a Party meeting. He tried not to think of his grief. He spoke on the international situation: "The heroic struggle of the Viennese workers. Thus was Wallisch killed." He remembered the tiny grave. When Mesentsev asked him discreetly: "How are things at home?" he made no reply but merely a gesture of dismissal.

Late that evening he came home. He delayed it as long as possible. He could imagine how Lolka would look: he saw her face, now thin and wasted and hard. She was probably sitting thinking. What ought he to say when he came in? After all, one could not be as silent as in the cemetary. He ought to comfort her, caress her, but Genka could not—other fellows could, but with him it didn't come out right, somehow. Slowly he climbed the frozen stairs. Thus had he climbed once long ago—with Lolka. After they had been to see *Traviata*. There had been no Dasha then and everything had seemed easy and straightforward and gay. Suddenly he heard the neighbour's voice calling him.

"Is that you, Genya? Your wife left the key and this note for you."

Genka felt frightened. Lolka must have committed suicide! How could he have left her alone? He tore open the envelope and read: "Genka, there's no point in our living together any longer. Ninta is going to put me up in her barrack for the time being, until I find a room. Only after Dasha I can't stay with you any longer. Try to understand and don't be angry."

Genka looked around the room. It had been tidied. All the medicine bottles, all the rag dolls Lolka had made for Dasha had vanished. It was as if there had never been a green jumper, or a baby girl, or love or quarrels or two whole years of life together.

Genka sat down at the table and started work, telling himself sternly that

he must not think any more of this. He did not want to remember that cruel day, the cemetery, the snow, Lolka's eyes and the short note that now lay somewhere under his papers. He was working. He was still young and strong.

When he went to bed just before morning, he felt terribly lonely. He was not thinking at the moment of Dasha or of Lolka. But the room seemed incomprehensibly empty to him. So did life. But that was only weariness. Tomorrow everything would be different.

True enough, when he awoke next morning, he felt bright and lively, as if he had suddenly got well after some serious illness. Now to start with redoubled energy! he thought as he puffed and splashed cheerfully, at the washstand.

Memories wore away gradually and when he met Lolka three weeks later, he asked her calmly enough: "Well, how are you getting on?" "Oh, pretty well, thanks," she replied. He did not notice the tremor in her voice, nor how quickly she hid behind Ninta. He thought to himself: "Well, that passed off all right!"

After this encounter with Lolka he calmed down completely. He even went to talk to Krassnikova about literature.

"Why is it there isn't a single good book about Komsomols? These are dead and lifeless. And, damn it all, we're live people! We feel," he protested. Upon which Krassnikova, for some reason or other, asked: "Is that true?" and turned away in embarrassment. But Genka was not looking at her. He was happy. Krassnikova was not Lolka, she had been to a university. Last spring she had read a paper on Sholokhov and now she listened eagerly to every word of Genka's. He was evidently head and shoulders above the others: he understood not only foundations, but literature as well.

Genka had not always been sure of himself. He had begun, like many another, with doubt. When Engineer Khokhlov had explained to him for the first time what mutual gravitation of machinery was, Genka had thought despairingly: "How thick headed I am! I don't understand! I simply can't understand anything!" A year later he had come forward with a suggestion about placing frames in relation to each other. Khokhlov had congratulated him. "That's fine! How quickly you mastered the idea." Genka might have replied: "I'm only learning" or "I'm not the only one." but, too happy to be hypocritical, he had smiled and said: "This is only the beginning." He knew that he had a big future before him. Several years had passed since then. Genka Sinitsin could be seen now on the platform, at the table where the presidium sat, at meetings, at business conferences. Lolka alone had not appreciated him, but of Lolka he did not care to think now: it was simply a slip of the pen.

Genka looked out upon the world with a business like, but enamoured gaze. It was his world. A machine might look complicated enough, but if you studied it properly, everything about it was perfectly simple and followed certain laws. All that was needed was to understand its construction. Genka knew how the world was constructed. He knew the great ideas that determined the life of the country. He loved ideas—they were up to his level, he felt, but he was indifferent to people. He knew his comrades well. Some of them were stupid, others lazy. Genka had hung his certificate of honour on his wall and was delighted. Kudriashev was in love with his wife; they sat hammering away at German exercises or playing draughts of an evening. Schwartz read novels all night long, indiscriminately: Dumas right after

Leonov, Turgenyev after Conan Doyle. Leshchuk adored dancing. Genka was alone amongst them. "Why do you want to do everything in such a hurry?" Lolka had said. But he had nothing but contempt for collars and ties, and dancing and home comforts. He always had dinner now at the dining room for engineers and technicians. But did he ever notice what was on the plate before him? He always read at dinner time. The world might be simple, but it was very large and Genka had very little time. At work he was severe and exacting.

He would never bother to gossip about Leshchuk keeping company with Natasha. When Kudriashev started to talk about his little year old son who already knew four words, Genka brushed him aside. Genka had no friends. He tried to be pleasant and friendly to everyone. Once a disagreement arose between him and Mishka. This Mishka was a clever fellow, but lazy. Genka had said to him:

"What's that you're reading? Tolstoi? Waste of time. Tolstoi could wait, you ought to be reading *The Navvy's Manual.*" Mishka was highly offended. "And who's Tolstoi for then? For you, I suppose?" Genka said nothing, but that evening when he bumped into Mishka again, he heard him growl: "Hitler!" Genka burst out laughing. "Now, what sort of a Hitler am I? I haven't even got a moustache. And you shouldn't turn nasty, Mishka, if I say anything to you—it's all for your own good. You ought to try and get on in your work, that's all!" Genka said this in a good natured tone, but Mishka, without taking his malicious gaze from Genka's face, retorted: "Never mind about the moustache. Everyone says you're a downright Hitler and nothing else."

When he got home, Genka spread the newspaper out before him. "Hitler's speech" caught his eye. He remembered Mishka's words and for the first time during the last few years, felt abashed. Could it be that the boys did not care for him? He should have been less formal with them, more friendly.... Should he go to their evening parties? And drink with them? It was all very disgusting, of course, but they liked that sort of thing: it meant you were one of them, and not setting yourself up above them. Then he sat down at his work and immediately forgot Mishka and Hitler and all his doubts.

They confronted him once more two months later. It came about this way: happening to drop in to see how the Komsomols in the barrack were getting on, Genka caught sight of a young woman with a baby in her arms.

"This isn't right, boys. If this is a Komsomol barrack, you've got to keep the place in proper order."

"What am I to do," Baikov protested, "if there's no room in the family barrack? I asked the boys first if they had anything against it, and they hadn't. You see it's like this: there's nothing to eat back home in the village, because her father's on his own now, he left the collective farm. Quarrelled over a calf and now the fool's drying nettles and she's working here."

Genka would not give way, however. This was a model barrack, they could not be allowed to spoil it. Then Baikov flared up. "It's alright for you: you live at home with your wife and your little girl. So that sort of thing's only for the like of you, is it?"

Genka did not reply at once. He sat down on a bench. A month had passed since the day he had been handed Lolka's note on the dark staircase. He had forgotten his trouble and now he was confronted with it again. He felt like striking Baikov or calling him a swine. But the restrained himself. He replied

calmly, even drily: "But I'm not living in a barrack. And if it comes to that —well, my little girl is dead and my wife and I have separated. So I don't think there's anything you can envy me for." He ceased speaking. It was very quiet in the barrack now. Baikov stood there meekly enough with downcast eyes: his wife looked at Genka with a kind, mournful expression on her face. But Genka would not give in. "This has nothing to do with Baikov. The question's quite clear. He came here as a bachelor, and then sent for his family. We've got to put down that sort of thing firmly." Then Baikov went close up to Genka and said quietly:

"So just because you've separated from your wife, no one else must live with his, is that it?" But Genka did not seem to hear him. He was thinking of something else at the moment, of how the Komsomol barrack had been his pride. He had managed to obtain beds instead of shelves for them to sleep on, and put a gramophone in the Red Corner, and flowers everywhere. Was all this to go to the dogs because of a woman? She would hang out her rags and her washing here.

"You know what, Baikov," he said, "you can have my room and I'll fix myself up here. Only give me ten days or so yet: I'm working on an invention and it's a bit crowded here." Then he turned and went quickly out of the barrack. He was upset: Baikov's remark about Lolka had put him in a bad mood. He could see the green jumper hanging on a hook and the snow drifts around the grave.

He tramped several kilometres before he could calm down. At last he regained his spiritual poise. He began to recall the conversation in the barrack. Things had taken a favourable turn, after all. As for the comparison with Hitler, it was Mishka who had started all this talk. What sort of a Hitler was he? He had gone and given up his room. . . .It would be rather difficult to work now. Never mind, he'd manage somehow or other. The principal thing was that the boys should see that he was a real comrade. To tell the truth, he was very attached to them. Baikov was quite a decent chap, too. Only a bit quick tempered. And, of course, this wife of his meant a lot of bother for Baikov. What a lot of trouble Lolka had caused! It was more fun living together, though. . . . This was all nonsense, by the way. Mishka had started this Hitler talk. But surely, the boys were fond of him. . . . Could anyone say he was ill-natured? Lolka had not understood him. That was all the better, perhaps. Kassnikova had said yesterday: "Come round some evening." Making the literary circle an excuse. But couldn't Genka see plainly how she looked at him? Formerly Genka had been bashful. How long he had sighed hopelessly for Vassina. And then it appeared that Vassina talked of no one but Genka. At that time he had thought that no girl would like him. His freckles were a great drawback. When he caught sight of himself in the barber's mirror, he thought with horror: "What a mug!" But Vassina had not seemed horrified by his freckles. She had said: "You're a very handsome fellow, Genka." And Lolka? She had been the first to call him: "Genka, you're not asleep, are you?" Now it was Krassnikova. . . . They might get married. Only he had given up his room. It was silly to live together, though. It only led to quarrels and abuse. He with his wire, she with her powder. It would be much better to meet from time to time: there would be more feeling. And one could work more quietly. His plan for ice roads would probably be sent to Moscow. An urgent wire would arrive: "Come at once."

But how could he go, if he had already been made secretary of the Komsomol? How many battles and victories lay ahead! How splendid! Misfortune

descended upon him unexpectedly. On the 11th of June Tsvetkov was crushed by an excavator. Although Genka had known Tsvetkov, they had worked together for a year—he did not give way to grief: such things were bound to happen, he thought, when great construction work was going on. Collecting the workers, he made a short speech. He reminded them of how Tsvetkov had worked when they were building the bridge at Uima: "For six days at a stretch he never lay down to sleep." Then they began to choose the delegates who were to go to the funeral. Genka knew that his name would occupy the first place, it was always so. The chairman said: "So there'll be Sinitsin, Petryakov, and Ovseyenko." Then it was that the real catastrophe occurred. An old navvy, Kobyakov, with whom Genka had always got on quite well, came forward and said: "If it was something to do with work, then Sinitsin would do. But as I understand funerals, we're mourning for a dear comrade and I don't see any point in electing Sinitsin."

Without waiting to hear what the other workers had to say to Kobyakov's words, Genka hurriedly announced:

"I'm taking my name off the list myself. I've got to be at Number Three Section early tomorrow morning." He did not hear who they elected in his place. He stared blankly at the calendar: the 11th of June—two black strokes.

He sat all the evening over his plans, getting ready for the journey. He tried not to think of what had happened. He rode forty kilometres to the Section. Then he went out with Butyagin to look at the work, and listened intently to long explanations. As they were crossing a ditch, Genka fell: the plank proved to be rotten. Butyagin and Vassya carried him to the barrack. That night his temperature rose. Through the fog of the fever glimmered two black strokes, a green jumper, and Hitler's moustache. . . . Genka was sick for two days, and then got up. There were no bones injured. But he felt ill at ease. He understood that something irreparable had happened. At first he dreaded going back to work: Mishka and Baikov and Kobyakov would be there, and they were all against him. How had it happened? He was to blame. He had forgotten that people were little minded and ignoble. Take Stendhal: a splendid writer, yet his heroes were rubbish. Why did the lads not care for Genka? He had miscalculated. The world was as simple as could be, and yet it was so easy to make a mistake. He would like to send them all to the devil! But to be without them, for Genka, was like being without air. He must think of something. What was called in the newspapers "straightening your line."

Genka persuaded the Parshins to invite him to an evening party. There he drank a great deal, no less than the others. But he did not get tipsy, he observed his carousing companions through hard, sober eyes. At first the boys drank alone, while the girls whispered in the next room. Four litres of vodka stood on the table. Koslitzki, picking up a salted herring by its tail, drawled out: "A herring has a tail, but what has Manechka got?. . . ." Redhaired Manechka appeared in the room for a moment and tittered. While waiting for the dancing to start, the girls talked of how Sonechka had paid a hundred and forty rubles for her slippers in a second-hand shop. It must have been Belkin. . . . Then they put on the gramophone. Parshin and Gorbunov sat in the corner, pawing the girls. Genka could stand it no longer. Taking advantage of a moment's confusion, when they were all crowding round Natasha, who had fainted, he went out into the street.

It was a June night and the birds were calling to each other in a high treble. Genka felt as if he had just escaped out of a deep, dark pit. He even smiled at the ray of late sunlight that crept into his room upstairs. Then he

remembered the evening's party. No. He would never be able to get on with these people! Why should he pretend?—he despised them, that was the truth. And they?. . . . They hated him: "Hitler" they had called him. But he could not live without them. So this was the end. Genka thought to himself that it had all started on the 11th of June, that was the day from which he dated his failures. His plan of ice-roads would be rejected, Krantz would call him an ignorant and impertinent fellow. Mesentsev would be made secretary of the Komsomol. The fact that Mesentsev was stupid would disturb no one. Stupid he might be, but he was one of themselves. Mesentsev would find it easy enough to make friends with that Kobyakov. They would be able to brawl out their songs together and tell each other about their family affairs. It was said that Mesentsev was going to marry Varya Stassova. What nonsense life was, after all! But how terribly he wanted to live. Only people would not let him. A superstitious fear seized Genka. He thought of himself as a failure, his whole life now was divided into two periods—before the 11th of June when the workers refused to elect him and after it. He did not know what to do.

Perhaps, when he went two days later to Krassnikova, he only wanted to see whether his luck was really out or not. He slouched along, thinking moodily of his misery. At that moment Krassnikova was a mere name and address for him. He could not see her face. He was not dreaming of love or caresses. But when Krassnikova, on seeing him, cried out delightedly: "Is it really you, Genka!" he woke up, as it were, at once. He felt he was alive. His whole passion for life, the alarms of the last few days, hope, and despair—he put them all into the kisses that shook Krassnikova. He was impatient and even sharp with her—he was afraid his luck might change suddenly. His gestures were full of feeling. They expressed the complex and tormenting emotions that had driven Genka to Krassnikova. But his soul was calm and cold. He was observing Krassnikova and himself from the side. There was neither tenderness nor passion: he was simply re-examining his life's road. There was a minute, nevertheless, when, forgetting himself, he experienced a brief joy, but even this joy was revengeful: he squeezed her shoulder and she gave a sharp cry of agony. Afterwards he came to himself, became polite once more, smoothed down his hair, and, calling her by her name for the first time, asked:

"Well, Natasha?" She made no reply. She lay there on the narrow folding bedstead with her face to the wall. She was two years older than Genka, but if he could have read her thoughts, they would have seemed childish to him.

She did not know life and she was afraid of it. It seemed to her that she was no good at anything. She worked in the Institute of Forestry. She gave herself up to her work with passion and mistrust. She lived neither in the town, nor in the forest, but in that peculiar world where every word meant for her years of toil and struggle: pulpwood, heartwood, props, sleepers.

She was regarded as a good worker, but she reproached herself for stupidity and laziness. When she had to read a paper on Sholokhov for the literary study circle, she went about for several weeks like a lost creature. Could she ever understand what style, composition, character and subject really were? The life of Sholokhov's heroes seemed to her splendid and mysterious. He understood, but then he was a writer, while she had neither talent, nor spiritual experience. How would she ever be able to speak upon such lofty subjects? She had never yet been in love and now at this moment, she was forced to understand so many new sensations at once. She lay there, shaken to the marrow, crushed. Genka's words brought her out of this exhausting torpor. She turned towards him and looked at him attentively. She seemed to be seeing

him for the first time. He was a good fellow, she liked to hear him, he always spoke so eagerly and sensibly. When he did not come to the library for a long time, she missed him. But could she have thought half an hour ago, when she had greeted him with such a glad cry, that there would be anything like this between them? It seemed to her that it had happened against their will, and, glancing at Genka, she sought for signs of confusion. Then she saw his serene, light green eyes looking at her with a friendly smile. Genka picked up a book from the table and began to turn over the leaves. She said nothing. Then he asked:

"Well, how did you get over Panferov's book?" Krassnikova was amazed she rose from the bed and went up to him. She even touched his hand with weak, cold fingers, as if verifying if it were really Genka who sat before her. "No. That is—I don't understand, Genka. This won't do. It won't do at all, understand."

Genka laid the book aside and, smiling good naturedly, replied:

"Why won't it do? Seems to suit us both alright. We can get married, if you like. . . ."

It seemed now to Genka that he loved Krassnikova. True, he did not care for her face: there was a kind of sickliness about her, about her skin, which was too white, and the circles under her eyes, and the thinness of the too pale and as if sucked in lips. But he was not thinking of that now. He felt grateful to Krassnikova for having relieved him of the burden of his doubts, and overflowing with tenderness, he said:

"In a word, the same as in the novels—complete with love—you understand."

He said this quite simply, in a friendly way. Then Krassnikova moved away from him to the bed again, smoothed the pillow mechanically and said softly:

"Go away, Genka. . . . I've told you: this won't do for me. And don't come here any more."

She stood there in silence, waiting for him to go. He lingered. He thought at first that it was perhaps a joke, a passing change of mood, that all he had to do now was to fondle her, and things would be alright again. But she only repeated stubbornly: "Go away." Her face was cold and contracted. She waited until he had gone out and banged the door behind him, then flung herself down on the bed and began to cry aloud like a child.

Genka banged the door without any anger—he was really suffering. He imagined he loved Krassnikova, that he was losing his happiness. This state did not last very long, however. The night air revived him and distracted his thoughts. He even began to think that it was well it was over—as he had done that evening after the party at the Parshins. He decided to spend the night at Tereshkovitch's. It was a long way and he had plently of time to think things over. Perhaps Krassnikova was right: there was no point in this. She had her own life and Genka his. The chief thing was that this signified the end of his failures. People did like him still. Now everything would go well with him: why had Krassnikova said "This won't do?" Why? Was he then unfeeling? Was he incapable of emotion? Why had she offended him? Like Lolka. . . . Evidently things looked different to women. Anyhow, why should he bother about that? He wasn't a writer, he wasn't Sholokhov, he had other things to bother about. He could get on well enough without women; work, read, speak at meetings, organize and be a guide to others.

Three days later, encouraged by this victory over Krassnikova, he decided

to go and see Krantz. The beginning of the conversation agitated Genka so much that he even jumped up and strode about the long room.

"I understand, of course," Krantz said, "that you have a great deal of Party work to do. But I shall put the matter before the town committee. You have extraordinary ability. You must go to a Technical School. I shall speak to Golubyev about it."

He spent a long time trying to convince Genka to go and study—he would make a splendid engineer. The north was only just awakening: there was a vast amount of work ahead of them. Genka listened to him absently. He understood that the star which had guided him from childhood was still shining above him—high, clear and irreproachable. Lolka? Kobyakov? Mesentsev? They were insects, crawling somewhere down below. While he, with head held high pushed on straight to the goal. When Krantz paused for a moment, Genka crumbling in his agitation the sheets upon which the further stages of his plan were set out, asked him:

"And what about my suggestion?"

"Why, that's just what I'm talking about. It's marvellous! Even in the places where it's downright absurd, one feels the tremendous ability behind it. Only you haven't enough knowledge. You've done things here that simply make one laugh. It's lucky you didn't happen to hit on some raw young engineer—you know the kind—some newcomer who would be glad to show off all his learning and despises everything and everyone. I look at this differently. It's not your suggestions that interest me so much in this case, as you yourself."

Genka rose and left the room without saying goodbye. He hated fat little Krantz: the very image of the fellow caricatured in a comic paper like the *Crocodile*. A mere bureaucrat! How cleverly he had made fun of Genka. "Your extraordinary ability!" As much as to say "But stick to elementary geometry at present." There was a conspiracy against Genka here. It would be nice to be in Moscow: there would always be someone to turn to, a fellow wouldn't be let go to waste. This was a regular quagmire. Mesentsev suited them—and there was an end to it. No one wanted either passion, or impulses, or exceptions. Genka was stifled here. Others consoled themselves with novels or girls. But Genka was bored with novels. He had read Tolstoi and Stendhal. You read them, you got so interested you couldn't put them down and then—when you'd finished them, and thought them over—you wondered what was the point in it all. It was boring, and you were sorry for having wasted time. To Genka himself, Genka was much more interesting than Julien Sorel and Bolkonsk. In the case of women, one entered another world: it was the warmth of the pig-sty ,the sensation of freshly ploughed soil, people scratching themselves, sweating, sleeping. It was all very well for a tree to put down its roots and bloom. Genka could not sit still: he felt he must move. Should he go to Krassnikova again? And buy a chest of drawers? And breed? Genka was not built for that. Why had Krantz taken up such a formal attitude to him? Did the man not understand that Genka was different? That fellow Krantz. . . .

"That fellow Krantz," Genka was talking to Golubyev now. Golubyev with a cheery laugh, asked:

"What about that fellow Krantz?"

"I'm damned if I know what he's up to. He's a petti-fogger. And maybe even worse—a wrecker."

Golubyev went on laughing. "He isn't a wrecker at all. He isn't a pettifogger either. I know all about this incident of yours. He told me. 'I'm afraid,' he

said, 'that Sinitsin's offended with me. But as a matter of fact, I value him very highly. He's got to go through a Technical Institute.' So you leave him alone. And while we're on the subject, I may as well tell you straight that it's very easy to go off your chump that way. I know you're clever, and work hard: You can be relied upon. But you don't get on well with the boys. That's bad. Now don t get mad with me, that s the main thing. How old are you? Twenty-four? Well, and I'm forty-seven—twice as old as you. I'm not telling you this because I want to make out I'm twice as clever. There are old fools, too. But you've got such splendid lives before you now: you can learn as much in a year as we could in ten, at one time. Why am I talking about age? So that you won't take offence. Mishka can't but I can. My children are still small, but I'm old enough to have had Komsomols for sons by now. So I could be your father. You re a good fellow. Both in general, and in particular. That is, a boy after my own heart. What a big forelock you've grown! You're a stubborn fellow, very likely. Well, listen to me: you can't go riding roughshod wherever you want. You've got to take other people into account. The same with your plan and suggestions. You attacked Krantz. And yet this Krantz is a good chap. He'd be delighted to make you a member of the Regional Committee if it was in his power. At your age I wasn t half so bright. I was expelled from the Higher Grade School. I worked for the Party. It was in Moscow, I remember. The late Innokentii Dubrovinski spoke about the role of the Stolypin farmsteads. I made up my mind that he wasn't saying the right thing. I'll make short work of him; I thought. And then it occurred to me: perhaps I'm not right? Let me think. I thought it over, and found that Innokentii was right. This is only a trifle, I don't even know why I remembered it now, but I want to show you that you can't attack people just like that. You've got a lot of pride, you're a shock brigade worker and an inventor and this, that and the other. That's a splendid thing, of course, but still you shouldn't go to extremes. Everything's open to you, so far as I can see. Then why start a war, as if you were in a fortress? Chuck it, Genka! You can't live like that, it isn't interesting. There's no warmth in it. And it's very little good to the Party, either. Better give way a bit and get along with people—and not live to yourself, as you do. . . ."

Genka did not protest, but he did not agree, either. It seemed as if Golubyev's words had not reached him. His heart now was tightly closed to outside influences. He was testing in his own mind whether Golubyev was right or not. It appeared he was not. Of course, one should try to get on with the boys —he realised that himself. But one must also try to get ahead: that was how leaders were created. As for that story about Innokentii—it was sheer nonsense. In general, Golubyev was beginning to go down. "As a father," he had said. What sort of an argument was that to use in a discussion?

All this occurred to Genka later on, when he was alone. To Golubyev he replied evasively: "Perhaps I was mistaken about Krantz. But my suggestions were, generally speaking, feasible." Golubyev understood Genka's confusion of mind and promised to look over his project. Then they parted.

A few days later there was a conference in the town committee: various candidaturs were to be discussed. Genka resolved to keep perfectly calm. Very likely they would all begin to praise Mesentsev Well, Genka could wait. He would stick to his work. Perhaps he had muddled something up in his suggestions. Then he must set it right. Besides that, he was writing a lot of correspondence for the *Komsomolka* on problems of the new ways of living. He would win through yet. For the present, let them praise Mesentsev. Genka himself would tell them that Mesentsev was a good workman.

Before the meeting opened Golubyev asked Genka: "Well, how are you getting on?" Genka gave a bright smile by way of reply. He was no longer thinking of that sly Krantz. He was heart and soul with his comrades. As always, the sensation of their nearness cheered him: they might quarrel and abuse each other, but still, they were all one big family.

"Ushakov will speak now."

Genka knew that Kolka Ushakov followed everywhere on Mesentsev's heels. Now he would be sure to sing his friend's praises. But Ushakov began to speak of Genka. He enumerated all Genka's good points. He told them about the barrack, and the wall newspaper and the talks on the international situation.

"Sinitsin has been an unusually capable secretary of the Komsomol."

As he listened to Ushakov, Genka involuntarily smiled: he could not hide his satisfaction, but at the same time he suspected a trap. How would it end? He sat, now shaking his head nervously, now drumming on the table with his fingers. At last, Ushakov passed on to the darker side of Genka's work. Genka did not know what forbearance was. Ushakov had some sharp things to say about Genka's attitude to the non-Party people. He accused Genka of superciliousness and concluded by saying:

"It won't do to get out of touch with the masses! Why do the boys speak so badly of Sinitsin? It's very easy to understand: it's because he looks down on them. I don't deny, of course, all his good qualities. But I must say plainly that his own interests, not those of the Komsomol, come first with him. He only thinks of how to show himself off. And that sort of thing, comrades, is absolutely alien to us."

Genka, as a rule, kept smiling even when he was angry. But now he did not smile. His face lit up with such malice that Golubyev happening to glance at him, turned away, repelled. Genka spoke quickly, without pausing.

"What do you mean by saying I'm an alien element? I'm not living a double life. You can ask me about anything you like, I'm ready to answer for every action. Of course, I often make mistakes. That happens with everyone. But I'm not an alien element. I'm a worker, comrades, both by origin and by profession. I don't want anything for myself. You can verify my earnings if you like. People are trying to drive me into a university. But I'm afraid to get out of touch with the boys. If we do quarrel with each other occasionally, that's the result of the conditions we live in. They get so devilish tired and then if I say a word too much to them—the fat's in the fire. But you won't tear me away from them: this is my family. Who gave you the right, Kolka, to call me an alien element? That looks to me like a conspiracy. Why didn't Mesentsev say it himself instead of sending Kolka to say it? Let me ask you a question then. You take Mesentsev as your example. Very well. He's got the right attitude to the masses, he's not like me. Then why does Mesentsev permit himself absolutely everything? He fancied a girl and he took and married her. It makes no difference to him that she's actually from an alien class. . . ."

Mesentsev interrupted Genka: "This is silly, Sinitsin. Why tell lies?"

"What do you mean by saying it's silly. If I say such a thing, at an important conference, too, it means I must have some facts in my possession. Why should you accuse me of lying? As if you didn't know yourself, where your Varya Stassova came from. But since you've insulted me, I've got to say. You can verify it, if you like. Her father's a dispossessed kulak and lives in Uima. This spring the members of the collective farm wanted to ask for him to be deported. He tries to stir up trouble: one day he sets a rumour going that individuals are to be deprived of their cows, and another day that the goods

in the shops are rotten. And when they told him he would be sent away, he began to cry about: "My daughter's got a job in the works, and she's joined the Komsomols; I'll be dead myself before very long—you can see I can't walk." He's a sort of paralytic. Maybe he can't walk but he can talk as well as the rest of us. The rumours he sets about! In short, he's a typical kulak. I want to be perfectly fair, however, so I'll tell you this: Stassov says his daughter was brought up by a sister who worked as a farm laborer in Kholmogory. Anyhow, it's a doubtful business, and if Mesentsev had been just one of the rank and file of the Komsomol, I wouldn't have mentioned it. But since he's being set up as an example for everyone, I might ask him: why did you marry a girl from an alien class, and cover your tracks, and then Ushakov comes out and accuses me of being an alien element. Is it so difficult to give up a girl if it has something to do with. . . ."

At this point, Genka, who was cooling down a little, glanced at Mesentsev. Up to that moment he had been staring straight before him, noticing no one. Now, his eye suddenly lighting upon Mesentsev, he dried up at once:

"If it has anything to do with. . . As a matter of fact, I've said all I wanted to. . . ."

He could not take his eyes from Mesentsev's. What was the matter with the fellow? That was how Lolka had looked at him, when Dasha died. "Leave me alone with her!" she had said. Damn it, how had all this come about!. . . Genka muttered:

"Well, generally speaking, of course, it's all nonsense. . . . That is, it may be right about her aunt. . . . In short, I'm not going to make much of the matter?"

Mesentsev rose, tall and powerful: misfortune seemed to have weighed him down and made him heavy. "Wait! You can't hush up a thing like that. It's the first I've heard of this, comrades. I give you my word as a Komsomol. If this is true you can try me. Here, take my membership card away if you think I'm not worthy of it."

He sat down, or rather, dropped down on the bench. There was an excited stir. Golubyev moved that they should postpone the meeting till the 16th. Taking advantage of the general confusion, Genka escaped into the street. He realised at once, the kind of night lay before him. He strode ahead quickly. He was running away from Mesentsev's eyes. But the eyes would not be left behind: they started up right before Genka's eyes, among the new buildings, glowed in the rose-tinted dust, among the clouds and the mournful wooden shacks. They were everywhere and that night they were Genka's life. Everything came back to him: Lolka's farewell note and Krassnikova's words, and Kobyakov's snub—"We're mourning a comrade, let's choose someone else." Why did no one understand him? He had loved Lolka. He had not wanted to part from her. If he had been rough at times, well—surely it was understandable. He had his invention, his work, he was tired after his day. . . . But no, people did not understand one another! He had meant Krassnikova no harm. He had thought it would be nice for both of them. How was he to know what was in her mind? As regards the boys—why, they were his whole life. If they were to tell him to die tomorrow, to die as Tsvetkov had died, would he be afraid? How often he had been within a hair's breath of death! Was it a fault if he could not weep? Everyone felt things in his own way? And then, nowadays one could not weep, this was no time for tears—once you let your spirits go down, work would come to a standstill. He hadn't wanted to offend Mesentsev. Mesentsev was an honest fellow. Stassov had said: "My daughter's

joined the Komsomol." But who knew what they were up to? Perhaps it was true that Varya had lived apart from her father. Only why had Mesentsev been so furious? He must have known how things were, he was just pretending that it was news to him. Could she have hidden it from him? You never could tell with women though. It had all turned out so stupidly. Very stupidly. Henceforth he would have no life here—everyone would point at him as the man who tried to ruin his comrade. Yet he did not want to ruin anyone. By all means, let Mesentsev be secretary if he wanted to be. It would even be better so. That was not the point. Some inward support was necessary. But when something gnawed you inside like now, you let your hands fall to your sides in despair. You had no more desire to live—that was the truth.

"That was the truth," Genka repeated the words aloud. It was the first time he had ever felt that he did not want to live any longer. He was overwhelmed by this realisation, he even stood still suddenly, as if someone had called out his name. He looked about and saw that he had run as far as the cinema. The people were just coming out: Genka began to count them mechanically as they passed. Suddenly he caught sight of Lolka in the crowd. She was with another girl—Ninta, he supposed it was. He ran up to Lolka, not in the least knowing why he was doing so. Without any preliminary greeting, he stood still in front of her. He must say something! Oh, if only she would not drive him away! He would be alone again. At last he managed to say: "So you've been to the cinema?" "Yes." They walked along in silence a while. Lolka kept glancing mistrustfully at Genka. He hesitated a long time and then said:

"Mesentsev's got himself into some kind of a mess. You know Varya? Well, she's the daughter of a kulak."

Lolka made no reply, but Ninta decided to join in the conversation.

"I know her aunt. She lived with her aunt, did Varya, and this aunt's in the village soviet. So why should you say such things?"

Genka mumbled hastily:

"Oh, you know her aunt, do you?? So it's all nonsense? Well, that's alright then. He'll be able to clear himself. But it worries me. Somehow things haven't turned out the way they ought. Listen, Lolka. The same as with you and me. Do you think I have no feelings? What I felt when I read your note! Perhaps I suffer more than you."

His voice broke. It seemed to him now that he was suffering because Lolka had left him. He was ready to give anything in the world if only she would stay with him now. Lolka still said nothing but her heart was troubled. Genka's voice stirred her to the depths. Who knew what she might have replied if Ninta had not interfered at that moment.

"Stop bothering her. She's only just quietened down and now you're torturing her again. Do you think I don't know you're living with Krassnikova? What did you want with Lolka? Let her have a bit of peace."

Genka did not stop to argue. With a gesture of hopelessnes, he hurried away from them. The white night still went on: it could not wane, for it was day. It shed its lifeless, evil light over the streets. Genka ran on without pausing as if he was trying to measure the length of this fleeting and endless night, the length of the broad, dusty streets, the length of his own loneliness.

Translated from the Russian by Anthony Wixley

Transcontinental

(*For Louis Aragon, in praise of* Red Front)

Though trembling waves of roadside heat
We see the cool green of golf courses
Long red awnings catching sunshine
Slender rainbows curved above spirals of water
Swaying hammocks slung between trees—
Like in the movies . . .

America who built this dream

Above the ceaseless hiss of passing cars
We hear the tinkle of ice in tall glasses
Clacks of croquet balls scudding over cropped lawns
Silvery crescendos of laughter—
Like in the movies
On Saturday nights
When we used to get paychecks. . .

America who owns this wonderland

Lost
We hitch-hike down the hot highways
Looking for a ride home
Yanking tired thumbs at glazed faces
Behind the steering wheels of Packards Pierce Arrows
Lincolns La Salles Reos Chryslers—
Their lips are tight jaws set eyes straight ahead. . .

America America America why turn your face away

O for the minute
The joyous minute
The minute of the hour of that day
When the tumbling white ball of our anger
Rolling down the cold hill of our lives
Swelling like a moving mass of snow
Shall crash
Shall explode at the bottom of our patience Thundering
HALT
You shall not pass our begging thumbs
America is ours
This car is commandeered
America is ours
Take your ringed fingers from the steering wheel
Take your polished shoe off the gas
We'll drive and let you be the hitch-hiker

We'll show you how to pass 'em up
You say we're robbers
So what
We're bastards
So what
Sonsofbitches
All right chop us into little pieces we don't care
Let the wind tousle your hair like ours have been tousled
Doesn't the sun's hot hate feel sweet on your back
Crook your thumbs and smudge the thin air
What kind of a growl does your gut make when meal-time comes
At night your hips can learn how soft the pavements are
Oh let's do it the good old American way
Sportsmanship Buddy Sportsmanship
But dear America's a free country
Did you say Negroes
Oh I don't mean NEEEGROOOES
After all
Isn't there a limit to everything
You wouldn't want your daughter
And they say there's no GOD
And furthermore it's simply disgraceful how they're discriminating against the children of the rich in Soviet schools
PROLETARIAN CHILDREN
Good Lord
Why if we divided up everything today we'd be just where we are inside of a year
The strong and the weak The quick and the slow You understand
But Lady even quivering lips can say
PLEASE COMRADE MY FATHER WAS A CARPENTER I SWEAR SWEAR HE WAS
I WAS NEVER AGAINST THE COMMUNISTS REALLY
Fairplay Boys Fairplay
America America can every boy have the chance to rise from Wall Street to the Commintern
America America can every boy have the chance to rise from River—River-side Drive to the General Secretaryship of the Communist Party
100% Justice
And Mister don't forget
Our hand shall be on the steering wheel
Our feet shall be on the gas
And you shall hear the grate of our gears
UNITEDFRONT—SSSTRIKE
The motor throbs with eager anger
UNITEDFRONT—SSSTRIKE
We're lurching toward the highway
UNITEDFRONT—SSSTRIKE
The pavement drops into the past The future smites our face
America is ours
10 15 20 30
America America

WOORKERSWOORKERS
Hop on the runningboard Pile in
We're leaving We're leaving
Leaving the tired the timid the soft
Leaving pimps idlers loungers
Leaving empty dinner-pails wage-cuts stretch-outs
Leaving the tight-lipped mother and the bare meal-can
Leaving the shamed girl and her bastard child
Leaving leaving the past leaving
The wind filled with leaflets leaflets of freedom
Millions and millions of leaflets fluttering
Like the wings of a million birds
AmericaAmericaAmerica

Scaling New England's stubborn hills Spanning the Hudson
Waving at Manhattan Waving at New Jersey
Throwing a Good Bye kiss to Way Down East
Through mine-pirred Pennsylvania Through Maryland Our Maryland
Careening over the miles Spinning the steering wheel
Taking the curves with determination
AmericaAmerica
SOFT SHOULDER AHEAD
AmericaAmerica
KEEP TO THE MIDDLE OF THE ROAD
AmericaAmerica
The telegraph poles are a solid wall
WASHINGTON—90 MILES
AmericaAmerica
The farms are a storm of green
Past rivers past towns
50 60 70 80
AmericaAmerica
CITY LIMITS
Vaulting Washington's Monument
Leaping desks of Senators Ending all bourgeois elections
Hurdling desks of Congressmen Fascist flesh sticking to our tires
Skidding into the White House Leaving a trail of carbon monoxide for the President
Roaring into the East Room Going straight through Lincoln's portrait Letting the light of history through
AmericaAmerica
Swinging Southward Plunging the radiator into the lynch-mob Giving no warning
Slowing Slowing for the sharecroppers
Come on You Negroes Come on
There's room
Not in the back but front seat
We're heading for the highway of Self-Determination
UNITEDFRONT—SSSTRIKE
Dim your lights you Trotskyites
UNITEDFRONT—SSSTRIKE

Lenin's line is our stream line
UNITEDFRONT—SSSTRIKE
Through October's windshield we see the road Looping over green hills Dipping toward to-morrow

AmericaAmericaAmerica
Look back See the tiny threads of our tires leaving hammer and sickle prints upon the pavement
See the tree-lined horizon turning slowly in our hearts
See the ripe fields Fields ripe as our love
See the eastern sky See the white clouds of our hope
See the blood-red afterglow in the west Our memory of October
See See See the pretty cottages the bungalows the sheltered homes
See the packing-box cities the jungles the huts
See See See the skyscrappers the clubs the pent-houses
See the bread-lines winding winding winding long as our road
AmericaAmericaAmerica

Tagging Kentucky Tagging Tennessee
Into Ohio Into the orchards of Michigan
Over the rising and falling dunes of Indiana
Across Illinois' glad fields of dancing corn
Slowing Comrades Slowing again
Slowing for the heart of proletarian America
CHICAGO—100 MILES
WOORKERSWOORKERS
Steel and rail and stock All you sons of Haymarket
Swing on We're going your way America is ours
UNITEDFRONT—SSSTRIKE
The pressure of our tires is blood pounding in our hearts
UNITEDFRONT—STRIKE
The steam of our courage blows from the radiator-cap
UNITEDFRONT—SSSTRIKE
The wind screams red songs in our ears
60 70 80 90
AmericaAmericaAmerica

Listen Listen to the moans of those whose lives were laughter
Listen to the howls of the dogs dispossessed
Listen to bureaucratic insects spattering against the windshield
Listen to curses rebounding from fear-proof glass
Listen to the gravel of hate tingling on our fenders
Listen to the raindrops mumbling of yesterday
Listen to the wind whistling of to-morrow
Listen to our tires humming humming humming hymns of victory
AmericaAmericaAmerica

Coasting Comrades Coasting
Coasting on momentum of Revolution
Look Look at that village Like a lonesome egg in the nest of the hills
Soon Soon you shall fly all over the hillsides Crowing the new dawn
Coasting Indulging in Lenin's dream

TUNE IN ON THE RADIO THE WORLD IS LAUGHING
Red Baseball
Great Day in the Morning

> . . . the Leninites defeated the Redbirds 3 to 0.
> Batteries for the Leninites: Kenji Sumarira and
> Boris Petrovsky. For the Redbirds: Wing Sing and
> Eddie O'Brien. Homeruns: Hugo Schmidt and Jack
> Ogletree. Umpires: Pierre Carpentier and Oswald Wallings...

The world is laughing The world is laughing
> . . . Mike Gold's account of the Revolution sells
> 26 millions copies . . .
> *26 million copies . . .*

The world is laughing The world is laughing
> . . . beginning May lst the work day is limited to
> five hours . . .

The world is laughing The world is laughing
> . . . last of the landlords liquidated in Texas . . .

The world is laughing The world is laughing

Picking up speed to measure the Mississippi
AmericaAmericaAmerica
Plowing the richness of Iowa soil Into the Wheat Empire
Making Minnesota Taking the Dakotas Carrying Nebraska
On on toward the Badlands the Rockies the deserts the Golden Gate
Slowing once again Comrades Slowing to right a wrong
Say You Red Men You Forgotten Men
Come out from your tepees
Show us Pocahuntus For we love her
Bring her from her hiding place Let the sun kiss her eyes
Drape her in a shawl of red wool Tuck her in beside us
Our arms shall thaw the long cold of her shoulders
The lights flash red Comrades let's go
UNITEDFRONT—SSSTRIKE
The future opens like an ever-widening V
UNITEDFRONT—SSSTRIKE
We're rolling over titles of red logic
UNITEDFRONT—SSSTRIKE
We're speeding on wheels of revolution
AmericaAmerica
Mountain peaks are falling toward us
AmericaAmerica
Uphill and the earth rises and looms
AmericaAmerica
Downhill and the earth tilts and sways
AmericaAmerica
80 90 100
AmericaAmerica
Every factory is a forttress
Cities breed soviets

AmericaAmerica
Plains sprout collective farms
Ten thousand Units are meeting
America America
Resolutions passed unanimously
The Red Army is on the march
AmericaAmerica
Arise, ye prisoners . . .
AmericaAmerica
Speed Faster
Speed AmericaAmerica
Arise, ye wretched . . .
AmericaAmerica
Speed Faster
Ever Faster America America
For Justice *America America* Thunders
AmericaAmericaAmerica

Willi Bredel

The Flag

A Short Story of Present Day Germany

A thin rain is drizzling down which makes the eye lashes sticky and leaves face and clothing damp. It is decidedly cold and the dampness seems to penetrate the skin and make your bones ache. Arnold has put up his collar and thrust his hands deep into his pockets. His face is sopping wet. He comes from the centre of the town and from some distance off can watch the corner of the street. As far as he can see down the street there is not a soul about. There is no sign of Karl.

In passing by a street lamp he has a look at his wristwatch. There is a minute more before Karl is due. Shortly before midnight he passed by this same place; he can see nothing to rouse suspicion. But where is Karl? He can't have gone up already? Perhaps some minutes ago. Musn't attract attention. It's a mistake to stand still, one must keep moving. What shall I say if I'm asked where I'm going? What is there to say? One must think of something plausible. Passed midnight already. Lost my key, that'll do and am going to stay the night with a friend. What friend? Hugo Kolz lives in the Ringweg. Ringweg 21. Yes, that sounds all right, then turn straight away into Papenstrasse.

Arnold is standing by the factory wall. There is not a sign of Karl. He slackens his pace somewhat.

"Hello, Arnold." He hears his name called in a faint whisper but all his faculties are alert and he hears it at once. Karl is standing by the gate. He grins broadly as Arnold comes towards him and holds out his hand.

"Everything all right?"

"Yes."

"Have you got all the things?"

"Sh! sh! do you hear anything?" Karl looks anxiously at the small dimly lit window of the porter's lodge.

Arnold hears faint sounds.

"It's just the half hour," whispers Karl. "Look, he's making his round. In twelve or at the most fifteen minutes he'll be back again. We're damned lucky. He's taken the dogs with him. I brought this in case, but it won't be needed. Things are going all right so far."

"Don't you think the weather is rather against us? This icy cold rain? The chief said that if it seemed too risky the idea might be abandoned this time."

Karl Vischer shakes his head slowly and looks at Arnold with his wide open eyes. "A-ban-don it? Why then everything has been for nothin?"

"No, no! He only meant that if it seemed too dangerous when the weather was bad you shouldn't be rash."

Karl gives a sigh of relief. "I thought you were going to tell me that the whole thing was off. Why everything is going on oiled wheels."

They stood there for a moment staring at the window and listening in the darkness. These minutes seemed endless. The tall black chimney rose up before them. Both looked up at it, Arnold with a hard immobile expression on his face, Karl with a slight smile. "I'll climb up you like a cat and tomorrow thousands will stare at you in amazement."

They heard steps. The porter was coming back. They could hear him speaking. Who was he speaking to? The dogs of course. He had the dogs with him. Then he entered the lodge, made some movement by the stove and sat down.

"Time to start." Karl steps forward. He has a bucket in his hand, Arnold follows. Every detail has been arranged beforehand, every slightest movement planned in advance. No questions are necessary. Each one knows what he has to do.

Arnold wants to advise him to leave the bucket behind. How on earth will he drag it up? But the decides he must not try to alter anything at the last moment.

Karl is wearing his green jersey and a broad belt fastened tightly over it. Something is swinging at his side. Arnold looks closer. He has stuck a double hook in his belt. It is an ordinary butcher's hook. He probably has the red cloth under his jersey.

They cross the street to where there is a heap of scrap against the factory wall. Arnold look round. There is no one to be seen and all the windows of the houses near are dark. Karl looks neither to the right nor to the left, goes to a certain part of the wall, puts down his bucket and then says: "now give me a leg up."

They had practised it for days and it had gone splendidly. Why should it fail on the great occasion. All the same Arnold's knees shake. He is in a very excited state and he knows it (which works him up still more). Karl gives an impression of complete calm. His decisions are like his grasp, strong and sure. He stands on Arnold's shoulders, waits a moment and then whispers impatiently: "Now, now!"

Arnold thinks for a moment whether to refuse to give him the bucket and advise him to go as he is, but then rests one hand on the wall and lifts up the bucket with his other hand. It is heavier than he thought. Good God he'll never climb up the chimney with that. It will drag him down. It's pure suicide.

"It's too heavy, Karl, leave it below!"

"Gone a little balmy have you, give me the bucket!"

Arnold lifts up the bucket. He has to summon all his strength. Karl, in bending down to take the bucket nearly throws him to the ground; Arnold feels he could cry out, with the pain in his shoulder bones.

The bucket disappears behind the wall. Karl then stands up. Arnold has only one thought: if only all goes well. Contrary to what they had agreed he stays by the wall after Karl has disappeared behind it. Somewhat bewildered and with a strange feeling about the throat he goes over to the other side of the street, waits in the shadow of a doorstep and watches the small dark mass that is Karl crawling along the roof. He wipes his brow with the back of his hand and starts when he finds that it is sweating profusely.

Karl has studied this climb over the wall and roofs to the chimney. He has made every movement a thousand times in imagination. He knows too that half way up an iron rung is missing and some of the others may be loose. The chimney is an old one and has not been used for ages.

Not only during the day but in the night time also he has been haunted by the idea of scaling the chimney. Once he stood on top and waved his hand after the job had been done. The fire of the open hearth furnace blazed up as though from the bowels of the earth. Down below the town

slept. Then suddenly he lost his hold and fell, faster and faster, nearer and nearer to the earth; the air seemed to be a compact mass. He opened his mouth, struggled, tried to get his breath—and then woke up. It was a horrible feeling. He lay limp in his bed as though he had actually fallen. It is a good thing he is not superstitious.

Now that he grasps the first rung and sees the tall uncanny finger pointing straight up into the air above him, he must think about it.

He climbs with confidence. It is all a question of nerves. The thing is not to lose your nerve, to keep cool and take it easy. Rung by rung he climbs up. The bucket which he hung on to his belt behind with the butcher's hook is frightfully heavy and all the time threatens to drag him down. But he'll soon be free of it. Without the bucket it would be quite a pleasure to climb up here.

Karl proceeds cautiously. Before grasping the next rung he tests whether it is firm and never holds a single rung with two hands at the same time. He cannot help thinking of Arnold. He was in a funny mood today. So excited and nervy. Generally so imperturbable too. Probably standing down below trembling. Karl smiles at the thought.

When will he come to the gap where the rung is missing? He stops for a moment and looks up the chimney. He cannot distinguish any gap. Then he looks down and unconsciously tightens his grasp. He has reached quite a height. Right up above the roofs. The streets have become quite small. He can see the straight line of the Hernerlandstrasse down below as though it had been drawn with a ruler.

If I were to lose my hold now. . . . Nonsense! I must be getting on. The damned bucket, it's a frightful drag. Well, now for it.

Karl continues his climb. Mad thoughts worm their way into his brain. If I were to let go, merely release my hold, all would be up. Everything would be finished. Hm! just let go. . . . He tries to drive these thoughts away, but without success, they go on boring their way and wriggle down from his head into his arms and legs, interfere with his blood stream and cause unwonted shivers. . . . He feels as though his foothold were giving way under him.

Karl climbs faster and quickly grasps rung after rung as though this helped him to get rid of his thoughts and as though there was safety up above. Hadn't he better hang up the bucket here? This is surely high enough. It would be so much easier without the bucket. It seems as though a long arm is dragging him downwards. Then his hand grasps the air. He gets a pretty good fright but this soon gives place to relief. Reached it at last.

He takes the hook with the bucket from his belt and hangs it onto a rung. He wants to deliberate for a moment, gets into an easy position and draws a long breath.

How long have I been climbing? Three, perhaps four minutes. No longer? Hours seem to have passed.

How much stronger the wind is up here. And he is only half way up. He wonders if Arnold can see him. Hardly. It's a good thing the rain has stopped. But the iron is damp all the same, and terribly slippery. He'll grease the rungs later. Yes he was forgetting, he has that before him still. If somebody were to see him now, some Nazi or other, there would be a pretty to do and in a jiffy they would all collect together down below and watch him like a pack of wolves their prey. It would be better then just to jump down. . .

Jump down. That thought again. It wouldn't be so bad after all. One would have to leave go only for a second; for a fraction of a second. . .

He says to himself aloud: "I have nerves like a ship's hawser. My nerves will hold out. And what is there in a climb like this? It is not as though I were the first person to do it." And at that moment he remembers his dream. Yes, a damned good thing he's not superstitious.

He gets over the gap and goes on climbing. It is easier at first, he does not feel himself being dragged down. He tries not to look down but cannot overcome the temptation, he must know how high he has climbed. Good Lord, will it never come to an end? He looks up and he could almost believe that the chimney had grown. But the job's got to be done! So up's the word.

Karl climbs higher and higher. The winds are whistling round the brickwork and him. They are malevolent, cutting winds that seem to be whirling uncanny feeling. Does it always sway?

Karl pauses in horror — the chimney is swaying. Yes there is no mistaking, the chimney is swaying to and fro. It is quite perceptible. An uncanny feeling. Does it always sway?

He has a dreadful temptation to turn back. Turn back? Down again without doing anything? And Arnold? And his mates? Am I a coward? Have I taken on more than I'm up to?

Damn it all what am I thinking about. Up, I say. Mustn't look down. Mustn't look up. Must just keep on climbing. And Karl looks straight at the brickwork in front of him and keeps on climbing.

. . . Higher and higher and h-igh-er. First of all he thinks it, then he begins to hum it, and then, quietly at first, but then louder and louder he sings *Wir steigen trotz Hass und Hohn.* . . .

The singing does him good It makes the climbing immeasurably easier . . . and higher and higher and h-igh-er. . . .

Karl no longer feels the cold winds, does not notice the swaying of the chimney, and there are no more dangerous thougts to keep away, he just sings and climbs and climbs.

A second time his hand grasps empty space.

This time it is not a gap in the ladder but the end reached.

He cautiously gropes round the top of the chimney. The brickwork is stronger than he had thought. He must not lose his nerve at the last minute now. He climbs up, grasps the brickwork and sits astride the wall of the chimney.

So he's got there at last. It will be easier going down. We know the way now. But supposing I was to stand up on the edge and wave, like. . . . Those mad thoughts again. Do your job, man, and climb down again.

Up here Karl feels extraordinarily safe and in the best of spirits (he's done what he set out to do and the flag will fly!) He carefully unwinds the red cloth which he has been wearing like a scarf round his body under his jersey and starts making it fast to the lightening conductor. He ties it below and for the top end he has a strong clamp that holds the cloth up at the right height.

Karl always used to think that he had a steady head, and he really has a steady head now, except that from time to time the demoniacal desire to cast himself down comes over him in waves. Keeping his eyes from looking down and with all his faculties concentrated on fixing the flag, he sits there a lone figure on high.

Now quickly down again. The red flag must be quite plainly visible all

over the town. He must do the smearing quickly. He wonders can Arnold see him and whether his knees are still knocking. He takes a fleeting look at the roofs and towers, furnaces and stacks of coal and the closely packed buildings of the town, then he swings his leg over the edge of the chimney, gives the flag free to the wind and clambers down on to the first rung.

It is definitely easier going down. He feels like singing again, this time not from fear but from joy and triumph. The worst is over, he has done his job. He has reached the gap already. The bucket is hanging there. Karl undoes the handkerchief which he has tied over the top and dips it in. Holding on with his left hand he dips his right into the soft soap and smears the rungs, two at a time. Let anyone who tries to reach the flag break his neck over it.

Karl works like one possessed. The rungs have flecks of soft soap clinging to them. The bucket becomes emptier and emptier. In spite of the cold and damp Karl is sweating and he feels his undercloathing sticking to him.

He hooks the empty bucket on to his belt. As he jumps to the roof a feeling of great happiness comes over him. The thing has been done. All difficulties have been overcome. He has not made a mess of it.

He leans over the wall. Arnold is standing there as arranged. Karl reaches him the bucket, swings himself over the wall and slides softly to the ground. Quickly, but without haste they cross the sreet. In the Hernerlandstrasse Arnold whispers: "Magnificent!"

"How long did it take?" that is what interests Karl most at the moment. "About eight minutes."

"Eight minutes? Eight minutes? Impossible, you must be making a mistake. It certainly took a great deal longer than that."

They walk on without speaking. Arnold is still carrying the empty bucket.

"Tell me, did you sing up there, the *Fliegerlied?*"

Karl nodded, laughing: "Yes."

"Why?"

"I was afraid."

"What? You were afraid? Really? Well, good night, old man!"

"Good night."

Before Karl enters the doorway he looks up at the top of the factory chimney once more. Very small up there, but quite plain, even in the night the red flag is streaming in the wind.

Translated from the German by N. Goold-Verschoyle

Evgenyi Lann

WALDO FRANK: American Writer

A quiet lane near Arbat Square in Moscow. Passersby are few. Short minutes when no automobile horn breaks the silence. Thickly clustering houses, narrow sidewalks.

I say something in continuation of the conversation. Frank is silent. I repeat my remark. He touches my shoulder.

"Don't speak just now, Lann."

I look at Frank. In these few days of his visit to Moscow, I had often looked at him. I have never seen anyone with such warm—not burning, but warm—eyes. The lips under the small black mustache are now tightly pressed together, and the dark eyés, are darting about me, over the houses—they are in no way remarkable—with a kind of passionate intensity. He is listening to the silence, with his full being he is listening to the quietness of the Moscow lanes. There are such lanes in all the world's capitals. When you come across them you feel—until the first blast of a speeding car —an alteration of your inner rhythm.

I understood what a huge creative eagerness for life filled this compact man in a beret who was walking alongside me. I remembered *how* he spoke when showing me photographs of his children: "These are my children!" It was thus that a mother might have spoken—not a father, but a mother. I remembered his philosophical pathetics and, by some cloudy association, pages on love in his novels—such passionate and such chaste pages. I remembered his excitement when he spoke of the duty of a writer. I remembered how this man had breathed into himself the Red Square.

And then, in these quiet moments, I understood that Waldo Frank opens himself without hindrance to that stream which is life in all its vitality. And afterwards, rereading his books, I understood that his creative power, which has flown through the channels of so many genres, is huge because if it were less this man might have choked.

I have never seen him on the platform. But the writers of Latin America, on publishing a book dedicated to him, after his triumphal tour through the countries of South America with lectures on the culture of his native land, dwelt on the fact that Frank's voice vibrates from an inner passion when he speaks of the future of his native land. And this passion, so unusual in lecturers on the history of culture, is infectious, wrote the Argentines. But Frank, this doctor *honoris causa* of the Peruvian National University, was infectious with passionateness, not only on the platform of Buenos Aires but on all the platforms of Latin America where he appeared. Those who came to hear the author of the philosophic essays, *Virgin Spain* dedicated by him to Spanish culture, saw on the platform a man for whom the search for a synthetic conception of the world is as organic as breathing itself. Instead of academic lectures on the philosophy of the culture of the United States, they heard a tribune. This tribune was a first-class scholar with a European training, but the method of his analysis and synthesis was not scholarly in the sense accepted by bourgeois universities. Before his hearers there stood on the

platform an artist for whom philosophy before everything is a program of action and a practical ethic is the central problem solved by this program. His listeners were able to acquaint themselves with the basic premises of this philosophy through his books *Our America* and *The Rediscovery of America.* The lectures and books enabled one of these listeners, Jorge Manach, to formulate his impressions of Frank as a lecturer thus: "If Waldo Frank intrigues us so much as a thinker it is because in his construction of his system, in his complete version of reality he successfully combines two methods: the logical and the impressionistic, the classical and the romantic. His dialectic is a close woven web of reasoning and rapture, of syllogism and image, of analysis and emphasis."

The images and the emphasis in the closely woven web of dialectical come from the artist turned thinker. But the rapture comes from the man himself. From the man who is able to believe and has taken upon himself the task of teaching this faith to others. This, however, is not quite accurate. In the stage at which he was right up to the events of recent years, he had not yet taken up the task of teaching. He had not become either the Henry Thoreau or even the Emerson of postwar America. He had not refrigerated a few dogmas in order to devote the rest of his life to commenting upon them. He had not entered upon the path of "spiritual teacher" of the bourgeoisie. But didactic notes already sounded in the *Rediscovery of America.* The artist turned thinker with all the strength of his tremendous temperament, believed that *words* must become *deeds.* Hence his exit from the limitations of the *genre* which are in the commands of an artist of the pen. Hence, not a calm analysis of the cultural paths of his native land, but an attempt to reach a cultural and philosophical synthesis in the name of those aims towards which he counted it his inner duty to go. And hence the summons to the reformation of the world in accordance with these aims.

Such psychologically was Frank's path to the method by which he revealed the history of the spiritual growth and the cultural tendencies of capitalist America. This method, stipulated by his temperament and his certainty that humanity must find a way out from "chaos," allowed the notes of didacticism to take on such a hue as would now and then have testified to a certain temporary weakening of taste. Only he can grasp and understand the genuine Frank who does not pass by this fact. Frank, a most delicate master of words and equipped with almost irreproachable taste, nevertheless was sometimes betrayed by taste. And at that time some obscure reporter wrote in the Argentine journal, *Critica:* "Frank's tone is prophetic" and further: "When Frank refers to the future of America, he has a Messianic accent." And Jorge Manach, who was quoted above, was able to state: "In the United States the voice of Frank is a prophetic, 'apocalyptic' voice, to use his own descriptive adjective."

2

A great danger threatened Frank. The prophetic mantle might have become the official costume of his thought. Then the bourgeois intelligentsia of the States would have acquired "a spiritual teacher" who on the philosophic foundations of Spinozaism would have attempted to construct a program of social conduct for the American intellectual of the twentieth century.

But this did not happen. The vicious phraseology—prophetic, apocalyptic, messianic—held Frank's thought in captivity until the hour when he realized at last that the American bourgeois is not in the least inclined to value twentieth century Spinozaism as vegetarian exercises in the sphere of theoretical ethic.

In the course of many years Frank wrote novels and short stories which were little understood by the bourgeois and in which he bared the sources of human consciousness. He was helped in this by Bergson and Freud who were thickly screened from the understanding of the ordinary American reader. In the course of many years Frank wrote essays, both esthetic and literary essays of a special kind, designed for the upper "ten thousand" but not the ten thousand most successful inhabitants of Manhattan, but ten thousand half-fed people scattered over the face of his native land from Greenwich Village to the dull towns of the Anderson West. And in the course of many years Frank stored up his thoughts, educated by German philosophic idealism, the artistic practice of the French, and Oriental attempts to create a walled-in system of human behavior.

The bourgeois of his fatherland allowed him to write books, but did not, however, read them, accepting instead the commentaries of Frank's critics on faith. The latter explained to the bourgeois that Frank completely denied the property instinct as the motive factor of progress, that he termed the reality organized by contemporary capitalism "chaos" and that by means of struggle with the spiritual degeneracy of the native bourgeois Frank was forming a consolidation of all the progressive elements of the country. These elements united in some sort of group were by written and verbal propaganda to turn capitalist society away from the preaching of the cult of might, or in other words, to tear up by the root the property instinct which had transformed man into the tool of the blind elemental forces of nature.

The critics did not doubt the complete authorly honor of Frank. Malcolm Cowley, whose judgment Frank did not underrate, considers him a proud author. For "Frank tries to reach a position of intellectual leadership not by grasping it or advertising that he owns it." These qualities in Waldo Frank—honor and pride—scarcely interested the bourgeois. To Frank's claims to become an intellectual leader he paid just as much attention as to these qualities. The analysis of the paths of the social behavior of the American seemed to the bourgeois to have little perspicuity. But the basic—and for him the most important—quality of Frank's social philosophy he knew, again, not from Frank's books but from the commentaries of the critics. Frank's philosophy was not dangerous, either for the philosophy of the bourgeois (inasmuch as he did not understand it) or for his existence, inasmuch as Frank was seeking a way out from "chaos" "for the American." In other words—also for the bourgeois of all sorts Step by step he conquered positions for the construction of a firm philosophic foundation by the introduction of which underneath their economic system his compatriots could reform the system from within and give Frank's eventual group—so eagerly awaited by him!—the chance to breathe to the full extent of their lungs.

From his first novel *The Unwelcome Man* through his first experiment in analysis of the cultural paths of America, through his belles lettres, the literary essays collected in the book *Salvos,* and in passing, in *Virgin Spain,* Frank brought all his basic qualities as a writer turned thinker to

the *The Rediscovery of America.* This book, the title of which imposed an obligation, found Frank still in the house of his fathers. He promised the American bourgeois the role of the saviour of world culture. If the efforts of his still nonexistent "group" (to which Frank appealed) should induce the American people to choose the Frank path of spiritual clarification.

We repeat, the master of this great country, the American bourgeois, did not understand by what paths Frank was seeking to lead him to enlightenment. He condescendingly preferred to think that Waldo Frank—a well-known writer, highly esteemed in Europe—would cease passionately to call the American people to renewal. In the existence of the States not a few "revolutionaries of the soul" had returned to the lap of their capitalist homeland, worn out by the unequal struggle.

But the master of this great land made a mistake. Frank went out from the house of his fathers.

3

What had happened? Was it only because the most elegant artist of the States found it beyond his powers to suffer the vulgarity of the esthetic tastes of his customer and had lost hope of ever being understood and valued? This vulgarity is more terrible than the European variety, but it is not in this hopelessness that there is to be found the key to an understanding of what had happened to Frank. Frank is indeed a proud writer, this is not simply a phrase. But for a writer of such human qualities there was open a way out well known to many of the proud ones. There was for their benefit that very ivory tower which Frank repudiated.

The bourgeois, and along with him the critics who had written about Frank, had not been sufficiently attentive. They had overlooked for instance, the following fact in his biography: eighteen years earlier, in the year of America's entry into the imperialist World War, when the whole press of the States was choking itself with patriotic ecstacy and every pacifist was suspected of being a German spy, the editor of the journal *The Seven Arts*, Waldo Frank, expected a visit by the police. He had pronounced himself an opponent in principle of war and only accident—by November 1918 the States had not yet called up the men of Frank's age—saved him from arrest and indictment for treason. This biographical detail which escaped the attention of those critics who do not understand the most basic thing in him—*the organic nature of his artistic development*—does not of course reveal this quality. But it is interesting. It forms a social illumination to the whole book of his creative work.

The basic and most essential tendency of his creative work has been overlooked also by those critics who at present do not understand that the question is not whether Frank today will succeed in combining Spinozaism with Marxism. This point—Frank's failure—makes clear at one and the same time the heroic labor of his brain and the complete impotence of the critics to set forth in all clarity and to solve the question of the conformity to principle (or the contrary) of the development of Frank as an artist. If this were the question in front of American criticism the worth of his latest novel *The Death and Birth of David Markand* would have to be appraised not by Frank's inability to combine the philosophic foundations of Spinozaism with dialectic materialism, but by the lack of

conviction of Frank's expressive methods, the falsity of the plot situation, and the failure of the Frank manner of artistic writing in application to material which was new for him. In other words, Frank's failure would have to be evidenced by the gap between his style—in the widest sense of this term—and his material on the one hand, and on the other, between this style and the tendencies in the novel which can and should be with the fullest emphasis turned revolutionary. If this could be shown, to what would it bear witness? To the fact that the novel is not an ordinary thing in the development of Waldo Frank's creative work, but a leap by him into a transition of an unknown kind and of a kind not motivated by the conscience of the artist, a transition to a new thematics in the name of a new ideology.

But this is just what the American critics (Edwin Seaver, Malcolm Cowley, Edwin Berry Burgum and others) do not show. Not only because they do not put before themselves the problem of the conformity to principle of Frank's development, but because to show the gap between style and material in Frank is impossible. His latest novel—of which more later—and the path chosen by him, his leading role in the consolidation of all the forces of the revolutionary writers of the States is not a leap of the Spinozaist Frank into the unknown. If the literary criticism of the States did not limit itself to peripheral questions connected with the creative work of this interesting artist, but made clear to itself the distinguishing quality which marks out Frank from all the masters of American literature, then it would long since have had to give the American bourgeois warning of approaching danger. The master of the land could not but lose Frank. To the house of his fathers Frank could not return.

4

Waldo Frank learned his writing craft from the French "abbey" group. Out of this group there came unanimism. It is not difficult to show that the early Frank is indebted to Jules Romaine for his creative method. It is not accidental that he was the first to acquaint the States with Romaine by writing an essay on him which was "the first deep investigation of unanimism," to quote André Cuisinier. His dependence upon this method weakened with the years, but to this day it can still be felt. The semantic instrumentation of (early) unanimism is close to Frank even yet. From Romaine he took also some negative stylistic qualities—manneredness, a love for refined, sometimes precious, metaphors. Earlier this tendency was more pronounced; with the years Frank's taste has matured and brought him onto the road of virile mastery, while, however, preserving his individual stylistic characteristics. These are easy to distinguish; Frank can be recognized from a few sentences. This means that he has his own style. Of only a few American masters can this be said—of Cabell, Anderson, Dos Passos and Hemingway. But not one of them equals Frank in the variety of expressive resources.

Frank's metaphors are indeed "brilliant," as it is customary to say in writing about him, for the most exacting taste. To illustrate this assertion is impossible, as it would require a complete volume of quotations.

Those who are not acquainted with Frank may be put on their guard by this. Is it not the dwellers in ivory towers who engage in refined polishing of style? With what else do they engage themselves if not with this?

Now, after *David Markand* one thing is obvious to me: this stylistic brilliance of Frank has dazzled the American critics so that they have not been able to see the most essential thing about him. To this result, so sorrowful for both the critics and ... for Frank, there contributed also Frank's partiality for "erotic mysticism," as the American critics love to call Frank's manner of solving questions of sex.

This brilliance also hid from the critics the most important thing in Frank's creative biography: from his first novel *The Unwelcome Man* and through all the genres which he has occupied himself right up to *David Markand* Frank has been a writer with *one theme*. There is hardly anyone, among the American writers who have claims upon the title of artist on the European scale, who can with more right than Frank repudiate the ivory tower.

Frank has one theme, and this theme is social. He is tempted and will continue to be tempted by the investigation of the subconscious; he will not a few times yet return to attempts to see in emotions tinted with sexuality something that no one until he has seen; he will still be drawn towards the unexplored areas of human psychology; he will never cease to value the sensation of the fullness of life which some try to restrain within boundaries. But the genuine Frank began and begins where Henry James and Stephen Crane, Proust and Romaine, finish. It was by this that he was always distinguished from these artists: he devoted all his analytic mastery to the service of a theme of huge social resonance.

In the beginning of his work as an artist this temperament was displayed in the organisation of the magazine *The Seven Arts*. This was essentially the first esthetic and literary magazine of the European style in the States. It had to be built on a naked site. There were neither traditions nor circles of readers for it. The traditions had to be created. The readers had to be accustomed to esthetic criteria which would have induced horror in the subscribers of the *Saturday Evening Post* and *Harper's Magazine*. The European—or rather the French—experience in all the seven arts had to be transplanted onto a completely virgin soil and the first shoots had to be saved from disaster. But apart from, and above, these by no means easy tasks, there was still another task which for Frank was a central one. Having acquainted himself with the style of European bourgeois culture even before his stay at Yale University, and having strengthened this acquaintance by a year's visit to France and Germany—before the war—Frank returned home with such a reserve of observations on the intellectual life of the European intelligentsia as made him feel the striking unlikeness between this life and the conceptions of the world held by the intellectual of his native land. He was not an absolute admirer of the European intellectual's philosophic systems, and he was sufficiently economically literate to find the community of sources of these philosophic systems sufficiently evident. But just as obvious for him were also the special conditions of political and economic development of his native land in distinction from European conditions. They had brought into life such traditions in the development of American culture as gave the sociologist reasons for announcing the originality of the cultural tendencies of the American people and bound the artist to seek in the American features for a portrait which were unknown in the portrait of his European brother.

Whether these reasons were sufficient or not for the counterposing of

the two philosophies—those of the European and American bourgeois intellectual—is not essential. In any case, they seemed sufficient for the early Frank, who on returning from Europe did not content himself with transmitting the esthetic theories of pre-war Paris. The drawing in of Van Wyck-Brooks to the management of the magazine had already disclosed that *The Seven Arts* must not only unite the theoreticians of art of the European school. It had to serve as a platform for that handful of intellectuals, which, along with Brooks, was bringing forward the problem of *culture* as the basic problem of the apprehension of reality.

Brooks' book, *America's Coming of Age,* which appeared in 1915, found in Waldo Frank not merely an attentive listener. For some time it was for him a methodological guide in the studying of the cultural tendencies of his native land. He rejected many of Brooks' conceptions, but the basic thing in this semi-Freudian piece of investigation, Brooks' *method,* in which the reason of the scientist was subjugated to the will of the romantic, became his own method. Fifteen years after the appearance of Brooks' book, Frank formulated his method in the following way: "Brooks interpreted the sources of American life not in terms of their *forms,* political, economic, aesthetic; but in terms of their *energy* . . . His tool is psychological analysis of a material which he attains by scholarly means . . . This feat, alone, assures Brooks an exalted place in the history of American culture."

More clearly than anybody Frank understood that the "romantic" method proposed by Brooks permitted not only an apprehension of reality; the psychological analysis of social phenomena and cultural facts opened up the possibility of revealing their teleological causality; it was necessary merely to ask (and answer) the question: what aims were included in the elements of progressive development in order to find for the social fact its place in the history of national culture and to find those means which should bring about the approach of social facts facilitating the progressive movement of this culture.

In other words, Brooks' method allowed a man endowed with Frank's social temperament to dream of the possibility not only of apprehending reality, but of reforming it. Upon entering on his path as a writer, Frank did not yet see the viciousness of this method which was too subjective and unreliable to give a correct direction to his tendencies towards social reform, but was too seductive for an artist turned thinker for him to deprive himself of it.

Frank was not alone in the management of *The Seven Arts.* In the short period of a year he was able to unite a group of leading spirits: Brooks, James Oppenheim, Randolph Bourne, Sherwood Anderson, Paul Rosenfelt and Louis Untermeyer. Among the contributors were John Dewey and John Reed, Mencken and Leo Stein, Robert Frost, Dreiser and others—all those who were united by hatred for the moneygrabbing, mercenary "spirit" of the standard American civilization, and were disunited by bourgeois intellectual, anarchist free-thinking which defended itself at any price—even the price of the breaking up of the group. And the group broke up and after fifteen years Frank honorably acknowledged that the reason for the breaking up of the group and the cessation of *The Seven Arts* was not the World War, as some supposed, but the war between the members of the group—"their mutual distrusts and spiritual failures."

But Frank emerged from the catastrophe not only strengthened by the experience—both as a writer and an organizer—he had gained. In the year that had passed he had written not a few articles on literary and social subjects. His personality as a writer was not yet clearly formed, but it was precisely at this pre-war period that there was formed in him the certainty that the paths to the reform of reality, to the overcoming of the traditions and tendencies of American civilization which were destructive of "genuine" culture lay through the solution of the question: in what was the essence of this same American civilization which had usurped the title of "culture?" And inasmuch as Frank was first of all an artist and only afterwards a sociologist and philosopher, this social problem had to be cleared up with the weapons of the artist.

And Frank endeavored to open it up. In his first novel *The Unwelcome Man,* he built up the philosophy of Quincy Burt so that with the utmost sharpness it reflected the historical tendencies of the development of American culture. It had no yesterday, this culture; history had given it its start in a country which knew no economic formations; it did not have to expend its strength on a struggle with a feudal culture. It was able to develop freely, strengthening its positions not against the claims of the past but in the name of the fuller realization of its own tendencies. It knew no compromises, had to yield nothing, and therefore these tendencies—in distinction from the European—acquired such clarity of style, the style of the capitalist epoch. Already in his first novel Frank unerringly found the method of artistic characterization of these tendencies and their destructive strength. Before the artist were two paths. One path opened up to him the figure of a man who found the wolfish ideology of the American bourgeois completely alien. Firmly linked by the sources of his philosophy with the bourgeois, this man was too weak to carry the double load of philosophy and action. Such a weakness might not have been fatal if the Rhode Island ancestors of the contemporary American bourgeois had not placed the sign of equality between philosophy and action. If, according to the catechism of the Rhode Island ancestors this sign of equality was not obligatory, their ancestors, impotent in action, might have turned out to be useful in another capacity. In any case this inability to forge a path for one's self in the conditions of capitalist reality need not have cut at the roots of his philosophy, just as it does not very often cut at the roots of the philosophy of the European bourgeois intellectual. But it is precisely in the inability to realize the principles of the Rhode Island "philosophy" of life and the consequent shattering of this philosophy into fragments that there lies the specificity of the ideology of the American bourgeois. And if nothing comes forward to succeed this philosophy, is the consciousness of alienation from one's class does not lead to the search for other philosophical fundations of one's social behavior, then in front of us are—the heroes of Sherwood Anderson.

5

But not Quincy Burt—the first character with which Waldo Frank began to solve the problem of the paths and aims of his native land. Frank did not start collecting helpless "poor white" who had discovered for the whole world an altogether new America not in the least like that which was known to the Europeans. But Frank—he was one of the first to do so—not not only appraised the splendid artistic farsightedness of Anderson, who had given numerous MacPherson's Sons and Poor Whites to the country which

did not limit him to this appraisal in one of the first issues of *The Seven Arts*. He was able to reveal in Andersonic personages (for the time being only in his first novel) not individual portraits of incomplete Yankees, but an able generalization of individual characteristics in a social fact of great significance. For Anderson in actual fact showed *how* before our very eyes, in the epoch when the decline of capitalism was beginning, the traditions of the pioneers transplanted by the *Mayflower* near Boston to the future state of Rhode Island were being shattered to bits. For the characterization of these traditions—which had been realised by America for three centuries already—for the characterization of the basic spiritual strivings of the bourgeois of all types in the course of these three centuries Anderson chose the method of sharp contrast. This method led him to the character of the "misfit" of a social group, to the character of a man who fails, not being able to live with that unique instinct and that unique aim according to which the Rhode Island ancestors lived and the Mr. Babbitts live. To the instinct of acquisition Anderson opposed an anemic dreaminess, to the aim of success, bewilderment, helplessness and a kind of vague hope of sticking onto the surface of life without setting for one's self any aims at all When the reader watched the Winesburg inhabitants revealed by Anderson, there was opened before him with extraordinary strength the exceptional living tenacity of the Mr. Babbitts who despised dreaminess.

But Frank already in his first novel did not follow Anderson. He found a new way to reveal the destructive strength of the Rhode Island instincts and aims. And this way, it seems to me, was more effective.

For his Quincy Burt, poisoned by the Rhode Island virus, is impotent in the struggle, not with American reality, but with this virus. Upon reflection it will be seen that this impotence witnesses to the exceptional strength of the Rhode Island traditions better than the tragic fate of the Wintersburg inhabitants who are unable to the end of their lives to adapt themselves to these traditions.

These traditions, which are not a dead past, but form today the social behavior of the American bourgeois, were revealed by Frank in the biography of Quincy Burt. Just like the Winesburg inhabitants, the hero of Frank's first novel tries to live outside his social group. He lives also outside his own family—the father and brother Mersden know no other aims than success and their will to moneygrabbing is of the same quality as that of their ancestors. They are true sons of Franklin, the founder of the *Saturday Evening Post,* in which in *Poor Richard's Almanac* Franklin defined the bounds of the cultural demands of his people; his "Commandments" were meant to serve the purpose of a tablet of commandments of individual morality for the native—and the universal—Philistine. Quincy does not listen to the propaganda of success which clutches at the throat of the reader from the pages of the *Post*; his urge is towards some sort of "spiritual" source of genuine suffering, for his education and environment cripple the soul. If before him there opened up some sort of horizons beyond the bounds accessible to his father and brother, on these horizons Kensey saw nothing beyond a kind of vague "spiritual ideals." Of the paths leading him to these befogged places the American bourgeois knew nothing and Kensey was impotent to conceive more clearly the meaning of his own existence. And he yielded—he did not come to ruin as did the personages of other Frank stories and novels, but returned to the faith of the Rhode

Island fathers. The stream of American life caught him, and he swam with the current. He was not able to come to birth with a new life, he died; traditions and reality were endured with a strength before which the opposition of the Burts is insignificant.

The analysis of the consciousness and subconsciousness of Quincy was done by Frank with such a masterly hand that even then—seventeen years ago—there could be no doubt of his tremendous artistic gifts. Quincy's unclear tendencies, abortive thoughts, the palely anemic desires deposited in his subconscious, were easily and freely drawn out by Frank. This ease unerringly witnessed to the fact that the method of work upon the social theme included in the biography of young Quincy was not accidental for Frank, and it is hardly likely that he will ever abandon Freudian methods of artistic depiction.

In the course of two years the correctness of such an assertion was confirmed. In his second novel, *The Dark Mother* the setting of the problem of the essence of standard American culture and the legatees of the pioneers from the thick forests of Massachusetts was more complex. But the creative method remained the same, though it had become still more mature. And the vision of the artist in these two years had become sharper. In the new novel he brought into conflict with David not the father and brother of Quincy, so splendid in their primitiveness, and not the rectilinear businessman Cugeller but a "complicated" Rhode Islander—Tom. The latter has also risen against the commandments of Franklin embodied in the philosophy of Tom's minister father. The primitive philosophy of life, the primitive cultural values in which the father believed were rejected by Tom in a prolonged struggle from which he merged the victor and along with his sister Cornelia left Ohio for New York. And here, in a living and terrible reality the instinct of self preservation promted him to a complicated maneuver by means of which he tried to deceive himself and his friend David. Having thrown away the Rhode Island program, he evolved for himself a philosophy which he termed "realistic." It helped him to become a successful attorney, without compelling him, as he assured David, to betray the misty "ideals" of his youth. In solitude he understands fully that his "realistic" philosophy is a new complicated Rhode Island structure which can only for a very short time deceive David, who is alien to "realism."

Frank found David not at all such a man as Quincy. Under Frank's pen there grew a youth who opposed to the ideals of the disciples of Poor Richard not the spiritual yearning of Quincy Burt, but the integrity of youthful emotions and a biological eagerness for life. Both these qualities are as far from the striving for success and the eagerness for dollars as they are from Tom's "realistic" philosophy. The latter knows this, and for him—for Tom—the struggle for David is a struggle for his own self—the vindication of his realism in his own eyes. He loses the struggle for David goes away from him. But not to Cornelia, Tom's sister, who does not accept the "realism" of her brother, but to a girl who stands upon his path. Where he will go further the reader does not know, and Frank himself did not know then. Now, after fifteen years it is clear that the path of David in the *Dark Mother* is the path of David Markand. A zigzag path through Rhode Island success to the picket lines of the Kentucky miners. And once more a return to success, following which comes the second and last departure to the graves of his two friends. In the same way as the "realism" of Tom is

more complicated than the philosophy of Poor Richard, the path of David is more confused than the road of defeated Quincy Burt.

But the path of Waldo Frank himself did not as a result of this become more sinuous after his first two novels in which the academic problem of the essence of the spiritual culture of the States resounded as a social theme. His artistic farsightedness grew stronger, he distinguished enemies who were more cleverly masked and to uncloak whom was harder than to unmask the readers of the *Saturday Evening Post*. And he saw the sacrifices of this "realistic" sobriety, saw people whom the "realist" Tom in alliance with the militant Philistines drove spiritually and socially underground to the depths.

He concentrated his attention upon these victims. This attentiveness did not weaken in him in the three following books of belles lettres.

6

Tragic are the individual fates of the people who pass through these books: *Rahab, City Block* and *Holiday*. Almost everyone is crushed, if not at the beginning of his path, then at the end. They are all set against either the tremendous city which is ruled by the laws of capitalist economics, or against the "realism" of their close friends, which dooms them to complete solitariness. Some of them are integral, innerly strong people who are not saved either by their integrity or their strength inasmuch as these characteristics are of a different quality than those which are necessary in New York—Babylon of the bootblack Paolo Benati. Another group lives in the world of ecstatic emotions to the level of which a man can rise only when he is driven into himself and feels no social connections. The third group, finally, in seeking defense from their inherent weakness, take to any weapon—from a bullet in the forehead to sadistic ferocity to a beloved person. And all of them, separated one from another by the wall of solitude, do not know where reality ends and where it passes into the play of a deseased imagination.

The theme of a woman who falls but remains pure is not a new theme. It was familiar to our classics. Frank stated it in *Rahab* with technical brilliance and with great lyric quality. The confession of Fanny Dirk before the poet Samson Brenner is developed against a static background; Samson waits for his prostitute friend; at the other side of the table sits Fanny, the keeper of the den. Frank does not relate the terrible story of her life; the stages of her life pass before us scene by scene—marriage with a drunkard; her "path to Damascus"—relationship with a "realistic" attorney; expulsion from home by the evangelist husband—a faithful son of the Franklin commandments—of the unworthy wife; journey to New York with the child; the fall step by step right down to the last point—the trade of a procuress. And all these stages alternate with the scene given in the exposition. The poet continues to wait for his friend, drinks wine, and sees the biographies of two women. One is given in the scenes of her outer life story, the second in an analysis of the subconscious in which there is carried out a cleansing process and in which there are laid bare high human qualities —emotional integrity and complete lack of mercenariness. And the woman doomed to ruin by the "realist" lover and the Pharisee husband falls ever lower, but her soul "descends upwards" before the accidental listener who sees:

"... Then, from the wreckage of her features there was born a smile

making them clear and sharp, making them fair and high. A light shone in them."

The Negro John in *Holiday*, a story simpler in composition but extremely interesting rhythmically, is endowed with the same integrity. He falls in love with a white woman and pays for it with his life. And before death at the stake in accordance with the law of Judge Lynch, he has to pass through an experience as terrible as death. In that last moment, when the white woman he loves could have saved him with one word—by acknowledging to the crowd that she herself inflicted the wound upon herself—he did not hear that acknowledgement. The bestial Rhode Islanders dragged him by a rope to the stake and his beloved lady in her room heard the hooting of the crowd passing by her window. And John did not call upon her—pride and bitterness were too great for the instinct of self-preservation to display itself. This Negro was given as a man on another scale than that of the two-footed beings of Rhode Island America, who dragged him to the stake. But who is Virginia, the woman who loved him and betrayed him? We can only guess at this. Frank has helped us insufficiently. He has taken the reader through emotions in Virginia so dark and cloudy that the reader might not understand them. In any case there is before us an unhappy woman who is as far away from her primitive brother—the leader of the crowd—as from John, a man of great integrity and inner strength. The combination of masochism and sadism shows that in his journeying through the subconscious Frank in this character lost the right direction and left the motivation of her cruelty only to be guessed at.

And, finally, the series of stories in *City Block*. For the bootblack Paolo Benati who ends by suicide, New York is a Babylon. But every district of it also is a Babylon, and in every district live people, tens of thousands of people, crushed by the great city. Anderson saw in the West, in Ohio, people who lost a game with fate. Frank saw such people in New York. The book is only about them, about those in whom the will to success is paralyzed by consciousness of impotence, and in whom there is only one dream: to get through life on some byway and avoid the columned highroad where death may crush at his first steps each one who is not able to live according to the wolfish laws of contemporary capitalism. This impotance does not arise from individual qualities. In other social conditions the majority of these people who have been crushed by New York would have found their place in life; but not there, where success determines the value of human strivings, and success is determined by the number of dollars acquired. It is just exactly dollars that these people are unable to acquire. They are unable to laugh (and here it may be pointed out that Frank also is unable to laugh, notwithstanding his great vital energy). There is nothing left them but to dream. They dream ecstatically, like the hero of *The Candles*, and the heroine of *The Murder*. And in almost every story Frank carries their dreaming to the point at which reality is transformed into delirium, and fantasy stalks forth under the mask of reality.

If one reads these three books of belles lettres one after another, and then remembers the obstinacy with which Frank the sociologist returns in the *Rediscovery of America* to the term "chaos" for the definition of contemporary capitalism, you will understand this obstinacy. There is not, perhaps, in contemporary Western literature another artist who feels the "chaos" of the contemporary West with such sharpness. Perhaps not one of the Western mas-

ters living in postwar conditions displays the sensation of "chaos" with such force of direct experience as he. In order not to understand, but to feel that the "crisis of Western culture" is, I would recommend the reading of these three books of Frank's prose, the last of which was published twelve years ago. In them you will not once come across the term "crisis." But it is with such a "feeling of wholeness"—to adopt his phraseology—that Frank bears witness in the prose of these three books to the "chaos" of his native land, that our diagnosis acquires all its terrible significance. And indeed, what other diagnosis could be made if an artist, sensing capitalist reality by direct feeling—apart from all ready-made schemes—beheld a world which had gone off its axis? This process ("chaos")—so terrible for the social organism—was seen not by a sick visionary but by a man of tremendous vital force and a master of syllogism. How can you live and breathe in a world in which the descendants of Rhode Island, the spiritual sons of the founders of American culture, wreak injustice upon a man of an immeasurably higher culture than his executioners? And this injustice is carried out in the name of the Rhode Island testament and the daughter of a standard American finds in her subconsciousness a basis for treachery to her beloved, simply because he is a Negro. Surely in such a world the norms of social ethics have been knocked off their axis? And surely this is a world of delirium in which a woman killed by scorn rolls down to the depths and her spiritual path, "descent upwards," is the opposite to her social fall? A world in which human consciousness cannot take in reality lest it break to pieces and live on the boundary of madness, taking dream for reality. Surely in such a world the laws of human logic have gone off their axis?

For him who has not before him the problem of the conformity to principle of Frank's creative growth—and American criticism does not have this problem before it—it is necessary to reflect on the tendencies of his three books of prose, *Rahab, Holiday* and *City Block,* following which there was a long interval before he again returned after ten years to belles lettres. It would then be evident that he saw the "chaos" of the social and cultural life of his native land, not through the syllogisms of his essays which found their completion in *The Rediscovery of America.* In the "closely woven web of dialectics," syllogisms played the role of reserves, reenforcing the direct acceptance of reality and its expression by the methods of the artist. But the basic weapon of his cognition was not and is not syllogisms. He came as an artist through two novels, in which he solved the problem of the essence and aims of American culture, and it was the same problem that he solved—but more maturely in the three following books of prose. In the novels, the problematics was more plainly evident, in the three following books the reserves of syllogisms were not brought to the aid of the artist, and the "chaos" of modern America stood forth still more terribly.

7

But these reserves were necessary to Frank for the essays. In the "closely woven web of dialectics" they received equal rights along with the methods of artistic depiction. He gave them the same rights in *Our America,* a developed essay on the paths and aims of the culture of the American people. He wrote this book sixteen years ago. Already then he put all his emotion into this prosecuting speech against the American Philistine, the hero of "small affairs," who murders reason and contemplati-

veness for the sake of material advantages, and is hypnotized by the idea of success. He traced out the path by which the pioneer from the thick forests of Rhode Island came to Wall Street. The reasons giving rise to the Puritanism of the pioneers were clear to him. He was economically literate. But he did not set himself to write an economic history of the States. He traced the development of that ideology which was brought to being and nurtured by the pioneer—a stout property-holder who based himself on the old Calvinist God who helped him in his struggle with James First's encroachments, which were not so much upon the consciences of his subjects as upon their properties. He showed how all the ethical and conventional norms of the States were tinted with the dye of the Puritan "yea!" how Puritanism fostered the moneygrabbing instinct of the rank and file American, and with what passionateness New England cherished the property principle. He showed how the strivings of the American artist were paralyzed, how his creative spirit was petrified, how it was impotent to overcome the esthetics of Puritanism which smothered all strivings not directed to the aims of Franklin. He minutely traced the leakage of stupid hypocritical morality into all spheres of the cultural life of America. He drew the profiles of the victims and heroes of this struggle with Puritanism in all the spheres of the spiritual life of a great people. And he achieved his aim:—there stood before us at full height the militant Philistine whose gigantic shadow falls upon the culture of America.

This book was needed for himself, first of all. Through it he saw his enemy, thought out methods of struggle and weighed up his strength. He thought and worked upon it simultaneously with his first two novels, in which his heroes did not yet know the weak spots of their enemy. Through it Frank tried to get to know these weak spots at which it was necessary to strike. Did he find these defenseless spots in the elephant hide of bandit Puritanism?

It seemed to Frank that he had found them. In *Our America* his compatriot stood out as a man whom history did not allow to contemplate and give himself up to reflectiveness, and whose energy was spent completely on "physical ripening." He did not know self-analysis and had not learned to control self-consciousness. And to Frank sixteen years ago it seemed absolutely necessary to teach his compatriot both these abilities. He found the vulnerable spot. So he supposed. What had to be done? First of all, to teach the adult infant to think and analyze himself, and then to educate him in the acquisition of ideas beyond the strength of an infant's understanding. Such was the task placed by Frank before Young America. But when we had to arm his heroes with weapons for the struggle against the enemy, he could not bring himself to offer them such weapons as these. His artistic conscience did not allow him to do this. And the three following books of belles lettres of which we have spoken bore witness to Frank's self-deception. He had not yet found the vulnerable spots of the master of life, and he had not found the appropriate weapons. With the hand of an artist he depicted "chaos;" the guilt for this chaos lay with that very bandit Puritanism which has developed in our days into capitalist industrialism. But Frank already understood that the weapons he had found were made of cardboard. And he preferred to leave his heroes defenseless. This was bad, despite the author's honorable intentions.

And Frank the artist went out to search for another weapon.

His ten-year absence from belles lettres (1924-1934) is a splendid testimony to his great and genuine honorableness as a man and a writer. What could he have brought to the reader if he had kept on turning out books? The customary depiction of social chaos and heroes as helpless as ever?

And he went aside. For some time it seemed to him that the clarification of the motive factors of another culture distinguished from the culture of the Pioneers would help him to find a way out of the blind alley. He began to study Spanish culture and its reflection in the bourgeois culture of Latin America, the neighbors of the Anglo-Saxon States. The fruit of this was the book *Virgin Spain* which covered his name with glory in the upper sections of the South American intelligentsia, but in no way helped the author in his search for new forms for his native culture. The dependence of the latter upon the economic and socio-political structure of the country had been known to Frank earlier. But in *Virgin Spain* and in *The Rediscovery of America* which followed in the course of three years, he was still diverting himself with the hope of a revolution in the sphere of spiritual culture, while preserving the socio-economic system of contemporary America.

In *The Rediscovery of America* this hope was interwoven with a thesis which for some reason or other held Frank's thought captive throughout the whole book. Attracted by the idea of the imminent ruin of European culture and the not less disputable theory that "America was the first grave of Mediterranean culture," he demonstrated the providential role of American culture in the renaissance of world culture. He showed this with brilliance, but the "closely woven web of his dialectics" in almost every chapter of the first part, which is entitled *Causes and Conditions* turned out to be insufficiently closely woven, and menaced a rupture because of only one question which had not been thought out. This question might be put in the following form: "What special qualities distinguish American capitalism, the parent of the culture of the States, from European that it should be given the role of saviour of world culture?"

In 1929, when the book appeared, Frank was still seeking ways to save world culture within the frame of capitalism. The web of his dialectics tore at every touch; he courageously engaged himself in closing up the gaps which he himself had made. One could feel that this book was the last despairing attempt of an honorable man to prove to himself the possibility of a way out of "chaos" into the bright future of humanity, without destroying the foundations upon which the universal Philistine had built his own culture. It could be felt that Frank, in developing the theme of the ruin of Europe and the rights of inheritance of capitalist America, was first of all convincing himself—so much was this undemonstrable.

But the book demonstrated something else; in it, Frank had exhausted all the arguments against the possibility for an honorable bourgeois seeker of social truth, of coming to terms with that very American bourgeois to whom Frank had appointed the role of saviour of world culture. If in *Our America* the creator of the culture of the States had had to be taught to think and thus to have opened for him the path to a new spiritual life, in *The Rediscovery of America* Frank made much higher demands upon the bourgeois. He forgot that in the ten years that had elapsed the bourgeois had learned neither self-analysis nor self-cognition.

It is not my business to reconcile these contradictions. They are charac-

teristic for such a man as Frank, who has moved slowly with the brakes on, but making steps forward and not going back. The caution of such men is an intellectual and moral honorableness and costs much more than the sudden "boldness" of people of another kind. And perhaps it is because of this that when six years ago I read in *The Rediscovery of America* greetings to Russian people "who rises from this base of servitude" and when I read also: "the sole duty of our group would be to avow the sanctity of the Soviet profession, the universal value of the Soviet experiment,"—I was not confused by Frank's phraseology. I knew that those words had been spoken by an honorable thinker. I was not confused by such a phrase as: "The business of our group will be of course to plough its own fields; and its ways, like the fields, will not be Russian." I knew that his summons: "to keep hands off and to help with reverent respect" reenforced by the logic of events would yet force Frank to reflect firmly upon the fields and paths of his native land, and of the Soviet country.

In remained but to wait patiently for the arrival of the time when Frank would begin to reflect upon these things. His visit to Moscow perhaps robbed Frank of his last illusions. And in 1934 there appeared *The Death and Birth of David Markand.*

8

Not all that had happened and was happening in the Soviet country was understood by Frank. But he understood much more than a globe-trotter, although he did not stay here long. His travel essays on the journey reveal convincingly enough that the problem of "paths and fields" had not yet been solved by him. But it was close to solution.

It was necessary only that Frank should come into collision with the problem of "paths" on the "fields" of his native land. Kentucky is on the fields of the States. Strikes have not ceased in America for the course of half a century, and the injustice to the Kentucky miners was in no way distinguished from the standard injustice of the American bourgeois to strikers. But Frank had not previously attempted to put his fingers in the social wounds of his native land. Now he went to Kentucky.

For the first time perhaps he saw fully and with his own eyes the unmasked face of the bourgeois. Although it is customary to consider that writers are distinguished by well-developed imagination, I do not think that Frank, in trying to reform bourgeois culture, had clearly seen the face of the bourgeois for the sake of whose "enlightenment" he had devised so many talented schemes. In Kentucky he saw it. Between the bourgeois and Frank there might have taken place the following dialogue:

Bourgeois: And so, you have turned up on my fields! I hope that you have not forgotten your own words, written five years ago? It goes like this, I think: "The ways of our group are not the Russian ones."

Frank: I have come to acquaint myself with the working conditions of the striking miners. As for "paths," I will think about them later.

Bourgeois: Splendid! As far as conditions are concerned, after all you yourself wrote in the same book: "For the Americans do not starve, yet are enslaved no less to an idolatry." But I can assure you that the conditions are quite satisfactory. If they would get on with the business and stop the strike, the conditions might be splendid.

Frank: Once more "getting on with the business!" But for how many years


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have I been saying one and the same thing! Remember: "the animal expends its energy in the business of personal or race nutrition." Mankind is still animal. A man who boasts that all his time goes into business is the equal of a cow all of whose time goes into grazing.

Bourgeois: Excuse me, but time is money.

Frank: The nation that solemnly asserts of time that it is money and that plots, prays, breathes, in the obsession of acquiring wealth—is a pack of wolves on the hunt! And its idealization of this servitude to the belly into a kind of "service" is as hideous a spectacle as that of any brute worshipping its lust.

Bourgeois: Sh! That's not quite nice. My daughter might hear. O.K., I won't quarrel with you. Evidently you won't be convinced that time is money. But it is for me. I'm in a hurry. Permit me on leaving to say that I am a great admirer of yours. I even know some of your sentences by heart. And I like your style.... My daughter sometimes reads aloud.... Self-knowledge, self-analysis, the symphonic nation ... idolatry ... and so on. Ah, at last!

Frank: What is that noise of drums?

Bourgeois: I've sent for soldiers, Mr. Frank. Enough. Joking apart, I would recommend you to go away for some time. You know. . . something unexpected might happen. And then come back later. My car is at your service.

This talk did not take place. There was another talk between the agents of the Kentucky bourgeois (the mob, as the newspapers coded it) and Frank. As the result of this talk, Frank had to be taken away in a car. Perhaps the very same car which was offered to him by the participant of our dialogue.

Of the conditions of life of Americans "who do not hunger," of the strike of the miners and the shooting of them, the American reader had some conception. Frank, returning to New York with a bandaged head, did everything possible to make the American reader know more than is permitted in such cases.

In Kentucky—not in the Soviet land, but on the fields of his own country—Frank had to decide for himself the question: could he, after the Russian experiment, and having seen the face of the master of his country without makeup, return to that illusion of the "resurrection" of bourgeois culture which held him captive five years before? For the first time, perhaps, he understood that such an illusion was a check payment of which could be claimed by the bourgeois any day, on any field of his native land. For the faith in "resurrection" is a helping hand stretched out to the master of the country. It carries moral responsibility for Kenctuky shootings. It is a reenforcement of the bourgeois, not only in political but economic positions. It is objectively a support for "brute worshiping of its lust," as he had written five years earlier.

And Frank decided the question of "paths and fields." *David Markand* came out last year, and this year we have heard the voice of Frank from the platform of the Paris Congress.

When you read the American criticism of the novel *David Markand* you are astonished not by the distrust which the critics display to Markand's participation in the miners' strike, but the insufficient attentiveness to the stages of the strivings of Frank himself. In this connection one feels that the critics all the time are confusing the hero with the author, and are judging Frank for the deeds and thoughts of Markand. I am not going to recount the story of the novel—it appeared in English so recently that it is still fresh in the memory. As is known, Markand after the murder of his two comrades,

the leaders of the defeated strike, makes an oath over the graves of Priest and Byrne: "I envied you, knowing how different I am. I will no more envy you. I will be like you. I will do like you. . . I have only the dead body of a class that dies: I need, that I may live, the living body of the class which now is life." And then after all, he returns home—to his family, to his ease, to the well-fed life of a successful businessman, from which he had fled in order, after passing the ordered, to take the oath over the graves. And Malcolm Cowley writes: "This contrast between word and deed is only the strongest symptom of a disharmony in the author's mind." In other words, Frank himself betrays the oath.

We know that he has not betrayed it; his speech at the Congress, his address to the Chinese revolutionaries (these splendid words: "If the people of the United States know what is happening in China, if they know the glorious story of the Chinese Communists,—a story that makes one proud to be a man," his work for the strengthening of the revolutionary front of American writers—all these are links in one chain. Frank did not go home; it was his hero who did so. In Frank there has been no gap between word and deed. As far as concerns "the disharmony in the author's mind" I am far from certain that Frank has decided the question of "paths" as simply as it may seem to those who do not know how hard and complicated his path has been. Malcolm Cowley knows this, but evidently he had to have the events of the last year of Frank's fate as an author in order to have trust in Markand's oath. This caution is not a sign of his farsightedness as a critic.

There are writers of two categories. The first compel their heroes to outstrip them, and then they live on the rent brought in by the hero. The hero earns them a reputation. The others detain their heroes halfway, and continue the journey beyond that point. Their heroes bring them not a few unpleasantnesses. There are cases when the critics do not believe that a writer of this type has put forward himself, but not a hero. Then they begin to detect the author in "disharmonious" thoughts. Frank belongs to this second category. He sent Markand back to the ancestral home which he himself had quitted. And quitted forever. Belonging to one of these two categories determines not only the writer's manner of constructing the plot, but something more—his style of life.

If it had happened that Frank had not sent Markand back to the ancestral home, but had compelled him to go along with himself on that very hard path which at present stands before Frank alone, a critic of Cowley's type would not have detected Markand (transformed into the author) in a contrast between word and deed. He would have limited himself to finding the novel untrue to life. For in this same article he writes: "Frank has changed his philosophy in recent years, changed his direction, but he is still trying to fit the new material into an old structure." In other words, if Markand had not returned home, Frank's "attempt" would have been less convincing than it is. And another critic—Edwin Seaver—makes reservations to the end: "We do not fully believe in David Markand nor in his search for truth nor in his conversation at the graves of the two working-class comrades.

It is not for the sake of polemics that I have mentioned some statements of American critics. But in order to draw attention to two crucial points connected with the path of Frank himself, inasmuch as this path brought him on the one hand to Markand's return to the ancestral home, and on the other, to his own linking of his fate with the fate of the revolutionary literature of the States.

Markand's return home—his halt halfway on the road after the oath at the graves—is before everything a testimonial to Frank's faultless artistic touch. At that stage at which the novel breaks off, Markand is still not ready to follow the author who created him. This the author knew, and showed, but this the critics did not see. They preferred to see "disharmony." Markand is not Frank, he is a rank and file bourgeois intellectual of the States. He would be greatly amazed if fate made him an intellectual leader, and he would have to define by his own inner experience the social behavior of any "group." He is a seeker for truth. Like a rank and file [illegible] sectarian. And the character of his seekings is tinted with sectarianism, and in this sectarianism there is something Puritan, not in content but in style. His ancestors might be found among those "seekers" who were once led by Penn. It is not accidentally that Markand came to the two graves. Frank is a great and mature artist, and between the different stages in the biography of Markand's ravings there is no gap. But with just the same artistic sensitiveness Frank did not allow Markand to carry out his oath over the graves. He gave Markand a respite. Frank is not only an inventive psychologist, but an exact one. In the next novel we are bound to meet Markand. Perhaps under a mask.

Frank broke off the book where it had to break off. "The tremendous value of the novel is that it so thoroughly exposes the thorny road the bourgeois intellectual must follow if he is to become 'class-conscious of the proletariat.'"

This quotation—from the criticism by Edwin Burgum—leads us to the second crucial point of the theme of David Markand. In distinction from the first—Markand's return—the clarification of this point directly concerns Frank himself.

We know, from Frank's book, what has been his path from the house of his ancestors to the present day of his fate as a writer and a man. The path is very complicated, very hard, with breaks. But nonetheless, it has been an organic path, without violence upon himself, directed by the will of an honorable man. Frank has not yet got rid of his Spinozaism. The struggle will teach him to get rid of it. The old phraseology still holds him captive. In the struggle he will gradually forget it. For he will understand as an artist that, above everything else, it is tasteless because it is not exact. Psychologism leads him at times to biologism. In the near future he will discover in man new spheres of consciousness which he has not yet noticed. The content of consciousness will be qualitatively different from that to which his analysis is accustomed. He was still young when he set out on the search for social truth. This search was interwoven with another—deistic. With the years his thought has matured and the foil of deistic terminology has tarnished. It will tarnish altogether. His method of cognition was eclectic. An attentive eye might have distinguished also elements of materialism. A refined psychologism is in essence dialectic. And there will come an hour when in the philosophy of Frank his inconsequent Spinozaism will be swept out by a cogent dialectical materialism. Not because he is "commanded to do so by Karl Marx," as the foolish people of the house of his fathers, which he has abandoned, say in their mockery, but because it cannot be otherwise.

And then all doubts will disappear about whether or not Frank can fully accept the philosophy of the proletariat and commune upon his own path. The right to this path is possessed by all. Those who have an honorable conscience cannot but follow it to the end.

Translated from the Russian by H. G. Wells

RAPHAEL SOYER: AMERICAN ARTIST

In the City Park

How Long Since You Wrote To Mother?

Quilting Centre **Pearl Binder**

ARTICLES and CRITICISM

A. Lunacharski

Bacon in Shakespearean Surroundings

From an Unpublished Work [1]

In order to attack the problem set ourselves at the end of the preceding chapter[2] as vigorously as possible and combine brevity with the greatest possible wealth of vivid detail we shall adopt a rather unusual method.

We assume that Shakespeare has noted and described with extraordinary, incomparable genius, that peculiarly terrible, yet bright, nay glorious phenomenon—the mighty growth of intellect in the society contemporary to him. What we want to do is determine the properties and tendencies of one of the most brilliant minds of the period in question, of our hero Francis Bacon, by a study of Shakespeare's characters.

In all of Shakespeare's works, particularly in the so-called histories, struggle plays a tremendous part.

The end of the Middle Ages and the beginning of the Renaissance, which Shakespeare witnessed, were distinguished for stormy individualism; the decay of still rather firm social ties was perceptible everywhere. Jacob Burkhardt, in his profound work devoted to the Renaissance, notes this emancipation of individuality and its active endeavors to find its way in life independently as one of the basic phenomena of the period.

The free personality continually engages Shakespeare's attention. He is profoundly interested in its fate. What awaits this free personality—success which crowns its ever growing aspirations or premature doom? Both are possible in that chaotic world where individual will is pitted mercilessly against its like. Shakespeare's characters (perhaps even more so those of his predecessors—the Elizabethan dramatists, the academicians) ask themselves —is not everything permissible? The authority of the church has greatly declined, there is very little belief in a god, and in place of God's will as stated clearly in the doctrines of the churches, a new divinity is dimly surmised—something akin to Pan or some dark Fate, hardly a benevolent one, hardly a just one, perhaps even a cruel one that gloats on the sufferings of mortals rather than sympathizes with them.

If everything is permissible the question arises—what is attainable?

Every punishment—whether brought about by circumstances or the cruel reaction of the state, society or enemies—in the end resolves itself to failure.

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[1] This essay was to have been a chapter of a book on Francis Bacon, part of a brilliant biographical series *Lives of Extraordinary Men*—which, unfortunately, was never finished.

[2] The preceding chapter ends with the passage: "We have thus given what we believe to be a precise picture of the period in its social aspects as well as of the social group to which Bacon belonged. The following chapter we devote to a more specific problem, namely: the problem of determining the place in culture occupied by the principal inner psychological force—by mind—in the society to which Bacon and his like belonged."

If one falls under the blows of such punishment, it means he failed to consider his actions, that having assumed the more or less correct thesis—perfectly moral to the man of the Renaissance—"everything is permissible," he forgot that this does not mean that everything is undefended and one can prey egoistically in this world of conquest, forgot that there is a society, the state and other, perhaps even better armed, preying individuals.

One need not be moral—morals are only a hindrance in the struggle. True, morals may also be useful at times, but only as a mask behind which one can hide cynicism and cruelty. Above all one must be wise. One must be very, very wise. One must know how to play diverse roles, according to whatever the situation may require. One must be able to impress others. One must know how to curb them to one's will. One must consider betimes the forces called out and take account of their cumulative growth. To be wise means to throw overboard all religious and moral poppycock, all scruples, all false values and look at life soberly. But this also means to look at life's real dangers soberly.

No genius in the world's culture has so attentively, so fixedly, studied the rise of intellect in the world, the rise of mind as such, unfettered, crowned mind, as Shakespeare.

Mind is declared a feeble guide. To Shakespeare this seems a very doubtful guide indeed. He is not sure that this guide does not but always lead to doom. At any rate, haughtiness and loftiness of intellect is a theme which not only preoccupies Shakespeare, it also bothers him. He has great respect for intellect. He does not at all despise, he does not hate even the most cynical "knights of intellect." He understands their peculiar freedom, their beastly grace, their incomparable human dignity consisting of their very disdain of all scruples. But he also believes that theirs is a risky fate: whoever leaves the trodden path, goes to sea in search of fame and fortune, putting himself at the mercy of the winds, with mind—the only captain on board—is taking an excessive risk.

Mind as a weapon in the struggle for success—is one phase of intellect which came prominently to the fore in Shakespeare's time.

Another phase that interested Shakespeare was that the man of intellect, to whom mind serves as a bright lantern, sees much that was dark to others. Suddenly and with great clearness and distinctness he sees his surroundings and himself in the midst of this strange and terrible world. In the light of this lantern—mind—it developed that the world is not only strange and terrible, it is also base and stupid, that it is perhaps not worth while living in it altogether and even the greatest triumphs in it do not justify its absurd existence, not to speak of the fact that these triumphs are rare and ephemeral and that everything is ruled by old age and death which strike everything living.

Early awakened intellect is the direct cause of suffering. We are confronted by a vivid case of that tremendous phenomenon so clearly and laconically indicated in the famous title of Gribolodov's comedy—*Grief of Intellect.*

Francis Bacon, a man of intellect, a mind of great daring unfettered by the very circumstances of the Renaissance, came into contact with both series of Shakespeare's intellectual heroes. In the next chapter, when we shall take a closer look at his worldly morality and his precepts on the conduct of life, we shall see his kinship with the Machiavellians.

We must make the reservation however, that while Bacon did not feel a particle of piety towards so-called morals, he thoroughly understood the importance of the moral mask, the importance of not antagonizing by any too

great frankness, the importance of veiling the daring flights of independent intellect by verbal concessions to current views. And where could Bacon do this better than in his published works which he dedicated to various high patrons! This transparent moral mask however should not prevent the least perspicacious person from seeing Bacon's far-reaching intellectualising amorality.

It is only from such a point of view that Bacon's conduct in individual cases becomes intelligible, cases when his cynicism exceeded all bounds and called out unfavorable reactions even in the free society of the period of Renaissance. This also explains the apparent "lightmindedness" with which Bacon spoiled his brilliant career by insufficiently veiled bribery, insufficiently adroit even for that period.

But, while these features of Bacon—his world wisdom, craftiness, unscrupulousness—are akin to Shakespeare's free intellectual heroes, Bacon is also closely connected with the sadder and nobler Shakespearean characters —the Hamlet type—of which we shall investigate three: melancholy Jacques (Hamlet in embryo), Hamlet himself and Prospero, who is a sort of majestic symphony of Hamletism as a whole.

Let us first take Shakespeare's cynics. There are many of them. First and foremost among them however, is King Richard III.

As I pointed out at the beginning of this chapter, the struggle of individuals among themselves (principally for power) plays a tremendous part in all of Shakespeare's works, particularly in these histories. *King Richard III* completes Shakespeare's histories. The very character of King Richard III is given by Shakespeare as the most complete product of the time—a time of relentless extermination of the ambitious nobility.

The historical Richard III may not have been as black as Shakespeare paints him. He was a militant, ambitious king, one sufficiently relentless in politics, but hardly much worse or better than the others. The fact, however, remains, that to the people as a whole he was particularly crafty and bestially cruel and it was readily believed that he attained and maintained himself in power by a series of crimes. The critics that claim the character of Richard III enjoyed such success with the London public because it coincided with what they expected are probably right. Nevertheless, if one even turns to Holinshed (i.e., to the direct source from which Shakespeare got his material), it can be said that in this case Shakespeare was not altogether true to his basic source; he was to a great extent under the influence of another famous book about Richard III written by one of the greatest intellects of the Renaissance period—by Thomas More—the greatest figure of the reign of Henry VIII and an original forerunner, so to say, of both Bacon and Shakespeare.

Chancellor Thomas More in undertaking to write a biography of Richard III really produced a profoundly polemical and political book. More did not so much attempt to win the favor of the Tudors as to exalt them at the expense of the predecessors—not to flatter the Tudors but to glorify them, inasmuch as he was trying to put through his humanitarian and really profoundly progressive bourgeois policies under Tudor patronage although he did not succeed in this (and himself fell a victim of Henry VIII's monstrous despotism).

Henry VII, Earl of Richmond, who defeated Richard and was the first Tudor on the throne, was a most loathsome miser and a person altogether lacking in gifts. This did not prevent Thomas More from hinting that the Earl of Richmond was a glorious knight who had brought about the triumph of

truth and the punishment of evil, while Richard III was made out to have been a very fiend of hell and the very worst embodiment of medieval discord.

Shakespeare adopted More's view on Richard III's profound wickedness. But we are struck by a great difference. To More Richard III was only a bad king politically whom a good king, whose servant More himself happened to be, succeeded in overthrowing. To Shakespeare it is a human personality, a tremendous historical figure, a singular, gigantic character.

Shakespeare has not the least intention of rehabilitating Richard III, deny any of his crimes—quite the contrary—he ascribes crimes to him which even More does not mention; but he draws no poetical or ethical conclusions. To Shakespeare Richard III is a monster, but a monster so magnificent, so gifted, so perfect and so daring that Shakespeare can only admire him.

As a manysided psycholigist Shakespeare tries to distinguish various traits in the character of Richard III and show them in various phases of his spiritual life. However, in spite of the fact that politically Shakespeare should condemn Richard III as an usurper of the throne, in spite of the fact that he piles up horror upon horror and tries to awaken the wrath of the audience against the shamefully wicked Richard III—Shakespeare nevertheless respects him. We repeat, he admires him. He does not for a moment wish to lower the fundamental Machiavellian principle, i.e., the principle of rationalized ambition, statesmanlike ambition, directed to a definite aim, using all the resources of scientific analysis and rapacious hypocrisy to the limit.

The play devoted to Henry VI was probably mostly written by someone else and it is very difficult to establish which passages were written by Shakespeare himself. However, as *Richard III* was written almost entirely by Shakespeare himself, it can be surmised that those passages in *Henry VI* which serve as preliminary steps, preparatory to the history of *Richard III,* were written by Shakespeare. We thus have the genuine development of the character.

Gloster (the future Richard III) is first of all a brave warrior. He is not afraid of bloodshed, is not sparing of blood—either his own or others. He is more energetic and more active than his kin. He is a violent man and inspires fear. At the same time he is deformed. The features of his physical deformities are noted in *Henry VI;* they make him unattractive, even repulsive to those around him, who keep away from him, isolate him, compel him to rely upon himself only. The resulting psychology Gloster expresses in several monologs in *Henry VI* which we shall not quote only because at the beginning of *Richard III* there is a brilliant summarizing monolog (by the way, also a characteristic one for the artistic method adopted by Shakespeare to unfold his Richard).

Richard is a cynic—he understands what he is doing perfectly, scorns all scruples and is afraid of no crime. To Richard no crime is a crime at all if it serve as a means to achieve his ends. He therefore draws his plans to himself quite openly and unafraid. One can, of course, hardly conceive any sort of confidant to whom he would unfold his plans with such frankness. The existence of such a confidant would spoil the character of Richard III: he must be perfectly secretive before others! So the dramatist has recourse to the monolog. Richard III, when alone, deliberates and, with extraordinary brilliance of imagery, unfolds his inner world to the audience (assumed to be non-existent).

We quote the entire monolog which is also something like an introduction to the whole play:

Gloster: Now is the winter of our discontent
Made glorious summer by this sun of York;
And all the clouds, that lower'd upon our house,
In the deep bosom of the ocean buried.
Now are our brows bound with victorious wreaths;
Our bruised arms hung up for monuments;
Our stern alarums changed to merry meetings,
Our dreadful marches to delightful measures,
Grim-visag'd war hath smooth'd his wrinkled front;
And now,—instead of mounting barbed steeds,
To fright the souls of fearful adversaries,—
He capers nimbly in a lady's chamber,
To the lascivious pleasing of a lute.
But I,—that am not shap'd for sportive tricks,
Nor made to court an amorous looking-glass;
I, that am rudely stamp'd, and want love's majesty,
To strut before a wanton ambling nymph
I, that am curtail'd of this fair proportion,
Cheated of feature by dissembling nature,
Deformed, unfinish'd, sent before my time
Into this breathing world, scarce half made up,
And that so lamely and unfashionable
That dogs bark at me, as I halt by them;—
Why I, in this weak piping time of peace,
Have no delight to pass away the time,
Unless to see my shadow in the sun,
And descant on mine own deformity:
And therefore, since I cannot prove a lover,
To entertain these fair well-spoken days,
I am determined to prove a villain,
And hate the idle pleasure of these days.

When one thinks oneself into this monolog the conclusion is forced that among the motives for Richard's "proving a villain" Shakespeare considers the main one—the fact that he was "deformed and ugly" and thus put in an exceedingly disadvantageous position from the point of view of life in peace time, from the point of view of court gallantry.

It must be noted, however, that while Gloster speaks of "proving a villain" he really does not condemn villainy so very much, in fact there is no reason to think that he considers himself an "inferior person" only because he is disfigured. On the contrary the feeling is conveyed that this physical deformity which dooms him to a singular loneliness, hardens him all the more in that wherein he finds most satisfaction in life, namely in struggle, triumph, in attaining his ends by turning people into his blind tools. Shakespeare hastens to show this in the famous scene between Richard III and Anne. It is not that Richard here shows great capabilities of intrigue, an ability to rapidly evaluate events and see how to manipulate them so as to advance his struggle for the throne. Nor is it the acting which Richard here shows, the tremendous art of shamming by which he fools people, although this is quite important. The specific property of this scene is that the deformed Richard talks about love, passion, that he wooes the wife of the man he had killed and in a short time succeeds in turning Anne's hatred of him into a singular sympathy for him. This shows that Richard's uneven shoulders, withered hand and short leg are no hindrance to him even when he has to make use of the weapon of erotics.

I wish to call the reader's attention to Richard's conversation with Buckingham. This conversation shows how great a role the ability to sham, sly acting, played in the relations of people on intellect of the time. Richard asks:

Come, cousin, canst thou quake, and change thy color,
Murder thy breath in middle of a word,
And then again begin, and stop again,
As if thou wert distraught, and mad with terror?

Buckingham: Tut, I can counterfeit the deep tragedian;
Speak and look back, and pry on every side,
Tremble and start at wagging of a straw,
Intending deep suspicion: ghastly looks
Are at my service, like enforc'd smiles;
And both are ready in their offices,
At any time, to grace my stratagems.

A high degree of just such acting Gloster himself shows in the scene with the people. The scene is admirable for its perfect hypocrisy. Whoever has not read, or having read it does not remember this scene, should read it. I shall confine myself here to pointing out that Gloster not only knew how to hide his crookedness of limb, his repaciousness, militancy, his biting, mocking sarcasm so characteristic for him: he dons a mask of Christianity, of a prayerful, nay almost a holy man despising human vanity—and all this only to win for himself the momentary good will of the people which should seek in him their king, the patron of order. Later, when the forces of history begin to turn against him, what incredible daring is his in speaking to Queen Elizabeth for the hand of her daughter! What passion, what emotion, what charming tenderness in Richard's words! One can imagine that even the experienced Elizabeth, who knows him thoroughly, will be fooled. In any event, hard as it is for him, he again risks a great stake and with all his former art and self possession builds a whole new system of political relationships, a whole system of alliances with those he had wronged, in order to again feel a firm foundation under him.

But the figure of Richard III would be incomplete if we did not also see how Shakespeare builds up his final undoing.

Richmond is coming against him with a big army. One after another Richard's friends go over to the side of the enemy. It becomes ever clearer that the enemy is overwhelmingly stronger. Richard is innerly disquieted. After a series of crimes he has killed entirely innocent children. Here the theme later developed by Pushkin in *Boris Gudonov* comes out with tremendous force. But Richard is not Boris. Although his conscience hurts, although his nature is human and according to thousands of years of tradition, he cannot but feel some twinge of conscience at his inhuman cruelty, at least in his sleep, he frees himself from these visions and reproaches, from his inner disquietude when morning comes and it is necessary to go to battle.

We can only recommend that this entirely perfect scene be read. Every word is a monumental stroke, painting a terrible, a monstrous man.

Here we shall only confine ourselves to quoting Richard's final call to arms, an inspired passage showing his Machiavellian politics, his ability to find just the thing to say in order to inspire men who are neither his friends nor ideally minded "patriots." Here a more than Napoleonic knowledge of mass psychology is revealed. At the same time what an inner determination, what inner tranquility after such a disturbing night—and all to brighten the decisive moment of the struggle!

Go, gentlemen, every man unto his charge:
Let not our babbling dreams affright our souls;
Conscience is but a word that cowards use,

Devis'd at first to keep the strong in awe:
Our strong arms be our conscience, swords our law.
March on, join bravely, let us to't pell-mell;
If not to heaven, then hand in hand to hell.
What shall I say more than I have inferr'd?

But enough of Richard III. Of course, this figure is a much more majestic one than that of Bacon, but Bacon's amorality has much in it akin to Richard's. It is of one and the same formation, one and the same world.

Shakespeare comes perhaps closer to Bacon's scale with the figure of Gloster's bastard son Edmund in the great tragedy *King Lear.*

We note to start with that Edmund also has his justification. Richard enters a merciless struggle for power and explains it by his physical deformity. Edmund enters a similar intrigue explaining it by the fact that he is a bastard son. We are dealing here with an evident generalization.

Shakespeare asks himself: what gave rise to a breed of people who devote their minds to the service of their careers, their ambitions, turn their mind into such a dangerous servant, such a keen, poisoned dagger for their will? And he answers—these are all, so to say, bastards, these are all people whom fate has robbed of all they desire. They are people who consider themselves disinherited, disappointed by fate and consequently spin marvellous intrigues, correct what, to them, are mistakes of nature.

The translator of *King Lear,* Druzhinin, gave an excellent analysis of Edmund in the preface to the Russian edition of the play. The analysis is so thorough that I prefer to quote his characterization of Edmund directly:

"The fundamental trait of this type is the brazen insolence and oldness of face which always help a man lie unconscienceably and assume any mask that may suit him, acting under one dominant urge—to make his way in life—at any cost, even if it is necessary to step over the bodies of father and brother.

"Edmund is not simply a narrow egoist; nor is he a blind villain that finds pleasure in the villanies he commits. Edmund's is a richly endowed nature but one early and profoundly spoiled and consequently can make use of those unusual gifts only to the detriment of neighbors. Edmund's genius is felt at every step in every word, because he does not take a single step, make a single movement or say a single word that has not been thoroughly considered and such constant deliberation so dries up Edmund's heart and brain that he gets prematurely old, that he learns to control even those bursts of youthful passion against which easily tempted youth is usually so helpless. Another undoubted sign of Edmund's genius is that all that surround him succumb to the magic power of his eye, his words, the general impression of his personality which inspires women with a mad passion for him and makes men trust him, respect him involuntarily and even fear him to some extent."

To this characterization we shall only add Edmund's famous monolog, because this monolog frequently coincides almost literally with some of the precepts of a "free morality" which Bacon, though with some reservations, tends to approach.

Edmund: Thou, nature, art my goddess; to thy law
My services are bound. Wherefore should I
Stand in the plague of custom, and permit
The curiosity of nations to deprive me,
For that I am some twelve or fourteen moonshines
Lag of a brother? Why bastard? wherefore base?
When my dimensions are as well compact,
My mind as generous, and my shape as true,
As honest madam's issue? Why brand they us
With base? with baseness? bastardy? base, base?
Who, in the lusty stealth of nature, take

More composition and fierce quality,
Than doth, within a dull, stale, tired bed,
Go to the creating a whole tribe of fops,
Got 'tween sleep and wake?—well, then,
Legitimate Edgar, I must have your land:
Our father's love is to the bastard Edmund
As to the legitimate: fine word,—legitimate!
And my invention thrive, Edmund the base
Shall top the legitimate. I grow; I prosper:—
Now, gods, stand up for bastards!

The third type of intellectual cynic armed with mind against his neighbors, we consider Iago. Usually he seems the most puzzling one of the entire series of types of this category created by Shakespeare. In fact, it is hard to say what Iago's motives are that induce him to execute such artful maneuvres dangerous to himself and infinitely cruel, to destroy two people that—at worst—are indifferent to him.

All of Iago's motivation Shakespeare puts into the scene with Roderigo. Here we find a whole system of strange self justifications. At first Iago enters into a conspiracy with a madman who expresses mad desires and for no apparent reason, for the mere joke of it, agrees to help this madman if he will only give him enough money. But it later develops Iago has also other motives for causing Othello and Desdemona trouble. Into these enter some moot suspicions that Iago's own light minded wife, scantly respected by him, had been lacking in strictness to the general. There are also some other things, trivial, contradictory ones.

It is quite clear why a subtle psychologist like Shakespeare needed so many different motives. It is evident that their purpose is not to motivate Iago's actions but to show that Iago himself was not aware of the motive for his conduct.

What is of importance in this entire long scene representing confused seekings for some pretext, for a stupendous criminal plan, a plan to be executed with subtle cunning and án iron will, is not anything that is of the nature of a motive but the way Iago characterizes the human will generally. However, let us make the reservation at once, really not "the human will generally," rather the human will of such people as Iago, Richard III, Edmund, or of all Machiavellians in politics and in life generally,—in a word, of such men as our hero—Francis Bacon.

This remarkable passage reads as follows:

"Iago—Virtue! a fig! 'tis in ourselves that we are thus, or thus. Our bodies are our gardens; to the which, our wills are gardeners: so that if we will plant nettles, or sow lettuce; set hyssop, and weed up thyme; supply it with one gender of herbs, or distract it with many; either to have it sterile with idleness, or manured with industry; why, the power and corrigible authority of this lies in our wills. If the balance of our lives had not one scale of reason to poise another of sensuality, the blood and baseness of our natures would conduct us to most preposterous conclusions: but we have reason, to cool our racing motions, our carnal stings, our unbitted lusts; whereof I take this, that you call love, to be a sect or scion."

It is perfectly evident that Iago is conscious of great powers in himself; he feels he is master of himself; he understands that he can plant some unusual, subtle poisons in this garden which he describes: he feels that he is a man of iron will and clear mind, a man unhampered by any scruples, no slave to any law outside himself, to any moral authority—and that such a man is terribly strong. In those still dark days when the great majority was not yet able to use their intellects, when almost everyone was tied up in religious and moral

prejudices such a free, strong man felt himself something akin to a fabled giant. He could challenge anyone to a game of life and play him into a corner, take away his goods, his honor, his wife, his very life and come off best. And suppose there was a degree of risk, doesn't that only add to the zest of the game for the gamester? And Iago was such a gamester. He was a poisonous blossom of the springtime of intellect; he had only just opened up, was enjoying the novelty of it and wanted to make immediate use of his youthful strength, was anxious to enter the arena.

But why does Iago pick Othello for his foil? Why does he go against Desdemona? The reasons he gives are of course ludicrous ones. The fact is, he pits himself against Othello because the latter is his superior, a famous general, almost a great man, covered with glory, who has overcome many dangers and feels brave, strong. Isn't it pleasant to vanquish such a man? And he is an easy prey, because he is simple, trusting, flares up like straw; it is easy to ride him, easy to dupe him. And is not this pleasant? Isn't it pleasant for the ensign Iago, a rogue who had never excelled in anything, to be the lord, the fate, the god, of the famous, hot-headed, mighty, dangerous and fiery general?

And Desdemona? She is the daughter of the senator Brabantio, she is the finest blossom of Venetian culture, she is sensitively poetical and nobly faithful, she is like a song, a charming story. She is—a great gift, the greatest gift a man can hope to get; and she has given herself to Othello, has chosen to make him a gift of herself. But she is confiding, defenseless and noble. She can not suspect anyone of evil designs—does not even know what evil designs are. It is very easy to lure her into any trap. And isn't it pleasant to feel that such a beauty, such a marvel of nature, is dependent upon you, that you can lead her where you wish—to suffering, destruction, turn her into a torture and punishment instead of a blessing and a delight?

Iago senses all this with his subtle Renaissance soul and exults in anticipation, sees himself the god of these people or rather, the devil of these people. And it fills him with pride to see himself the master of the fates of these highly placed people.

That is his motive.

It is also an important one for sketching the character of the intriguer. Nowadays it is different—the intriguer has lost his freshness. Genuine, real intriguers roamed the earth in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Then the most amazing combinations were possible in the struggle of human cunning, that was the time when love intrigues flourished.

Generally speaking Francis Bacon was far from any erotic intrigues, as we can see from his biography. But intrigues were on the whole a rather favorite occupation of our philosopher as we shall soon see. I do not know whether he was influenced by any such magnificent satanic forces of ambition as those of Richard III, or those of Iago. The intrigues he was engaged in are mostly of the Edmund type.

Francis Bacon considered himself as not altogether of legitimate birth. He did not choose his parents, but if given the choice he would have chosen different ones. He was always trying to get things through his highly placed uncles. And he was struggling against a powerful adversary—Cook. He conducted the most intricate and odd friendship the world has ever known with the most singular figure of his age—with Essex. He had occasion to flatter the basest sort of people, like King Jacob and his favorite Buckingham. He was surrounded by conscienceless courtiers, sly jurists, keen parliamentarians—a

world dangerous, unprincipled, full of ambushes—and in this world he made for himself a tremendous career, made it almost entirely by intrigue. He got to such heights that once, in the absence of King ~~Jacob~~, he played the monarch in London. Then—he slipped. To understand this side of him one must investigate his entire moral philosophy, which he formulated very carefully, and throw the light upon it which we did, i.e., we must look at it in the light of the psychology of the conscienceless knight of intellect as reflected in the three Shakespearean types we have mentioned.

Let us now investigate another phase of this problem. Let us look at these Shakespearean characters which reflect the springtime and infinitely sad "grief from intellect" at that time.

In the matter of scientific psychological *observation* of intellect, Shakespeare had both predecessors and contemporaries. In the province of *effective* intellect he had the remarkable, concentrated teachings of Machiavelli.

In the given instance Montaigne could play the role of Machiavelli; it is characteristic that the appearance of reflective and profoundly sad intellect, surrounded by an endless if sad sympathy on the part of the author, Shakespeare, like Montaigne, combines with the comparison of "pastoral" philosophic principles to the conceit of courtiers.

The book *Worldly Wisdom of Shakespeare and Goethe* tries to prove that Shakespeare generally devoted a great deal of attention to the advocacy of an elegant simplicity of life in contrast to arrogance and vain luxury and that this was the real inner meaning of the pastoral tendencies of the sixteenth, seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. However it may be, Shakespeare's *As You Like It* seems to be the one play unquestionably devoted to this pastoral philosophy.

What interests us however, is not this Shakespearean tendency. We do not even find that Shakespeare was an especially ardent advocate of the pastoral spirit in this comedy. What we are interested in is in one of the characters of this play, a character who doesn't even play an especially active role in it—in Jacques.

Jacques is called a "melancholy fellow" several times—and this is very characteristic. He himself tries to determine what this melancholy consists of and he does so in a peculiar, half-jesting way. He likes to clothe his wisdom generally, the inventions of his mind, paradoxically different from what is usually observed by so called average people, in an ironical, jesting form.

Here is what Jacques says, in describing his sort of melancholy:

"I have neither the scholar's melancholy, which is emulation; nor the musician's, which is fantastical; nor the courtier's, which is proud; nor the soldier's, which is ambitious; nor the lawyer's, which is politic; nor the lady's, which is nice; nor the lover's, which is all these; but it is a melancholy of mine own, compounded of many simples, extracted from many objects; and, indeed, the sundry contemplation of my travels, which, by often rumination, wraps me in a most humorous sadness."

Jacques has no desire to hide his had conclusions. But he knows they will not be understood very readily. And he gets the desire to don a motley coat. play the fool whom paradoxes are permissible. He can "under the unexpected guise of real foolishness speak nature's wisdom." Jacques exclaims:

O that I were a fool!
I am ambitious for a motley coat.
It is my only suit;
Provided, that you weed your better judgements

Of all opinion that grows rank in them,
That I am wise . . . . . .
. . . . . .
Invest me in my motley; give me leave
To speak my mind, and I will through and through
Cleanse the foul body of the infested world,
If they will patiently receive my medicine.

It can be seen, Jacque's melancholy does not take the attitude that the world is incurably ill. He sees the world is seriously ill and thinks reason, which uncovered the illness can also cure it by telling the truth, even though it be in a jesting form.

Jacques looks for something to compare this world to and finds it is like a theatre.

We shall not quote the entire remarkable monolog where Jacques says:

All the world's a stage,
And all the men and women merely players

We shall only repeat the last lines:

. . . . . Last scene of all,
That ends this strange eventful history,
Is second childishness, and mere oblivion,—
Sans teeth, sans eyes, sans taste, sans everything.

Jacque's idea of the world is thus perfectly evident. It is a repetition, and not a theoretical, but a practical one, of the famous oriental law: "Who multiplies great wisdom, multiplies sorrow."

The world is so built that one can gaily continue to play his role in it only if he does not understand he is on a stage. Otherwise the transitoriness of all existence, the aimlessness of it all, spoil the act.

The question arises, how does one open the world's eyes to the fact that it is "a dream," "a play," by telling it such a truth, and to what extent will this improve it?

The improvement, evidently, must resolve itself to people ceasing to value, in Buddhist fashion, youth, beauty, ambition, honor, triumph, glory. All this should bear the mark of transitoriness.

We find such bitter aphorisms also in our hero, Francis Bacon. Montaigne is no stranger to him.[1]

The assumption that Bacon is the author of *Hamlet* is ludicrous. But there is much in common between them—of that there can be no doubt.

What distinguishes Hamlet from his prototype—Jacques? That there is Machiavellism, intellectualism in Hamlet; that he is "a prince of talent, a prince of a man, a prince—a warrior." He does not "talk only"—he fights. The fact that Hamlet is a man of will power has struck many.

One has only to read the famous passage which ends the third act of *Hamlet* to see the similarity to Richard III, Edmund and Iago:

Hamlet: There's letters seal'd: and my two schoolfellows,
Whom I will trust as I will adders fang'd,
They bear the mandate; they must sweep my way,
And marshal me to knavery. Let it work;
For 'tis the sport, to have the engineer
Hoist with his own petard; and it shall go hard,
But I will delve one yard below their mines,
And blow them at the moon: O, 'tis most sweet,
When in one line two crafts directly meet.

[1] Several lines of the manuscript are missing here.

In this way Hamlet could not only give battle, but also triumph. Only he has no joy in victory, because he knows that "the world's a prison" and Denmark one of "its worst words."

His keen mind penetrates all the world's imperfections. But to understand its imperfections implies to hold some high ideal. And Hamlet does speak of a world straightened, of a world of honest people and honest interrelations, but he cannot believe that such a world can become a reality.

Hamlet holds his friend Horatio in such high regard because of his honesty and steadfastness i.e., because he can bear insult with dignity.

Hamlet is stirred by the sight of Fortinbras' army.

> . . . Examples, gross as earth, exhort me:
> Witness this army, of such mass and charge,
> Led by a delicate and tender prince;
> Whose spirit, with divine ambition puff'd,
> Makes mouths at the invisible events;
> Exposing what is mortal, and unsure,
> To all that fortune, death, and dander, dare,
> Even for an egg-shell . . . .

And dying, Hamlet does not forget Fortinbras:

> O, I die, Horatio;
> The potent poison quite o'er-crows my spirit:
> I cannot live to hear the news from England;
> But I do prophesy the elections 'lights
> On Fortinbras: he has my dying voice . . .

These are people Hamlet can respect. They seem to lead a life such as he should have liked to lead.

The monolog "To be, or not to be" is so well known, that it is not necessary to quote it here in full. But it is necessary to analyze it a little from this angle.

Let us leave aside Hamlet's doubts as to whether one should risk suicide, not being aware of what awaits one beyond the grave. That is a special theme which does not interest us just now. What interests us at present is, how Hamlet sees *this* life. He asks:

> Whether 'tis nobler in the mind to suffer
> The slings and arrows of outrageous fortune,
> Or to take arms against a sea of troubles,
> And by opposing end them? . . .

and finds that, humanity is doomed to "heart ache, and a thousand natural shocks:"

> . . . To die,—to sleep:
> No more; and, by a sleep, to say we end
> The heart-ache and the thousand natural shocks
> That flesh is heir to. . . .

enlarging upon this a little later:

> For who would bear the whips and scorns of time,
> The oppressor's wrong, the proud man's contumely,
> The pangs of despis'd love, the law's delay,
> The insolence of office, and the spurns
> That patient merit of the unworthy takes,
> When he himself might. . . .

and so on.

The first thing Shakespeare's awakened mind grows aware of is—the existence of tyranny, the lack of rights.

This is not the place to consider what sections of society Shakespeare had in mind. It is sufficient to state that the first and most obnoxious thing in life the intellect finds, is the profound contradiction between the conception of rights and reality under the sway of tyranny. Then come some rather purely moral complaints of Hamlet. They all resolve themselves to the same thing: there are very bad, wicked unworthy people, and society is so built that the best people, the genuinely noble and wise people, prove the victims.

This position was, of course, an acceptible one not only to some of the "dissatisfied" elements, i.e., to part of the golden youth of the older aristocracy that found itself hemmed in by the bourgeois monarchy of Elizabeth whose agent Shakespeare was, but also to part of the intelligentsia which represented talent, men of art and of which Shakespeare himself was part and parcel.

The eyes of the golden youth on the one hand,—inasmuch as the entire class was gliding on the surface of things and saw nothing ahead for itself but its doom—and of the bourgeois intelligentsia just come to life (and these people, just recently awakened saw no way out for themselves either), were opened to their surroundings—and the idea of suicide arose. And if they were to continue in life, it was only to wear mourning for the complete impossibility of considering life worth while or to make it so.

The true significance of the monolog becomes apparent when we compare it with the 66th sonnet written about the same time and in which Shakespeare, speaking for himself, presents the basic theme of *Hamlet*.

The full grief of awakened mind at the time is expressed in this sonnet:

> Tir'd with all these, for restful death I cry,—
> As, to behold desert a beggar born,
> And needy nothing trimm'd in jollity,
> And purest faith unhappily forsworn,
> And gilded honour shamefully misplac'd,
> And maiden virtue rudely strumpeted,
> And right perfection wrongfully disgraced,
> And strength by limping away disabled,
> And art made tongue-tied by authority,
> And folly (doctor-like) controlling skill,
> And simple truth miscall'd simplicity,
> And captive good attending captain ill:
> Tir'd with all these, from these would I be gone,
> Save that, to die, I leave my love alone.

Everything is in its place. The upper circles are taken by ugly masks. Real force, real modesty, real sincerity, real talent, are trampled upon and there isn't the least hope of putting things in proper order again.

It was perhaps fitting for Shakespeare to cherish ludicrous hopes at the time of the Essex conspiracy that this impractical conspiracy entirely incoherent in its program, would bring about a change for the better; but after the failure of this conspiracy complete disillusionment was inevitable and this laid its stamp on the work of the entire second period of the world's greatest poet.

Bacon knew Elizabeth's court. He also knew Jacob's court. He felt the injustices of both these courts very keenly. He was himself on occasion just as unjust. But Bacon was a friend of Essex and was close to the conspiracy—true, occupying a rather singular position.

When we shall investigate Bacon's so-called wordly mortality, we shall see

the traces of this disillusionment and grief which pervaded society. But we can say without hesitation that although Bacon is of a type akin to Hamlet (because he is just as intellectual, with just as active and analytic a mind), he is nevertheless entirely different. And in order to reconstruct this type fully it may perhaps be advisable to add another character from among Shakespeare's wise men, his most mature and final character—that of Prospero from *The Tempest.*

Prospero is a learned man, a magician. Prospero is master of a magic wand which give him power over the forces of nature.

Prospero has much in common with Bacon.

By study, investigation, scientific research, man acquires great power over nature. Bacon seeks just such a magic book, a magic wand. He rejects sorcery only because it is false. He is inclined to call the technical power man obtains from science a new magic. Via a singular academy, Bacon marches towards a utopian Atlanta. Bacon is really a sort of Prospero.

One could almost believe Shakespeare knew of some of Bacon's subtlest ideas. Thus, for instance, it is easy to interpret Ariel as that which Bacon calls "form" and of which we shall speak a little later. Prospero's power over Caliban is at once—power over the lower elements of nature and power over the masses of the people generally and over colonial peoples in particular.

However Prospero is not so much unhappy, as lacking in a desire for happiness, he does not cherish happiness. He does not even wish to bear vengeance to his enemies. He has no wish for any sort of acceptable order to be established on earth. True, he improves and organizes the relations of those that go on living; he is concerned over the fate of his charming daughter Miranda. But he hastens first to cast off power and leave. The world does not seem to merit ruling it. He does not hate the world—he simply knows what it is worth. He is satisfied with the "mirage;"

> . . . These our actors,
> As I foretold you, were all spirits, and
> Are melted into air, into thin air:
> And, like the baseless fabric of this vision,
> The cloud-capp'd towers, the gorgeous palaces,
> The solemn temples, the great globe itself,
> Yea, all which it inherit, shall dissolve,
> And, like this insubstantial pageant faded.
> Leave not a track behind. We are such stuff
> As dreams are made on, and our little life
> Is rounded with a sleep. . . .

This is what Shakespeare's pessimistically-idealist wisdom says.

Having passed through a period of infatuation with the world, the bitterness of struggle against this world, he became to a certain extent reconciled to it, but reconciled only because he was aware of its vanity.

It is good life is not eternal. It is good everything is transitory. It is good there is death. Good there is an end. Under such circumstances one can manage to stay through the performance.

Of course, such a frame of mind is neither a "beginning" nor an "end" of human wisdom. It is a frame of mind of a definite class. It is the great expression of an aristocracy losing caste and turning into a wealthy bourgeoisie and, a representative of the creative serving class at the time when the bourgeosie was in its period of formation, Shakespeare saw no prospects of ever getting away from the avarice, hypocrisy and puritanism of this new class.

The monarchy rising on the basis of these confused relations promised no ray of hope. There was no way out. One could either commit suicide, whine without end about the world being bad or be glad rather than sorry, everything was so unstable.

It was different with our hero—Bacon. There is in his wisdom a note one does not catch in Prospero. Bacon is anxious for the magic book and wand. That requires a tremendous amount of work in cleansing scientific method and scientific attainments.

Bacon is full of a youthful, happy, glistening, naive faith in science. He knows the social order is unjust. He knows a great deal has to be accepted as inevitable. He knows much about many of the evils of this world, but he easily makes his way through them. He is unlike Prospero who gives up his wand of science, his adumbrations of technical power, only because he feels or suspects that "life is—spiritual grief." Bacon forgets about "spiritual grief" and declares: by applying the proper methods we shall find out what nature is and obtain power over it—then we shall see!

(Here the manuscript ends)

Translated from the Russian by S. D. Kogan

Louis Aragon

The Return to Reality

An Impassioned Speech by the Noted French Poet Louis Aragon

"Poetry must have practical truth for its end!"

This aphorism comes from a man who had carried the spirit of romanticism to its extreme consequences, the poet Isidore Ducasse, Comte de Lautréamont.

In less than two years, from 1868 to 1870, from the *Chants de Maldoror* which are the height of expression of romanticism to those *Poésies* by which a sentence of death was passed on romanticism, one and the same man had traversed, within the zone of genius, the path of the most extraordinary contradiction presented to us by the history of poetry.

We are in the epoch when there is already a rent in the imperial mantle of Napoleon the Little. The taste for falsehood, hysteria, dreams, histrionic passions, great sorrows, unreciprocated sentiments, the benumbing dilemmas of romantic love oscillating from the paternal inheritance to the *Mimi Pinsons*, and from *The Lady of the Camelias* to the sighs of *La Paiva*, a future hit at the Folies-Bergère, all that is no longer the sum of the illusions, ambitions and hopes of the sprightly young bourgeois of 1830 who shook thrones in the belief that they would put Liberty in power as firm as a rock, but merely installed the banker Lafitte in the seat of power and believed that they were enthroning human progress, whereas, they were merely playing the game of industrial progress.

No, at this hour when the young Ducasse declared: "The poetry of personality with its relative jugglings and contingent contortions has come to the end of its tether", all the Mauro-Gothic stage scenery of romanticism is already the personal property of the banks and of industry and we are already far from the days when Petrus Borel was imprisoned at Les Andelys. Baudelaire has died oblivious of the moments of exaltation of 1848. Prosper Mérimée, confidant of the empress, Dumas fils, baseness turned comedy, and right up to Gautier, poet turned goldsmith, the aspect of the time is that of submission to money, of a poetry that has been domesticated. The new generation, with Verlaine at that time giving his all to the *Fêtes Galantes*, had not after all any other sunshine than the glitter of wealth. Up above there—the imperial boot!

All this however is on the eve of disappearing; along with the Empire and the haunted cardboard castles, which so ineffectually hid the strong-boxes, there is going to be engulfed in a few months a whole world, a new class is going to rise; from the depths there is already rising the fiery breath of the Commune, strikes are more numerous at La Villette, at Creusot... And it is at this moment that the tranquil voice of Isidore Ducasse pronounces the phrase which has so often been commented upon in our days: "Poetry must be made by all, Not by one."

When the popular Hercules raises the flagstone of rosy marble under which his masters had tried to hide him, when the working class amid the ruins of the imperial brothel makes its formidable entry into history, the clouds which covered social reality dissipate and the hero ceases to be Roland, Charlemagne or the Cid, he becomes the worker of Belleville, the housewife of La Jatte who fired the cannon on the Versaillists and with the

Commune there triumphs in French literature the tendency towards realism which since the Empire had been strengthened by Manet and Courbet, Zola and Valles.

We know how, the bourgeoisie once victorious, this will towards truth which had taken flesh in naturalism turned purely and simply to the woeful art of the Nationale, to the detestable novels of social peace of Zola's last years and to the maniac taste for popular description designed to divert the Marie Antoinettes of the Third Republic.

Nevertheless we must not forget the essential lesson of infant naturalism, when it was still in its corrosive period. Today when the people of France have rediscovered the traditions of 1871, has renewed with the warriors of the factories that alliance which gave birth in Paris to the first proletarian government in history, we must lay claim to all that there was of a deeply subversive nature against the reigning bourgeoisie in the naturalism of that time and that is why with emotion I hail here the recent declaration of André Gide: "I consider the present discredit in which Zola is held to be a monstrous injustice." André Gide of the *Nourritures Terrestres* defending Zola in 1935, that is a sign of extreme importance. André Gide on the eve of the February days draws our attention to the naturalist Zola and there is here one of those apparent contradictions which are characteristic of the forward march of the human spirit, one of those contradictions which we who are the soldiers of this march must strive to understand.

Learning from History

The problem which I want to put before you today is the following: What is there vital in, what can we take from the great creative movements which have preceded us, what is there that can clarify our ideas in the romanticism of the heroic epoch, in the days of the rising bourgeoisie, in the naturalism which leaned upon the first up-shoots of the proletariat? What is there that is vital that we can take from the various movements among the poets and writers since the time of the Paris Commune to our days—our days which are the prelude to a new Arcady exemplified for us in the East with its proclamation of two great slogans which astonish and set us dreaming: Socialist realism and revolutionary romanticism?

I declare here that what there is of vitality in romanticism and in naturalism as in all the poetic and literary movements which followed them consists in the degree of realism which they possessed.

I declare that in all poetry, in all literature, in all cultures, the thing to which today claim must be made by us, by us writers who hear that in the world there are two camps, one of shadow and the other of light and who are for the light against the shadow, is whatever they contained of realism and since we are speaking here of the reconquest of the cultural heritage it must be made clear that it is necessary to take from the works of the men who preceded us precisely that which belongs to the light and that we must neglect the shadows. It is necessary to take the realism and free it from the mysticisms and juggling tricks, the swindling tricks of religion, beauty and pure idea, thanks to which genuine hangmen in flesh and blood managed to become forgotten in a world of clouds.

With whom in fact does realism lie? With the rising class, with the class which has made reality its great business, that which incarnates at the period in question the historic future of humanity.

Today the French bourgeoisie calls M. Chiappe, president of the municipal council of Paris, a great and honest man Has not this bourgeoisie forbidden the people of Paris to celebrate Victor Hugo, that realist who, faced with the degenerate poets of the 18th century, those Abbés Delilles who were doomed to oblivion, cried:

"I have said to the long golden fruit: Away, you are but a pear!"

Yes, Hugo was a realist. A realist, the author of *Les Miserables,* for whom society was not the drawing room which from Madame de Rambouillet onwards pursued an affectation of style which has been dying from Octave Feuillet up to Paul Bourget. A realist, Hugo, who asserts the citizenship of city slang in the language and the right of the Communards to live in France.

Realists too, in their way, all the great poets of France of the 19th and 20th centuries, realists in whatever they have of the imperishable. The symbolists themselves were realists in speech inasmuch as they made current in their writings hundreds of words which the official guardians of literature wished to ban and all the popular words and all the new words of technique, of science. In the dictionary of Plouwers (the pen-name of Verlaine) for the understanding of the symbolist and decadent productions, it is striking to see that apart from some fantastic words the great majority of the words which were then incomprehensible have since become understood by all and are as useful as inventions.

In this period there arose a poet whose figure is not less than that of Shakespeare and Dante in the sphere of the clarification of ideas. I mean Arthur Rimbaud. This Rimbaud who said at that time to his friend Delahaye: "This society itself will pass under the axes, picks and clod-crushers. 'The valleys shall be raised, the mountains shall be brought low, the crooked paths shall be straight and the rough places shall be made smooth.' Fortunes will be abolished and the pride of individuals be destroyed. A man will not be able to say: 'I am more powerful, more rich'. Bitter envy and stupid administration will be replaced by peaceful concord, equality, the labor of all for all." This Rimbaud who was profoundly realist in poetry, he who, after Hugo, carried the objects of every day furthest into poetry. he who

. . . loved not God but men in black blouses
Whom he watched return to thick-set houses
Under evening's saffron light. . .

With Rimbaud there enters into poetry on *Le Bateau Ivre* all the production of modern society, the immense burden of the modern which we are to see used as the adornment of all lyricism after thirty years, in the days of Apollinaire, the days of imperialism. The classic nymphs find themselves joined in the disdain of the poets by all the personages who posed on top of the clocks of romanticism. And it matters little that silence and flight from reality were the bounds within which a world and the hatred he had for it confined the rebel Rimbaud. The lesson of Rimbaud's modernism is a lesson in realism even beyond his genius, his life, his poems.

The 20th century saw for the first time the realisation of the partition of the world. No one can remain in the illusion of being able to escape from this world. Rimbaud's refuge, Harrar, is today the field of operation of Italian armies. At no other time perhaps have poets had to such a degree the taste for invention, for novelty. The fact is that at this very period the means of production of men have been so profoundly transformed that novelty it-

self takes on a new countenance. The machine has entered into art. The poster, the advertisement have become poems. The "seer," according to Rimbaud, is in rivalry with the cardsharper of the markets, the publicity agent, the radio loud-speaker, the refrain of the Metro tunnels: "Dubo. . . Dubon. . .Dubonnet." In a world made mad by capitalist production it is realism alone that gives worth to the sinister humor of an Alfred Jarry, the lyricism of Guillaume Apollinaire. And the latter, ambushed by the ignoble idealisation of the war and the interests of capital, has been dead from the days when he lost his footing in the new reality and gave himself up to academic floral games like the *Chant de l'Honneur* with which the *Calligrammes* conclude.

From a Personal Experience

Towards the end of the war, while Apollinaire was rolling into the tricolor gutter, there was born literary cubism, the master of which, Pierre Reverdy, was to become a catholic in the fashion of the post-war period. One can affirm of literary cubism, the name of which I at that time made use of, that it was essentially a reactionary movement in poetry, regressive in vocabulary, a brake upon all thought; the reality of every day had disappeared from it, this reality which included Verdun and the Chemin des Dames, and, paraphrasing a saying of Apollinaire on pictorial cubism, this was probably one of the reasons for its success in good society. I claim the merit of having been among those who gave this abominable sardine tin a hearty kick—with a reservation of respect for some fine poems—and here I want to speak of Dada.

It is not that I wish to present here the Dada explosion of denial as a step towards realism. But the cubist corset burst about 1919; the demi-conscious Hegelians who escaped from it were caught up by life and its contradictions. Incapable of understanding the sense of them, they could not attain social reality.

Surrealism, inasmuch as it had legitimacy, was a desperate attempt to pass beyond the negation of Dada and to reconstruct, beyond it, a new reality. An idealist attitude which went towards reality instead of departing therefrom and which contained its own condemnation: the surrealists themselves pronounced it the day they proclaimed themselves materialists. This meant putting the surrealist, Hegelian dialectic on its feet. They were not able to accept Marxism except with their lips; they did not in any way change their methods. More than that, they claimed to add to Marxism (as well as themselves and their poetic luggage) the theories of Freud, to join Freud's theories to Marxism, and that apart from any economic and social considerations. Let it be understood that I am speaking here of a group to which I belonged for it possesses to the point of caricature the essential characteristics of the culture bearers of our country.

Nevertheless it must be emphasized with vigor and against the surrealists themselves that what is vital in their works, as in the works of all those who have more or less approached them and more or less followed them is not the dream and the folly which glitter there but the translation, done with all the violence of youth, of the reality of their times, that which no one had described and the socially revolutionary aspect—with all the confusions you please—of that. But their incapacity to become logical materialists and therefore to walk on the firm earth of reality led them into the same impasse in which Lautréamont-Ducasse found romanticism at the end of the

Second Empire and almost every word of Isidore Ducasse in the *Poésies* against the romantics is a brilliant denunciation of their position today. I who have left their ranks will make use against them on my own account of his very words:

"There are low writers, dangerous buffoons, motley clowns, sombre mystificators, real lunatics who ought to be in Bicêtre. Their idiotic heads, from which there are tiles missing, create gigantic phantoms which descend instead of rising. Filthy exercises; specious gymnastics. Grotesque conjuring tricks. Please get out of my presence, you who make by the dozen forbidden puns in which I did not earlier see at first glance as I do today the frivolous trickery."

I will make use once more of his masterly condemnation of the romantic pessimism of which they are today the continuators:

"The poetic lamentations of this century are but sophism. . . . There is a tacit convention between the author and the reader by virtue of which the first proclaims himself sick and takes the second as a nurse. It is the poet who consoles humanity! The parts have been wilfully interchanged."

It is time to finish with this "Have-you-seen-what's-the-matter-with-me?" style of sorrowful writing, these individual or collective hallucinations, the freedom given to the subconscious over sight, hearing, smell, taste and touch, sexuality as a system and delirium as representation, it is time to finish with the baroque, the *style moderne* and the flea fairs which are the supreme resources of wordly ennui and the pessimism of the pleasures. It is time to finish with the false heroism, the gentle knock of purity, the tinsel of a poetry which more and more takes its elements from aurores boreales, agates, the statues of parks, the parks of country mansions, the country mansions of bibliophile squires and no longer into where were thrown the dismembered bodies of insurgents, the mud in which there flowed the very real blood of Varlin, Liebknecht, Wallisch, Vuillemin.

I proclaim here the return to reality. Enough of games, enough of day dreams, to the kennels with your phantasies, diurnal and nocturnal! Do you not see whither you are being led by this liberty of experience which you complacently claim? Are there not those among you who have ended by loving "experience" so much that they have seen even in the torture chambers of the Nazis, in the Hitler rods and axes, interesting accessories of vice, human values after all? You have not the courage to sweep all that away, to render it justice, because in your unfortunate heads you carry contradictions which are like contrary winds. You seek an excuse in the socialist future, do you believe that it will understand you better than the present and its combats? Tremble then at the idea of appearing before the eyes of the future with your "erotic objects" and your little society games in the style of Marinetti who is also an experimenter, according to whom boredom is the world's great ill and who organizes the pleasures of the masters of bleeding Italy, offering them trick-chairs, stinking bowls and a petrol cookery worthy of Mussolini fascism!

I proclaim here the return to reality. It is necessary that on all hands the poets should break with the dead weight of the phantasmagory in which they are taking their ease. I bring forward here before them the example of the futurist Mayakovski. He was able to tear himself from this very road which led His Excellency Signor Marinetti to the height of favor with the fascists and throw himself into the river of reality, into the red stream of history. The futurist Mayakovski in his first poems distinguished himself from the

futurist Marinetti, from the futurist Apollinaire, by the realism which was the worth of Villon, of Hugo, of Rimbaud and which formed itself from the year 1915 in the protest of "Cloud in Pantaloons":

Strumming a rhythm, they stew up
From loves and nightingales some sort of broth
But the street twists tongueless
Has nothing to shout or to say!

I proclaim the return to reality. And there is reason to laugh at the scorn of those who make clouds for the "meannesses" of social reality and their horror of "subjects" in poetry, these people who are inspired by a woman or by the flight of time, but who oppose all their abstract forces against the installation of the new world in poems. If one were to listen to the adherents of pure poetry, the USSR would have no citizen rights in the verse from which Rome and Sparta have been exiled and see how they kick up a fuss if they find between the folded pages a political slogan! More than anything else, that puts them beyond themselves, this reality it is that throws them into convulsions. Ah! they did not struggle of late against this horror when in their own poems there were inscribed the slogans of commerce and industry, the set phrases of the poster and the advertisement! *Every elegant woman is a client of Printemps!*—O. K.! But you must not shout in verse: "Bread and work!"

I proclaim the return to reality and that is the lesson of Mayakovski, all of whose poetry derives from the real conditions of the Revolution. The lesson of Mayakovski fighting against lice, ignorance and tuberculasis. Of Mayakovski "the agitator," "the loud-speaker-in-chief" and that not only then in the hours of the Civil War but here, today when the conditions of the World Revolution are being realised!

I proclaim the return to reality. This I say and who then will oppose me, if not those who have a vested interest in reality, who want to hide it from us? At a time when the bourgeois is abandoning all that there was of the light in the program of its youth, when in order to preserve its bloody domination it is throwing aside its former mask of liberalism and burns its parliaments and with its own hands breaks its machines, at the hour when its Counts de La Rocque, its Lussatzs and its Carbones are the defenders of new Bastilles it can no longer suffer the thunder of reality, the very idea of reality. It needs now a stage setting similar to that grotesque Mystery of the Passion which on the square in front of the cathedral of Notre Dame conceals the police headquarters. We who are the allies of the revolutionary proletariat, its comrades in arms, have the duty of flinging to the winds this deception, we expect everything from reality's denunciations. We have nothing to hide and that is why we hail as a word of joy the slogan of Soviet literature: Socialist realism.

Socialist realism or revolutionary romanticism: two words for one thing, and here meet the Zola of *Germinal* and the Hugo of *Châtiments*. To bring about this synthesis there was necessary the route of capital and the victory of socialist economy on a sixth of the globe. The proletariat in power has nothing to hide; it is rich in all human truth. It has no need of lies, it can afford to look at reality. This reality no longer makes those little deductions from the pay sheet the consideration of which might be so disturbing for those who make them, in the Soviet Union there is no longer any need for curtains to conceal the shares and dividends, to hide from those who are

martyred by toil the true links which join their hell with that earthly paradise over the gates of which there is written (just like the gates of a casino):

WORKERS NOT ALLOWED HERE

In the Soviet Union culture is no longer a glittering thing from on high, is not the business of a few, but is born from all, comes from the earth and bathes and transfigures everything—labour and the most everybody affairs. Because there today as here tomorrow, when we have learned to follow that example, miracles are no longer in the church windows but in the streets and the fields, in the hands of living people, the toilers.

I proclaim the return to reality in the name of this reality which has arisen over a sixth of the globe, in the name of the man who was the first to foresee it and who in the spring of 1845 in Brussels wrote:

"The philosophers have only *interpreted* the world in various ways; the point however is to *change* it."

Translated from the French by H. O. Whyte

Nik Ardens

Tolstoi and Humanism

A quarter of a century has passed already since the death of Leo Tolstoi. Great events have been inscribed in the annals of this period.

The scale of these events is so grandiose and they themselves are so rich in social experience that they afford a huge amount of material for a comparison of the achievements of the socialist culture of the USSR with that cultural condition in which the capitalist world finds itself. They allow us in the light of the economic and cultural difficulties which have already been overcome to appraise and recomprehend all the great problems of life over which so many pen points were broken by the old, bankrupt, idealistic philosophy.

One of the most essential problems of culture is the problem of personality. How did the culture of the past decide this problem, how did it define the place of a man among other men, his interests, rights and duties, how did it understand care for him, the creator of life, the citizen of the present and the builder of the future—on this set of questions the humanists of all countries including Leo Tolstoi engaged themselves.

Their conceptions of humanity led them in the end to the idea of the so-called "liberation" of man.

To speak of writers only, this "liberation" was widely prophesied by the humanitarian plans of Dickens and Victor Hugo, Byron and Schiller, George Sand and Dostoeyevski... Tolstoi, too, on the theme of liberation wrote almost fifty thousand printed pages, beginning with *Childhood* and finishing with the *Efficacious Remedy* written just before his death.

It would be wrong to deny the role played by these singers of mercy at a definite stage of the development of world culture. In the century of the militarization of Europe, in the century of the maturing of large-scale industry and the formation of the barefaced "ethics" of exploitation by the minority, the great productions of these classics of "right and equity" acquired a certain "humanising" significance. They "softened manners," they were in their way a hindrance to the arbitrariness of the capitalists, they in some measure set the laboring man in opposition to the oppressor.

In the course of the long centuries of the growth of human inequality, first feudal-aristocratic and then bourgeois-capitalist, the literature of elegant protest spawned such writers, beginning with Petrarch, Boccaccio and the other Italian humanists and closing with those names of the 19th and 20th centuries which are near to us; to this day certain circles of the bourgeoisie punctually clip the coupons from the shares of humanism, to this day the incantations of the mighty dead are respectfully listened to.

But at the same time it becomes more than clear to us who are witnesses of and participants in the accumulation of great new funds of knowledge about man (and particularly of socially renovated man) how limited and melodramatic was the role of these mouthpieces of "goodness" who so touchingly believed in an eternal dawn and a never-setting sun. More than that, it becomes clearer to all honorably thinking men how reactionary was the effect of such preachings in the conditions of those days.

Emerging from the most sensitive core of the ruling classes and venturing out upon unfamiliar paths, the humanist literature of the old world never

understood and always feared the revolution of the masses of workers and peasants, it was never with them to the end and could not be so, but always in cases when the matter went as far as real help to them hid itself in the dark corners of churches of parliaments and quoted artful Gospel verses or uttered majestic summonses to "moderation" or "moral self-knowledge." It wrote a play with thousands of acts—and no denouement!

Even the best representatives of the ruling classes avoided the *real roads to liberation* and thanks to their class nature (which was alien to the popular masses) thought of man in abstraction from the historical development of the class struggle; they built a staircase to the clouds and from the heights thus achieved sat dreaming until the harsh touch of reality brought them to earth.

According to Victor Hugo, "man in the clouds" feels at home. It seems to him so natural to plunge into the blue sky and see the constellations at his feet. "To be a repository of dreams—that is one of man's talents."

Actually such naive summonses to the oppressors of man are to be found in all genuine mourners over the sorrows of the people and Tolstoi in his numerous articles from 1880-1910 furnishes but another example of the traditional theme concerning loving and all-reconciling division of earthly goods between rich and poor, between landlord and peasant, between banker and worker... And if we compare all the passionate expressions of a desire for equality made by the humanist writers who struggled in the name of the liberation of humanity, and contrast these expressions with the insignificant practical results of their excessively great creative work, we shall see clearly the whole terrible picture of their helplessness.

History has bitterly contradicted the theory of the liberation of "humanity" without the liberation from class oppression of the mass of the toilers. The zealots of pan-humanist liberation programmes supposedly able to rid the earth of every class difference did not understand this and did not see how the tyrants they hated merely laughted at ther "melodies of love" and continued to carry on their affairs under cover of these very melodies.

II

The real prerequisites for the liberation of society and the individual were first made clear by revolutionary Marxism, which revealed the masquerade of bourgeois humanism. Marxism understood that the efforts of bourgeois humanism to liberate man objectively led only to the maintenance of personality in the abolition of classes, that path which was later followed by the Russian proletariat under the leadership of Lenin.

This, naturally, made still sharper the great world-wide dispute over the questions "What is to be done?" and "Where to begin?" and one of the disputants was the unchangeably-passionate Leo Tolstoi.

Thoughts of "man" were daily work for Tolstoi. Beginning with his youthful diaries and finishing with the last lines he wrote and the last words he uttered "man" is the one theme which can be traced throughout the whole of his creative life.

If Dostoyevski's mysticism arose out of the conception "god," when Tolstoi was tormented by man and for the sake of this man he wrote his novels, tales and flaming articles, for his sake he broke from the whole environment in which he had been reared, for his sake he doomed himself to tragic solitariness in his own family and, what was still more tragic, amongst men.

As early as *Childhood, Boyhood and Youth,* Nikolenka Irtenyev asserted

that "man is designed for moral perfection and this perfection is easy, possible and lasting."

The view of man thus formulated at the beginning of his career Tolstoi carried to the very grave, complicating and burdening it in middle life with his doctrine of "non-resistance to evil."

On the perfectibility of men in his own days the great humanist Tolstoi thought and dreamed with tensity. Only in perfection did he see liberation.

Around him he saw the amazing poverty and suffering of the oppressed exploited workers and the peasant masses. And to them with all the force of conviction he said: It is necessary to perfect yourselves and this perfecting is "easy" and "lasting."

He became a witness of the bloody arbitrariness of tsarist and ecclesiastical Russia, its unbounded mockery of the toiling people, terms of exile, death sentences, imprisonments. . . . "And I say unto you: resist not evil by force" he repeated at all the decisive moments of his life as he looked at these repressions and these outrages.

He as no one else did knew the habits of the "ruling classes." With what merciless contempt he filled those lines of his dedicated to the lives of exploiters of all sorts!

They have

"the beastily perverted appetites of luxury," they are people who calmly suck the best blood of the people in order to buy silk, velvets and brilliants for their wives or their mistresses." "To these people the welfare of the dogs running after their carriages is dearer than the welfare of the workers and peasants who plough for them and mine ore for them."

"What a filthy government we have!"—how often does he exclaim in his family circle where he incessantly remembered the misdeeds of all sorts of Pobedonostsevs and Stolipins.

Nicholas II and Stolipin were in his opinion the ones chiefly guilty for the terror in Russia. "Our attitude to the tsar should be our attitude to a murderer. There is no need for special tenderness" we read in his notebook (unpublished) for 1904.

With the tremendous power of a realist he unmasked the contemporary reality of aristocratic-bourgeois society. Village poverty and ignorance together with city slums, dirt and hunger (numerous impressions of Moscow life beginning with his participation in the census of 1882) all this was classified by him as a direct product of the exploiters' system of life. "The courts are only an administrative weapon for the support of the existing order of things, as convenient to our class," he announced for instance, etc., etc.

But though he thus effectively unmasked all these tricks of the officials, merchants, priests, generals, landowners and others for stupefying and duping the exploited masses, Tolstoi offered them if they came under his protection the same utopian means of liberation from the tyranny of the plundering minority as all the humanists of past ages, a means oriented on all "humanity." This means, dogmatised with the aid of Gospel texts, consisted in this; that all the hundreds of millions of laboring folk should somehow suddenly cease to serve the factory owners, landowners and militarists; simply ignore their "power," thus realising the command "not to resist evil!" Inimitable, unsurpassable realism in the portrayal and delineating of the rotten reality of imperialism Tolstoi crowned with utopianism in the matter of overcoming that reality. Earthy, sweaty, dusty, his hands marked by the labor of plough and awl, Tolstoi nevertheless departed from the earth alto-

gether when it was necessary to move from words to deeds. Though he expended so much passion, so much sincere scorn on the gentlemen who exploited and harried the workers and peasants, Tolstoi gave advice that was unimpassioned and unearthly; throw the millions of rifles into the marshes, replough the millions of acres of land for your own use, cease to work for the manufacturers. Objectively this advice sounded almost ridiculous. And this sincerity of thought so grandiose in its sweep and in its confusion, becomes understandable only in the light of Lenin's appraisal of Tolstoyan views as reflecting the "moods of primitive peasant democracy" and as ripening in the conditions of the peasant bourgeois revolution.

The last ten years of Tolstoi's life disclosed with special forces all the tragic futility of these "super-individualist" views which he had suffered and sustained. His protests against the arbitrary mockeries of the Russian rulers, his polemics with the most varied groupings of Russian "society"; finally his personal family situation among his relatives and friends at Yasnaya Polyana —all this was a knot of contradictions unparalleled until then in the biographies of the great writers of all lands. This is that burden of a great man which in the years before his death so tragically hindered his march. The volume of Tolstoi's contradictions was increased by the complicated nature of his personality. Maxim Gorki truly said that. "Leo Tolstoi was the most complicated man among all the great people of the 19th century."

On the eve of the long-awaited "overthrow of the present order," i.e., in approximately the last ten years of his life, Tolstoi the thinker became particularly well-defined in the growth of his views with all their contradictions which were, as Lenin observed,

"a reflection of all those most highly complicated, contradictory conditions, social influences, historical traditions, which shaped the psychology of various classes and various sections of Russian society in the post-Reform but ante-Revolutionary period."

The aristocrat Tolstoi, long ago having appraised and depicted artistically the whole picture of the crisis of his class, having long left his class, having eagerly gone hither and thither in search of paths of salvation, none the less stubbornly continued to stand on the further side of the rural hedge. From the manor house he went out to the patriarchal peasant's courtyard and his former property philosophy was exchanged for rural anarchism and the same old village religion (resting on "nature.") That force which in the course of centuries had with its juices fed his noble patrimony—the village —continued in his conceptions to be the only force mighty enough to save his soul and with its aid he decided to oppose the whole bourgeois city culture, the whole aristocratic bureaucracy, and the whole governmental and military cabal which he hated.

Lenin wrote:

"His unmasking of capitalism, which was tireless and full of the deepest feeling and the most flaming anger, conveys all the horror of the patriarchal peasant, upon whom there had begun to approach a new, invisible, incomprehensible enemy coming from somewhere or other from the city or from abroad and destroying all the 'bases' of everyday village life, bringing with it unheard of destruction."

And when there came the Revolution of 1905, he did not simply condemn the killings on both sides; no, in the smoke of the cannon, he tried to review the inner significance and the ultimate aim of the killing.

But—what a disunity in the appraisal of the historic events that had taken

place! Tolstoi, thanks to his lacking a dialectic point of view, overlooked in 1905 that historic line of development which in 1917 led to the real liberation of the toiling people from all sorts of "Nikolais, Wittes, Antonis, Suvorins" and suchlike hateful representatives of the "ruling classes."

Here is the ideal of Tolstoi as expressed by him in the article "On the Existing Order:"

> "The competitive system must cease to exist and must be replaced by the communist system; the capitalist system must cease to exist and must be replaced by the socialist; the militarist system must cease to exist and must be replaced by a system of disarmament and arbitration; the separatism of narrow nationalism must cease to exist and must be replaced by cosmopolitanism and general brotherhood; all religious superstition must cease to exist and must be replaced by rational, religious, moral consciousness; all kinds of despotism must cease to exist and must be replaced by freedom; in a word, force must cease to exist and must be replaced by the free and loving unity of men."

Thus depicting the mighty future, Tolstoi when the business afoot is its realization gives himself up as a sacrifice to the shades of the past and in answer to the brassy summons of history brings forwards his *transcensus,* an extra-historical conception of "religious consciousness." Thinking of the living people who were groaning at his doorstep and impetuously dreaming of their liberation, he like Hugo and the other humanists offers instead of health-giving medicines the most ancient drugs for embalming corpses, while on the path to Communism i.e., to the liberation of mankind there stand obstacles which cannot be destroyed at all with the aid of amulets, however high-minded the charming of the great exponents of this sort of witchcraft.

III

The October Revolution might have demonstrated to Tolstoi the reality of the path to the liberation of humanity which he had so stubbornly disputed. He might have convinced himself of this as did his admirer of old times, Romain Rolland, and other masters of culture.

In the period of the late destruction of peoples from 1914 to 1918, Romain Rolland, remaining "above the struggle," following Tolstoi and inheriting his fearlessness and straightness, also showed himself (in the expression of Henri Barbusse) a "solitary rebel" in the struggle against a war of hitherto unseen proportions. He applauded human reason and conscience and called on all the supernatural powers to the aid of "right and equity" which were being trampled upon. The Tolstoyan "think better of it!" and "control yourselves!" were again and again repeated with new faith. It seemed that through his lips Tolstoi was gaining some sort of realization of his preachings.

But there soon came the hour of recovery of sight. A sixth part of the earth cleaned itself of the fogs of centuries and men with unheard of trials and effort began to build there a new socialist life.

Rolland saw it already clothed in flesh and, defeated by facts, began to doubt his old humanist principles.

As a thinker and writer, to whom truth was dearer than Plato, he pronounced:

"Russian thought is the advanceguard of world thought." "New times, new ways and new hopes! Russian brothers, your revolution shall awaken our Europe, which has been lulled to sleep by proud memories of its past revolutions. March on! We shall follow you!"

And he followed with a bold glance to the future.

On the basis of Rolland's example it would be possible to make tempting suppositions about Tolstoi too, but we will refrain from this. Moreover we can already make more certain deductions with regard to that "spiritual cause" which was so devotedly served by Tolstoi and Rolland and for the sake of which they so generously expended their talent in anger and protest. And in making these deductions we have the aid of Rolland.

The humanism of the old world, the humanism of the pre-Lenin epoch is exhausted. The soil from which its springs trickled has become impoverished, is drying up and will be blown away by the winds of history.

This humanism, now hypocritical, now helpless, in capitalist conditions could only serve and did serve only a selected minority; it sweetened and decorated the culture of the ruling classes with all its seekings after God (so symbolically consummated at present by fascism); it did not liberate and could not liberate humanity from the inhuman conditions of life under the pressure of tremendous inequality. And however benevolent and at times even revolutionary the role it played in the "human comedy" and whatever useful fruits for men may have grown from this historic manure—none the less it was doomed to failure.

And Leo Tolstoi, this fanatic of love for man, did not escape the fate of his forerunners. He turned out to be outside the real struggle for the liberation of humanity. Knowing for certain that "Carthage must be destroyed" he wanted to convince the gentlemen of "Carthage" that they should "think better of it" and "control themselves." The "Carthaginians" did not heed his warnings and rejected the Yasnaya Polyana doctrines.

A different fate awaited the summonses of R. Rolland. His experience of life drawn from the struggle of the Russian proletariat for its liberation has made him a genuine friend of toiling man and one of the singers of the humanism of the new world.

Socialist humanism promises mankind an unhypocritical liberation of personality. From "man" it forms a classless, i.e., a genuinely free society.

"Socialism cannot turn away its attention from individual interests. Only socialist society can give the fullest satisfaction to these personal interests. More than that—socialist society represents the unique firm guarantee of the defence of the interests of the personality. . . " said J. Stalin to Wells. This is the thesis of that class which has overcome all outer obstacles and is now overcoming all "inner" hardships on the road to the Communist brotherhood of peoples, the class which with unprecedented tensity, cutting through superstition, deprivation of individuality and sloth, is nurturing man with a consciousness of his purpose in life, his individuality and usefulness.

In Russia we no longer have "extra" people. We are needed for life. We praise life and life praises us.

"Of all the precious capitals in the world, the most precious and the most decisive capital is people" (J. Stalin, speech at the graduation of Red Army students, May 4, 1935), and that is the first and last commandment of Soviet humanism, in continuation of the thought of Marx: "the root of man is man himself," a genuine Habeas Corpus Act of the new socialist world which has conquered within itself and in its outer—international—relations the misanthropic morale of the bourgeoisie.

The most important significance of this form is that it grew out of life, out of historic convulsions and therefore it lives in the visible world and not only in literature; it lives along with all the deeds and works uniting the proletarians of all lands.

LETTERS and DOCUMENTS

André Malraux

LET THEM KNOW

Preface to the Book by Andrée Viollis, INDOCHINA SOS

I think there are few novelists of our time who have not prowled around volumes made up of *reportages,* who have not felt that here was the beginning of a new form of novel—and who have not quickly enough abandoned their hopes.

And nevertheless *reportage* continues one of the strongest lines of development of the French novel from Balzac to Zola: the intursion of a personage into a world which he discovers for us discovering it for himself.

The *potential* strength of *reportage* is drawn from its necessary refusal of evasion, from the finding of its highest form (just as in novels of Tolstoi) in the possession of the real by intelligence and sensibility and not in creation of a universe which, although also sometimes destined to the apprehension of the real by conscience, is imaginary. If the object of art is to destroy facts, then the reporter is beaten; but when the object is creation by means of the elliptical comparison not of two *words* but of two facts the reporter regains his strength and it is the strength of the cinema regisseur.

Reference to truth, however, is more important in *reportage* than truth itself; it is clear that Albert Londres created his personages from an assemblage of several encounters. But I think that Albert Londres, who was one of the best French reporters, marks the end rather than the beginning of a technique. And what engrosses me in the new journalism, in this book of Andrée Viollis, *Indochina SOS,* in those of Kisch, in some of Ehrenbourg's articles is that *it is no longer personages but things one seeks there.* To reveal, to order, to possess the fatalities which weigh upon as did the novel for psychological fatalities. And when Andrée Viollis shows us the head of the Saigon prison who, patting the cheek of a young Annamite condemned to death, goodnaturedly calls him a "dirty dog", the passage acquires significance only from its context. If there is a great novel here in the raw state, that is because *every new art form implies a will,* that is because *reportage* in France weak to the degree in which it lacks desire. Balzac created the modern novel in giving to each of his principal personages epic dimensions, in giving Grandet, Birotteau, Popinot the intensity which would have been theirs if destiny had attached some Bonaparte to their miserable profession. What gave the novel of those days this effect of "enlargement" of individuals was the penetrating power of exact revelation—and the same power can be given to the facts of *reportage.* All art of writing consists in discovery. With Ehrenbourg and with all the Soviet writers, and as with Kisch, it is revolutionary protest which has crystallised scanty information and created the possibility of a work of art. The plastic inventory of the post-war world, its scenery, has become a mockery ever since we heard the voices of the scene-shifters and sometimes their cries; for the reporter money lies in acquiescence but his talent lies in being truthful and truth lies in refusing to be acquiescent.

I know that one can choose other facts. But they are not in opposition to those given here. A nationalist reporter ought first of all to see that these atrocities are in no way the ransom for the works of France which he defends and that the facts which are given here condemn the confusion between the necessities of colonization (even if one accepts these necessities) and the follies which shelter under its name. Indochina is far away; this permits one to hear but faintly the cries which rise from it. But the present authority of France there, as of all democracy, is in the strength of control. It is singular that people should so lightly suppose that control paralyzes but dictatorship works in a country the most imperious memories of which are those of the army of the Rhine. The strength of a nation is linked but subtly with its mode of government; the France of Napoleon I was great, that of Napoleon III was not; the France of '48 was weak but not that of '91. The control which a living people exercises over itself becomes part of its life. That this control can be established was sufficiently proved for me by the anger roused by the idea which I expressed at Saigon in 1925 of a Supreme Court independent of the Ministry of Colonies and sitting in Paris but it was proved less thoroughly than by the story of the Pasteur Institute the activity of which Andrée Viollis shows in all its heart-stirring efficiency—efficiency because it is independent of the colonial administration. For

the game of the colonial enterprises and of the administration of which they are the moving spirit is to claim for the activity which they exert upon the natives the rigor which the State should exert upon them *and which precisely they refuse to give it.*

As soon as an attempt is made to introduce a justification for this state of affairs, absurdity begins. Those who in answer to Andrée Viollis' questions claim to found colonization upon justice forget that missions for lepers are admirable exactly to the degree in which they do not furnish a justification for the merchant. And it is very simple for the Annamite to answer: when the French build roads and bridges in Indochina let them be paid as is done when they carry out works in Siam or Persia and then let them spend the money they have earned as they think fit. For if those who labor must, in addition to their salary, receive political power it is necessary to have Soviets in France of all who labor, from worker to specialist.

It is too evident that in the domain of liberty there is no colonization at all and in the domain of fact the problem of conquest is a problem of force and colonization a problem of exchange.

I remember you. When you came to look for me, the action of the government had at last stopped the only revolutionary journal of Indochina and the peasants of the Baclieu were being despoiled amid a great and tranquil silence.

For several weeks the police had been hindering the distribution of copies; the Annamite postal employees had none the less kept distribution going; but that day the threats had at last paralyzed our printer.

Nevertheless, our workers came to mend the old presses. The type which we had gone to China to buy had been seized since our return under pretext of customs duty. We had succeeded in getting other type. But the type made in China is English type, without accent marks. The methodical despoilation of the farmers of the South continued and we stood before our mended old presses with unusable type.

You brought out of your pockets a handkerchief tied like a purse with rabbit-ear corners. "It's only the é's... we have *accents aigus, accent graves* and circumflexes. As for the i's, that'll be harder but perhaps we can do without them. Tomorrow many workers will do the same as I and we will bring all the accent marks we can." You opened the handkerchief and emptied on to the stone the jumbled letters and you aligned them with your printer's fingers, without adding a word. You had taken them from the printing shops of the government journals and you knew that if you were discovered you would be condemned not as a revolutionary but as a thief. And when they were all aligned like chessmen you said only: "If I'm condemned, tell them in Europe what we did. Let them know what goes on here."

This book too has been made to let them know... And since it was written the dance of death which it depicts has done no more than change its tempo.

A MEMORABLE SUMMER

The summer of 1935 will always remain a memorable one to me on account of the International Writers Congress which took place in Paris the latter part of June. This was something entirely new: so many creative intellects from so many lands and all corners of the Earth—all united in one front, all determined to "defend culture." In one part of the world enslavement of the spirit prevails. And it had to come to this before we could all see together, before Marxians and bourgeois writers found their profound kinship. Both want a thinking people instead of a society cowed to dumbness.

The enslaved countries believe society will be saved if thought is abolished. All those who gathered in Paris believed that on the contrary, with the abolition of thought a society loses its right to exist. When a society suppresses ideas and violently opposes their realisation, there remains no reason for anyone to feel any inner ties to it. Man is interested in society only to the extent that it realizes ideas. And the right ideas have a remarkable way of coinciding with the improvement of human conditions.

As things now stand, any honest democrat must admit that Marxism furnishes the only premise for real democracy. Anyone seriously religious must see that Socialism is the realisation of his beliefs. On the other hand, triumphant Socialism, now securely in possession of a large section of the globe, must grow conscious of its human mission. Democracy, the political equality of all, is the privilege of strong nations. So long as there will be someone to play the lord economically, and hence also politically, there can be no democracy. Humanism also can be claimed only by such as have a secure people behind them. The facts of life which have proved the truth and justice of this make it possible to be humanly and healthily magnanimous.

That was why the participants from the Soviet Union and the participants from capitalist countries found themselves able to speak one or an allied language at the Congress. Others, particularly Germans, learnt it under the shameful pressure that is degrad-

ing their country. The multitudinous audiences understand both and honored them for their struggle regardless of how matters stood here or there. The thing is, to be understood by many, nay by all men, to serve as an example to them. The Congress of Writers, the first to be held publicy, gave new courage to an untold number of people.

Humanists are worth their salt only if besides thinking they also know how to lend a hand. Henri Barbusse whose last deed on earth was the organising and calling of the Paris Congress in June 1935 was a fighter and—that is what we should all be. He knew the value of reality as a weapon for spiritual ends and of power. I also published my novel *Youth of King Henri IV* towards the end of the summer 1935. In this novel the Humanists of the 16th century are shown as knowing how to ride and fight. They had a prince in France who was a prince of the poor and oppressed as well as a prince of thinkers. Young Henry at any rate experienced life as an average man.

I made a series of pictures and scenes out of his adventurers, deeds and sufferings that make good reading. They all aim to show that wickedness and horror can be conquered by fighters whom misfortune had taught how to think and by thinkers who have learned to ride a horse and fight. They came out stronger even after the St. Bartholome massacre. I also only got the strength to write a book about a king who was most human because he had suffered most, only, after I had lived through some hard struggles. This book appeared in the summer of 1935 and also contributed towards making this summer a memorable one to me.

HEINRICH MANN

TO THE YOUNG PEOPLE OF THE USSR ON SEND'NG THEM MY NOUVELLES NOURRITURES

Comrades of the New Russia, you whom an immense effort has carried through blood and tears so far ahead, you, representative of a people which was long overburdened, have now at one bound outstripped us on that glorious road upon which humanity has set forth and upon which so many peoples are anxiously striving to catch up to you you thanks to whom my heart swells once more with hope—it is towards you that I turn on the completion of this little book which I am sending you today as a fraternal message.

Les Nouvelles Nourritures is a belated reply to the *Nourritures Terrastres* which I wrote forty years ago almost at the beginning of my career. This book, which in the course of time was fated to exercise a liberating influence upon youth, for long had no reverberation. This return to natural joys, this direct appeal was simply not heard or understood by the generation which was mine. We had at that time excellent and even some admirable poets; but the symbolists who surrounded me had gone perilously far away from life. They were unaware of this; so much was this so that it was the spontaneity of my book which seemed to them artificial. The book came too early. In twenty years it had no more than exactly five hundred readers. But it is the book of mine which is most read today. I wrote for the generation to come, the generation which is now rushing into life. For long I spoke in the desert. Not one of my books until the present has known immediate success. This forces me to think that often in the USSR the need for prompt communion with a great number of readers leads you to disregard (but perhaps I am mistaken) certain virtues of qualities which I shall call: virtues of expectation. It happens that authors who are fore-runners give answer to future questions, to questions which have not yet been asked. Today disdains them; they have tomorrow. Between the present and following generations they make a bridge and maintain that secret continuity which must always be one of the most important functions, although an often unknown one, of literature.

Many urgent questions which appear to be of first importance will soon have no more than a historic interest. I am thinking for instance of the struggle against the kulaks which furnished Russian literature with such a fertile theme. I am thinking of the class struggle which is anguishing for us and for all the backward countries. What makes Sholokhov's book admirable and will enable it to last is not at all the powerful depiction of the momentary struggle but rather the profoundly human quality of all the passions which therein confront each other. Every new conquest (in the sciences as well as in letters) is at once followed by a relaxation of the spirit; man starts thinking of repose and comfort. What is no more than a step on the endless staircase which he climbs seems to him a great plain where he can install himself in indolence and be a tease. So I cry from out of the West: Do not relax, young forces of the new Russia! Remember that our anxious gaze is fixed on you and that you must remain for us an *example*. Be vigilant, even after victory. Do not rest on your laurels. Many pages of my book are addressed only to those who are still fighting, not to you who have already triumphed. But every man has something within himself to fight and the combat will always go on between the burden of inert matter and the exulting of the spirit, between the invitation to sloth and the exigency of ardor.

ANDRE GIDE

CHRONICLE

EVGENI BRAUDO ADVENTURES OF A SOVIET MUSICAL MAN

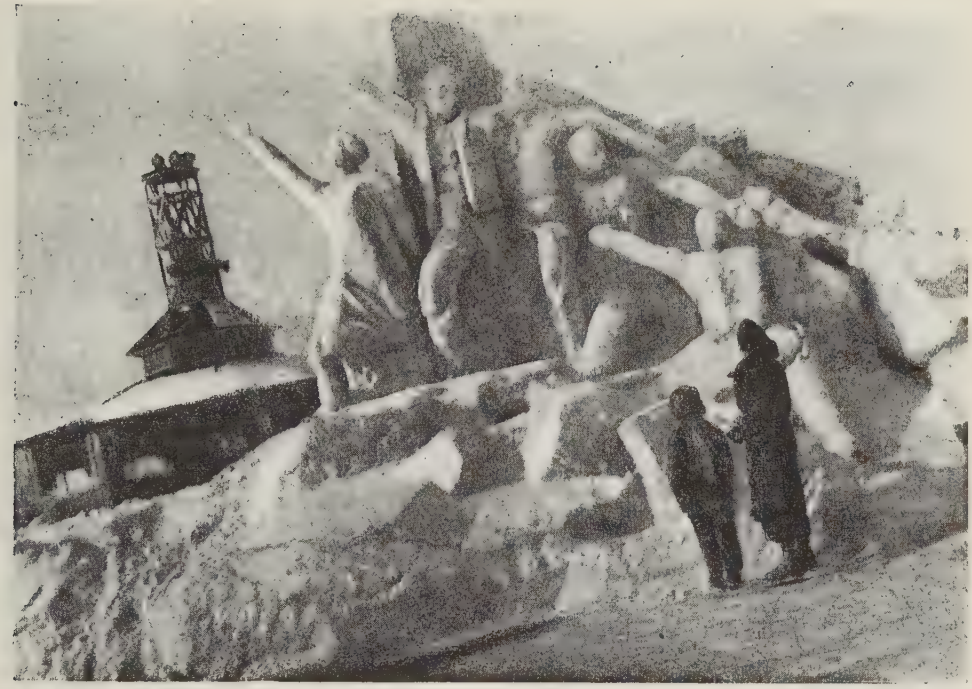
From Letters to a Friend

My Dear Friend: As you see I am faithful to my promise to let you know all the news in the life of a Soviet musical man. You are probably expecting something about the results of my work on the investigation of the Chaikovski manuscripts at the splendid museum house which is named after him. That can wait till next time. Today I want to tell you about an unusual adventure that happened to me as the result of the activities of the *Krestyanskaya Gazeta (Peasant Newspaper)*. You know that this newspaper, which has an enormous circulation not only for its regular issues but also for the sheets put out by its travelling brigades at various local points in the countryside, keeps up connection with the masses of collective farmers through cultural and educational work. On its initiative there has been organised in the Volokolamsk district (roughly 160 kilometers from Moscow) a series of lectures on various questions of science and culture. One day I had a phone call from a member of the staff of this newspaper, Comrade Rosenberg, who asked if he could see me. From our preliminary conversation I understood that the business in hand was the invitation of me as a lecturer to one of the collective farms in which the newspaper is specially interested. I, it is true, did not altogether understand in what way I could be useful to the newspaper with my qualifications. When the comrade put before me the plan of lectures on different questions of science and culture organised by the newspaper among the peasants on the collective farms I was not a little astonished to find that among the subjects of knowledge necessary to a collective farm shock-worker there was included the history of music. I seriously doubted whether the two-hour lecture which was proposed in the negotiations would be heard by the collective farmers with even the minimum of attention. The proposal, however, was so unusual and so tempting that I decided, notwithstanding the severe winter cold, to go, to the Volokolamsk district which was unknown to me.

Early in the morning we left Moscow and by noon, along with a brigade of executants, students of the Moscow Conservatory, we arrived in the town of Volokolamsk, a provincial town still insufficiently involved in the plants of our great construction work. At first glance it seemed to me that it was not here that I should find a live and interested audience. But my companion, a member of the staff of the *Krestyanskaya Gazeta* only smiled and said: "You'll see a different picture altogether in the collective farm." After lunch, we set off for the rest of our journey. A heavy snowstorm had made it impossible to go by car. It was necessary to use *rozvalnis* (wide low sledges used in the Russian countryside) in order to get along the road which was under heavy snowdrifts.

And so, we went off to the collective farm. The end of our journey was 25 kilometers from the station. Our driver related to us lively stories of his work among the collective farmers. The collective farmer, he said, has ceased to be surprised. Tractors and radio sets have ceased to be anything extraordinary in the everyday life of the peasants and on the contrary arouse only a desire to master them and make use of them. Every schoolboy in the countryside knows how to make drawings for a radio set. Among other things, he gave us information about Yaropolets, the collective farm to which we were going. At one time there were here the large estates of the Goncharov family and the important military family of Nikolai's times, the Counts Chernishev. At present in the Goncharov mansion there is a ten-year school. In one of its wings two rooms are kept for Pushkin relics. Here are preserved articles connected with the everyday life of the great poet and books collected by him. You will of course remember that Pushkin's wife, Evgeniya Nikolayevna, was born a Goncharov and that the poet used to be a guest in the house of his wife's relatives.

The Yaropolets collective farm has the use of one of the finest estates of the Moscow province. The former country house of the Chernishevs with its splendid park is now occupied by the school-sanatorium where children are medically treated and given an education at the same time. In the spick-and-span class rooms we saw beautiful sculptural groups done by Italian masters of the 18th century. The children are accomodated in big, spacious rooms. For games and improvised concerts there is the entrance hall which is luxuriously decorated with marble figures and bas-reliefs.



Prisoners of Capital — One of a Series of Sculptures in Ice in Park of Culture and Rest

On learning of the visit of the Moscow professor, the Pioneers of the school had decorated the entrance with placards which charmingly welcomed us. Two girls, of ten to twelve years of age, blushing in sweet confusion, invited us to watch an exhibition of the amateur artistic activity of the school. Happy children declaimed poems by Pushkin and fables by Krilov. Others with genuine and attractive grace danced to the sound of a harmonium. We did not wish to be in debt and hastened to answer with a display of our own art. Talented Mikhail Goldstein, brother of the celebrated Busya Goldstein, performed on the violin some pieces by Schubert, Beethoven and Brahms. The performance was prefaced by me with a short explanation of the part of music in the life of Pioneers and short characterisations of the composers. We were given very warm applause, an ovation of Pioneer greetings shouted in unison.

Having finished our inspection of the amateur artistic activity of the children's sanatorium, we set off on foot for the premises of the Yaropolets school club where there was to take place the lecture organised by the *Krestyanskaya Gazeta* along with the administration of the collective farmers and whole caravans of sledges on which the collective farm children were being taken home from school.

I must confess that I experienced a certain uneasiness which grew as I approached the building where I was to speak. A lecture on the history of music without any sort of artistic performance to serve as an attraction cannot always reckon on a full house even in Moscow. What was my astonishment when at the club entrance I saw a line of sledges and in the hall itself a group of collective farmers who had come from a distance (it turned out that there had gathered representatives of 27 collective farms situated at distances of over 20 kilometers from Yaropolets). Even for those who were to speak, it was difficult to make one's way through the quite big hall of the club .While we were putting the platform in order, a collective farm choir sang some mass songs expressively and clearly. Not for a long time have I been so moved before an appearance as this time. It was a little bit frightening to see before me big placards with all my works on music listed exactly. That laid a big obligation on me. I decided not to lower the level of my lecture and boldly began to put

forward the basic problems of music—the development of folk song and different musical genres, opera, symphony and chamber music. I looked at the clock. It seemed that I had been speaking for an hour and the hall was listening with great attention. To take advantage of attentiveness, however, is not a good thing. I finished my lecture within twenty minutes. All together I had spoken for about two hours. On the proposal of the platform, the collective farmers began to discuss my lecture and it turned out that the audience had a whole lot of critical observations. One of the collective farmers was interested in the question of the origin of music upon which I had not given sufficient enlightenment. Others were interested in the connection between music and labor processes or asked about the origin of lyrical music forms. There was lively interest aroused by the question of the reflection of peasant life in Mussorgski and Chaikovski. Further questions concerned the possibility of organizing a collective farm conservatory and the possibility of publishing a popular history of music for the collective farms. The discussion went on and on. Soon, however, it was time for the musical illustrations. The young executants—singers, violinist, pianist—students of the Moscow Conservatory, mounted the platform. They performed in the main the productions of classic composers and the Russian romantics. They performed with a very high feeling of responsibility to the collective farm audience. After the concert—there once more spoke representatives of different collective farms on the significance of such events. The general opinion was that the systematic organization of such lecture-concerts would have the most beneficial effect on the raising of the level of amateur art in the district. Then—the departure of the guests on their sledges over the crunching snow and under the brilliant light of the moon, to the accompaniment of the sledge bells.

We, the guests from the city, went to have another look at the Pushkin rooms in the school. All the Pushkin relics—books, articles of furniture, embroideries done by his wife—are preserved in fine condition. In the visitors' book I wrote on behalf of the brigade: "On the 97th anniversary of the death of the poet (the lecture took place on this memorable date) the collective farmers of Yaropolets showed great reverence for his memory by listening with warm attention to the best examples of world poetry and music in their collective farm club."

Dear Alexander, I would like in conclusion to ask you a question: Will it be soon that western scholars will begin to undertake journeys like the one I have described? After all, western musical men have great forces at their command and scientific traditions considerably older than ours. With warm wishes.

Yours,
Evgeni.
Distinguished Master of Art,
Prof. E. M. Braudo.

Sergei Prokofieff's Romeo and Juliet

The Soviet musical public took great interest in the first hearing—only a piano performance so far—of the Prokofieff ballet *Romeo and Juliet*. Undoubtedly the approach to classical subjects and the treatment of them in choreographical images will considerably raise the cultural level of the Soviet ballet. What we have heard of the new Prokofieff production gives us a basis for thinking that it will have a tremendous, we would say, a *world-wide artistic significance*. Prokofieff in this new score is different from what we have been accustomed to think him. Simplicity, light and shade, great warmth in the delineation of the characters, especially Romeo and Juliet—such are the main features of the new Prokofieff score, which he played with great mastery on the piano. Legibly realistic strokes give Prokofieff the means to portray the whole situation in which the tragedy unfolds. But there is one strange thing in the treatment of the classic characters by Prokofieff and his librettists, Radlov and Piotrovski. The tragic end of the Shakespearean production has been remov-

Mural *J. C. Orozco*

ed. Juliet drinks not poison but a sleeping draught, Romeo does not stab himself for Friar Laurence knocks the dagger aside. All this is hard to understand, poorly motivated and such an enforced happy ending lowers the impression of the music. Could not Romeo and Juliet in the choreographic treatment make an end of themselves accompanied by as tragically expressive musical phrases as those of Shakespeare? Surely it cannot be the case that such a splendid master as Prokofieff could not find the corresponding colors on his palette? This perplexing point remained unsolved at the first preliminary hearing of a magnificent new production of the Soviet ballet.

Cycle of Lectures on Chaikovski

The organization of a cycle of six lectures on Chaikovski, to be given in the current season by well-known Moscow lecturers, may serve as an example of the great growth in the artistic interests of the mass Moscow audience. Long before the beginning of the cycle all the subscriptions were taken up by workers' organizations of the city of Moscow. The contents of the lectures by no means pander to cheap vulgarization of the creative work of Chaikovski. On the contrary the lectures demand a certain degree of preparation and width of viewpoint on the part of the listener. It is sufficient to point out the titles of the different lectures: "Chaikovski and Folk Song," "Chaikovski the Romantic," "Chaikovski and Russian Poetry," "Chaikovski and Pushkin," "Chaikovski the Symphonist," "Chaikovski and World Poetry." For the cycle there has been made use of a series of new, unpublished documents on Chaikovski's creative work. In connection with the cycle, the Chaikovski Museum House at Klin is organising a special exhibition. The lecturers are Distinguished Master of Art Prof. E. M. Braudo (four lectures) and Prof. S. A. Bugoslavski (two lectures). The lectures will be amply illustrated with music.

Music and Communism

In October the Union of Soviet Composers organised a get-together between Soviet composers and the prominent Czech maestro, Yaromir Weinberger, who is at present in Moscow. Weinberger demonstrated his new symphony, which is not quite finished (there are only sketches for the fourth part). It is, according to the composer, a narrative of an autobiographical character which witnesses to the fact that the leading artists of the West cannot fail to feel that great truth which has been brought forward by Communism. Weinberger's symphony is a link in that anti-fascist and pro-Soviet movement in which the best representatives of Czech

literature and art are at present taking part. The whole plan of the symphony is such that all the reserves of artistically motivated ideas with which it is impregnated reach their culminating expression in the final part for orchestra and choir using words from the "Communist International." A great master of the orchestra and of contrapuntal scoring, Weinberger logically and forcefully leads the whole sound structure of the symphony to this climax. The strongest aspect of the symphony as far as can be judged from the score is its splendid use of orchestral sound, its warmth of expression. Weinberger strives to attain the heights of light and shade in his scoring, sometimes consciously lessening his exploitation of possibilities and at times giving an excessively simplified score delineation. This involves a certain poverty of modulation in the first part, a simplification of structure in the funeral march. On the other hand, there are pages which are simply brilliant in conception and combination of motivated material, such as the scherzo where the author tries to depict that feeling of joy which seizes him on the thought of the triumph of Communism in the land of Soviets and the approaching triumph on a world scale.

EVGENI BRAUDO

Editor-in-chief SERGEI DINAMOV

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Editorial Assistant WALT CARMON