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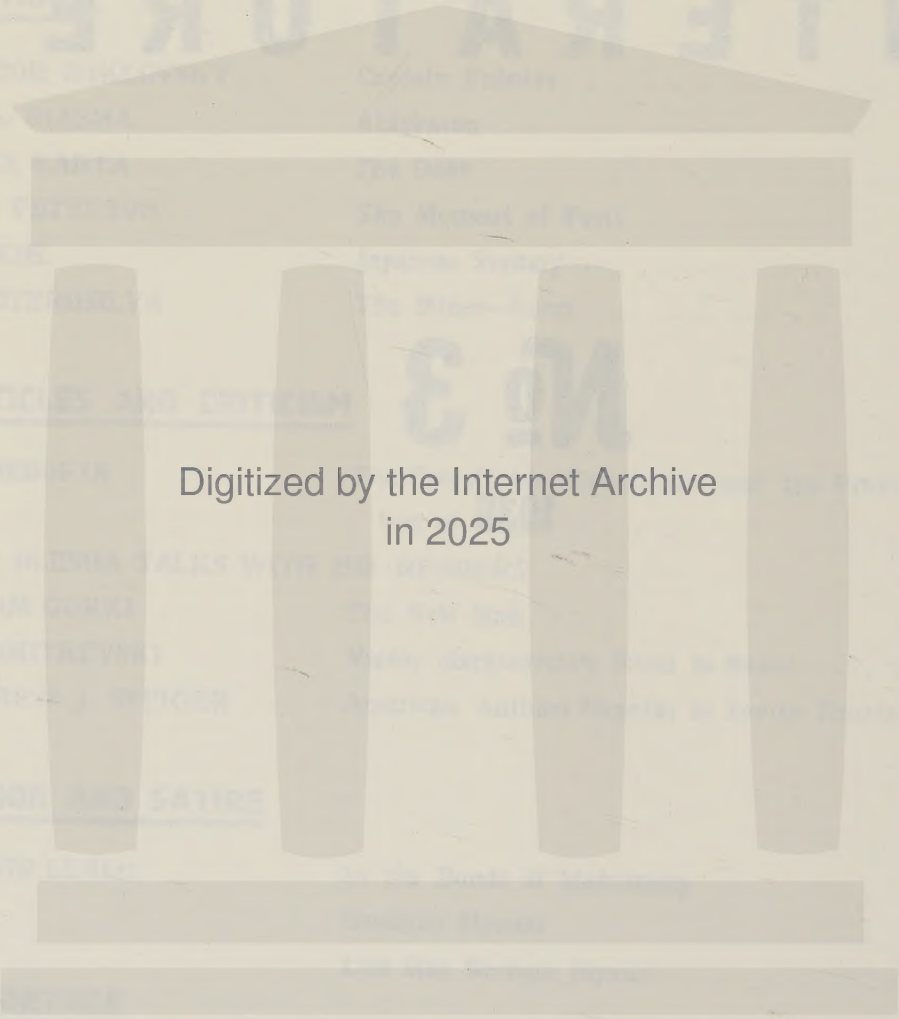

Victor Shklovsky

Captain Fedotov

A Tale

Moscow

Dreary houses of two stories or a story and a half with a mezzanine straggled among endless fences.

Big clouds of dust hung over little houses, over the pierced stone belfries.

Half defaced signs hung at the corners. Here the streets were never swept and the grass was never trodden down.

It was said of old Moscow that it was not a town, but a collection of towns: all that was confined within the ring of boulevards might have been called the capital; the vast *Zemlianoy* resembled a county town, and after that came the little townlets, suburbs, faubourgs, and hamlets.

On the outskirts of Moscow stood houses with fields and orchards, with the overflow of unclean and unhurrying streams.

The Great Fire of 1812 had passed long since, and in the streets there were ever fewer black gaps with glistening charred logs, and what had once been house cellars were now pits thickly overgrown with tall nettles.

Moscow was healing, drawn together by fences, flower-gardens, and vegetable patches.

Pavel Andreivitch Fedotov was born in Moscow in 1815, in the part known as "Kitchen-gardeners."

Here there were few houses with coats-of-arms on the facade, and stone gateways graced with the serene, proud legend:

"Exempt from Billeting."

This meant that the master of the house was a person of importance and that soldiers could not be billeted on him.

For the most part the houses were bright yellow, with green shutters.

Clothes-lines were stretched across the little gardens, and on the clothes-lines hung striped and flowered washing.

Such houses were not exempt from billeting.

Within the houses exempt from billeting stood mahogany furniture upholstered in silk or, at least, chairs with the backs upholstered in other material of the same color.

Within the houses not exempt from billeting stood cane chairs, and in the windows flourished the latest foreign novelty—the geranium. On the wall hung a wooden clock with an ornamented face; in the space between the two windows stood a card-table, the top leaf of which was warped; by the door—a tall cupboard painted in imitation mahagony; on top of the cupboard—rabbits of canary-colored plaster with red ears, flanking a big wooden figure of a soldier in painted uniform.

Pavel Andreivitch Fedotov was born into what was by no means a wealthy family. His father was an officer who had risen from the ranks. Andrei Fedotov had been married twice, the first time to a Turkish woman, the second time to a Russian.

Andrei Fedotov read very seldom, and then only *The Russian Veteran.* At

home he always wore a dressing gown, with a handkerchief round his neck.

A large family was crowded into the little house, from which the father, wearing his tall hat, went out daily to the office.

He frequently returned home angry and accompanied by the watchman, who carried a pair, or sometimes two pairs of boots.

These boots, tied together with string that was sealed near the knot, belonged to clerks who were found lacking in diligence or sobriety.

The bootless clerk had to remain in the office. If his work was done by the morning, the offender received his boots back, together with a severe reprimand. Andrei Fedotov was a martinet and not the man to overlook a fault.

Winter in the house at "Kitchen-gardeners" was sad and stuffy: for economy's sake the whole of the house was not heated, and, also for economy's sake, there were no lattices that could be opened in the house.

Spring came in with mud, then grass appeared, bird cherry bloomed in the slightly chilly air, manure was carted into the vegetable gardens, the mud in the streets dried a little, people said it was dwindling away, and the children were let out to play.

In his autobiography Pavel Andreivitch recalls the Moscow of those days.

"The more remote streets of Moscow preserve even to this day a rural atmosphere, while at that time they were practically the same as in the country. Our favorite playground was the hayloft, a place where one might not only play to one's heart's content with the other children, but from the top of which one had a view of the neighboring yards, all the scenes taking place in them were exposed to the eyes of the observer as if on a saucer. As far as I can judge at the present time, the ability to find pleasure in contemplative occupations I owe to the hayloft, or rather, to its upper part. The life of a child who is not well-to-do and perhaps even poor, abounds in variety which is often denied to a child from a well-to-do family, a child developing in the narrow circle composed of its parents, governess and two or three family friends—people for the most part well bred and therefore possessing nothing that could act in any way on a child's imagination.

"Now take my childhood: any day I could see scores of picturesque people of widely varying character and, above all, akin to me.

"Our innumerable relatives, as you may suppose, consisted of the plainest people unspoiled by the ways of the world. Our servant was part of the family, chattered before me, and would appear before me in the most informal dress. The neighbors were all people well known to us; I met their offspring not at children's parties, but in the hayloft or the garden. We chummed up with each other, quarrelled and fought whenever we wanted. Representatives of the various orders of society met at every step, at one's aunts, at my father's boon companions, at the parish priest's, round about the hayloft and in the adjoining yards. The very strength of childish impressions, the store of observations made by me at the very beginning of my life compose, if it is permissible to express it thus, the 'background of my gifts.'

"The children used to cross the Moscow River to Chinatown; drop down in Zariadye; visit the stage coach yards of the Kursk, Voronezh, Murashevsk and Tula highways; gape at the goods displayed in Hunter's Row—Linen, Timber, Paints, Grocery, and Gold-lace Rows; linger before the stalls where the simplest of pictures were sold—gay woodcuts, tinted by hand in water colors.

"They read the rhymed jingles under the pictures and examined again and again the 'Tomcat's Funeral,' the birds of Paradise, and the 'History of Great

Guzzlers and Notable Drinkers,' where Rabelais' heroes came to life in the crude cuts.

"The pictures had been colored by a capable but hasty hand: large blobs of paint united whole scenes engraved in rough outline.

"Alongside were sold turned vessels from Vladimir and other painted wooden curiosities.

"Baked oil sparkled like a jewel on bowls covered with tin-foil and painted. At the next stall snuff boxes of lacquered papier-mache—a novelty then, were sold.

"Most of the snuff boxes were decorated with a picture of the Fire of Moscow. Here for the first time our future artist encountered pictorial art.

"He was sent here to buy an eighth of a pound of sugar, and a pinch of tea, but generally he came of his own accord.

"People talked a great deal around the stalls: the customers talked, the merchants talked and shouted, the beggars sang.

"There was always a great deal of talking and boasting in old Moscow: they boasted of their turned vessels, their tobacco snuff boxes, pet cats, cathedral of Vassili the Blessed, and their Tsar cannon.

"One volley from this cannon could have killed all the French, but they had not dared to fire it, for, then the Moscow River would have overflowed its banks and flooded the whole town."

II

The Artist's School

In 1826, when the boy was ten years old, he was placed in the Moscow Cadet School as a boarder.

Fedotov himself, in the verses addressed "To my readers, the severe judges of my verses," says:

> **Fate and my parents**
> **Destined me to march.**

The school was a vast one, with corridors like streets. The little boy passed from corridor to corridor, from stairway to stairway, down smooth worn steps.

There was a strange, unfamiliar smell, a smell of uniform cloth. A drum beat in the corridor: marching was going on somewhere.

The streets of the corridors led to landings like squares. Over the landings hung an official sky of vaulted ceiling. Highways of corridors led away into the distance.

The new boys went about in flocks, their heavy, ill-fitting, uniform boots clattering over the stone-paved corridors.

The hall was so vast that it seemed more like a field than a room.

The sky of vaulting spread overhead.

The windows hung somewhere high above, seven feet from the ground.

The deafening rattle of drums was repeated and they all lined up against the four walls of the vast hall.

The little newcomers took their places at the end of the line, and pretended to be official and unnatural like the rest.

At a word of command they all turned to one side. A monotonous mass—they marched, and only the new boys got mixed up in their ranks. The dining room was smaller than the hall: a line of long tables, laid with knives and

forks reminded one of the rows in the spring vegetable patch without the green plants.

They all lined up before the tables as if they were preparing to weed a garden.

Silence fell, and after the silence the drum said something: then they all sang quickly: "Lord in Thee have we put our trust!" They sang gabbling and droning.

The words of the prayer concluded with the drum, then came a scraping of the benches, a buzz of conversation, the monotonous clatter of knives, glasses and spoons.

After dinner the drum beat again; they all lined up and marched to the hall.

Boys strolled up and down the hall in couples. Then the windows darkened.

A long figure in trousers and tunic of rough grey cloth appeared.

From one of the brass buttons on his jacket dangled a phial of turpentine.

The lamplighter tramped along, bending his knees sharply, with the measured step he learned for parade, the ladder lay across his shoulder at the regulation angle. The lamplighter went up to the lamps, set up his ladder, and smeared the wick with turpentine. Then he lit the oil lamp and it burned dimly.

Night came on.

The boys slept on iron bedsteads in big dormitories; at each bed-head, on an iron rod, hung a board bearing the name of the pupil. The majority of the names bore numbers after them: Simeonov III, Bogatyrev VI, Rozanov V. The cadets were kept in ill-heated rooms and badly fed.

The company commanders were distinguished for their words rather than for their deeds.

Number One Company was commanded by Captain Peter Christianovitch Minut. He was tall and stooped and pale, and differed from his colleagues in his habit of rapping the cadets' heads with his metal snuff box. This he regarded as a warning, not as a punishment.

The commander of Company Number Two, Alexander Arnoldovitch Levshin, was a stern individual, devoid of enthusiasm or kindness. His conversations usually concluded with: "Well, come along, I'll give you a bit of a thrashing."

Karl Ivanovitch Grosswald, the commander of Number Three Company, was distinguished by his height, his handsome face and his love for everything fashionable.

He called the cadets "stinking infidels;" the Grand Duke Michael Pavlovitch had brought this word into fashion.

At night in the dormitories things went on that we know only by obscure descriptions and verses published at the time in Carlsruhe without the printer's mark.

The young cadets acted as substitutes for women to the older boys.

Someone's parents complained of this to Nicholas I. Nicholas glanced at Count Benkendorf, who was standing by, and said, almost shyly: "It isn't harmful."

Count Benkendorf reddened slightly.

This conversation is recounted in a book called *The Russian Eros*

Morning began at six o'clock, when the boys got up and started their

cleaning and mending. For this purpose wooden bowls containing boot blacking and powdered brick-bat stood in the middle of the washroom.

They did their mending with wax thread, smearing the place with ink afterwards. Then they marched, and after the marching, they spent weary hours in class.

Once a week, when the companies were mustered at dusk before going to the baths, the "Military Regulations of Peter the Great" were read. These were the military and criminal laws issued in 1714.

They were read rapidly and indistinctly and all that could be understood were familiar words like "soldier," "ration," "spy."

A dark threat to take reprisals against the life of anyone who broke the regulations accompanied each paragraph.

On the days when there were no baths, no regulations were read, but oral teaching was given; the pupils were tested in their knowledge of the Christian names, patronymics and surnames of all the members of the imperial family, the corps-commanders, the directors of the universities, right down to the non-commissioned officers of their respective companies.

During this lesson one had to stand motionless, because if one moved while standing at attention, one got a whipping. Punishment was liable to be administered twice and even three times a day, if the pupil happened to look depressed after the second dose.

The classes were better—one could sit down—but the teachers had their own peculiarities.

The French teacher was a man of mild character, but had his own system of teaching.

"In order to teach the pupils to distinguish between é, ê, and è, he invented the following method; when a boy pronounced e instead of e accent grave, the teacher gave him a rap of the knuckles over the head from right to left, while loudly pronouncing the è accent aigu: when the boy pronounced è with accent aigu; the knuckles, accompanied by a corresponding repetition of the required accent, worked from left to right. To ensure the *accent circonflexe* being rightly understood the raps were made by both hands in tent form."

The mildest of all was the teacher of the universally-despised penmanship. Lessons were dull; the boys were taught Russian history, were taught that Russia was a vast country, that Russians had the best guns, that a uniform overcoat, lined with canvas, was an equally efficacious protection against cold or heat, and that buckwheat porridge was the finest food in the world. Whippings were many and frequent, but a preference was shown by the authorities for hunger as a punishment.

A curious circumstance saved Pavel Fedotov from punishment: he had a marvellous memory, and could remember everything, even the Military Regulations.

He could recite the names of all the members of the reigning house without stopping, not only straight from beginning to end, but backwards as well; this latter he was forbidden to do, however, on account of the resulting strange and unexpected words, which no one was quite prepared to hear to the end.

Fedotov could repeat his lessons word for word: he was exhibited to the authorities as a marvel.

He knew history by heart and could sail, figuratively speaking, up and down any Russian river, naming the tributaries and towns, and describing the uniform worn by the regiments stationed in any town.

But young Fedotov read very little, for the books provided were uninteresting. Drawing did not attract him either, for all the boys were given to draw was antique ornaments, and the principal thing demanded was that the drawing should be distinct.

Besides, those who distinguished themselves in drawing were given a book to read, called *Subjects for Artists* by Pissarev.

This book, which had been written by order of His Imperial Majesty in 1807, treated of all that an artist might draw.

It opened with the following introduction:

"In all the arts, as in poetry, what is needed is the creative intellect, or what we call Genius. The difference lies only in this: that in poetry nothing can take the place of creative intellect neither great knowledge nor indefatigable application. Genius alone can attain to the language of the gods, as poetry was called in older times—this is no subject for mediocrity. In the arts great knowledge and indefatigable application to one's studies may take the place of creative intellect."

This book was intended as a substitute for the artist's own mind. It contained, for example, a description of the summoning of the Varangians and asserted that "glory was the cradle of the Russian people and victory the herald of its appearance." The arrival of Rurik on Slavonic land was thus described: "This scene takes place on the banks of the river Volkhova, near old Ladoga. Rurik together with his brothers and a number of chosen Varangians, among whom the Slavonic ambassadors may be observed, leave their ships and come ashore. The officials and the Slavonic population can be seen coming to meet them from the town."

Anything that was not mentioned in this book was regarded as unsuitable for the artist's brush.

The book provided sufficient subjects for two hundred years ahead.

Subjects for the Artist, inspired Fedotov very little, he was much more interested in music.

III

The Artist Encounters Want

In 1833 Pavel Andreivitch Fedotov graduated as the head of the school in lessons, and his name was inscribed in gold letters on a marble slab in the great hall.

In his graduation certificate, by the way, it was noted that in the tracing of topographical plans and drawing in general Fedotov had not shown diligence.

Having graduated at the top of his school, Fedotov was admitted into the guards. So he became one of the poor guardsmen so numerous in those days.

By that time his father had left his office and the little house in "Kitchen-gardeners" had become still poorer, chillier and more crowded.

It was necessary that Fedotov should be of immediate assistance to his parents, and he was only eighteen.

On graduation from the cadet school an officer was given an allowance for his uniform and overcoat.

But the uniform wore out, so that at home it behooved the officer to change into old clothes and boots.

The life of an officer who existed on his pay alone, and did not steal from the soldiers, was extremely skimpy.

He had to save for many a year if he wanted to order himself a new overcoat, and he pondered the matter for a long time before he decided whether to have the coat lined with calico or a slightly more expensive material called *demicoton* or jean. Though this cost a little more than calico, he who wanted his coat lined with jean denied himself tea for a month beforehand.

A private received 13 rubles 96½ kopecks a year, which, together with the allowance for uniform and ammunition, and gratuities, amounted to 26 rubles 43 kopecks. But out of this the soldier had to board himself. The canteen took 18 rubles 33 kopecks for his food. He had eight rubles 10 kopecks left. Out of this he had to keep himself clean and in good repair, buy flint for his flintlock, buy paper for his cartridges, get his boots resoled, whiten his straps with wax and buy underwear and the linen wrappings used for the feet instead of socks.

So the soldier was short of 17 rubles two and ¾ kopecks. Besides that, he had to buy wax thread, brushes, a small mirror, and combs—all out of his own pocket.

Since these things were regularly inspected they had to be given a smart and uniform appearance.

Therefore they were called "Parade Outfits" and were kept together in a special case. As they were inspected by the Emperor himself, they were never used. Brushes, mirror, comb for the hair, metal comb, linen rags for the feet, piece of chalk, moustache dye, flint, lead, and drawers—were made in miniature, like toys, so that the soldier's entire outfit could be contained in the palm of the hand, and since wax thread and foot wrappings were indispensable to the soldier, he carried the real things on him, secretly, under his overcoat.

The barracks of the Chasseurs Regiment of the Life Guards was situated on Vassiliev Island. Behind the barracks lay fields, a cemetery, a common, the sea coast, bushes, and somewhere about there, the graves of the executed Decembrists.

The regiment had been in Paris once, had been stationed in the city itself, but the memory of these campaigns had worn away, and was buried behind the Smolensk cemetery.

In those days it was said that war ruined the troops.

The troops were improved by drilling. After the Polish rebels had killed a great many guards in the forest, attention was turned on training to shoot.

In the Finland Regiment of the Life Guards an order was given to issue each private six cartridges a year, for shooting practice. Shooting practice ceased to be a footnote to the regulations and became part of them.

There were eighteen exercises in all, and out of these the following were reintroduced: slope arms, shoulder arms-right, at prayer, put on gloves, take off gloves.

The interval between the exercises was triple: slow, quick and double quick.

Military rules began with the one referring to a soldier's bearing.

"Decent bearing does not infer that the soldier must hold himself stiffly, as if he was made of wood. On the contrary, he should stand and walk easily and freely, in accordance with his natural build. He should try to behave so that his conversation, looks and all his actions and movements should ex-

press, in keeping with his calling, a certain decent boldness, without isolence, firmness without presumption and impertinence, and lastly, nimbleness and courtesy. Whoever lowers his eyes during conversation leaves himself open to be suspected of slyness, fear, and an uneasy conscience. People who look death calmly in the face should look boldly into the eyes of any man, no matter what his rank may be, but should not, of course, exhibit effrontery in this."

The devoted could be distinguished by their looks, which expressed readiness. A soldier had to have a devoted and martial air.

To achieve the martial air a soldier had to wear a moustache and whiskers, which to civilians were forbidden.

The moustache and whiskers were also regulated according to rules.

"Moustaches and whiskers should not be long, since if they are long they disfigure the countenance and give it a savage and, frequently, even repelling appearance."

Service was routine and drudgery. The shiny shako chilled the head in winter and heated it in summer. Work consisted of preparation for parades. Parades were held in spring, summer, autumn and winter.

Drilling and training were so hard that the colonels were in the habit of hiring, specially for parade, trained soldiers from other regiments which had already undergone inspection.

There were only twenty-four carbines in proper order to a regiment: shooting was scarcely practised at all. The army was unarmed and was taught, for the most part, how to turn smartly, how to take off and put on the satchel quickly, and how to keep time in marching.

In those days there were artists whose business it was to draw the monotonous beauty of the parade.

The first daguerreotype in Russia was taken of a parade.

It was brought to the Emperor Nicholas I. He looked at it for a long time, examined it through a magnifying glass, and then sent for his brother Michael Pavlovitch.

The Emperor was in a rage. He brought the glass close to the photograph and shouted:

"Is this the way they receive me? And this is a parade given in my presence?"

Michael Pavlovitch said nothing. Nicholas Pavlovitch got his breath and said:

"Look through the magnifying glass: the third soldier in the fourth line has his shako on crooked."

Nicholas Pavlovitch was right, according to his lights: for him the whole point of every invention and improvement lay in the possibility to test a rule by its aid.

The military regulations were worked out in the form of a catechism.

The aim of the catechism was to eliminate accidents from the ranks.

The catechism did not allow for the soldier breathing in the ranks: that is to say, it was not forbidden, but it was not mentioned.

Lieutenant Fedotov learned the catechism quickly, beginning from the first question.

Question: What constitutes a good soldier?

Answer: A good soldier is sober, honest and orderly; is faithful to his sovereign, knows the regulations properly, is obedient to his superiors, keeps himself and his ammunition in a clean and orderly condition, knows how

to stand, to dress the ranks, to turn, march, and handle his gun, knows how to address all his superior officers, knows the time limit for every article of wearing apparel, the amount of pay and provisions he is to receive, and, at the same time, is always lively and alert."

Question: What is the right way to stand?

Answer: Freely and easily; head up, shoulders straight, neither turning nor bending; the chest well out; hands by thighs; little fingers on seams of trousers; heels together; toes directly opposite hollows of collarbones.

Question: What is the right way to dress your ranks?

Answer: In line with the chest of the third man, holding the body in the position in which we have been taught to stand, and, without turning the head in any case, and, holding the shoulders level, dress in the direction commanded.

Question: What is the right way to turn?

Answer: On the heels, never moving the left heel from its place, but bringing the right up to it.

Question: Why should the left heel never be moved from its place?

Answer: In order to keep the line straight.

Fedotov's tenacious memory and true eye helped him to keep his line straight in the ranks.

He served his time without anything disagreeable occurring, doing his sentry duty quietly and modestly.

IV

Sentry Duty

On the third day Fedotov received from the regimental office a folded greyish blue paper; the clerk informed his honor that he was appointed to sentry duty.

Those who were detailed for sentry duty feared most of all the Grand Duke Michael Pavlovitch, who used to creep up to them in his carriage, taking cover behind the large stage coaches, then coming into fashion, and catch the unfortunate guards at the very moment when they were holding their guns carelessly or had got out of step.

This made the officers of the guard extremely suspicious of stage coaches and non-commissioned officers would stoop to peer under the wheels of wagons and stage coaches to see if the carriage of their mortal enemy were visible.

Sentry duty was not always of the same character: there were peaceful watches and feverish watches.

Sentry duty was difficult at the theatre and the circus and easy at the Petropavlovsk fortress, at Galernaya Port and at the towngates or barriers.

In the guard room at these barriers hung a list of the people forbidden entry into the town. By the turnpike stood a soldier who stopped every traveller with:

"Halt! Allow me to ask, where are you from and where are you going?"

Upon this the traveller either showed his passport or alighted and went into the guardhouse to sign his name.

Then the soldier returned together with the traveller and shouted to the sentry:

"Raise the barrier."

The traveller drove on. There was no necessity to ask questions of people

who drove by in the town cabs, nor demand a passport from those who said they were coming from their summer cottages.

Duty at the barriers was, therefore, very quiet, because no one called himself by a name that was suspect and no one had to be led away to the guardroom under arrest.

Sentry duty was very quiet at Galernaya Haven, too.

There was, by the way, a little wood, where the soldiers were afraid to stay in winter, because, they asserted, an evil spirit lurked there at night.

Sentry duty at the Winter Palace was quiet, too, especially in the absence of the Emperor.

The guard was well fed, there, and the premises were well warmed.

On the wall of the palace guardroom hung a splendid English clock, a very old one. It indicated the hours, minutes, seconds, the year, the phases of the moon, the month and even the eclipse of the sun.

The clock ticked with a clear, ringing sound; it was a great rarity and had got into the guardroom by accident.

It had hung in the private office of the Emperor Paul I's palace, but it so happened that one day the Emperor was late for parade, so he flew into a rage with the clock and sent it under arrest to the guardroom.

Soon after that the Emperor was strangled.

People forgot to issue an order for the return of the clock, so it remained in the guardroom under permanent arrest.

Sentry duty at the Admiralty, the Arsenal and Haymarket Square was regarded as heavy. Undressing for the night was not allowed, only the scarf could be loosened a little. Soldiers were not allowed to loosen anything.

Whom and what they were guarding was not clear. A guard was placed outside a shed, where tradition said, a steam engine acquired by Peter I was kept.

This engine was designated in the sentry shifts "iron articles."

But there was no iron behind the bolts and bars, for it had been eaten by rust.

On the clean side of the form appointing him to sentry duty Fedotov wrote his diary.

His entries are monotonous enough:

"Played the flute." "Had coffee." "Did some drawing."

He still drew rather poorly; did portraits of his comrades, and, whenever he felt very depressed, drew a picture of a young officer leaning on an urn under a weeping willow or a birch tree.

One year after another went by.

Fedotov added the guitar to the flute.

One could sing to the guitar.

Singing was encouraged. One of the older officers, Marin, wrote songs. Singing was recommended to the soldiers in preference to all other recreations, since it "helps to pass the leisure hours pleasantly, lightens the hardships of the march and takes the place of other pleasures."

A soldier's singing had to go with a swing and be smart.

Songs should be suited to the step—fairly slow, quick, and double quick.

To lighten his employment, Fedotov himself wrote songs that went with a swing.

Fedotov's songs called forth a certain amount of dissatisfaction on account of some lines gloryfying shooting, and were only later popularized by Mr. Marin.

It was universally admited, however, that the songs were adapted to the very longest route marches.

V

Service in the Ranks

During the reign of Nicholas I a gun was not a weapon but a musical instrument. The articulation of the gun was specially loosened and the screws filed down so it would keep time, and rattle in step.

The drawings, portraits and paintings of Nicholas' reign were no more drawings and pictures than columns were columns. It was simply decoration.

The homeless Fedotov played the flute and drew during his hours on guard.

He recorded life in the ranks in his drawings and accumulated the power of draughtsmanship drop by drop, as it were.

Fedotov made a record of this life in drawings.

In one we see a soldier mending a comrade's torn trousers.

In another an officer is depicted in most varied and violent poses, and the titles under the sketches were as follows:

"This is terrible! Company Number Five!"

"You're not toeing the line!"

"Fancy, Number Five!"

"This is terrible!"

"Hold your mug higher there!"

"Where's your foot?"

"Fussy, no dignity!"

And on the same sheet of paper there is another drawing, quite rubbed out, entitled:

"Adieu, Paris!"

Then there is another drawing of an elderly officer drilling an old, harassed soldier. The drilling has evidently gone on for a long time: the soldier looks worn-out, the officer has taken off his cap. Underneath is written "Left turn!"

That was how affairs stood as regards his service in the army.

Fedotov's own affairs stood thus: the regiment was stationed outside Pargolovo. Fedotov himself lived in a little country cottage. Lived and sang on Thursdays and played the guitar.

Suddenly Fedotov noticed that his food was becoming much better.

One evening his orderly, Korshunov, who came from Yaroslavl, served up a roast chicken.

And the bird was fit for a major, at least.

So he had chicken that evening and the day after the next, chicken again.

Evidently, Korshunov must have been stealing. Fedotov made a few enquiries of his neighbors on the quiet, but they said no, they hadn't missed anything.

Still, there was bound to be some unpleasantness.

He sent for Korshunov. Korshunov denied everything. And three days later there was sausage and a bottle of wine for supper.

"Where did this come from, Korshunov?"

"Out of the housekeeping money, your honor. Left over from the days you didn't have dinner at home."

It seemed a doubtful question. Fedotov sang again that evening and the following evening there was a piece of smoked sturgeon as hors d'oeuvres.

Korshunov was questioned once more. Said Pavel Andreivitch:

"I counted up the housekeeping money: there could only have been enough

left over for a white roll. I don't care for miracles. I'll send you back to the regiment and get another orderly."

Then Korshunov confessed.

"There's various gentry, your honor, as listens to your singing—over by the fence, and I lets 'em in to sit on the bench in the garden, and they gives me tips, like. And no one's a bit the wiser, your honor."

Fedotov had to deny himself chicken for dinner. It wouldn't do: an officer and all the rest of it—looked as though he went round the yards singing to his guitar. Ensign Fedotov, it is true, wrote songs and verses. The verses were not up to much, they were mere jingles, like the inscriptions on the crude prints of his youth.

He wrote:

A soldier has no time to dream,
When life is night, without a gleam.

And further on:

To nature try and sing a hymn
When you're in a soldier's skin.
Try to praise the streamlet's burbling,
When in your boots the water's gurgling.
Shivering in your thin surtout,
Waiting while the colonel's through,
And your frozen fingers numb
Scarce the sabre hilt can thumb—
Try to strike the lofty lyre
Sing with true poetic fire
An ode to Nature's midnight charms!
You will find, if ought you utter
It will be a wolf cub's mutter.

The verses ended like this:

Blinded and deafened the likes of we,
All we ask in the way of delight
Is a noggin of vodka on a cold night.
A cup of cold water in the heat,
Hot soup and a sleep when we're dead beat.
Give us these and a decent game of Whist
The Arts and the Muses won't be missed.

This is not the voice of Fedotov alone, it is the voice of his day.

A housewife now my ideal is,
And peace my only wish
And I to be the master, and cabbage soup my dish.

Thus wrote Pushkin.

For the present the clear-eyed, rosy-cheeked Ensign Fedotov had youth on his side.

He drew portraits of his comrades. He had to save money to send home. Once he made a good likeness of the Grand Duke Michael Pavlovitch. The portrait was purchased and the young officer began to make copy after copy of it.

It was copied about twenty times on vellum paper.

Michael Pavlovitch was drawn from every angle.

Fedotov found sketching his comrades and the passers-by more interesting.

He wanted to learn drawing, so he attended the evening classes in the

Academy of Arts. There he drew from plaster casts of ears, eyes, feet, hands, and drapery.

The artists of that time knew how to draw, and a man who had gone through a good school, could draw from memory any antique figure from any point of view.

The artist Yegorov taught in this school. He would come up and stand behind the student and say:

"What's that you've drawn? What's that smudge?"

"Alexei Yegoritch, it's not my fault, it's on the model."

"Well, but it's not natural to him, you see, the crooked toes have merged with those that have corns, but you should try to ennoble nature—look here. . . ."

Yegorov would take the pencil out of the artist's hand and correct the work.

There was a good deal of controversy about it at the Academy and Gogol's story "The Portrait" was mentioned. Chertkov, the hero of the story, painted a young society lady, but the portrait did not turn out well because the girl's mother would not allow the artist to suggest the yellow tinge of the complexion.

Disappointed, Chertkov stood before his easel. Gogol says:

". . . And in his head, meanwhile, floated these light feminine charms, those shades and aerial tones, which had been observed by him, and had been ruthlessly destroyed by his brush. Being full of them, he laid the portrait aside and sought out a neglected 'Head of Psyche' that he had sketched roughly on canvas a long time ago. The face was well done, but it was an ideal one, cold, built up of stereotyped features alone, with nothing living in them. Idly now he began to go over it, recollecting all he had ever observed in the face of his aristocratic sitter. The features, shading and tones he had caught were here recorded in that purified form in which they appear when the artist, after having looked his fill at nature, then turns away from it and produces a creation equal to it. Psyche acquired life and a scarcely perceptible thought began, little by little, to be clothed in visible flesh. The type of face of the young lady of society was involuntarily imparted to Psyche, and by this means she acquired a peculiar expression which entitled the picture to be called a truly original production. It seemed that he had used, in detail and altogether, all that the original had presented to him, and he grew attached to his work."

There was a good deal of argument about this in the studio. Some said that Chertov was only to blame for selling this picture, others—that there was a curse on the portrait genre, and the third party said nothing.

The artist Fedotov kept silence. He had learned to keep silence on sentry duty.

Books were often brought to the studio and Fedotov, who read only odd volumes of journals of Catherine's time in the barracks, now read Timofeyev, Kukolnik, Polevoy, and Gogol.

Literature had grown milder since the days of Novikov's *Artist* and Krylov's *Spirits' Correspondence.*

People wrote mostly about artists: even Gogol wrote about them.

It looked as though Russian literature was about to transfer itself to Vassiliev Island.

They wrote about artists because they dared not write about anything else.

In Gogol's *Portrait,* the police officer and the landlord of the flat in which Chertov lives are, as it were, people from another town, another country.

The artists in the Academy of Arts lived as if on an island. For the main land was Italy. They went to Italy and endeavored not to return. There Jordan had spent many years, engraving a picture of Raphael's, there dwelt Kiprensky, there dwelt Ivanov, there dwelt Gogol.

Rome, Italy—were, it seemed, just across the road, quite near, nearer at any rate, than St. Petersburg.

It was a widespread mania.

You remember Gogol's *Diary of a Madman*:

"Onward, onward, so that nothing, nothing at all, can be seen. Yonder the sky rolls before me: a little star twinkles afar: the forest with its dark trees and moon rushes past, a grey-blue fog spreads under the feet, a string vibrates in the fog; on one side lies the sea, on the other—Italy; now the Russian izbas appear in sight."

Italy was out of Fedotov's reach.

Here, in his own country, it was the painting of battle-scenes that was encouraged most of all. His Imperial Majesty, Nicholas I, said: "I love battle-scenes and they are very essential: we have plenty to pass on to our descendants—our exploits in the Caucasus and much more." This thought was expressed in a sentence that showed complete disregard for Russian grammar.

Fedotov had been marching all his life. The people he saw around him were those whom it was practically forbidden to draw.

Pictures had to be either battle-scenes or other historic events.

Fedotov decided to paint a picture: "The Return of a Royal Grenadier to His Old Company in the Finland Regiment."

Palace grenadiers was the title given to old seasoned soldiers who were sent on parade duty in big bearskin caps made in the fashion of a bygone day.

Fedotov's picture was intended to be at once a record of battle and of everyday life.

In the summer of 1837 he did a water color painting of another complicated subject: "The Reception of the Grand Duke Michael Pavlovitch at the Camp of the Finland Regiment of the Life Guards." This picture included portraits not only of the Grand Duke, but also of all the officers of the regiment.

The centre of the picture was occupied by the Grand Duke, upon his right were depicted: Aphrosimov, Weikran, Aminov, Friedrichs, Bazin, Tulubyev, Maximov, Zvaritzky, Simansky and Fedotov himself in the act of drawing the scene. To the left of the Grand Duke stood Sergeant Major Yegorov, Fizzardi. Boassell, Gretch, Likhonin, Kinovitch, Shepetkovsky and Haack.

The picture was very highly finished; the details, uniform, and ranks of soldiers were shown with a perfect knowledge of the subject.

The artist presented the picture to the Grand Duke, who bestowed a diamond ring on him in return.

Fedotov received an order for a new picture: "The Dedication of the Banners in the Rebuilt Winter Palace."

The Winter Palace had been burned down shortly before that, and several companies of soldiers had lost their lives while saving the things out of it.

The palace had been restored with great exactitude; the work had gone on even during the winter months and the new rooms had to be glorified.

Fedotov was not so young now. He was much stouter and had grown a

large moustache. He was getting on quite well in the army, he had been appointed commander of a training company. He had to be very particular about his bearing. He never had enough money, although he had done twenty portraits of the Grand Duke Michael Pavlovitch on vellum paper. His drawings pleased his superior officers.

Fedotov was commissioned to paint two more pictures with similar titles: "Bivouac: the Emperor Paul's Regiment of the Life Guards," and "Bivouac: the Grenadier Regiment of the Life Guards."

It was decided, however, that Fedotov introduced too much genre into his pictures.

In "The Return of the Grenadier" a miserable shaggy cur belonging to the company was shown. The soldiers were offering the old Palace grenadier their tobacco, while in the depths of the barrack room a barber, engaged in shaving one of the chausseurs, eyed the guest curiously. Recruits were marching under the eye of their supervisors. Here was someone asleep, there someone flirting, a third mending boots, a fourth buying tape from a pedlar.

It would have been better, it was thought, if there had been more orderliness in the picture.

Fedotov's rooms hummed with the voices of strangers. He had a big blackboard stood there, on which he drew caricatures. Here he depicted officers as the heroes of the opera *Rusland and Ludmilla.* They fought and drank in various costumes and sometimes without any young people used to come and see the company commander; they drank and smoked, marvelled at his drawings and at his simple manner of treating his stumpy, little orderly, Korshunov.

Fedotov called Korshunov his friend as well as his servant.

They argued about art. Their host said that he wanted to paint a picture: "The Evening Celebrations in the Barracks on the Occasion of the Regemental Anniversary" and "Life in Barracks."

The second picture seemed by its subject to be a caricature: there was a great deal of argument about it and some people prophesied that it might lead to unpleasantness for him in the army.

Above the smoke and noise and twanging of the guitar, an instrument that was all the rage at that time, the wire head, upon which Fedotov learned the laws of perspective, gazed at them all.

VII

The Artist Encounters Pictures

Things were going fairly well in the army. Parade outfits had now to match in color, and Fedotov was sometimes called to neighboring regiments in order to choose the color schemes. This gave him prestige in the regiment.

Before inspection they worked at such a tension, and the officers were so hard on the soldiers, that desertions became more frequent about that time.

A first desertion was punished with five hundred blows as the deserter ran the gauntlet.

A soldier who deserted the second time received, in addition to running the gauntlet, worse food for four years, four years' extra service and two grey cords on his shoulder straps to mark him out from the rest.

For a third desertion a soldier was supposed to get three cords, but he was usually beaten to death while he ran the gauntlet.

It was hard in the regiment, hard to look at the bright, salmon pink face

of the regimental commander, hard to march and not think. Even flute playing and drawing did not help.

The soul was in anguish from the morning onwards, it would not be soothed with the knowledge that you could draw so that your comrades marvelled, and the Grand Duke himself was astonished at the resemblance of his own portrait.

After drill was over, and before the light had vanished from the sky, Fedotov would cross the Neva in a little skiff.

Smartly, without getting out of step, he would mount the marble staircase of the Hermitage, glance at Diana and pass on into the spacious galleries. Fragonard looked down from the walls, astonishing one with his harmonious lines, all was living, nothing accidental, no discord.

In Lancret's pictures game was wonderfully painted and people were wonderfully posed. The pregnant mistress of the butcher's shop leaned back covering her large stomach with her left arm and watching the housewife who was smelling the meat.

Watching her in a way that made the onlooker watch, too.

In Dawe's picture a nymph gazed back over her shoulder at the public.

How marvellously the French painted fabrics. And every part of a picture was linked up with the rest.

These encounters with the pictures in the Hermitage were not informal. The Hermitage was regarded as a continuation of the palace. The Emperor himself had taken an interest in the equipment of the new building, the spacing of the candelabra and the malachite vases. Besides having an admission ticket one had to be in dress uniform, hat and gloves. While looking at a picture one had to stand at attention.

These visits to pictures resembled being on parade.

Then you came home and looked at the illustrated French magazines and thought how well those nameless, famous people drew!

And here was a caricature by Hogarth, the most famous of Englishmen. there were scores of figures in this picture, each with its own destiny; they were linked in groups, and of each one a great deal could be told. Long stories.

The Artistic Survey contained a caricature by Hogarth: it appeared to be a dancing class or a ball. On the margin of the picture Hogarth had drawn a vignette in which the movements of the figures were analysed. It included a drawing of the position of the bones of the pelvis in one of the figures. alongside it—the neck of a violin and beside that the curving line of an oak leaf.

The curving lines of the drawing were analysed as ornament and the picture was an integral whole.

Pushkin's poems do not break up into verses, but Pushkin died before he had finished writing of life.

Fedotov had to think and learn. He went to the Academy in the evenings to draw, and learnt to paint in oils. The professor, an easy going old German, consoled him with:

"Learn to paint soldiers, my lad, study perspective. One can't do everything, my dear. You talk about the Dutch painters: they couldn't do everything either. One would learn something special, to paint columns, for instance, with the right foreshortening and so on, and he'd paint columns. And sell his pictures, my dear, at so much a column. Painting columns and columns. You're very fortunate, my boy. You've been in military service since

you were ten years old. You can't make a mistake. Paint your soldiers one by one, in rows, in perspective, with His Imperial Majesty in the foreground on a white horse. Learn to paint a horse's knees. Well, and put a dog in the left corner, say. This will supply a bit of genre."

His comrades consoled him, too. Two poor fellows named Agin, illustrators, used to come to the same German for lessons. They received five rubles for each illustration to the Old Testament; Alexander Agin was preparing to illustrate *Dead Souls* and sketching designs for tombstones in the cemetery.

The artist Bernardsky used to come with Alexander Agin. He was a good fellow. They came and did their drawings, and drank weak tea and sat about on couches with broken springs, and still endeavored not to think and to take life at her word.

On the embankment in front of the Academy of Arts lay two not very large, but very strange animals, carved out of granite.

"These huge Egyptian Sphinxes" was carved on their pedestals.

So the sphinxes had to be accepted as huge.

Behind the Academy of Arts lay long streets called Lines, where the rain beat down in summer and the snowy blizzard blew in winter. The artist had to drill his men in Smolensk Field.

He got a scolding for his ranks and painted a picture called: "High Words in Smolensk Field."

It was dull. Far across the martial field, little boys were flying kites, beyond them a horse dealer was trying out his horse in a light racing trap. On the right lay Galernaya Harbour, its grey, wooden houses with moss green roofs. On the left the buildings of Vassiliev Island, where no moss grew on the roofs, for they were mostly made of iron.

The field was big and deserted and, involuntarily, one lowered one's voice in speaking. With measured step the company marched homewards, past the Workhouse of the Patriotic Institute, past the Mining Institute with its ponderous columns and the iron statue of Apollo, cast in the Alexander I Foundry.

Everything around insisted that it was natural, that it should be so, but everything around was intentional.

The Tsar liked military reviews but did not care for shooting. He looked upon war as disorder, but was consumed with envy of his brother Alexander.

Once the regiments which had taken part in the Battle of Borodino were transferred from St. Petersburg to Mojaisk. They marched down the broad road that led past Arakcheyev's terrible Chudovo. They reached Moscow, glanced at it from afar, and turned off towards Mojaisk. The field of Borodino was strewn with monuments that rose above the uncut grass.

The effaced line of the old trenches was restored under the personal supervision of the Emperor.

With their ancient flintlocks—introduced by Peter I in 1700—and their black shakos, the regiments marched across the fields, striving not to get out of step when they had to avoid the pyramidal tombstones of granite and brick.

His Imperial Majesty sat on his horse in an exalted mood.

On his horse he mounted the little rising where once Kutuzov's carriage had stood.

The bugles played, the drums beat, the battle was fought over again on the old position.

In the middle of the battle His Imperial Majesty gave his gracious permission to the troops to attack.

Napoleon's right flank was surrounded by the cavalry, and Napoleon himself was taken prisoner.

The hamlet of Borodino and the position adjoining were taken by the manoeuvring troops to shouts of "hurrah!"

The Tsar summoned all the officers to the redoubt and, addressing Yermolov, Count Toll and other generals who had fought under Kutuzov in 1812, said:

"Now that's the way the battle should have been fought, gentlemen! If Field Marshal Kutuzov had acted then as I have done today, the results of the battle would have been quite different."

The generals said nothing. Even the Tsar's retinue was silent. The whole group was as motionless as if it was posing for Fedotov, who stood on the fringe, together with General Aphrosimov's adjutant.

After a pause, a voice in the crowd said distinctly, but without addressing itself to anyone in particular:

"His Majesty forgets that on the field today there were no cannon balls, no bullets, and, above all, no Napoleon."

It turned out afterwards that the voice belonged to General Davydov, brother of the well known partisan and poet, Denis Davydov. The Tsar pretended not to hear these words.

He spurred his horse and all the generals mounted theirs and rode after him. The Tsar surveyed the field once more.

The drums beat, the regiments marched past, keeping the required intervals and distances.

The chasseurs went at a quick march. They were smallish people, but their shakoes brought them up to regulation height for guards.

The white straps of their equipment, polished with wax and bone, shone. The brass gleamed, the bayonets which had been slackened so as to keep time, gleamed, and the flintlocks clanked in step.

It was a splendid field.

The Tsar rode up to Sphrosimov, the regimental commander, and said to him:

"They're marching well, the ammunition's all in order, hold your mug up!"

They kissed, and after that the choir sang, the hundred and seventeen thousand men who had taken part in the battle scene fell on their knees and listened to a service of thanksgiving, and the artillery fired seven hundred and ninety-two shots.

That year the poet Pushkin died.

Service in the army went on.

Sentries were changed, ammunition was inspection.

In 1841, during the inspection of capsule pouches and casque buttons a soldier named Ivanov of Company Number One, was struck by Captain Kahn a number of times. Upon this Ivanov tore the epaulettes from the captain's shoulders and flung them on the ground.

The regiment stood "at attention" and no one rushed to the assistance of the captain.

The note on Ivanov in the regimental journals was brief and to the point: "Private Ivanov, an old offender not having survived punishment by running the gauntlet, as carried out by order of His Imperial Majesty, and having died in hospital, to be struck off the roll of the company and off the list of regimental rations."

VIII

Krylov, the Writer of Fables

In the *Sorrows of Werther,* Goethe, in addition to suicide from love, dealt with the alternatives of madness from love and murder for love. He worked out plots, thinking of all possible cases of unsuccessful love.

Fedotov stated his life in his drawings, working it out like an equation; in almost every one of Fedotov's pictures there is a portrait of the painter and the painter's fate is always different.

He has a picture called "The Death of Fidelka." Fedotov himself describes the subject as follows:

"Fidelka is dead. Her mistress has fallen seriously ill from grief, and taken to her bed. The doctors are holding a consultation and the medical practice of the town are expressing indignation at the Russian army doctor. A younger doctor is not interested in the consultation: he is watching the young chambermaid fumigating the dog which is now not quite so fresh as it might be. Some ladies have come to visit the sick woman. Even her dogs, Roska and Adelka, have missed her. They are sitting up begging, and envying Mimi's good fortune: she alone has been allowed to lie on her mistress' heart. The husband silently threatens Roska and Adelka with the candlestick. By the door we see a servant bringing paper and pens to the doctor. A bearded undertaker is slipping something into his hand to ensure that he shall be informed the moment the mistress draws her last breath. Artists have been called in to immortalise Fidelka's memory. One of them makes a definitely flattering drawing. The mistress' son has found an architect's portfolio of drawings and is rummaging in it."

The artist who is making a flattering likeness of the dog is a self portrait of Fedotov.

There is another picture belonging to the series, called "The Life of a Talented Artist." The title of one of the links in this series is "The Artist Marries a Dowerless Bride, Relying on His Own Talent."

In a cold, damp room where the windows are blocked up with snow, the now aging artist (it is Fedotov), with a handkerchief bound round his jaw on account of the toothache, and wearing a frieze overcoat, is painting a sign for a haberdasher's shop.

The cook is breaking up the frames of the pictures for fuel for the stove, but the yardman is already taking away the damper out of the stove, a dead child is lying on the table, the artist's son is bringing in a stolen kettle, the artist's daughter, half dressed, is seeing a young man to the door.

That is how Fedotov pictured to himself his future life.

If he did not paint battle scenes, then he would either have to paint shop signs or portraits.

But Fate granted Fedotov a breathing space.

In the house of the merchant Blinov, which stood opposite the Cadet School in Line Number One, Vassiliev Island, lived a stout, grey haired man, a retired librarian.

Pigeons strutted about his room which did not boast a writing desk; his books were piled up under the bed.

The man was old. People were already arguing about the year of his birth, although he was still alive; he spoke with reluctance of the past, and his life seemed to have begun at forty. He talked to visitors nowadays without turning his head. He lumbered about the streets, for short distances. Once he had

been fond of playing cards and, it was said, had been lucky at them: once he had won thirty thousand rubles in Riga, so as to be able to go abroad. but he had not been able to go. Once he had had a friend named Radishchev, and now he wanted to forget it. Once he had written verses:

There glittering golden Luxury
Calls guests unto her halls of ease,
To tables laden heavily
With viands rare their tastes to please;
Into her crystal goblets fine,
Pours bloody sweat instead of wine:
Drawn from the brows of those who toil,
Enchanted by her unto the soil.

And now he was at court himself, and wearing a false, silvery beard, a Russian caftan embroidered with gold, and red boots, acted as cup bearer, pouring wine into crystal goblets, while Their Imperial Majesties condescended to express their pleasure to him.

Yet once he had quarrelled with Klushin because the latter had written an ode to Count Kutaissov.

Now the stout man said of himself:

"I'm like the mariner who never met with misfortune simply because he never ventured far enough out to sea."

All that the times demanded of Krylov was that he should be stout. It was his uniform, the bearing expected of him.

There had been ill fated love, there had been wanderings; now he lay down and it was long since he had seen his own feet.

He came across Fedotov's drawings. Krylov had been bored with everything for years. So bored that he had had time to learn Greek and forget it.

All his acquaintances were dead. He had seen the poet Pushkin grow up, and die. The celebration of his jubilee, when he was fifty, had been attended by strangers; the people with whom he had once argued were all dead. New magazines had come out, at the evening parties in the editorial offices they did country dances. Books by old friends were mentioned with furtive glances.

Forty years before that Krylov had pretended to be stout and now had gradually attained sincerity.

It was difficult to either embarrass or disturb him.

But, looking at Fedotov's drawings, he recognized a somewhat timid passion and indignation that was familiar to him.

Though his ankles ached with the weight of his body when he walked, Krylov went out.

He crossed the bridge, passed the familiar statue of Peter I, riding at his eternal speechless gallop.

Past the Admiralty went Krylov and came to a standstill before Dazziaro's picture shop.

There was a water-color in the window, a portrait of the Grand Duke Michael Pavlovitch by Fedotov.

Krylov looked at it with displeasure.

For two mornings after that he drank his coffee in a disturbed state of mind. Then, grimacing with dissatisfaction and indignant at the extra trouble he was giving himself, Krylov wrote Fedotov a letter. Very convincingly the old man urged the artist to give up painting battle-scenes and develop his powers of observation of everyday things.

Having dispatched his letter, Krylov did not quieten down; he wrote another letter to the Public Library requesting them to send him *Tales of Ghosts,* a virulent book, published by Novikov. Even the liberal minded Metropolitan Platon had said the book ought to be burned.

Krylov read it, striving to recapture the meaning contained in the old hints. Then, at night, he read the *Spirits' Correspondence,* his own magazine and, smiling, the admonition to the Emperor, then addressed as a *Respectable Young Man.*

To receive a letter from Krylov was as incredible as to hear, while marching past the monument of Peter I, the command "Stand at ease!" and to raise one's head and find that the order had been given by the laurel crowned bronze rider himself.

Krylov had written fifty-eight fables during the last twenty-five years. At present anecdotes were being published about him which he did not even trouble to refute.

This happened in 1844, a few months before Krylov's death. The old man died, mistrustful and dissatisfied. The disease of which he died was the result of over-eating.

He died of old age, straining himself over trifles.

A few hours before his end Krylov compared himself with a peasant, who, having piled a disproportionately heavy load of fish on a cart, did not realize that he was overloading his feeble horse, thinking that as the fish was dried it did not matter.

"He lived as serenely as an Iroquois," wrote Greditch of Krylov.

They said of him, and they were wrong, that Krylov had no conception of a better state of society, and thought that any other order was impossible.

The letter arrived at its destination. Being an officer, Fedotov read old books; biographers affirm that on the unpainted table in his room lay volumes of Kantemir, the *Spirits' Correspondence* and journals of Catherine's reign.

Krylov wrote correctly, the letter reached a person who knew him.

For Pavel Fedotov, Krylov, the famous writer of fables, the Russian popular poet, was a man who had not unfolded himself, who had said what he had to say indistinctly.

Fedotov made up his mind to live without deviating from his path.

(To be concluded in the next issue)

Translated from the Russian by Anthony Wixley

Aldebaran

A group of three were sitting on a bench. A girl, a young man, and an old scientist. It was a summer morning. A huge tree with a hollow in it loomed over them. A musty smell came from the hollow. It reminded the old scientist of a childhood sensation in a cellar.

The young man said:

"Today I am free the entire day."

"So am I," said the old scientist.

The young man worked as a machinist on the steam roller "Buffalo," smoothing asphalt streets. He was a Latvian, by the name of Zvibol. Sasha Zvibol.

A gipsy girl no bigger than a broom came over.

She offered them lilies.

"Now run along!" grumbled the old scientist.

Sasha Zvibol was indignant.

"So?" said the old man, surprised, "you are touched? It sure sounds strange to hear a Young Communist defend vagrancy."

"She's—a child!" said the girl.

"A child? Is that it? Does it mean then that socialism is a Christian paradise for children and beggars?"

The old man had a clear tenor voice. He was, by the way, a handsome old man, quite robust—one of those old people who smokes, drinks, does not watch his diet, sleeps on his left side and says about himself: Not so bad!

His name was Bogemski. He was collaborating in the compilation of the *Large Soviet Encyclopedia.*

He was in love with the girl. She sat alongside of him. She put her hand on the young man's knee. Then the old man asked:

"Perhaps I am one too many here?"

The young man sighed. Took off his cap. His round Red Army head was closely cropped. He was blond. His head glistened like bullion. He scratched the crown of his head.

The old man stood up and threw the cigarette butt into the hollow.

"Sasha and I are going to the river," the girl said. The old man was silently not invited.

"Take us to the bus," the girl said. They went. She walked one step ahead. Bogemski was watching her back and thought:

"No, this is not love. This is lust. Cowardly, senile lust. I want to eat you up. Do you hear? I would eat you up, starting with the back, below the shoulder blades."

"What a beauty!' said Zvibol.

These enthusiastic words were uttered with emphasis. They sounded masculine. The enthusiasm modified by the manly quiet created a sense of restrained passion. And the old man envied.

"Katia, your lover looks like a Roman," he called to the girl.

"It won't rain," said Zvibol.

"What of it, same thing. Warriors. Order of the Templars."

They reached the station.

"And what if it rains suddenly?" said Bogemski.

"It won't rain," said Zvibol.

They looked up. The sky was clear. A blue sky.

"Rain—the enemy of lovers," said the old man. "He drives them out of parks. A malicious keeper of morals."

A bus approached.

They did not have time to say "good-bye" to the old scientist.

He saw Katia being borne away on the step. She was entering the door. As she moved in the wind she resembled a hyacinth.

Bogemski walked in no definite direction.

He was tall and well-built. His gait was youthful. His black cape was flapping in the wind. On his grey locks sat a black hat. He was the kind of a walker that dogs are a little afraid of. Such a walker strides. A dog running towards him suddenly stops, looks at him for a moment, then crosses the street. There it runs close to the wall, stops, and when the walker is a distance away, follows him with his eyes.

Bogemski walked and thought about the girl. She is a first-rate woman. She—is a first rate woman and doesn't know her own value. Under different objective conditions she would be shaping history. His mind wandered back to the age of enlightened absolutism. Duchess DuBarry. Salons. And many other things. Directory. Barras. The rise of Bonaparte. The women speaking Latin. The play of intellects. Political threads held in delicate little hands. George Sand. Eda Rubinstein.

Sasha Zvibol.

"A soldier," thought Bogemski, Don José. A sad tale. A young communist in love with Carmen. Sasha Zvibol, a simple-minded herdsman, caught on the hook. Very interesting. He is overwhelmed. And how! He himself doesn't realize wherein lies her power. He—one of those gaping fellows on the market place—he touched the electric spool, contorts, and, contorting, doesn't understand why he contorts. A communist. Ridiculous. Komsomolka. Ridiculous. I am in the world a very long time. I remember when they danced cancan in Paris. I know everything, say everything, thought over everything. I am very old, Katenka. I—the Dreyfus affair, I—Queen Victoria, I—the opening of the Suez Canal. Zvibol, whom you love, tells you many beautiful things about construction, about Socialism, about science, about technique which will transform man. Ah, Katiusha, your young lover tells you about the class struggle. . . . Ridiculous. It is easy enough for him to talk about anything when you smile at him. But I, who am twice as old as the Art Theatre, and to whom you do not smile, say to you, as a wise old man, paraphrasing a poet: "All classes yield to love. . . ."

"At this moment they are undressing on some sun-bathed raft. Beneath it, the water lies still and basalt color. They are noisy. All around there is noise, ejaculations, slapping sounds of bare bodies in the wooden lockers where youths are undressing. Through the window one can see the river, railings, little flags, sail boats. Oars flash on the river. They leave the wooden locker and walk on the heated boards. Somewhere an orchestra is playing It rocks the air. The rocking causes the wooden structures to shake. The saw-dust flies from the boards. Ah—doesn't life appear more beautiful—a flag unfurling in the deep blue summer sky, when in the distance an army band is playing!"

He came home and stretched out.

He surrendered himself to the play of imagination.

Such women are murdered.

Paris! Paris! He visualized a horrible scene. That which was not. Drama. The end of the drama. The denouement. In his opinion the inevitable result of Katia's beauty.

Murder.

She dashes about the room. Chairs fall. Flashing wildly, the closet mirror springs open. And he who pursues her, he himself, the old man, who is mad with passion fires through the mirror. Six shots. Splinters. Silence. He stands in the middle of the room with the palm of his hand to the head. Pink wall paper. Evening dust dancing in the sunlight. Neighbors come in. They see an old man with greying hair, noble brow, light-emanating, resembling a Turgenev old man.

Epochs! Years! What are they? All the same! Love and death. Eternal laws of sex.

The closed door opens. A body tumbles out on its side and knocks its head against the parquet floor.

"Let me!" screams the old man and dashes towards the body. He raves and with frustrated desire, in a deep "do." He lays his head between the scattered breasts of the girl. He raises his red eyes to the people around him and says:

"How clean it is here and cool on this hot day."

Late in the evening he speaks to her over the phone.

"Katia," he says, "I love you. Funny? Do you hear me? I ask: the love of an old man—does it amuse you? I don't ask much. If you're—a storm, then I hope for only a little. . . . It is very difficult to speak in images over the phone. Are you listening? Every day you are together with Zvibol. In the evening the stars shine. You sit with Zvibol underneath the stars. Yes, yes—I saw. Love. Stars. . . . I understand. Does Zvibol know the beautiful names of the stars? Vega, Betelguese, Arcturus, Antares, Aldebaran. What is it that makes you laugh? Aldebaran, yes. For a whole month now I have been dreaming of going to the cinema with you. But the weather is against me. On a summer evening you prefer stars. What? But the weather may become bad. Technique cannot control the weather as yet. Give Zvibol the blue skies, the river, the stars, but leave the rain for me. All right? Katia, I am speaking from a public booth. I am being hurried. They knock at the window and throw dirty looks at me. And so—that is my request. . . . You're listening? Should the weather be bad tomorrow should it rain—will you go to the cinema with me? If the stars are not out?"

"All right. If the stars are not out."

It was a clear cloudless morning.

Bogemski was standing on the thoroughfare where three "Buffalo" machines were working. On one of them sat Zvibol in a blue sleeveless begrimed shirt.

"Warm?" shouted Bogemski.

"Very warm." answered Zvibol.

Without letting go of the wheel he mopped his brow with his bare shoulder. It was very hot. Altogether it was hellish. Heat from the fresh tar, reflection of the copper parts, shrieks of the radio.

Idlers were standing on the pavement.

"Warm?" Bogemski shouted again.

"Very warm," again answered Zvibol.

During rest period Zvibol came over to Bogemski for a smoke.

"What did you do last night?" asked Bogemski.
"Took a walk."
"With Katia?"
"Yes."
"Where?"
"All over."
"It was a nice evening?"
"Yes."
"Stars?"
"Yes."
"And today?"
"We'll walk again."
The radio breaks in.
Radio: Heavy rains in the Central Black Earth Region have passed.
Bogemski: "Do you hear?"
Zvibol: "It is good they were heavy."
Radio: According to meteorological data there is good reason to expect rain in the Moscow region in the very near future.
Bogemski: "Do you hear?"
Zvibol: "It is good it is so near."
Pause.
Bogemski: "It may even rain today."
Zvibol: "Perhaps it will."
Bogemski: "There will be no stars."
Zvibol: "And you will go to the cinema with Katia."
Pause.
Bogemski: "And for the sake of rain you agree to have me spend the evening in the company of the girl you love?"
Zvibol: "Yes."
Bogemski: "Rain which is needed by the Republic and is not needed by your love."
Zvibol: "Yes. The rain which is needed by the Republic."
Bogemski: "Bravo! Give me your hand. I am beginning to understand the meaning of a class approach to reality."
And true enough a cloud appeared.
At first its brow appeared. A tall brow.
It was all brow. It scrambled out of somewhere below. It was a lout looking out from beneath his brows. He brought forth huge paws, one was stretched out over the Alexandrovski station, it slowed down. Then raising itself half way up over the city, it turned its back on it, looked over its shoulder and began to roll on its back.
The downpour lasted two hours.
Then an unsuccessful attempt at clearing up.
Then —a light rain.
Evening came.
There were no stars.
The rain came and went.
Bogemski bought two tickets for the performance before the last and began to wait for Katia, near the statue of Gogol, as was agreed.
She did not come. He waited an hour and another quarter of an hour, and then another quarter. The puddles glittered. There was an odor of vegetables.

Through an open window the sounds of a guitar came. Flashes of summer lightning.

He came to the narrow street and approached the sacred house. Here lives Katia. He pushed the gate open with the sole of his foot. He passed through the yard, leaving traces in the mud, deep ones, like the goloshes. Walking around the house, he saw that the window was dark. No one at home.

He went out to the narrow street and began pacing up and down. He stopped and stood still, wrapped in the cape, black and pyramidal, lit up by the windows—as in an illustration.

They appeared from around the corner. Katia and Zvibol. They walked, embraced, like two grenadiers.

He suddenly grew before them. They separated.

"You fooled me, Katia," said Bogemski.

"No," answered Katia.

"Rain," said Bogemski.

"Rain," they agreed.

"There were no stars," he said.

"There were stars."

"That's not true. Not one star."

"We saw stars."

"Which ones?"

"All."

"Antares," said Zvibol.

"Betelguese," said Katia.

"Antares," said Zvibol.

"Aldebaran," said Katia and laughed.

"Besides that," said Zvibol, "we saw the stars of the Southern skies. That is not your Aldebaran. We saw the Southern Cross. . ."

"And Magellanic clouds," continued Katia.

"Despite the rain," said Zvibol.

"I understand," muttered Bogemski.

"We were in the planetarium," said Zvibol.

"Technique," sighed Katia.

"There was rain needed by the Republic," said Zvibol.

"And by us," added Katia.

"And in the sky were stars needed by us," said Zvibol.

"And by the Republic," concluded Katia.

Translated from the Russian by Rae Bunim.

Alexander Barta

The Debt

In the narrow, elbow shaped alley joining two parallel streets there were only a few houses. To the right there were three single storied tenements, yellow, pale green and cherry-colored and to the left a dove-grey broad-shouldered giant of a building with eighteen tin-rimmed windows, and such a large gate that two army wagons could pass through side by side.

The street was quiet that day and the mist seemed to have gathered like a ball of cotton wool around the only gas lamp burning there. The two green grocers' shops were full of Christmas decorations, and although the people were just as tired and suspicious as they had become accustomed to being during the past few years nevertheless a certain holiday spirit seemed to have penetrated the alley. Women made their way home with full shopping baskets and some could be seen passing through the gate with a small Christmas tree under their arm. For some days the newspapers, shops, church and schools had been cultivating the Christmas feeling and it was difficult for poor people to shake off its allurement. Even the social-democratic newspaper, the only legal "workers' newspaper," published a long leading article about the "season of goodwill" and expressed their heartfelt devotion to the Christian fascist government.

In the two-storied, dove-grey tenement house the somewhat crippled house supervisor had pasted up church posters at the foot of the staircase and under the gate. However it was hardly dark before unknown hands had torn these posters down again. This behaviour very much angered the supervisor. He reported the matter at the nearest guard house and gave it as his opinion that the perpetrator could be none other than the cobbler who lived opposite, since he had not only neglected to decorate his window but had actually made a point of filling his window with old lasts and dirty boots.

Although the obdurate cobbler was an exception among the ground floor tenants, up above where mostly workers lived this sort of thing was quite the rule. Here, so it seemed to the supervisor, they left the place almost purposely in a mess before Christmas. "The blasted swine are still hoping for communism to come back again," he thought to himself. He made a mental note of the numbers of the rooms. All right, let them wait, he'd see that they paid for it, even if it came to letting their lavatories flood them out, sewerage and all.

But even here there was a holiday feeling, especially among the workmen. . . .

To this contributed to no small extent the news that had gone round the day before that Frau Pehle, thanks to the clemency of the national-Chrisian government and the Regent, would see her husband back again on Christmas eve.

This news naturally caused great excitement throughout the house, and even in the neighbouring houses. Some thought that it was quite what was to be expected, others were sceptical and others shook their heads ironically. "Amnesty for Franz Pehle? An utter fraud!" But all eagerly awaited the evening.

Many could not conceal their excitement. Among these was Weisz, the double bellied tailor who was Frau Pehle's immediate neighbour and who

wandered through the corridor, winter and summer in his shirtsleeves, the corners of his mouth full of bitten off ends of different coloured threads. This Weisz who always buttoned his trousers over his stomach, so that it was only thanks to some strange providence that they did not slip down altogether, and were constantly alternating between his backside and his shapeless hips—this Weisz, as we have said, who had always been one of the most inquisitive of the tenants had been completely occupied during the last twenty-four hours with the news of Pehle's release, and the evening before he had had an argument with his wife about it as she had insisted that Pehle would certainly be let out. Weisz had explained to the "long haired woman wit short wits," and had explained quite clearly, that for this and that reason the possibility of Pehle being allowed home was quite out of the question. His wife, however, as always, contradicted him. It made no difference when he shouted at her "Use your brains you goose! Use your brains" she still held to her opinion. That was why Weisz was compelled to fling his plate of cabbage (it was burnt anyway and there wasn't a shred of meat in it) to the ground. It was not quite clear why Weisz was so interested in what took place behind the tighly drawn curtains of Frau Pehle's room.

It was different in the case of the Zsolts who lived two doors away from Frau Pehle. "Two doors and a whole world!" once said Zsolt, who was foreman in the bookbinding department of the Athenaeum Printing House; he said it so loud that he could be heard right down the corridor. Zsolt subrented an apartment from a widow named Ciraki who lived by taking in boarders and delivering the social-democrat newspaper in the mornings. Although he was only a sub-tenant everyone knew that the stumpy pedantic Zsolt with his stiff hat was master in the household of the ground tenant Frau Ciraki. Everyone knew, although he tried to hide it, that the bookbinder was living with Frau Ciraki; and Zsolt accordingly bore a grudge against his sharp-tongued neighbours. The Zsolts were very interested in the question as to whether the news of Pehle's release was reliable. Three years before when Franz Pehle (who after the fall of the dictatorship used to come home secretly in the evenings) was arrested, it was whispered among the neighbours that Zsolt had given information to the police.

But Zsolt did not care a straw for the neighbours, and what was it to him if most of them were not on speaking terms with him. What proof had anyone? Pehle, Zsolt's deadly enemy had been put out of the way for nine years and a great deal may happen in nine years.

Now that the news of Pehle's release was going round Zsolt saw things in quite a different light? What would happen if he chanced to meet Pehle in the passage one dark night? The great lout would crush him to the ground like a hazel nut, with a single blow of his fist.

However Zsolt believed it was quite out of the question that they would let such a dangerous person as Pehle free, seven years before the end of his term. The whites know what they are doing, they have common sense. They would never release a dangerous bolshevik like Franz Pehle a minute before his time. On the contrary. . . .

As a matter of precaution however he had spoken to Frau Ciraki and she agreed that the moment the rumour had been verified she would let him know by telephone and he would keep away from the house until she could think of some good plan.

Frau Ciraki kept conscientiously to her contract. She spent the whole day fetching water in a blue enamelled jug. Weisz could not imagine what she

wanted such a quantity of water for and why she went each time to the tap under Pehle's window although there was another tap much nearer, on the other side.

Frau Ciraki did not tire of fetching water till the wife of Kovac the mechanic (besides Kovac the mechanic there were two other Kovacs in the house) had had enough of Frau Ciraki's going backwards and forwards. And it happened like this. Frau Kovac merely stepped out into the passage and watched Frau Ciraki as she let the water run into her jug and stood with one hand on her hip and the other on the railing. This was sufficient to make Frau Ciraki go back to her rooms the opposite way, probably with a half filled jug.

The Kovacs lived on the left hand side of the Pehles. Kovac was a fellow-worker of Pehle's and the two men had been friends for many years. They kept up Frau Pehle's spirits. That is to say as well as they could; for Frau Pehle was always losing her head, and this time, the unfortunate thing was as Kovac said, she had not yet been able to find it again.

Frau Pehle was a simple credulous person who could be won over with a few fine words. While Pehle was with her she had listened to anyone who had something to teach her, but while Pehle was in prison, Frau Pehle, in spite of all the Kovacs' efforts, had got into bad company, and under the influence of bigotted relations she would put such a lot of nonsense into her head that the Kovacs had to perform a spring cleaning at least once a month. As time went on however her head began to be more and more cluttered, most of which was to be attributed to her relations, the Walters, who were office employees.

Walter was a close relation of her mother's family and he had belonged to the Christian Socialists since before the war. Owing to political differences the two families had nothing to do with one another. However Frau Pehle used to come across the Walters occasionally by chance, and during the four and a half months of the Soviet dictatorship heard a good deal from them about the communists and her husband. In those days Walter had prophesied the fall of the dictatorship and advised Frau Pehle to try and persuade her husband to cut himself off from the communists, as very unpleasant things would follow. He had it on the authority of someone who had been in the ministry and who was in touch with very influential circles. But Frau Pehle, although she was very alarmed, could not bring herself to broach the subject with her husband. So everything had happened as Walter had foretold.

Walter took the view that now that all evil ideas: war, revolution, dictatorship, and so forth—had been shipwrecked, the time had come for Christian national ideas to be realised.

He took up with Frau Pehle and promised her to make it easier for her husband.

Soon a close friendship grew up between them and Frau Pehle came under Walter's influence. She went secretly—for she was ashamed of it before the Kovacs—to church, and even became a member of a Christian Socialist woman's organisation.

When the Kovacs heard about it there was a big row.

One day while the Walters were paying a visit to Frau Pehle, Kovac came in. For about ten minutes he listened to Walter's chatter and then called him an old pharisee, and a mealy mouthed sanctimonious ass to his face and threatened to bash his head in if he didn't leave the unfortunate woman alone

and stop stuffing her up with religious tosh. Kovac was a man who was easily worked up .

Poor Frau Pehle was given such a fright that she could not utter a word until the Walters had left. Then she had to listen to Kovac's reproaches— for Kovac got going now — about bringing her husband into bad repute, and the shame of making friends with Pehle's most deadly enemies. For some time the lesson seemed to have had its effect. Then one day it happened that Frau Pehle made a secret visit to the Walters.

What was the poor woman to do? She was vacillating between the Walters' unctious discourse and Kovac's impetuous warlike attitude. She could not help it. From her very childhood she had had religion drummed into her so that she could never quite get rid of the traces. One of her brothers was a clergyman, and her father was a small tradesman with religious leanings. And what an uproar it had caused when she married Pehle whom the whole town knew to be a rabid socialist. Her father never forgave her.

But she had never regretted getting to know Pehle. The way they had first met was also rather strange. She used to go to the dancing school at the club. It was here that she met Pehle who had come into the club, not to dance, but to look for a book that they had not got in the trade union library. For Pehle at that time used to devour books. And Pehle who had never danced before went to the dancing school for three weeks for her sake and learnt to dance. And what a splendid dancer they made of him. He wore his hair combed back from his forehead and when he looked at a girl with his brown eyes she was almost bound to fall in love with him. He had courted her for three weeks and when her father refused him he took her the same day to Budapest.

Pehle was a good worker, at that time he earned as much as 40 to 50 crowns a week. But after an unsuccessful strike he was put on the black list. He was out of work for some months. He did not waste his time, however. He went to libraries—once she found three readers' cards in his pocket— brought fat books home with him and went on reading and making notes late into the night. Frau Pehle used often to cry, accusing Pehle secretly of being without work purposely so as to be able to go to the library and read books.

Then came the war. No sooner did Pehle find work than he had to join up. However he managed to run away. Then he worked in the neighbourhood of Budapest with the book of one of his workfellows who had joined up, and as he could only stay for a short time in any one place, he had to hide for weeks on end. The library is the best hiding place, he used to say. The dogs would not dream of looking for a working man there.

After the October revolution he joined the Communist Party. The day the proletarian dictatorship was proclaimed he embraced his wife and said joyfully: "You can rest content now, Terka, I won't be organising any more strikes. I'm going to spend all my time studying now, in the autumn I'll take my exam and enter the university." However nothing came of this. He became chairman of the workers' committee at the factory where he had last worked and was elected to the Soviet so that for the whole four and half months of the dictatorship he was not able to take a single book into his hands. Then the dictatorship was overthrown, and a few months later, coming home secretly to visit his wife, he was arrested. The police gave him such a flogging that he lay unconscious in his cell for a whole day. Five months later when he came up for trial he could hardly stand on his feet. When sentence was passed he shouted out "Long live Soviet Russia and Soviet Hungary" so that he was sentenced to two days in the dark cell each month for

nine years. How could Frau Pehle feel anything but hatred, after the trial, for judges, government and God who permitted her husband to be tortured and shut up in prison for all those years?

But after some months her relations came to her and shook their heads and said, "It's quite right you know, he took part in the dictatorship, he got mixed up with it like a lot of other unfortunate working men, but why did he insist on remaining a communist after the dictatorship had been overthrown and it turned out that the communists were merely bandits."

And now Frau Pehle used often to weep in the evenings repeating through her sobs what her relations had said to her: Why, oh why did he remain a communist?

To these outbursts the Kovacs could only answer that her husband was suffering for the cause and she should show herself worthy of him. Yes, for the cause? What a cause, though! The cause that everyone vilified, denounced and despised. Was that a cause worth suffering for? Was it worth suffering when a cad like Zsolt who, during the dictatorship, was director of the printing house and wore a red star the size of his fist on the lapel of his coat now took every opportunity to denounce and vilify the communists? Then she turned round against the Kovacs. It was easy for them to talk. Kovac was at home and was working. She was not going to say that they did not help her a good deal but that would only last as long as she showed herself to be worthy of her husband. All they did was preach and appeal to her conscience and say rude things. And when Frau Pehle thought of how the Kovacs had only a short while before turned the Walters out of her house when they had come to pay her a visit, her blood boiled against them.

How had this Kovac dared to interfere in her affairs, how had he dared to be so abominably rude to these people who were her close relations and who helped her to get cheap sugar and fats and through a Swedish Christian mission to pieces of free clothing, and even lent her money?

And Walter was a poorly paid clerk in the Ministry of the Interior although his chief was a famous counsellor who was not only famous but also, according to Walter, a very good man. And the ministerial counsellor was not only a good man but he also had a very high opinion of Walter, called him by his Christian name and asked him in the morning: "Morning, Johann, how did we sleep last night?" Yes that was what able people thought of Walter whom Kovac could only call an ass. Why did he call him an ass? Walter had once read her out of an article in which it was clearly shown how all men are dependent on one another. He gave her an instance of this. He, for instance, carried memoranda to the other ministerial counsellor and fetched him a pen wiper when he wanted to wipe his pen. It was the same with employers and workers. Without employers there would be no work and without workers there would be no employers. Which of them is the most important the Lord alone could say. One thing though was certain, the person who gave work gave peace and everything else. And it was in this that the terrible mistake of the communists lay, and here he read Frau Pehle some passages out of a fat book printed on very thin paper and with a great many photographs. The book was by a learned priest in whose opinion the error of the communists lay in the fact that they wanted to make all men equal. It could be quite clearly proved, however, that no two men on earth were equal. Moreover many of the communists were merely Jewish fanatics. There were two kinds of Jews, proselytised Jews and fanatical Jewish prophets. Since the crucifixion however every Jewish prophet was a Judas, a false prophet.

And Frau Pehle did not find Walter at all stupid in spite of all the Kovacs said. From that time on she used to go to see the Walters regularly.

One day Frau Pehle happened to be with them when Walter came home in very good spirits. It was Sunday and he was very pleased to see Frau Pehle.

While his wife was heating the soup Walter told what had happened. He had been the whole morning alone with the ministerial counsellor. He had been to his home and had helped him to clean and load his gun, for the noble gentleman was getting ready for a hunting expedition. The noble gentleman was in a very pleasant mood and asked for all the news and even asked after Frau Pehle, because he had already spoken to him once about Pehle—here Frau Pehle went red all over. That time however he had apparently chosen a bad moment because the ministerial counsellor said that it was a hopeless case and that nothing could be done about it . . . But this time he had promised to obtain permission for Pehle to be sent books and for Frau Pehle to visit him.

Here Frau Pehle not only went red, but when Walter explained to her that this was only a beginning and that he had not given up hope of obtaining a pardon for Pehle and securing his release, after trying to control herself for a few moments she burst out crying for joy.

In about two weeks time Frau Pehle was given written permission to visit her husband, and this also entitled him to have books brought him.

She had a journey of more than two hours and then had to walk another hour in the hot sun in order to see her husband for fifteen minutes in the presence of a warder. Frau Pehle would never forget these fifteen minutes till the end of her life. When she came into the little room Pehle was standing waiting there with the warder. But she did not know until she had been told by the warder that this broken down, wrinkled old man was her husband. What had become of her broad shouldered man, the real Pehle who had been shut up in this horrible prison? She could only stand there and cry and could not say a word to him. Pehle stroked her hand: "You shouldn't have come," he said, "it will be more difficult for me now to endure this life." The book she had brought (on Walter's advice she had brought him the bible) he flung out on to the table so that even the warder looked up. He looked at Frau Pehle with such a gleam in his eye that the poor woman went pale. In her fright she lied to Pehle that she had brought a lot of other books but this was the only one that had been allowed through.

Pehle calmed her and said quietly, "I would rather count the grains of dust than take that book into my hand." Frau Pehle bitterly regretted having listened to Walter. The Kovacs were quite right when they said that Walter, with all his schemes, was only leading her up the pole.

So this was the great favour that Walter had done for her? It was as though a bucket of ice cold water had been flung in her face burning with the expectation of seeing her loved one again. It was deception, mockery, ignominy. She did not stop crying all through the interview. When she looked at Pehle she shrank from his glance. At one time his eyes were like the eyes of a corpse, stiff and leaden and at an other as though they were flaming. . . . No, no, Frau Pehle knew Pehle would never survive his nine years in prison.

During the whole time they could not come really close to each other and it was only when the warder told them that their fifteen minutes were up that Pehle embraced his wife and hugged her to him with such a force that she almost fainted. But this happiness only lasted a minute. "Don't cry, my own Terka," said Pehle, "I'm still alive and they make a big mistake if they think

I will ever die. We never die!"—and a strange ominous gleam came into his eyes so that her heart seemed to stop with fear.

Although they had agreed to meet the same evening Frau Pehle did not see the Walters again for over a month. She did not go to see the Kovacs either, but they came to her. Frau Pehle did not mind them coming. When she was alone she could do nothing but weep and conjure up her husband's prematurely aged face and his terrible glance. What troubled her most was what Pehle had said about death. Pehle had thoughts about death, but men who are strong and in health do not think about death. And how strangely he had said "those who think I will ever die are mistaken." What did he mean by that? And how he had stared, how his eyes had gleamed! Like a man on his death bed. She was glad that Kovac had explained to her that he had only meant this figuratively, and that Pehle could not speak otherwise in front of the warder. . . . That meant that the cause for which Pehle was suffering would never die.

Frau Pehle understood very little of all this but she believed Kovac that truth meant something very different to what Walter said. "The truth," said Kovac, "is the mistreated Pehle. All else is merely incense in which the poor man is either stupefied or in which if he does not become stupefied himself, one can bash in his brain pan without him noticing it. Only we ourselves can open the prison doors!"

Frau Pehle wept still more. Kovac's words seemed to cut into her flesh. Yes all Walter's prattle was lies. Prisons would never be opened the way Walter said, they would only be opened in the way her husband believed and the way the Kovacs' friends believed. . . .

But often her weakness got the better of her and she mourned bitterly to Frau Kovac: "Those wretches are frightfully strong, we could never open those heavy iron doors unless they opened of their own accord."

And Frau Pehle collapsed again and so lost control of herself that the Kovacs themselves were at a loss to know what to say.

But her relations again came along and again bridged the gulf between her and the Walters. They told her with many sighs how sorry Walter was that Frau Pehle had found her husband in such a condition and when he learnt that Pehle had refused the bible he hought a pile of books on science in a second hand bookshop, including a large volume on astronomy with illustrations, a book on beetles and a history with gilt edgings which he himself posted to Pehle.

All Frau Pehle's anger melted away. Poor Walter was spending his last penny on books for her husband. How good of him. . . And she resolved to go and see the Walters and thank them for the books.

In a few day's time she got a letter from Pehle in which he thanked her for the books, thinking that she had sent them. As she did not quite understand some parts of the letter she decided to show it to Walter and ask him to read it out and explain it to her. That would be a good opportunity of making it up with the Walters.

The Walters received her warmly as though nothing had happened.

Walter began to explain the letter, that is, he first of all read it to himself then aloud and then paragraph by paragraph. The poor man broke out into such a sweat that Frau Pehle was sorry for him. As there was nothing he could add to it when he had finished, instead of giving any explanation he read through the first part again twice: the letter ran as follows:

"I was not at all surprised when I read in the history book that you sent me

that there has always been war and always will be war. According to the history book this is because there are industrious people and lazy people, strong and weak, clever and stupid; and so it is also with nations (and the same applies to writers of history books!) And then strong and clever and industrious nations inevitably conquer the weak ones. It is obvious that men are not equal. Although every man has his nose in the middle of his face and everyone who has feet walks on his feet and if a person has no feet he does not walk on his feet but tries to replace his feet with artificial limbs. But in what are men not equal? In my opinion chiefly, in. . . . (the next sentence was crossed out with a red pencil). However this does not seem to have been noticed by the worthy writer of the history book! The fact however that one man differs from another by two freckles is regarded by him as of world-shattering significance."

Walter was still more puzzled by the next paragraph.

"And now a word about the beetle book. Don't think for a moment that this book is neutral because it is about beetles! This book is like a poisonous insect that injects its poison into human beings painlessly. But how could the beetle student be any better than the historian when they had both sucked at the same breast? These collectors of beetles look at the world just as they are expected to look at it by the people above them, that is to say what the history dung-beetle says about war the beetlestudy dung-fly hastens to confirm. They prove!! that!!! in the life of beetles in every cranny of nature war is un—a—void—able!!!!

"But my dear Terka however much lice were to multiply they would not be capable of drawing the wagon of history. Not to mention the fact that a beetle is not the same thing as a human being. For example, in my cell here there is a fly that has been my companion for three months. Every day it flies about fifty times against the glass of the window and at least ten times a day is knocked dizzy by the blow. The poor creature is completely in the dark as to the explanation of it all. If anyone thinks, however, that I am such a fly, he is very much mistaken. I am not a fly and I do not bash my head against the glass. Mark that well, my dear Terka. The working class is not a fly. But there really are some flies which, alighting on the shaft, think that they are drawing the wagon of history."

Walter had completely lost his bearings when he began the next sentence

"Incidentally I thought of writing a book on this subject entitled "The Fly on the Wagon Shaft or What the Fly Thinks and What I Know About It." But it is not worth while. I have much more important things to do. I have discovered a conspiracy against Mars and I shall get out with my disclosures in spite of all threats."

Walter, who had had the avowed intention of taking Pehle's mind off politics, came to the conclusion from reading this letter that Pehle was already on the right path, as he was seriously taking up scientific questions. This was a good sign: "Science would lead Pehle into the path of truth, and truth into the way of love. There was every reason to be satisfied with the letter."

Frau Pehle was very touched, for the letter showed that her husband did not forget her in prison and even wrote her instructive letters which showed that the poor boy had at last found an opportunity to study! But Walter's explanation had not satisfied her. It was quite clear that Walter was not sufficiently qualified to explain such difficult matters.

Accordingly the next evening she brought the latter round to the Kovacs. She showed it first to Frau Kovac—Kovac had not yet come home—and

she said that the letter was very well written and she might be proud of having such an intellectual husband. Then Kovac arrived, and, just as he was, dirty and tired from work, took the letter in his hand, thinking that he could read it there standing in the middle of the kitchen. But Frau Pehle knew that this letter from her husband was not one that could be read hurriedly standing there, cap tilted back, in the middle of the kitchen.

And she was right, for no sooner had Kovac read the first page, than, somewhat abashed, he started reading it over again and then said that it would be better to light the lamp first as it was getting dark. And then when his wife had lit the lamp he said that the reason why he could not quite make it out was probably because he was so hungry and saw everything double. He laughed as he said this and his wife set his meat before him. "That's better," said Kovac, as he swallowed his last mouthful; "let's have a look at it now." He said this so self-consciously that his tone sounded almost condescending. Why should he have to make such a business about a letter written by Pehle! But Frau Pehle only smiled. He would soon see!

"Yes. I see what he means," he said when he had read it through for the second time. "It is quite simple, there are two main points in the letter. In the first place, Pehle is speaking against war, probably the news of the war danger has reached him in prison. In the second place he is saying- -figuratively of course, so that the prison authorities shan't make the letter disappear— that the revolution is invincible and that the exploiters should very soon be made to feel this on their own skins. Yes," said Kovac with conviction, although he had found the contents of the letter a little odd at first, "that is what is in the letter."

Frau Pehle, however, was secretely dissatisfied with this explanation. For even though Kovac was cleverer than Walter and knew her husband better, he nevertheless had failed to see the most important thing about the letter, that is to say what a very learned person Pehle had become since he was in prison.

Walter learnt by chance from the conversation of his ministerial counsellor, that the government intended declaring an amnesty at Christmas. This fact alone was sufficient proof to Walter that the government took the Christian principle of forgiveness seriously.

He drew up his petition, added a suitable quotation from the scriptures, pointed out that Pehle had turned over a new leaf and was chiefly occupied now with scientific questions and also mentioned that Frau Pehle was a very devout woman and came of a good Christian family. He added a word about himself to the ministerial counsellor with a word of explanation and the hope that he would support it.

He carried the petition about with him and waited for an opportunity, for he knew that it was very important to find the ministerial counsellor in the right mood. The opportunity duly arose.

One morning much to his surprise the ministerial counsellor came in before he had finished tidying up. He had never been in such a good mood since he first started calling him Johann. Although he had always been very nice to him and always asked after his health, he had never before embraced him. This struck Walter as a little strange, in spite of the fact that they were living in times of Christian love and national rebirth, but he was very much touched. However when the ministerial counsellor began telling him how the evening before there had been a long conference at the house of the famous clerical minister which went on till daybreak, and that his excellency turned

out to be a great authority on women, Johann became confused and went as red as a turkey cock. Johann felt that something terrible was happening, that the good ministerial counsellor was going to the dogs before his eyes and that frightful overwork and great responsibility were telling their tale. For he had often heard of cases where overwork has caused people in an exhausted state to resort to all kinds of soothing drugs, or to drink, and had even sent them to sanatoriums for neurotics and to lunatic asylums.

However Johann's eyes opened wider still when he saw the ministerial counsellor beginning to undress and stretching himself out on the soft broad office sofa. He rolled up his overcoat and put it under his head, took off his evening dress,—for he was in evening dress—and covering himself with it asked Johann to take off his shoes. In this position the ministerial counsellor with his reddish brown goat's beard, his pock-marked face and stubbly moustache, certainly did present rather a strange appearance.

Goodness itself, however—especially after he had relieved himself into the spittoon—beamed out of the ministerial minister's eyes and this turned into the purest beatitude when Johann, at his request, placed a damp cloth on his head.

"Now Johann," said he, "I'm going to sleep, do you understand? I'm going to sleep, but first of all I want to know whether there is anything, my good Johann, that you particularly desire, but after that don't wake me till twelve."

Had Johann any particular desire? Yes, he certainly had a desire. He took the petition and Pehle's letter out of his pocket where it had lain for some days and awaiting an oportunity. But at first he thought that the counsellor must be joking or he was the victim of a fevered brain, for the counsellor flew into a rage when Johann did not answer his question. Walter then told what his wish was and describing Frau Pehle's terrible position and the change that had taken place in Pehle since he had been in prison, and requested the minsterial counsellor to read through the petition and the letter and give the former his support. The expression on the ministerial counsellor's face was not the most intelligent one of which it was capable as he listened to Johann's "wish." He frowned slightly and then put the petition and letter into his pocket saying benevolently: "That'll be all right, Johann; a man of science deserves to be put on the amnesty list." Then he let his head sink back on the rolled up overcoat and fell fast asleep.

Walter stood in the doorway for a moment, almost transfigured, and his face shone with joy. That's more than I had hoped for, that's all that I have been striving for. It's victory!

He went on tiptoe into the front office. For about half a minute he listened at the door. Only the even breathing of the tired out great-hearted man could be heard. It he had looked through the key hole he would have seen the worthy counsellor lying on his back and gaping at the ceiling as he snored voluminously, a stream of brown saliva, stained with nicotine, hanging from the corner of his mouth.

Meantime the weeks passed and Walter said nothing to Frau Pehle about the ministerial counsellor's promise, as he wanted to keep it as a great surprise and contented himself with laughing heartily in a knowing way or making general references to the near future when there would be great changes.

When more time passed, however, and still nothing happened, Walter decided to take the first suitable opportunity to remind the ministerial counsellor of his promise, as it can easily happen when a man has so many pressing af-

fairs, that he may, in spite of the best intentions, forget a promise. And no one could deny that the ministerial counsellor was one of the busiest men in the ministry.

Luckily a very good opportunity very soon presented itself.

One day, although it was not a visiting day, the same tall thin woman, dressed in mourning, who had twice been there before, came to see the counsellor. The woman was thickly veiled and Walter had never been able to see her face, but he had an idea that she must be very young. The woman had wept softly while she was in the inner office and Johann had heard the ministerial counsellor consoling her. Poor good ministerial counsellor, how he did take people's troubles to heart. He heard through the door that there was a question of a pension. Then the door shut and the key turned quietly in the lock.

Walter knew from experience that the ministerial counsellor would often spend hours on end listening to unfortunate women pouring out their unhappy stories and that he had been doing this for some time twice weekly. Walter therefore made himself comfortable in the black armchair whose leather upholstery was decorated with white buttons. This armchair always had a peculiar effect on Walter. The first effect was that his head began falling gradually forwards and the second was that he fell asleep. The third most alarming effect, however, was that it caused Walter to tell lies. For when the ministerial counsellor or anyone else exclaimed in consternation: "What is this, Johann my good man, you're not sleeping are you?" Johann always answered, "Oh, no, Sir, I wasn't sleeping, I heard everything."

Such lapses, however, were only a sign of weakness, and Walter had read somewhere that men were weak creatures.

Walter did not wake up until the door opened suddenly behind him and the veiled woman, blushing slightly under her veil, came into the outer office. Johann sprang up and only caught sight of the young woman's slim leg, visible through a ripped black stocking, disappearing through the doorway.

Walter caught sight of the clock on the wall. He must have slept for a good hour and a half. In the inner office the ministerial counsellor was whistling a jaunty tune and kept time to it by throwing bundles of documents one on top of the other.

Walter knew that the ministerial counsellor was very pleased with himself as he always was when he had been able to help anyone.

Now, thought Walter to himself, that the ministerial cousellor is in the midst of good deeds anyhow, my time has come to remind him of his promise. As he thought over in his mind what pretext he could use he caught sight of a book which a clerk had left on the table while he was asleep. He seized the book and knocked at the door.

The counsellor knew the knock and called, or rather sang out: "Come in, old man."

Walter's heart thumped with joy. When the ministerial counsellor said "come in old man" that meant that he was in an exceptionally good mood.

He entered the office, the curtains of which were slightly drawn (the sun was certainly very hot) and became aware of an unobtrusive perfume in the air. The sofa was in great disorder and there was a small black-rimmed handkerchief lying on the floor in front of it.

The counsellor went on whistling and throwing down documents. There was a roguish look in his eyes as he said:

"Now, Johann, enough for the day! I shall sign nothing more, receive no-

body else, nor undertake anything else. The same applies to confidential matters and urgent matters, I'm doing nothing more today. It does not matter even if his excellency comes to see me. Tell him that I've gone out on very urgent business."

He seized his coat, put on his soft light brown spring hat at a jaunty angle and started to leave.

He had his hand on the latch, but Walter could not bring himself to speak. He stood there like a pillar of salt.

The counsellor had already opened the door when he suddenly put his hand up to his forehead and came back into the office. He looked for something on the writing table and then found it on the sofa. It was his silver cigarette case. As he lit his cigarette his eyes were full of glee.

If only the ministerial counsellor were not so angry Walter began, summoning all his courage.

"What is it you want, Johann?"—asked the counsellor without turning round.

"Some time ago," Johann succeeded in saying, "the ministerial counsellor was pleased to promise to put Franz Pehle on that list."

"On what?" asked the counsellor in astonishment.

"On the amnesty list, sir"

The ministerial counsellor frowned.

"When did I promise that, Johann?"

"That day, early in the morning when I gave you the petition and his letter."

The ministerial counsellor burst out laughing.

"That day early in the morning? Why that day I might have promised that I'd marry you before whitsuntide."

And still laughing he went out and left Johann alone.

Walter stood in the middle of the well carpeted office, heard the ministerial counsellor stepping along the corridor with light tread and then his head began to swim, he had an empty feeling in his stomach and, if he had not supported himself by holding on to the file case, he would have sunk to the ground.

During the next few weeks Walter was never at home when Frau Pehle went to see him. Frau Walter complained that her husband had changed very much. One day he had come back from the office very pale and upset and since then he had neither eaten nor drunk nor spoken a word.

Frau Pehle could only think that Walter was ashamed to see her and he had cause to be. Nothing had come of his wonderful prophesies and a month had passed since she had heard from Pehle.

Also, Kovac had read out to her from a banned newspaper what shameful, things the Christian national government had been guilty of since it had been in power. The very same government that Walter was always praising. This banned newspaper had made a great impression on Frau Pehle, and she made up her mind after her last unsuccessful visit not to go and see the Walters any more.

When after some time she heard again from Pehle and could make as little of the letter as she could of the first one, she immediately brought it round to Kovac.

Kovac read the letter through several times to himself and then aloud. It ran as follows:

"Thanks very much for the book on archeology. It came at just the right moment for my astronomical studies. In my opinion the ruins that are found in the earth are shadows of human history. According to scholars most of the ruins came underground as a result of geological and volcanic changes. But believe me, that is only a half truth. What about the social eruptions which have left just as many heaps of ruins in the course of history? For an earthquake is capable of utterly destroying a civilisation only if the economic foundations of that civilisation are rotten. Where this is not the case new buildings will be erected on the site of the old. Rome fell into ruins, was burnt and remained in ruins, because there was no social force capable of rebuilding it, because the time was ripe—and you should mark this well my dear Terka —for the whole slave system to fall to the ground."

Another passage that Kovac read over and over again was about the books on astronomy.

"The last astronomy books you sent have fully confirmed my suspicions. All this about Mars is a pure conspiracy. What does it all mean? Merely that on Mars the new social order has been in existence for years but our astronomers have been hiding it from us. Instead of telling us the truth, they lie and let their writers, who can create what fantastic things they like with a bottle of ink, tell us that there are all sorts of monsters living on Mars. What do they do it for? It's quite clear! The lackey only requires a nod from his master to know what to do. The learned lackey does not even need a nod of the head! The learned lackey thinks his masters' thoughts and only winks with his own eyes. The story about the food pills has been started in order to compromise the social institutions on Mars in the eyes of the Hungarians who, as is well known, are rather fond of a good dinner. Furthermore, the men have only one head, in this they are wiser than . . . . (the next sentence was crossed out by the prison censor with a thick line in red ink.) It is also a lie that the women have beaks and beards, and wear spectacles, and that they rule over the men. There are no spectacles there at all, my dear Terka, only we have such things, but on Mars people see things the same size as they are in reality. It is also a libel to say that there are robots there. You must not believe that either. All this is mere literary fabrication. People who give themselves out to be scholars and literary folk, but who in reality are merely little well-oiled screws in a (the next word was deleted) machine, should take this to heart." Kovac sweated and struggled with the letter but would not for the world have admitted that he did not understand what it was about. Three or four times he repeated that the letter was a little out of the ordinary, as it was written in figurative language, but that he saw quite well what Pehle was driving at.

Frau Pehle, however, saw that Kovac did not really quite understand it and that he only said he did so as not to look silly. How could one expect him to understand it anyway? Frau Kovac had not only never found three, but had probably never even found one reader's ticket in his pocket. And Kovac had no conception of the huge volumes which even in the old days Pehle used to fill with his notes.

Walter recovered gradually from his blow.

The ministerial counsellor—thought Walter—is a man of unpredictable temperament. He makes a promise and then forgets that he has made it, but the next day he probably forgets that he had forgotten it and keeps it after all. But in the second place had not Walter read somewhere that patient resigna-

tion and silent waiting brought all things at last? There was no need to despair. Had he not been refused at first permission to visit but in the end had he not obtained it? The fact that Frau Pehle was angry with him incited him still more to persevere with his original plan and to await a favorable opportunity to bring the matter up again cautiously before the ministerial counsellor.

For now the Pehle affair—especially now that the Kovacs had apparently won Frau Pehle over again to their side—would be a test for him. And not only for him, but also for the ideal in which he believed.

And again the opportunity presented itself.

It must be said here that although the ministerial counsellor in the articles he wrote for the papers was very energetic in his attacks on the Jews, he nevertheless distinguished the national Jews from the international ones, that is to say, as he put it, the constructive Jews from the destructive, Marxist Jews. Once he had even said to Johann that they could agree that the country needed constructive, national-minded Jews, as without them it might suffer the fate of ancient Spain.

It therefore seemed quite natural to Johann that the ministerial counsellor, while writing long articles for the papers against the Jews, should be very ready to receive constructive, that is to say national-minded Jews at the office.

Such constructive Jews could be distinguished from destructive Jews miles away. The constructive Jews were all men with good manners. They were somehow of the unobtrusive sort of people, they were well-bred, they always smiled slightly but not unduly, greeted Johann civilly, were somewhat stout and of a rosy complexion. They never shouted, their feet never had a bad smell, and sometimes it was quite difficult to distinguish them from real gentlemen. Moreover, they never gave less than a round sum, never less than five pengö.

In a word, Johann knew how to differentiate between Jews and Jews. He was therefore not surprised when at about two o'clock a middle-aged Jewish gentleman came into the outer office and asked him to hand his card to the ministerial counsellor, with which request Walter at once complied. The ministerial counsellor came out to meet the Jewish gentleman, and the Chirstian and Jewish gentlemen greeted each other in a very friendly fashion, after which they went into the inner office and shut the door. Johann sat down again at his desk and went on cutting with his wooden handled pocket knife his piece of dry bread which he liked eating with a pinch of salt. He confined himself to salt because otherwise he would have no appetite for his midday meal. For some time it was quiet within, but after about ten minutes had passed, he became aware of an animated conversation. The ministerial counsellor thumped on the table and went on repeating that "under such conditions he would give the contract to someone else. . ." that it was "too little" and again that it was "too little" . . . . and that he had "his duty to consider" and that otherwise "there would be no object" in the deal. . . Then he heard that a new prison chapel was being discussed and that there were some percentages connected with it and that the Jewish gentleman would in any case include these percentages in the price. . . . Johann at last made out what it was all about. The thing was that the ministerial counsellor was bargaining with the Jewish building magnate and was trying to cut down the price of the church by a certain percentage. He was trying to get the Jew to build the church cheaper. The poor good man, what things he had to bother

his head about! Later, he heard the Jew saying: "All right, sir, it shall be thirty thousand, but that is my last offer." This was accepted by the ministerial counsellor. How splendid, thought Johann that they have come to an agreement. So the ministerial counsellor had succeeded in saving the government thirty thousand pengö. It had meant a hard battle, and sooner or later the constant battle for the commonweal would bring the ministerial counsellor to his grave. More than once the good, puritanical ministerial counsellor had said: "Johann, Johann, life is a hard battle, it is well for you that you understand but little of what goes on around you."

The most important thing of all, however, was that at the end of the negotiations the ministerial counsellor and the well dressed Jewish gentleman had parted in the most friendly manner and in the best of moods. The Jewish gentleman had shown the most constructive side of his character, had smiled kindly and in an understanding way at Johann and as Johann helped him into his superior but simple dark grey overcoat he pressed a ten pengö note into his hand.

Johann was pleased with his day. Not because of the ten pengö—but because it was after his own heart that the good Hungarian Jew and the good Hungarian Christian had come to an agreement. He was still more pleased, however, when he heard the same cheerful tune being whistled in the next room which he had heard that day when the slim lady in mourning had left. And in just the same way as then, the ministerial counsellor beat time with his documents on the desk.

"Now or never," thought Johann. A bundle of confidential documents lay on the table so he took it under his arm and knocked at the door.

On hearing the knock, the ministerial counsellor called out in the same almost musical tones which he always used when he was in a good humor:—

"Come in old man."

The ministerial counsellor did not wait, however, until Johann had placed the bundle of confidential papers before him. He took down his overcoat and planted his hat jauntily on his head.

"Now, Johann, enough for to-day. I shall do nothing more to-day, receive no one and undertake nothing. Even if his excellency himself calls you must tell him that I have gone out on urgent business."

The next moment he had his hand on the latch, but then he suddenly put his hand to his brow, went back to his desk, took two cigars out of a drawer and laid them on one of the fat bundles. "Now, Johann, you must bring these documents to me at my house after work. I have put these two cigars on it in order that it shan't happen with you as it did before. Not every file is so entertaining as this one, and this evening the kind of men are coming round to my place who are only willing to take a file into their hands for the pleasure of it."

The ministerial counsellor left the room in the best of moods before Walter could get a word in.

It was then that Walter found the right opening for what he had to say. But it was too late. A fine sweat oozed out at the roots of his grey-sprinkled hair. And as he took the two cigars off the file, his hand shook as though under the influence of an electric shock. He put on his spectacles in order to look at the writing on the bundle—for lately he had interchanged two files by mistake—and his face which during the last weeks had become grey with illness now went pink with excitement. On the top document was written "Report of the Vacer Prison Administation *in re* prisoner, Franz Pehle, Communist."

Johann read the inscription for a second time and could have shouted for joy. He knew now, he felt certain of it, the ministerial counsellor was not going to let him down! He had obtained the documents about Franz Pehle without knowing it. The letter that he had given him had done its work after all. The good just man. He devoted his whole life to others, to the common weal. He had just finished a hard day's work with the prison chapel affair, and now, instead of resting, he had asked to have Pehle's documents brought round to his house so that he could pore over them until late into the night, and was even going to discuss the affair with some other gentlemen. Yes he knew he would do something in the end. It was half way to victory.

It was as much as Johann could do to wait until office hours were over. After he had delivered the files as instructed, he did not go immediately home, but went a round way by the banks of the Danube and made a mental picture of Pehle's release which he filled in with the smallest details. As he had not finished imagining it when he reached home, he walked back again and did not turn in until he had thought the whole thing over twice.

When Walter went into the ministerial counsellor's office early on the Monday morning to begin tidying up, he found a fat bundle of papers on the desk. Some strange impulse prompted Walter to take the bundle into his hands. The bundle, which was tied in the middle by a string, contained a pile of blue documents with worn-out edges and the cover was full of square shaped rubber-stamp marks and large black numbers and resolutions written crosswise. Up above were the words:

"Amnesty at Christmas."

The bundle of papers trembled in Walter's hands. He knew all about documents; he knew them better than he did human beings. Such well-thumbed documents full of annotations, rubber-stamp marks, and resolutions meant that they had passed through all the different processes and that the final decision or the recommendation to make the decision must be inside somewhere.

His finger played with the string, and then he suddenly put the bundle down. No, he would never do that. He had served the government for thirty three years and he had never done a thing like that. People offered him a lot of money, and other things besides money, to do it, but he never had.

He would do almost anything for Pehle, but he could never bring himself to do that.

He was very relieved when he had closed the door behind him.

He felt very pleased at having been able to resist the temptation. The ministerial counsellor would let him know the decision anyway, and whether the best or the worst had happened. The latter was quite out of the question. When there was any bad news, the ministerial counsellor never laughed so heartily as he had just now.

At about half past one the ministerial counsellor arrived in great haste. He was just in time, because the secretary of state had already sent for him twice. The ministerial counsellor threw his coat on the sofa, rang for Johann, took up a pile of documents including the fat bundle about the amnesty and told Johann to follow him. The two of them almost ran down the winding corridor to the secretary of states's office.

Although Johann, seized with a fit of coughing, could hardly keep pace with the counsellor, he did not allow a single sigh to escape his lips but un-

ostentatiously laid the amnesty document which had got to the bottom of the pile on to the top again.

In a roomy apartment, behind the double doors of the secretary of state's office, a tall red-haired official was waiting in great agitation. He received the ministerial counsellor with a loud "Servus," and then added with a frown: "the secretary of state has been waiting for you for half an hour."

The counsellor said something nervously in answer, seized the documents from Johann (the amnesty document again slid to the bottom) and entered the secretary of state's office.

Johann was weak and trembling. He thought that this was because they had walked so fast, but the real reason was that he was extremely excited. He was also very distressed that the amnesty document was again at the bottom of the pile.

A good hour and a half passed before the door opened and the counsellor in an unusually nervous voice called Johann to him and put a bundle into his hand which Johann at the first touch took to be the amnesty documents.

"Take this to despatch," he said and went back into the secretary of state's office.

Walter's heart beat so loud that for a few moments he could not move from the spot. Then he fairly ran to despatch. As soon however as the despatch clerk assorted the documents, Walter saw to his great confusion that the documents about Pehle had been left with the secretary of state.

Walter knew the secretary of state quite well. He was a stern unbending sort of person. He knew quite well what it meant when a document began to wander round from desk to desk, from shelf to shelf, from entry clerk to entry clerk. It becomes covered with dust and torn and colored, it gathers a whole collection of rubber stamp marks, signatures, recommendations, numbers, letters, until it becomes distended like an overfed animal and sinks down for ever on some shelf whence it never moves again.

Walter fell ill with a very high fever. The news of Walter's serious illness made a great impression on Frau Pehle. However she could not make up her mind to go and see him.

A great deal was written in the papers about the coming amnesty. Kovac, however, would shatter all her hopes to the ground whenever she broached the subject to him. "These butchers will show us no mercy," said Kovac. Later when she had a letter from Pehle from which it was clear that his conditions had become very much better, a quarrel arose between them on this question. "I am very much afraid that things are much worse with poor Pehle than they ever were," said Kovac after reading this letter.

Frau Pehle could not understand how anyone could be so prejudiced. Even a person who was blind could see from this letter that Pehle was very much better off. One had only to read the letter without any prejudice:

"My dearest, only Terka! First of all I must tell you about the great change in my position here. They have given up putting me in the dark cell as they found out that I could work with much more success in the dark. What is more I am now an object of the greatest attention. Especially since what happened a few days ago, when I threatened the prison governor to put him on the list of conspirators against Mars. I have been put into a brightly lit room. There are bars on the windows here too, but the sun shines through all day long. The walls are painted with oil paint for about six feet up. The bed is

also better, there is a spring mattress and I get clean sheets. Of course, I am still a long way from having a properly equipped laboratory. So far I have only a home-made telescope which I have succeeded in fixing up on a stand opposite the window. Although my telescope is a very simple one I have already made good use of it. The struggle is still going on. He's an artful person, but I see through his plans. He does not send my orders to their destination and informs me through the medium of a fair haired man, who I think is in league with my warder, that he has forwarded my orders but that the foreign firm has not yet sent an answer. The idea of having to send abroad for every trifle!"

Frau Pehle now saw that Walter was right from every point of view and it was clear to her that Kovac only spoke out of hatred and consciousness of his own impotence. She decided to tell Walter this as soon as he was well.

Walter recovered very slowly. His body was like dough without yeast. And why should Walter hasten to recover? In order to see the enemy victorious? For it was clear that neither he himself nor the idea that fired him had stood the test. It was not clear whether the fault was in himself or in his idea, but one thing was clear, and that was that Kovac's prophesies, Kovac's cold-blooded, calculating, cynical, hate-inspired prophesies, had come true.

They had come true, and this being so why should he leave his bed? Why exchange this slightly distressing position, which the doctors guaranteed him, for an absolutely unbearable position in which he would have to mix with human beings again? He thought it was better to try and puzzle out, here, in the shadowy airless stillness within the four walls of his room, what was really happening to him. . .

And very possibly Walter would never again have risen from his bed if one day the counsellor's housemaid had not arrived at Walter's rooms with a bottle of cognac and a message for him.

Although the doctor's orders held good for all other mortals, Johann wished to receive the cognac and the message, personally, sitting up in bed with combed hair.

And from the moment Walter had learnt that the ministerial counsellor was going into the country with his family for Christmas and that he hoped very much that "Herr Johann," as the housemaid said, would be better before he left, Walter could rest no longer in bed. The thought of his duties at the office (helped no doubt by the many-starred cognac) awoke Walter again to life.

In a week's time he was back at the office; and although he did not find the ministerial counsellor there, he did find on the ministerial counsellor's desk a familiar bundle of documents, somewhat enlarged now, which he immediately recognised as the papers about Franz Pehle's pardon. He could not control himself. He slipped off the string with trembling hand. A thin white sheet of paper fell on the table with the heading "Doctor's opinion in the matter of the condemned communist, Franz Pehle." Without heeding this paper Walter searched for the verdict in red ink and found it in the top corner of the document in four lines written crossways.

The room seemed to become gradually brighter around Walter, like a stage when the lights go on one by one.

His pale veined face went red, the corners of his mouth trembled, his eyes became moist.

He had stood the test. But not only he, everyone had stood the test.

He had won. It was victory over the enemy, over Kovac, over all other sceptical, cynical people like Kovac, who liked grovelling in the dust.

The petrol lamps shone at the bottom of the steps in the dove grey house. It was a lovely night and the stars shone brightly. Anyone looking out of his window could see that the sky itself had decorated itself for Christmas.

Here and there behind the window panes candles had been lit on Christmas trees. A palpable stillness had spread over the house. There were, however, obstinate people through whose windows only darkness fell upon the corridor.

But behind the lit and unlit window panes alike, all spoke about Pehle and awaited his arrival: both those who believed the news and those who doubted it to the last moment.

And Frau Pehle waited for her husband.

Frau Pehle stood in their small room (a freshly baked loaf of bread lay on the table and its smell filled the air) and took a dress with a lot of lace on it and of a cut that had long gone out of fashion, from the cupboard. Pehle had bought this dress for her during the first year of their marriage and it was the dress in which he liked to see her best.

After all these years, she stood again before the mirror and as she twisted her heavy black hair into a knot and fixed it at the back of her head (it was the way of doing her hair to which Pehle had become accustomed) and saw herself half naked, she blushed a little. Then her eyes fell on the small bookshelf which stood in the corner by Pehle's bed, full of fat books which Walter had bought as a present for him the day before. Tears gathered in her eyes, as she thought of Walter, this great hearted, ingenuous old man. The scales now fell from her eyes and she saw at last on which side the truth lay. She saw now that Walter was no mere prattler and that Walter's words were not mere pious nonsense and the pernicious outpourings of a simpleton, as Kovac had insisted for a whole year.

Then all her thoughts were again of Pehle. At the slightest sound she started, and her heart beat louder every time as the sound of feet rang out in the yard.

She waited for Pehle.

But she was not the only one who waited for Pehle. Zsolt the bookbinder had also been thinking the whole day about Pehle's home coming As he had waited till late in the evening for Frau Ciraki to ring him up about Pehle's arrival, he decided towards nine o'clock to go home. He was quite sure now that Pehle would not be allowed home and that the whole rumour was false.

He had hardly entered the house, however, than he ran into a man with a heavy parcel of books in one hand and an open telescope in the other. The grey haired, stooping man wore a broad brimmed hat and had stopped to rest when Zsolt caught up with him.

It was only by guessing that Zsolt could recognise in this grey sunken face above whose prominent cheek bones the eyes glowed under vaults of bushy eyebrows, the features of the once handsome, well-built Pehle.

Zsolt grasped at the railing and trembled. His first idea was to run before it was too late Pehle, however, spoke to him wonderingly like a child.

"Why it's Zsolt, the bookbinder." His voice was friendly; he even reached out his hand.

Zsolt held out his hand, greatly astonished. Could it really be that Pehle on which he had informed to the police, was holding out his hand to him?

After shaking hands with Zsolt, however, Pehle immediately left him and continued shuffling up the stairs.

Zsolt stood rooted to the spot. His eyes filled with tears. On Christmas eve, the season of goodwill and forgiveness, Pehle had forgiven him. . . . And Zsolt, the cynic and egoist, stood there and watched Pehle's form disappearing up the steps, touched to the heart.

Pehle walked along the outside passage with even heavy tread, bending forward and breathless with the effort of carrying his heavy load. At the door of Weisz the tailor, he stopped to rest. He took out his telescope and looked up at the sky, putting down his books on the stone passage in front of him. Up in the firmament Mars shone with a pure light. Pehle stood there transfixed, gazing at the planet.

Weisz the tailor, who did not feel at all in the mood to enter into the general Christmas spirit and who had just given his eldest son a box on the ears for inciting his younger brother to ask their mother for Christmas presents, noticed Pehle at once and came out in his shirt sleeves into the outside passage. Seeing however that Pehle was observing the stars he came up beside him, and stood watching him, half amazed and half curious, without saying a word. For some time he could not bring himself to say anything and merely examined the human wreck closely. Pehle noted something with a pencil on a piece of paper that was covered with dots and then took the telescope from his eye.

"Ah, Herr Weisz?" said Pehle absentmindedly as though they had only met the day before. "Well how's your work going?" and he lifted the two parcels from in front of his feet.

"Hello, Herr Pehle, so it's true after all," said Herr Weisz pretending he had only just noticed him. "Hard times, we're having, Herr Pehle, especially for small Jewish craftsmen like myself. But you know yourself better than I what is taking place in this unfortunate country."

"Yes, I know, Herr Weisz," answered Pehle with a sympathetic smile. "I know too well! That is why they let me out! Though very unwillingly, Herr Weisz! You can take it from me that they did it very unwillingly," and he laughed loudly.

"Do you really think so?" asked the tailor in child-like astonishment.

"I know it, Herr Weisz," said Pehle in a voice that brooked no contradiction, and he passed on with heavy shuffling steps.

The tailor watched him beningly. He thought of how Pehle had not seen his wife for three years and how lovely it would be for them meeting again. It was real Christmas tide. The amnesty. If he had been a Jew, though, they would not have let him out. There was not a single Jew amongst those who had enjoyed the amnesty. It was only a case of solidarity among the gentiles. Humbug. *Gleichheit* [1] was right, the Jews must stick together, they are one big persecuted family in an immense ocean of gentiles. . . . And he made up his mind not to work any more on Saturdays, but to go to the synagogue in Tobacco Alley and hear Chief Rabbi Hevessi.

Meanwhile Pehle reached the small kitchen which shone like a chapel.

Frau Pehle recognised her husband's steps and waited for him in her blue, lace covered dress with her thick black well-combed hair in knots, just as she had worn it when she had first met him.

As Pehle entered the kitchen, she cried aloud and threw herself into his

[1] *Gleichheit*, Organ of the Society of Israelites in Hungary.

arms. Pehle let his books fall and pressed his wife closer to him, but he did not put his telescope down. For some seconds they could say nothing. Pehle gazed at his wife in the blue lace dress, with her black hair done in knots. The tidy room and the pleasant smell of the warm bread created an atmosphere that cleansed and refreshed. His eyes cleared and a tremendous feeling of relief came over him as though everything else that did not belong to these familiar surroundings had evaporated from his brain.

The Kovacs, who came a few minutes later were overjoyed to see Pehle. Kovac and Pehle gave each other a long hand shake during which Kovac did not once cease gazing into Pehle's eyes.

Until the last minute Kovac had refused to believe the news of Pehle's homecoming, but now he could rejoice all the more that his fears had proved unfounded, for Pehle, although he had altered terribly, was physically still the same old faithful friend that he had always been.

Throughout supper they spoke about all kinds of things, their mutual acquaintances and trivial everyday matters, but spoke no word about the prison. When it was time to open the wine—for Frau Pehle had seen to it that there was wine—Pehle noticed the bookshelf—the winebottle was standing on top of it—with the books which Walter had sent. No sooner had he noticed the fat volume than he suddenly stopped eating, went up to the shelf, took a pile of books and laid them on the table before him. They were all books on astronomy and archeology.

"Yes, I thought so," said Pehle, suddenly, in a changed voice as he opened one of the books and showed a picture of the stars on a black background. "This worthy gentleman has simply left Mars out of the firmament!" He took a red pencil and made a large dot in the middle of the picture. "That's right here," said Pehle.

The Kovacs experienced a painful feeling. Kovac tried to change the conversation. He asked him about the amnesty.

Pehle studied one of the diagrams minutely for a moment then looked at Kovac and laughed aloud.

"They had to let me out my friend! I had them in the hollow of my hand! They thought they would render me harmless by letting me out!" His eyes were like two flames. He struck the table with his fist. "Within three weeks I shall establish communication between the earth and Mars."

And Pehle laughed an ironic, triumphant and threatening laugh.

Frau Pehle was outside in the kitchen and now lifted her head as she heard the strange laughter. When a little while later the Kovacs left, she calmed herself. "They only irritate and excite him," thought Frau Pehle, as she later caught sight of the harassed, bitter expression on Pehle's face. I am very glad they have gone.

The Kovacs were as white as the wall. As they stepped out into the passage, Kovac said half to himself: "You'll pay for this." Frau Pehle did not understand what these words meant, when she caught them through the open kitchen door, and they made her still more angry with the Kovacs.

Frau Kovac wept. Even Kovac was choked with sobs.

Christmas trees brightened the windows and inquisitive heads looked wonderingly at the Pehles' lit window.

Kovac clenched his fist. He stood for a moment in the kitchen doorway and repeated with a flame of hatred in his eyes: "You shall pay for this a hundredfold!"

It was nearly midnight. The candles of good will went out one by one and

the windows were left in darkness. Pehle's rooms were also clothed in darkness.

The Pehles went to bed. They lay together for the first time for three years. Pehle spoke to his wife about the strangest things, which Frau Pehle could not understand, and at that moment did not wish to understand. She merely drank in the music of that voice which she had not heard for so long. She had nothing but thankfulness and reverence in her heart for Walter who was probably kneeling now with transfigured countenance in the church, praying for the good ministerial counsellor and also for the outwardly stern but just and upright secretary of state and all those people about whom Walter had so often spoken.

Frau Pehle laid her head on her husband's breast and stroked the beloved body of the man from whom she had been cruelly separated for so long. And as she felt his emaciated body covered with stripes and deformed by torture, a terrible feeling suddenly seized her. She was lying beside a skeleton covered with scars, and for the first time she became aware of the madness in his words.

She sprang up, knelt over him, shook him, threw herself on his breast, trying to check the frightful stream of insane talk.

But Pehle spoke with burning, flaming eyes, he frowned and laughed ironically, stared rigidly in front of him and expounded, hoarse with excitement the epoch making significance of his discovery.

For the first time Frau Pehle understood what had happened. With streaming hair and her eyes lit up with hate she knelt over her husband and held him like a dead man in her hands. She thought of Walter, of the good ministerial counsellor, of the just secretary of state and of the gracious Regent of Hungary and she repeated Kovac's words, whose meaning she only now understood:

"You shall pay for this a hundredfold."

Translated from the German by N. Goold-Verschoyle

Jan Peterson

The Moment of Peril

Two episodes from *My Street* a first novel on illegal anti-fascist work in Germany, to appear soon. The novel was written on the spot, in Germany.

Strubbel is sitting in my room.

"Did Rothacker tell you?"

"Yes."

(Strubbel was forced to escape from his shack settlement two weeks ago. Yesterday Rothacker made an attempt to re-establish connections with a comrade there. The attempt failed.)

A long pause. Strubbel plunges his head in his hands. His black, matted hair falls down over them, hangs over his forehead. Doesn't he ever comb it? . . . I wait. I can see that he wants to say something, and is fighting with himself.

"It's getting dark. I'm going to the settlement. We've got to have contact." Strubbel drops out the words with difficulty. "Edith and the boy need clothes, too. The typewriter and the hectograph are still there. . . . Are you coming?"

The Storm Troopers have a "raiding squad" posted around the shack settlement. Two weeks ago he only just escaped their bullets. And now he wants —why, it's madness!

"Give us the name of some other comrade. We'll try and get in touch with him. You can have clothes tomorrow, first thing. As for the typewriter and the machine, we'll fetch them later. We'll do it, Strubbel, not you!"

Strubbel shakes his head. Again and again he passes his gnarled hands through his black hair. And he talks on and on. His "desertion" has been on his conscience for a long time. Why, whatever would the other shack-dwellers think of him, when for years past he'd been. . . . Was he something special, then? All the other comrades had stayed behind, hadn't they? Anyway, he had to see about carrying on the work there, *Jawohl!* See about those machines, too! He'd left them in charge of one of the shack-dwellers. A little lame fellow, a cripple. Most of the folks there thought him a harmless idiot. He'd never had anything to do with them. He wanted to get to this fellow, he lived right on the forest edge. But he'd only give the stuff to him, he trusted no one else.

Once again I try to dissuade him. He was running counter to the most elementary rules of illegal work. I threaten him with a Party resolution on his lack of discipline.

Strubbel rises.

"I'm off!" Strubbel cuts me short.

Damn his obstinacy! I'm of two minds now. Can I let him go alone ? What I've told him applies to me, too. I'm a Party functionary, mustn't let myself be dragged off on reckless enterprises. But then he'll think I'm a coward. . . . I take down my hat from the peg.

. . . We are trudging along a field path across swampy land. Our feet stick fast at every step. A distance of ten yards separates us. Every now and then Strubbel halts, and listens. We are nearing the woods. I have my work cut out to keep him in view, among the trees and undergrowth Suddenly Strubbel drops to the ground. I throw myself down behind a clump of black-

berry bushes. Two Storm Troopers are cycling past along the edge of the forest. Carbines are slung across their backs.

". . . and then she suddenly tells me. . . ."

They are already past us, only a coarse laugh reaches our ears.

Then we plunge into narrow passage-ways. Rusty, rickety fences. Squat, tumbledown shacks standing behind them. Strubbel glances round, takes a couple of big strides. A door-hinge squeaks. . . .

The oil lamp throws a yellow garland on the tables, steeps the room in a dim twilight. There is a smell of dung and of something acid. The crippled "idiot" is sitting opposite me. His head is sunk deep between his shoulders, his ears stand out like broad flaps. His arms lie resting on the table. They are remarkably long. The backs of his hands are covered thick with hair.

"It's all here," he says. "I've been waiting these two days."

He has a clear thin voice, like a child's.

"We wanted to meet someone from the settlement yesterday. He didn't come."

"Who?"

"Dumke."

"Arrested three days ago."

Silence.

"Are the Storm Troops . . .?"

"Still hanging around Schwenke's place. Twenty strong. The dirty bastard led them round from one shack to the next. They took Eber off with them, too. He was back two days later. Beaten black and blue. They let him out as a decoy, the comrades say."

"Anything else?"

"Didn't find anything. They asked about you everywhere."

The tramp of steps outside. The little window is half open. We listen. Nothing can be made out, except we can see it is three people. They pass by. The cripple fumbles for something in a corner, then comes back to the table.

"Managed to collect this for you here."

A twenty-mark note lies before Strubbel. He picks it up falteringly, is about to say something when—a glaring searchlight suddenly floods the room . . . and vanishes. A motor-cycle clatters past outside.

"Nobody here has one!" says the cripple.

Storm Troopers, then!

"Can you keep contact with us for the time being?"

"Yes."

I name a place, tell him what time to come.

"All right, come along now!"

We grope our way round the shack, find ourselves standing in the stable. Chickens are perched on long poles; they ruffle their plumage. A goat starts up in terror at the glare of the pocket torch. She stares at us, bleats softly, her tight udder shaking. The cripple opens a battered chest. It is half filled with yellow chicken food. He rummages in it, and pulls out two big packages. The typewriter and the hectograph machine! We cram them into our knapsacks, with the clothes on top.

"Round the back way now!" hisses the cripple, when we're outside again.

Our way lies through raspberry bushes, past the outhouses, till we reach the fence. Before us—a broad dark ribbon—lies the forest. The cripple lifts the wire trellis to let us through.

"Cut it out specially. So long!" he whispers.

I shake his hand hard. Our comrade. The crippled "idiot" who was never "interested in politics."

Yesterday I was in a bad fix. I had cycled over to a comrade living in the neighboring district. I had to fetch some inside information about the Storm Troops from him, for the next number of our paper. The comrade and his wife were just having supper. They kept urging me to join them until I did. We began swapping notes in regard to our illegal work. The comrade told me, among other things, that they had arranged regular radio evenings. They had several groups of five or six people who always listened in to Moscow. Every evening, the German radio hour. Two Social-Democratic comrades had also placed their rooms and radio sets at our disposal for this. They had to listen to the *International* every night, they said, otherwise they would go crazy in the brown swamp of Nazidom. These two pinned their main hopes on the Red Army.

I told him we could not organize any such radio evenings in our room, for the Storm Troopers made raids almost everyday. Thereupon he invited me to come and listen in with him that evening. I thus learned much, very much that was new to me, but when I suddenly glanced at the clock, it was after ten. I was a bit worried. So late with those papers? But then I let out the air from the front tire of my bicycle, yanked up the mudguard, slipped the papers underneath the tire, then pumped it up again and rode off.

A splendid summer night. Soon I turn into a broad, lonely street. The wheels spin along the cement-covered bicycle track almost of their own accord. It's a long way home yet. Bungalows line both sides of the road. There are bright-colored Chinese lanterns burning before many of them, Someone is playing a mandolin. The notes ring out clear in the stillness. Down the middle of the street, with the bicycle track running close beside, stretches a double row of trees, with solitary benches in between. How unnaturally bright and green the leaves look in the lamplight! The summer air comes to meet me in warm waves. How quiet it is here! Right in the middle of the city, too. The world's a fine place, after all. I'll go out to the woods with Köthe. We'll bathe, fool around—it'll be just fine.

How quickly the bicycle goes! My feet push the pedals mechanically. Isolated couples are seated on the benches, I glimpse a dark group of people on the sidewalk to the right—otherwise the place seems dead. . . . It'll all be different one day, then we'll— I am startled out of my thoughts. Two, three, four bangs suddenly ring out. Has a tire burst? Shouldn't wonder! My feet are still pedalling away—I glance down at the mudguard—why, there's nothing wrong!—Bang—bang—pss-psss—something whistles close by my head. Why, there's someone shouting, too! I turn my head around. Dark figures are running down the road behind me. Is it me they want? I suddenly catch the shouted words: "Halt! Stop! Halt!" I press down the back-pedalling brake, and jump off. . . . Storm Troopers! They've got you!—the thought stabs through my head. Here they come, sure enough. Five, six, seven men, I count them. Paralyzing terror bears like a heavy weight on my brain.

The two in front point their revolvers at my face.

"So they did fire at you, then!" The realization of this sends a cold shiver down my back. "You were in plenty of demonstrations where the police have taken a hand, but that's the first time in your life you've been shot at direct." My hands cling hard to the handle-bars. "They mustn't notice you're trembling."

"Can't you halt at once, you swine?" one of the Storm Troopers bellows at me. He is still pointing his revolver at my face; the metal gleams dully.

"I din't know . . . it was me you were. . . ."

"When a Storm Trooper calls out to you, you've got to halt, you swine!"

"Smash his face in, smash his face in right away!" shouts the Storm Trooper standing next to him. He pokes me in the chest with his revolver.

Search him first!" says the other gruffly. And to me: "Drop the bike, you swine! Hands up!" I obey. "Drop the bike. . . ." They're not up to that trick, then. My heart is pounding like a hammer, but I've got my nerves under control again.

They feel my knickers, finger especially the baggy cloth at the knees.

"Turn out your pockets!"

I do so. . . . There's not a soul on the street. Supposing they were to. . . here? And if they ask me where I live?. . . How I come to be in this section of the city?. . . My brain is working feverishly.

I am allowed to put the bunch of keys, the comb, the two handkerchiefs back in my pockets. What could I have had concealed on me, anyway? I'm only wearing knickers and a sport vest! Best thing I can do is to act timid, that'll impress them with their "strength," I reflect convulsively. They've probably fogotten by now about smashing my face in, haven't they? But the revolvers are still there—they're standing around me in a semi-circle—do they think I'll try to escape, or what?

Madness! The one in front on the left seems to be in command. Aha, a star on his uniform collar. Troop leader!

He pokes me in the shoulder-blade with the butt of his revolver.

"Where were you coming from just now?"

"I was with some friends—somebody's birthday today," I stammer. For a moment he eyes me menacingly. The others?. . .

Are they waiting for a word of command?

"Get along with you!" bellows the troop leader suddenly. "Now you know! When a Storm Trooper calls out to you, you've got to halt at once, understand?!"

"*Jawohl,*" I answer timidly.

The troop leader looks at the others with a grin. He'll soon be shitting in in his pants, says the look. The others are grinning, too.

"Let 'em grin. . . To hell with them. . . . We'll settle their hash one of these days. . . ." I am still standing there.

"Get along! Beat it!" he bellows at me again.

I push the bicycle forward a couple of steps, then mount. Mustn't ride away in hurry—keep calm—they're sure to be watching you. . . .

The tires sing a fine tune as they spin over the asphalt. The papers go rolling on and on. . . .

Translated from the German by H. G. Scott

R. Kim

Japanese Scenery

Beyond the steepness of the pass there rose in the distance a high mountain, a very blue mountain with a snowy peak. The nearby valley was a mass of scarlet and lilac, a mass of mountain azale and lupine. By the edges of the path bamboo and clover. The five foot-travelers felt they must rest; there was a coolness coming over several valleys from the blue mountain, but it was hot. They went up to a hut where in place of a sign hung advertisements for toothpowder and cooling pills. All five sat under an awning on a bench covered with a red blanket.

From the hut there came out an old woman with a tray; she bowed before each, put down little cups, and poured out tea. On a big bench near the front door of the hut lay a bundle of straw shoes, postcards and flower biscuits in a glass case.

The middle-aged foreigner brought out sandwiches from a little case and opened a traveling flask. The young Japanese in European costume bought straw shoes, and hung his heavy iron-studded boots over his shoulders. The remaining three, a couple with a little girl, all in Japanese costume, took off their sandals, clambered onto the bench, and began to drink tea in little sips.

The foreigner took out his camera, snapped a stone statue of the god Dzidzo which stood near a cliff, and then went up to the couple, pointed at the little girl and asked:

"Irosii desuka?" [1]

The couple looked at each other and smiled; the husband put his spectacles in place and with a bow answered in English:

"If you please."

The mother straightened the girl's fringe and sash. The foreigner sat the girl down at the other end of the bench so that in the background the distant hills could be seen, and snapped several times. Then he took the parents with the girl, and invited the young fellow in the European suit, but the latter with a smile put his hand in front of his face and refused.

The travelers, leaving some copper coins for the old woman, went on further.

Another pass; there began groves of fantastically twisted pines, on the borders of the narrow road grew yellow daisies and rosy asters. The blue mountain came nearer, and beneath there appeared a new valley, on the floor of which could be seen a little village, a dozen huts with straw roofs and poles on which linen was drying. A little river, a few small squares of rice fields.

The foreigner walked alongside the couple. The wife also knew English.

"You are going to the lake?"

"Yes, and you?"

"I am too. I like to walk in the Japanese hills without guides and comforts. When will we get up to the lake?"

"By the evening. Have you been long in Japan?"

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[1] "May I?"

"A year and a half already. Your little girl must be tired. It is hard for her to walk so much in the hills. The youngest little tourist in the world."

The foreigner laughed, and carefully lifted the girl into his arms.

The couple learned that the foreigner was the French ambassador, Paul Claudel. The wife said that she had read Claudel's poems in a translation by Horiguchi Diagaku. The ambassador learned that the husband had been a teacher of English in a private school in Tokio. His school had been closed three months before and the premises bought by a patriotic organization The wife had graduated from highschool, but owing to tuberculosis, had had to stop work.

Near a little temple of the goddess Lisi, the travelers stopped to lunch. The young fellow in European costume took an aluminum case of rice with a little bit of salmon from his satchel. The ambassador began slapping his pockets and found that on the way he had lost his cigarette case. The young fellow brought out cigarettes from his pocket, and offered them to the ambassador. Both lit up. The couple, turning away, ashamedly ate omusubi—salt rice rolled up in balls. The little girl took out from the sleeve of her gown a neatly folded piece of colored paper, opened it up, and began to blow; it was a paper ball, and she began to throw it into the air and smack it with her hand. When the ball fell on the earth, the little girl squatted down and burst out laughing.

When they passed by the next tea hut, the little girl saw for sale there little cakes with a sweet stuffing of peas. She stopped near them and put her finger in her mouth. The couple looked at each other. The wife said:

"How much have we left?"

"One yen, seventy sen."

"One and a half yen will be enough for the hotel. Spend the rest. Fumichyan is very fond of these cakes."

The wife touched her face with the sleeves of her gown and went forward.

The ambassador brought out a conversational dictionary from his pocket and began making phrases in Japanese. It was with difficulty that the young fellow understood the ambassador.

"How far is it to the lake?"

"It is already quite near. One hour."

"What are these huts down there?"

"They make charcoal there."

"Are you a student?"

"No, I am not a student. I . . . "

The young fellow began to look in the dictionary for the word "electric fitter," but could not find it. He explained with sweeping gestures; the ambassador decided that the young fellow was a circus artist.

Further the road ran straight through the mountains, by steep cliffs. On the borders of the road stood stone lanterns. Far away upon the road there appeared a group of policemen who got off their bicycles and halted. The young fellow said to the ambassador:

"It's a long way by this road. Here is a good shortcut."

The young fellow quickly turned off the road and went along a path which ran through a ravine. All the others went after him. The path quickly led to the summit of the mountain and thence opened out the view over the lake.

Round, apparently very cold, the lake was surrounded on all sides by high mountains. Cherry trees were in blossom upon its shores. Tiny yachts slid

over its blue-green glassy surface. On the other side, among pines, on the mountain slope there could be seen the pagoda and roofs of a Buddhist monastery. Below the monastery was a village. At one time where the lake now was there had been the tremendous crater of a volcano. From the lake ran a little river across which had been thrown a toy-like red bridge in the ancient Chinese style. Beyond stood villas. The river led to a waterfall, famous all over Asia, which is mentioned in all guidebooks for tourists.

The five travelers stood for a long time looking on the lake, cherry trees, the mountains and the clouds. The ambassador wanted to take a picture, but the light was already too poor. There was absolute silence all around the lake. Then there appeared a motorboat and from somewhere among the pines there were heard several beats upon a gong. And then everything was quiet again.

The ambassador took out a notebook and wrote:

"Lake among mountains. Blue-green-rosy water-color twilight. Waterfall some kilometers away. Scenery—an unexpected masterpiece of volcanoes, typically Japanese.

"All are as one before the face of nature's masterpiece. Emperor, trader, coolie, equally forget their ephemeral passions—politics, business, daily worries. Buddhist pantheism, etc. The Japanese are specially delicate in their appreciation of the beauty of nature. Write in answer to Valery."

It began quickly to grow dark. The travelers went along the shore to the hotel. All took rooms; through the wide-open doors could be seen the lake and the mountains. Servants proposed to the travelers that they should wash. All put on nightgowns and went to the bathroom. The ambassador came back to his room and said that he would wash later. In the square basin the young fellow and the couple with their girl accommodated themselves; they squatted in extremely hot water. After the bath the guests ate in their rooms. All went to bed early. They were tired. There were no other guests in the hotel beyond these five. At night the lake could not be heard; it was as if it were not thirty paces from the hotel, but somewhere behind the hills.

Early in the morning all the five travelers left the hotel and went off in different directions.

The ambassador called for a ricksha from the village and went further into the hills to a neighboring health resort so as to catch a train and get back by evening to Tokio in order to be present at a banquet in a palace.

The young fellow hired a boat and crossed to the other side of the lake. In the monastery at night there was to be held the first conference of the new Central Committee of the Communist Party formed after the big raid two months previously.

The couple and the little girl went along the shore, crossed to the bridge and went past two-storey villas which were still empty. They made straight for the celebrated waterfall in order to throw themselves over it.

Translated from the Russian by H. O. Whyte

M. Oterosilva

The Miner

Strong miner with broad shoulders
Buried alive in the dark tunnel,
Sunk in the darkness of the deep mine
While outside the birds sing
And the trees lift themselves to look toward the rivers,
While outside the sun shines.

Strong miner who draws
From the womb of the earth the coal,
Stretching your muscles in the tense effort
While outside there are men who sing
And warm laps of women,
While outside the sun shines.

Strong miner who sweats
And is black and grimy with sweat
Because the damned coal has entered your blood:
Miner whose eyes are dim,
Full of the black strong walls,
Hungry for sunshine.

Strong miner who feel
How you are killed by exploitation,
How they throw your meager wage in your face
While with your coal they move the ships
And work the machines, and the chimneys
Lift their plumes under the sun.

Strong miner, when you come out,
Packed with the others in the elevator,
Your muscles are weary and worn,
You are thinking of your poor evening meal
And of the hard working day of tomorrow,
Another working day without sunshine.

Comrade miner, when you reach your home
You must pay twelve cents for four pounds of coal,
Of that same coal that you dig.
Leaving part of your flesh in each hole.

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[1] Miguel Oterosilva is a young Venezuelean poet active in the revolutionary movement in South America. He was arrested and imprisoned in the infamous La Rotunda prison in Caracas. "The Miner" is translated here from the only copy of *Twelve Red Poems*, which escaped the police.

How I admire your tremendous class struggle,
Your struggle for your mine and the sunshine!
Comrade miners! Battalions of dark men!
When the Revolution dawns
The mouth of the mines will give their cries in men,
Marching forward
Under the golden trumpet
Of the sun!

Translated by Alberto E. Sanchez and Fielding Davidson

ARTICLES and CRITICISM

Academician A. Deborin

The Proletarian Revolution and the Problem of Genius

I. In his interview with the first American labor delegation in the USSR in 1927 Comrade Stalin was asked by the delegation: "Would it be correct to say that Lenin believed in 'creative revolution' whereas Marx was more inclined to wait for the culmination of the development of economic forces?" Stalin answered: "I think it would be absolutely incorrect to say that. On the contrary, I think that *every popular revolution,* if it is really a popular revolution, *is a creative revolution, for it breaks up the old system and creates, builds, a new one.*"

In the question of the American delegation one can hear the echo of the opportunists and reformists who have always asserted that Marx, presumably, stood for evolution while Lenin put forward the idea of creative revolution and thus, seemingly, deviated from Marx. In this interview Comrade Stalin exposed the opportunists and reformists who distort the teachings of Marx in the interests of the bourgeoisie and emphasized that *both* Lenin and Marx always stood for creative revolution which raises the oppressed classes against the oppressing classes.

What is really the difference between creative revolution as understood by Marx, Lenin and Stalin, on the one side, and the theory of "the culmination of the development of economic forces" maintained by the reformists, on the other? The difference is that creative revolution, as Comrade Stalin explains, *destroys the old system and creates a new one* while evolutionary development implies a *slow, gradual "mending" of the old system,* thus precluding *revolutionary creativeness.* Creative revolution opens up new ways and means of development while evolutionary development, the theory of "waiting for the culmination of economic forces" runs along the old rut, within the confines of the *old* system, essentially denies the *qualitative* creation of the *new* system and admits only qualitative changes of the existing system.

In another connection Comrade Stalin makes the distinction between *dogmatic* and *creative Marxism.* At the sixth congress of the Party, on the eve of the proletarian revolution, at one of the most important and decisive moments of our revolution, Comrade Stalin, in his report outlining the prospects of development of the revolution in our country, proves the necessity of applying the power of the state after it has been seized by the proletariat in the direction of peace and the socialist reconstruction of society The ninth paragraph of the resolution adopted on Comrade Stalin's report expresses this thought.

This was opposed in a Trotskyite vein by E. Preobrazhenski, who proposed that the question of directing the revolution towards a socialist re-

building of society should be made dependent upon the proletarian revolution taking place in the West. Comrade Stalin's prophetic answer to this was as follows: "I am against such an ending of the resolution (i.e. as proposed by Comrade Preobrazhenski). *The possibility is not excluded that Russia will be the country to pave the way to Socialism.* No other country has enjoyed such absolute freedom as Russia has (lately), has even attempted to institute workers' control of industry. In addition to this, the base of our revolution is broader than in Western Europe where the proletariat stands perfectly alone face to face with the bourgeoisie. In our country the workers are supported by the poorest sections of the peasantry. Finally, the government apparatus in Germany functions incomparably better than the imperfect apparatus of our bourgeoisie which itself pays tribute to European capital. The dead idea that only Europe can show us the way must be rejected. There is dogmatic Marxism and there is creative Marxism. I take my stand on the basis of the latter." [1]

Dogmatic Marxism proceeds from the letter of Marx's teachings, creative Marxism proceeds from the spirit of his teachings, from his method. The opportunists of the II International have made a number of their own dogmas and they use them as a springboard. They have thus turned Marxism into a dead dogmatic system and robbed it of its live revolutionary content. It will suffice to recall the dogma about the level of development of production forces and the absence of a sufficient number of ready trained, cultured and administrative proletarian cadres capable of governing the country.

"But why not do it this way," writes Comrade Stalin. "First seize power, create favorable conditions for the development of the proletariat and then proceed with seven league strides to raise the cultural level of the laboring masses and form numerous cadres of leaders and administrators recruited from among the workers?" [2] Dogmatic Marxism stand apart from revolutionary practice: instead of an integral revolutionary theory it offers decayed dogmas, robbing Marxian theory of its live revolutionary spirit.

Lenin's and Stalin's *creative* Marxism proceeds not from ready-made dogmas but from the critical and revolutionary spirit of Marxism. Under conditions of a new historical era the *method of Leninism* arose on the basis of Marxism. The era of imperialism, the era of catastrophic contradictions (as put by Comrade Stalin) required not only the restoration but also the concretisation and further elaboration of Marx's critical and revolutionary method of materialist dialectics. *Creative Marxism* armed with the method of Leninism could not, of course, reconcile itself to a dogmatic interpretation of Marxism, which would turn the most revolutionary and creative theory into a weapon of stagnation and reaction.

Creative Marxism, enriched by the tremendous experience of the world proletarian movement and the results of the scientific analysis of the new era of capitalism known as imperialism, was born or revived in Russia on a new historical level. Its creators were Lenin and Stalin. Uncovering the "historical roots of Leninism," Comrade Stalin emphasized the fact that at the beginning of the twentieth century Russia had found herself on the eve of the bourgeois revolution—a revolution she could accomplish under more favorable conditions and with a more developed proletariat than similar revolutions had been achieved in other European countries. It was natural that the bourgeois

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[1] Miuutes of the Sixth Congress of the RSDWP (B), July 26-August 3, 1917.
[2] Stalin, Leninism, Vol. 1, p. 23.

revolution in Russia should have "served as a leavener of, and prologue to the proletarian revolution" (Stalin), that it should have grown into a Socialist revolution.

"Is it surprising," writes Comrade Stalin, "after all this that a country which has accomplished such a revolution and possesses such a proletariat should be the fatherland of the theory and tactics of the proletarian revolution?

"And is it surprising that Lenin, the leader of this proletariat, should have become the creator of this theory and of these tactics and the leader of the international proletariat?" [1]

Lenin and Stalin have always considered the creative forces of the working class of tremendous importance. In summing up the results of the first Five-Year Plan, Comrade Stalin elaborated quite vividly the thesis of the creative capacities of the working class. He said: "The results of the Five-Year Plan have shattered the well known bourgeois 'article of faith' that the working class is incapable of building the new and is only capable of destroying the old. The results of the Five-Year Plan show that *the working class is just as capable of building the new as of destroying the old.*"

In his struggle against the various deviations within the Party, Comrade Stalin has always maintained that essentially Party members incredulous of the powers of the working class to build Socialism or overcome difficulties are enemies of Leninism. Thus in the *Theses for the XV All-Russian Conference of the Party,* Comrade Stalin wrote: "Some sections of our Party.—it is true, not very numerous ones,—frightened by difficulties, become weary and hesitate, *become hopeless and cultivate pessimistic moods, are infected with disbelief in the creative forces of the proletariat and arrive at the ideology of capitalism.*" [2] Disbelief in the creative forces of the proletariat is derived from the pessimistic moods of the enemy class and is tantamount to capitulation before bourgeois ideology and desertion to the camp of counter-revolution.

Lenin and Stalin have always proceeded on the idea that tremendous, inexhaustible funds of creative energy lie dormant in the working class and that this energy is one of the most important factors in Socialist construction. The October Revolution, having liberated labor, has also unchained and liberated the revolutionary and creative energy of the proletariat, giving it a free road and creating the conditions for its all-sided manifestation. While Social-Democracy has always been afraid of the activity and independent revolutionary initiative of the working class, the Communist Party, guided by Lenin and Stalin, has sustained itself on the creative energy of the proletariat, has striven to liberate and develop it, to awaken and inspire it.

In the essay "How Is Competition to be Organized?" Lenin affirmed that there was much organizational talent among the people. "They must be helped to develop. It is they and they only that, with the support of the masses, will be able to save Russia and save the cause of Socialism." In another essay "Those Frightened by the Crash of the Old and Those Struggling for the New," Lenin wrote: "As the resistance of the bourgeoisie and its toadies grows, the united forces of the proletariat and the peasantry also grow. The exploited classes strengthen, mature, grow, learn to throw off the 'old Adam' of hired slavery just as fast as the resistance of their enemy, the exploiters, grows. Victory is on the side of the exploited because life is for them;

[1] Stalin, *Leninism,* vol. 1, p. 20.

[2] Stalin, *On the Opposition,* 1928, p. 311. Italics mine. A. D.

for them also is the power of numbers, the power of masses, *the power of inexhaustible resources, of unbounded devotion, ideologically developed, honest, forward, striving, awakening to the building of the new, the entire colosal reselves of energy and talent* of the so-called 'common people,' workers and peasants. They will be victorious." [1]

Lenin maintained that the working class and peasantry were a rich untapped spring of talent. Under capitalism the creative forces of the proletariat are repressed by disfranchisement and poverty. Only the Socialist revolution calls the many millions to life, to great creative labors. The October Revolution owes its strength and invincibility, Lenin said, to the fact that it has brought the toiling masses out on the road of independent creation of a a new life, that it has *awakened in them creative capacities* which could not but remain dormant under the slavery of capitalist society.

In that work of genius, *Will the Bolsheviks Retain State Power?* Lenin described the Soviets as the "popular creation of the revolutionary classes," as the new governmental apparatus called to life by "a powerful wave of genuine folk creativeness."

Lenin and Stalin thus attributed a tremendous role to folk creativeness, particularly to the creative enthusiasm of the working class, and saw in the creative forces and capacities of the proletariat a guarantee of the triumph of Socialism.

The creative revolution rests on the *creative capacities of the revolutionary class and its leaders,* on the ability to guide this class by means of creative theory. Lenin and Stalin are creative geniuses.

II

The basis characteristic of genius resolves itself into the ability to create something new. This is its peculiarity, this is what its originality consists of and what distinguishes it from those who "do not invent gun-powder," who only follow the trodden paths, live, think and act according to rote, according to established pattern.

A genius is a *highly gifted* man who has the ability to *discover new roads,* solve problems considered as not lending themselves to solution or not yet solved. The genius sets his special stamp on his period by *pointing out new aims to it and lending it a new content and a new direction,* thus beginning *a new page in the history of mankind.*

The difference between proletarian genius and persons of genius of other social classes is that the latter, however broad their views and however gifted they may be, are limited by the *narrow horizons of class society.* They are under the sway of the ideological illusions and distorted ideas of reality which the material conditions of their existence give rise to.

The genius of the working class (Marx, Engels, Lenin, Stalin as instances) is naturally free from such limitations and illusions and is hence distinguished for great universality, for a breadth and profundity of ideas inaccessible to the best minds of the bourgeoisie.

Remaining the most faithful disciples of Marx and Engels, Lenin and Stalin added many new treasures of world significance to the fund of Marxism, proceeding in their creativeness from independent study of the new historical period, setting new problems before the proletariat of the world to which Marx and Engels could not give the answer by virtue of the fact that they

[1] Lenin, *Collected Works,* vol. 22, p. 57. Italics mine. A. D.

lived at another time. Comrade Stalin has always opposed dogmatic, "quotational" Marxism and insisted on creative Marxism.

"Marxism," writes Comrade Stalin, "is a science. Can Marxism as a science remain and develop if it is not enriched by the new experience of class struggle of the proletariat, if it does not digest this experience from the Marxian point of view, from the angle of Marxian method? Clearly, it can not.

"Is it not clear from this that Marxism requires the improvement and enrichment of old formulas on the basis of taking into account new experience yet preserving the Marxian point of view, preserving its method; while Zinoviev does the exact opposite when he preserves the letter and substitutes for the point of view of Marx and his method the letter of individual propositions of Marxism.

"What can there be in common between genuine Marxism and the substitution for it of the letter of individual formulas and citations from individual Marxian propositions?" [1]

A number of theoretical questions and practical tasks were put and solved by Lenin and Stalin in a new way; issuing from the principles of Marxism they discovered *new roads leading to Socialism.*

"It must be admitted," Comrade Stalin says, "that it was Lenin, and no other, who discovered the truth of the possibility of the triumph of Socialism in one country. One cannot take away from Lenin what is his by right. One should not be afraid of the truth, one must possess the courage to say openly that Lenin was the first of the Marxians to put in a new way the question of the triumph of Socialism in one country and to solve it in a positive sense.

"I do not mean to say by this that Lenin stood higher than Engels or Marx as a thinker. I mean to say by this two things. In the first place, one cannot demand from Engels and Marx, regardless of their great genius as thinkers, that they should have in the period of pre-monopolistic capitalism, foreseen all the possibilities of the class struggle of the proletariat and of the proletarian revolution that revealed themselves more than half a century later, in the period of developed monopoly capitalism. In the second place, there is nothing surprising in the fact that Lenin, man of genius and disciple of Marx and Engels, should have discerned new possibilities of proletarian revolution in new circumstances of capitalist development, and thus should have discovered the possibility of Socialism triumphing in one country.

"One must know how to distinguish between the letter and the essence of Marxism, between individual propositions and the method of Marxism. Lenin succeeded in discovering the truth of the triumph of Socialism in one country because he considered Marxism not a dogma but a guide to action. He was not a slave to letters and could grasp what is most important, fundamental in Marxism." [2]

Everything that Comrade Stalin writes about Lenin as a disciple of genius of Marx and Engels, refers in like measure to himself as the disciple of genius and continuer of Marx, Engels and Lenin. Like his teachers, Comrade Stalin is a creative thinker of genius who creates new values, discovered new truths and embodies them in life at the same time, i.e., intimately joins theory and practice. One of the most remarkable traits of Stalin's creative personality is the inseparable interpenetration of theory and practice, word and deeds, thought and life, idea and reality.

[1] J. Stalin—*"on the Opposition"* p. 510.
[2] Ibid—pp. 379-380.

In view of the simplified (schematic) way that many understand the principle of unity of theory and practice, it is essential to emphasize that what Comrade Stalin requires of theory resolves itself to this: that theory must precede practice, guide it, illuminate the revolutionary movement. He condemns sharply the "tendency of practical workers to shake off theory," and flagellates those who submit to the elemental. He never reconciles himself to a lag between theory and practice, always spurring on theoretical thought, stimulating it and directing it into proper channels.

With the perspicacity of genius, with extraordinary powers of profound analysis and great sensitiveness to all—even minute—changes in social relations, irrespective of whether these occur in our own country or abroad,—Comrade Stalin discerns, catches these new processes often in embryo and draws general conclusions which arm the proletariat in its struggle for Socialism. What distinguishes creative Marxism from the dogmatic is that the latter either altogether fails to notice new processes or changes in the historical situation or, if it does notice them, *adapts itself* to them to the benefit of the interests of the bourgeoisie.

Creative Marxism takes into account all new facts and changes, all new phenomena and differences in the historical situation, to further develop and enrich Marxian theory on the basis of new experience and utilize the results achieved to change the course of reality itself. What is most essential and important to the thinker and leader is—the ability and power to see the new and observe the unknown, the unusual. It is vulgar thought which operates in the sphere of customary phenomena, established canons, formulas learned by rote, current truths.

This is why new phenomena, unusual events, insomuch as they do not fit in with what is well known and cannot be understood from a trite point of view or fit into a ready formula, call out confusion, fright and despair in (vulgar) minds. This is particularly noticeable at critical periods, when a rather rapid change of formula is required, when thought itself must undergo a "crisis" in accordance with changed reality as otherwise a conscious forward movement is impossible.

From the point of view of the social traitors, Leninism cannot but seem a sort of "doomsday" as it upset and continues to upset every day their established views. But Leninism is both creative Marxism and orthodox Marxism—understanding by orthodoxy, faithfulness to the revolutionary spirit, to the essence of its teachings, faithfulness to revolutionary dialectics as the method of Marxism. The essence of creative Marxism has been made sufficiently plain by Lenin and Stalin.

In his essay, "On Our Revolution," Lenin has exposed the dullness, ossified pedantry and routine shabbiness of the main figures of the II International with remarkable profundity. He speaks there about their "slavish copying of the past," their cowardice, their fears before the slightest deviations from the German model, from the established pattern. "In all their conduct they reveal themselves as cowardly reformists, afraid to step away from the bourgeoisie, not to speak of breaking with it, while they cover up their cowardice by the most devil-may-care phraseology and braggadocio. But even purely theoretically one is struck by their total inability to comprehend the following Marxian considerations: *up to now they have seen a definite way of development of capitalism and bourgeois democracy in Western Europe.* And they cannot imagine that this could not be considered a model *mutatis mutandis* otherwise than with some corrections (insignificant ones from the point

of view of world history)." [1] But creative Marxism differs from dogmatic and vulgar Marxism precisely in that the latter defend at best what "they have seen up to now," a definite *customary* way of development of capitalism and bourgeois democracy, while creative Marxism is distinguished for a maximum of flexibility, for breadth of horizon, and carefully takes into account the peculiarities of the new situation, the new objective circumstances created by historical development.

Vulgar Marxism considers "normal bourgeois relations the limit insurpassable," as Lenin says. The narrow-minded theoreticians of the II International have never understood the most decisive thing about Marxism, its revolutionary dialectics. They have never understood that in a revolution connected with the imperialist world war *new features* had to appear, features which are outside the confines of the "usual," that no text book can foresee all the forms of development of world history. "A stranger to them is all thought of the fact that while the development of world history follows certain general laws, this does not preclude, but on the contrary, presupposes individual phases of development representing peculiarities either of the form or the order of this development." [2]

The leaders of the II International keep harping on the idea that the objective economic prerequisites for Socialism are lacking here, Lenin tells us. But it has not entered their minds that the peculiarities of the revolutionary situation that arose revealed to the people "the possibility of another transition to the creation of the basic premises of civilization than the one followed in all other Western European countries," that "transformation in the usual historical order" is possible, that if a definite level of civilization is necessary for the creation of Socialism "why can not we begin by the revolutionary conquest of the prerequisites for this definite level and *then,* on the basis of a workers' and peasants' government and a Soviet system, proceed to catch up with other peoples."

"Our opponents have told us many times," writes Lenin, "that we are undertaking a rash venture in planting Socialism in an insufficiently civilized country. But they were mistaken in that we began not at the end prescribed by theory (of all pedants) and in that the political and social upheaval in our country proved the precusor of that cultural upheaval, that cultural revolution, which we are now nevertheless facing." [3]

"We began at the other end." But it was just this "rash" infringement of the "normal," i.e., customary historical, order of things that shows the genius of the leaders of our Socialist revolution. According to bookish, schoolboy, "normal mind" conceptions there is a definite, established sequence which the historical development from capitalism to Socialism must follow. From this point of view it is necessary to wait until the production forces, the economic conditions of a country, develop to the highest level, at which time only does it become possible for the proletariat to accomplish the revolution.

Why could not the proletariat seize political power *first* and then catch up with the foremost countries economically and culturally? Such a transposition of "links" means a veritable creative revolution in the very understanding of Marxism as compared with the views previously prevailing in all parties of the II International. Such an approach by Lenin and Stalin to the

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[1] Lenin, *Collected Works.* Vol. 27, pp. 398-99. Italics mine. A. D.
[2] Ibid, p. 300.
[3] Ibid, p. 397.

fundamental problems of the proletarian revolution meant a complete and final break with the "normal bourgeois relations."

Lenin's analysis of imperialism revealed new phenomena and new laws of capitalism which opened up new possibilities and prospects for the proletarian revolution. The general conclusion reached by Lenin in his analysis reads: "Imperialism is the eve of the Socialist revolution."

"Accordingly," Comrade Stalin teaches, "the very approach to the question of the proletarian revolution, of the character of the revolution, its extent its depth and the scheme of the revolution, in general undergoes a corresponding change.

"Formerly, the analysis of the premises of the proletarian revolution was usually approached from the point of view of the economic situation in any particular country. This method is now inadequate. Today, it must start from the point of view of the economic situation in all, or a majority of, countries—from the point of view of the state of world economy, inasmuch as the individual countries and individual national economies are no longer self contained economic units but have become links of a single chain called world economy; inasmuch as the old "cultured" capitalism has grown into imperialism, and imperialism is a world system of financial bondage and of colonial oppression of the vast majority of the population of the globe by a handful of "advanced" countries.

"Formerly, it was customary to talk of the existence or absence of objective conditions for the proletarian revolution in individual countries, or, to be more exact, in this or that advanced country. This point of view is now inadequate. Now we must say that objective conditions for the revolution exist throughout the whole system of imperialist world economy, which is an integral unit; the existence within this system of some countries that are not sufficiently developed from the industrial point of view cannot form an insurmountable obstacle to the revolution, if the system as a whole has become, or more correctly, *because* the system as a whole has already become ripe for revolution.

"Formerly, the proletarian revolution in this or that advanced country was regarded as a separate and self-contained unit, facing a separate national front of capital as its opposite pole. Today this point of view is inadequate. Today it is necessary to speak of proletarian world revolution, for the separate national fronts of capital have become links in a single chain called the world front of imperialism, to which should be opposed the united front of the revolutionary movement in all countries.

"Formerly, the proletarian revolution was regarded as the consequence of an exclusively internal development in a given country. At the present time this point of view is inadequate. Today it is necessary to regard the proletarian revolution above all as the result of the development of the contradictions within the world system of imperialism as the result of the snapping of the chain of the imperialist world front in this or that country." [1]

With imperialism, thus, the conditions for the possibility of a proletarian revolution, the course and form of its development, have radically changed as compared with the period of industrial capitalism. There is a tremendous difference between "before" and "now." The leaders of the II International remain on their *old positions,* not noticing all the *new changes* in the structure of capitalism which imperialism brings with it. By virtue of this the

[1] J. Stalin, *Leninism,* vol. 1, p. 32-33. Italics mine. A. D.

Social-Democratic parties have become, essentially, *counter-revolutionary parties.* It fell to the lot of Lenin and Stalin, those two thinkers of genius of our age, to bring the world proletarian movement out on the new broad highway of historical development which opens up the greatest of prospects before the proletariat.

III

In his *German Ideology* Marx develops the thought that labor in the Communist society will take on an entirely different form from labor in a class society. It is in this sense that he speaks there of the "abolition" or overcoming of labor. "Division of labor," he says, "shows us . . . a prime example of the fact that so long as people find themselves in a *spontaneously developing* society, so long consequently, as there exists a divergence between private and social interests, so long consequently, as the division of activities occur not voluntarily but spontaneously,—the very activity of man becomes a foreign, inimical force which subjugates him instead of his subjugating it." [1]

Capitalist society developing due to the division of labor, results in the segregation of capital and labor, of production forces and the individuals whose forces they are. "The only connection," says Marx, "that still exists between production forces and their own existence—labor—has lost for them all semblance of independent activity and only sustains their life by crippling it." In order to ensure their existence and independent activity the proletariat must become master of the production forces as a whole.

"The very appropriation of these forces itself already represents nothing but *the development of individual abilities* to correspond with the material production tools. For this reason alone the appropriation of a definite sum total of production tools is *tantamount to a development of a definite sum total of abilities in the individuals themselves.* Further, this appropriation is predicted on appropriating individuals. Only the modern proletariat, completely robbed of all independent activity, is capable of achieving its full, no longer limited independence, which consists of the appropriation of the production forces as a whole and of the development of the sum total of their abilities in connection with this."[2] This appropriation must be universal in character. It is further conditioned upon the means by which it must be achieved. "It can only be achieved by union, which by virtue of the properties of the proletariat itself can only be a universal one, and by revolution, in which on the one hand the powers of the previous methods of production and association as well as the social order must be overthrown, while on the other, the universal character of the proletariat and of the energy necessary to accomplish the appropriation develops while the proletariat casts off all that he has retained from his previous social position.

"It is only at this stage that independence coincides with material life, which corresponds to the development of individuals into integral ones and the abolition of all spontaneity." [3]

The proletarian revolution thus, "appropriating" the sum total of production forces unfetters the unlimited independent activity of the proletariat and frees its abilities and creative energy previously chained down by the condi-

[1] Marx and Engels, *Collected Works,* vol. 4, p. 23 Russian ed. Italics mine. A. D.
[2] Ibid, vol. 4, pp. 57-58. Italics mine. A. D.
[3] Ibid, vol. 4, p. 58.

tions of existence in capitalist society. Man becomes an integral personality free from the dominance of any elemental forces over him. He is transformed into a conscious independent creator and builder of life, labor becomes creative independent activity in the process of which all the abilities and all the creative energies of man are unfolded.

In the new conditions created by the October Revolution in our country, Lenin and Stalin see the task of Socialism as "leading the toilers out upon the road of independent creation of a new life." (Lenin). Socialism creates for the first time the possibility "to draw the actual majority of toilers into the arena of such labor as makes it possible for them to reveal themselves, unfold their abilities, discover talents, of which there are in the people an untapped spring and which capitalism marred, oppressed, stifled in the thousands and millions." (Lenin)

The creative energy of the bourgeoisie as a ruling class, capable of guiding society spiritually and politically, is exhausted. In its day ideologists—philosophers, artists, poets, political leaders—led society forward and created much of value in all fields of culture, "supporting" themselves on the slavery of the proletariat. Nowadays the civilization created by them is undergoing a most profound crisis, because the class represented by the bourgeois ideologists is moribund. Reflecting the "morbid condition" of bourgeois society, the ideologists of the ruling class are only capable of "morbid creations."

Curiously enough, the theory of giftedness, of genius, is with them inevitably connected with a morbid state of the creators. We have no intention to investigate these theories here. We only wish to point out that the proletariat alone as a young social class, full of fresh strength, full of surging blood and creative energy, is capable of creating a new civilization, a higher culture, regardless of the tommyrot propounded by bourgeois theoreticians that the proletariat is capable only of destroying but not of building.

The leaders of the proletariat represent the brain and will power of this young class struggling all over the world for the overthrow of the decayed social order and the establishment of their own power, their dictatorship in order to build a new, socialist culture. During the seventeen years of the existence of a Soviet government in our country the proletariat has succeeded in unfolding its creative forces and proving to the world that it is building a new social order and creating a new culture. This even many bourgeois statemen must admit.

Mr. de Man, however, a representative of the II International, in his book *The Socialist Idea* goes so far as to deny the working class the capability for any independent creative activity, claiming that only the bourgeoisie can have such creative abilities.

He therefore exhorts the workers to develop bourgeois "virtues." This social-fascist only calumniates the working class when he argues that it is incapable of any independent creative work and that the very complex of socialist ideas is a product of bourgeois creation. According to such views neither Marx nor Lenin have created anything new and the proletariat can only realize what the bourgeoisie has set up on its banner.

According to de Man the ideologists of the bourgeoisie were the real creators of Socialism. The "Socialist" de Man further consciously shuts his eyes to the great creative processes taking place in the Soviet Union where the proletariat, guided by the creative genius of Comrade Stalin, is the creator of a new civilization and a new culture. For the past eleven years such marvels of socialist construction have been achieved in our country as one did not

even dream of previously. But that is of no interest to the "Socialist" de Man!

Like Spengler and other fascist theoreticians he seeks for the basis and source of all culture in religious and metaphysical systems with which all creative effort in the field of art, philosophy, literature, etc. is supposed to be connected. The dominance of science and engineering, he claims, is not the basis of culture but of civilization. In the era of civilization religion and metaphysics are replaced by atheism, materialism and scientific thought. And this is supposed to be a vivid sign of the decadence, the wane of culture.

"Russian culture," writes Fr. Naltenius, "is now undergoing a transition from a high culture (Hochkultur) to civilization. Which of the old cultured European nations can pride itself upon an art which (at the threshold of the modern era) could equal the work of the great Russian masters? But the wave of intellect is having a destructive effect upon Russia. The reformation of the church—Communism or Leninism—and a social revolution of a most radical nature are destroying all values and all order. They will undoubtedly call to life a mighty technique and science, but there will be no Dostoyevski, just as Europe no longer has any Shakespeares, Rembrandts, and Beethovens." [1]

There is no denying Beethoven, Rembrandt, Shakespeare were great men. But Noltenius is profoundly mistaken when he assumes that where science and engineering are developed there can be no great art. In the Middle Ages, for instance, in spite of the undisputed domination of religion and metaphysics there was no suitable basis for real art. The flowering of art begins with the Renaissance which historically bordered upon classic antiquity in all fields of human endeavor.

As a new social class the bourgeoisie once entered into a struggle against religious views in the name of the individual's right to reason. It was compelled to enter upon the road of scientific investigation of the world and the development of technical science. It was then that it also gave birth to a mighty art. But, while the bourgeoisie, as a revolutionary class, was capable of great creative efforts in all fields at the time it flourished, at the time of its struggle against feudalism, it can not longer foster any Beethovens or Rembrandts, Shakespeares or Goethes now, at the time of its waning, after it has played its historical role; it must make way for the proletariat as the ruler of life, because its creative powers have been exhausted.

There are no examples of powerful characters in the life of the bourgeoisie now, of heroic struggle for great ideals, of leaders of genius capable of leading humanity forward, of daring investigators of live truth, creators of new values and a universal ideal which makes it possible to understand the new era and fill it with a wealth of content, form and color, build a new world and a new culture, as we see in the example of the Soviet Union.

It is curious, but when the modern bemoaners of mystical culture begin to argue, they illustrate the decline of culture mostly by using as examples the countries of Western Europe undergoing a crisis, where there is decay of literature, music, the theatre, philosophy, etc. The vast majority of bourgeois ideologists nowadays see the live source of culture in *mystical experience* having its roots somewhere in the irrational world, in the dark kingdom of the unconscious, in a world beyond, where man is supposed to find joy, happiness and the fulness of life. But the intellect cannot reconcile itself to the existence of a dark kingdom of mysterious, mystical forces which hide the

[1] Fr. Noltenius—*Materie, Psyche, Geist,* p. 453, 1934.

real truth of life from man. This is why the modern mystics consider science, intellect and reason the destroyers of all mysticism, all mystery, and hence also of the foundations of culture. The ideologists of the bourgeoisie consider Marxism—intellectualism.

Spranger has pronounced the thesis that "culture ends with asceticism." This is a very curious thesis; it harmonizes completely with modern bourgeois policies demanding of the proletariat a maximium of *renunciation of the satisfaction of his most immediate needs* for the sake of . . . saving their political and economic power over the proletariat. The "Socialist" de Man also adopts the viewpoint of "asceticism." Among the virtues of the bourgeoisie he enumerates, besides "veracity," thrift, moderation, abstemiousness—in a word an ascetic way of life. And, as we already mentioned, he exhorts the workers to adopt these bourgeois virtues.

But *the masses do not care a whit for asceticism,* Noltenius exclaims in despair. "They are distinguished for little susceptibility to spiritual pleasures," he says, and they abandon themselves to the "cult" of the body. Excellent! Another "philosopher" (Muller) reproaches the workers for "belly egoism."

They evidently should devote themselves to spiritual pleasures and give up thinking of mere material needs. The interests of spiritual culture should be high above all "materialism." But however he might try to libel materialism and humiliate the workers he must admit two indisputable facts: the extreme decay of bourgeois culture—degeneration of art, decay of taste, vulgarization of the theatre and a general spiritual decay and degeneration on the whole.

The second fact he is compelled to admit, although he sees no relation between the two facts, is that with all their "belly egoism" the workers tend to develop their creative capabilities and lay the foundation for their own culture even within the framework of the capitalist system. One result of the class struggle, which has sharpened greatly in the post war period, is the complete estrangement and aloofness of the working class from its nation, he says: "A tendency has even arisen among the workers to create their own proletarian culture (Arbeiterkultur): proletarian literature, proletarian music, a workers' theatre, poletarian sport, etc. The worker was kept away from cultural achievements. But, as he cannot exist without spiritual food, he had to resort to self help and try to find some substitute which would satisfy his spiritual cravings."[1]

We consider it superflous to engage here in any detailed criticism of this loathsome "work" of the fascist professor, on a rampage in the name of God and religion against materialism, the "gravedigger of culture" to him. It has now become perfectly evident to the widest circles of toilers and intelligentsia that the real gravediggers of culture are the fascists of all breeds and denominations. Though Muller brazenly asserts that materialism and culture are mutually exclusive, that materialism is inimical not only to art but also to science, we have every basis to oppose this historical falsehood with the truth that religion and culture are really incompatible, like fire and water, and that materialism has always been, consciously or spontaneously, the basis of all genuine culture. Pronouncing the thesis that the subversion of God and religion by materialism has led to a man losing the meaning of life, he must in the same breath admit that religion is bankrupt because it has "become a party." In what, then, does he see the way out of the contemporary situation, the way out from that crisis which Germany particularly is experiencing? In spiritual regeneration, in the return to culture, in the devel-

[1] W. Muller, *Totengraber der Kultur*, S. 92, 1933.

opment of the "higher type of man" and the achievement of mutual trust between the business-man and the worker. . . .

Russian communism, Muller writes further, cannot solve the social problem because communism denies the "spirituality of man" and the family. Under such circumstances the only salvation is man's self-education to culture. The masses need a *new idea of labor.* The void in man's spirit can not be filled by substitutes like "the shorter work day" and "increased incomes" but by new spiritual principles on the idea of labor, on subordinates as assisting co-workers, on the superior as a just judge, on the fatherland as a sure haven of earthly bliss. The whole problem amounts to the raising of this new type of man. It is the problem of the cultured man. "The era of genuine culture begins, the superman is born with faith and ideals! This is the pathos of the future.. Consequently: back to culture!"—thus Muller ends his "work."

Thus the slogan "Back to Culture" when compared with the slogan "Back to Barbarism" as it is formulated by other representatives of fascism proves to have exactly the same meaning. Essentially, all talk about culture and the birth of a new type of man, in conjunction with the "new idea of labor" as a basis for a "new culture," is calculated to set up a bourgeois counter "philosophy of culture" against the Communist teachings on culture. The "new idea of labor" presents nothing new. It only illustrates again the "conviction" of the bourgeoisie and its ideologists that there can be no culture without wage slavery, without exploitation.

Slavery—that is the basis and foundation of that "philosophy of culture" which Muller extols as brand new but which is as old as class society itself. The "ideals" of the "new type of man" mean simply awakening in the mind of the worker trust in his employer, respect for superiors, love of fatherland. This is a police "ideal of culture" and there is of course nothing surprising in the modern fascists reviving police ideals while being the gravediggers of culture. Besides some twaddle about "perfection of the immortal spirit" this "philosopher of culture" could of course tell us absolutely nothing about the real meaning of culture. This is perfectly natural if one takes into consideration the fact that to him and his ilk culture is only a weapon of exploitation, a means of instilling in the workers love and respect for capitalist and superiors. Thus this "philosopher" in his own writings reveals the depth to which bourgeois culture has fallen nowadays and proves its incompatibility and irreconcilableness with the idea of the proletariat being the herald of new ideals, new values and new culture differing fundamentally from bourgeois culture.

IV

At the Third All-Russian Congress of Soviets which took place several months after the October Revolution Lenin declared: "The earth, now the heritage of all the people, has opened up before the proletariat and it will be enabled to organize production and consumption anew on Socialist principles. Previously man's mind and man's genius were entirely occupied in creating things so that some got all the benefits of engineering and culture while others were robbed of the most essential—enlightenment and development. *Now all the wonders of science, all the achievements of civilization, will become the heritage of the people and from now on the human mind and human genius will no longer be applied as means of oppression, means of exploitation.* We know this—and is it not worth while to work towards this and, to devote all

one's strength to this greatest of historical tasks? And this colossal historical task will be accomplished by the toilers because inherent *in them lie the latent powers of revolution, regeneration and renovation."*[1]

The regeneration and renovation of the world is thus only possible on the basis of Socialist society, on the basis of "appropriating the production forces as a whole" which, as Marx expresses it, is tantamount to the "development of the sum total of abilities." The powers of revolution, regeneration and renovation inherent in the toiling masses are only liberated under Socialism when all the achievements of culture, like the material forces of society, become the heritage of all and not the privilege of the rich as in capitalist society.

Lenin and Stalin have set a colossal task before our country—to transform an economically backward country into a Communist, classless society on the basis of the greatest achievements of science and engineering, and simultaneously to transform an illiterate country into one of the highest culture. The Stalin slogan of mastering foremost science, engineering and the entire cultural heritage of the past in order that great independent creative work in all fields of culture might flourish on their basis sets some truly colossal tasks before the country. "It is necessary to take all the culture left by capitalism and out of it to build Socialism. It is necessary to take over all science, engineering, all knowledge, art. Unless we do so, we cannot build Communist society." (Lenin) More than that, the fruits of science, engineering, art must be accessible to "absolutely all toilers," as Lenin emphasizes.

Proletarian culture cannot be created unless everything that has been created by mankind in the field of culture shall have been mastered and critically digested. Lenin makes this quite definite. Such is also the opinion of Comrade Stalin. Lenin says: "Unless we understand clearly that only by exact knowledge of the culture created by the entire development of mankind, only by that can we create a proletarian culture—unless we understand this, we cannot cope with the problem . . . Proletarian culture must be the logical development of those funds of knowledge which humanity has accumulated under the pressure of capitalist society, landlord society, officialdom society." [2]

But the problem of socialist and cultural construction also involves the direct *transformation of man himself.* Struggling for Socialism he struggles against his own failings, changing the world he also changes his own nature, emancipating himself, as Marx says, from all the ancient meannesses and raising himself to the level of the historical tasks before him, tasks acquiring a universal character.

We emphasize the role and significance of the creative forces and abilities of the working class, supporting ourselves on Lenin and Stalin. We have quoted Lenin and Stalin on the creative revolution, on the creative energy latent in the depth of the masses of the peoples, on the conditions for liberating this energy and the possibilities for its further unlimited development. We shall now take this problem up more in detail and analyze it principally in connection with those "theories" which are now current among the bourgeois ideologists of "latest formation." Many of these ideologists, joining Nietzsche, whereas all the "non-creative" elements— and in them they include the workers, or rather, they consider the workers the very "non-creative" class"—must be relegated to the position of soldiers, in a juridical sense also.[3]

[1] Lenin, *Collected Works,* vol. 22, p. 225. Italics mine. A. D.

[2] Lenin, *Collected Works,* vol. 25, p. 387.

[3] "Arbeiter Sollten wei Soldaten empfinden lernen" writes Nietzsche in *Will to Power* (cf. Friedrich Mess. *Nietzsche der Gesetzgeber.* "S 380-381. 1930.

It is well known that fascism puts into effect this soldier's culture. It seems to us, however that it is necessary to dwell somehow on the "theoretical" bases of this soldier's culture which the fascists proclaim as the highest ideal and achievement of the German spirit.

In his book, *Nietzsche the Lawgiver,* Mess writes, among other things, the following: "It is essential to establish the juridical relationship between the creator and the toiler. What this amounts to is to make the labor power of the toilers available to the creators for the works they contemplate in the most efficient manner. The creators set the task and the toilers have no influence on this whatever." [1] There is a natural law, he continues, according to which power, i.e., domination over natural resources, belongs to the creative workers.

In other words, those should have sway over natural forces who are able to produce *new values* out of them. But, according to Nietzsche and Mess, not only workers, but even those who engage in mental labors really have slave-like functions. "Even the most differentiated mental labor is slave labor and never gives any privileges with respect to the right of choosing values."[2] In the social system the "creator" represents the active element, the toilers represent the reagent element, and this must find its expression in the law regulating their relations.

If the "creators" develop positive creative energy, the worker can supposedly only manifest negative creative energy expressing itself in violent actions against the first. Spartacism, i.e., communism, says Mess, is the embodiment of nihilism, resistance and counteraction to the creative forces of society. A genuine Sparticist does not want any positive values. He does not want to work, has no refined wants either physical or spiritual. But this lack of any wants is his strongest weapon in the struggle against the "creators." Spartacism or communism is only the will to destruction, nihilism, the direct opposite of activity and creativeness. Society thus falls apart into two categories standing at opposite poles: into the creative and the non-creative, the destroyers, nihilists.

Who then are the "creators?" It is quite easy to guess that it is the capitalists, the entrepeneurs who are being glorified as the creators of values, the creators of culture, as against the workers, the slaves, who are supposed to do the bidding of the "creators" like dumb animals. The theory of "creators" and "non-creators" (workers) has been concocted purposely to deceive the masses and justify the rule of the capitalists. The capitalists raised to the rank of "creators" acquire a certain "immunity" because who but "barbarians" and "nihilists" could take issue against creators of culture? But this is a very weak and crude defense of capitalism. Because who will really believe that the capitalists create any sort of values while those engaged in physical and mental labor create nothing, create no values! But however false this "new" theory may be it forms the cornerstone of fascist practical politics and we must therefore devote some attention to it. Besides—even the "Socialist" de Man claims that the workers should learn how to work from the bourgeoisie which is supposed to be the creative class in all respects, i.e., the "creators."

That new "lawgiver," Mess, feeling that he has somewhat overshot the mark, tries to soften down his wild, false theory by "amending" it with what

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[1] Fr. Mess, *Nietzsche der Gesetzgeber,* p. 372.

[2] "Auch die differenzierteste geistige Arbeitist Sklavenverrichtung und giebt niemals Anwartschaft of Wertwahlrechte" (Mess, *Nietzsche der Gesetzgeber,* p. 374.).

amounts to the statement that there is presumably no sharp, impassible barrier between the creators and the toilers, that "every worker is to a certain, though to no very great extent, also creative." But this amendment is vitiated by the claim that the toilers, Sparticists, Communists, show "resistance to the creative forces" and personify the principle of destruction.

Contrary to the fascist "philosophers" we claim *that only the toilers are creative*. Consequently to say the toilers are opposed to the creators is sheer nonsense. That labor is the source of material values and that consequently those who do labor are the only "creators" in this field—is such an axiomatic truth that no proof of it is necessary.

With respect to the part taken by workers and peasants in scientific and technical work generally at various periods of history we might point out the following facts. Gutenberg, the inventor of printing, was a glass polisher. Michael Faraday, the genius of experimental physics, was the son of a blacksmith, and was himself a bookbinder in his younger days. Michael Lomonosov was the son of a peasant, Kant the child of a saddler and Fichte the son and grandson of a village weaver. The great mathematician and astronomer, Carl Gauss, was the son of a small artisan. The physicist Ohm, whose discoveries form the foundation of all modern electro-technical science—was the son of a mechanic. Peltier, author of the most important discovery in the field of thermo-electricity (the Peltier effect), was the son of a cobbler and himself a watchmaker. Rukhmkorff, inventor of induction apparatus (the Rukhmkorff coil) was himself a worker and came of a family of workers. Sturgeon, the phycisist, inventor of the electro-magnet, one of the first to build a generator and electric motor, author of a number of theoretical investigations—was the son of a cobbler and himself a cobbler. James Hargreaves, the inventor of the weaving machine (the spinning jenny), was a carpenter by trade. Crompton, inventor of the spinning mule, was the son of a weaver. Newcomen, the inventor of the atmospheric steam engine and predecessor of Watt, was the son of a carpenter. Trevithick, the inventor of the cylindrical boiler, the high pressure steam engine, the direct acting steam pump and so on, was the son of a mechanic. George Stephenson, inventor of the steam locomotive, was the son of a miner and himself a workman in his youth. Telford, the famous architect who erected many hydrotechnical structures, bridges, etc., was the son of a poor peasant and himself a hired hand. Gramme, the creator of the dynamo, was a carpenter. Hiram Maxim, the inventor of the machine gun, the gas regulator, the regenerator, the carburetor, pumps, heaters, smokeless powder, the air and sea torpedo, was a workman on a wood lathe. And so on.

To speak after this of the "organic" inability of workers to engage in scientific and technical creative work, as the representatives of the bourgeoisie do, is simply to falsify facts. We think the part taken by workers and peasants in creating not only the material but also the scientific and technical culture of even the bourgeois era is exceedingly great. Unfortunately no one has ever made a serious study of this matter.

In his famous letter to the "Workers Parliament" in session at Manchester in 1854 Marx wrote, among other things: "Millions of workers of Great Britain were first to lay the real foundation of the new society—modern industry, which transforms the destructive forces of nature into the productive forces of man. The English working class has, with invincible energy, by the sweat of their brows and by straining their minds, called to life the material possibilities of ennobling labor and has increased its productivity to such an extent as to make general well-being a possibility.

"In creating the inexhaustible production forces of modern industry it fulfilled the first condition for the emancipation of labor. Now it must fulfill the other conditions. It must free these beneficient forces from the shameful chains of monopoly and subject them to the general control of the producers who have thus far permitted the values created by them to be turned against them, to be turned into a weapon of their own oppression.

"The working class has vanquished the forces of nature, it must now vanquish men. It has sufficient strength to accomplish this successfully."[1]

In speaking of the workers having vanquished the forces of nature, having created modern industry, etc., Marx undoubtedly had in mind also all modern technical progress, including technical invention and discovery.

Thus almost all technical invention which determined the industrial revolution and opened up a new era in the history of mankind were the work not of "creative" merchants, entrepreneurs, capitalists or bankers, but of talented workers, men of genius: blacksmiths, "mechanics," weavers, carpenters, cobblers, etc. This is of tremendous significance in itself, inasmuch as it shows the tremendous creative powers of the "simple people." Socialism opens up the broadest possible opportunities, totally undreamt of prospects for their manifestation and development.

Who does not know that we have a great organized army of inventors and rationalizers, 800,000 strong, who devote all their creative energies to the great tasks of Socialist construction? While under capitalism all discoveries and inventions are of a cursory, "accidental" nature, they are conducted or can be conducted into the road of planned creative work under Socialism, because it is he who seeks that finds.

Under capitalism the toiling masses were robbed of the opportunity to be creative in the "higher" fields of culture: philosophy, science, literature, poetry, music, painting, etc., because, for creative work in these fields one needs, in addition to talent, some education and a great deal of preparatory training. Crushed by want and oppression the toilers could rarely rise to these heights while the bourgeoisie consciously cultivated ignorance and all sorts of prejudice in the masses, keeping them away from education. Nevertheless individual great talents still were able to fight their way upward and create values.

Translated from the Russian by S. D. Kogan

[1] Marx und Engels, *Collected Works*, Russian Ed. vol. 9, p. 260.

Uril Olesha Talks With His Readers

Question: How did you work on *Jealousy*? What served as the first impulse for this work?

Answer: This is a hard question to answer. The laws of creative work are very poorly understood. It is hard to give an account of how the thing is done. How characters are born, how the idea comes forth. . .

Jealousy was my first book. At one time I wrote verse. This, by the way, was not simply the verse of a young man who settles accounts with his secret thoughts and his dreams of love, as frequently happens in youth. This was to a certain degree professional verse. I also tried to write prose. Some of my stories were printed in Odessa a long time ago, about 1918 roughly. Bad stories, not at all interesting. Then I wrote verse feuilletons, in the newspaper *Gudok*. I wrote for six years. At the same time I worked on prose.

How was *Jealousy* born?

Like every first book, it was the result of very prolonged accumulation. The first book is always the most fresh. It is the result of almost the whole of one's conscious youth.

What was the impulse which gave rise to *Jealousy*—that I can not ascertain. There was no exterior impulse. I recognize in *Jealousy* colors which were noted by me in very early childhood, when I was five or six years old. In childhood I was greatly intrigued by transfer pictures. A trace of this childhood impression remains in *Jealousy*. Transfer pictures are mentioned there. It is strange—to me, for instance, it seems that one of the reasons as a result of which I became an artist was precisely this marvelous impression received by me in childhood from transfer pictures . . . I remember a very elegant, small-sized format book. It was a present. Transfer pictures made abroad. On the sheets there were printed different engravings. Engravings, mark you, I remember this well. Different historical scenes. They were printed in one tone—of a grey color. And then the miracle began! When such an engraving was transferred onto paper there appeared on the paper a completely new, excitingly colored, brilliant, glittering design. It had just come out of the water and therefore seemed to have a special glitter! One such design I have remembered all my life. It was a scene from the Boxer rising in China. A high wall under an indescribably blue sky, and from the wall hang beheaded Chinese. An indescribably blue sky, indescribably scarlet blood. To this very day I can see this picture in front of me. And I remember that in those moments when I took it into my perception I felt in myself a sort of new, unknown spiritual movement. I felt the existence of the beauty of events! That an event may be in itself—independent of what is happening—splendid. This is the formulation I would make now. Then, of course, an account of what it was that I felt—such an account of course I could not give. But I know exactly that precisely then, in perceiving the impression from the transfer picture, I understood for the first time that in the world there is art.

Childhood impressions play an enormous part in the formation of the artistic intellect. Sometime or other I will write an article on childhood impressions in Tolstoy's work. Precisely in Tolstoy's work do these childhood impressions display themselves very forcefully.

Voice: For example?

Answer: For example, in *War and Peace*. In the description of the battle of Borodino. There Napoleon is described as he observes the battle through field

glasses. And here is what Tolstoy writes (my quotation of course is not exact, but approximate): "When he put the field glasses to his eyes, he saw where the blue uniforms of Murat's regiments were situated. When he lowered the field glasses, he could no longer find the place where these uniforms were. . ." and so on.

Here certainly is a childhood reminiscence of the game with field glasses. You remember, when you use field glasses for the first time, you really don't understand the mechanism all at once. It is quite difficult to find the position of say, the balcony or window which in all its details was in front of you when you looked through the field glasses.

It is, however, impossible to believe that Napoleon did not know how to use field glasses. But Tolstoy wanted to discredit Napoleon, and in order to give his actions a ridiculous flavor, he reduced him to childish incompetence.

Thus a reminiscence of childhood aids Tolstoy to attain a definite artistic effect.

Question: Then, according to you, childhood impressions have a great significance?

Answer: In a certain sense—a decisive significance. I will give an example. The words of Goethe. He said of Peter the First that he built Petersburg on canals because in childhood he was impressed by a picture showing a Dutch town. These certainly are the words of a poet, very beautiful words but perhaps not altogether exact—however, it seems to me that there is in them a bit of truth.

The ability to see the world as if for the first time is the characteristic of the poet. And this ability comes after all from childhood, when a man really does see the world for the first time.

Question: How long did you take to write *Jealousy*?

Answer: In fact six months. But on particular parts I worked for five years. I was learning to write. "I grew wild from blotting," to use the expression of Boris Pasternak. The first draft had 300 pages and not one of them remained as it was originally.

Question: Did you have a definite plan as you wrote?

Answer: I wrote without a plan. There are some who as they work say to themselves: I haven't succeeded with this bit, but I'll leave it for the time being. I'll write on and then come back and work over it. Unfortunately I cannot work so. I can go forward only when everything I've done seems to me to have been done well. If I feel that in what I've written some expression or separate word is unsatisfactory, then I go back and sit over it until I achieve a result which satisfies my taste.

Voice: That is incorrect!

Answer: Of course it's not correct. That is why I spend so much time on my productions. But what's to be done? There are no rules of how to work. The manner of each is extraordinarily individual. Zola not merely drew up a plan but definitely fixed a schedule by which a page had to be finished. And as a rule he finished the whole work according to the calendar—exactly as he had planned . . . Each works as he can and as he wishes.

What does a plan mean?

I see separate stages. As it were, piers upon which lies the bridge of the whole production. Sometimes there arises a particular image, a phrase. Sometimes with the mind's eye you see it a gesture. Someone's extended arm. The appearance of some tall figure in a bright rectangular door. Separate images, repetitions of reality which suddenly come to the surface of consciousness.

Not every image of reality is remembered in such a way that it comes to the surface of consciousness. It must be supposed that only those moments of real life remain in consciousness which in some degree are necessary to me, the artist. There is some kind of harmonious mutual relation between me and reality.

These separate images enter firmly into the consciousness. It is they which are the original impulses of which you spoke.

Certainly it is necessary to have a plan. I will learn to work with a plan. I do not consider myself a finished master. I know as little as you do.

Concerning a plan. I am astonished, and it seems to me completely incomprehensible (absolutely a secret and a riddle for me) how for instance Hugo wrote his *Les Misérables*. After all, from a formal point of view, *Les Misérables* is an adventure story. How many threads are gathered together there, how many cunningly devised intersecting and inter-twined events take place, how many effects, surprises, how marvelously all the ends meet. I cannot understand how you can even compose such a plan. This is above my comprehension.

Pushkin said that the plan alone of Dante's *Inferno* was already a work of genius.

So everything points to the fact that before beginning to write it is necessary to have a plan. Alexei Tolstoy, however, in one of his utterances remarks that when the plan is already made and you are writing according to this plan, there takes place suddenly a revolt of the characters. It would seem that such a thing is possible. It would seem that the creation of the event itself may continue, even when the event is already taking place. And in this lies one of the remarkable characteristics of creative work. Creation is radioactive. One thought irradiates another. The poet improvises. I, for instance, have remarked that for me personally it is very fruitful to narrate my design to someone else. You get something in the nature of improvisation. Unexpectedly for myself new things are born—not merely details or bits of color, but complete sections, complete catastrophes. . .

Question: What are the artistic methods of *Jealousy*?

Answer: There are two kinds of writers. One kind in whose productions you can see how the thing was written, see the structure of the thing. And there are others in reading whom you do not note the language, but see only those pictures which are described by this language. Let us suppose that you look out of a window and lean right forward; then you do not see the window—the window frame and the shelf—you see the fields and the sea. And you can look so that you see the window, and apart from that perhaps things standing near the window just as well.

When I write I think only of how to transfer with the maximum of vividness what I see. I want the reader to look at the world which I show him and lean right out without being distracted by the window frame and things standing near the window.

One reader told me that he does not know what my sentences are like, long or short. "I see what you show me and do not note the methods you adopt to make me see."

What sort of methods are these? In order to make another person see I must first of all see myself. This is the basic and most important thing. I must convey to the reader my own emotion. If the idea is thought out, if you know thoroughly what you want to depict, then you need not worry about words. They will come of themselves.

Hugo said that every true thought takes the form of verse. The chief thing is the thought, the content. The form comes later. Form is the frontier of content.

Voice: You frequently quote Hugo. Evidently you are fond of him.

Answer: Yes, I am very fond of him. But the question is not put in the right way. I do not know what to answer when I am asked: whom do you like more, Pushkin or Lermontov? And by the way, you often hear this question. And then the discussion begins: you know, there's something in Pushkin, bot then in Lermontov there's something . . . This is a ridiculous way of speaking. What is meant by being fond of a writer? Great writers are great. How can you be fond or not be fond of Balzac, Shakespeare, Goethe? It is possible to speak of a certain other attitude to a writer. This other attitude arises when you find in one writer or another something close to yourself, something of your own. This something of your own can be found in a Balzac masterpiece and in some production of no merit at all. All right, let us call this "being fond of a writer." From this point of view I am most "fond" of Wells. H. G. Wells. You know, the author of *The Invisible Man, The War of the Worlds* and *The First Men in the Moon.* For me, Wells is a genuinely great writer. He describes fantastic events. Things that never were. Martians descend on the earth. The conquest of the earth by the Martians. Or a journey of the moon. Two men in the moon. Or an invisible man. The terrible life of the invisible man.

Voice: But Jules Verne?

Answer: Wait a minute. That is, you want to say that there is another more fantastic author, Jules Verne. No, it is impossible to compare them. It's a different matter. Jules Verne does not seem to me to be an artist. The strength of Jules Verne is in something else—incomparable strength of imagination in the sphere of technique. But in Wells what I value is precisely not fantasy, although it is amazing in him—I consider that what is valuable in Wells is that, adopting artistic methods, he is able to transform fantasy into epic. Improbable events acquire such convincing and real features that the fantastic novel becomes as it were a document, as it were evidence of real events which in their time disturbed humanity. *The War of the Worlds*, the novel about the Martians, I accept as if it were a historical novel. I do not wish to doubt that all this really took place. The fantasy of Wells is a fantasy with details, with everyday events. His methods are of the same family as those which Tolstoy uses in, let us say, *War and Peace,* where historic personages are brought down by him to the concreteness of everyday life, where the first appearance of Napoleon is shown in rather a comic style: he is shown with naked torso and his batman is spraying him with eau de cologne.. And Napoleon—the hero whose personality filled nearly a century—grunting and snorting, exclaims: "Go on, go on! Let's have some more!"

Reading Wells' novels, I live in a fantastic environment, as if in a real world. Such is the strength of this artist.

Wells is epic as no one is. And the chief thing is that he depicts the flow of events and solitary human fate in this flow. War, the collision of tremendous masses, catastrophe. And through this passes a man: a live, diverse, lonely, unhappy man who struggles on to the very end. In this lies the unusual emotionality, humanity of these fantastic novels. This is that emotionality which is to be found in *All Quiet on the Western Front.* There also there is individual human fate in the flood of events. The artistic essence is one and the same.

Question: You say that you like those writers in whom you find something of your own. What of your own do you find in Wells?

Answer: I will say a thing which will seem strange to those comrades here who are well acquainted with my work. *Jealousy* was written under the influence of Wells. In particular, of *The Invisible Man.* Strange? However, it is so. Sometime I will demonstrate this with a pencil in my hand. Certainly the idea of my novel is different, different certainly are the characters, the whole essence is different. . . . However, I know that it is so. When I read my novel carefully I see behind its web scenes which arose before me when I read *The Invisible Man.* Summer arises, a summer day, green grass. In childhood I dreamt about Europe. About a bicycle tour in Europe. About the roads of England. I lived then in Odessa. It seemed that Odessa was linked more closely with Europe than with Russia. I saw the sea, a wave of the sea, and it was easy for me to think that that wave had come from the ocean. The thought of Europe had a special emotional quality in stirring my imagination. In Europe at that time aviation was beginning, and sport. In Europe technique was in flower. Amazing automobile races took place there. The Eiffel Tower stood there. And then Wells fell into my hands . . . I know that the summer coloring of *Jealousy* comes from Wells, from the dreams about Europe, from the pictures of aviation and sport which my imagination was then forming.

Voice: But that is not enough, to speak of influence . . .

Answer: Perhaps this is not concrete. I, so to speak, give you few examples, but after all, I myself know and feel this, and I do not wish to conceal it. Wells' *Invisible Man* is precisely the thing, and not the French writers, not Jean Giraudoux as the critics assert, which has exerted on me the greatest influence. I know, for example, definitely that the outward appearance of Ivan Babichev, those features which I suddenly saw when I was thinking over this character—the exterior of a man who has sunk to the bottom and is living a dirty life, a man in a strange hat, a poor man, a tramp and a philosopher, this image is nothing else than my reminiscence of that tramp, Mr. Marvell, who stole the magic books from the invisible man. There is a place where Mr. Marvell runs away from the invisible man—a panting fat man with short legs . . . Green grass, a summer day, and the fat man running. . . Whoever remembers *Jealousy* will agree with me that Ivan Babichev is very like this fat man . . . The character of which I speak evidently had a powerful effect upon me. Apart from *Jealousy* it crops up in another of my things. In the short story "The Chain." There it is said: "Now I am tired. See how tired I am. I, a fat man with short legs. See how hard it is for me to run. But I run, although I pant, although my feet stick—I run under the thundering storm of the century."

Here I speak of myself, and yet the thought returns to an image from an alien literary production, an image which cut its way into my consciousness. Why precisely this image cut its way in and not another is difficult for me to explain.

Question: How did you attain the restraint of style of *Jealousy* and your other productions? How did you work on the polishing of sentences, dialogue and images?

Answer: In *Jealousy* there is a phrase . . . Kavalerov says to the girl: "You have gone sounding past me like a branch full of flowers and leaves." Everybody likes this phrase. It is quoted. And I like it. But, by the way, it is not altogether literate. This illiteracy has been noticed by no one. Why? Because

it stands in a place where the reader experiences emotion. This phrase comes to the surface on a lyric wave. It is dictated by a whole series of preliminary events leading to a very serious conflict. In what does its illiteracy consist? A branch full of flowers and leaves cannot exist. A branch is not volume, but line. A line cannot be full. You cannot fill a line. You can approach it from all sides. You can build upon it, but you cannot fill it. There results here not perhaps exactly illiteracy, but a kind of stylistic inexactitude. No one has noticed this. It has not been noticed because this phrase was pronounced with great feeling. I do not intend to justify illiteracy and slovenliness; in art, however, the most important thing is feeling. The artist must convey his feeling to another. Tolstoy called this infection with feeling. Without this infection there is no art. Of course form has a colossal significance. Marcel Proust said that for eternity there remains from art only metaphor. With this extreme opinion it is impossible to agree. But let us take the expression "eyes like stars." Who first applied this comparison and where was it first applied? In song? In prayer? In story? We do not know. Only the comparison remains.

It is absolutely necessary that the artist should be moved by some feeling in order that the emotion should seize those who apprehend the artistic production. Thought, feeling . . . Form comes by itself. Once again let us return to Hugo's persuasively correct formula that every true thought takes the form of verse.

On infection with feeling. Tolstoy repeatedly stated that Hugo's *Les Misérables* made an enormous impression on him, and we may say that Hugo's emotion infected Tolstoy. In *Les Misérables* the main figure is Jean Valjean, who was a convict and became a righteous person. What was the reason for this transformation A certain circumstance, and namely: a man whom the convict wished to murder forgave the convict . . . The man forgave his enemy, and had mercy on him. As a result of this act, there took place a miracle. The convict became holy.

The theme of forgiveness. Someone forgives somebody. Forgives his enemy does good, renders help.

Hugo infected Tolstoy with this theme. A whole series of Tolstoy's works is penetrated by it. And, formally, these works are the most perfect. So it may be concluded that this theme—the theme of forgiveness, of mercy—more than others moved Tolstoy, aroused in him the greatest flow of creative power. And another point is characteristic: this theme was most often treated by Tolstoy in his old age. That is, when he had weakened. Because when you read about someone forgiving, you have a feeling of tenderness. And tenderness is after all a manifestation of weakness. We have grown out of the thought that you should forgive your enemies. We are not Christians. In reading *The Forged Coupon*, however, we yield to the artistic influence of Tolstoy, and without wishing it, yield to tenderness at those places where the enemy is forgiven. This is a very powerful moment in art, when people are forgiven. And there is still another moment, equal to it in strength. That is, when people revenge. Ah, Tolstoy was a very cunning artist, precisely cunning. He knew all, all the delicacies, all the methods. He was a master more than anyone, and yet for some reason or other, we have very little written about the formal side of Tolstoy's works.

Question: Why, in your conception of the new man, are physical culture and sport indispensable characteristics? Is it impossible for a round-shouldered, spectacled bookworm to be a positive type of contemporary reality?

Answer: I think it is possible. But if he takes up physical culture, he won't

be round-shouldered. You have touched upon an interesting question. The exterior appearance of the hero. It may really be quite witty to give to a positive hero somewhat comic exterior features. This is a tested method. I am preparing a play in which there is depicted a student—a young Marxist who is studying philosophy and who is like the old German student. He has a multitude of books in his room—and birds. A wide open window, pots of flowers on the window sill, hanging cages. He wears his hair long, and plays the violin.

To give exterior features opposite to the inner appearance is always interesting. This increases the brilliance of the figure. I was severely criticized for making Andrei Babichev a sausage-maker. A communist, a positive type, and all of a sudden, a sausage-maker! But I deliberately gave a positive hero an eccentric profession. If he had been not a sausage-maker, but let us say, the head of a publishing house, it would have been insipid. Inasmuch as he was a sausage-maker around him there appeared visibly, tangibly, interesting things. The head of a publishing house has paper, cardboard . . . tasteless. But food products are more picturesque. . . .

Jealousy was written in 1927. In our days, in the last five or six years, the attitude to the professions has greatly altered. At present it is easier in this sense for an author to work—in the sense of choosing professions for his characters. A very characteristic feature of our days is the fact that the mental level of our country has grown extraordinarily. Love for reading, the theatre, art, has awakened the masses to thought. A tremendous number of universities, schools, libraries, form an educational center for life. The political essence of our life—the very fact that socialism is being built in our country—directs our attention into the channels of thought, of philosophy. We think, we reflect, we imagine. An extraordinary activity of mental processes—this characterizes our country, all its citizens, all ages, all professions. Now there are no "unthinking" professions. Now any character in a play may reflect and reason. A playwright of our times, in endeavouring to solve in his play any sort of problem connected with the philosophy of our epoch need not be in difficulty in choosing a profession. If in his play a fitter should make philosophical conclusions, this would be completely artistic, this would be truth. Nothing like this was possible before. Remember. When a playwright in the past wished to depict a hero who reasoned, a hero who thought, it was either a king or a landowner. Only in our country are poetry and philosophy accessible to all. Do not fear to distribute your most delicate thoughts to any group of characters. If I should introduce into a play a young man or woman, I would put in their lips the most colorful expressions of all I have in store.

Question: Would not this be idealization?

Answer: Let it be idealization. It is necessary to create things which will arouse in young people the thirst to imitate. Everything depends on the artist. I want to see only the good in our life. I want to exaggerate this good. Artistically, of course. An artist can do much. Very often people judge the true picture of life on the basis of artistic productions. Particularly when they judge the past. The great strength of art is that it transforms life. It combines parts of actual reality, creates a new picture in which the truth of facts, gives place to poetic truth. Of the terrible Russia of Nicholas the Hangman, two great poets, Pushkin and Gogol, wrote simultaneously. *Eugene Onegin* was written, and *Dead Souls* was written. Each one of these poets saw one and the same world differently. The picture of life in *Eugene Onegin* seems

idyllic, in *Dead Souls* it is like a delirium. Reading *Onegin* we have no regret for Lenski, we would be hard put to it to say of Onegin himself what he is, bad or good. . . Attention does not rest on this. The main thing that enters into consciousness is—the garden, only the dream, Tatyana's letter, the nurse. . . Only the good, only the gentle, only the idyllic! And on the contrary, we remember only the horrible when we read *Dead Souls*. And there is nothing there that could not be called horrible. Even children were seen by Gogol as repulsive.

When Gogol read *Dead Souls* to Pushkin, Pushkin said—"how sorrowful is our Russia!" And this roused Gogol's surprise. Gogol was surprised that Pushkin—such a wise fellow—did not understand "that I imagined all this." It seemed to Gogol that he imagined this terrible Russia. And today by this imagined Russia we judge what Russia was in actual fact. And the strange visions of Gogol have turned out to be the truth.

The artist sees in the picture of the world only what he wants to see.

Question: If you were to write *Jealousy* now, what would you alter in it?

Answer: Everything, from beginning to end. Let us speak frankly: it is a good book. But I think all the same that it should be written differently. Here we approach a very important question. The thing is that between a young author and an old one, the difference first of all is that the first is a young man, and the writer who has been writing for a long time is already mature. A young man sees the world differently from a mature man. In *Jealousy* there are all the good things, and all the shortcomings of youth. It seems to me now that the structure of this work is too "fat." There are too many comparisons, metaphors. . . The distribution of color is improper. It is necessary to write more dryly, more simply, more concisely. It would, however, be senseless to give such a recipe to the young writer. A young writer cannot write sparingly. He is all in the power of what Essenin called "the tumult of the eyes and the high water of the heart."

I have noticed that in the verses of young poets a great deal of attention is paid to roads, rain, stones, birds. The chief thing in the verses of young poets is scenery. Here there is given, as it were, the tribute of admiration to the outer world in its more beautiful and simple manifestations, rain, flowers, birds. Roads play a tremendous role in poetic creation. Remember Gogol, how much he spoke of roads. He said, "The road cures me."

But it is necessary after all to write dryly, sparingly, simply. Stendhal, it seems to me, wrote best of all. He also used metaphors, but see how he does it. In one place he complains that a woman whom he loved did not understand him because she was superficial, silly. "I placed my net too high"—says Stendhal—"she flew much lower."

Simple writing does not mean poverty-stricken writing. Here is a passage from Tolstoy's *Kreutzer Sonata:* "Only when I saw her dead face did I understand all that I had done. I understood that I, I had killed her, that it had been done by me that she had been alive, moving, warm, and now had become motionless, waxen, cold, and that never, nowhere, and nohow could this be put right."

That is written very simply. To the young writer it will perhaps appear that the expression—"it had been done by me that she was alive . . ."—is not up to much. Probably it is even illiterate. . . But what a terrible impression it produced by this passage!

It is necessary correctly and economically to distribute the colors and perspectives. In *A Theatrical History* Anatole France gives a calm narra-

tion for several pages and suddenly there is a suicide scene. A bullet pierces the skull, the brain is seen, and "the brain was like Africa," writes France!

In saying that metaphors, comparisons and decorative epithets should be unexpected, I am saying nothing new. And they must not in any circumstances dare to be "remarks" on the part of the author. They must not stick out of the fabric of the narration. When, on coming across a metaphor or some kind of definition, you see through the web of narration the winking eye of the author—it is disgusting! There, he seems to say, what a nice thing I've thought up . . . but what will you say, reader?

In *Ocean Road* Leonov writes: "The Holofernes head of the signalman." That is a wink on the part of the author. The author saw a black-bearded signalman, and remembered a picture which he saw in a museum. From whose point of view does the comparison arise in the given case? Who saw the depiction of Holofernes in the museum? A character? The author? Why am I, the reader, bound to know the picture which the author saw? One picture portrays Holofernes with a beard, another might show him as bald and with a sparse beard. This is a matter of taste and in presenting to us the exterior of Holofernes just as it impressed itself upon the author on seeing some picture which we are not bound to have seen, the author displays what is called estheticism and bad-mannered estheticism at that.

Such private comparisons should not be made. Everything is like everything else. To compare, speaking generally, is easy. But such comparisons make the fabric of the work flowery. And that is a great defect.

A comparison should be exact, scientifically correct. You should almost shriek when you come across a comparison. And then on looking at it you ought to be surprised that it never entered your own head that things are exactly as the poet has said. Probably even it did enter into your head, but unclearly; you did not think things out, but only hobbled approximately nearby. And when the poet says: "There!" you at once acknowledge: "Yes. Quite true. It is just like that!" A metaphor should facilitate thinking and not make it more difficult.

Perhaps you see some object or other. This object has some special kind of illumination. Let us say that it casts some sort of fantastic shadow. The whole thing taken together astonishes you. You suddenly see that the whole composition reminds you of something and you note in your consciousness: Such and such is like such and such.

But it is just here that you must show extraordinary care. Beware of generalizing the particular. If there were not the fantastic shadow, would the likeness still be there? Think it over, check it up. That you have discovered a likeness does not yet mean that the likeness exists. The likeness must exist not only in your eyes. It must exist (not recognized by consciousness) in the perspective system of every man, in every man's knowledge of the world. It is when the artist discovers these conceptions of likeness which are the same for all that he compels us to scream! Here the artist himself experiences a mental shock! The discovery of such a likeness affords the artist exceptional pleasure, and naturally this pleasure is conveyed to the reader. And on the contrary: when comparisons and metaphors are artificial, the reader is gripped by an almost physiological despondency.

An unexpected touch of color should serve not merely for decoration. It should perform an "explanatory" role. For instance, in the *Forged Coupon* Tolstoy says of a dignitary that "the dignitary laughed so heartily that the belt on his belly wrinkled up." Until this point nothing had been said about

the dignitary's exterior and of how he was dressed. Only when he laughs do we see the belt and the belly.

Words in an artistic production should be sufficient and inevitable. Here is an example from one of my own things. In *Jealousy* it is said: "I heard other people speaking. They spoke about a razor. About a madman who cut his throat. And there was no fluttering of a female name." Here the word "fluttering, in a somewhat ironic passage about a love tragedy. Why fluttering? Because the wings of Cupid, the god of love, flutter. Thus the word chosen is sufficient and inevitable.

For me personally it is incomparably pleasant to work on style. And I experience the same incomparable pleasure when well-found words fall from the lips of another. "It is necessary to teach men to wish correctly." This is an expression of Academician Pavlov's. How splendidly is the thought expressed here! In this case the great scientist has shown himself a notable master of the sufficient and inevitable word. When a man knows what he wants to say, he always finds splendid expressions. This is a law. This might be established upon examples of non-literary men expressing ideas concerning their specialty: this very Pavlov, scientists in general. Very often scientists in defining some phenomenon employ metaphors, although they are not poets. How many poetic definitions there are, for instance, in medicine and technique. Take just such an expression as "the fatigue of metals." And as scientists are serious people, they don't use metaphors like a baby playing with a rattle, but out of necessity. They employ the given expression only because it defines the content of the given fact in the truest way. Thus it is that the imagery of science is always weighty and manly. It was anatomists, not poets, who saw the likeness between the ear and a shell, and who gave the Adam's apple its name.

Question: Do you read according to a definite system?

Answer: No.

Question: When you read philosophical literature, does it give you material?

Answer: Yes. Associations arise. The attention of the artist usually rests upon what in one way or another will turn out to be useful for him. Reading a book I always know: There, that will come in handy.

Question: Some fact or other?

Answer: A fact, a thought, an expression.

Question: Do you write it down?

Answer: There is no need to write it down. It will remain in the memory for the rest of one's life.

Question: Is it necessary to read much?

Answer: Of course. But when you have already started writing your work, I think it is not advisable to read. That may be dangerous. Some good book may have such a powerful influence on you at the time you yourself are writing that you will be drawn into a direction which is quite unsuitable for you. I am not speaking, of course, of that auxiliary reading which is necessary in order to gather factual material. I have in mind books capable of influencing you poetically.

Question: Is it possible to write a novel without love?

Answer: Not worthwhile. It can be done of course, but it is better with love. You want to have the young people read you, and it's nice for young people to read about love.

Remark: Not everybody can understand your productions.

Answer; I can write only as I can write. It is necessary to be absolutely certain of one's self. This is extremely important. A man must absolutely be certain of himself.

Remark: The great productions of literature are understandable by all.

Answer: That is a general phrase. It would be possible to bring forward a multitude of facts showing that those writers whom we nowadays consider classics and on a level with whom we place the conceptions of simplicity and comprehensibility were in their own days neither simple nor understandable.

Question: Whom of contemporary writers do you place higher than others?

Answer. This question is of the same sort as the one we spoke of at the beginning: "Whom do you like best, Pushkin or Lermontov?" It is hard and even senseless to answer this question in categorical form.

Contemporary writers.

In general I am not too fond of fiction. It is more attractive to read history, memoirs, documents, correspondence. I don't know, it may perhaps seem funny to you, but to me, for instance, it is more interesting to read the explanatory material attached to a novel than the novel itself. Explanatory material, giving information about historical personages and events. And more than that, it seems to me very pleasant to write explanatory material, because (probably you have noticed this) it always affords special pleasure to communicate news, to explain, to show a comrade on holiday round the city. Sometimes it is more pleasant to read a scientific book than to read a novel, even when the subject dealt with in the book is not altogether understood. I have already spoken of the poetry which is imprisoned in scientific books. For instance, I recently read a book by Academician Menzbir—*The Migration of Birds*. There there is a passage like this: "The cranes which nest in Sweden fly South to the North German plains. Hence they fly to the southwest through Saxony and divide into two branches: one goes to the West, comes out on the Rhine and thence on the Rhone, crosses southern France and by Corsica, Sardinia, and the Mediterranean Sea, reaches North Africa. Another section breaks off in southern France, follows the eastern coast of Spain, and by Gibralter reaches in its turn the northern coast of Africa." This reads like a poem. And moreover, there is a special quality here also in the fact that that which always moves the poet—birds, the seasons of the year, the names of countries—is named here as the result of scientific investigation, that is, words acquire here that weightiness of sufficiency and necessity of which we have already spoken. This is the poetry of the earth, the poetry of realism. And it fortifies the soul. It says to me: the world is splendid.

The reading of biography enriches one greatly. I would advise you to read the series of biographies called *Lives of Remarkable Men*. There you will find much for creative work. There you will find history and poetry and human character and fate!

What does it mean to read a work of fiction written by someone else? It means to give one's self into the power of an alien individuality. One does not always want to yield one's self to the power of an alien individuality. The individuality must be a very high one for me to enter willingly into its power!

Recently much has been spoken of Hemingway. . . His is a fashionable name. And truly he is a good writer. But is it necessary to write as he does? No, it seems to me. This writer says: "To live is terrible." But I consider that a writer should say: "To live is splendid." So it would seem that for me personally Hemingway is a bad writer. However good he may be in general

Joyce is considered a great writer. I know only fragments. Yes, what Joyce writes is all very remarkable. But in my conception the task of a writer is to create a world, to create a second life, a second reality, better than real life.

You will say that a writer living in the conditions of the capitalist West cannot affirm that life is splendid. I agree. But that means that we Soviet writers have nothing to learn from Joyce, from Hemingway, or from Celine. I want to know that life is splendid, and however formally interesting Joyce may be, however sharp his eyes, however delicate his psychological analysis—all the same. I do not want to read a writer who says of cheese, that this cheese is the carcass of milk.

There is death in the world. There is sorrow. I know that. Life is a disease of the planet, said the English astronomist, James Jeans. All right! But after all, this disease knows that it is a disease. The disease is good which has understood that it is a disease. In the world there is death and sorrow and the wrench of parting and hopes deceived and defeats—and yet, man conquers, lives, struggles with nature. That man is powerless before certain phenomena of nature and of life is a subject for transformation by the power of art into majestic and splendid images. It is for this that art exists. It is the bridge between man's dream of perfection and the imperfection of his nature.

Read about Beethoven. There is nothing in the history of the world more terrible than the deafness of Beethoven. Beethoven was deaf. Impassive nature broke down some bone in the ear of the musician, as a stone is crushed. A man who composed music became deaf. And nonetheless, the strength of his soul was not dimmed. Solitary, deaf, the most unhappy man upon the earth, yet he created music which said that life is splendid. This man, whose brow was like the poop of a ship—Beethoven the proud, who died in storm—said: "An artist never weeps." This we know: the artist is a fighter.

Translated from the Russian by H. O. Whyte

Maxim Gorki

The New Man

Comrade Stalin has told us the reasons for, and the meaning of the Stakhanov movement. The Stakhanov movement is a result of the cultural development of the workers and collective farmers; a result of their consciousness of the conquering force and governmental significance of socialist labor; a result of the mastery of technique and of the growth among men of a feeling of responsibility before their fatherland for their work and their behavior.

There are certain indications that Comrade Stalin's wise speech was not understood in all its profundity. The significance Stalin ascribes to the Stakhanov movement in industry is understood, but its application to our everyday lives is not made; the social pedagogy of that closing speech is not entirely understood.

That pedagogy is not understood because to most of our young people the fundamental difference between rivalry and competition is not clear. Here, no reproach is intended, no one is being blamed; people cannot be blamed because it is difficult for them to understand a life the severity of which they have not experienced.

The fact is, however, that class life before the Revolution resolved itself wholly into a constant, intense, forced rivalry in the business of the exploitation of man by man. The exploiters of human energy were not only also administrators, factory directors, and store managers who were grinding down the people below them—the cashiers, technical assistants, young landlords, manufacturers, shop owners and rich peasants in the country, but clerks, and day laborers. The coachman exploited the groom, the miller his helper, the foreman his men, the priest the sexton, the intellectual his domestic servants, chambermaids, nurses, cooks and so on.

There was no one who was not subjected to force one way or another, in some form or other. All people of the "lower class" were compelled to sell their labor power. People by the very structure of life, the family, the school, were educated by force and each one of the exploited saw that force was the law of life. He saw that to make life easier and fuller, one had to employ somebody else's labor, the energy belonging to some one else, paying for it as cheaply as possible. In the final analysis, such competition resolved itself into the exploitation of man by man and class by class. That is what it amounts to in our own times in bourgeois states with their class structures.

Our young people know, of course, about this infamous, shameful life only from books. But no books can show the shame and abomination of that life in all their sickening reality. Man not only had to submit to physical force which sucked away labor power, but to a political force that clutched at his throat to prevent him from crying out, from complaining about life to anyone except to a non-existent God; and even to God he could pray only silently, not aloud. They suppress man in every way; drained him dry; robbed him of his strength and then mocked at his helplessness in order completely to eliminate any possibility of protest, any sign of self-respect which might have remained in him, any desire for something better, or dream of some other kind of life on earth.

Man feared man; each suspected the other of being a possible enemy, a rival for his place, for his piece of bread. They saw to it that man should toil until he died. And there were very many extremely "well-educated" people who regarded this infamous life of blood and dirt as "beautiful," and were distressed when Bolshevik barbarians destroyed it. Only six years ago, one of them, an emigre, wailed in a letter to his sisters: "History will never pardon the Bolsheviks for depriving us of the fruits of the beautiful life which we created."

The Stakhanov movement is a flaming outburst of mass energy, an explosion produced by the colossal successes of labor, by the consciousness of its cultural significance, its force in liberating working humanity from the yoke of the past. The Stakhanov movement is socialist competition in labor raised to still greater heights. It seems to me that the conception of "competition" is now filled with new meaning and will inevitably have a very favorable effect on every day life, will help people of the Soviet land to establish new relationships with one another.

Socialist competition undertakes to make us all social equals in rights, in power, in worth, not hampering the development of individual capabilities but fostering their growth. The greater the degree of variety of men's gifts and talents, the greater will be the degree in which life will burn ardently, the richer will life be in the facts of creative work, the quicker will life move to the great goal—the organization of the whole world of laboring folk on new Communist foundations. The Stakhanov movement has no place for philistine, individualistic ambitions on the part of one man to rise higher than another and use another's talents for his own profit, as is accepted and legalized in capitalist society.

If they say to me: "culture is coercion"—there are still people capable of saying that—I will not contradict them, but I will make a correction: culture is coercion the moment the individual directs it against himself, against the anarchy inherited from centuries of history, fostered by the bourgeoisie on the blood and bones of the toiling people.

Equal rights, equal power, equal worth should destroy in people the feelings of hate and greed which are shameful in a socialist society. Such feelings are the diseases of the bourgeosie which have brought it to its death throes.

If some "I" recognize himself as a necessary bit of the world's equipment, he should recognize every other creative "I" as equally essential. In this way he escapes the feeling that he is alone in the world—a feeling characteristic of the petty-bourgeois. That feeling was a source of grievance against life and served the philistine as a "trick mirror" in which he saw himself as a hero, genius and stranger in a world that did not understand him.

We have lived through 18 years of struggle, very difficult and wonderful years. Without speaking of how much—a colossal amount—we have created in these years, we should recall that this tremendous work has been done by tens of thousands of people of a completely new psychology.

What is new about it?

Maria Demchenko writes me: "Labor is the most sacred thing in our land. Free labor in the service of our socialist fatherland is the greatest joy and happiness for me, whose parents worked their whole lives without knowing the joy of labor." Demchenko is not the only one who talks like this. These are, not only new words, but new feelings.

Whenever did working folk experience joy, happiness and satisfaction in work? Since they never worked for their fatherland, for they did not have a fatherland, they could not experience these feelings.

And so a fatherland has been won for our young people. They, the young people, are complete masters of a huge, rich, lavish country which almost daily opens up new treasures before them. That should teach the young people to discover and develop the treasures of their own talents and capabilities.

There is still much in our everyday life that must be driven out and destroyed. We must create a new socialist everyday life. We must reach the point where the words: "comrade," "friend" will not be merely empty words, as we sometimes find in our ordinary intercourse. We must teach each other. We all are reservoirs of energy of equal value but unequally developed. The Soviet man is a being who is more and more attracting the attention of the laboring folk of the world. He must be a model man not only in his labor activity but in his everyday relationships.

In the USSR all citizens should take care that each one develop himself to the end and display his capacities to the full. That is why our socialist competition essentially means the mutual aid of 170 million people—millions of workers, collective farmers, engineers, theoretical and practical scientists, literary people, creators in the various arts—mutual aid and cooperation in the building of socialist culture.

The Stakhanovites show us graphically that any man can be an artist in his work if he wants to be. The more forcefully and brilliantly an artist expresses his talents, the more we respect and love him. So let us imitate the Stakhanovites and try to be just such honest artists, each in his own work. Such emulation would not only solve the problem of cadres but would create such an attitude, such an atmosphere around us that we would soon rid ourselves of all the stupid, infamous philistine rubbish that unfortunately still exists among us and greatly interferes with our lives. It is high time we did this!

Is it possible to create a life in which people firmly respect one another? Everything is possible if we collectively and unanimously want it. The church, that unfamous fellow traveler of history, played the role of procurer, persuading the poor to love the rich. "Love thy neighbor as thyself," it taught, setting up the bestial love of man for himself as the ideal of love. As opposed to that cunning and false teaching, clearly unsuited to the predatory conditions of philistine life, requiring inhuman force to be exercised against the working class, against the masses of workers; as opposed to the hypocritical preaching, we create conditions of life in which it is possible to love people sincerely, to love them for the heroism of their labor, for the beauty of their work in the many-sided development and strengthening of our country—which makes the philistines of all countries sharpen their teeth and claws and makes the workers of all the world look upon our country as their fatherland.

Translated from the Russian

Vl. Dmitrevski

Victor Margueritte's Road to "Babel"

The destiny of Victor Margueritte is typical of the destinies of hundreds of honorable, radically-minded intellectuals.

For long years, patiently and with inspiration, he built up the castle of his own inner world. In this castle he installed "the conscience of the people" unto which he confided his perplexities and before which he laid complaints about the ferocity and injustice of a frigid world; he called upon this conscience to interfere. He was too dazzled to see that this hermit conscience was withering away not daily but hourly, that its life blood was trickling out of its veins and that the very conception of *conscience* could only be likened to a toy with which one amuses inconveniently inquisitive and sensitive children. Bourgeois society listened to the voice of the young writer with a sneer of condescension. It was well enough acquainted with those noble and emotional natures which sought for a dazzlingly moral purity amid the refuse heaps and stinking rubbish of society. As long as the writer disdains explosives, spades and axes and works with delicate, doubly abstract weapons like "the court of conscience," "the progress of human thought" and so on, the refuse heaps and stinking rubbish of society. As long as the writer disdains explosives, and fatter, may devour the weaker, because their hide has long since acquired the consistency of armor-plating and does not in the slightest react to the pin pricks of conscience.

Many important and talented writers who in their youth laid claim to the title of knight-errant of humanity have shattered their cardboard lances, soothed themselves with a stout dose of valerian drops and in the years of their maturity become venerable singers of capitalism. True, in bad weather when gout twitches and lumbago pains them the acknowledged masters let filter through their teeth bilious reproaches and gloomy forebodings about the fate of the society which reared them, corrupted them and used them in its own interests. But the bourgeoisie is not in the least troubled by these grumblers, for it knows that they are very much devoted to business and to their own glory which is indivisibly linked with the life of the ruling class.

Could it have been foreseen that Victor Margueritte would make an exception to the general rule?

In 1898 Victor Margueritte was given the right to wear in his buttonhole a gay little ribbon of watered silk. A cavalier of the Legion of Honor? But, of course!

The young man fully deserved the highest reward of the Republic. His father had been a general, a renowned hero of Sedan. He had graduated with brilliance from the Lycée Henri Quatre, served in the Spahis, in the First African Rifles and had then studied at the Saumur Cavalry School. A lieutenant of dragoons on the retired list and moreover the author of *Lilac Branches*, a collection of gently lyric verses! Along with his brother Paul he writes a novel, and to judge by the success of *Havoc* the cavalry lieutenant is not without talent.

The bourgeoisie is able to value talent if it is turned in the right direction—the support of the existing system. . . . It seemed that the career of the young writer was already mapped out. All that was demanded of him was talented

and decently veiled lying; for this the bourgeoisie was willing to pay with laurels, decorations and crinkly checks. But Lieutenant Margueritte had scarcely gone on the retired list when he began to lose his conceptions of discipline. He started speaking with impermissible sincerity and kept on raising his voice; sometimes he even shouted with a voice full of anger and wrath.

In 1904 there appeared his monumental novel, *The Commune,* written in collaboration with his brother Paul. In his novel, of course, Victor Margueritte was unable to rise to an understanding of the historic role of the Paris Commune of 1871. Standing entirely on the positions of abstract humanism, typical of the most radical section of the French petty bourgeoisie of that time, he sorrowed over "the selfless heroism" of the Paris proletarians and treated the Commune as a *martyrdom* for the sins of an "unworthy" humanity. But even this pale rose tint of a novel affirming sympathy—through the prism of "pity" it may be but none the less sympathy—to Paris and its defeated defenders and not to Versailles, not the insensate and bloody bourgeois victors, was enough to put on their guard those who had crowned his talent with the ribbon of the Legion of Honor. And Victor Margueritte's first independent novel, his *Prostitute,* published in 1907, had the effect of a bomb in the drawing room of the worthy bourgeois.

"Under fictitious names I call to court not definite persons but the whole vile system born on unjust laws and customs the existence of which in the twentieth century will undoubtedly rouse the conscience of the people when science has step by step brought to perfection its educational work. . . ."

Thus did Margueritte write in the preface to this angry indictment (which was at the same time a naive and helpless novel).

The vile institution of prostitution is created and nurtured by the hands of the ruling class. Wealthy Raoul Dumesse, mayor, counsellor-general, chairman of a charitable society, Poierre, the banker and speculator, the Count de Tempet-Luxelle, Madame Van Meissen and the others—all these bourgeois and aristocrats, stockbrokers and officials, standing at the very top of the social ladder, commit the most agrievous and disgusting crimes while the law, cynically winking, remains blind and unperturbed. Margueritte puts the sign of equality between the scoundrels from "high society" and the bandits, souteneurs and bawds of the brothels of Montmartre and Montreuil . . . He wishes to bring all this "vile system" before the court. . . but only the court of conscience. And in *Prostitute* Margueritte finds only one conclusion, one weapon. . . . Annette Sorbier, after her "fall" remains a prostitute who avenges upon men herself, Rose and other women who have been "corrupted and disdained." "A fallen angel of revenge"—that is all that Victor Margueritte found in his arsenal for the struggle with the system of injustice and iniquity which he had seen in 1907.

Mingling with the high-placed perverts and scoundrels there are high-spirited intellectuals who walk about staring at the sky but occasionally give vent to tirades about "prostitution as a tremendous social evil" and affirm that crime hidden by "hypocritical virtue" is a hundred times worse than ordinary crime. Along with them in the motley Parisian crowd there strolls the writer himself, sincerely sorrowful over the fates of these poor girls; he darts angry glances at the figure of Dumesse speeding by in his automobile, at the tilted procuress who is received in society and receives its "best representatives" in her mansion which has been skilfully adapted for meeting the intimate requirements of the guests.

And none the less, although the author in his work on the novel had used

material "kindly" supplied by the Paris police, notwithstanding the clearly good intentions of the conclusion drawn by Margueritte—the abolition of prostitution (and who had not spoken of that!)—the book was greeted as a public scandal.

After all, the author was a Legionnaire, the vice-president of the Society of Men of Letters, the son of a famous warrior of Sedan. . . . All these things placed obligations upon a man in certain ways . . . to be modest for instance. And *Prostitute* was not at all a modest book.

In his following works, Margueritte did not go further than a left-radical criticism of separate defects of the existing system; he systematically bombarded it with shells of low calibre, stuffed, not with explosives, but with the highmindedness of the intellectual, with abstract humanism, with appeals to "popular conscience" and so on.

Margueritte put the family and social life of capitalist society under fire and boldly and fiercely unmasked its frightful vices but he turned out to be quite helpless when he tried to find a method for the curing of these vices.

"I pointed to the other side of the abyss, to the wide path of equality on which the two sexes would one day undoubtedly walk harmoniously arm in arm. *Bachelor Girl* was but a stage on the inevitable path of feminism towards the splendid future which awaited. . ."

In 1922 it seemed to the inveterate humanist that the only effective lever capable of turning the world from gloom to light was feminism, a successful solution of the "question of women."

The hurricane of revolution and wars had swept the earth. Along with the mutilated bodies of tens of millions of murdered men deeply buried in the earth there were being buried the pacifist and humanist ideals of the pre-war years, in Russia out of blood and flame there had risen the scaffolding of the new society, the builders of which were the Revolution and the proletariat, but Victor Margueritte, through the lips of Madame Ambrat, one of the personages of the novel *Bachelor Girl*, was still asserting:

"If it had depended upon us, perhaps life would have been different! First of all, we certainly would not have allowed the war. If we had had the vote, there would have been fewer slums, fewer breeding places of tuberculosis, fewer prostitutes infecting the world with syphilis. There would have been more créches and shelters. And above all. . . schools."

Bachelor Girl was the first book of a trilogy, *Woman's Way,* which the author had planned. According to his design, the trilogy was to have dealt a furious blow at the post-war society of France. This society was seen by him as a lascivious beast which had gone mad from blood and the danger of death which had just been averted. Unable to restrain a shudder of disgust, Margueritte wrote of all these thoughtless, futile young people who before everything preferred refined perversion, these representatives of the young post-war generation who drowned their thoughts in drink, saved themselves from boundless boredom and indifference to life in the embraces of fleeting passion, in the fantasies of drug dreams.

Sexual degenerates, sadists, masochists, drug-fiends and alcoholics—that is the generation, "the gilded youth," which bore in its trembling hands the banner of the hopes of post-war France. They had got out of the war alive but in fact they were a decaying half-corpse. Margueritte snatched the shroud from this offensively ulcered body. . . Look at it!—this is bourgeois society and its "best representatives" ministers, bankers, manufacturers, the men

of art and ordinary wire-pullers from the shadows... All the same! All lepers!

But what followed this ferocious unmasking?

Offended society, unable to hear the truth about the truth, sentenced the apostate. *Bachelor Girl* was termed a "slanderous, immoral book with a pernicious influence upon the imaginations of the young." Victor Margueritte, by a special decree signed by the President of the Republic, was removed from the lists of the Legion of Honor. He was accused of pornography and degeneracy...

Covered with filthy lies, Margueritte preserved all the serenity of the high-souled intellectual. He was still unable to free himself from illusion, continued to launch passionate appeals to conscience and reason upon the empty air.

Honorable in his negative criticism of the existing order, Margueritte when it came to action was unable to propose anything more effective than... feminism.

His beloved heroes, whom he in *Bachelor Girl* opposed to post-war bourgeois society are the old friends of "all humanity" Professor Vignabot, the philosopher, Georges Blanchet, who is transparent to the point of excess and is ready at any time of the day or night to pronounce sententious orations, the feminists of the old generation: Tante Sylvestre and Madame Ambrat and finally Monica Lerbet herself—a girl who had passed through all the seven circles of Dante's inferno but was at last brought out by a Virgil——her own conscience aided by Blanchet—on the path of virtue and struggle for a better future for women. All of them glance distrustfully, although sympathetically, at the Soviet Union, inasmuch as for them the October Revolution is still but a "Communist utopia;" " a game in the dark," "a great experiment" and so on.

"The famine on the Volga which is piling up the bodies of little children at the gates of the graveyards, poverty which drives people to cannibalism, the two-year civil war—all this brought Monica to despair and horror when she thought of Russia."

For an intellectual reared in the traditions of radical humanism, it is hard to understand and trust the strength of the Revolution. Its sacrifices—inevitable for any great social advance—hid from the consciousness of Margueritte all the huge positive power of the Revolution.

He finds, however, enough courage to anticipate the best and not the worst:

"But," objected Blanchet, "Russia is not France! Therefore the havoc and the hunger in Russia depend upon deeper and more complicated reasons than the Communist utopia. The very crash of this utopia would raise the spirits of the French reformists. And whatever happens, the nationalisation of the land and of heavy industry are triumphant in the former empire, in the Russia of Lenin. The whole world will go on the path of this young giant of a people which is now recovering from its bloody wounds! From chaos and struggle there will arise great worlds!"

"And not only in his novels, *Bachelor Girl* and *Your Body Belongs to You* (published in 1928; it also had a *succès du scandale*) did Margueritte express his sympathy and his as yet faint hopes for the better future which would come out of the Soviet Union. . . . Having founded in 1926 along with A. Charpentier a magazine of petty bourgeois pacifist tendencies, *Evolution,* he wrote in it warm articles dedicated to the present and the future of the

Soviet Union... In these, as in his books *On the Edge of the Abyss* and *Criminals,* devoted to the imperialist war, there predominated the illusionist moods of the humanist who was still unable to break with the old faith in the progress of reason, conscience, pacifism, etc.

But history moves inexorably. She has no time for the hopes and dreams of venerable humanists. The years of the devastating crisis, of the worklessness of tens of millions, the starvation of the super-exploited, the crash of "democratic liberties," the ever-hastening fascization of the bourgeoisie and finally the brown beast in the very heart of Europe compelled the writer to revaluate all his conceptions. The process of departure from the old positions which for scores of years had seemed inaccessable and the transition to the new positions of real struggle is a process of extraordinary difficulty for every petty bourgeois intellectual and especially for an important recognized author, a man already in his declining years. But Victor Margueritte, having overcome his inner hesitations, courageously set out on the new path. In the second half of 1934 he joined the Association of Revolutionary Writers and Artists of France. In the February issue of *Commune* (1935) he published an article "From the Refusal of Military Service to Mass Action" in which he expounds the reasons which led him into the camp of the proletariat.

"And here I cannot but repeat"—writes Margueritte—"what I have already said in the *Palais de la Mutualité* before the teachers of the Département de la Seine who met in defense of the freedom of opinion and the freedom of trade unions: There remains still one extreme remedy, the transformation of the imperialist war into the revolutionary movement. This will be the signal for the liberation of the whole world!"

From the "opposition of conscience" up to revolutionary struggle, to the struggle against war and fascism, and the defense of the Soviet Union came Margueritte in the steps of the great humanist, Romain Rolland, along with hundreds of the best and most honorable representatives of the thinking intelligentsia of the West. Not limiting himself to declarative announcements, Margueritte has made a decisive turn in his creative work. His latest work, *Babel*, witnesses to this.

A complex novel with a huge diapason! *Babel* is not only the international disarmament conference at which, as in the biblical fable, the people of different tongues are unable to agree in their attempts to erect a cardboard building—the tower of peace under cover of which it is more convenient to bring up the cannon muzzles, more convenient to explode the powder magazine of war—but the whole *capitalist system* which is unable to achieve harmony, is doomed to destruction, ruin and wreck.

Margueritte with great mastery depicts the struggle of two oil concerns *(Compagnie Mahzet-Rémoh, Holley et compagnie Dat heim),* which refuse literally no methods for driving their rivals out of the market. Murder, theft, deceit —all is acceptable, all is permissible! In this single combat of the mighty capitalist plunderers, the heroine of the novel, Thérèse Soubise, is involved.

In Morocco to which she goes as a newspaper correspondent she has to save herself not only from the terrible heat but from the unwanted attentions of a certain British colonel and his numerous agents...

A great deal is necessary for Thérèse, the pacifist, feminist and knight-errant of humanist ideas, to understand a reality which has nothing in common with "conscience," "morality" and other conceptions which have become ridiculous anachronisms in the crisis years of capitalist competi-

tion and imperialist expansion. There are needed great social and interior shocks to destroy her faith in the "triumph of equity," in the effectiveness of the work of the Geneva Disarmament Conference.

"Wait patiently"... That is what still to a considerable degree distinguishes the main heroes of Margueritte's new novel from genuine revolutionary fighters. And although in the end Thérèse has to part with very many idealistic illusions, is compelled to look more soberly upon the world, she still remains a person with a defective philosophy and has still not been able to dot her i's and cross her t's.

Through the lips of the two heroines of the book: the journalist Thérèse and the Chinese woman Communist Kui, the author unmistakably declares:

"Bolshevik unity has become for us a pattern for every revolution. It is at once a seed and an embryo, a prototype to which from now on the toilers —workers, peasants and intellectuals—must strive..." Is it that Thérèse has just left her previous positions and has not yet found strength to say that she is completely and unreservedly with those who in the struggle are forging the future of humanity?

Yet the past compels Margueritte to show great sympathy toward the chemist Jean Derobe, anarchist and individualist, who strives to influence the world by means of a most absurd "humanitarian" terrorist act. The meaningless tragedy of Derobe and his young companion Lussaine does not find a severe condemnation at Margueritte's hands. His reason has already understood that acts of individual terrorism "by no means serving the concerted action of the masses, are more likely by their very nature to hinder the progress of ideas;" his heart, however, beats with sympathy, beats in unison with the hearts of Lussaine and Derobe. And in the preface to *Babel* Margueritte cannot refrain from a passionate summons:

"Women of all lands, unite: Call meetings and demand that wisdom shall triumph and that the governments give promises never to decide their disputes by arms. Hold higher the banner of respect for personality, save the human race, for it is you that give it life. If not—believe me—there is an end to everything."

Not without difficulty has he changed the armor of the knight-errant of the "popular conscience" for the weapons of a man who has joined the action of the masses.

Babel is a sincere book, a book of considerable worth. And although in it Margueritte has not yet finally freed himself from the load of the past and draws the figures of Communists (Kui, the workers of Sabatier, Muzot Mopa) unconvincingly, untruthfully, it confirms the right of Victor Margueritte to be with those who want to change the world with not the ephemeralities of "the opposition of conscience" but with genuine revolutionary mass action. According to the author, *Babel* is a portrayal of the "prolonged agony" of the old world, it is "the final point of my literary work."

"I have tried to depict the moment of the death of one world before turning to the East where under the banner of the Hammer and Sickle there has arisen and there is growing another world," he writes in the preface to *Babel.*

The great inner honorableness characteristic of Margueritte allows us to think that in his following novels he will come still closer to the proletariat, whose path he has now decided to acknowledge his own.

Andrew J. Steiger

American Authors Popular In Soviet Russia

American Books, a Leading Foreign Literature, Translated into Russian

The few American authors—Cooper, Twain, Harte, London, most published in Russia before the Revolution, interpreted various periods of American Frontier life advancing westward from New England to California, to Alaska. They impressed Russian readers with the buoyant freedom of life in the new world, just as Dostoevski impressed American readers with the terrible oppression in Russia, where generations of exiles were settled on the eastward moving Siberian frontier. Many Russian youths, after reading the novels of Cooper, Reid and others were inspired to seek escape from Tsarist Russia by fleeing to the new world in America. Today, with Russian translations of more than seventy American authors (including pre-revolutionary favorites) at their disposal, readers in Soviet Russia have acquired new ideas about America. They are aware of the critique modern writers make of the new civilization built up in America by European and Asiatic immigrants, African Negroes and aboriginal Indians.

American authors have been published in Russia for one hundred years. While less than ten individual authors were published during the eighty years before the Revolution, more than seventy, or eight-fold more, individual authors have been published during the past eighteen years. A century ago, Pushkin had thirteen volumes of James Fenimore Cooper's works in his library, twelve in French. Today, the modern Soviet writer has a dozen copies of Dreiser, Dos Passos and other American authors in Russian translations and often in English.

An historical comparison of American with European authors published in Russia discloses that since the Revolution the number of American authors published has rapidly increased. In the first six months of 1912, only seven of the 70 leading foreign authors published in Tsarist Russia were American; 22 were English, 20 German, and 21 French authors. In the first six months of 1928, 42 of 154 leading foreign authors published were American authors; 37 were English, 50 French and 25 German. American books, which were formerly a minor item on Russian publishers' lists, are today the most popular item on the lists of translations into Soviet languages.

From 1917 to 1928-29, London and Sinclair, pioneer pamphleteers in America, contributed more than half the American books published during the first decade. They were soon followed by Curwood and O'Henry. Since 1928, Dreiser became popular for his realistic exposure of American capitalism. Dos Passos was hailed in 1932-34 for his new style and proletarian sympathies. Of late, Hemingway is being widely read for his mastery of literary technique. Cooper, Twain, Harte, popular before the Revolution, have also been republished.

Lenin and London

Engaged in a strenuous revolutionary struggle, Lenin found recreation in reading London, In her *Memoirs of Lenin,* Krupskaya, widow of Lenin, writes:—"Two days before his death, I read to him in the evening a story by Jack London. It was a moving tale. A sick man starving to death forges across a snowy waste, never trod by man, towards a landing on a wide river. His strength wanes away, but he grits his teeth, ever moving forward, crawling, clawing to get on, while a famished wolf tracks him, snarls and bares his white fangs. An exhausting struggle ensues. The man, on the verge of insanity, half-dead, finally wins and reaches his goal. This story pleased Ilyich very, very much. The next day, he asked that I read again from Jack London. But powerful stories in Jack London are found side by side with extremely weak ones. The next story proved to be of quite another character. A sea captain, imbued with bourgeois morals, promised the owner of his grain ship that he would sell his cargo for a profit;—the captain sacrifices his life to keep his word. Ilyich smiled and waved his hand.

"I did not have occasion to read any more."

If pre-revolutionary publishers put out a few volumes of London in 5,000 to 20,000 copy editions, the Soviet publishers have issued six editions of his complete works in twelve to thirty volume sets of 5,000 to 90,000 copies per separate volume. The last collected edition was put out in 1928-29. The *Iron Heel* suppressed in pre-revolutionary days was published nine times to a total of 155,000 copies. But this is all bare statement. Of the 72 American authors published since 1917, only Upton Sinclair (167), Dreiser (19), James Oliver Curwood (42), O'Henry (65), Sinclair Lewis (18), Conrad Bercovici (16) Bret Harte (10), Edgar Allan Poe (11), Mark Twain (12), James Fenimore Cooper (12), have had more than ten separate volumes published. Editions of London's works were far larger than those of Upton Sinclair or any other American author ever published in Russia.

Sinclair, a Soviet Classic

Upton Sinclair, esteemed for his attack on social evil, was accorded great public honor in Soviet Russia. During the New Economic Policy (NEP) in 1925, when private publishers were fiercely competing for foreign authors and when Lunacharsky was Peoples Commissar of Education in RSFSR, the works of Upton Sinclair were declared state property and the State Publishers were granted a monopoly on publishing them. This order of the Peoples Commissariat of Education was based on a previous decree of the Council of Peoples Commissars which declared the Russian classics such as Tolstoy, Dostoievski, Turgenev, Gogol, Chekov and others to be state property. Sinclair was the only living author and the only foreign author to be treated as a Soviet classic.

Sinclair's works have been issued and reissued over and over. His collected works were published by the State Publishers in 1924-25 a 2,500 to 10,000 copy edition. Such books as *Jimmy Higgins* have run through 13 editions, *King Coal, Story of a Patriot, The Jungle* ran through ten editions. *Love's Pilgrimage,* five editions. However, Sinclair's popularity has waned since 1928.

Between 1923 and 1928 O'Henry's short stories went through 65 editions of 5,000 to 25,000 copies each. They were eagerly read during the period of NEP inertia, when the country, recovering from the drain of warfare and

famine, was getting ready for a new advance in Socialist construction. During these days of relaxation, men who had dispossessed rich landlords and wealthy factory owners, who had driven out the soldiers of foreign capitalists, could read with good humor about the kind-hearted millionaires, sleek politicians and "con" men who people the short stories of O'Henry. They read and enjoyed the "Gentle Grafter," "Whirligigs," "The Trimmed Lamp," "Strictly Business," "Roads of Destiny." At the same time some Soviet writers learned a few tricks about short story writing.

James Oliver Curwood was a publishing sensation between 1925-27 when 42 editions of his works were published in 5,000 to 60,000 copies per volume. Perhaps the unprecedented popularity of Jack London prepared the way for this stream of Curwood's *Nomads of the North, Gold Hunters, Valley of Silent Men, River's End, Golden Snare, Last Frontiers, Country Beyond.* Soviet observers tend to explain this as a relief reaction after the exhaustion of revolution and civil war, for Curwood's *Plains of Abraham,* a war story, was read by everyone in 1927. People who had lived through the harrowing days of warfare on all fronts, felt when reading Curwood that they were reliving the former stirring days.

The list of other titles published during this first decade includes *Spoilers* by Rex Beach, *So Big, Show Boat* by Edna Ferber, *When Winter Comes* by A. S. M. Hutchinson, *Thundering Herd* by Zane Grey, *Three Black Pennies* by Joseph Hergesheimer, *Penrod* by Booth Tarkington, *Ten Days that Shook the World* by John Reed, *Shadows of Men* by Jim Tulley, *Count Brugga* by Ben Hecht, *Bondsman* by Hall Caine, *The Pit* and *The Octopus* by Frank Norris, *The Harbour* by Ernest Poole, *Flight* by Walter White, *City Block* by Waldo Frank, *Mendel Marants* by David Friedman, and works of Sherwood Anderson, Robert Herrick, Sinclair Lewis, Conrad Bercovici, Edgar Allan Poe, Walt Whitman and others.

Dreiser Popular with Workers

When Dreiser's complete works were published in 1930, it was heralded as the biggest publishing event of the year. Many articles were written discussing his work. He was called the "American Zola." "Dreiser wants to say all," wrote one reviewer commenting on how seriously Dreiser studied the lives of American millionaires to get material for his *Financier.* Another reviewer called *The American Tragedy,* the most comprehensive social document produced in the first quarter of our century.

Dreiser is popular with the Soviet reading public of working people. Among

the readers' comments collected by the Literary Consultation Section of the State Publishing House, we find the following: "The *Financier* pleased me very much, showing how a poor man became a millionaire. But the *American Tragedy* left me indifferent to all. I was shocked by the helplessness of Clyde." Two young workers—one a truck driver, the other a fireman — wrote a joint letter, saying: "We find that Dreiser is able as no other American writer we know to give a truthful and penetrating picture of real life in American civilization." A 24 year old house-wife wrote: *The American Tragedy* is vividly written. When you read it, you cannot break loose; you are ill of these diseases, beguiled by these pleasures, solve these problems." Dreiser and Zweig were the most widely read foreign authors in Soviet Russia about the year 1930.

Dos Passos was the foreign author most read and talked about between 1932 and 1934. He has come to be regarded as the writer's writer; admired for his sympathies to proletarian heroes, imitated for his novelties of style, respected for his revolutionary convictions. A literary dispute took place a few years ago in which Dos Passos was discussed as a "relativist," denounced as a "bourgeois objectivist," and upheld as a revolutionary realist. Startsev, protesting that the pseudo-Marxists were talking nonsense, wrote a 160 page book, entitled *John Dos Passos* to give them real material for discussion. He declared Dos Passos "An artist of the advanced petty-bourgeois intelligentsia of the West in the period of the general crisis of capitalism."

While a few writers (John Reed, Waldo Frank) of proletarian sympathies were published before 1928-29, the majority of American proletarian writers have been published since then, in the period when the State Publishing House gradually acquired a monopoly on the issue of foreign literature and when Marxist criticism had become established. Among the American proletarian writers published in Russian are Mike Gold *Jews Without Money* Mary Heaton Vorse *Strike,* Agnes Smedley and others. Soviet editors welcome every new proletarian writer of merit. A review of Jack Conroy's *Disinherited* appeared in the *Literary Newspaper* May 1, 1934. It contained the following passage: "Writers like Sinclair of petty-bourgeois origin and proletarian sympathies don greasy overalls, go to the slaughter houses and mines to learn about the worker. But this does not change their viewpoint. They write about the workers but are not of the working class. . Only in Conroy (the first, if you will, in American literature) in his novel *Disinherited* do we get a real proletarian." Conroy's book was published in the spring of 1935.

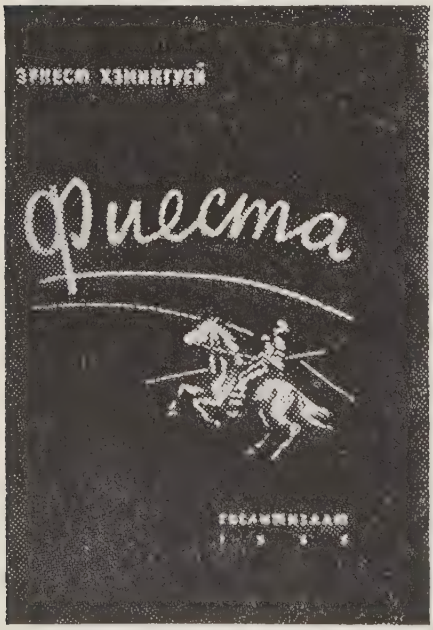
The American Negro Comes to Russia as a Writer

The American Negro was known to pre-revolutionary Russia from such sentimental books as Harriet Beecher Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin.* The *Slave's Dream* by Longfellow was also published from the translation made by Mikhailovsky in the 1860's. Readers in Tsarist Russia knew the American Negro as a slave; only since the Revolution has he been introduced to Russians as a writer.

The foreword to the anthology of Negro poets published in 1933, entitled *Africa in America* contains the following: "Nowhere in American literature does rage and protest against social evil resound so powerfully as it does in the Negro poets. The genuine voice of Negro laborers and farm hands, which sounds in the spirituals, the blues, the songs of labor and the chain gangs, lies at the base of the work of the young poets and we hear in this Negro folklore notes of genuine revolt." The Negro poets selected for the anthology include Langston Hughes, Edward Silver, Sterling Brown, Countee Cullen, Claude McKay, Alousius Green, Ellen Johnson and others. Among the books written by Negroes and published in Russian translations are *Home to Harlem* by Claude McKay, *Not Without Laughter* by Langston Hughes, *The Autobiography of Roland Hayes and others.* The books written about Negro life and published in Russian translations include *Porgy* by Dubois Heywood, *Nigger Heaven* by Carl Van Vechten, *Georgia Nigger* by Spivak. *All God's Chillen Got Wings* by O'Neill has been staged at the Kamerny Theatre in Moscow.

Hemingway Published

Hemingway's *Farewell to Arms* recommended by Maxim Gorki in 1928, will be published in 1936. *Fiesta* was published in 1935. A collection of Hemingway's short stories has also been translated, being selected from his books:—*Death in the Afternoon, In Our Time,* and *Men Without Women.* The forward to the collection of Hemingway's short stories contains an interesting comparison of Hemingway and Dos Passos:—"They are like twins in American literature. Both came from the same social circles, both underwent the war disillusionment. But while Hemingway follows the way of despair and pessimism to the arena of futile bull fights; Dos Passos cannot write in the old way and takes up the banner of the proletarian revolution." Hemingway is eagerly read as a master of literary style.



Other Writers

A collection of American short stories was also issued in 1935, containing stories by Stephen Crane, Henry James, Ambrose Bierce, Ring Lardner, Faulkner, Erskine Caldwell, George Milburn, Whittaker Chambers and others.

already mentioned. An anthology of American poetry is being prepared to include selections from Robinson Jeffers, E. A. Robinson, Lee Masters, Carl Sandburg, Robert Frost, T. S. Eliot, Edna St. Vincent Millay, Vachel Lindsay, and other poets not published here before.

Other American authors published since 1928 which have not been mentioned include such writers as Fanny Hurst, I. Zangwill, Lester Cohen, Kathleen Norris, Dorothy Canfield, Carmel Geist, Floyd Dell, Felix Riesenberg, Ford Maddox Ford, and others.

With the publication of foreign authors in the hands of the state, foreign authors are no longer subject to the caprice of a competitive book trade. Soviet publishers aim to give their readers the best modern and classic works by foreign authors. The scope of their work may be suggested by the fact that during the first six months of 1932 and the last six months of 1934, books were translated into Russian from more than 20 languages (exclusive of the 170 languages of the national minorities of the USSR) including English, French, German, Spanish, Italian, Danish, Finnish, Hungarian, Lettish, Turkish, Arabian, Persian, Latin, and others.

America Contributes a New Literature

Comparing the American authors published during this period (the first six months of 1932 and the second six months of 1934) with European authors published in Russian translations, one striking difference is apparent. Proportionally, America contributes the largest number of modern authors, while European countries contribute the largest number of classic authors. Of the twelve American authors, only three were so-called classic—Mark Twain, Jack London, O'Henry, while the others were modern authors including the revolutionary writers Langston Hughes, Mike Gold, John Dos Passos, Agnes Smedley. However, the twelve English authors published included Daniel De Foe, Shakespeare, Charles Dickens, Tobias Smollet, Robert Burns, John Fletcher, and only three were modern authors like Bernard Shaw and H. G. Wells. The twenty French authors published were rather equally divided; half being classics such as—Flaubert, Balzac, Beaumarchais, Anatole France—and half modern, including the revolutionary writers—Romain Rolland, Henri Barbusse, Andre Gide. The German authors published likewise included the classic authors—Heine, Goethe, Zweig—and the revolutionary modern writers—Ernst Toller, Friedrich Wolf, Johann Becker. Among the other foreign authors issued during this period were the classics—Cervantes, Dante, *One Thousand and One Nights,* besides the modern Hungarian revolutionary writers—Bela Illes and Anatole Gidash. This of course is a limited sampling of the foreign authors published, but taken at two periods separated by a year, it gives a fair indication of publishing trends. While America has fewer classic authors as compared to European countries, the new literature in America is growing by leaps and bounds; and one may safely predict that America will contribute increasingly more modern authors for Russian translations, and will maintain a leading position among the foreign literatures published in Soviet Russia.

HUMOR and SATIRE

Leonid Lench

In the Bonds of Matrimony

A young man by the name of Pasha Trofimov decided to divorce his wife Nura, with whom he had lived for the entire past seven months.

This bright idea had entered Pasha's tousled head on the eve of the rest day, in the lobby of the cinema theatre "Aurora," while waiting in line in front of a candy stand.

Nura was insisting on four pieces of candy known as "Mishka" ("little bears"), while thrifty Pasha suggested that the purchase be limited to two small white breads. A lively discussion followed. The breads and the "Mishkas" became a matter of principle, and the discussion quietly and unnoticeably turned into a quarrel.

They went off into a dark corner without any purchases, and there Nura burst into tears.

"You miserable Plushkin[1]," she sputtered, finding it difficult to talk through her copious tears, "You wouldn't spend . . . two rubles . . . your own wife. When . . . courted me . . . brought as much as . . . half kilo . . . sugar plums . . . without word . . . complaint."

Pasha stood there, his face turning red, his hair disheveled, looking like a rooster beaten in a fight, and answered abruptly:

"So I did bring it! So what? I was a fool that's why I brought it. Now don't be a fool and wipe your tears, people are looking."

"Let them look at such a good-for-nothing. For months I've kept on asking: buy me a fluffy beret! Everybody's wearing fluffy berets—Klava, Dusia Poklepkina. . . . and where is my fluffy beret? Answer me!"

"But what has a beret to do with it? Wipe your tears, you fool. Bread is much more useful than a beret. And candy, pshaw!"

"Other husbands run to the store themselves, buy their wives this and that. But you—you wouldn't think of it. No sooner you get your money, off you go to the Mostorg buying socks for yourself."

"Oh, keep still, you fool. Socks tear, don't they? You don't expect me to go bare-footed like Leo Tolstoy."

Not waiting for the show, they went home. In the morning Pasha Trofimov went to seek advice from his friend Vasia Smichkov. Vasia was considered very experienced in such matters, having himself been married five times. For the time being he was a bachelor.

The friend was at home. He was standing near the desk, in lilac colored underwear with a shirt and tie on, busy pressing his trousers. After listening to Pasha's complaint, Vania, with an air of great authority, said, waving the iron:

"Of course you should divorce. With a wife like Nura you'll never be able to buy yourself a decent suit. Divorce, Pashka. You'll pay three rubles at the

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[1] A famous character of a miser in Gogol's *Dead Souls*.

registry office—and that's all. Then you'll come and stay with me for a while."

From Vasia Smichkov's house Pasha went back home, feeling more calm, reassured and a bit drunk. Divorce! Divorce! To hell with sentimentality. Love —that's only in poetry.

Nura received Pasha's news calmly, stoically; she was a proud woman. True, her lips trembled a bit, her eyes became very big, but she immediately controlled herself and said:

"—As you please. Even tomorrow, if you wish."

And so at two o'clock in the afternoon they went for the divorce. Pasha being on the night shift was free in the afternoon. During Nura's lunch hour he went to her store and in ten minutes they found themselves in the reception room of the registry office. It was a small room with latticed windows. In this same registry, only seven months back, their marriage was recorded. Then they had to go to a room to the right of the entrance; now it was to the left. It is very, very sad, comrades! Yes, life certainly is sad.

At last, through the door on the left, the last client emerged from the divorce room; an elderly man with a scratched cheek and a black and blue eye. On his face was a happy and contented smile. Exchanging glances, Pasha and Nura, as though diving into cold water, dashed into the terrible room.

At a huge desk in the divorce room sat a very stout young woman with a ruddy complexion and dancing curls. Her eyes were laughing—because of her abounding health, no doubt.

"We want a divorce," Pasha Trofimov said glumly, "as quickly as possible, or I'll be late to work. The usual reason—incompatibility."

Nura silently shook her head. A tiny tear fell on the open, finely written book, spreading into a light-blue blotch.

"It doesn't take long to be divorced," said the stout woman seriously. "But are you sure you thought it over well before coming here?"

"Yes, yes, we thought it over," groaned Pasha.

Nura again shook her head. Two more tiny tears fell on the divorce book forming a tiny inky rivulet.

"Very well, as you wish," sighed the registrar, "I'll give you a divorce."

After a moment's thought, she suddenly said:

"Only bear in mind, a divorce now costs one hundred rubles—a new tax."

"How much?" Pasha asked hoarsely.

"One hundred rubles."

"Well, how is it my friend said it was only three rubles?"

"It used to be three rubles, but now it is—one hundred."

An oppressive silence fell on the divorce room. After a while Pasha Trofimov asked diffidently:

"Is there no reduction for shock-workers *udarniks?*"

"No reductions are given to any one, citizen. Some udarniks! Divorcing left and right. Well do you want a divorce or not?"

"One moment,"—Pasha excused himself and took Nura to a corner.

"One hundred rubles," he whispered over the whole room, "easier said then done. For one hundred rubles we can even buy a table cloth A yellow one, with peacocks on it and everything else."

"And a beret," Nura put in, "a fluffy one, like Dusia Poklepkina's."

"And a beret. There will be enough left for socks too, I guess."

"Of course there will. I love you Pashka, only it is very unpleasant when you act so greedy. I'll buy you lilac colored ones, with a checked design."

"I love you too, Nurka. Only I don't like when you spend money recklessly.

We have to forgive each other, Nurka. Why, we have to live together for at least another thirty years. And a beret we'll buy the day after tomorrow."

They went out of the divorce room without taking leave of the stout registrar. In the street it was cold. The first snow was falling. It smelled like the watermelon juice. They kissed. The janitor sweeping the sidewalk winked to a passing woman in a kerchief and said in a deep voice:

"Just get hitched up?"

Out of the three rubles which were to be spent on the divorce, Pasha bought some "Mishka." As he was putting the change into his pocket, someone in the back put a hand on his arm. He looked around and saw the stout registrar with a fur piece thrown over her shoulders. The round cheeks of the registrar were flushed either from the cold or embarrassment.

"I want to apologize," said the registrar, her eyes laughing, "I was only joking. A divorce costs three rubles. But I saw you were young people, no dramas in your life, excuse me for saying so, and so I thought: Why should they divorce. So I lied that a divorce costs one hundred rubles. But it really costs only three rubles. If you want it, come on in, I'll give it to you!"

Pasha looked at the bewildered Nura, then at the registrar, then at the bag of "Mishkas," and said:

"Merci. We don't want it. Even the three rubles are now blown in, and there is nothing left for a divorce. Have a piece of candy?"

And he offered the registrar the bag of "Mishkas."

Translated from the Russian by Rae Bunim

Drunken Hyenas

The life in the animal kingdom is wisely organized in many respects. For instance, elderly Bengal tigresses do not attempt to act as wet-nurses; young jackals do not sing in lyric sopranos and do not try to assure anyone that they are being fed on rose buds.

And what is particularly admirable—wise hyenas do not get drunk and do not write. Can one imagine a lofty poetic opus coming from the claws of a drunken hyena just after a cemetery performance?

We can inform you that it is pleasure of a questionable sort. But the foregoing is not told without reason: let us call your attention to the not unknown Italian fascist poet Marinetti.

At one time Marinetti strutted about in his native land with painted cheeks and wrote very bad poetry.

He organised a large association of futurist poets, which

A—promised in the very near future to change the universe, the system of planets, and the human psychology.

B—To discredit the past.

C—To prove that modern history began with Marinetti.

The past was not discredited, although some of the poet's most insolent associates built something like a temporary privy on one of the ancient Roman ruins.

The universe is, for the time being left unchanged, the planets continue in their course, and human psychology remains on a very low level, indeed so low that in one of the Roman cafes, Marinetti was beaten, long and persistently, with sausages and a broom, for disgraceful behavior.

As a result, Marinetti, disillusioned in the "Psychological revolution," accepted a government post. And like a monkey between two poles he began to oscillate between futurism and patriotism.

Patriotism—naturally—evolved into chauvinism, ultra-nationalism and finally into zoological, fascist nastiness.

And so, hoping to escape obscurity, Marinetti at the present time is delivering speeches on the beauty and glory of war.

In the world of the two-legged, the state of affairs is not very satisfactory. Here, it seems, drunken hyenas have taken to writing exalted *opera* on the short, recurrent theme:

We crave corpses, dear little corpses.

We present verbatim the last article of the poet Marinetti, which reveals, not only the man, but the milieu and atmosphere in which such ideas are conceived.

It was printed in the Milan *Stampa* No. 85, 1935.

War is Glorious

We protest against the traditional slanderers of modern war who declare it to be anti-esthetic. We, futurist poets and artists, who twenty-seven years ago propagated a "single universal hygiene," state that:

1—War is glorious because it affirms the harmony between Strength and Tenderness.

2—War is glorious because it fulfills mechanically equipped man, chiefly to the gas mask, the terrifying megaphone, firethrower and small blinding car, which embody the supremacy of man over the tamed machine.

3—War is glorious because it reveals the "metallization" of man, which rises out of the depths of the human being.

4—War is glorious because it fuses the blooming meadow and the fiery orchid mitrailleuse into one beautiful whole.

5—War is glorious because it "symphonizes" the firing, the cannonade, the stillness of the pause, the aroma and the odor of decay.

6—War is glorious because like an artist-genius it re-creates magnificent land and water scenery through the means of inspired artillery and its "sculptors."

7—War is glorious because it creates new architecture, for instance, the huge war chariots, the geometry of flying aeroplanes, the spiral smoke of burning villages.

8—War is glorious because it definitely cures men of individual terror and collective panic through the refinement of "stylized" heroism.

9—War is glorious because it rejuvinates the body of man and enhances the charm of woman.

Particularly striking, of course, are the fiery Marinetti orchid mitrailleuse, the aroma of decay, and the spiral smoke of burning villages.

A quite gentle and beautiful dream of a fanciful wayfarer. One of those wayfarers who, having been befriended for the night, rises at dawn, murders his hospitable hosts, sets fire to the house that had just sheltered him, and walks on.

From the Soviet Satirical Journal Crocodile—
Translated by Rae Bunim

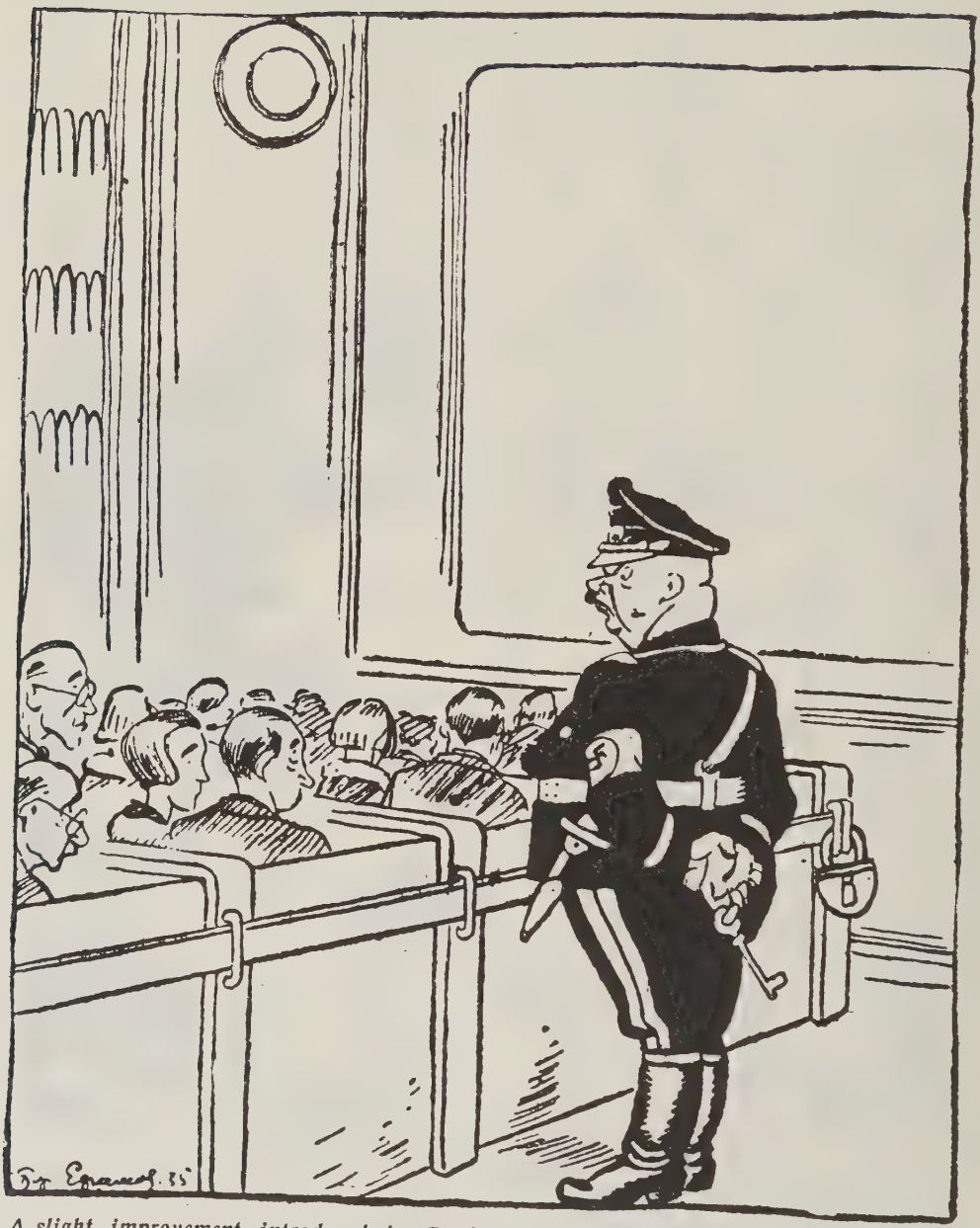
ANOTHER MOUTH

Drawing by BORIS EFIMOV

Growth of German Worker's Family

ART PROPAGANDA

Drawn by BORIS EFIMOV



A slight improvement introduced in Berlin cinema theatres to prevent people from leaving in the middle of boring anti-Soviet plays

Life Has Become More Joyous

It happened thus.

The first in the apartment to yield to the seductive pleasures of the contemporary dance were Comrades Fisakov, economist-consultant-reviewer-lecturer of two institutions and his worthy spouse. It was from their room that the sound of a phonograph was first heard, and ten times a day it played the superannuated song *Ich küsse ihren Hund, Madam.* (English translation: I kiss your dog, Madam). The other tenants at that time, regarded contemptuously both the phonograph and the dancing. And the Fisakovs themselves were looked at askance, as though they were, how should one say it, a somewhat alien element. The Fisakovs, on the other hand, responded with an ironical tolerance; as cultured people might respond to the superstitions of the ignorant.

And suddenly the dance fans were joined by one of the most reputed tenants in the apartment, one in military service, Comrade Vostroknutov. Comrade Vostroknutov and his wife, too, began to attend the dances run by his club, and one fine day, to the great amazement of the neighbors, a hoarse voice was heard from his room—and it was, if you please, the voice of Utesov him, the famous Utesov!

"You didn' recognize me, did you? I am. . . ."

And now the Fisakovs and Vostroknutovs had something in common. It became evident that the Vostroknutov couple was a very happy couple—for they made excellent dancing partners and had reason to expect a prize for the best Boston waltz. The Fisakovs on the other hand were having great difficulties on account of the cross-step, and Mrs. Fisakov cried three times because of it and for days did not speak to her husband.

It was apparent that the dance fans were gaining fresh and powerful support: the family of the scientific worker and head of a University department—Joseph Brickman. An active part in the dance was also taken by the wife of Brickman (age 45) and her son Harichka (diminutive for Hariton). However in the same family there was found to be an irreconcilable foe and sabotager of dances: a dog nicknamed "Poopik"—in its youth a fox terrier but at present, because of its obesity, a bull-dog. From the outset, Poopik quite energetically opposed the dance. No sooner would the phonograph be wound and the dance start, than Poopik would hurl himself into an attack, roaring like a dentist's drill. The damages sustained through this four-legged Savonarola were terrific: he tore the shoes of the dancers, the hose, the clothes, he bit legs, hands, backs, and even managed to bite one guest under the arm.

The one who suffered most was a certain Nikolai Askoldovich Muschiner, an acquaintance of the Brickmans, a young man very gifted in dancing and possessing great phonograph erudition. In the knowledge of records—he was simply a wizard. One needed only to put on a record and let it hiss for about three seconds under the needle and Muschiner would announce long before the first measure of the song was heard:

"Oh. . . . this—'I kiss your hand.' "

or

"That's 'Manenka Manon.' Better play the other side, there is one interesting passage. . . ."

This genius was invited by the Brickmans as an expert, and it was he who was bitten by the ascetic hound in sixteen different places of his foreign-made golf pants.

FINE SENSE

Drawing by L. BRODATY

CRITIC. Have read your new book. They say it's well written

The next one to attach herself to the dancers was a worker from the Mosbulavka factory, Aniuta Vizikina. Having separated from her husband she occupied a small room in the house, where she lived with her two-year old son, Urochka. The evenings that she went to dance she would sometimes ask the neighbors to watch the child. The boy became so accustomed to this that when anyone asked him at any hour of the day "where is mama?" he would answer, breathing heavily:

"She 'ent to 'ance." (She went to dance).

And then someone came upon a postcard addressed to the most respected and dignified tenant in the apartment—chairman of the Kutzprom Trust, Comrade Djbonich. The postcard read thus:

"Dear Comrade: This is to inform you that the next lesson in the Western dance will take place on the 7th of this month. Your presence is absolutely required. In case of absence, your name will appear on the blackboard, the board of disgrace—besides, you will be subject to a fine".

(We love to be severe about the most unimportant matters.)

Everybody was shocked; but then it was decided that the postcard was a misunderstanding, a usual post office joke. However, three days later one of the tenants opened the bathroom door (the door had no lock) and there he saw the chairman of the Kutzprom Trust, Comrade Djbonich, with a towel over his shoulder, watching his feet, while trying to reproduce the fox-trot step known to the specialists as "Lesenka." And what was more astonishing, when Comrade Djbonich saw the neighbor, he did not stop, but continued to dance.

In the kitchen, too, the everyday discussions began to touch on the question of dancing. And one day, while Anuita Vizikina turned on the faucet to fill a big pan with water, the discussion took on such a sharp and lively character that Vizikina, not being able to contain herself any longer, began to demonstrate how a tango should be danced. She was demonstrating so long until from the other end of the apartment an old lady, by the name of Nikitishna living on a pension, came running in, yelling:

"A flood! We're swimming! Drowning! My goloshes were carried out into the yard!"

And sure enough, over the entire house, great streams of water were pouring out of the overflowing pan.

After this, on the following day, it was learned that the student Verochka Ochrimenko had learned to dance (in the club of the technical school), also

her mother, Anna Kosmodemianovna, housekeeper (evenings, in the Red Corner of the Tenants' Cooperative Association). Already, in the kitchen one heard such dreams discussed:

"Recently I dreamed of a new *blues* step. At first I was dancing the ordinary *blues* with our janitor, Egor Ivanovich. Then a new step suddenly occurred to me, like this: You take two steps, away from your partner, and lift both legs from the ground, say about two feet...."

"But wait a minute, what will you stand on?"

"Oh, that's right. That I omitted... But in the dream it came out so well, a beautiful dance...."

Now, there was dancing in all the rooms. Brickman's fox terrier, Poopik, became thin as though after a long vacation in a rest house at Kislovodsk. He was also ill psychologically.

BRUTAL HATRED FOR STAKHANOV MOVEMENT

Drawn by BORIS EFIMOV

The Fascist slanderers are beside themselves (From left to right: Stakhanov, Krivonos Vinogradova)

But, then, the ranks of the enemy of the dance were also swelling. A united front with the fox terrier was formed by the thirteen-year old Gene, Djbonich, who cried and pleaded with his father that dancing must be "cast aside" that "real people don't hop around," etc. But all that Gene accomplished was to anger his father who in punishment took away his ticket to the circus and the album of stamps (for three days).

Others who raised objections to dancing were the panicky old lady Nikitishna and her grand-nephew Mitia who lived with her. The nineteen-year old Mitia, strictly speaking, was *for* dancing, but he took such an intense and awkward part in it, that objectively, he was an enemy. No sooner would Mitia hear the sound of a phonograph than out he would dash towards it with a happy yell, reiterating in his own strange language:

"Hop, hop, Fox-Mox."

Then he would begin stamping with his feet to the accompaniment of the music and when he would tire would flop down and grab the legs of the dancers. By that time, the fox terrier Poopik usually came on the scene: At the beginning of the dance he would be locked up, but somehow or other he managed to break loose. Sometimes, too, Urochka Vizikina cried. But dancing in the apartment went on.

The other day Poopik was crying and whining at seven o'clock in the morning—a sure sign there was dancing in the house. He cried so long that all the occupants in the apartment ran together in the kitchen: there the two maids of the Fisakovs and Vostroknutovs were practicing the art of dancing which they had just learned.

The veterinarian said that Poopik would soon die because of an over-taxed nervous system.

From the Soviet Journal Crocodile

REPORTAGE

HEINRICH MANN
THE CREDULOUS MAN

Johannes R. Becher has found a new name for that remarkable man—the average man of Germany of 1900 to 1933. He calls him the *credulous man*—to which one can hardly object; for really, from Wilhelm to Hitler, what did not this man believe—and whom! Once it was law and order at a time when the Kaiser's government was already nothing but an adventurous usurpation and a bourgeois swindle, simply the successor to the vanquished Louis Napoleon. One fine day the victor himself stood vanquished; the average German "good man," already then got a good dose of that false "communal spirit" he was to swallow whole later. At the behest of the rich he shot down honest revolutionists, believing, of course, it was for the sake of the "fatherland." In 1923 the mark went up the flue—whose fault could that be if not the Jews'. The "good man" believed it. He was also ready to believe the Communists, but unfortunately: "the Communists did not come." At this point the good man is already not far away from the "brown shirt." He had to have something to cover his nakedness—that of his soul rather than of the body. So as to believe something he put up with Hitler. But even Hitler and his ilk had refused, our "good man" the average German would have hauled them out of their hiding places and believed in them in spite of their refusal. His luck was such that they had no intentions of refusing. The right crowd always comes forward to take advantage of the native, incurable credulity of the German. They understand each other, they and their victim. One needs the other.

This is the sad impression one gets from the story which Becher nevertheless tells quite merrily. Not bitterly, because he himself has faith, a rationally sound faith, that the imbecility and the afflictions of the helpless average man are curable,—by means of radical economic changes. By their own reasonableness, these would enlighten the reason of the poor in spirit; and the impostors would no longer, as up to now, be indispensable since the necessity on the part of the "good man" to believe every absurdity would be on the decrease.

And here an important moral fact comes out. The socialist idea makes it possible to think of man in a more cheerful and friendly spirit than his behavior warrants. Something might yet come out of him. The poet Becher really shows consideration for and benevolence to the "good man" when he puts his miserable perambulations into verse. And good verse, because it runs smoothly while the account is exact. Now business likeness, lightness, humor and snatches of romantic mood—what does all this produce in the end? Long sought, really unexpected folk lore. Literary attempts of the Third Empire try to shame it; entirely in vain—no one is folk-like among a downtrodden people. It is an exile, it develops, who can achieve it. One hardly recognizes Johannes R. Becher—so much more precision and beauty has the sincere and well considered feeling for his "class" lent him. This class must be the people, otherwise he could not write folk lore.

What is particularly remarkable about the book *The Credulous Man,* is that in it there are some of the most beautiful sonnets produced since classic times. This is a great deal; to be folk-like and humanistic, to have educational laws alongside of economic ones. Perhaps this is a first glimpse of another Renaissance still beyond the horizon? Let us be bold, so long as we press forward!

(Johannes R. Becher's book was published by Carrefour, Paris, 1935)

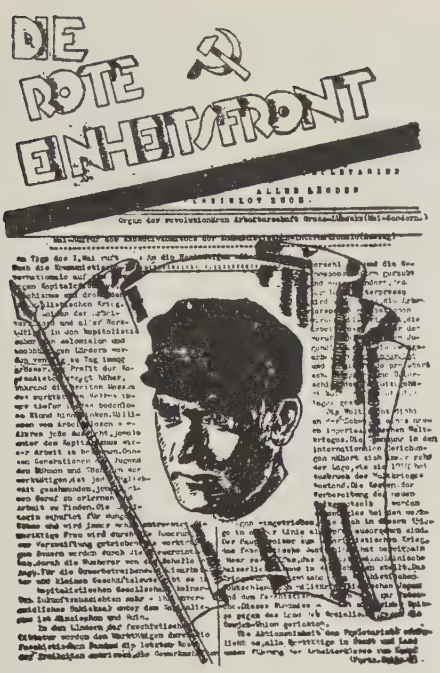
from the Paris
Tageblatt, No 684

TRUDA RICHTER

The Apotheosis of the 'Penny Dreadful"

If you purchase an illustrated weekly at a German newsstand nowadays, you may be sure of finding on one of the first pages a sun-bathed full-page photo entitled: "Hitler, the Children's Friend." A group of children, specially detailed for this duty, is presenting the *Leader* with the regulation bunch of flowers. He accepts them with a smile, and speaks words of thanks . . . . that is how the muzzled German press of today presents the question: Fascism and the Young. If we look into the matter a little more closely, however, the kind smile of the grandmother—to allude to a well-known fairy-tale—quickly changes into the fleecing grin of the hungry wolf.

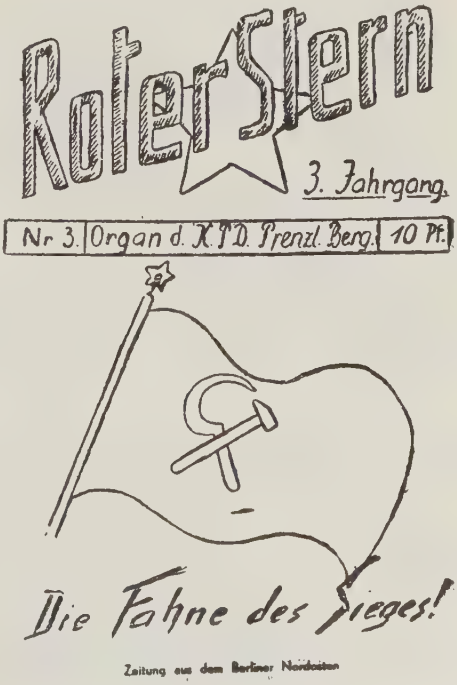
It is true, the *Leader* is much concerned about the younger generation. No party congress, no conference of ministers is allowed



to pass without new resolutions being adopted on how to influence the young. One of the most burning questions confronting fascism is that of winning over to its side the young people of the proletarian, peasant and impoverished lower middle classes. For the problem is a queer one indeed: how to make the younger generation defend and support the very system which is responsible for their miserable and hopeless situation?

Literature, as the fascists believe, offers them one of the easiest ways of achieving this end. Here an imperceptible influence may be exercised, here a way may really be found to the hearts of the young, for they are accustomed to reading thousands of new books every year, from serious volumes of short stories to the most disreputable "penny dreadfuls." This fact must be realized if one is to grasp the full scope of the Nazi campaign to strait-jacket literature. Anyone who supposes that it is, perhaps, purist motives which impel the Nazis to suppress this or that type of juvenile literature must greatly underrate the intensity of their propaganda campaign. Goebbels proclaims: "Propaganda is only a means to an end. If it achieves its end, it is good. If it does not, it is bad. *How* it achieves its end, is a matter of indifference." This cynical attempt to justify every sort of lying and inconsistency has had a double effect on the policy of the Nazis in regard to juvenile literature: on the one hand, there has been an official "campaign for keeping German children's books pure from trash and dirt" (combined, of course, with a boycott of the best children's authors), and, on the other hand, the outworn track of juvenile "blood-and-thunder" literature is being freighted to the full with fascist trash.

The plan, indeed, is not so badly conceived. In Germany, as in every other capitalist country, the whole literary world, both in quality and in circulation, is shaped in the form of a pyramid. What is the success of a Heinrich Mann among a few thousand bourgeois intellectuals when compared to the millions of votaries of a Courths-Mahler! In our analyses of literature we are accustomed to consider only the more reputable productions of bourgeois fiction—that world of letters in which the individual works or their authors possess, as it were, a special character of their own. But we must not forget that behind this bright foreground of literary notabilities the broad stream of humdrum "anonymous" literature flows on unchecked from year to year. This holds good of fiction in general and of juvenile fiction in particular, the latter indeed being nothing but a special department of *belles lettres*. The development and essence of the juvenile "penny dreadful" can therefore only be grasped as a part of the general development of that literature of mass



Einige Funktionärorgane der KPD und des KJVD in Berliner Stadtteilen

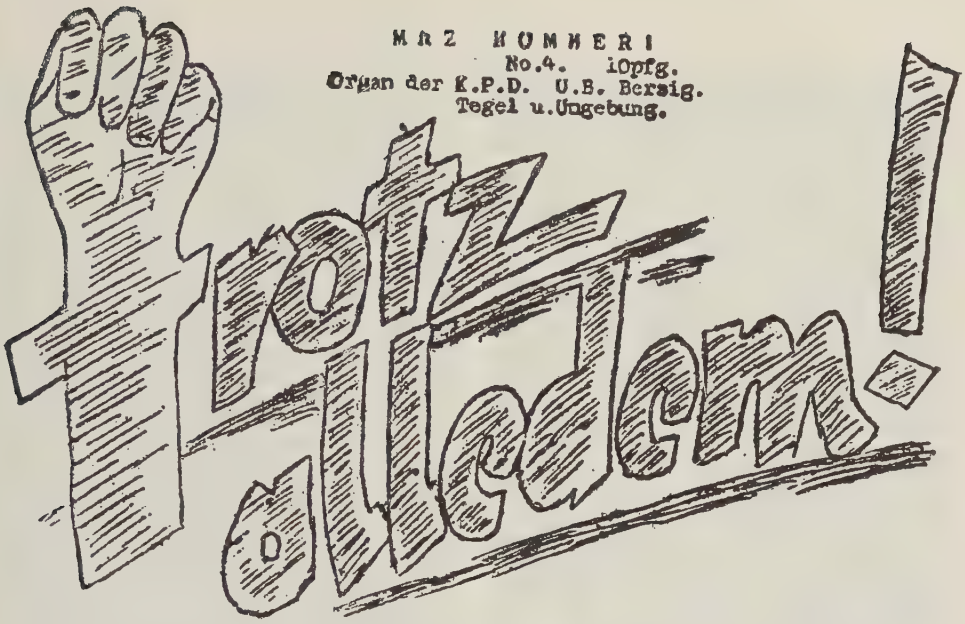
staltification which dates from the Nineteenth Century.

Just as industrialization did away with serfdom, just as the whole of economic life received the imprint of capitalism, so too the native barbarism of the countryside was driven into the background all along the line by the "cultural progress" of the bourgeoisie. The latter were thus killing two birds with one stone; they made all propertyless classes consumers of standardized mass products, and at the same time trained them to be tractable adherents of bourgeois ideas. Just as the ready-made suit ousted the peasant costume, and the gramaphone, the bagpipe, so the "penny dreadful," which always brought in good money, blossomed over the grave of the primitive saga and folk tale..

Historically considered, the "penny dreadful" is a degenerate offshoot of the great bourgeois novel of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Even at that time the two main types of this *genre* were already fully developed—the adventure story and the sentimental novel. Both of them originally possessed the good features of the young, rising class, from whose head they sprang. The adventure story, for example, Grimmelshausen's *Simplizissimus,* could direct brilliant satire on the social conditions of the time; and the sentimental novel, for example Goethe's *Werther* for the first time gave artistic form to the most subtle stirrings of a lovely individual's soul.

Both these types of literature were developed further, in books both for adults and for children, in those by famous and by nameless authors. The adventure story degenerated into the wildly sensational and sadistic "shilling shocker" specially adapted to the excitability and credulity of youth. Careful researches (*e.g.,* Lenga von Korber's *My Experiences Among Convicts)* have shown that a large number of juvenile criminals act under the direct or indirect influence of this type of book. The opening of cafes, the raping of girls, the mishandling and murdering of defenceless victims—all these things are described here in minute detail. It has only remained for the fascists to utilize this most noxious offshoot of "blood and thunder" literature for the "political training" of the young. Whereas formerly the *Blood-Stained Slipper on the Churchyard Wall* and similar backstairs reading material were only to be found on the carts of the most disreputable hawkers of cheap literature, the fascized counterparts of these smutty novels now adorn the show windows of "respectable bourgeois" bookshops. *Red Murder Lurks Around the Corner* was the title given to the first collection of these agitational pamphlets in novel form, which appeared as far back as June 1933. Dozens of the same type have followed it since then. The Communists are here depicted—one could hardly expect it to be otherwise—as common criminals, as thieves, burglars, murderers, adulterers, and—as the authors of bloody clashes with the "peaceful" Storm Troopers. All those sadistic atrocities with which the brown-shirted gangsters torture their captured enemies are here attributed to the Communists. The aim is transparent enough: the authors want to imbue the younger generation not only with hatred for the Marxist "submen" but also with the desire to take active part in their destruction; the awakening of lust for torture is to go hand in hand with a "full understanding for the just reprisals" of the National Socialists. Such is the great work of enlightenment which the fascists are doing for German youth!

But this is not all. Girls, for example, cannot be approached with such blood-curdling stories. Besides, the object in view is to win over the entire younger generation of the propertyless classes to support the economic, social and political measures of the Third Empire. And for this purpose the second species of trashy literature, the sloppy sentimental novel, can be used to much effect, because outwardly, at the first glance, it does not betray its trashy content. Its circulation, too, is for this reason almost boundless. Many a respectable and worthy



Mai-Zeitung aus Berlin-Tegel

Wofür haben wir gekämpft?

Aus dem Inhalt:

1 Wofür haben wir gekämpft?
2 Wie wir rote SA-Zellen bildeten!
3 SA-Korrespondenz.
4 Luftschutzrummel.

Kopf des oppositionellen SA-Organs aus dem Berliner Osten

citizen thinks he is buying a good book and is entrapped again and again into reading sentimental trash. No wonder the Nazis include this permanent standby in their bill of fare.

But in order to give this new variety of sentimental novel its deserts, let us first compare it with the old model. What was the latter like?

In their ideas, these sentimental effusions are conservative and optimistic. Conservative, because they uncritically glorify the existing property relations whether feudal or capitalistic—and together with them, the ruling class. Optimistic, because they nevertheless make it appear that members of the lower classes have a chance to rise in the world—a reflection this of the days when capitalism was flourishing—but only strictly within the bounds of the existing order.

In general, a sanguine confidence in the existing system of society as the best and most just conceivable forms the very foundation of all such novels. It likewise determines the course of the plot. The "poor but honest" girl, after many bitter experiences, finds a wealthy suitor for her hand in marriage, while the vengeful wife of the upstart dies of consumption; the handsome but starving waif is duly adopted by the lord of the manor, the cheat and the legacy-hunter are unmasked—in short, the "happy ending" in universal harmony is inseparable from the sentimental novel. Social problems simply do not exist.

The frequent harping on the "chance to rise in the world" theme, the unctuously moral, at times even sanctimonious tone of these cheap books resulted in their being proclaimed without more ado as fit reading for the young. In addition, there was a special branch of "books for girls," whose abundance was rivalled only by their inferior quality—for female readers showed a preference for the sentimental. These "flappers' books," which enjoy an incredibly wide circulation, especially among the lower middle classes depict the most improbable careers of people in the most banal form. Silly boarding school stories reflect the fatuous vacuity of the bourgeois girl's "superior" education. But the climax is always the same: a great stroke of luck, the poor typist marries the general manager, the impoverished count's daughter does not need to become a schoolmistress but hooks on to a wealthy professor, and so on. The same theme with other minor variations, is trotted out over and over again.

The scene in which the action takes place is equally stereotyped: the factory owner's villa, the gentleman's country seat—or, by way of contrast, the humble cottage. Observations from real life will be sought for in vain. Set formulas take the place of living description. ("The golden beams of the evening sun. . . ." "There was bustle and life in the festively decorated halls of the count's palace. . . ."). The people are always the same. Their characters are fixed down to the last detail, even the names are recurring ones, like people in a Punch and Judy show. There is the lord of the manor or owner of a factory who "loves his subordinates but cannot show it," the gay married couple and the serious one, the ugly plotting villain, bad through and through, the handsome, noble-hearted and heroic officer, etc., etc. The exact correspondence between looks and character heightens still further the primitive black-and-white drawing effect of the figures depicted.

A fit counterpart of these false and out worn stencil forms is the style itself. It forever employs the same stale pictures, the same artificial turns of speech, only to be met with here: "'I will not forsake you!' replied Egon Count Riedwege, and his delicate nostrils quivered. . . ."

And the National-Socialist offshoot of this prolific literary root? Before us we have one of the serial products of 1934, destined for mass consumption among the young, *Christiana's Schooldays in the Country*. The very title gives the clue to the plot, for a year's labour in the country has already been made law for all young people on leaving school in the big cities of Germany. Christiana, the daughter of a city merchant, passionately yearns for country life, just as the "flapper" in the sentimental novel of the old style yearned for a French boarding school in Geneva. Life on the country estate of the Riedwege family is, as usual, painted in glowing colours. The culminating point in the story is of course—how indeed could it be otherwise!—the harvest festival at which the servants and farm hands are generously entertained and recite a blessing to their beloved master and mistress:

I wish the master and his wife a gift
That I do not have myself:
A bed of roses;
A blanket of damask
A door of ivory
And a diamond bolt to close it fast . . .

The utter grossness of this purely imaginary picture betrays, it is true, a more conscious emphasis of the servile tendency than was usually to be found in the trashy novel in its primitive stage. But in its choice of *dramatis personae* the Nazi novel is true to tradition. We shall not look in vain here for the lord of the manor, Herr von Riedwege, "who loves his servants from the bottom of his heart but cannot show it," nor for the "refined" old Frau von Riedwege, nor for the brilliant hero, the son of the

house, Rudiger von Riedwege ("his delicate nostrils quivered sensitively. . . .").

Here, too, Nazi fascisation has played its part. The once customary figure of the lieutenant of the guards has now become a leader of Storm Troopers, an august warrior, who sacrifices himself for the common weal. The magnanimous foundation of some charitable institution, which was generally due to arrive on page 300, is not lacking here either: the hero arranges for the National-Socialist education of young unemployed workers from the great towns, who, isolated from "the Marxist contagion," are settled on the neighboring estate of Silkow on a diet of "good hard work and simple wholesome fare." "The pupils must practice gymnastics with the young people, as is done in the defence leagues. . . ." The young proletarians are naturally all delighted with this arrangement—life in the country is so splendid! The culminating point of their happiness is an excursion to Berlin, where they "experience" Hitler in the Sportpalast. (Formerly this uplifting experience was furnished by a gala performance at the opera or a trip to see the "artistic relics of the ancient world." It will be seen, therefore, that the changes made here are purely formal ones.

This, however, does not complete the process of fascising this type of juvenile literature. The process further requires the cutting out of one of the main parts—the "happy end" itself! For although it goes without saying that the general keynote of optimism is maintained throughout (not a word about the crisis in agriculture, the failure of big estates to pay their way, etc.), it is nevertheless surprising to find that there is no mention here of anyone making a good marriage or living happily ever afterwards, as was the case in all previous novels of this sort. No, poor young Christiana and her girl friends are just the same penniless dependents at the end of the story as they were at the beginning. No hope is promised them, no chance to rise in the world. That is the point! And yet, in spite of this, they are happy. Why? Their sole happiness rests in—Hitler. Under the sign of the swastika these female farmhands are "only too happy" to render service on gentlemen's estates. Another point, just as characteristic of the Nazi novel as this axiomatic self-denial on the part of the younger generation of women, is the peculiar social moral of the story, conceived as something more than a development of the old time "charity" theme. The "awakening of the national community" demands that the big landowner, too, show an "understanding for the distressed condition of the proletariat"—which means material assistance for the Silkow labor camp. Herr von Riedwege, needless to say, complies! The Junkers are such generous men, such models of self-abnegation, that the young people from the working and middle classes might well take a lesson from them. . . .

Such is the purpose of this novel and of its numberless counterparts, resembling it as closely as one egg resembles the next. We need scarcely add that such cheap fictitious trash is recommended by the authorities as valuable literature, read in the schools, proferred in the lending libraries and bookshops. The Nazis may circulate it as widely as they will! The young unemployed of the big cities know what life under fascism is really like. And their language—the language of hard facts—is also a source of propaganda, though not, to be sure, in favor of Hitler and his system.

Translated from the German by H. Scott

Editor-in-chief SERGEI DINAMOV

IN THE NEXT ISSUE:

ERNST OTTWALT —	Last Things
V. SHKLOVSKY —	Captain Fedotov (Conclusion)
A. PLATONOV —	Third Son
V. LIBEDENSKI —	Our Comrade Furmanov

and others.

INTERNATIONAL LITERATURE

C O N T E N T S

No. 4 APRIL 1936

FICTION

CRITICISM AND ARTICLES

HUMOR AND SATIRE

ART

REPORTAGE