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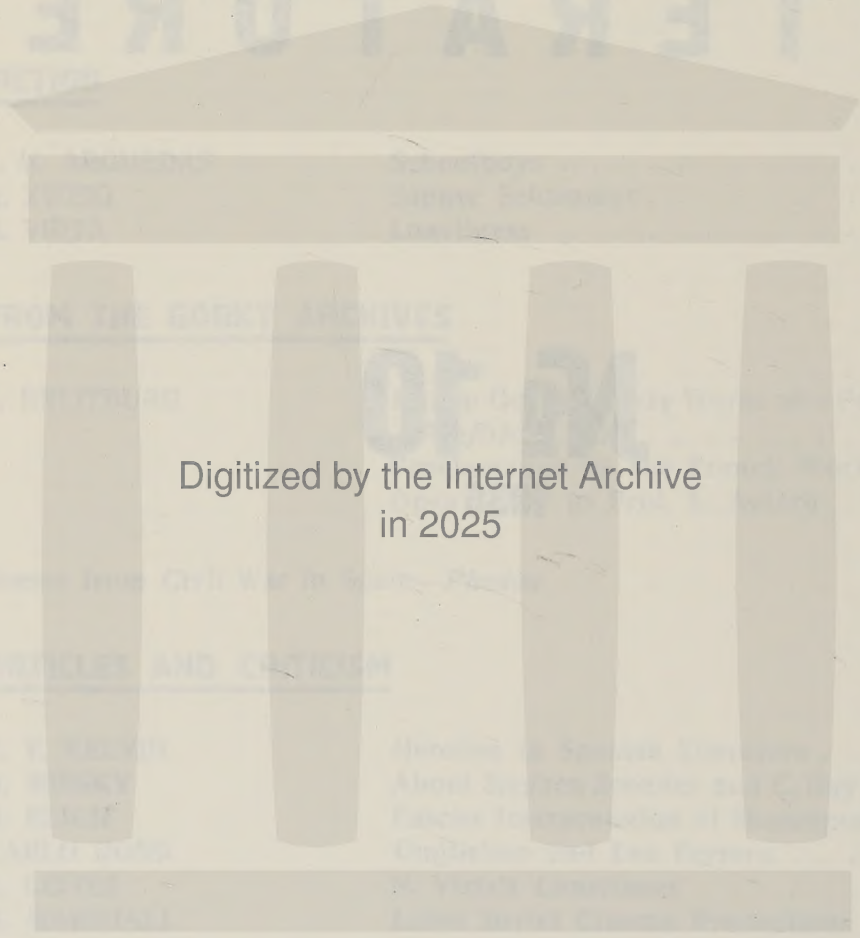

Jose Maria Arguedas

Schoolboys[1]

The creative power of the Peruvian writer, Jose Maria Arguedas, is splendid evidence of those achievements which the revolutionary movement in literature has attained in recent years in Latin American countries.

Ecuador, which has also produced excellent novels like *Huasipungo* (see *International Literature* No. 2, 1936) and *On the Streets* by Jorge Icaza, in this respect is no exception. The achievements of revolutionary literature in Peru, Bolivia, Paraguay and Colombia, *i.e.*, those countries which in the last few years have experienced all the horrors of colonial imperialist war in Chaco and Leticia are significant. It is possible to name any number of revolutionary novels and tales in which this war has found expression. Among them are *Green Hell* by the Paraguayan writer, Jose Maria Cañas, *The Flaming Stream* by Oscar Cerruto, a Bolivian, *Proletarian Stories* by Antonio Garcia of Colombia and others.

The Association of Revolutionary Writers and Artists, notwithstanding savage persecution, continues to carry on its work. In 1934, the association published a manifesto calling for struggle against the oppression of colonial peoples, against fascism and war. Some of the writers who are members, for instance, Jose Macedo Mendoza, the General Secretary, have been again and again subjected to arrest; the building of the association in Lima was repeatedly ransacked and finally wrecked. As a result of this persecution, the association was compelled to go underground. Some of its members were arrested and held in confinement in the colony for criminals, "El Fronto," where they declared a hunger strike.

Mention should be made of the activity of a group of Peruvian writers who have emigrated. In Spain are Cesar Falcon and Armando Basan (now fighting at the front against the Spanish fascist rebels) and in Paris Cesar Vallejo.

Notwithstanding the repression, revolutionary literature in Peru not only continues to exist but is also winning its first victories. After Cesar Vallejo's *Wolfram* (1931), a book of short stories devoted to the Indians by Jose Maria Arguedas was published. Arguedas describes the horrible exploitation of the Indians on the plantations of the Peruvian landowners with stirring accuracy.

In the story *Schoolboys,* Arguedas succeeded in giving an artistic picture of boy, a future participant in the revolutionary struggle of Latin America.

In the evenings the schoolboys of Akola loved to play *wikullo*. Bankucha was the champion of the school. He was old for his age, intelligent and serious. He was the *makta* of the school: by comparison, the rest of us were only *mak'tillos* and he could order us about.

When we cleaned the schoolhouse or prepared the swill for the "Miss's" pigs, when we rode on donkeys down the main street of the village or fixed the road for the "government" of the province, Bankucha was our leader.

During road work, which is usually done by grown-up men, we silently obeyed our *makta*, pretending we were real workers, peons, *maktas* of Akola, and that Bankucha was our overseer, our manager. We calmly wiped the sweat from our foreheads and during rest intervals Bankucha would place his hands on his hips like a real worker, and standing at the head of the brigade, would regard us severely just like don Jesus, the manager of don Ciprian, the proprietor of the village. At times we laughed heartily at Banku, but he never laughed. He really considered himself an overseer and shouted to us in a deep voice, commanding us to keep quiet. The *wikullo* champion knew how to give orders and we schoolboys liked him because under his lead-

[1] Children in Indian villages who work for a proprietor; in return the proprietor sends them to school three or four times a week.

ership any work went smoothly, because he bitterly hated our oppressors and because he had large soft eyes. On days when he didn't come to school even the smallest schoolboy felt his absence and missed him:

"Where's Bankuchallava?"

One Saturday afternoon, Bankucha and I loitered on the square listening to the song of the thrushes in the cemetery trees. The village was almost deserted. All the *comuneros* [1] had gone off to work and most of the schoolboys lived in neighboring villages or on the farms and went early on Saturdays.

The day was damp and foggy.

"Bankucha, I'll soon beat you at *wikullo.*"

"You're a liar, Juancha."

"If you want, we'll go to the Walpamayu and try."

Akola lies between two small rivers, the Pukamayu and the Walpamayu. Both of them gush down from the mountains at a steep incline and fall into the big river, the real river, which runs at the foot of the range. In the course of eons the Walpamayu has cut away the earth and flows through a deep gorge. The inhabitants planted prickly hedges along the edge of the ravine to protect the children and animals. Here and there aloes stretch their branches over the precipice. Many years ago the schoolboys made openings through the prickly hedge in order to reach the edge of the gorge and throw *wikullos* in the river.

We cut *wikullos* from aloe leaves—small rectangles with a long handle. A bark knife for cutting the aloe dangled from the belt of every player. Bankucha had a real knife with a sheath—the gift of don Fermin, a drunken half-breed who liked children.

"Bankucha, you cut *wikullos* better than I do; if you're honest make some for both of us."

Bankucha did not answer. Going over to the aloe he broke off a big leaf and cut out six splendid *wikullos.*

"One at a time," he said.

He then stepped forward and dodged through one of the openings in the prickly hedge. Beyond the hedge was a space about two meters wide.

The muddy stream bore leaves and branches in its swift course, swirling and foaming among the rocks.

"Walpamayu, one of these days I'll throw my *wikullo* across you," Bankucha said and glanced at the opposite side of the gorge.

"No, no, Walpamayu, I'll do so before Banku!"

I picked up my *wikullo,* bent over, flexed my arm, then suddenly straightened, and stretching like a *llok'e*[2] bow I hurled the *wikullo* with all my might. The *wikullo* flew like an *anka,*[3] cutting the air with a whistling noise and fell on the other side of the gorge, burying its nose in the ground some 20 meters from the river.

"Who saw it?"

Clenching my fists I leaped to the edge of the precipice. It seemed that nothing in life would ever mean as much to me as that game. I was so happy that I shouted to Bankucha.

"I reached the other side, *makta.*"

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[1] Comuneros—members of primitive agricultural communities still existing in South America.

[2] Llok'e—a bush with strong, highly flexible branches.

[3] Anka—a large bird of prey.

Banku looked at me with mingled alarm and suspicion, trying to conceal his chagrin.

"Wait a bit, wait a bit, you little devil!"

Spitting on his hands the champion raised his *wikullo* from the ground, spread his legs wide apart and bent over raising his head. His eyes flashed with fury. He suddenly leaped up and his hand straightened out like a lash. The *wikullo* rose in the air and flew straight forward, but midway it suddenly lurched and plunged headlong towards the river, dashing against the stones.

He tried a second *wikullo*. But it was already late and a strong wind rose, carrying the *wikullo* sideways far downstream. For the first time I saw Banku lose his self-possession. He cut out four and five *wikullos* at a time and each time told me threateningly:

"I'll show you. Alongside of me you're nothing but a pup, Juancha."

He was all in a sweat and tried different positions, all to no avail. The wind was against him. It dashed every *wikullo* to the ground smashing it to bits.

I felt sorry for Bankucha.

"Forget it, Banku. Mine only got across the gorge by accident but you are our *matka,* the manager and overseer of the schoolboys. Tomorrow, when the wind dies down, you'll be sure to reach the other side. You'll see, Bankucha."

Grabbing me by the hand, with his other hand he pointed to the place where my *wikullo* had fallen.

"Juancha, you've been outdoing me for a long time; you're a real *matka.* If tomorrow, or the day after tomorrow, I don't come up to you, you'll be the first *wikullo* player in Akola."

"Alright, Banku. But you'll always be the leader among us."

It was growing dark, the wheat fields played with the evening wind. The mist rose covering the sky and the whole horizon. The earth seemed wrapped in an impenetrable ashen pall. The mountains shimmered in the distance.

The *comuneros* were returning along all the paths that led to the village. Some walked behind donkeys laden with firewood. Others herded small flocks of sheep, chatting with their neighbors. The dogs ran ahead overtaking each other and frolicking happily.

"Juancha, eight years from now we'll be going along like that, our wives behind us and our dogs in front."

"Of course, Banku, why we're real Indians of Akola."

We came out on the highway leading down to the Tullo pampas, the mother pampas of the Akolas, where the maize grows twice as high as a man.

"Let's stop and look at Tayta Ak'chi," said Banku.

Tayta Ak'chi is a mountain which rears its head two leagues from Akola. Tayta Ak'chi sees everything for ten, perhaps for fifteen leagues around. And the *comuneros* of Akola say that all he sees belongs to him. At night he gets up and walks about his domains. Many shepherds and travelers have seen him; tall and silent, he walks with giant strides, and rivers join their shores to let him pass. But that's all imagination. The pastures and fields which Tayta Ak'chi sees belong to don Ciprian the proprietor of the village. And don Ciprian actually does walk over the pampas by night, with his overseer don Jesus and three peons; the proprietor and the overseer with a rifle over their shoulders and a revolver dangling in a holster from their belts, the peons with a stout whip, rounding up all cattle they encounter on the proprietor's pastures. They herd all the animals into the proprietor's corral and

keep them locked up until they either die of hunger or until the owner pays don Ciprian ten or fifteen *soles* a head for damages.

"Tayta Ak'chi deserves respect, Juancha."

His eyes regarded the mountains with his accustomed expression of tenderness, but now he looked more serious and calmer than usual.

"Do you love Ak'chi, Banku?"

"Tayta Ak'chi is the patron fo Akola, he guards the *comuneros,* their cows, donkeys, and all their other animals. We are all sons of Tayta Ak'chi."

"That's wrong! The *comuneros* have no fathers. They have nobody. They are alone like grass upon the plain. Does anyone weep when don Ciprian with his manager and overseer skins the hides off the *comuneros?* Forget about it, Bankucha, Tayta Ak'chi is deaf and hears nothing. He's as stupid as a parrot. It would be better if we went to look for Teofanes, he went up the road with Gringa." Bankucha was reluctant, but I, disregarding him, ran upwards along the path in order to overtake Teofanes. Banku soon followed me. We caught sight of Teofanes at a bend in the road, he was going uphill, hanging on to Gringa's tail.

Gringa!

I flung my arms around the neck of my favorite cow and hugged her tightly. Then Banku came over, she lifted her head and placed it on his shoulder.

"Ya, ya, carago!" Teofanes shouted.

The cow stopped, took a deep breath and began licking her nose. The smell of fresh milk was very pleasant.

Gringa was the best cow in the village. Teofanes's father, a cattle puncher, had brought her from the mountains when she was still a calf. He had fields of maize and alfalfa and Gringa grew up in peace and contentment. When the cow grew up and calved she gave twelve liters of milk a day. Teofanes' father died when Gringa was still with calf. His widow had no other cattle besides this cow. They called her Gringa [1] because she was completely white, and her eyes were slightly watery. We schoolboys liked to play with her and felt very much at home at Teofanes' house where no one scolded us. The widow was a good woman. She adored her son and each morning more than one outsider drank Gringa's milk. The cow was extremely mild; her face, her thick jowls, moist blue eyes and small ears combined to produce an expression of kindness that melted our hearts. Gringacha! I loved her like a mother.

"Don't bother Gringa, she dragged me the whole way up the mountain and she doesn't feel quite like herself right now. She's tired, poor thing," said Teofanes.

"Why, you lout. Can't you climb the mountain on your own legs?"

"Is mountain climbing the same as playing *wikullo?"*

We let go of Gringa.

"Do you know, Teofanes, Gringa has grown fat."

"That's because she grazes at Pakcha now. The alfalfa is sweeter there."

"The soil is different at Pakcha, not like any around Akola."

Gringa again resumed her journey taking the mountain step by step. She leaned heavily on her hind legs. Her full udder swung and dragged her backwards. The three of us walked along behind her, rarely saying a word. The wind whispered in the grass that covered the slope on either side of the road. A flock of pigeons and myriads of other birds flew swiftly, low above the earth. They were flying to the woods, to the shores of great rivers, to the

[1] The term Latin-Americans use to describe Anglo-Americans.

bushes of the Walpamayu. In the direction of Tayta Ak'chi the sky was black and threatening.

"You know, Banku, don Ciprian has been to see us four times and asked us to sell Gringa. Mother flatly refused and don Ciprian became angry. 'If not by fair means then by foul," he said and he went home cursing. Don Jesus also came to see us in the evening and asked us to sell the cow and said that the proprietor was ashamed that the best cow in the village belonged to us and not to him."

"What do you think, Teofanes?"

"The swine! Gringa belongs to me, Teofanes. Don Ciprian will only get her over my dead body."

"And the same holds for me, brother. Gringa will never be in the proprietor's corral."

"Indians keep their word, Bankucha!" Teofanes said.

We stopped in silence at the prickly hedge not far from the village. We felt a pain inside of us as we gazed at Gringa. Don Ciprian was a wicked man with the soul of the devil himself. He paced up and down around Gringa, greedily regarding her with green eyes that were like the scum in stagnant swamps.

"Forget about it, Teofanes. Let's dance here in front of Gringa. We'll dance before her like *makta* Untu[1] from Puquio."

"Yaque."

"Yaque!"

We halted Gringa and began dancing on the green sward. We felt agile and skilled in that Indian dance. We whistled the song of Untu, the father of all dancers. We raised our right hand as though holding a pair of steel scissors and pawed the ground like happy birds.

Gringa's soft eyes regarded us with interest.

When we separated, a rainy night was approaching. The clouds swooped lower and lower. First came hail followed by rain. A cold wind whistled. The black sky was unbroken by a single patch of light. From a distance the cloudbursts on the mountain peaks were like a heavy curtain.

The streets were deserted by man and beast. Green leaves, straw and refuse swirled in the air. Gusts of wind seized them and carried them to the big river.

Our hearts felt cold and heavy.

"Don Ciprian will kill Gringa, he's sure to."

"That devil's soul of his won't let her go. I, Teofacha, Banku and all the *maktas* are no more than black ants as far as he's concerned, little childrenwho only need to be whipped a couple of times. The *comuneros* are cowards. There are many of them but they are terrified by the proprietor. I am not afraid of him. Teofacha and Banku are also brave. But we haven's the strength There are only a few of us. Don Ciprian is only one in the village. In Pukio there are lots of proprietors and rich folk, but in Akola there is only one proprietor, don Ciprian. On account of stupidity or cowardice everyone is afraid of him. Yet hasn't he got the same sort of a neck as don Lucas or don Kokchi? A strong knife is sure to sever it. A *wikullo* can bash his head in. Juancha, Bankucha, Teofana! A *wikullo* is surer than a bullet, more certain than an arrow! Head-first from the mountain, from the top of the 'piedra altad' on the way to the big river, don Ciprian's brains will splatter like cactus

[1] A famous dancer from the province of Lukanas.

thrown from the crag! Well, Ciprian, I'm not afraid of you, I'm a *wikullo* player, the son of a lawyer, you miserable half-breed!"

It began to rain.

Never before had I felt such enthusiasm and strength. It was as if a candle burned inside of me. I wanted to jump and kick. My heart was pounding like that of a panting stallion.

"Here's a *wikullo* for you."

I looked at the new unfinished school house, whose walls had been waiting to be roofed for many years. Two meters from the ground a mason had placed an almost round stone. The schoolboys had given it eyes, nose and a mouth and from that time on the stone was known as the "Uma" (head).

—The head of don Ciprian!

I bent over just as I had done on the brink of the Walpamayu gorge. I seized the stone by the sharp end, crooked my arm, straightened out and cast my *wikullo*. The stone was shattered on the forehead of the "head," causing a dent.

"There you are, you swine."

I worked myself up to a terrific pitch of anger. My body became hot and I began to perspire. The hand with which I had thrown my *wikullo* trembled slightly.

"Juancha is a man, don Ciprian! Bankucha and Teofanes throw the *wikullo* from one side of the Walpamayu to the other and we *wikullo* throwers from Akola can break your head like a green cactus!"

I shouted like a madman, threatening the stone "head." But then a sudden weariness overtook me and I slowly staggered homeward. A warm feeling of tenderness welled up within me and I felt like crying.

"Don't worry, Gringacha! Bankucha, Teofanes and I are *wikullo* players and our hearts have the courage of grown-up men. You can rely on us, Gringacha!"

I laughed quietly, pleased with myself, Teofanes, Banku and our *wikullos*.

I walked along silently, stumbling over rocks and heaps of fresh dung. Reaching the corner I suddenly stopped.

"*Ja, caraga*! I've become soft."

My chest was moist from tears.

That's all right. It's because of Gringa, I'm crying on her account!

The heavy rain spattered the earth, pelting my head and back.

Reaching the door of the proprietor's house I felt my heart fill with sorrow, as though I'd just been fighting with somebody too strong for me. I felt discouraged, I felt scared.

The yard was flooded with water, that gushed from the well and leaped across the flat stones which served as a hearth. Don Ciprian was sitting in the living room having his dinner with his wife and manager. Several workers were talking on the porch. I entered the kitchen, shaking the water from my *usutas*. Facundacha gave me a frightened look.

"Don Ciprian is angry, Juancha. He wants you to go in to see him immediately."

Don Ciprian's farmhands were sitting around the fire warming themselves — Jose Delgado, Tomas, Antonio Kispe, Juan Wallpa, Francisco Rondon. Dona Cayetana, the cook, was handing out dishes of rice.

"Look out, Juancha," said don Tomas, "be careful, don Ciprian is furious."

A wax altar-candle, a relic of the time when don Ciprian was in charge of the church, burned in the center of a large table in the main room. The proprietor was seated at the table, greedily devouring meat. Next to him sat

dona Josefa, half-asleep, and across from her was don Jesus, who gazed fixedly at the tablecloth as though he were ashamed of something. The room was in semi-darkness. High, carved benches, set end-to-end along the walls, added to the somber funeral atmosphere.

"Where have you been since 5 o'clock?"

Don Ciprian's green eyes were glazed and stony, as they always were when he was seized with a fit of rage. That evening he looked worse than ever. He stared me straight in the face.

"Speak up, you brat!"

"I was playing with Teofacha and Bankucha outside the village."

"I'll have you thrashed again, Juancha. There's no doctor now, and if you try to loaf, I'll use a whip to make you work, you understand? On account of your father I lost my suit against the Kocha community, I paid him 30 pounds and you've got to work it off."

"All right don Ciprian."

"Don't you associate with Teofacha. They say, that Indian threatens me. Sooner or later his cow will be in my pasture and if not, it's all the same. Persuade them to sell me Gringa. I'll buy you a new suit and let you go to school four times a week instead of three."

"How do you expect them to sell Gringa, don Ciprian? Why, Teofacha loves her like his own mother!"

"The boy sides with the widow, don Ciprian, they bought him up for a glass of milk," said the manager.

"All right! Don't you dare associate with Teofacha. If I see you with him I'll have you flogged. Beat it."

The eyes of dona Josefa were full of sympathy and fondness for me.

"Go on, Juancha, don't be frightened."

In the yard I was swallowed by the pitch black night. The rain had stopped and water was slowly dripping from the eaves.

"There's no other way left, Teofacha! A *wikullo* on the road to the big river!" I shouted in the dark yard.

I stopped for a minute and examined the depths of my heart: I was no coward and felt that I had the strength to throw don Ciprian into the precipice.

When the rain subsided the dogs began to bark. Sitting on the corners of the square they barked for two and three hours on end for their own enjoyment, pointing their noses to the dark sky and howling. Sometimes they fought in packs and bit each other. Kaisercha, the proprietor's dog, was a serious animal. His big head, small eyes, dropping jowls and huge size—he was as big as a calf—filled the Indians with fear. Why didn't Kaisercha bark? His head was always cocked to one side, his tail drooped, he took no notice of anyone and always looked severe. Kaisercha paid no attention to the other dogs and rarely gave himself to love. The mountain dogs were of a different temperament. They wandered through the streets all day, or frolicked about the village with their ears back and their tails high. Occasionally—it was a rare event—Kaisercha came out in the evening and sitting on a corner of the square, apart from the other dogs, barked along with them. At such times the *comuneros* stopped in the roadway in order to listen to Kaisercha's bark. It echoed through the square, reaching the gorge and it drowned out the barking of the other dogs. Kaisercha had a strange bark, dull and broken like the bellowing of a bull. His bark was easy to recognize because he came from another country, he was a foreigner.

"What do those villages look like, don Kokchi?" the *comuneros* asked.

although you could imagine what they were like from the dog. "They say that the houses are of iron and the people are as numerous as ants."

"But they say the people are very wicked and fight among each other and they even say people die from hunger right in the streets there."

"Where is it, don Kokchi?"

Thus when we listened to the howl of Kaisercha we thought of the distant villages where don Ciprian went every year with herds of cattle and sheep, returning two or three months later with brand new *reales* and *soles,* shiny like the sand on the big river bottom.

"Those dogs bark without themselves knowing why," said Jose Delgado.

"Who knows? 'Dogs see things.' If one's soul wanders far away they bark. But if it stays right in the village they howl mournfully."

"Do you think Kaisercha also sees, don Francisco?"

"No, Kaisercha can't see where the souls of this village go because he is always silent and wanders about like a sick person. Kaisercha's soul probably remained in foreign lands, and when it's dark he cries for his soul and calls to it with his doleful barking. Poor Kaisercha! His soul remained far away, twenty, thirty, one hundred days' journey from Akola. Most likely he never will find it."

Dona Cayetana had a kind heart. She always spoke kindly. She loved the tom cat, Kaisercha and the chickens and most of all she loved the schoolboys from other farms, those who went out early on Saturday morning. I liked dona Cayetana's voice. It had a note of soft melancholy which soothed me in my lonely orphaned life.

"Next, dona Cayetana, you'll begin crying because of that sick dog; I'd better go out."

Jose Delgado got up to say good-bye, the other farm-hands also rose.

"Till tomorrow, *mamaya.*"

"Goodbye, *mak'takuna.*"

All four went out, talking on the way of dona Cayetana's kind heartedness.

The red coals of the fire went out smothered in ashes. The wind and a feeble shaft of light came through the window which was cut directly beneath the roof.

I lay on a llama skin on the floor near a large tub for kneading dough. Dona Cayetana spread a skin by the hearth and also lay down. Facundacha slept in dona Josefa's room.

The dogs became silent, the wind died down, the heavy dark of night shrouded the earth and sudden stillness set in.

We *mak'tillos* never slept badly if we had so much as a goatskin to spread on the floor. Sleep was our friend.

"Juancha, Juancha," shouted dona Cayetana, but sleep had already tied my tongue.

"Juancha, don Ciprian is very angry with you. Tomorrow morning leave early with a sickle for Jatunrumi field and cut alfalfa for the bullocks. By six you've got to be back here."

"All right, *mamaya.*"

"My poor little orphan, my poor little half-breed."

A whole rick of mown alfalfa towered beside me when the first ray of the sun crowned the ridge of Tayta Jatun Cruz and filled the sky with radiant flashing light. The sunrise in a cloudless sky always made me feel like jumping for joy. Laying aside my sickle, I sat down on the rick waiting for Taita

Inti[1] to appear. The light clouds drifting in the East grew white and smiling. The sky was aflame and the peaks of distant mountains were painted a bluish color; suddenly a white ray flashed down from the crest of Jatun Cruz.

"Inti! Tayta Inti!"

The whole ravine was lighted. The hills became green, the slopes and pampas came to life and right across from me, next to Jatun Cruz, honored Tayta Akchi raised his large pointed head, unmarred by a single cloud, as though he were the real lord of this land.

Calmly and purposefully I bound the rick of alfalfa, slung it on my back and set forth. Passing Jatunrumi, I saw the path by which Banka with other schoolboys had climbed to the very top.

Jatunrumi was the tallest rock of Akola and stood on the edge of the road leading to the puna. From the roadside it doesn't seem so high, but if you look at it from the pasture which spreads downward on the slope and bears the same name you can see what a regular mountain it is, and when you gaze at it for long you begin to feel dizzy. Only the oldest and boldest of the schoolboys could climb to the top.

"Today, I'll reach your very summit, Jatunrumi."

I felt confident and brave that morning. If don Ciprian had chanced by on horseback I probably would have smashed his skull for him with a stone. The warm rays of the morning sun, the serenity of Tayta Ak'chi, the gay, pleasant landscape of pastures and mountains, the soaring flight of the *anka* and *kilincho* stirred my blood, giving me strength and daring.

Depositing the alfalfa on the ground, I jumped over the pasture fence and began hoisting my way upwards over the stones. My hands deftly gripped the cracks, my legs nimbly found footholds. Neither Banku nor anyone else had climbed so agilely. I soon reached the top of Jatunrumi. A strong wind whistled in my face, pushing me downward, but I stood firmly on the summit, surveying the entire land of Akola from one extremity to the other. From the top of Jatunrumi the poor little village nestling in the depths of the ravine seemed pitiful. I stood thus for a long time listening to the whistling wind and gazing at the green planted fields with satisfaction. The sun rose high above the village and the first lowing of the cows looking for their calves was audible. Suddenly my spirits fell. I was seized with my former sadness and my hatred for don Ciprian flared stronger than ever in my breast.

Should I climb down? Impossible! Apparently Jatunrumi loved me because I was an orphan and wanted me to stay on the summit forever. Like a little bird arriving from the west I hopped along the top of the crag without finding a path. I lay on my stomach trying to wriggle down but took fright and changed my mind. I tried going down on all sides, but from the very first step felt an unconquerable terror of the chasm which yawned at my feet. My head swam and I clambered back.

Then I recalled the *comuneros'* legend of the mountains, tall crags, rivers and inlets.

"Sometimes they get hungry. They kidnap a *mak'tillo,* swallow him whole and hold him in their fastness. The imprisoned *mak'tillo* sometimes recalls his native land, his village and mother and he sings mournful songs. Did you ever hear how Jatunrumi sings? It tears the heart of any living man, when, on a dark night, after a rain, Jatunrumi sings in a slender, melancholy voice. Only that voice is not the voice of Jatunrumi, but that of those luckless *mak'tillos* whom he kidnapped and swallowed. This happens every so many years. How many years has Jatunrumi lived so far?"

[1] The sun in Peruvian mythology.

Don Ciprian and don Fermin, who had been to other lands, often laughed at these tales. But now I was reaching the point of despair. Jatunrumi didn't want to let me go. It seemed to me that Jatunrumi's huge black jaws were about to open and he would swallow me. I screamed at the top of my lungs. Tears streamed down my cheeks.

"Help, *Comuneros!* Help, *mak'tillos.*"

I fell, crying, clawing the unyielding rock. Opening my eyes I pleaded in the bleating voice of a deserted calf:

"Tayta Jatunrumi, I'm not fit for you. I'm the son of a white lawyer. I'm not a real *mak'tillo.* Take a good look at me Jatunrumi. I've got hair like cornsilk on the Tullo pampas, and blue eyes. I'm not fit for you, Tayta Jatunrumi!"

Suddenly I was startled by the hoarse voice of don Jesus.

"Hey, Juancha, Juancha!"

At the sight of don Jesus I immediately felt reassured. He came riding up on a black horse, coatless. Probably he had been looking for me. The manager was furious. His pock-marked face became hideous when he lost his temper. But I felt grateful to him.

"Tayta, you've saved me. Jatunrumi wanted to swallow me," I shouted to him from above. He hurried, jumped over the hedge, climbed half-way up the crag and threw me a lasso. Tying it to a rock I climbed down and fell right on top of don Jesus. The manager grabbed me by the nape of the neck and pushed me downward.

"You bastard! I ought to kill you!"

I fell in a heap of stones. I clambered down cat-like, hurdled the hedge and grabbed my rick of alfalfa, hoisting it to my shoulders. I saw that blood was running from my hand, the rope had taken all the skin off. I started running down the road. I stumbled at every step and scratched my fingers till they bled.

"He saved me from Jatunrumi."

I was ready to shout for joy and hurried down the mountain forgetting about the manager.

When I was already near the village I heard the gallop of the black behind me. In an instant don Jesus was up to me and struck me on the neck with his lash.

"You bastard! You dirty dung!"

The horse nearly knocked me over. Don Jesus reined it in with difficulty and again raised his lash. To save myself I leaped across the hedge on the other side of the road.

"My rope, you bastard! It remained on the rock! Go back and fetch it, you dirty pup, or I'll kill you on the spot!"

His gimlet eyes, like those of an over-fed pig, glittered like two sparks.

"Are you going or not?"

"Tayta! Only don't hit me. I can't. My hands and feet are all bloody!"

I showed him my hands.

"All right, get up and walk on ahead!"

Hoisting my load over the hedge I threw it on the road and then climbed over myself.

"I'll tend to you right now!"

And he struck me across the back with his lash, just like a dog or a calf. I fell face forward on the fresh alfalfa. A wave of warmth filled my chest. I felt as though my heart-beats were slowly subsiding and would soon stop forever.

Don Jesus stood silent. Then he suddenly bent down and looked at my

face. Probably the blood from my hands had got on my ears. He touched my head with the rough hand of a cow-puncher.

"Juancha! That damned temper of mine!"

He picked me up, tears welled up in his eyes.

"That damned temper of mine! Forgive me Juancha, I'm like a dog when I get mad!"

He deposited me on the ground, picked up the rick of alfalfa and placed it across the horse. He then jumped to the saddle and galloped off.

I felt very wretched indeed. My hands, neck, back and legs were sore.

"What a hell of a life!"

The sun shone brightly in a cloudless sky, its rays warmed my body caressingly; it tinged the gorge and distant mountains with a blueish light. *Kilinchos* fought happily overhead. Birds sang loudly in the thickets of Taya and Sunchu. The whole world seemed happy. At the edge of Akola the Jatunk'-ocha river, whence the population got its water, tumbled musically on the black rock of Pak'cha.

I sat down on the edge of the road.

"How nice it is here!"

The morning freshness, the pleasant sight of my native ravine again reassured me.

The day will come in Akola when the landlord will die and the *comuneros* will live in peace, tilling their own fields, bringing in the harvest with singing and dancing, and they'll never cry on account of the overseers and managers. They can love their animals with their whole hearts, like Teofani loves Gringa. And no one will shoot and kill hungry cows from a distance, because all the gorges and pampas which meet the gaze of Tayta Ak'chi will belong to the *comuneros*. I, too, will remain with the Indians because I love them and will grow up a good *makta* of Akola.

I sat there a long time thinking of the happy life of all *comuneros*.

The Indians are good people. They live together in friendship and help each other. They are kind to other people's cattle and they are glad when strong, green shoots of wheat and maize sprout on the communal fields. Who is responsible for disputes and quarrels in Akola? Only don Ciprian. The landlord wants the inhabitants of Akola to quarrel with their neighbors from Lukanas and the people of Lukanas with those of Utek and Andamarkas. He bribes the taytas of the village with gifts. All it takes is one or two cows and whiskey to make them side with the proprietor. For the sake of money he holds in readiness rifles, revolvers, whip and managers. For the sake of money he kills and tortures old men in the villages. He's as crafty as the devil himself and his eyes are clouded by the wickedness which fills his heart. And he cries only for the sake of money. What sort of a soul does he have?

And there, far away in distant lands they look after him and send soldiers to guard him. There, in foreign lands the father of all proprietors probably lives. He's the oldest. Anger and hatred fill his head, his bosom and his soul, and don Ciprian is only his manager . . . what a hell of a life!

I hadn't noticed how don Ciprian and don Jesus were racing as fast as they could across the Walpamayu bridge on their excellent jumpers. The landlord's bay went galloping up the mountain and the black followed behind him, arching its tail and craning its neck.

Yes, they were heading for the field.

I hid in the bushes. The horses soon dashed past.

When the noise of their hoofs had subsided I returned to the road and headed straight for the village.

I walked with difficulty as though I were ill.

I was no longer a happy, carefree *mak'tillo* like Banku. I was the son of a half-breed, my head often ached and I thought of my future, of the *comuneros*, of my father who had died no one knew where, of the injustice of don Ciprian and I felt that I hated him more than Teofacha did, more than all the schoolboys and *comuneros* of Akola.

Dona Cayetana rubbed my hands with salve and her eyes filled with tears.

"He's a beast, a regular beast, that don Jesus!"

"It doesn't amount to anything, I'm a real man, dona Cayetana. It doesn't hurt. But it's a lucky thing I was saved from Jatunrumi. Don Jesus is a dog, all right, but he did save me."

But dona Cayetana would not be comforted. She cried as though I were dead. She selected a piece of fresh canvas from a box full of rags and proceeded to bandage my hands. At this point dona Josefa entered the kitchen. She was shocked at the sight of my cuts and took me to her room.

Dona Josefa lived in a dark room with a single door. A narrow window, high in the wall, let in a feeble light. The broad bed where the master and mistress slept rose like a house. It had a roof like a cupola with a crown on the top. A small cabinet where dona Josefa kept medicines stood in a corner of the bedroom.

"God alone knows who banged you up like that. But we won't discuss it," said dona Josefa.

She applied iodine to the cuts. Tears formed in my eyes from the pain. Then she bandaged my hands with a piece of soft cloth.

"Don Ciprian went off to the puna with his manager. They'll be back in four days."

"Really, senora?"

"Are you glad?"

"Don Ciprian doesn't like me, *mamita*."

"That's true, Juan."

"I love you very much, *mamita*."

"This evening we'll sing to the guitar on the porch."

"I have no sores, *mamita*, not a single one. There's nothing but happiness both in my heart and hands!"

I was ready to shout and dance. I felt as if I'd been sitting in a cage my whole life and had suddenly been set free. I wanted to run, flapping my arms and shouting, like the ducks on the big rivers.

"You have to sit quietly all day because of your wounds."

"No, *mamita!*"

I ran through the rooms. I cleared the porch steps with a single bound and ran around the yard. The sun smiled on the white clay walls.

Dona Josefa came out on the porch and regarded me with serious eyes. Feeling slightly ashamed I climbed up the steps and sat down on the bench.

"Here's breakfast. Eat, *mamacha*."

The house seemed deserted at this hour. The laborers came in for their dish of coca very early and then went back to the fields. The only people left in the whole house were dona Cayetana and Facundacha, who waited on the mistress.

It was always this way when don Ciprian went to the puna. He never told of his plans ahead of time. On the eve of the departure the manager hid the rifles on the road and in the morning saddled the best horses. Before

mounting his horse, don Ciprian informed his wife of where they were going and that was all.

The days when the proprietor was off on the puna were the best days in the house. At such times the eyes of everyone—farm laborers, dona Cayetana, Facundacha and even dona Josefa became brighter. A look of gladness came into their faces. Everybody walked more confidently somehow, as though he were the real captain of his fate. In the evenings noisy games and music were to be heard, whole orchestras were improvised. Boys and girls from the village danced happily and freely before the senora.

Within two or three days a herd of cattle on the street, the hoarse bellowing and snorting of bulls announced the return of the proprietor and don Jesus. People's eyes grew glum; their faces lost their luster; their feet became heavy. Something seemed to snap inside your heart and your blood froze with mortal fear. It was as though the soul had fled from everything.

The next day *comuneros* started straggling in from all the neighboring and distant settlements. They came into the yard with pitiful, tearful faces. Don Ciprian awaited them, standing on the porch.

"Tayta," they began. "They say you drive in my cattle."

"Your cattle? Do you think I keep pastures for you? Your goats, horses and cow clean off my grass. Well, pay me a pound or I'll pay you a difference of twenty *soles* and we'll call it quits."

Don Ciprian never gave in. He mocked the tears of the Indians and things always turned out the way he wanted. Usually, having received the twenty *soles,* the *comuneros* went off with drooping heads, wiping away the tears with the edge of their ponchos. Every time I saw the tears of those grown up people I thought with fright of the heart of don Ciprian. "It's probably not like the hearts of other people," I told myself. "It's probably bigger and harder. Big, round and heavy like the heart of an old bull."

Why did don Ciprian demand one or two pounds? Because for a few days the cattle of the commune had eaten parched grass on wild, unsurveyed, unfenced pastureland. Nobody knew which pastures belonged to the proprietor and which to the commune. Don Ciprian only said: "That's mine." And if he found any cow on the pasture which he pointed to, he drove it off with him for damages.

Every year cattle died in don Ciprian's corral. But not all the *comuneros* were equally afraid of him. Sometimes a bold Indian turned up who behaved firmly, answered the landlord sharply and did not pay damages. But the landlord was not the least bit roused by this. He calmly permitted the animal to die from hunger and then ordered it to be deposited at the owner's door, and every animal which died in his corral swelled the hatred of the Indians of Akola, Lukanas and other villages, for the proprietor. There were times when don Ciprian could not find any peons. All the Indians of Akola agreed to refuse to work for him. Don Ciprian flew into a rage. He rode about, shooting and killing pigs, dogs, and even cows in the streets. The *comuneros* took fright, they surrendered one by one.

That is why none of the things they say in Akola about Tayta Ak'chi are true!

The big mountain stands like a deaf and soulless stone, propped on the other mountains. Holding high its head it gazes calmly on all sides and when evening approaches wraps itself in thick black clouds that it may sleep calmly. In the morning, Tayta Inti removes the cover and condors circle slowly above its head. Once a year, in February, it hides from human eyes. Black rain clouds cover its body completely and it sleeps. And here the In-

dians are again mistaken. They say the mountain talks with God and receives its orders from him for the whole year. That is a lie. Ak'chi means nothing to Akola, god also means nothing to Akola. In vain does the mountain become angry. In vain does it assume the haughty bearing of lords and senors. It is impotant and serves only as a resting place for clouds.

Nor is Tatacha San Jose. the patron saint of Akola, the lord of the district. In vain do the *comuneros* carry his image through all the streets on their shoulders in August. In vain on the eve of this day do the *comuneros* set off fireworks on the Suchukrumi. In vain do they pray to him childishly. He too is as dumb as Taita Ak'chi. He is rather the friend of the real master of the village, don Ciprian Palomino, because on the day of his feast the proprietor kisses his hand while the Indians only touch the hem of his robe. Sometimes the master even laughs in his presence and swears coarsely. Don Ciprian, yes, don Ciprian, he is the king in Akola, a wicked king with a big hard heart like an old bull. Don Ciprian rounds up other people's cattle. He owns the water in all the streams, ponds and rivers. He owns the jails. Tayta curate is also don Ciprian's hireling and goes from door to door persuading the *comuneros* to work for the master proprietor. Don Ciprian can strike any Indian over the head. He is never depressed and a green flame always flickers in the depths of his eyes like sunflower leaves reflected in the eyes of grazing sheep. At the sight of money his eyes fill with an insane luster. His soul is clogged with accumulated filth from the piles of money. And soon he'll die of that poison.

I spent the whole day on the porch, sitting on a llama skin. It was a nice day, the sun shone brightly, and there was no wind. Towards evening clouds gathered from all sides and covered the sky, but no rain fell.

"No," people said, "there won't be any rain. The clouds will scatter."

That was how it turned out.

The farm hands and peons returned at dusk. When they learned that don Ciprian had gone off to the *puna,* they gathered happily in the yard and began talking as though they were in their own house.

"The wheat is sprouting well. It's a good year, don Tomas."

"True, this year you'll have the wherewithal to fill the stomachs of your half a dozen kids."

"They say you love don Kokcha's Emiliacha. Maybe a good year will help you out in that respect."

The Indians tussled, without getting angry, and scolded each other for the amusement of onlookers.

"You're just plain stupid, don Tomas. Did you see the chicks? They have a fat rear, like a clay pitcher, just like don Tomas's."

"Wait a second, don Jose. Did you ever see the snout of a tom cat when he licks himself? He becomes self-important like a preacher delivering a sermon. You can't help laughing when you see him; take a look now at don Jose's face."

Don Tomas invariably came out on top. He was famous in Akola as the champion wag. On Sundays don Tomas became the hero of the day. Before the distribution of water began the *comuneros* crowded around. The prison court filled with people. One of the crowd finally agreed to challenge him to a competition.

"Do you want to try with me, don Tomas?"

"You poor fellow. I have no equal in Akola. My equal hasn't yet been born . . ."

We schoolboys shinned up the porch columns in order to hear better and see his face. The Indians laughed for two or three hours on end—until don Ciprian arrived to begin doling out the water.

"That don Tomas amuses the whole village," the *comuneros* said.

Jose Delgado was don Tomas's understudy. Both of them worked as farmhands for don Ciprian.

The bout ended when dona Cayetana called the peons to supper. By that time Jose Delgado had already lapsed into silence. Sitting on the hitching post he eagerly listened open-mouthed to don Tomas's jokes. The others laughed loudly, stamping their feet. And the merry bursts of laughter grew louder and louder, because the master was far away. They never would have dared laugh in his presence.

By night the sky had cleared a bit and the stars twinkled merrily over the village.

All the inhabitants of the house gathered on the porch. Dona Josefa sat down nearest to the living room in a large armchair which on January 6 was used to represent Herod's throne. Some of the farmhands sat alongside on the bench, chatting with the mistress, dona Cayetana, Facundacha, and two girls, Margacha and Demetria, whom the senora had invited.

They placed a lamp on the small bench.

The porch was in semi-darkness. The people's faces were almost invisible. The silence of the streets penetrated the house. The stars glimmered in the deep night. Their rays lost in the dark sky gave but feeble light.

"Margacha, I'll play *Wikunitay* and you'll sing with Juancha."

Dona Josefa tuned her guitar and played *Wikunitay*.

Out on the cold pampas, in the tall grass, in rain and snow storms the little llamas bleat, gazing sadly at passing travelers. The Indians love those little animals, and their eyes fill with tenderness when they hear their sad soft cry.

Wikunitay, Wikunita,
Why do you drink the bitter spring water?
Why don't you drink my sweet blood?
And the hot salt of my tears.
Wikunitay, Wikunita.
Do not cry so that you break my heart,
I'm an orphan fatherless and motherless and homeless,
But you have your white snow and bitter spring.
Wikunitay, Wikunita.

The *comuneros* confide their sorrows to the llamas, birds, trees and rivers, they do not trust the human heart. From childhood we learned to love animals, the stars, the sky, the sun.

Wikunitay, Wikunita.
Let me join your flock, let us run together through the grass,
We shall cry until the heart dies and our eyes grow dim,
I shall follow you everywhere, to mountains, rivers and swamps,
Wikunitay, Wikunita.

"No one can sing as sadly as you can, Juancha. You love the songs of the punas as much as if you had been born in Wanakupampa."

"The songs of the puna, *mamacha,* are sad like I am.

"But we won't think about the puna, now. It would be better, *mamita,* if we sang a *kachaspari* from San Juan."

"All right."

"Good. And let Margacha and Crisu listen."

Dona Josefa played *Lorito,* a gay song of the gorge. Dona Josefa was an excellent guitarist.

The girls and boys began to dance in the dance of San Juan: a young fellow holding a handkerchief with his upraised hand strutted around a girl like an amorous rooster. Margacha marked time in one spot, glancing around the yard and flirting with Crisucha.

"Come on, Juancha, sing Lorito."

Parrot noisy dweller of the gorge,
Lorito, the young fellows' friend
Whistle, whistle loudly,
Wake her, tell her it is late,
That Tayta Inti is angry.

Dona Josefa strummed her guitar loudly. The laborers and women clapped their hands, encouraging the dancing pair. Dona Josefa knew how to make people gay without recourse to whiskey and without *Chicha.* The *comuneros* were not depressed by her. They were not dull and silent in her presence as they were in the presence of the master. They opened their hearts to her—their simple, tender and loving hearts.

In the presence of the master the *comuneros* were completely changed. Their eyes became sad. Their heads drooped. They would lose their wits and become worse than animals. I was keenly aware of this and was no better than they myself. Did this Crisucha, who danced so well, proudly raising his head and strutting around Margacha like a young rooster with a hen, the least resemble that other Crisucha who cringed before the master and hugged the wall, like a pup in the presence of Kaisercha?

"Don Ciprian is a regular devil!" I said angrily. "He makes the *comuneros* shiver with one look!"

That evening the noisy gaiety of the boys and girls did not cheer me as formerly. I thought all the time of don Ciprian. He had made a deep imprint on my life. I thought of him constantly and my heart burst with anger. Instead of capering like a happy goat along with the others, I left the porch for the street.

No, I wasn't a real *mak' tillo,* a carefree dancer. No, I was a bogus *mak'-tillo,* the son of a lawyer. That was why I did more thinking than other schoolboys and sometimes felt sick from communing too long with my soul. I talked mostly of don Ciprian. Sometimes I felt as though a bright flame was burning in my eyes:

"Why don't the *comuneros* cut off his head on the square before the entire village?"

"Yes, yes," I shouted, "cut him down, like a mad bull, with don Kokchi's big knife!"

That night I gazed towards the puna. The stars dimly lighted the mountains. Osk'onta, Ak'chi, Chitulla, were peacefully slumbering in the silence.

"Right now he's probably breaking backs of luckless cows which strayed into his pasture. He'll shoot one or two of them. Tomorrow or the next day he'll come back clinking his spurs and gazing about with his wicked, greenish

eyes. And then old men from Wanakupampa, Lukanas, and Santiago will start to cry. What a hell of a life! Why don't the *comuneros* from Akola, Puquio, Andamarkas, Lukanas, Chilk'es feel such hatred for don Ciprian as Teofacha and I do? We'd be willing any time to rip his belly with a rock."

I walked up and down before the master's house. Anger clouded my head and I turned in circles like a cat chasing its tail.

We danced and sang on the porch till dawn to dona Josefa's guitar. Songs of Puquio, Huamanga, Oyolo, Andamarkas, Abancay—at the end dona Josefa sang a song of her native land.

Do not love passing strangers, my daughter,
Foreigners from distant towns.
When your heart fills with tenderness,
And love is born in your bosom,
The foreigner will leave you.
It were better to love the trees by the wayside,
Or the crag which casts its long shadow.
When the sun burns your head,
Or the rain soaks your shoulders,
The tree will give you shade,
And the crag will shelter you from the rain.

Don Ciprian had brought Dona Josefa from Chelvanka. He happened to go there by accident, traveling through, and now he was her lord and master. For he cursed and beat her too. Dona Josefa was a meek wife with the soft affectionate heart of an Indian. She was unhappy with her husband, but her coming to Akola was a happy event for the rest of us. She knew this and sometimes wept bitterly for all of us, beginning with the calf Juancha. That was why the Indians of Akola called her *mamacha* and were neither reticent nor silent in her presence.

"*Mamacha,* don't sing that song," we asked in unison.

Rapidly loosening the strings she rose from the armchair.

"The cock's already crowed."

The farmhands and young girls bade good-bye to dona Josefa with a repectful hand shake.

"Sleep well, *mamita,* and dream of heaven," said dona Cayetana.

I was the last.

When we were alone, I went over to the mistress and said softly:

"*Mamita,* why is don Ciprian such a devil? I hate him, *mamita,* because be strikes you on your tender face, because he wants to take Gringa away to foreign lands, and because he's a dirty dog."

Deep sorrow welled up in dona Josefa's eyes, as though all her life's unhappiness were reflected in them.

"But the Indians love you, *mamacha*! The *comuneros* know that you have a good heart. You belong to us and not to don Ciprian."

"I belong to all the unhappy, Juancha. Holy Candelaria assists me."

Sorrow vanished from her eyes the moment she remembered the virgin and her face acquired an expression of dog-like humility.

"*Mamacha* Candelaria!"

The cocks crowed a second time. I embraced the mistress and went off to bed. Hatred and pain had left my soul. Dona Josefa had communicated her humility to me and I went to sleep like a good *mak'tillo.*

"Don Ciprian has gone to the puna.
"Don Ciprian has gone far away."

The Indians talked joyfully of the master's absence, except for those who had cattle grazing on the puna, who looked dejected. There were not many of them, however. The Akola Indians had no pastures on the puna. Don Ciprian's farms were at Lukanas, near Akola. Don Ciprian had forcibly seized the common land at Lukanas, ordered it fenced in and had then brought a judge and representatives of the authorities from the capital of the province. Having received the title, don Ciprian became the real proprietor of Lukanas and Akola. He lived at Akola because that village was situated in a warm gorge, whereas Lukanas was on the cold puna. That was why when don Ciprian made the rounds of the puna he rounded up the cattle of the Indians of Lukanas and Wanakupampa as well as of other villages, and only rarely did he chance upon a cow from Akola.

Frankly speaking, the Indians of Akola were not on good terms with their neighbors from Lukanas. Every year quarrels arose over the water, because both villages brought water from Jatunkocha, a large lake which belonged equally to both villages. Out of the seven days in the week, Friday was reserved to Lukanas, Thursday to Akola, Wednesday to Tayta curate and the remaining days to don Ciprian Palomino. Of these days, the proprietor voluntarily conceded one or two to the other half-breeds in the village. But the inhabitants of Lukanas with the support of don Ciprian tried to close the lake at 3 o'clock on Thursday afternoon and this led to quarrels. The two communes had been on bad terms for a long time. At carnivals and "scrimmages" the Indians of Lukanas and Akola fought among each other as though in fun, throwing apples and striking each other with straps. Actually they put so much anger into the game that every year one or two Indians died on both sides We schoolboys also played sometimes, imitating the hostile villages. Dividing ourselves into two camps—Akola and Lukanas—we threw stones and struck each other with straps. Many left the fray with broken heads and bleeding. We did the same when we played *wikullo*. I was an Indian from Lukanas and Bankucha was an Indian from Akola.

Thus, the masters' excursions to the puna were no particular threat to the Akola Indians. On the contrary, everyone sighed with relief and became lively and cheerful. Even the day seemed brighter and the village didn't look so poor.

Someone rapped on the gate with a stone at midnight.
"Juancha! Juancha!"
I bounded out of bed.
"Juancha, Juancha," the commanding voice of don Ciprian could be heard.
I rushed across the white flagstones of the yard. At that moment dona Josefa lit a lamp in the bedroom. I drew the latch and opened the door. A large white shape met my eyes.

Don Jesus cracked his whip and swore in Indian. First a donkey entered the yard, behind him came a large shapeless white mass; it was a cow. I was seized with panic.

Today don Ciprian wasn't home and Teofacha had not gone after Gringa. But it was unthinkable that don Ciprian would have taken a cow from someone else's farm.

The animals entered the yard, snorting, their hoofs clattering on the stones. Don Ciprian was in a hurry. Neither he nor don Jesus wore spurs.

Don Ciprian himself ran to the corral entrance and opened it. Don Jesus punched the animals nervously. The master immediately returned and bounded up the steps that led from the yard to the porch. At that moment dona Josefa appeared on the porch.

"Well, how was your trip, Ciprian?"

"Fine, Josefa. But don't light the lamp. Unsaddle the horses, Jesus, and tell Juancha to chase them to the edge of the settlement, only not on the road to the puna but in the direction of the pampas." The proprietor went into the living room with his wife.

I went over to the manager.

"Well, how are you, Juancha? You probably played the whole time, didn't you?"

"I did play some, don Jesus."

The manager began to unsaddle the animals.

"You didn't bring in many cattle this time, don Jesus."

"You can see for yourself. Unsaddle the mule."

The animals were hot and tired. "Looks as though they had climbed the mountain," I thought to myself. I became more frightened than ever. The road from the puna goes downward and the animals never get very hot.

The back of the mule was moist.

Don Jesus flung the saddle and stirrups on the porch.

"Ready, Juancha?"

He struck the bay on the crupper and the horse ran out into the street followed by the mule.

I ran after the animals as fast as I could. The bay snorted loudly and pranced forward. It was no concern of his that I ran after him and that I had orders to chase him along the road to the pampas. The animals ran forward madly. I could barely see them. It was utterly dark and all I could do was listen to the clatter of their hoofs.

I couldn't catch up to them. The clatter came fainter and fainter.

"Now they'll turn upwards! I'm out of luck!"

I ran faster. I began imagining that I was racing with Teofacha and must absolutely win in order to earn Bankucha's praise. But it was no use. Reaching the edge of the settlement, I strained my ears. The noise of hoofs had ceased; the gray and the mule had vanished in the darkness.

Stopping by a prickly hedge I began praying:

"Tayta God, please make them head straight for the pampas!"

The cold wind of the gorge fanned my head. The sky was blacker than pitch. The darkness seemed to weigh down on me and crush me from all sides. I became terror-stricken and turned back, running as fast as my legs would carry me.

The door was open. I entered and drew the latch.

Don Jesus had already left after first putting away the saddle. On the kitchen threshold I remembered Gringa.

"Why did the master come back at night this time? Why did he drive in only two animals?"

I went to the corral entrance and looked in. Opposite, by the wall, stood a white animal. I stared with bulging eyes. Not a sound. Soon I could plainly hear the cow's breathing.

I was seized with a desire to shout so loud as to wake the whole village

"Teofacha's Gringa is in don Ciprian's corral."

I ran into the kitchen.

"Juancha!" dona Cayetana suddenly woke.

"Don Ciprian drove in Teofacha's Gringa."

"Did you take a good look, *makta?*"

"It was very dark—but that big white cow looks just like Gringa. Today Teofacha didn't fetch her. He left her in the pasture because the proprietor was away on the puna. Don Ciprian probably went away on purpose and deceived everyone in order to steal Gringa. *Mamaya,* he'll drive her off to foreign countries or starve her to death in his corral! He has a false heart, worse than a dog's."

"But maybe that isn't Gringa. Even if he is the proprietor he doesn't take animals from fields that don't belong to him. Probably it isn't Gringa."

I sat down on dona Cayetana's bed.

"*Mamita,* do you really think don Ciprian wouldn't enter a field that didn't belong to him?"

"And lead Gringa from Teofanes' pasture at night, like a thief? No, he wouldn't agree to that. Don Ciprian is very wicked and he is quite capable of taking her openly in the day time. But not at night, like a thief."

"And what about Jesus?"

"Well, he is ready to steal the eyes out of your sockets when he's alone, but with the master along he wouldn't dare, no, Juancha."

"Its true, he once said 'I can cheat, but I'm not a thief.' "

"There are lots of white cows on the puna, my boy!"

"It's true, *mamaya*!"

And all the same I couldn't calm down. It seemed to me that I recognized the smell of Gringa when the white animal entered the yard, that I recognized her breathing, and I refused to listen to dona Cayetana any more.

"It is Gringa, it is Gringa!"

My heart was breaking. Even in the dark of night my heart recognized those it loved. All we *mak'tillos* are like that.

"Everything's done for, *mamaya,* everything. She'll slowly starve to death on the hard floor, like other cows. Then that devil will deposit her bones at Teofacha's door. But I'll kill him, *mamata,* I'll kill him with a stone *wikullo* on the road to the pampas!"

Dona Cayetana cuddled me close to her to comfort me, just as she always did.

Not all the stars had faded, but the sky was already tinged with crimson. The clouds still slumbered peacefully on the mountain tops. Thrushes sang loudly in the trees and on the housetops. They chased others through the air, and hopped along the eaves.

The Indians of Akola awoke to new sufferings. Don Ciprian, the proprietor of the village, was again there to curse and scold the *comuneros.* Only the birds were happy when the proprietor was home.

That morning I jumped out of bed and rushed to the widow's house.

"Teofacha, Teofacha! It seems to me that Gringa is in don Ciprian's corral!"

Teofacha came out frightened and trembling.

"It was hard to tell in the dark . . ."

I ran down the street followed by Teofacha.

We raced to the corral wall. Long ago several holes had been made high up, in order to get a glimpse of the animals which the proprietor had rounded up on the puna.

"You look first, Juancha."

Teofacha was sweating and looked like a corpse.

I hoisted myself up. Gringa was lying on the dirty floor of the corral. Gripping the top of the enclosure I regarded her steadily.

"Now, you look, Teofacha."

The *mak'tillo* clambered up the wall like a cat.

"Gringacha!"

And he fell into the bushes. We gazed at each other. Teofacha's eyes bulged. Two dark spots flashed in their depths, and then they filled with tears.

"Tears won't help you, Indian!"

I felt strength within me. I was determined to kill don Ciprian.

"Listen, Teofacha, early this morning the proprietor is going to Tulyapampa. The two of us together will wait for him at the Capitana gulley. He'll be alone. Don Jesus is scheduled to send the peons to K'onek'pampa. With a stone *wikullo* we could even smash the skull of a mad bull. What do you say?"

Teofacha jumped at me and flung his arms about me as though I had saved him from drowning. Then he released me and began thinking. His eyes flashed.

"Do you remember don Pascual Pumayauri, Juancha? He returned from the coast and tried to arouse the Indians of Akola and Lukanas against don Ciprian. Don Pascual was a bold and daring *comunero*. He hated proprietors like enemies. But the Indians of Akola are chicken-hearted cowards. They allowed don Pascual to be shot at Jatunk'ocha. He wanted to take over possession of the lake for the *comuneros* against the proprietor, but don Ciprian knocked him down and shot him through the chest. Now we *mak'tillos,* Teofanes and Juanocha, will take revenge on him for don Pascual and for Gringacha. You're a real *makta,* you're a splendid fellow, Juancha!"

Teofacha was like a grown man, a hardened man, a man of forty, bent on murder. Yes, he was like a real murderer.

"*Caracho*!"

"We'll kill the devil!"

There was gladness in our souls. Boundless hate and love clashed in our hearts and warmed our blood.

Don Ciprian received the widow the way he usually received the Indians from Lukanas, standing on the porch of his house, with an expression of boredom and contempt playing over his features.

"Your cow was grazing on my pasture and I demand 20 *soles* for damages," he shouted before the widow had opened her mouth.

"On what pasture, don Ciprian? Gringa was grazing in my field, and you led her away at night, like a thief from Talavera."

Teofacha put his hand over her mouth.

"Leave him alone, leave him alone, *mamita*!"

But the widow rushed to the porch in order to shout in his face.

"Thief, murderer!"

Descending one step, don Ciprian struck the widow on the head.

"You old Indian hag!"

Teofacha had already communed with his soul and made up his mind. His heart turned cold like the black waters of Trokok'ocha and throbbed in strained suspense. Without saying a word, and without looking at anyone, he grabbed his mother and dragged her back along the road. I wanted to follow after them, but don Ciprian shouted to me from the porch:

"Juancha!"

I approached the steps. The master's face had lost the look of hardness

and contempt which he used to awe the Indians of Lukanas. He looked frightened and cowardly, he was pale.

"Tell the widow that I'll pay her eighty *soles* for Gringa. It's true Gringa wasn't on my pasture, but since I'm the proprietor I wanted dona Grigorya to sell me her cow—the best cow in the village has to belong to me. If she won't sell I'll drive Gringa to Lomas along with the other cattle. And you come right back!"

I knew that the widow would not sell Gringa for anything, but I ran off, so as to carry out don Ciprian's orders and talk to Teofacha.

I overtook the widow and her son at their door. The streets were empty and only two women walked behind the widow, weeping. Teofacha was trembling from head to foot, as though he had a fever.

"Dona Grigorya, don Ciprian says he'll give you eighty *soles* for your cow. He says that it's true she wasn't in his pasture, that he drove her from your pasture because he's the proprietor and he wants to own the best cow in the village. If you don't sell her he'll drive Gringa away from the village altogether."

"Let him drive her away, the thief!"

"The thief," echoed Teofacha.

I ran back. The proprietor was waiting for me in the doorway.

"The widow doesn't want to sell Gringa. She says you're a thief, don Ciprian."

In a rage the proprietor kicked open the door of the corral. I followed after him.

Don Ciprian went over to Gringa, drew his revolver, and placing it to the animal's forehead, fired two shots. The cow slumped over on its side and lay on the ground, twitching.

"You filthy swine," I shouted.

Don Ciprian gave me a look of contempt as though I were a pup. He replaced the revolver in his holster and went out into the yard.

"*Mamaya*, Gringacha!"

Flinging my arms around Gringa's white neck I cried as I had never cried before in my life. Her warm body gradually grew cold and together with her warmth the smell of fresh milk vanished. I hugged Gringa's neck tighter leaning my head against her soft ear, preparing to die together with her, thinking that the cold which was stealing through her body would reach my veins and extinguish the light in my eyes.

That same day, don Ciprian put me and Teofacha in jail. Not even the oldest *comunero* recalled any other case of two schoolboys, under the age of twelve, being flung on the cold straw which served as a bed for the Indian prisoners.

Huddled in a dark corner, Teofacha and I, the best schoolboys in Akola, cried ourselves to sleep.

Don Ciprian beat, cursed, tortured and plundered the Indians until he reached ripe old age and could no longer distinguish the daylight. When he died they bore him away on their shoulders in a large black box with silver ornaments. Tayta curate sang and cried over his grave because he was his partner in plundering and crime. But hatred seethes stronger than ever in our hearts and our wrath increases with every succeeding day.

Arnold Zweig

Sapper Schammes

Wooded hills bound the horizon; and from the hills the land drops down, its slope cleft here and there, to the stream that runs through the valley.

In front of a long wooden hut stands a rough table and around the table, on rough benches, are seated five men, deep in the good old game of skat. Their similarity of dress—they all wear coarse cotton suits with the trousers tucked into high army boots—gives them a certain resemblance to one another. They might be working-class men, washed and tidy, enjoying their Sunday evening. Three of them have, in fact, the faces of workers; a fourth, freckled and ruddy, looks more like a publican; and the fifth, who wears spectacles, probably is employed in an office. They sit with their feet swinging idly among the tufts of white and yellow camomile that grows wild all around them.

The man who looks like a publican—and actually is one, although he is not now plying his trade—turns his gold-flecked eyes towards his two opponents and declares "clubs solo." Lebehde is his name, Karl Lebehde, and he is from the east end of the great city of Berlin. But his friend, the compositor Pahl, a man with a flat face and grey eyes, disagrees. He watches Lebehde cautiously, and after looking over his own hand, proposes instead "grand." Grand is a really serious game, for which you need cards, aces whenever possible and several jacks into the bargain; in grand losing really means losing. Karl Lebehde yields at once—passes, to use skat terminology; and the third man, who has a reddish walrus moustache and reddish bushy eyebrows, also agrees immediately. He is a metal-worker, a moulder, Schammes by name; originally a Jewish baker, he is, consequently, a friendly fellow. He too is not working at his own trade at the moment.

The young worker Przygulla, who always finds life amusing, leans his elbows on the table and stares open-mouthed at the cards of his friend Schammes. The fifth man, the one who has been a writer of some sort or worked in an office, even stands up to get a better view. As long as he holds his tongue, nobody objects. He is distinguished from the others by his lighter build, knobby forehead, and softer hands, but most of all by the close-trimmed glossy black beard on his cheeks and jaw, a likely mark by which to remember him later. He also is not engaged in his own profession at present; but by way of compensation he has learned a great deal: skat, for instance. But as Karl Lebehde is obviously going to win, and Pahl to lose this game, it is not worth while waiting for the end. He might as well leave them all and turn instead to that private world which exists within oneself, or in the home one has left behind. Yes, he will find a shady corner and write to his wife.

His name is Bertin, Werner Bertin; he is an educated man, was, in fact, a writer before he came out here. He raises his head, stretches his arms, and breathes deeply of the pure air blowing from the west, carrying with it the sound of distant tumult.

"Poor fellows!" says the man with the black beard, and goes away shaking his head.

The four who stay behind make no answer. That distant tumult is as familiar to them as is the compassion just expressed by the man with the black beard. For this wooden hut is a barracks right in the middle of France;

the ridge of hills to the west is Caureswald, and the surrounding country is the approach to the fortifications of Verdun. The distant tumult is the crash and rumble of the artillery engagement which has been going on around the Douaument for weeks. Since the end of February, the German army, column after column, has been hurling itself against Verdun. These five uniformly-dressed men are wearing military caps—singularly ineffective as a protection—with the black-red-and-white and the black-and-white cockade because they are soldiers, sappers working behind the line. The five of them have already been at it, without hope of promotion or relief, for fifteen months. They are attached to the heavy artillery, building roads, setting up batteries and loading munitions.

Meanwhile, the compositor Pahl has really lost the game; he must forfeit several pfennigs of his scant wages. There he sits, a bad loser, grumbling at the black-bearded fellow (the Jew, but he merely thinks that quietly to himself) who has brought him bad luck. However, Karl Lebehde, whom Pahl esteems, and who, in turn, thinks a lot of him, explains the matter with precision. Of course educated people bring bad luck, he says, but Jews, as everyone knows, bring good luck; therefore, it must have been something else that affected Pahl's game. While Lebehde is talking, however, Pahl shuffles and deals the cards again, and he gives Schammes such a good hand that he can hardly wait for the game to begin. Moreover, Schammes dislikes this kind of talk. To Bertin he is in some manner bound by reason of common race and religion; with Przygulla, who has also joined the discussion, he has worked, and formed a friendship in which Schammes is the protector and Przygulla the unfailingly goodhumoured comrade. Schammes is an excellent worker with his hands, which are skillful and unusually strong, but his large flat feet—he takes the biggest size in boots of anyone in the company—make him slow and awkward. Compared with him, Przygulla is a veritable greyhound; and were it not for him Schammes would always be the last to get his supper, his letters and his ration of tobacco. Thus they complement, laugh at and help each other; in spite of their incongruity, they might well serve as an example of unselfish comradeship.

Schammes now has a good hand, and Przygulla finds that, when it comes to the point, his comrade knows how to keep firm hold of what he has. But Przygulla does not know how vital it will one day be that these same hands should keep firm hold of himself—and that even then they will not save his life, poor fellow. For of these five men the laborer Przygulla, the slowest-witted, will be first to die.

That is to take place many months after this card-game in the ghastly late autumn, when, in the face of two French counter-attacks, German defeat before Verdun is imminent. The lack of transport facilities in the terribly ravaged and rain-sodden country is then felt with desperate acuteness. Oh, the rains in the dreary months of October and November! They soak through the canvas covering over your coat, penetrate the coat itself, creep frigidly up your sleeves, seep through your army tunic and are only held in check by the drill jacket underneath; thus you are left only with your underwear and shirt.

And so, heavily and drearily, the sappers move out in detachments long before sunrise to the front, or at any rate into the firing zone, to lay narrow-gauge lines for the guns and to replace the approach-roads that have been destroyed. They leave the barracks while it is still dark, after sipping the hot sour broth which the men call "nigger-sweat" and chewing at pieces of dry bread smeared with turnip-jam or some lard-substitute saved from last nights'

supper. Then, their ears wrapped up against the cold, they set off along the railway-line. They follow it as far as Azannes, for the mud everywhere else is too deep to walk in. It is a laborious job; one hour of stepping from tie to tie makes you painfully aware of the soles of your feet.

Silent and freezing in the sharp morning air of the Maas heights, some thirty sappers goose-step after Sergeant-Major Jacobs, who is taking them out to-day to the marshy land below Height 310. Once they get there, they have nothing to be afraid of, except perhaps that their boots will get split or torn on the rubble of the railway-line. But before you get that far, my friend, you can get shot once for every minute of the hour.

The night is giving way to a pale, still dawn. All the comrades of the card-party in the pleasant spring day are here: Pahl and Lebehde, who believe that the first rarely get caught, hurrying ahead with the sergeant-major and already well on to the field; Schammes and Przygulla nearer to the rear of the straggling procession; and, last of all, Bertin, who is commissioned to see that no one stays behind.

Bertin is nervous. There is something in the air this morning. "He" has not fired a shot yet, and he never misses a morning. If only the job were already over, so that they could look back on it, instead of having to look forward. . . .

At this moment, "it" breaks out. Bertin flings himself flat on the ground, on bog and stones, fifty to fifty-five yards away from where the shell has landed. After the explosion there is a dark red glow, whimpering cries from somewhere, and a trampling noise. Then the second round of firing bursts upon them, and the air whirls with bits of brick and shell; then, as suddenly, there is quiet. But not absolute quiet; it is disturbed by cries and sounds of excitement.

Bertin tears down the street, past the medical station and out of the village. Then he has an encounter.

Giant-high in the dim light comes Sapper Schammes. In his arms, and in those powerful hands, he carries the form of a man, still whimpering. Something in the shape of the head makes Bertin realize it is Przygulla. He is holding his guts in his two hands and dripping blood. Schammes is talking to him tenderly, in a low voice, for his friend's head lies against his shoulder.

"Hush, Robert," he is saying, "it will soon be over. The doctors are right down here, and a stretcher is already on its way." Two stretcher-bearers have actually left the medical station, and are now on the spot regardless of whether the French fire again or not. They take comrade Schammes' burden from him.

"Stay with me, stay with me," whimpers Przygulla.

"Of course I'm staying with you, Robert—I won't go away."

But the medical under-officer, who knows a seriously wounded case when he sees it, shakes his head emphatically and motions Schammes away: there is nothing he can do, he'd better go back to work and not trouble any more. At this moment the sergeant-major and a few of his men come running back to find out who was hit. They have heard the cries, and Pahl has seen one of the figures lying flat on the ground jump up and run back into the danger-zone to that dark, shrieking form. "Przygulla!" they heard him shout as he ran, "I'm coming!"

From answers slowly elicited to the sergeant-major's questions, it is finally established for purposes of the company report that the shell did not actually strike the line of men, but to one side of them, considerably to the side, in fact, and that Przygulla simply did not manage to throw himself down soon

enough. He stopped for some reason at the exit from the village. He was caught instantly, by the first shell; and in a second, his comrade Schammes was at his side. "I had to collect his guts first, so we wouldn't tread on them," Schammes reports. "Then I picked him up and carried him down to the hospital tent. They'll fix him up all right there."

"If there's anything left to fix," says Bertin.

In the early morning light, they stand pale and shivering. The little stocky figure of Jacobs, the sergeant-major, has disappeared into the hospital tent. He is a man of quick decisions: in a few seconds he is out again, wiping the sweat from his forehead.

"Now then, my lads," he says, "let's be getting on. The work won't get done by thinking about it." And to a questioning look from Schammes: "You did everything you could, Schammes," he says in a voice full of respect, "but he doesn't need a doctor any more. On our way back you can get his things and take them to the office."

Silently, they all start off again, the men and the little sergeant-major, to catch up with the troop that has gone on ahead. . . .

The five who played skat have become four, and there's an end to it. And during the rest of that day, whenever Bertin meets Schammes he has a warm feeling for him, for the comrade who jumped up between two volleys of firing and ran to aid Przygulla,—for the Jewish baker from Galicia who tried to snatch the Polish laborer from West Prussia out of the very jaws of death. That was real comradeship: two men of the same military rank and the same status in civil life, from the same class—the masses that labor to produce all the good things of life and themselves receive so little. And on the way back, at the end of the day, Bertin sees Schammes pass his big hairy hand over his eyes as he shuffles into the hospital tent, huge in his long coat, and with feet too big for him—to collect the few belongings of a young man who lies there no longer.

For Prussians are quick workers, and one must be orderly.

Translated from the German by Majorie Lineham

N. Virta

Loneliness [1]

Book II

The Crash

One January evening the Dvoriki moujiks gathered at Andrei Andreivitch Kosyel's house to listen to what Ivan Ingolukov, who had just returned from the Red Army, had to say.

They sat in darkness. Andrei lay on the shelf of the stove with his son Yashka and three-year-old Masha beside him. Andrei had been a widower for three years now. The little house had gone askew and looked out at the world through blind, boarded-up windows. In winter time the corners of the room froze and great hungry rats ran about and fought every night under the stove.

Andrei was thinking of the horse Nikita Simonovitch had left with him before his departure for the station. Kosyel had taken more care of it than he had of his sick wife. Up and down the village he had gone, begging oats by the handful and the pound from the neighbors; he had a sleigh, and plaited a harness of rope, and had even begun to sing at his work, a thing that Kosyel had never been known to do before. Misery had ground him down all his life, and misery sings no songs.

The moujiks sat smoking, their blue wreaths of smoke floating to the ceiling. Masha coughed in her sleep. Outside a snowstorm was raging; it was a cold January with frequent blizzards.

"Well, Vanya, how's old Russia getting along?" asked Father Stepan, who had joined the group at Kosyel's out of sheer boredom: he was curious to hear what was going on in the world.

Invisible in the darkness, Ivan drew at his cigarette and spat out.

"Life's rotten, Father! Going to wrack and ruin! Russia's as weak as can be. We thought we'd get plenty to eat at home—after all, it's Tambov, the rye country."

"It *was* the rye country, but that's all over now," someone sighed.

"It beats me," Ivan went on, "what we're going to do! We've been fighting so many years now, and we've come to this."

"What's the latest news about the rebellion?" came a voice from the corner.

"Well, on our way we were told there were outbreaks here and there. No peace."

"There you are! That looks as if Storojev wasn't lying when he said we aren't the only ones—folks are rising everywhere."

They sighed. There was a pause. In the silence cockroaches rustled at the back of the stove.

"Listen, old chaps," someone said. "How is it the Bolsheviks are letting the army go home? If they're breaking up the army and letting the boys go home, it looks as if Antonov wasn't up to much. They'll make short work of him."

"The army, indeed!" Ivan chuckled. "It's got to be fed, hasn't it, you blockhead? Well, that's why they let it go. What else can they do with the army?"

Another silence followed. Every man was afraid to say what was in his mind. Devil only knew what was going on round about!

[1] For the first part see *International Literature* No. 9.

Only the other day Matvei Besperstov, whose son, Mitri, had joined the Reds, had said to the moujiks:

"There's a rumor that the Soviets are going to do away with the grain-assessment soon."

And the next day two riders had taken him away to Griasnoye, where Storojev was settled. The old fellow had been given such a dose of the whip that to this day he lay on his stomach, unable to move. That was what came of talking!

Here and there a cigarette-end would glow in the darkness; another would go out. A sudden clatter of horse's hoofs broke the silence. Then came an imperious rap on the window.

"All the moujiks are wanted at a meeting in the school-house," a loud voice called out roughly.

"Peter Ivanovitch must have come. Let's go and hear what he has to say."

The men left the house. Andrei covered the children with a tattered piece of sacking. Then, after glancing in at the horse, and stroking its warm muzzle, he trailed after the others to the school. He was anxious. The future looked vague and shadowy.

The peasants took their time about coming to the meeting. About fifty of them sat down at the little desks and carried on among themselves a lively conversation, which ceased on the arrival of Ishin and Storojev.

"Well, how goes it?" Ishin inquired gaily. He asked for a smoke. "Have the Reds been here?

"They dropped in now and again for a day at a time," came the reluctant response from the back rows. "They took the flour from the mill, and exchanged the horses."

"They were all from here," added a swarthy young peasant. "Listrat came, and Fedka and Vanyushka Frushtak—about ten of them altogether."

"They'll make mince meat of you soon," Ishin went on. "There's no getting away from it, you'll have to organize, by God you will. You can't get away from us," he laughed. "We'll cook your goose for you."

"It's pretty well cooked already," the same young fellow retorted gaily. "But devil knows how we're to organize!"

"Ah, you don't know how? Well, then, I'll tell you. The Bolsheviks have their own organization, and we should have ours—a peasant organization. A peasants' union. The moujiks are in the majority in Russia, and if we all unite, no power on earth can break us."

"There are moujiks and moujiks," remarked a man in a torn wadded jacket. "One moujik'll be like me, say, and another like Peter Ivanovitch. All the livestock I've got is the cur in the yard, while Peter Ivanovitch has a whole herd of cattle."

"Work—same as I did and you'll have a herd, too," Storojev broke in. "All you want is to lie on your belly the livelong day."

"Oh, we know who worked for you!" the other retorted.

"Who?"

"Well, those very lads . . ."

"Tell us, though?"

"That'll do, now," Ishin remarked. "What is there to quarrel about? Peter Ivanovitch has suffered from the Communists, and you yourself don't look as though they made your fortune for you, either," he said to the man in the torn jacket.

"That's true enough! But still—devil only knows what you're up to: every

day people come, and everyone has his own tale to tell. And we get it in the neck."

The other moujiks snorted approval.

The schoolroom was full now. The blue smoke wreaths were thick under the ceiling. It was very hot, the faces of the audience glistened with perspiration.

Lenka lit the kerosene lamp, and moved the table and chair to the middle of the room.

"Now, old chaps," said Storojev. "Here's Yegor Ivanovitch Ishin—he's been sent specially by Antonov himself. He'd like to talk to you."

"Listen here, Yegor Ivanovitch," a black-bearded moujik spoke up. "Don't you waste time talking about the Communists to us. We know all about them ourselves. You'd better tell us what your idea is. What sort of folks are you and where do you come from, and what kind of rules and regulations do you want to bring in?"

"Simon's talking sense. We know all about the Communists."

"Tell us," the black-bearded man went on, "what sort of government are you going to give us, and how you're going to manage about the land. Or else, maybe we won't want to talk to you."

Ishin sat smiling as he listened to the peasants, and flicked the leg of his excellent knee-boots with his leather whip. His powerful figure, his whole appearance—that of a light-hearted, reckless buffoon, the village shopkeeper who had become entangled with the Social-Revolutionaries—strongly appealed to the well-to-do of the village. Antonov had made no mistake in choosing him for the most difficult tasks; he could rest assured that Yegor would not let him down.

He had friends everywhere and many of them did not know what this big, red-faced fellow actually did.

He received whole train-loads of arms from Gorsky, sent off cart-loads of uniforms from Tambov—and was never caught once. Ishin had been lucky all his life; he went laughing through it, in every village he left a widow, and in every farmstead he had a hiding-place that no one could ever find.

Before the war Ishin had kept a small village shop. He had been ordered to do so by the Social-Revolutionary Committee. The shop was not run for the sake of profit, in fact he was owed money on every side. But Ishin was not hard on his debtors: they would come in handy later on, he thought. And sure enough they did.

Who would betray a fellow who had once stretched out a helping hand to him? Oh, Ishin knew well how to find his way to the moujik's heart! Now, as he sat before these people he sensed that they were waiting for something from him; how full of doubts and how dark the moujiks' thoughts of the future were! They did not need a man to read a report to them, but a storyteller to clear away their sad thoughts, their yearnings, their doubts.

"Well, I haven't come here to make speeches to you. In the first place Alexander Stepanovitch Antonov sends his respects to you all."

Ishin bowed low to the company, who kept a guarded silence.

"The second thing I want to tell you, moujiks, is about a dream I had. It's a long time since, but I've just called it to mind. Come a bit nearer, I've no voice, the frost's got into my throat."

The people closed around Yegor, each deciding in his own mind: "Seems the right sort of a fellow."

"Well, I had a dream that was like a prophecy. I was carried away

through the air to the world's end, beyond the seas and oceans. I went along a road and on either side of the road were fields of corn, corn taller than a man—rustling and waving in the morning. And the ears were a pound weight. That's a grand crop, I think to myself. And I can see people dressed in clean, town-style clothes, working in the fields. I go up to speak to an old fellow sitting under the trees like a gentleman, cooling himself, with an umbrella keeping the sun off him.

" 'What sort of people are you?' I asked him. 'What gentleman does this land belong to?'

" 'There ain't no gentlemen here, you blockhead,' he says. 'All this land belongs to us moujiks.'

"I go on further and come to a town. I see people going about the streets, and children playing, and green grass.

" 'What sort of a town is this?' I ask. 'It must be your capital, surely?'

" 'Why, you silly,' a lady says to me (all dressed in silk, she was—and had fine, fat children with her). 'Can't you see, it's the poorest of poor villages.'

" 'And who,' I ask her, 'are you? What gentleman's wife might you be?'

" 'Why, you must be crazy,' says the lady. 'I'm the plainest and lowliest of women; my husband's out reaping corn in the field, and I'm just going for a walk by myself.'

" 'How's this?' I ask—'If you're doing nothing but walking about, who's going to cook your husband's soup, you silly, and wash his pants, and scrub the floors, and dig the gardens?'

"She stared at me and then started to laugh.

" 'Oh, what a fool you must be,' she says, 'whatever kind of a country have you come from? In this moujik-state of ours life's just paradise for women. Now—if you can understand it—learned folks are racking their brains to find a way so we needn't bear babies; they want to breed children in special warm barns like chickens.' "

The moujiks laughed and stirred.

"How do you like that? Having a baby was too hard for her!"

"That's the life, boys."

"Sounds more like the kingdom of heaven."

"All right, then," Ishin continued, a little smile lurking at the corners of his mouth.

"The horses and cows I saw in that village—why our horses would look like sheep beside them, honest to God. And their sheep had wool a yard long—it trailed along the ground. I got to their capital—well, I couldn't describe it to you, it was so beautiful! I was taken to their ruler. I went in and there sat a red-haired moujik, plucking at his beard.

" 'Are you the ruler here?' I asked him.

" 'Yes,' says he, 'I've been put here as ruler for five years. Only,' says he, 'I don't get the slightest satisfaction out of it, being ruler, that is, I earned a good sight more in the fields and the work was a damned sight easier.' "

The audience laughed good-humoredly. Only Ishin and Storojev did not laugh. When it was silent again, Ishin continued.

"Now, I asked that moujik to tell me how they'd managed to arrange life that way for themselves," he said.

" 'Well,' he told me, 'first of all we threw out our tsar. Afterwards there was confusion amongst us, some went this way, some that and some the other. While we were fighting and cursing each other, not listening to wise folks—Antichrist came. He had a red star on his forehead and wore a leather jacket.' "

A ripple of laughter passed through the rows of men in the class-room, but this time it was not such good-humored laughter.

" 'Now Antichrist came and set himself up over us and began to suck our blood. The moujiks set up a howl. Then a fine upstanding fellow came and showed us the proper way to get rid of Antichrist. So we up and cleared him out. When we'd done that, our elders called a council to talk over what we should do next. We decided all the land had to be given back to the moujiks. So we divided the land up equally; whoever wanted more than his share had to pay a tax. And if anyone wanted to keep laborers, he had to pay another tax. So that's how we achieved a good life. Now,' says he, 'the poorest of our moujiks has cutlets to eat, and fancy bread to munch, and tea to amuse himself with. Come on,' says he, 'I'll treat you to some of the soup our moujiks eat.' "

"I went into a palace where there were tables nearly breaking under the weight of all manner of food. And I felt so hungry I went up to the table, poured out a glass of wine, put it to my lips—and woke up. . ."

Laughter broke out again and the moujiks grew lively:

"That's a dream for you!"—someone at the back shouted.

"There'll never be a life like that!"

"You'll never see it anywhere except in a dream!"

"Wait a minute, boys, I haven't finished my speech yet. I woke up and told my dream to Antonov. 'That's the life we want to get to,' he said. Then Antonov showed me a book, and it said that the moujiks could have exactly that kind of a life if they wanted."

"Who wouldn't want it?" several voices called out at once.

"It's all rubbish."

"No, boys, it isn't. No one is going to arrange our lives for us if we don't do it ourselves. The Communists are not in our line. Join us in our rebellion. Take up your rifles!"

Hot and perspiring, Ishin sat down, rubbing his face with his hands. The moujiks, who had been laughing in such a friendly, good-humored way a minute before, now glowered at him and refused to speak. In vain Peter Ivanovitch appealed to them, in vain Ishin addressed them again. No one asked a single question and no one went home. At last, when Storojev was at his wits' end, the man in the torn coat stood up.

"We can't make up our minds about things like this all in a minute," he said. "What I think, boys, is that we ought to wait. Got to think it over. Am I right, boys?"

"Yes, you're right. That's what we ought to do," the audience boomed.

"Let Antonov himself come," someone shouted. "We'd like to have a chat with him."

The men rose and drifted out.

It was a starry, frosty night. Storojev tramped homewards, gloomy and cross The stubbornness of the peasants astonished and irritated him.

"Well, now what are we to do?" he asked Ishin.

"Scare 'em, Peter Ivanovitch! The moujik's back is a pretty tough one. He's been flogged before you turned up, and if you flog him you won't hurt him."

He laughed gaily.

Next morning Storojev, still angry, gave his men leave to "loot" the village. Riders scattered among the farmyards, which presently resounded with the screams of women, the squawking of hens, the quacking of geese and the bleating of sheep.

When he left for Griasnoye, Storojev took with him the man in the torn jacket and Matvei Besperstov.

The following day the two men were brought home. They said nothing, merely lay with their eyes closed. When they were undressed, it was found that the skin of their backs hung down in bluish strips, and blood oozed from their wounds. The peasant who had brought these half-dead men home also delivered a message from Storojev.

"Peter Ivanovitch told me to say that he's going to flog you without mercy till you join up with Antonov."

Two days later Storojev's riders appeared again. This time they took away two more: Frushtak, the watchman at the school—his son had joined the Reds—and the talkative, black-bearded peasant. These two were brought home in the same state as the others—flogged till they were insensible.

The moujiks gave in. They sent delegates to Storojev. He was at dinner when the old men arrived. He beat the delegates and flung them out, but the old men returned to beg Storojev to spare the village.

Once more the people attended a meeting, and once more Ishin spoke to them.

"Well, now, how are you all getting on?" he began, addressing the surly crowd. "You find it none too easy, evidently, between two fires! You get it in the neck from both sides, don't you? Wait, though, till the Reds come, see what they'll do. It won't be like this. They don't bother about whether you're living here, pleased with yourself or not. *Their* conversation's short and sweet and to the point: shoot every tenth man!"

Ishin began to tell them of atrocities committed by the Reds. The peasants turned pale and gasped.

"We understand all that," the staid Seliverst Petrovitch declared when Ishin had finished. "It's all been made clear to us, thank God. Only just tell us, my dear boy, what profit will we get out of your Antonov? After all, we'll have to support his army, supply you with people and horses and grain?"

"Well, what about it?" said Ishin, laughing. "We'll drive a bargain with you."

"That'll be better," said the black-bearded peasant who had been beaten by Storojev, and was now sitting in the front row. "Else there's nothing but talk and threats, that's all. We don't mind what government there is as long as it lets us alone and we can live as we've always done."

"That's right— he's quite right," someone in the far corner shouted. "We don't care what government we get as long as we can live to our own satisfaction."

Ishin made only a casual mention of Antonov's demands, but spoke at length about the station, occupied at present by the Communists, and crammed with goods.

"We'll seize the station," he roared, "there's everything you can think of there—boots and clothes and all. But we can't occupy the station without you. Your village is the key to it, so to speak."

At the mention of the goods, the audience brightened up.

"We don't need anything from you," Ishin wound up. "It isn't the first year we've kept the army going. It won't be a burden to the moujik who joins us."

Seliverst Petrovitch stood up once more. "It's like this, Peter Ivanovitch. It's clear we've got to stick to one end or another. The Reds aren't in our line. The village has come to this decision: to ask Storojev to persuade Antonov himself to come. We've a fancy for talking to him ourselves, because you're

all under him. And that'll be the end: then we'll declare ourselves either with you or against you."

Ishin made a gesture of despair. Storojev swore roundly. But there was nothing to be done. Dvoriki blocked the way to the South-Eastern Railway. Storojev's men had to give in and Storojev himself went away to persuade Antonov.

Two days later Antonov himself arrived in the village. His grey, dappled horse danced under him; the saddle, the velvet robe and all the trappings shone with silver trimmings. His best breeches—red with a gold stripe down the sides—were tucked into high boots. His lambskin cap was tilted to the back of his head.

To the village that irritated him by its stubbornness he brought the best of his forces, his body-guard and his entire staff—to impress the peasants.

Old and young poured into the streets. Respectable moujiks eyed the troops through the windows. The weather was warm. A few snowflakes drifted lazily down now and again.

Antonov and his staff put up at Seliverst Petrovitch's. The rest put up at other houses. They refused to accept hay from their hosts; each rider had a supply of fodder with him. This fact made a particularly favorable impression on the peasants. After dinner Antonov went for a stroll through the village, stopping people occasionally to speak kindly to them.

Towards evening the peasants witnessed a terrible deed. For a long time Antonov had been trying to get at Kolka Pastukh, the leader of an insubordinate detachment. At first Kolka had acknowledged Antonov's authority, and obeyed the staff. Later he had rebelled, spoken disrespectfully of Antonov, disregarded staff orders, refused to lay down his arms, and committed robbery and violence at every step.

At last, by both fair means and foul, Antonov managed to lure Kolka to Dvoriki. And now, bound and drunk, he was lying in Seliverst's barn.

When it was getting on toward evening Antonov gave orders for him to be shot before the peasants' eyes. It was Tokmakov's idea. Ishin protested angrily, but Antonov shouted assent and Kolka's fate was sealed.

Pastukh had no idea where he was going; he was roaring a ribald song and vomiting as he went. They stood him against the church wall and shot him; Antonov himself gave the command. Pastukh was killed without having had a chance to come to himself. As Antonov put his revolver back in its holster, he turned to the crowd of moujiks standing near.

"You've seen just now how I killed a blackguard with my own hands, a fellow who ill-treated the peasants," he said. "That's the way I'm going to kill anyone who betrays us to the Reds."

The terrified moujiks signed an agreement to join him, but did not omit to bargain with him.

Seliverst Petrovitch, the spokesman, asked that the neighboring villages be drawn into the rebellion, not by Storojev's regiment, but by a detachment of village volunteers; that they be allowed to exchange horses in these villages; that there be no extortion or violence; that the land which had belonged to the Communists should be given back to the village community for redivision. The community also asked that in the event the station was seized, half of the goods found there should fall to the share of the village.

Antonov agreed to the conditions with an air of importance. Then the peasants formed a detachment of fifty men, fully armed; they even had machine guns.

Antonov left that evening. Storojev spent the night at his own home, the first for a long time.

The moon sailed high over the village. Big wintry stars came out in the sky. The frost was growing harder. Dogs barked at the rare passers-by. At headquarters the men on duty dozed with their heads on the table. Around the village armed sentries strolled. There were mounted patrols far out on the roads. Lights burned in the houses where arms were being cleaned, and saddles, whips and bridles were being prepared. The village in revolt did not sleep the whole night.

A new life began for the village. The streets were quiet both day and night now. No longer did lads and lasses stroll about singing of an evening; no longer were villagers to be seen gossiping on the logs outside the soviet.

If the women encountered each other by the well, they would whisper together for a few moments, sigh, and then trail home again. It was a gloomy, anxious time.

Day and night the village committee of the Union of Toiling Peasantry held its meetings. The chairman was the grey-bearded Seliverst. His cousin, Ivan Simonovitch, the Baptist blacksmith, was in charge of supplies. The priest's son, Alexander, kept the minutes for each meeting, and Seliverst's son, Ilia of the flaxen moustache—a former non-commissioned officer—was chief of the local militia.

Only specially-selected people were accepted for the militia. There were the two sons of Vassili Ivanovitch Molchanov, independent farmer; the three sons of Sergei Vassilievitch Zagorodny, another farmer; Ivan Tugolukov, not long since returned from the army—a man as handy with a rifle as a smith with his hammer—and about five more persons.

In spite of all Yegor Ishin's glib talk about an easy life, it turned out quite differently. One had to be continually supplying either meat or hay to the troops or provisioning the militia, or lending them carts and horses. Seliverst was kept busy all day long—the whole committee depended on him. Once again the flour-mills and oil-mills were working: their owners took in payment the proportion of grain allowed by the committee. There was much talk in the village over this new calculation. Vassili Vassilievitch, the miller of the neighboring village, wanted to take ten per cent.

"We aren't under the Soviet government now," said the miller. "It's my mill, I'll take what I like."

"Aren't you afraid God'll punish you, Vassili Vassilievitch?" the peasants exhorted him. "Why, even before the war you never took so much."

"Ah, but on the other hand, I took very little when the Soviets were here! That'll do now, we've played about long enough. If you don't want to pay you can go to the mill thirty *versts* away."

The community appealed to the committee.

Seliverst sent for the miller.

"You're a regular marauder. What's all this I hear about you?" the chairman demanded sternly.

"Hold your tongue, greybeard," growled Vassili. "You've got a hulling-mill yourself, haven't you? How much do you take for hulling millet? You don't cheat yourself, I bet."

Seliverst made a gesture of dismay, as much as to say: "What can I do?—the miller won't give in. Go to the people at the top."

So the elders went to Storojev. Peter Ivanovitch sent for both Seliverst and the miller. "You'll take five per cent," he said, "or I'll report you to Antonov."

Vassili glowered at Storojev and declared he would close down his mill.

Storojev cracked his finger-joints: this would never do. If the mill was closed down, how would they be able to get supplies for the troops?

He spent an hour talking the men around, and at last shamed them into agreeing to take six-and-a-half per cent.

The committee wanted to declare private trading open to everyone, but the village only laughed: what were they to trade in? Milk, or what? The school was deserted. Seliverst called a meeting of the moujiks and told them the school ought to be opened.

The men grunted, said nothing, smoked a while and went home.

And Seliverst himself thought there was not much sense in it. How were the pupils to be taught? Where were they to get teachers? The question of teaching scripture would come up again, and no orders regarding god had been received from Antonov.

Still, the committee got through a good deal of work. The *mir* or village council returned to Father Stepan 33 *dessyatins* of church lands, and the deacon and sacristan got theirs back too. True, the *mir* swore roundly about it, but Seliverst reminded them that Peter Ivanovitch was a close friend of Father Stepan's and the elders were silenced. Evidently, the peasants had learned to pay heed.

Seliverst was at great pains to cleanse the village of all forms of temptation. One evening Seliverst and two moujiks paid a visit to the wife of Nikita Simonovitch, who had joined the Communists at the distant station. They ordered Pelageia to clear out next day and join her husband at the station; they threatened that if she did not do so they would pull the house down. Pelageia begged them, sobbing, to rescind the order, the farm would be left without anyone to look after it; so would the cows and sheep, the hens and geese. The men left without answering her plea. Pelageia made up a bundle of all that was most valuable in the house—clothes and linen—and set out. When she got near the cemetery, a militia man stopped her, took away her bundle, gave her back two of her dresses, and, without turning his head, ordered her to go on.

In the same way the committee cleared Dvoriki of Matvei Besperstov and anyone who had ever been friendly with the Communists. Seliverst sent the property of these exiles to the district staff office. At the same time he did not forget himself, but made up for what he had lost through the Reds.

All day long the figure of the sentry could be seen going to and fro on the bell-tower. At night a guard was posted everywhere. As soon as a detachment of Reds was sighted, the mills were stopped, and from the end of the village nearest to Griasnoye, a rider galloped in lashing his horse, hurrying to bring the news that the Reds were coming. The militia-men hid all their arms and saddles and retired to the houses like peaceable citizens. When the troops arrived, all was quiet and peaceful. The peasants would then vow they had not seen the bandits for a long time, and had never even heard of such a thing as a committee.

The Red commander sighed heavily: an enemy might lurk in every house, an ambush behind every barn.

Peter Tokmakov rode about the Tambov villages, flourishing *Pravda* and talking about the "Communist split." He invented stories—each more frightful than the last, prophesying new wars between the Bolsheviks and Europe, new taxes. The peasants went to Antonov in Kamenka; they looked to him for salvation, and believed that he could overthrow the Communists. . . .

And still more villages and hamlets rose in arms, and the scorching flame of rebellion spread through Tambov province.

The number of Antonov's troops increased from day to day. He had plenty of men, if nothing else, at his disposal. He formed new detachments, regiments and brigades. At first there were not enough commanders, but they were soon found.

In December Safirov caught about 50 men, dressed in dirty old military overcoats, near Kamenka. They were a surly crowd, but they explained that they were going to Kamenka to see Antonov.

"What do you want in Kamenka?" Safirov demanded.

"We want to fight," replied a tatterdemalion with a tousled red beard. He blew on his frozen hands to warm them. The men turned out to be demobilized Red Army men. Antonov himself received them. He came out with Plujnikov and Ishin on the steps of headquarters.

"How do you do?" he called out to the weary band. "What have you got to say for yourselves?"

"We've come to join up with you."

"Is that so?" Antonov drawled. "You want to join me, do you? First, you were against me and now you're with me. That's queer."

"It's not queer at all," said the man in the torn boots. "There's nothing else for us to do; we're used to fighting and there's only ruin at home."

Ishin laughed heartily and the men grew bolder.

"Don't drag it out, tell us straight what you think," someone roared from the crowd. "Are you going to take us or not? Else we'll find another *ataman* without your help, and carry on with him. It's all the same to us who we go with as long as we get a bit of meat to eat and decent clothes on our backs. We're done for anyhow."

Antonov whispered something to Plujnikov and turned into the house. Ishin followed him. A few minutes later the new-comers were called into the office, one by one, and questioned. They were carefully selected: not everyone was taken; those who came from good sound farms were accepted gladly, the rest were questioned by Tokmakov with a great deal of venom. He treated each to a piercing glance of his yellow eyes. Commanders—and there were a good many of them—he accepted without any talking. He carefully examined their documents, deciphered the words on the seals, the stamps and the signatures. Their papers were not returned to them.

"You don't need them, but maybe we shall," Tokmakov remarked smiling. "You can go. Send in the next!"

The demobilized men were divided into regiments, and the commanders were told to form detachments in their own localities.

By this time there were two armies roaming the province. Antonov placed two of his most reliable men—Tokmakov and a hot young fellow named Boguslavsky—in command of them. These commanders led skirmishes against the small detachments of Reds sent out from the town of Tambov against Antonov.

The military authorities in Tambov got into the habit of publishing a triumphant despatch as soon as their troops occupied a village. But when the village was free of them again, from secret hiding-places—almost, it seemed from cracks in the walls—out would creep the Social-Revolutionaries with their committees and militia, and everything would go on as it had before.

Sometimes a detachment of Reds managed to trap an Antonov regiment somewhere and smash it up. That is, the regiment would seem to be smashed

up—but the scattered riders would escape, change their horses in the villages and vanish.

It was useless to pursue them—they could never be caught. Useless to search for them—how could anyone distinguish Antonov's men from the moujiks? They wore no uniform and had hidden their arms.

Thus the war dragged on.

Once a messenger came straight from Gorsky to Antonov. Destiny had bound these two men together, and, try as he would, Antonov could not get rid of the arrogant representative of the "Petrograd office for the purchase of horses." He was as necessary as ever, and he continued to send stolen copies of military orders, reports and despatches.

But he still demanded in return eggs, butter, poultry and whole car-loads of goods. All the meat, butter, eggs, bronze and silver Antonov could collect from the Soviet farms—Antonov's men had to give up to Gorsky's agents.

This time Gorsky demanded horses.

Antonov had known for a long time that Gorsky carried on a big business in anything he could lay hands on—from spies' reports to museum curiosities. But what was there to do about it? There were rumors of large-scale military preparations in Moscow and Tambov to be directed against the rebels. Antonov stood in great need of Gorsky just now.

"My dear fellow," the lawyer had written. "There are two hundred horses in the Ivanov Soviet farm. Take a hundred for yourself and send a hundred to me.

"The horses are needed by our brothers in this struggle" (Antonov swore angrily at this point). "Hurry while everything is quiet. There are various rumors going about. I shall keep you informed, but please do as I ask."

Early one cold morning Antonov surrounded the Ivanov Soviet farm, which was occupied by a mere handful of Red Army men and local Communists. They had spent a whole year there as if in a fortress and were half-starved, but they had held on tenaciously and driven off Antonov's men more than once.

This time Antonov had resolved to conduct the fight himself. He took with him Storojev's frontier regiment, two field-guns, and about ten machine-guns. At midday he gave the order to open fire on the Soviet farm. Soon the thatched roofs were aglow. Then Antonov led his men to the attack.

The machine-guns rattled, the Communists replied with rifle-fire. Storojev's regiment, unaccustomed to fighting in the open, turned and fled into the woods. Storojev directed thirty shells against the farm, but the artillerymen were drunk and the shells missed their mark.

Peter Ivanovitch led his regiment once more against the Communists. He galloped ahead on his skewbald mare, shouting and flourishing his sword.

Alongside him rode Antonov, who had taught his men that in partisan warfare a commander should always ride at the head of his troops. And he was invariably at their head when riding into battle. He was not afraid of death. In spite of his conquests, life held no joy for him. At headquarters and in the committee people were still squabbling and laying traps for each other in the same old way. Out of devil knew what corners officers—from the gentry—had appeared. Priests followed the regiments, profiteers combed the villages and turned things to their own account; there was no getting rid of them.

With wild whoops Antonov galloped over the snow towards the Soviet farm, in the direction from which the shots were coming; little puffs of white smoke kept appearing and slowly melting away. The Communists

greeted the regiment with a series of deadly volleys. Antonov's horse was wounded. Limping and floundering the grey horse sheered off, away from the road. All around lay horses and men.

The regiment ran back. White with fury, Antonov ordered them to retreat. The Reds did not go in pursuit: they were not up to it. Next day Antonov sent Storojev into Saratov to find horses. By the Khoper Storojev's regiment encountered some Reds, who knocked it about a good deal.

On his return Storojev, enraged by his failure, raided a small horse-breeding Soviet farm. It was night and a mild, soft snow was falling, as Storojev's men broke into the farm, cut down the sentries, and seized the management. The head of the farm had not had time to dress, he was in his underclothes. Blood was streaming down his face; one of Storojev's men had struck him with the butt-end of a rifle while depriving him of his revolver.

During the struggle Storojev had been wounded in the shoulder. His arm, hanging limp and useless, drove him wild.

"Are you a Communist?" he demanded of the head of the farm. The man nodded assent.

"We're going to try you then," Storojev said. "Call in all the people," he ordered.

His horsemen rode about the Soviet farm, rousing those who were still asleep; some dragged in people from the neighboring village, some sounded the alarm. Even the sleepy, tousled priest was routed out of bed; he clung to his stole and the appendages of his office.

The people were all driven into the common dining-room. They were cold and scared, they shivered and swore softly through chattering teeth. Two lanterns brought in from the stable lit up the place. It looked like a barn; the floor had been spat upon all over, it was filthy and stank of something acrid. Storojev held a whispered conversation with the priest and appointed as judges three moujiks whom the priest recommended as dependable fellows.

Storojev called them aside. The three, two old and the third a clean-shaven peasant of middle age, stood stiffly at attention as they listened to him. Their faces were pale and sullen.

"You've got to judge as your conscience tells you," he said to them impressively. "And the rest you know yourselves. If five Communists are put against the wall and shot, it'll be all the easier for the peasants."

The directors of the Soviet farm were led in just as they had been seized—barefoot and in their underclothes. Their hands were twisted round to their backs and behind each man stood an armed guard.

Storojev began to question them, beginning with the head. The rest of the people became alert, the whispering and fidgeting ceased. The flame crackling in the lantern was the only sound.

"Do you believe in god?" Peter Ivanovitch asked.

"No, I believe neither in god nor the devil nor in you. And I'm not going to tell you anything."

Peter Ivanovitch drew his revolver out of its holster.

"I shan't tell you anything," cried the head again.

"Wait—you'll tell us yet," Storojev whispered. "Now lads, give it to him."

Five husky fellows rushed up to the Communist and knocked him down. Then one sat on his legs, another on his head—and the whips whistled. They flogged him long and in silence. The man made no sound, but lay as if dead.

"Water," Storojev called. They doused the man with icy water and lifted him on to a bench. He opened his eyes.

"To the wall with him!" ordered Storojev. They dragged the man up and

stood him against the wall. Peter Ivanovitch fired. The man lay there before their eyes, with the blood spouting from his head.

"Begin!" Storojev shouted to the judges. They did not open their mouths.

"Who are you?" Storojev demanded of a thin, grey old man with a shaven head.

"I'm the manager."

"A Yid?"

"I'm a Jew."

"So it was your forefather who betrayed Jesus Christ?"

The old man was silent.

"Why don't you answer when you're spoken to? How much land is there in the Soviet farm?"

"Four thousand *dessyatins*."

"What was it before?"

"Besrukov's estate."

"How much land was there in it?"

"Four thousand three hundred *dessyatins*."

"There you are, moujiks! Now you can see what the Communists are! Four thousand *dessyatins* for the Soviet farm, the Soviet estate and three hundred for you. Mind you don't choke with all that."

The moujiks said nothing. The room was hot and smelly, perspiration was pouring down the faces of all present.

"Which way do you want to die? Should we hang you? What's your opinion, judges?"

The judges were shaking with fear. Suddenly an elderly moujik in a sheepskin jacket stood up in one of the front rows.

"There's nothing to condemn him for," he said. "Isaac Isaacovitch is a just man and a good one. Our village had scores of colts from that Soviet farm. And we've never seen any ill treatment from the folk there."

"No? Then come over here, you," Storojev ordered. The peasant came forward. Storojev looked at him from head to foot, then raised his arm and lashed the man across the face with his whip.

"That'll teach you to stand up for the Communists. They're going to hang him now, and you'll get the noose ready for him. And if you don't want to, we'll hang you for company, so as to give the others a lesson."

At that, there was a movement in the crowd and shouts of protest. But Storojev's men, who were standing around him, turned their rifles on the crowd and it was silenced. It was so quiet that the uneven breathing of the peasants and the crackling of the flame in the lantern could be heard.

"Well, what's your last word, Grandad? Speak!"

The old man stood up.

"You're a bandit," he said, almost in a whisper. "I've nothing to say to you—how can a wild beast understand anything?"

Storojev stared at the grey old man—so pale and feeble but so proud; his eyes shone, his withered cheeks were flushed. Storojev felt suddenly terrified of these people. "There's only a handful of them here," he thought. "yet not one of them begs for mercy, or cries. Where does their strength come from, I wonder?"

His depression deepened. The dreadful night seemed darker than ever; the trial he had begun seemed senseless. He had convinced no one, and frightened no one.

"Hang him!" Storojev ordered, trembling in every limb. The old man and the peasant in the sheepskin jacket were led away.

One after another rose the Communists of the farm, and one after another Storojev condemned them to death.

. . . The flame crackled peacefully in the lanterns. People staggered to the wall, and their blood was shed . . .

The dawn was coloring the sky.

Storojev led away fifty horses and set fire to the Soviet farm as he departed.

Antonov gave orders for the new lot of horses to be sent to Gorsky's agent at the appointed place. Then, for the first time Storojev quarrelled with Antonov.

"What's this," Storojev, usually so quiet, shouted. "Do you mean to say I've lost four hundred men for the sake of that son-of-a-bitch of a profiteer! I won't take them to him. I'll be hanged if I'll give up the horses."

"Yes, you will though," Antonov ground out, the muscles of his face twitching. "You'll take them there yourself. If you don't, another will. And if you dare to utter a sound, I'll put you against the wall and shoot you. You've got too clever lately, you son-of-a-bitch."

Storojev bit his lip and left the room. His friendship with Antonov was at an end.

After the affair at the Ivanov Soviet farm gibes and jeers were directed at the victors. The village girls sang couplets of their own composing, each more insulting than the last. At the top of their voices they bawled:

"Now the young bandit's
Got a new whip.
He snuffled and he slobbered
And he went on a trip."

"You're a fine lot of fighters," Seliverst said to Peter Ivanovitch. "You're thinking of attacking Moscow now, I suppose? That snotty army of yours—couldn't even manage the Soviet farm."

"When are you going to take the station?" the moujiks shouted at the meetings. "You're pretty good at promising, aren't you?"

"Station indeed!" someone jeered in reply. "They're frightened to go anywhere near it. Grand troops, aren't they?"

The gibes and jeers came to Antonov's ears and he resolved to try and improve matters. The beginning of February Storojev and Plujnikov received orders from Kamenka. At the head of a detachment of 3,000 men, formed from various regiments, they set out to storm the station, which was guarded by a detachment of Communists.

It was near dawn as they approached the station and halted in one of the neighboring villages. Here Storojev made a last hurried inspection of the regiments. Then, taking Lenka with him, he rode far out into the fields. Before them lay the station, invisible in the murk. A single light glowed through the grey gloom; it was the lamp high up on the grain-elevator.

The station was silent; the weary men slept. Life there was hard. Surrounded as they were by Antonov's troops, the little handful of people had neither bread nor fodder for the horses.

Antonov had cut off the road just above Mordovo; no help had come to the station for a whole month. The men were on hunger-rations. They were gloomy, and the horses could hardly stand on their feet. Only Nikita Simonovitch kept up his spirit. He and Listrat spent whole days riding about the district collecting what grain and forage they could.

But the ring of Antonov's "Greens"[1] drew closer and closer; resistance in the villages grew more stubborn. Occasionally those who had lost heart talked of clearing out and trying to make their way beyond Mordovo. Listrat said nothing. He knew that men with families would not be able to break through, would never be able to get away on their exhausted horses from Antonov.

But he never expected an attack on the station; the patrols had somehow failed to notice the movements of the rebel troops at night.

Sashka Chirikin returned in the morning, fooled by the silence and the deserted appearance of the villages nearest the railway-line.

Noiselessly Storojev's vanguard approached the station settlement next morning. The Reds were awakened by the rattle of machine-guns and the crash of exploding grenades. Half-dressed, the men seized their rifles, rushed out of the houses, and, firing as they went, made for the railway station. Antonov's mounted men galloped through the streets. There was no course but to retreat.

Under cover of their own mounted men, the Communists left the station.

Antonov's troops soon ceased their pursuit. Storojev, Plujnikov and the active leaders—of whom there were about ten—could not leave their men. The victors were busy looting the station. Towards midday peasants from the neighboring villages arrived on carts. Doors were broken open, bolts and fastenings torn off, and windows smashed—in the search for the promised goods, which were nowhere to be found.

Beyond a hundred rifles, two machine-guns and a few score cases of cartridges there was nothing in the station.

"Here, hand over the goods," the women screamed fiercely. "Where've you hidden them, you dirty devil! Grabbed all the stuff yourself, very likely!"

In vain Storojev scoured the store-rooms, cellars and houses; in vain he ordered prisoners and wives of Communists to be whipped. They knew nothing whatever of the supposed stores of goods and leather, and stuck to their assertion that the station was empty.

The moujiks scowled and loudly abused Antonov and his army; the women went for Storojev and threatened to scratch his eyes out. Again and again the walls of the store-rooms creaked, again and again the cellars were ransacked. . . . They yielded nothing but five barrels of kerosene.

Peter Ivanovitch himself distributed the kerosene to the peasants. It was received without enthusiasm: the moujiks were thoroughly disgusted, and could not speak without sneering.

Storojev held the station for four days.

On the fifth an armored train arrived and with about a dozen shots scattered the "special shock-detachment." Listrat returned to the station and everything went on as before.

"So that's how it is, Alexander Stepanovitch," said Ishin. "We've got to think of something else; we've got to try and get the folk over to our side somehow or other."

Just at that time Gorsky sent word that a fresh batch of Red troops had arrived in Tambov; they had been sent to crush the rebellion.

This was the first important force that Moscow had sent against the rebellious Tambov *kulaks*.

Headquarters had given orders to the Orel command to put an end to Antonov and his gang. The Orel command had set to the task zealously but hastily.

[1] One of the counter-revolutionary bands.

They repeated the mistakes of the Tambov command, and did not benefit by its lessons. Once again, in the pursuit of victories, they occupied the centers of rebellion and then left them; once again they scattered Antonov's regiments, only to see them collect again. New detachments sprang up, as if out of the ground. True, the Orel command thought it would comb the rebellious countryside, form a broad front throughout, drive Antonov's forces into a corner, strike them a mortal blow, scatter them and destroy them. . . .

So they thought in Orel.

But, warned in time by Gorsky, Antonov had not been idle. A subtle game was in course of preparation and Antonov had made up his mind to draw hundreds of villages and hamlets, thousands of peaceable peasants into it, to raise the whole countryside and then clear out, away from the Reds. That was the way the moujiks would treat the Reds, he had decided. They would clear out along with him.

While the Reds were arriving in their train, Ishin, Plujnikov and the specially-mobilized staff of the Committee of Toiling Peasantry and Antonov's military headquarters were sowing rumors far and wide of a so-called Savage Division, said to be composed of Chinese, Latvians and Jews.

The agitators bawled of atrocities committed, read out "evidence" given by alleged victims, told tales of families burned alive, of tortures, violence and fires.

Storojev held a meeting in his own village. It was a bright frosty Sunday. There was not enough room in the school-house for all those who wanted to hear Ishin speak: the moujiks liked to listen to his gay, rambling talk, his jokes, funny sayings and stories.

The meeting had to be held outside the church. There was a dense crowd on the porch, and on the top steps the old men and women stood leaning on their sticks. They had come to hear the truth and be convinced of it personally.

Ishin's eyes sparkled as he warmed to his tale of the Red invasion. He daubed on the colors with no sparing hand. He said Antonov would have to retreat before the Reds and leave the villages and hamlets without any protection, although he knew that in the surrounding districts the Communists were killing off the whole of the male population, beginning with fifteen-year-old boys.

"They come," said Yegor, "and rob the places and shoot down men, women and children. In Zagriatchina there's a heap of dead and tortured people higher than a house. There's only one way out for you, moujiks: come along with us. Citizens, the Reds are near! Collect all your valuables, hide your grain and oats safely away, send your young girls and women away to outlying farms. And as for the men, they should harness the horses and come with us. Let these torturers see that you don't want to meet them or see them, or hear their speeches."

The meeting was over when men on heavily panting horses arrived on the scene. Behind them came two carts covered with sacking.

"Look here, brothers," shouted a lean, bronzed rider whom the peasants recognized immediately as Safirov, commander of Antonov's Special Regiment. "Come over here and admire the Communists' work!"

Safirov, pulling the icicles from his moustache, sprang down on to the snow, went over to a sleigh and turned back the covering. The peasants crowded around. One of the women gave a heart-rending scream and dropped down on the snow, writhing. Then other women looked and shrieked and set up a wailing.

The people crowded closer and closer around the sleighs.

Storojev pushed his way with difficulty to one of them. What he saw made him turn pale: his knees suddenly felt weak, his jaws seemed to melt. In a heap on the yellow straw lay corpses. They were naked and stared at the world out of black sockets. They had no eyes, for their eyes had been gouged out and hung on their cheeks.

Their hair was singed and stuck out straight like last year's rusty grass at the roadside during the melting of the snows. Their noses had been cut off, their mouths slit from ear to ear.

"Citizens," cried Safirov, mounting the sledge. "Look at this! Those scoundrels tortured our brothers. Here—you can see the rusty needles under their nails, look!"

The crowd pressed closer. Some of the hardier and stronger of them ventured so far as to pick up the mutilated, charred hands, the blue, stiff legs: from under the nails steel needles stuck out.

Again the women screeched, while the old men and women wept silently.

"They were tortured for three days," Safirov bawled. "Why—no one knows. They were all peaceful citizens, women, old men—and," he touched a smaller corpse—"here's a boy. Citizens, that's the sort of thing they do to us. We've got to escape from them, we've got to run away and hide. Come on, get your things together, they're not far off, the Reds!"

Another rider dashed up at that moment on a horse white with hoar frost. He handed Ishin a packet and galloped further. Safirov joined him, taking with him the frightful remains of people.

Ishin tore open the letter and addressed the crowd again.

"The Reds are twenty versts away. Antonov has begun the retreat. He'll be here tonight. As soon as we give the alarm—start off!"

The crowd scattered like chaff.

Panic-stricken, the people ran home. Storojev, green in the face, stood leaning against a post. He was sick.

"Yegor Ivanovitch, is it true—was it really the Reds who did it?" he faltered.

Without replying, Yegor gave an obscene chuckle and moved away. . .

Who but he would know where the corpses had come from? Who but he would know how Hermann Yourin, Deputy-Commander of Antonov's First Army, having caught five Communists (or—perhaps they were not Communists—who knew?) had told Vanka the Bull, the executioner from Safirov's army (Antonov kept an executioner in every detachment) to "dress" the corpses.

"Dress them properly!" Hermann commanded. "So's it'll drive the folks into a cold sweat to look at them."

"It won't be the first time I've done it," replied the executioner, a butcher by trade, a thin, wrinkled, red-eyed creature, nicknamed, no one knew why—the bull.

For six days Safirov's lads carted the mutilated corpses about, for six days the village women wailed and the moujiks trembled with fear. These sledges did what all the Antonov agitators could not do; the people rose and fled before the Reds.

Antonov gave a sly laugh and shook hands with Hermann Yourin, as much as to say: "Bravo, that's a clever fellow!"

. . . . In the evening Andrei Kosyel, pale and trembling, ran up to Peter Ivanovitch. He had visited at least ten houses but the people, busy with their own affairs and their own thoughts, paid no attention to him and drove him away.

It was not for himself he was trembling, but for his horse, for the treasured grey horse he had fed with his own hands.

"Peter Ivanovitch," he pleaded, almost weeping, "will they touch me, too? It can't be."

"And what sort of a bird do you think you are?" Storojev sneered. "You signed the agreement, didn't you?"

"Yes."

"Well, then, you're our man. They'll take away your horse and kill your pig—and you yourself into the bargain."

"You think they'd even do that?" asked Andrei in anguish.

"Easy as winking! To them—you're just as bad as I am—tarred with the same stick." Storojev replied with conviction.

That evening Andrei killed his pig, cut it up, flung it on to the cart, covered it with straw and bound it firmly to the front.

The weather changed that night and became much colder. Detachments and regiments marched through the village all night long. They were followed by carts from distant hamlets, moujiks driving into the unknown. They took with them their trunks of things, their slaughtered cattle, their children and their wives. Blinded by the blizzard, the horses wandered at random by road and snowfield, bumping into one another, and blocking the way, while behind them more and more carts came up and pressed on them. Half-crazy with panic, the people cut their harness, left their sledges and on horseback extricated themselves from the turmoil.

At dawn the alarm-signal sounded; it struck terror into their souls. People who had been left behind or lost their families ran frantically hither and thither. Mounted men from Storojev's regiment tapped at the windows of the houses and called out:

"The Reds are coming! Harness your horses quickly."

The people harnessed their horses with hands shaking with fear, flitted like shadows from house to sledge, cursing, weeping, praying.

Andrei wrapped his children in his torn jacket and drove off at top speed.

Somewhere in the distance a machine-gun was rattling, and the alarm-bell kept up a strained booming. Sledges were smashed, horses stumbled and fell, people helped them up and galloped on again, glancing wildly about.

Five versts from the village one of Antonov's regiments collided in the dark with the last of the sledges. The riders dashed straight on, setting about them with their whips and rifle-butts. Their horses trampled down the peasants: the firing was coming nearer; thousands of sledges rushed through the fields.

The peasants thrashed their horses, as they fled from death.

Such was the retreat of scores of thousands of peaceable country folk: that day many children lost their fathers, many fathers—their children. The blizzard never ceased throughout the day. The roads were snowed over; indeed, no one searched for the roads or kept to them. The refugees tore into new villages where new batches of sledges joined them by the hundreds.

About twenty versts from Dvoriki, shots rang out somewhere at the side, quite near. The refugees turned their horses' heads sharp around, but collided with a stream of carts coming from the opposite direction. In a moment all were inextricably mixed up; the air was filled with shrieks, groans, the splitting of wood, and the cracking of whips.

In this confusion, Andrei's horse got its leg broken. His sledge was smashed to pieces. By a miracle Andrei and his two small children escaped. Whoever

could manage it galloped away, leaving dead horses, trunks, clothes, harness behind them.

For a long time Andrei stood watching his horse dying in agony, and the carcass of his pig, which had fallen out of the sledge, being gradually buried under the blowing snow. Then he wraped up the children, took them in his arms and started homewards. The wind blew his hair about, for he had lost his cap out in the fields. As he plodded along he wept over his ruined dreams, over his dying horse that had gazed so pitifully into his eyes. He wept over himself because he now had nothing to look forward to but want, and the frozen corners in his house and the savage battles of the starved rats under the stove.

Ten versts from the village Andrei encountered the Reds. A cheerful young fellow, who in no way resembled a Chinese or a Latvian, took the children up on his horse. He questioned Andrei at length about the retreat, shook his head sorrowfully and could not understand clearly where the people had gone and why and what for? In a neighboring village where they halted, the Reds gave Andrei some food, and found him a hat. The commander sent out a patrol to the fields, and it returned with the pig's carcass. Towards evening Andrei got home and found the village occupied by a detachment of Red cavalry.

The commanders and men were completely at a loss. They had ridden through scores of villages and hamlets where none but terrified old men and women met them, bowing low. When these were questioned as to the whereabouts of the men they had talked a lot of drivel, wept and wailed, and finally explained about the retreat.

The commander visited the houses, comforted those who wept, made inquiries, uttered kind words that went to the peasants' hearts. They told him everything, their terrors and confusion and fear of the Reds.

He called round to see Andrei Kosyel, who was the first to return to the village. Men from the Red Army were busy in the yard: sweeping up, mending the door of the pig-sty. This was the kind of work they were accustomed to; they were tired of chasing Antonov.

Andrei Kosyel told them about his horse, and his pig and all that he had seen during those days of despair. He embraced the young commander, who gave orders for Andrei to be provided with a horse out of their reserve.

One by one, on foot and on horseback, the moujiks, angry and embarrassed, returned to the village. Antonov had achieved his purpose: under cover of the crowd of peaceful citizens, he had slipped away from the Reds unnoticed, leaving the peasants in the open fields.

All were sick at heart as they approached their native village, but they were greeted by smiling Red Army men, and the women ran out to meet them. About the yards these same Latvians and Chinese (but were they Latvians and Chinese, after all?) were working hard with spades and axes. They were all very polite and only shook their heads and looked reproachfully into the peasants' eyes.

That evening the commander summoned all the peasants and their womenfolk to the school. The old people came too. All were astonished to see that there were no sentries, rifles ready, guarding the doors. No one threatened to flog them, nor roared at them, nor abused them.

"What sort of a Savage Division is this?" Demyan Kossoi asked. He had come to the meeting in a thoroughly bad humor: in the retreat he had lost a trunkful of his goods. "They don't look much like savages to me."

"It was all lies—what the others told us," Andrei whispered timidly.

"Sh-sh—be quiet," he was warned. "Let's see what happens next."

The commander and the members of the political department of the Red troops came to the school without any guards.

They looked curiously at the folks who had risen against the whole country. They were astounded by the strength and depth of the rebellion. The moujiks listened attentively but sternly to what the commissar and commander had to say. No one spoke or asked questions; they sat smoking quietly. Only Andrei Kosyel put in a word.

"I beg your pardon," he began, crumpling his Budyonny cap nervously in his hands. "I hope you'll excuse me, citizen comrade, but—have you heard anything about the grain-assessment? Or, for instance, about trading? Folks have hardly a stitch to their backs."

At that Seliverst gave Andrei a wicked look, which frightened the latter so much that he left the school without waiting for a reply.

The commander spoke for a long time on present difficulties and the ruin that had been wrought, but, since he was cut off from the center, he could tell them nothing definite about the grain assessment.

The moujiks mumbled something, sighed, and drifted towards the door. "Try and say anything. Antonov'll recall it to you when he comes," they said to themselves.

It was useless for the commander to ask that the poor and those who had been at the front, should stay a while; there seemed to be none.

"Well, Alexei Petrovitch," said the commissar to the commander, when they were alone. "Do you know what this is called in plain Russian? It's a breach in the union of the peasants and workers."

The commissar smoked his cigarette. The commander sat lost in thought. To tell the honest truth, he had imagined the Antonov rebellion to be something quite different from this.

"You know," he said to the commissar, "we've been devilishly misled. When I call to mind what we were told about Antonov I feel quite ashamed."

"Y-yes," the commissar drawled. He, too, called to mind the description he had been given in Tambov of Antonov, of the people with whom he had surrounded himself and the whole rebellion. "A crowd of ignorant drunkards and thieves" "a gang of deserters and *kulaks'* sons, armed with whips and axes." Only now could the commanders grasp the scale of the plans formed by experienced, clever politicians. Only here did the commanders understand that the struggle would have to be mapped out differently, the war carried on in an entirely different way.

"Well, Alexei Petrovitch, I'll go and write a report to the center. I'll set down on paper all the conclusions I've arrived at . . ."

They parted. The detachment left next morning.

Lenka spent weeks with Natalia at Griasnoye. He slept on the stove. When her father was sound asleep, Natalia would climb noiselessly up to him. They would whisper together under the blanket of life and love, and kiss; the wakeful nights passed quickly.

Her father well knew why Natasha's bed was empty at night. He sighed and groaned. The children were living together, unwedded. Lenka was an unsteady fellow: supposing he threw Natasha over, left her when she was pregnant, to sorrow and disgrace?

He put off talking seriously to Lenka, however, and the young people themselves never thought about the wedding. Often as they lay awake at nights, Lenka would explain to Natasha as best he could what he had heard

of Antonov's teaching. He sometimes brought home proclamations and books. She read them and felt she could follow Lenka to the end of the world.

"I'll join the troops, too," she said once. At that he raised himself on his elbow and said roughly:

"I'll give you something! Want to become a streetwalker?"

"Marussia Kossova goes with them. . ."

"Marussia Kossova's a good-for-nothing. She's carrying on with Antonov—she'll come to a bad end yet. Her father and her brothers are with the troops; she's nowhere else to go. But what is there for you to do there?"

"I only want to be with you. And supposing the Reds kill you, Lenka?"

"They won't, I've got a charmed life."

"If they do, then I'll join up," and the girl's eyes flashed as she whispered:

"I'll go and kill the Reds myself.—O-o-h, the cursed creatures. I won't spare them, even if I am only a woman. . ."

At moments like these, Lenka felt horrified and conscience-stricken when he thought of the trouble he had brought into the girl's quiet, peaceful life.

Then she became pregnant. She was delighted. Her love for Lenka increased. She was insatiable, forgetting everything except Lenka—his dear hands, his bitter lips.

Once she told him about it. She gave a low, happy laugh when she felt the first stirrings of the child under her heart. Lenka seized Natasha's head, kissed her and whispered:

"It's a son, Natasha, a son—our son!" She laughed. Her father heard her; he crossed himself and groaned.

Then they arranged to get married and live together respectably like other people. But it was not to be.

One day about five weeks after Antonov's retreat, Listrat paid a flying visit to his native village to see his mother. This was the first time he had visited her, and he went alone.

On the bank of the miserable river in this hostile village stood his home, a tiny house with three windows. And at one of those frozen white windows, Listrat was aware, sat a lonely old woman, waiting for her sons, for her "falcons," listening in the gloomy, watchful silence for the thud of horses' hoofs.

Listrat knew that Storojev was far away in Saratov, whence he would hardly be likely to return soon, and that everything was quiet in the village. Still he took precautions, stealing homewards by the gardens. All was quiet, as in a village of the dead. Listrat tied his awkward grey horse under the ruined shed.

"Everything's going to rack and ruin," was the thought that flashed through his mind. "When there's no man at home, there's no one to do a hand's turn."

He filled the manger with oats, blew his nose with gusto and went quietly into the house.

His mother was sitting by the window, gazing out beyond the river and picking at the fringe of her old shawl with a gesture long familiar to him.

"Hullo, Mama," said Listrat.

The old woman turned, burst out laughing and crying at the same time. The tears poured down her clay-colored cheeks.

"Listratushka," she whispered. "It's Listratushka come home." She had started from her seat, and was now circling about him, clasping her hands together.

"Now, now, you've done enough chuckling," said Listrat, "you might give me something to eat. . . ."

"Listratushka, my love, my falcon! What shall I give you to eat? I've got cabbage-soup, and I can give you porridge with milk. Aksyutka brought it, thank God; she doesn't forget me—Aksyutka."

"What a life—it's like penal servitude," thought Listrat. "Her whole life's gone like this in slaving, and bringing up her sons; she's never seen a bit of pleasure."

His mother set the bowl of porridge and some bread on the table, put a spoon in the bowl and stood gazing at her son with wet, happy eyes.

They were worn out with weeping—those eyes. A sad life she had had of it. Her name was Axinia, but people had long since forgotten it and had nicknamed her "croaker" on account of her hoarse, cracked voice, and "convict" because of her many misfortunes and hard fate.

Curious how little luck had been hers! Her husband, a drunkard, scoundrel and rowdy, had beaten all the spirit out of her. Then the family had been broken up: her daughter had married an old man—for what young man would marry a dowerless girl—and the sons had gone to the war. . . .

So she had wept her eyes out in her sorrow, her lean shoulders shaking with sobs. Life had become still more bitter and her smile still less frequent. . . .

Listrat ate, and leisurely asked for the news of the village. He felt at ease, he did not want to remember that in an hour's time he would have to ride back through those silent streets into the frosty fog, and be ever on the alert, watching for the enemy. . . .

Suddenly, the door opened and Lenka appeared. He was belted tightly and armed. His sheep-skin cap, with its green tag, was set jauntily on the side of his head. As he entered, he pointed his revolver at Listrat.

"Chuck it—you and your silly tricks," said Listrat, taking another spoonful of porridge. "Chuck it, I'm telling you. I can shoot, too, you know."

His mother was struck dumb for a moment. Then she gasped, jumped up and bustled about again, smiling, while fresh tears ran down her pale cheeks.

"Lenya, Leshenka, Lenechka. Lord bless me, they've both come, both my little falcons come home together. Take off your coat, son. He won't touch you, Listrat won't. You won't touch him, will you, Listratushka? You won't, will you, now?"

She kept casting pleading looks at Listrat and twitching Lenka—her rosy-cheeked, beardless youngest—by the coat, she tried with shaking hands to unbuckle his belt. Then she ran over to Listrat again.

Listrat wiped his moustache and looked at his young brother sternly.

"Well, what are you standing there for? Sit down. I suppose you want something to eat? Nice to have company for dinner. We aren't going to start shooting each other in the house, surely? The place hardly holds together as it is."

Lenka glanced mistrustfully at his brother, hastily flung down his cap, thrust his revolver back into its holster and, turning to his mother, said, "That's a meeting for you, strike me dead if it isn't! A drink wouldn't be a bad thing now?"

"I've been saving a bottle for you," Axinia croaked.

"Didn't you notice my horse as you came in?" Listrat asked.

"No, I came down the street and left my mare by the wall."

"You son-of-a-bitch," Listrat said frowning. "So you leave your horse by

the wall when you go into a house. Fine farmers we have these days. I should think the mare would want something to eat, wouldn't she? . . . All right—sit where you are!" he shouted, as Lenka got up. "I'll go and take her to the cowshed myself. Got any oats?"

"No, we don't pinch oats from the peasants, that's your trick. We never touch the moujik."

Lenka's mouth twisted in a malicious grin. Listrat chuckled.

"Keep your wool on. I suppose you think you're the peasants' champion? And, by the way, oats are given us by headquarters." He went out of the house, laughing.

"Well, a bit of bad luck brought me here," Lenka thought aloud. "We won't part without a row, I expect."

"Never mind, Lenyushka, I'll tell him—I'll tell Listrat he's not to touch you," his mother said soothingly.

Lenka gave a smart tug to his shirt, embroidered with cocks, combed his fair curls before the bit of broken looking glass, eyed Listrat's Browning which he had carelessly left on the table, pulled his own rotten weapon stealthily out of its holster and stowed it away in the pocket of his leather pants. When Listrat came in again, Lenka was eating his cabbage soup. A bottle of milky-looking, home-distilled spirits stood on the table, and his mother was slicing pickled cucumbers.

"That's a good mare you've got," said Listrat, warming his frozen hands by the stove. "Had her a long time?"

"Since the autumn. I was in the scout-patrol near Sampur, killed one of your chaps. So she came to me, saddle and all. Over-reaches herself sometimes though."

"It's a good mare," Listrat repeated, and with a swift glance at Lenka's figure, remarked: "So you go swanking about, do you—as the moujiks' champion? What, did the moujiks ask you to stand up for them or are you doing it on your own?"

Lenka reddened as he replied; "We're fighting for the moujiks' freedom."

"Get out! Are you sure?" Listrat jeered, chuckling. "So you're fighting for freedom, too? Look at that, now, how funny it's turned out: you're out for the moujiks' freedom and so am I. And we're both at each other's throats. How does that happen?"

Lenka said nothing.

"So that's the way it is, Lenya? And what rank has Antonov given you? What's your official position as a bandit, eh!"

Lenka blushed furiously again.

"You shut up. It's a question who's a bandit and who isn't. I'm in the scout-patrol," he said, licking his spoon. "We've got very good commanders, not like yours. Our commander is Peter Ivanovitch Storojev. I'm serving under him."

"Is that so? Serving under your old boss, are you? Still looking out for bosses for yourselves?"

Lenka was silent. Listrat felt his wrath rising.

"You said you were fighting for freedom. Is it for Peter Ivanovitch's freedom, too? So he'll be able to hire four laborers instead of three? And you'll go back and slave for him again, will you?"

Their mother began hurriedly—as if afraid they would not let her have her say—to complain of how last autumn, when the village had joined Antonov, Peter Ivanovitch had lent her three poods of musty flour, and

now not a day passed but he reminded her of her debt and disgraced her by calling her names.

Lenka went as red as fire. Listrat only raised an eyebrow and looked at his brother out of the corner of his eye.

"Well, let's have a drink, shall we?" he said loudly. "Let's drink to freedom, my lad!"

Lenka poured the home-distilled vodka into the glasses. Listrat took up his glass slowly and sniffed the contents. Then, throwing back his head, he gulped down the strong, heady liquid, wiped his mouth with his hand and popped the smallest piece of cucumber into his mouth.

"How easily you can drink," Lenka said admiringly.

"I'm used to it," Listrat returned with a wink. "I didn't spend six years as a fitter in Tsaritsin for nothing. Folks in Tsaritsin can drink their share, I tell you. Your throat gets covered with a layer of dust there, and that's the way you wash it off. Folks there know how to drink, my lad, and how to fight, too.

"It was a pity you didn't go with me to Tsaritsin," he went on. "Honestly, it was. If you'd been in Tsaritsin in the autumn a couple of years ago, you'd have seen some real people. Stalin was there, boy: what a head he has, a man of iron, and clever. Your Antonovs are nothing to him; they're only rubbish. Wait till he goes for your bosses—he won't leave a stone unturned. He's smashed whole armies, and he'll knock your kulaks to bits in no time. Pooh, you. . . ."

Lenka longed to say something insulting, something that would make Listrat really angry. He screwed up his eyes, and twisted his mouth into a sneer, but could find nothing insulting enough to say.

"How did you get here?" Listrat asked. "We drove you quite a long way off."

"We've got the people behind us," Lenka replied. "And we're for the people. We're fighting for the land. See!"

Listrat gave a loud guffaw.

"You don't say so!" he roared. "You're fighting to get more land for Peter Ivanovitch!"

"We're fighting to get land for all the moujiks," Lenka added, frowning. "You took the land away from the moujiks and gave it to the Soviet farms!"

"How learned you've become these days, eh! You must have suffered, too, surely? Did they take your land away from you as well? You had such a lot, hadn't you? Look at him, Mother, look at the moujiks' champion. You had a fool of a child and now you plague yourself with him. In other provinces the peasants are doing a bit of honest ploughing, and around here you fools have to be kept down wth troops. Stinkers!"

This was more than Lenka could stand.

"Leave us alone," he shouted, his eyes growing bloodshot. "I'm not making any remarks about your folks and don't you make any about mine. Lap up your vodka and shut your mouth. There'll be an end of your government in the other provinces pretty soon. Give us time—we'll string you up, too."

"Oh!" Listrat laughed and filled his glass again. "Is it to be the end of me? Pick me a decent gibbet, won't you—after all I'm a relative, Lenya. Mama'll ask you to do that much for me. Make your son a bow, Mama—he's thinking of hanging his own brother!"

Listrat guffawed so heartily that Lenka grew merry, too. Their mother sat there listening but she did not understand their talk at all. How could one

understand anything when people came every day and abused one another, when each praised his own side and declared it was the right one.

But when Listrat mocked at Peter Ivanovitch, she was delighted, though she trembled. The pompous Peter Ivanovitch seemed fated to be her master for ever. For ever and ever, it seemed, Axinia's children were doomed to toil for him. Listrat had spent five years under his yoke, and her daughter Aksyutka scrubbed his floors.

"All the moujiks are indebted to him," she said in a terrified whisper to Listrat. "If he wants to, he can crush, squeeze the whole village in his hand—like that," and Axinia clenched her frail fist with its sclerotic, blue-veined fingers.

Listrat looked half-mockingly at this crouching, pitiful figure and recalled how one sunny morning many years ago she had brought him, a small boy —to Peter Ivanovitch. Peter Ivanovitch, big and stern, had stood on the steps of his house, and, scarcely listening to Axinias' plea that he would take her son and make a man out of him, he had boomed in his deep bass:

"There's no profit in it. Think what his food alone will cost me. Well, all right, let him stay with me, you're terribly poor. God says we mustn't forget the beggars. But the boy's got to behave himself—I'm very severe—or I'll thrash him so's he won't be able to sit down."

Recalling this scene, Listrat frowned in disgust, and his face twitched.

"If you squeeze him in your fist, filth'll trickle out of him, out of your Peter Ivanovitch," he said. "Stinking stuff'll ooze out of him and you'll smell it and be glad. You go and look for a boss for yourself and they do what they like with you."

Lenka, half-tipsy, was drinking the vodka through his teeth. Listrat rolled himself a cigarette mechanically.

"Are there many of you in Storojev's detachment?" Listrat asked his brother.

Lenka gave a start, and a sly little laugh.

"See that, Mama? Clever, isn't he? Wants to make me into a spy while I'm drunk. And he's the eldest, too."

Listrat gave him an indignant look.

"What are you killing people for?" Lenka shouted.

"We didn't start the row, you son-of-a-bitch," Listrat said. "It wasn't us who started it, it was all your Peter Ivanovitches. They lost their heads with fright and started to think with their bellies. They smelt it out, the dogs, they knew it meant the end of their ill-gotten gains. They wanted to fight, well —now you've started the fight—don't complain. We only wanted to knock some of the fat off them, but now we'll not stop till we've drawn all their stinking blood."

Listrat struck the table with his fist, hurt himself and waxed still more furious.

"Pooh, the devil," Lenka cried, startled by his brother's vehemence. "Thinks he's an orator. Wait, we'll see how you'll talk when it's coming to a finish. You're ready enough to rob folks and then say you're for the poor."

Without turning his head, Listrat asked: "And who are you for? You said you were for the poor, too."

"Yes, of course. We're all for the poor."

"And is Peter Ivanovitch for the poor, too?"

"Oh, you're always harping on the same string—Peter Ivanovitch, Peter Ivanovitch! It isn't Peter Ivanovitch who's the head. It's Antonov! He's suffered: he was doing time in Siberia before."

"Antonov's got a master, too, and his master's Peter Ivanovitch," Listrat winked at Lenka again. "The Peter Ivanovitches kept your Antonov chained up like a dog till they needed him. Now they've let him loose, set him on the Soviet government, so to speak. Antonov, indeed! What could your Antonov have done without the kulaks and fools like you?"

Listrat grunted, drank off his vodka, collected the rest of the sliced cucumbers in his fingers and popped them in his mouth. Then, smiling, he remarked in a casual tone:

"Do you remember how he used to thrash you—Peter Ivanovitch? When he caught you in the plum-tree, eh. And then Mother beat you for stealing. Didn't I tell you then that when you're hit, hit back? Aye, how you were flogged!" Listrat chuckled. "They still call you 'Floggin's,' I suppose?"

"Leave me alone!" Lenka said, turning crimson.

"Floggin's! ha-ha-ha," Listrat roared. "What a joke! Peter Ivanovitch beat him while he could stand over him, and now, Lenka's fighting for more freedom for the fellow, ah-ha-ha-ha!"

"Stop annoying me!" shouted Lenka, seizing his rifle. "Stop worrying the soul out of me, else I'll knock the breath out of you!"

Listrat suddenly felt sorry for his young brother.

"All right, that's enough then. How touchy you are, anyway, and you're only a bit of a puppy yet! You ought to be getting married, you little son-of-a-bitch. Instead you've taken to fighting."

"That's just what I want to do—get married," said Lenka sullenly.

"You don't say so? Mama, our Lenka's thinking of getting married!" Listrat's tone was warmer, kinder. "Who to, Lenka? Who's the girl?"

"Frol Bayev's Natasha from Griasnoye."

"Oh, I know, I know," Listrat said proudly. "That's a grand girl, Mama. And Frol's a decent moujik, too."

"I've come to talk it over with Mama," Lenka added, blushing again. "I'd like to fetch her here, she's in the family way."

Axinia smiled, blew her nose, and cried a little. Listrat stroked her hair, put his arm around Lenka and pressed him close to him.

"Marry her, marry her," he said softly. "Perhaps we'll be done with the war soon, and everything will settle down. And now let's go and look at the horses, lad. It's time for me to go."

A calf was munching straw in the ruined cowshed. The saddled horses were standing peacefully side by side.

Listrat patted Lenka's dappled grey mare and said:

"See you don't water her before it's time. You deserve to rot yourself and worse if you spoil a horse like that. She'd be a treasure on a farm. If you wanted her for ploughing, for example, see what a chest she has. She'd do enough work for two."

Listrat's voice, when he spoke of the ploughing, grew somehow softer and nearer, as it were. Lenka felt Listrat's longing for the life of the farm, and he himself yearned to be following the plough along the cool, crumbling furrow some dewy morning.

"Why must folks fight?" he whispered.

"Ask your own gang—ask them what they think they're doing and who they think they're fighting? And you're just as big a fool as they are with your 'I'm for the poor.' "

"I *am* for the poor," Lenka insisted. He wanted Listrat to say something that had been left unsaid, something that was not clear, but very important.

"Fool, you may be for the poor, but you didn't go the right way about it," Listrat said with a laugh and a friendly slap on the shoulder. "If you're really for the poor, you should come with us. How many of the poor are in your gang? Count."

Lenka did not answer. He was watching Listrat deftly adjusting the saddle, easing the saddle-girths, and feeling the mare's belly, chest and legs with an experienced hand.

"A bit of first-rate horseflesh," he said. "A real nice horse. I wouldn't mind swapping with you myself."

Now Lenka wanted to do something for his brother, so he said, impulsively:

"Let's swap then, Listratka! You give me yours instead. I'll only spoil the mare, while maybe you'll save her till peace-time?"

Listrat looked at him with contempt.

"By God, what a soldier. Why, how can anyone swap the horse he fights on? I'm used to my beast, we can't separate now. He knows me through and through, knows what I want without my telling him—and you want to swap? What do they teach you blockheads?"

At that Lenka lost patience and shouted:

"Oh, what are you running us down for all the time? Why should you try to make me out a fool?"

"I run you down," said Listrat sternly, "because you're a lot of fools. Who do you think you're fighting, I'm asking you? Well, your gang's won this province and maybe you'll win two or three more, but we've still got fifty. We don't want bloodshed, we're waiting till the moujik sees what you're up to, sees you for the wolves you are. Wait till we come down and crush you, then you'll squeal."

Lenka gave another indignant bellow, such a bellow that the calf ceased munching for a moment and Listrat's nervous horse pricked up his ears.

"Yes! You're good at crushing folks!"

"Oh, get out," Listrat retorted teasingly. "If folks like you aren't crushed a bit they make a hell of a lot of trouble for us."

"Don't you try to laugh it off," Lenka shouted, crimson in the face. "No joking now! You keep on making fun of me but you haven't told me yet what you're fighting for. What is it you're after?"

Listrat pulled a blade of grass out of the manger, nibbled it a moment and then said thoughtfully:

"That's true—I've never said what I was fighting for. I thought we were both from the same nest and knew the same things. But it seems there's a difference between fledgelings from the same nest. We want a lot, Alexei Grigorievitch. I'm an ignorant fellow—I can neither read nor write—it's hard for me to say it all. But you've watched your mother shedding tears all her life, haven't you? We'd like to collect all those tears in a tub and drown Peter Ivanovitch in them. So that there'd be none of his seed left. See?"

"And what about us?" Lenka asked. "Are we for the tub, too?"

"Why should you be? You're like blind kittens—nosing about and bumping into the corner every time. That's the way it is." Then he added: "Well, now, Lenya, we've had a chat and it's time for us to be going. Tell me, are your folks anywhere about?"

"Peter Ivanovitch went to Cherchinka," Lenka replied. "Keep round by the Molchanovs' farm; the road's clear there."

The brothers returned to the house, buckling their belts as they went. Lenka, blushing, pulled his revolver out of his breeches' pocket.

"Ugh, you rogue," Listrat observed. "See that, Mother? This ugly lout was frightened of me, he kept his revolver handy in his pocket, all the time."

Lenka gave a forced laugh and said, "Well, who knows what you may be up to? You talk a lot, you promise not to touch whoever gives in, but it's one, two, three—and up to the wall with him when you get hold of a fellow."

"Come and see for yourself," Listrat said, screwing up his eyes. "Maybe they've been lying to you about shooting folks against the wall."

Lenka chuckled.

"Don't think you can get round me. I know the way I'm to go."

"Aye, young puppy," said Listrat affectionately. "There's many and many a way, Lenya. Some are straight, and some are crooked . . . Well, I'm off now. Goodbye, Mama, goodbye, Lenya—if we should happen to meet in a fight, don't get mad; a fellow's liable to be hot-headed in a battle and doesn't feel who's his own flesh and blood."

Listrat smiled, but the thought flashed through his mind: "He's so young, the son-of-a-bitch. He'll go to ruin for nothing."

Their mother stood on the threshold, watching until the fast-falling snowflakes hid her sons from sight.

The brothers rode together until they reached the river. Then they smiled at each other and parted. A hot lump rose in Lenka's throat and his heart contracted.

He rode slowly onwards, sighing heavily over this meeting with his brother.

He felt as if something inside him had burst. Now, he thought, he would be scarcely able to explain Antonov's teaching to the moujiks.

Take Peter Ivanovitch, for example. Lenka had known him so long that he had grown accustomed to his roughness and took it as a matter of course in his master. But when his mother had told him about the flour, a new feeling had stirred in his heart. He reddened as he thought with fury of that tall, bronzed man who shouted at his mother on purpose so that all the neighbors could hear.

Then Lenka remembered how he had come to join Antonov. Until then he had not thought of it; there had been no point in doing so. It had seemed to him the right thing to do. After all, he had entered Peter Ivanovitch's family when he was only a little boy, and had been a farm-hand for him since the age of seven. So when Peter Ivanovitch went over to Antonov, taking his nephews and friends with him, Lenka had followed them, without knowing why. He did not want to think about it now but he could not help it; he could not get Listrat's words out of his head; they were simple enough, but they had pricked him.

"Damn it," he said, "it was just my luck to have bumped into him!"

He turned round. Far away to the side Listrat could be seen riding towards the Molchanovs' farmstead. Lenka stood up in his stirrups and saw his brother dismount and do something to the saddle. Listrat stood a moment—thinking, evidently—then made a gesture as if he gave it up and leading the horse by the bridle went slowly on his way.

"Has something broken or what?" Lenka wondered. He was about to overtake his brother when he suddenly noticed a group of mounted men in the distance. He recognized them as his own detachment with Storojev at the head on his skewbald mare.

"They're chasing Listratka," he thought. "They'll kill Listratka if they catch him."

His heart contracted again. He dug the spurs into his horse and dashed forward to meet the detachment.

Storojev pulled up his horse, looked at Lenka, moved his lips undecidedly and demanded, "What are you gallivanting about for?"

Lenka felt his own fury rising.

"You sent me out yourself," he growled. "What are you yapping about?"

Storojev was breathing heavily and unevenly. The horses were steaming; they had evidently been galloping at a good rate. The men must have been hurrying somewhere. Glad of a halt, they lit cigarettes and watched Lenka curiously.

"Was Listrat in the village?" Storojev asked.

"So that's it," flashed through Lenka's mind and suddenly—feeling as if he was turned to stone—he replied, "Yes, he was at my mother's."

"Have you been there, too?"

"Yes, I was there, too."

"Te-he-he, Alexei Grigorievitch. So you and your brother met, did you? And you kissed each other when you said goodbye, I suppose?"

"We couldn't very well start shooting each other in the house, could we? It just barely holds together as it is," said Lenka, repeating Listrat's words. "What we've come to with our fighting!"

Storojev gave him a searching glance, but Lenka sat quietly playing with the reins.

"Where's he gone?" Peter Ivanovitch asked in a casual tone.

"Who? Listratka? He's gone to Griasnoye."

"He's not lying," Storojev decided. Then he commanded hastily: "Now, boys, make for Griasnoye, maybe you'll catch the bird we want, and I'll ride over the village. You come along with me, Lenka, it wouldn't do for you to go chasing your own brother."

They rode away in silence. In his mind's eye Lenka could see Listrat, leading his horse slowly along the road.

Without turning his head, Peter Ivanovitch asked:

"Is your mother still alive? Still croaking? When's she going to pay her debts? You'd better hurry up."

Lenka said nothing.

"Do you hear what I'm saying to you? You're all ready enough to borrow, but when it comes to paying back, you hang on to your stuff."

"Why, will it make you so terribly rich if you get those three poods of flour?" Lenka asked very roughly.

"What was that you said?" Storojev demanded, drawing rein.

Lenka overtook Storojev and turned to face him. Away in the distance, he could see the detachment galloping on wrapped in a mantle of snow.

"What I said, I said," Lenka burst out. "You're too greedy! You've no call to be annoying a poor old woman like that. You ought to have pity on a body."

"Yes, I ought to pity you dogs," Storojev flared out, and his clean-shaven left cheek twitched. "Pity you I should, and then you'll wring my neck if you get a chance. We pitied you in 1917 and now we can't get rid of you."

He fumbled in his pocket with trembling fingers and drew out his tobacco pouch. When he had rolled a cigarette and lit it, he said, drawing deep at it, "What you folks want isn't to be pitied, but to be taught."

"Who picked you to be their teacher?" Lenka demanded loudly and roughly. "Teacher, indeed! . . . The Reds stick teachers like you up against the wall by the dozen, to stop you from teaching."

At that Storojev gasped and his cigarette dropped out of his mouth, which suddenly twisted convulsively.

"Aha, you blackguard!" he snarled. "Been listening to your brother! You haven't had enough thrashings yet. Take that!"

He raised his whip and struck Lenka across the face from brow to chin. Then he picked up the reins and with a touch to his mare, rode on, flinging back over his shoulder:

"Maybe you'll be a bit wiser now, you fool. Floggins!"

"Floggins!" flashed through Lenka's mind . . . he remembered how the boys had shouted after him: "Hey, Floggins, hey!"

Still boiling with excitement, he glared after Storojev and thought: "I'll meet you one day face to face and bump you off. That'll be the end of you!"

Then his excitement suddenly cooled down. He felt easier and freer, and the problem that had been tormenting him was decided very simply and above all, very quickly.

"The dirty swine!" he muttered, smearing the blood over his face. "What a cut he gave me. Got a heavy hand. . ."

Late that evening Lenka overtook Listrat at the Molchanov farmstead.

"Well?" Listrat demanded sternly, noticing the crimson streak across his brother's face.

"Let's be going," Lenka replied in a hollow voice. "I'm giving myself up."

A dull sunrise glowed faintly through the grey fog as Lenka and Listrat came in sight of the grain-elevator. It winked a red eye at them, guiding them to desired rest, now near at hand. Lenka rode ahead of Listrat in silence. Listrat smiled to himself and twisted his silvery moustache.

"Aren't you scared?" he asked his brother.

"No," Lenka answered. "It's all the same in the end."

"Why didn't you kill him?" Listrat asked. "I wouldn't have been able to keep my hands off him. Were you sorry for him or what?"

Lenka came abreast of Listrat and explained.

"I didn't want to murder him, Listratka, I didn't want to shoot him in the back. I want to catch him. And when I do catch him I want to look him in the eyes and shoot him. I'd like to be able to look into his eyes while he's dying."

Listrat laughed quietly.

"You're only a kid still," he thought. "You'll have to be kept in hand yet."

. . . And now the elevator was quite near. Lenka reined in his mare, took off his hat, his rifle, revolver, and bomb and handed them to Listrat.

"You take these," he said in a hollow voice, adding: "Listrat—tie my hands, for Christ's sake, I beg and pray you—tie my hands—else I'm terrified—I'll turn back. . ."

Listrat saw his serious, pleading eyes. He pulled a strap out of his pocket and bound his brother's hands firmly behind his back.

"Ready," he said. "Come on."

"Come on," Lenka chuckled and spurred his mare.

To be continued

REPORTAGE

Pierre Bochot

Strikers [1]

Long live the strike! When the people work they do not know their strength. They do not even dream of its existence. Nevertheless, it is their arms that make the world go round. The cradle and the coffin, the rail and the locomotive, the hammer and the nail, the cake and the plate are fashioned by their hands. They are the permanent creators of all things.

One day they will be masters.

The pedestrian who loitered yesterday on the old bridge of the Carrousel saw nothing but *bent backs* in the depths of the excavations below. Today he sees *faces* in the trench. For it really is a trench.

Pedestrians!
We are fighting for better working and living conditions.
Help us!
Thank you!

This carefully drawn poster is mounted on a sort of scaffold in the middle of the yard. And on a wagon, the property of the Vandewalle concern, a striker has written in chalk:

"Big show today

"Laugh with the famous clown Tonio."

Is it a battleground, a circus or a construction site?

It is a circus where comedies, dances and popular concerts are staged.

It is a construction site where a monumental bridge, a worthy neighbor for the Louvre Palace, is being built.

It is also a battleground where a fight is being waged to win a raise of five sous—twenty-five centimes.

It is a building site on the Seine, a circus under the open sky and a battleground of the proletariat.

The strikers, sitting on boards, juggle a plate and a piece of bread in one hand and hold a fork in the other. They are eating cabbage.

One of them regards me with blue eyes:

"This splendid radio set," he says, "was placed at our disposal by a librarian from the rue Bonaparte. You see, comrade, we have support. The first days we slept on the hard wagons. The lawyer Willard came to see us and he secured twenty-five bales of straw from the municipality of Montreuil. A garage mechanic went and fetched it for us in his truck. (Having too much to say, he speaks in broken sentences.) As for the cabbage (he turns to a group of Arabs: "Not bad, is it, fellows?") it was provided by a restaurant owner on rue Bonaparte for two francs, fifty centimes a plate. Last evening the Young Communists of the Sixteenth Arrondisement gave us a concert. There was

[1] Taken from *The Commune*, July, 1936.

quite a crowd. We took a collection on the bridge—one hundred and fifty francs. That's how we keep going. You see, there are a hundred and ten of us, including fourteen Arabs, good fellows without any families, and who earn four twenty-five an hour. They too have to eat."

He again turns to the Arabs:

"Not bad, eh, fellows?"

The oldest comrade, who is wearing an opera hat, pours the wine reverentially.

The sun pierces a cloud and caresses the folds of the red flag that floats atop the dredging derrick. The foliage of the trees is irridescent like the water of the Seine.

The return of an "agent" is hailed. He is carrying a violin under his arm.

"The performance is about to begin!"

Fil-de-fer, a husky lad, hurdles a wicker chair.

Two-sou, five-sou and ten-sou pieces shower upon the platform.

The spectators are clustered on the bridge. Since those farthest away cannot toss their contribution, a striker informs them:

"Ladies and gentlemen, I shall pass up the hat."

And he passes up a hat, attached to the end of a long pole.

"Thank you, comrades, thank you."

A young man lifts a heavy iron bar. Applause.

"The show goes on, you are about to see *The Barber of Seville*."

Great excitement. They drag a big tub of water on to the stage and bring out a saw, a bicycle-pump and a jimmy. The customer sits down in the barber's chair. The boss gesticulates. The barber enters, exhibiting his biceps.

The boss: Be quick boy, the gentleman is in a hurry.

The customer: Yes, in very much of a hurry, or I shall miss my train.

The barber: I want a raise.

The boss: Come on boy, faster, faster faster.

The customer: I'll miss my train.

The barber: I want a raise.

The boss: Yes! I'll give you a raise. Meantime go ahead and work. (aside) Afterwards we'll see.

The barber has completely lathered the customer's face. The boss shouts and gesticulates helplessly. The barber places his knee on the customer's chest, takes the saw in both hands and sets to work with the minutest care. First a tanned cheek appears and then the nose, the chin, the eyes and finally the forehead, which he had also lathered.

The bicycle pump serves as an atomizer and the jimmy as a curling iron for the moustache.

The spectators applaud.

Cigarette packages, books, twenty-sou, forty-sou and even ten-franc pieces shower the platform.

A porter up on top keeps on applauding.

"It's a real circus, all right," he remarks.

Today is the fifth day of the strike and the morale is excellent.

When they sing the *Internationale* the workers of the Seine take off their hats in honor of their two dead, and they gaze up at the red flag which brightens the sky like a star.

We have been nought, we shall be all!

Translated from the French

FROM THE GORKY ARCHIVES

PREFATORY NOTE

Maxim Gorky's Early Works as a Publicist

Early in 1906 Gorky went abroad for the first time. It is not the ordinary kind of trip that writers make, for the purpose of broadening their "mental outlook," accumulating new impressions or merely for the sake of amusement. Gorky took this trip like a proletarian writer and revolutionary.

By that time Gorky had a long list of "crimes" chalked against him: attending an illegal radical circle (back in the eighties of the past century), revolutionary propaganda in the country, participation in anti-government demonstrations, writing and distributing proclamations to the workers, collaboration with the Marxist press, associating with prominent revolutionaries, etc., etc. On the other hand, these revolutionary activities of Gorky's were accompanied by an equally complex chain of repressive measures, taken against him by the police and gendarmes: public and secret surveillance, searches, arrests, imprisonment, confinement to a fortress, exile and similar "retributions."

Thus the immediate cause of Gorky's emigration from Russia was a rumor he received of plans to arrest him. Quite naturally Gorky's trip abroad, from its very outset, was entirely a part of the current stage of his revolutionary activity.

In fact, en route, at Helsingfors, he spoke at a political meeting. He likewise appealed to the audiences of large meetings in New York to support the Russian revolution. Doubtless his "remarks," in the innumerable get togethers and banquets which the most advanced sections of European and American society arranged in honor of the Russian writer, were imbued with the same note of rebellion.

But along with this direct oral agitation, Gorky made even wider use of his pen for the same purposes. Besides the revolutionary story *Mother,* which he began writing in America, Gorky published in the foreign and in the Russian emigré "free" press a series of biting political pamphlets (such as *The Russian Tsar, Lovely France*) and publicist articles.

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Among the last mentioned a special space is occupied by a wide range of articles by Gorky on the question of loans to the Russian tsarist government by Western countries, which was of current importance then.

The need for this foreign state subsidy was called forth by the exhaustion of the Russian treasury as a result of the unsuccessful war with Japan A further increase in the quantity of paper money, which was already double the usual amount, brought the autocracy face to face with inevitable financial and economic ruin. Its danger was further heightened by the oncoming revolution, the struggle against which likewise required large additional expenditures. Accordingly one of the main concerns of tsarism at the time was the securing of foreign loans. This explains the importance, from the revolutionary standpoint, of hindering those loans by appropriate influence on foreign society.

Thus Gorky devoted a series of writings—articles, appeals, polemic letters (open)—to this propaganda. All this work may be divided into two categories.

On the one hand Gorky apealed to average "cultured Europeans," holding it was inconceivable that "when they saw how the savage government, maddened by fear of losing its hold on the country, stifled and killed by the thousand, they would care to aid this government in its crimes." He further appealed to the "common sense" of the investors, warning them of the risk of losing their investment, since the "buying power of the people is insignificant, its industry is undeveloped and what little land it has is exhausted" and "when all is said and done you'll be dealing not with the Russian government but with the Russian people, for it will win." Gorky threatened the most enterprising foreign loan buyers that "if the strain under which the people lives continues, it will more and more incline to hatred and to cruelty, and at the decisive moment . . . the strength of this hatred, the depth of this cruelty, will horrify the whole world."

On the other hand, Gorky made a comradely appeal to the working masses in foreign lands—explaining to them the actual facts of the subsidy to the Russian government, with a warning not to be deceived by hypocritical exhortations and calling on them to hinder by all possible means the floating of loans destined to be used against the heroic struggle of the Russian proletariat.

The financial backing of tsarism was in the end undertaken and to an extent which exceeded all foreign loans, hitherto known to history. But along with other factors, Gorky's articles could not fail to play their part in those delays which occurred in the government negotiations in this connection. As regards their author, according to rumors that were circulating in Russia at the time, the Russian autocracy made efforts to "extradite" Gorky to try him for revolutionary propaganda.

We give two of these early publicist works of Gorky, never republished before. To the first of the above-mentioned categories belong his "Open Letter" to Alphonse Aulard, the prominent French historian, a student of the period of the great French Revolution—who was formerly of radical sympathies and who has since become a rabid chauvinist. Gorky's "Appeal to the French Workers" belongs to the second group.

III

The contents of these articles lead to the conclusion that in his early work as a publicist Gorky was not acting merely on his own initiative. As may now be definitely ascertained, on the question of the loans he unswervingly supported the attitude of Party circles, an attitude which at the time had not yet been put into writing. It was not officially formulated until the following year, at the Fifth "London" Congress of the Russian Social-Democratic Labor Party which took place from April 30 to May 19 (old style) 1907, and which Gorky attended as a delegate with a consultative vote. The resolutions adopted by that Party Congress included a special one "On the Loan," the text of which read: "Whereas: 1) the autocratic Russian government is the irreconcilable foe of the Russian people, which is waging a heroic struggle with this government for its elementary political rights; 2) whereas Western countries which lend the Russian government moral or financial support are actually allies of the latter in suppressing the peoples of Russia; 3) whereas the proposed agreement of the English government with the Russian would be a tremendous moral support to the bitterest foe

of civilization—the Congress appeals to English democracy, calling upon it to use pressure to prevent the English government from perpetrating such a crime against the liberation movement in Russia."

This Party resolution found its reflection in retrospect in the later historical analyses of the leaders of the proletariat. Lenin, in comparing the conditions which gave rise to the Revolution of 1905 and the Revolution of 1917, again touched upon the question of those loans, saying: "Anglo-French finance capital was against the revolution in 1905 and helped tsarism to stifle the revolution (the billion loan of 1905)." Finally, Stalin in his analysis of imperialism wrote that Russian "tsarism was not only the watchdog of imperialism in Eastern Europe but was also the agent for squeezing from the population hundreds of millions of interest on loans, floated in Paris, London, Berlin and Brussels."

Thus, Gorky in the very first of his publicist articles seized upon and popularized one of the most important political problems of the time. And with good reason, therefore, do these early writings show such close kinship with those militant articles of his which continued to appear on the pages of the central organ *Pravda* to the very last days of Gorky's life.

S. Breitburg

PROCLAMATION TO THE FRENCH WORKERS

French Workers,

To you, who work all your lives and allow your masters to make laws for the protection of property created by your labor,

To you, who never have enough bread to satisfy your hunger, and who are ruled by people glutted with all that you have created,

To you, workers, the real owners of the earth, I address myself:

Before you, as well as before the workers of the world, is the path of struggle for freedom of mankind from economic and political slavery, from the bondage of capital and the state, the servile agent which supports capital against you.

This struggle will soon envelop the whole world and will be a struggle of two races:

The race of the poor, who will battle under the banner of reason, truth, love and justice, and the race of the rich, who will defend themselves with all their means—greed and hypocrisy, cunning and cruelty.

This struggle is as inevitable as death—and it has begun.

The Russian worker, in the first detachment of the universal army, has marched into combat.

His victories and his defeats are known to you. You know how much strength he has expended and what he will yet expend, you know how abundantly his blood flowed and will yet flow.

He has already inflicted powerful blows upon the enemy, but the enemy is still strong and many combats face the Russians.

The sooner the coming combat breaks out, the sooner its thunder will resound throughout the whole world. And if the Russian worker is victorious

—the workers of all Europe, of the whole world, will draw from this victory new inspiration and strength, and lessons for themselves. . .

Understand that in speaking of the working people, one speaks of the whole world—one family.

Therefore, I confidently appeal to you to help your Russian comrades, your comrades who are going to battle under a common banner with you—under the red banner of Socialism—with one aim: the freedom of labor from the oppression of capital.

They advanced first, and you must help them for, I repeat, in this struggle the victory of one is the victory of all.

The day of general revolt in Russia draws near. You will not really permit your comrades to go to battle with empty hands.

Give them silver for iron and zinc.

I know workers are poor in silver; only their hearts are rich.

But we must show the old world of pharisees and hypocrites that it is in the heart of the worker that the true fire of love for mankind burns, that in him blazes the flame of faith in the brotherhood of man. You must show this fire in your breast to the blind eyes of the greedy and sated. . . .

Let them tremble at the foreboding of their helplessness. And let our militant, our sacred slogan, the slogan of the brotherhood of mankind, sound the death knell of the satiated and dying world of malice and greed, the world of lies and cruelty.

Proletarians of all countries—unite.

Believing that the brotherhood of mankind is not a dream, that it will be realized on earth, I have faith in this great holiday of the future because I am a worker.

I have worked and lived among working people. I know their nature and I know that only they can realize in this world the reign of justice; only they are capable of creating a new life, a life of brotherhood, a life of joy and reason.

Only they.

Because the interests of labor are the same everywhere, and sooner or later the workers of the world will clearly see their path to happiness, freedom, and truth. This path is the same everywhere and for all.

All peoples will meet on it, and it will lead to the celebration of the idea of universal brotherhood.

The world is ever more sharply dividing into two armies—the army of the rich and feted, and the army of the poor who all their lives bend their spines under the heavy burden of labor.

Gold, that Yellow Devil, coldly and cruelly mocking at the world, corrupts people, sowing enmity and envy among them. Some it gathers around itself to pervert their natures with insatiable greed; others it pushes away into the embrace of hunger and labor.

Disuniting, it unites. Making the rich avaricious and stupid, it sharpens the mind of the poor, and, dividing all people into two irreconcilable camps, prepares them for battle, one against the other.

The workers of each country are united in a closely knit family and the day will come when the workers of the world will unite in one brotherly army of labor. Uniting, they will see clearly how few are their enemy, and how weak to be able to rule the lives of hundreds of millions. And they will see that the evil of life is gold, property.

And from that day there will reign on the earth not lies but truth, not

hypocrisy but sincerity, not greed and envy and evil, but reason, goodness, love.

Those who hold this belief are bound to serve it with all their strength since it alone will restore the world, will free man from the bondage of sorrow and need, will cleanse the spirit of everything that debases man.

Each worker who sees a comrade in need and sorrow must help him since all workers are one family.

And the workers of one country must help the workers of another country. This aid to remote and unknown people is truly humane and far-seeing.

Help your Russian comrades in their bitter struggle against the tsar and his gang of hangmen, who have drowned all Russia in blood. Do this.

In the name of the solidarity of interests of all workers, you must hold out your hand to help the Russian workers.

When your day of struggle arrives and you also will need help—then you will find friends who will respond to your cry:

Help, comrades.

Maxim Gorky (Magazine *Red Banner* No. 4, 1906)

Translated by Selma Schwartz

OPEN LETTER TO PROF. L. AULARD

It was with surprise and sorrow that I came upon your honored name, professor, amid the tempest of angry words and impotent anger, amid the filth and vulgar twaddle with which the French press replied to my article about the despicable action of monied and official France.

Your book on the period of the epic struggle of the French people against oppression is read by the Russian proletariat; from it they have learned how to die for freedom, which is as necessary to them as air. My esteem for you as an historian is deep. Esteeming you, I cannot allow your article *Lovely France,* to remain unanswered, since what has always been important to me is not people's attitude towards me but my attitude towards them.

Although apparently you did not read my whole article, you nevertheless acknowledge in part that I had good reason to be indignant.

You should acknowledge this fact fully, esteemed professor.

The important thing is not only, as you say, that "without France's money the tsar would not have been able to disband the Duma," but also that had it not been for this cursed money, Russian blood would not have been spilled so profusely and so savagely. And whether you like it or not, this blood has been a shameful stain on the face of the French bourgeoisie and government which granted this Judas loan.

It is not for the French press to wash away the stain—it is not clean enough to do so.

You are mistaken in your obvious assumption that I hurled my reproach in the face of all France. Why consider me so naive? I know that the people are never responsible for the policy of the ruling class and its obedient lackey, the government, and I especially, who know the French people, know how they scattered the seeds of freedom in Europe, know that they would not consciously go against it. But, as always, the people are deceived and dishonored by those who rule their lives. My maledictions upon them, whoever

they may be—Germans, Englishmen, Frenchmen, kings, bankers, journalists.

I was addressing the France of banks and financiers, the France of police and cabinet officialdom. I was spitting upon the face of that France which spat on E. Zola, that France which, for fear of the Prussian king, and priest of every kind of stupidity, drowned all her chivalrous feelings, and now lives only in fear for her tranquillity and the preservation of the franc.

But, esteemed professor, I believe that this France will not free itself of its fears and trepidations by supplying now, and probably in the future, a gang of robbers and murderers—that is, its friend, the government of Russia—with francs minted out of the blood of its people.

The Russian revolution will develop slowly and over a long period of time, but it will end in victory for the people. Following the example of France of yore, we will cut off the heads of the hydra of parasitism, but beyond that we shall not imitate even the great France.

When power is in the hands of the people, they will be reminded of the bankers of France, who helped the Romanov family to fight against freedom, justice, truth—to fight for its power, the barbarian anti-cultural role of which all honest hearts and eyes of Europe clearly understand and see.

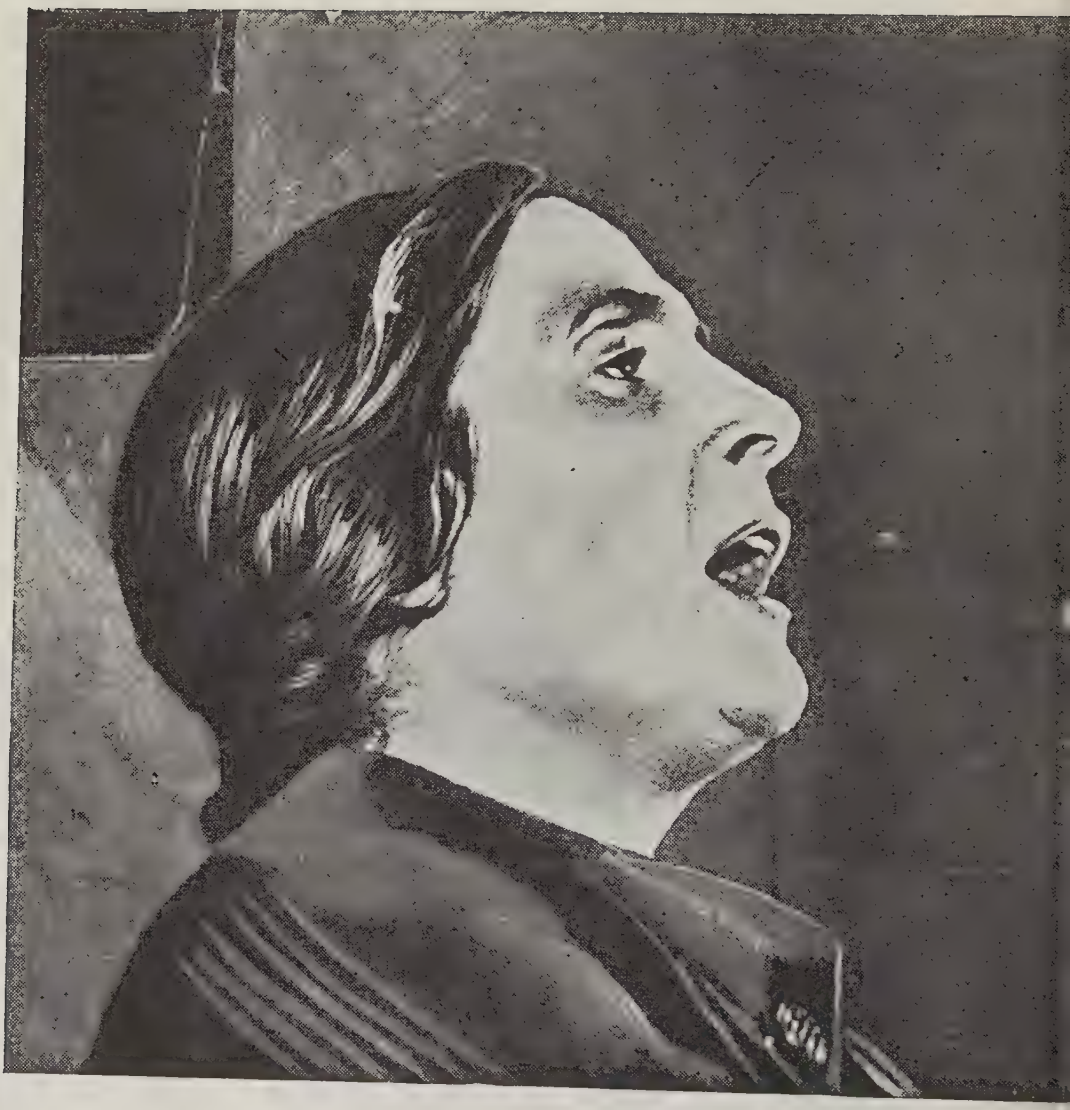
I am convinced that the Russian people will not repay to the bankers of France loans which have already been paid with their blood.

Will not repay.

M. Gorky, (*Red Banner,* Nov. 6, 1906)

Translated by Selma Schwartz

To The Front . . . .



Dolores Ibarruri (Pasionària) Speaks . . .

PASIONARIA

BEFORE THE FRENCH PEOPLE

"We come to you, people of Paris, victors
of the Bastille, fighters for the Commune."

The People Listen

Children of the Revolution

On Guard

Despite the war, life goes on... Armed peasants working in the fields

ARTICLES and CRITICISM

F. V. Kelvin

Heroism in Spanish Literature

The 1934 fighting in Oviedo was coming to an end. The fate of the revolutionary city had already been sealed. It was surrounded on all sides by a dense cordon of General Lopez Ochoa's troops. Airplanes flew over the city, dropping bombs on it. Peals of explosions . . . fires . . . thick pillars of smoke . . . moaning of the wounded. . . . roaring of heavy guns. The revolutionary detachment had received orders to retreat to the coal region. Such was the decision of the leaders, Communists for the most part, leaders forged in the actual fighting.

Though they had run short of bullets and lacked artillery, the heroic miners of the Asturias were unwilling to leave Oviedo. They put into action what weapons they had—rifles, machine-guns, revolvers, dynamite. They knew well what awaited them should the fascists seize the city. General Lopez Ochoa had fully earned his epaulets in Africa. Not without reason were "African" methods of fighting being employed in the Asturias: The general forced his prisoners to march in front of the advancing columns. No, it was better to die fighting, gun in hand, than be a living camouflage for the enemy. And so the Asturian miners went on fighting. They fought till they dropped from exhaustion, till their last drop of blood had been shed.

Among these fighters were not a few women and children. The sympathies of all were held by a girl of 17, the Young Communist Aida de la Fuente. Proudly she wore her red kerchief.[1] Aida was a pleasant vivacious girl. There was something fragile about her, as though she were not yet fully developed; she spoke in a low voice, looked and smiled at you bashfully. Her father, Gustavo, a Communist, was a designer in an Oviedo theater. For seven months he had been suffering from asthma. Aida was well-known in the theater, where she went to receive complimentary tickets. In the workers' districts one might often have seen her light, ethereal figure flit past. She helped to organize, and took part in all labor celebrations. In Oviedo she was known only as a "Libertario."[2]

But Aida was not only a pleasant, vivacious girl; she was an excellent organizer and fighter. During the fighting in October, 1934, she organized an ambulance brigade that greatly assisted the insurgent workers. Along with her brigade, Aida was always in the firing line, always in the thick of smoke and flame. When near the Spanish Bank a comrade was wounded, Aida took his place behind the machine-gun. That machine-gun became a part of her.

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[1] In Spain the Young Communists wear red kerchiefs just as the Young Pioneers do.

[2] *Libertario*—free. This is what the Anarcho-Syndicalists call the Communists. The word is widely used among the Spanish workers and peasants.

On Oct. 13, the forces of Lopez Ochoa and the Foreign Legion occupy the city. A detachment of fifty guerilla fighters, closely pursued, retreats down the slope of the hill San Pedro de los Carlos. Amongst the retreating fighters, firing from their pistols, is Aida with her machine-gun. "Run off, Aida," her comrades say. "No," she replies, "you are men. You are more badly needed. Let me stay here alone." And alone she remains.

Aida is glad that she can save the detachment by holding up the offensive. Not for a moment does she think of herself. The enemy is nonplussed. It ought to be easy to mount that hill, but the hill, it seems, has come to life. It spits bullets, takes deadly aim. It becomes necessary to find shelter, to run—and that in the moment of victory!

Now for a last exertion. Aida looks around. She sees the dark brown hills, the road, the fog and smoke over the city, sees the lofty sky aflame in the dawn. Aida tries to determine where her detachment is now, whether she has kept back the offensive. A cry of joy escapes her. She sees the detachment crossing a nearby hill, then the last of them concealed behind it. This means that the detachment will not be captured by the enemy, that fifty rifles have been saved for the revolution, saved by herself.

Now she may go—but cannot. The enemy is 150 meters away. "Well, what of it," she thinks, "I shall struggle on, like the fighters on the squares and streets of Oviedo. I have a cartridge belt left and I still have my pistol."

The enemy is infuriated. He cannot imagine that he was held back by this little girl, a child almost. So much the worse for her! But Aida does not surrender. The machine-gun has been stilled, but she fires from the pistol. She must not be taken alive. A last shot, a last cry, and the girl's small figure lies on the hill's summit—a symbol of the heroism of the working class, a symbol of eternal victory. The blazing dawn throws its clear rays on her red Young Communist kerchief. It flames like a torch, like a precious flower that has grown here out of Aida's blood. This is a symbol of the invincible heroism of the great days of the Asturias, a symbol of the Spanish revolution.

I want to bring her back to life . . .
The blood-red weeds of murder
Scatter far and wide!
Her storm-swept grave lies trampled,
Grave o'er which men stride.
I want to bring her back to life . . .
I want to tear the earth up,
Earth men cannot till.
Here are no pretty posies
Here's a crop of steel.
I want to bring her back to life . . .
Aida. . . . Libertario . . .
See her blood-stained form!
Breasts are stuck on bayonets
Limb from limb is torn.
I want to bring her back to life . . .
And shout to all the Fascists
"Libertario lives,
"She kneels by her machine-gun
"Fighting on the bridge."
I want to bring her back to life. . . . !
Say, miner, let your hand dip

Into Aida's blood. . . .
Write "Spain has found new courage
In October's flood."
I want to bring her back to life . . .
"We shall, when Spain has conquered,
Meet at Aida's grave.
And offer love to Aida,
Woman free and brave."

Such is Rafael Alberti's account of the death of Aida de la Fuente. According to this poet, Aida meets her end while defending a bridge. But there are other accounts of the young heroine's last stand. According to one of them, she fell while defending the locomotive depot of the Northern Station —the headquarters of the revolution. According to another version, by the supposed murderer of Aida, the legionnaire Torrecilla, the girl was killed on the steps of the church of San Pedro in Oviedo.[1]

Some claim she committed suicide so as not to fall into the hands of the enemy, others that she died fighting. But in all versions she is inseparable from her machine-gun and inflicts heavy losses on the enemy. We have herewith reproduced the most popular version, given by Manuel D. Benavides in a remarkable piece of reporting, *How the Revolution Happened.*

That there are so many accounts of her death shows that the image of Aida de la Fuente, "Libertario," has become very dear to the Spanish people as a symbol of the heroic. According to all the accounts, Aida was wearing red. Either she has a red Young Communist kerchief or a red dress. In most of them it is stated that *Era muy guapa* (she was very beautiful). She was a symbol not merely of the heroism but also of the beauty of the proletarian revolution.

The revolutionary struggle in Spain during the last five years—that is, since the proclamation of the bourgeois and landowners' republic—is rich in heroic deeds. A young girl telegraph operator in Barcelona stuck to her post till the end, the last telegram she sent being a message of greetings to the revolution. There was the journalist Louis de Sirval, murdered in an Oviedo prison by the whiteguard bandit Ivanov. There were the heroic children of the Asturian miners who fought in October, 1934. What a hideous poem to heroism is created by the prisons of Oviedo, Astorga, and other Spanish cities, by the "floating jails" of Barcelona. It is a poem to great persistance and struggle, to self-sacrificing deeds.

The national memory clings to the image of Aida de la Fuente not because she was the only heroine in the Spanish revolution, but because in her was clearly mirrored the new Communist generation to which she belonged and the idea of Communism to which the Spanish masses are passionately drawn. It is not for nothing that one account of her death represents Aida as saving the lives of hundreds of comrades, who succeed, thanks to her, in leaving Oviedo on the last train. Just before her death she waves her red kerchief and shouts: "Long live Communism! Long live the Soviet Revolution!"

It is no wonder that the question of heroism now commands such attention in Spain, or that it has found so rich and vivid a depiction in the revolutionary literature both of Spain and other countries. This fact naturally perturbs the class enemy, who attempts in every way to blot out the heroism of the Spanish working people. Both the foulest calumny and the most refined methods of propaganda have been resorted to.

[1] *Estampe* of Nov. 3, 1924—"Legionaire Torrecilla describes how he killed Libertario."

It is well known that the fascist and the clerical press of the whole world, following the October fighting in the Asturias, attempted to represent the heroic workers as gangsters, such as might have walked out of a moving picture. Of what were the Asturian workers not accused?

They raped women. They burned out the eyes of children, they burned their fathers on pyres, they shot down clergymen and so on and so on. Even the murder of Aida de la Fuente was ascribed to the revolutionaries. Reports in the government press claimed that "four revolutionaries attacked three girls wearing the uniform of sisters of mercy. Among them was the daughter of the Communist artist la Fuente, who is at the present time under arrest; another girl was a member of the Socialist Party.

"Taking the girls to a very remote district, the revolutionaries handled them with bestial violence. They also treated in this way a fourth girl, whom they met later." (In all Madrid newspapers for Jan. 16, 1935.)

El Debate, the newspaper of Gil Robles, carried the following item:

"Because the daughter of the artist la Fuente said that on returning to Oviedo she would tell everything to the revolutionary committee, it was decided to murder all four girls." (October 17, 1934.)

The tone of the fascist press in Madrid, in describing the heroic fighters in the Asturias, is exemplified by the following brief item, which appeared in one of the metropolitan newspapers.

"And so, I am out to tell the truth. Let all hear it who wish, just as I heard it from the mouths of thousands.

"Here (*i.e.,* in the Asturias) not only women but girls of seven have been raped.

"Sisters of mercy have been slain with knives.

"Red Cross hospitals, filled with wounded, have been fired upon.

"Private apartments and shops have been raided and plundered.

"The eyes of clergymen have been burnt out.

"A number of persons lived under a threat of death for seven days.

"Civil guards have been cut into pieces. Their bodies were hung up on hooks in butcher shops; their heads were shown in the shop windows with a notice: 'fresh pork.'

"Seminary students have been burnt alive, after being first roasted at bonfires.

(Here follows a long list of crimes attributed to the Asturia fighters.)

"At the time when a slanderous campaign against Spain is being continued abroad, and everything is being done to represent the revolutionaries as heroes, there is daily evidence of the revolutionary barbarism and the low moral culture of these people," stated *El Debate.* "Revolutionary beasts," "gangsters," "Spanish reactionaries"—expressions such as these filled the reactionary press of all shades and colors after the October fighting. The image of the fascist "hero" was set up against that of the barbarian. Two main types soon became clearly defined. One was the victim of "revolutionary barbarism," the patient christian martyr, "who endured everything rather than betray the ideals of Order, State and Church." This type included clergymen, factory managers, seminary students, civil guards, and so on. Another type of fascist hero, bordering on sanctity, was the officer suppressing the uprising, destroying the "hydra of revolution."

A glance through the Spanish newspapers from October to the end of 1935 will show how the government of Leroux and Gil Robles attempted to glorify the valorous troops of General Lopez Ochoa and Bateta. Large sums were raised by subscription for these troops. They were lauded on all

sides. And it often happened that officers and generals, who had particularly distinguished themselves, were received by the president or by cabinet ministers.

It is clear, however, that such primitive methods could avail only during the first stages. "Calumny," carried to the point of the absurd ultimately defeated itself. It transpired that clergymen whose fate was mourned by the clerical and fascist press were still alive. A commission sent to the Asturias could find no children with eyes burnt out by revolutionaries. A British commission of inquiry traveled to the Asturias without receiving permission from the government. Leroux expelled the commission by force of arms. There followed an outburst of patriotic indignation. A world scandal threatened. In the foreign press, especially in the newspapers of North America, reports began to seep through about the torturing of political prisoners in Oviedo and Barcelona.

But despite all these machinations, the Spanish government was unable to sully the symbol of heroism, the image of the brave Young Communist girl who fell in defending the last stronghold of revolutionary Oviedo.

II

But the Spanish reaction has found an ally in German fascism. During the past few years, the German fascists have considerably extended their ideological influence in the Pyrenean peninsula. It is well known that German imperialism has long been attempting to win a dominant position in Spain. To understand the part German imperialism has played in Spanish history, one need not go back to the period of Bismarck and Alfonso XII or to the later struggles between the imperialists of France, Britain and Germany, on the "black" continent of Africa. Suffice it to recall that Spain, while being formally neutral in the world war of 1914-18, actually sympathized with Germany, while the Spanish king played the part of a German spy in giving to the Valkenhein-Hindenburg general staff information he had received in conversation with the diplomats of the Entente Cordiale. Spain, which has a very jagged coast line, facing both the Atlantic and the Mediterranean, provided excellent bases from which German and Austrian submarines launched attacks on the war vessels and merchant ships of the Allies.

The German collapse was a heavy blow to the Germanophile majority of Spanish political and public leaders. Dashed forever were the patriotic dreams of getting back Gibraltar and of securing sole supremacy in Tangier and the entire northwest coast of Africa. Spain, the non-belligerent, appeared among the contracting powers at the time the peace treaty was signed as a power that had fought and had been conquered. The Allies did not want to forgive Spain for her neutrality, and they treated her as a moral ally of Germany. She found her rights in Morocco greatly limited, and as a consequence she became the least favored of the powers there.

During the "post-Versailles period" Germany evinced a heightened interest not only in Spain itself but also in all the peoples of Spanish race, *i.e.*, those of South and Latin America. Spain and the Latin-American countries interested Germany at that time as offering a big market and as a possible source of raw materials. Krupp and the naval ministry hoped to manufacture in Spain the military equipment they were forbidden by the Versailles Treaty to manufacture at home. But Spain and the countries of Latin-America also interested Germany in another way. These countries, which had taken no part in the struggle against the Austro-German bloc, regarding

it rather with sympathy, interested post-Versailles Germany as a "national essence" or, as German scientists of the Karl Vossler variety would say, as a "moral being." The German scientists and philosophers of this period were asking what was the place of Spanish culture in world history, and their answers were highly complimentary to Spain and the peoples of the Spanish race. In the past, Spain has always been "Europe's great teacher in the sphere of morality," and, in the present, she alone, animated by the ideal of christian stoicism, retained her national soul, her national being, retained her faith and national unity.

The study of the genuine essence of Spanish culture could not, of course, ignore the ideal foundations of the Spanish race and the question as to what constituted the Spanish ideal resolves itself into the question of the heroic foundation of life.

But German science not only tried to interpret, in a way necessary and acceptable to itself, the "national being," "the heroism" and so on of the "Spanish tribe," but exported this interpretation to Spain herself and South America. It should be said that at first this interpretation met with undoubted success. Count Keyserling's books and Karl Vossler's researches on the history of Spanish literature were not only translated into Spanish and made the subject of painstaking and careful study, but developed before very long into a dangerous weapon in the hands of the Spanish reactionaries. German and Spanish fascism once again met and embraced each other like brothers. Of the two brothers, the elder was again the German, who set himself the none too easy task of deceiving the toiling masses of Spain by offering them through its Madrid agents its conception of "the genius of Spain," "the heroism of the Spanish tribe," the "national ideal," and so on.

One of the chief exponents of the ideas of German fascism in this field is Count Hermann Keyserling, the founder of the Darmstadt School of Wisdom, who considers that at the basis of everything should lie spiritual ardor and feeling, which Keyserling sets up against mere, that is, bare knowledge. Mankind has already finished a definite cycle of its historical development. It stands on the threshold, as it were, of a "new kingdom," which is to be the "kingdom of the Holy Ghost." But there should be a preliminary period of upbuilding.

The founder of this philosophy, which is really a very naive one in spite of its hazy formulas, is a former tsarist landowner of the semi-feudal type. Keyserling was born in Latvia in 1880, his family, as he has said, having contained seven generations of thinkers. Among his forefathers were friends of Voltaire and Frederick the Great, Bach and Kant, Bismarck and Wilhelm I. A grandfather of the philosopher was a privy counciller of Alexander II, while his father was the leader of the liberal elements among the Latvian nobility. His mother, who was descended from the barons Palyar von Palhau, was daughter of Count Kankrin, Minister of Finance under Nicholas I. Keyserling has proudly boasted that two kinds of blood are mixed in his veins, the German blood of the conqueror and the leader, and the impressionable and feminine blood of the Slavs. As regards outer things, his connection with Russia amounted to the fact that as a typical German feudal landlord, the Baltic count lived very comfortably on his estate in Latvia, until he was driven off it by the October Revolution. Keyserling then found shelter under the wing of the German reactionaries. In Germany, he married a granddaughter of Bismarck and founded the famed Darmstadt School.

We have mentioned these particulars of Keyserling's life in order to

reveal who at the present time are particularly interested in spreading their conceptions of "moral essence," the "Spanish National Soul," "Genius of Spain," "Race Heroism," etc. It is not so much German as whiteguard reactionaries.

After writing a number of voluminous works on philosophy, highly valued in Germany, in 1929 Keyserling undertook a journey to South America. This was his second world tour. He had made the first in 1912-14, when he visited India, China and Japan.

His journey to South America, where he spent four years, was, he wrote, "the culminating point of my philosophical career." On returning to Germany he wrote *South American Reflections,* in which he proclaimed that the only genuine embodiment of the "idea of human warmth and faith" is the Spanish race, which has succeeded in preserving its national unity, developing an unshakeable religious stoicism, that, being eternally vital and efficacious, surmounts all obstacles. Keyserling's philosophical conceptions were strongly criticized by the late Maxim Gorky. In a letter to the students of the Serpukhov Workers' Faculty written on Jan. 30, 1930, Gorky characterized the fundamental idea of Keyserling's philosophy as follows: The "philosophical feuilletonist," as Gorky called him, advises us to find salvation from industrialism "which converts men into ants" in the "religious countries—Spain and the South American Republics." "The South American republics," said Gorky, "attracted the count probably because there, among the bourgeois intelligentsia exists a trend, started by the count himself, akin to the 'populism' which attracted our intelligentsia in the 60's and 70's of the last century. The essence of the populist teachings was that the city dwellers, the artisans and the workers, deteriorate under the influence of culture and can save themselves only by leaving the cities, by surrendering themselves to the 'power of the earth.'"

"The national ideal of the Spanish race," as seen by Keyserling in his *South American Reflections,* suited the Spanish reactionaries perfectly. It was just the type of hero which they had attempted without success to develop among the Spanish working people, a "hero" obedient to "the will of God," preferring submission to active struggle.

When the October storm swept over Spain, Keyserling was invited to deliver a series of lectures in Barcelona and other Spanish cities. But the count did not come up to the expectations of his friends. It is very possible that the Spanish soil, overheated by fighting, did not favor the manifestation of the "spiritual ardor" contained in the Spanish soul. In October, 1934, the Spanish workers posed and settled in quite a different fashion the question of the internal force impelling them to heroic struggle. The Baltic count, after reading a few lectures, departed without any regret being felt; he was soon forgotten. The chances are that he did not enjoy having a taste of the "genuine ideal of the heroic Spanish tribe."

Now that the people's fury has again burst out in Spain, the place of Count Keyserling has been taken by . . German armored planes and Junkers bombers. The moral influence of Keyserling has proved inadequate. . . . Can the Spanish people be converted to the "true faith" by heavy guns?

German fascism is greatly alarmed about the fate of its hero—"the national ideal of the Spanish race." This "hero" is not admitted by the Spanish people. And though Catholic priests march with cross and mauser in hand at the head of the generals' robber bands, and although attempts are made to exalt this hero with the help of the revolvers of Morocco riflemen, the image of another type of hero dominates heroic Spain. . . . At the ap-

proaches to Oviedo and Saragossa, in the gorges of Sierra Guadarrama, in north and south, thousands of Aida de la Fuentes, of her fathers and brothers, are fighting for their country.

And shout to all the fascists
"Libertario lives,
She kneels by her machine gun
Fighting on the bridge."

wrote the poet Rafael Alberti on the death of the brave Aida.

May the same machine-gun rattle today!

The name of the real hero of Spain is—the people of Spain.

D. Mirsky

About Stephen Spender and C. Day Lewis

The movement in English poetry whose most prominent names are W H. Auden, Stephen Spender and C. Day Lewis is a literary fact of considerable importance, and one of the significant manifestations of that great international development which is drawing the best representatives of the intelligentsia of capitalist countries away from the bourgeoisie and nearer to the revolutionary working class. The "post-war poets," as Day Lewis terms them, (also called the "New Country" poets from the title of a miscellany which introduced them to the public as a group) are the most interesting figures in the younger generation of English literature. Moreover, their work is among the most interesting poetry produced within the last half-dozen years in any capitalist country.

The "post-war poets" are united by a common aversion to the existing order of things, a common hostility to capitalism and fascism, and also by a common revolt against the degenerate traditions of English poetry. They are in sympathy with revolution and they are "revolutionaries" in their art—two things by no means necessarily connected. The list of poets whom the "post-war" group regard as their predecessors—Gerard Manly Hopkins, Wilfred Owen and T. S. Eliot—emphasizes the obvious fact that there is nothing revolutionary in "revolutionary" technique. Owen, indeed, may have had the germs of a revolutionary poet in him, for the human sympathy that inspired his powerful anti-war poetry could easily have developed into a more active attitude of comradeship in the fight against the class that breeds war, but by no straining of the imagination can Father Hopkins, S. J. be claimed for anything connected with revolution. As for Eliot, his work is the quintessence of decadent[1] poetry, which leads so naturally into the rut of the most reactionary tradition.

There is no essential connection between "revolution" in poetical technique and real revolution. But neither should it be assumed that because they have been strongly influenced by the Roman Catholic Hopkins and the decadent (since developed into an Anglo-Catholic fascist) Eliot, the work of "post-war" poets themselves is reactionary or decadent. The connection between form and tendency is complex, and artistic methods evolved for the expression of one outlook may be creatively applied to opposite ends. It is more relevant to point out that although Auden, Spender and Lewis have moved a great distance from Hopkins and Eliot, and although their poetry is certainly not decadent in the sense *Prufrock* and *The Waste Land* are decadent, they have by no means freed themselves from their decadent heredity in general.

The decadent period of bourgeois literature produced in poets the tendency —developed into an ingrained habit—of writing for a *coterie,* for a select circle of "those who understand." This circle may widen in the measure that a poet becomes fashionable and is more attentively studied, but it never ceases to be a circle of intellectuals, a strictly literary circle separated by a water-tight wall from the masses. The "post-war poets" still write for a coterie, a fact particularly obvious, perhaps, in the "propaganda" plays of Auden,

[1] I am not using *decadent* as a vague term of abuse, but as an historical term denoting the international movement which begins with Baudelaire and includes Nietzsche, Proust, Joyce, cubism, surrealism and so on.

which can be effective only among those who are familiar with the "private jokes" and "little language" of the poet and his friends.

I fully realize that inherited decadence, with its "aristocratic" attitude towards the masses, is not so easily cast off. Mayakovsky, whose starting point was in some way similar to that of Auden, Spender and Lewis had to take great pains to overcome it, and succeeded in doing so only by dint of sustained effort. There is little evidence of such effort on the part of the English poets. Their poetry, however important it may be as a new expression of anti-capitalist sentiment, still remains a poetry of intellectuals for intellectuals, or, to put it crudely—a poetry of highbrows for highbrows.

It is not my object herewith to give a critical account of "post-war poetry" for the reader. An initial step toward acquainting him with it was made in number 4 of *International Literature,* which contains a very valuable and judicious introduction to contemporary English poetry and its revolutionary tendencies by John Lehmann, himself one of the movement, and one who has come much nearer to an acceptance of the Communist point of view than the leading triumvirs of the school.

My subject now is not the poetry of the "post-war poets" but their prose pronouncements, contained in two of their books: *The Destructive Element, a study of modern writers and beliefs* by Stephen Spender (Jonathan Cape, London, 1935) and *A Hope for Poetry* by C. Day Lewis (Backwell, Oxford, 1934).

Of the two books, that by Lewis is the less ambitious. It is a defense of the new poetic practice which keeps rather close to concrete facts and contains much useful information on the actual history of the movement. The book is valuable as a guide to the actual production of the poets it deals with. Spender's book attempts to cover much more territory. It endeavors to give a complete statement of the general foundations of his outlook, a statement based on elaborate appreciations and criticism of writers of yesterday and containing pronouncements on a variety of very important subjects.

The book is in three parts. The first is a rather detailed study of the work of Henry James. The second, entitled *Three Individualists,* is devoted to W. B. Yeats, T. S. Eliot and D. H. Lawrence. The third, bearing the title, *In Defense of a Political Subject,* contains the most personal and controversial matter in the book.

The study of Henry James is valuable. Spender is correct in regarding James as a writer of genius, who was concerned with problems of the highest relevance and had something very significant to say. That there was in James a great writer is unquestionable, but it is equally clear that the great writer was wasted in him. Henry James is the most glaring and tragic example of the fate of genius in a decadent bourgeois society—the most tragic because he had in him much greater possibilities than Proust or Joyce or any other writer of the decadent period. He was by nature a realist. He had in him something which related him to the age of Shakespeare, something not found in Proust and Joyce—a sense of the potential greatness of man and of the significance of human behavior.

Spender makes some very good statements about James. "James ought to have written about kings and queens . . . about popes, cardinals and politicians who exert a great deal of worldly power; but today . . . the power-mongers keep well behind the scenes." (p. 199) It was impossible for him to write of the powerful men of to-day as Shakespeare wrote of the court of Denmark. Instead of real problems that revealed real human passions and af-

fected real issues, James wrote of the refined and futile "experiences" of the degenerate "society" towards which his middle-class snobbishness so powerfully drew him, and which in reality is merely a race of maggots breeding on the putrescent body of a decaying civilization. Hence the glaring contradiction between the greatness of his imaginative powers and the obvious nothingness of his material.

"A very great deal of his work," says Spender, "is about nothing except that he is a New Englander who has spent his life trying to reconcile a puritan New England code of morals with his ideas of the European tradition." This is decidedly an understatement. It is not only this particularly naive aspect of James's snobbishness (which was far more all-pervading than Proust's) that counteracts his genuine power as a realist. The whole nature of the world he wrote of was destructive of his best powers—a fact which explains the organic and inevitable imperfection of James's work despite his enormous care for form and perfect construction. The undying cancer of his work is that he approaches as valuable and humanly significant, characters and feelings that are in reality both futile and disgusting.

Ultimately, it is true, he does see through, and the *final* outcome of his work is what Spender calls a fierce indictment of the society portrayed. But to arrive at that indictment he wanders for thousands of pages in a jungle of futilely refined psychology which forms an impenetrable wall between his real message and all but a few of his worth-while readers. James will never become readable even in the sense Proust is. Proust's work is a document, a portrait of the aristocratic society of decaying capitalism—distorted, no doubt, but a distortion easy to estimate and to correct. But the work of James is the grotesque outcome of the conflict betweeen a noble conception of human possibilities, and the complete absence of these possibilities in the only material his snobbishness allowed him to tackle. In spite of his enormous powers, James remains a "case" rather than an object of aesthetic perception, but a case of supreme significance for the indictment of those social conditions which wasted such a noble genius.

It is impossible to speak, as Spender does, of James's "artistic method" being justified. It is precisely the method that is wrong. Spender is right when he goes on to say that "his account of society makes, in effect, an indictment" of that society, though the way Spender says it is somewhat odd. The indictment, he says, "is as fierce as that of Baudelaire; or, indeed, of a class-conscious Marxist writer." There is a method in this oddness of Spender's language, a method of which we shall presently speak.

In the second part of Spender's book, the chapter on *Yeats as a Realist* is disappointing. It contains nothing to explain the paradoxical title. After reading it, not only are we not convinced of the realism of Yeats, but we are not even aware that an attempt was made to substantiate the claim. Altogether the cult which Spender and the other "post-war poets" make of Yeats is somewhat disconcerting. Not that Yeats is not a poet of great talent, but one fails to see the relevancy of his poetry to theirs. The whole business looks rather like an affectation, a private convention which is of no interest to others. In reality, however, this exaggerated deference to so militantly conservative a poet as Yeats is part of a conscious attitude of "gentlemanly" manners, of which I shall have more to say.

The chapter on Eliot contains much apt and trenchant criticism of Eliot's prose writings. But in this chapter more than in any other, one is exasperated with Spender for playing the gentleman's game of such writers as Eliot him-

self. One is exasperated by the writer's prim politeness in discussing ideas voiced by Eliot in his prose, ideas that are mitigated only by the extraordinary absurdity of Eliot's prose style and that downright silliness of so many of his statements which, fortunately, so often turn him into a mere figure of fun.

Spender, to be sure, criticizes Eliot. But with what elaborate qualifications! ". . . although Eliot is not a fascist, there is no sentence in this paragraph [1] with which Mussolini, Hitler and Mosley would not thoroughly agree." Eliot *is* a fascist. To be one, it is not necessary to be a registered member of the Nazi party. And it is as silly as anything Eliot himself ever wrote to advance against him the argument that "there is nothing in the New Testament to correspond" to Eliot's chauvinism.

But as one reads on, one realizes that this attitude of Spender's to Eliot is representative of Spender's general outlook. He has realized much of the real truth about the position of the creative artist in bourgeois society; he is certainly hostile to that society and unmistakably hostile to fascism. There is no doubt of his sympathy with the working class or of his conviction of the justice of its cause. His poetry is full of spontaneous expressions of anti-capitalist, pro-proletarian sentiment, and his poem *Vienna,* containing noble passages devoted to the heroes of the February insurrection and of the underground Communist organizations, leaves no question as to the side he takes in the great issue of our times.

But Spender is gripped by an obsession—the obsession of the "independence" of the artist, of the necessity for him to fight shy of all party allegiance for fear of forfeiting his inner freedom. Of course, such a shying away is a possible transitional stage for an intellectual who is moving towards a wholehearted and responsible acceptance of his place in the revolutionary struggle but has not yet cast in his lot with it. In itself, such a stage has nothing particularly dangerous about it. But in Spender's case, the obsession is so strong and appears to be so consonant with certain very deeply rooted inclinations of his that it tends to counterbalance the entire revolutionary germ we find in his poetry.

One of the manifestations of this obsession is his obstinate care to retain all the appearances of the bourgeois intellectual, of a gentleman conducting a gentlemanly discussion with other gentlemen who have every right to their own opinions and prejudices. Consequently, such ludicrous understatements as the following: "At times it seems that the political movements of the time have a much greater moral significance than the life of the individual." Hence, such deliberately and studiedly non-committal statements (imitating Eliot's most affected mannerisms) as his summing up of the importance of Upward's story *Sunday* (a psychological study of the decision of a clerk to work in contact with the Communists). "This story is remarkable because it shows that it is possible for a writer to create by going forward into a new tradition, *as well* as going back—like Eliot in his Anglo-Catholic propaganda play *The Rock*—into an old one."

Only a few dozen lines above that observation, Spender had remarked that the important thing about Upward's story was that it broke away from the *Prufrock* attitude, from the "snobbery that sensibility is an end in itself, that the person who . . . is sensitive, is in some way vastly superior to the person who behaves responsibly and willfully." The point is that Spender

[1] A paragraph which includes a clause to the effect that "any large number of free-thinking Jews" in any country is undesirable.

himself has by no means effected the break with the "sensitive" attitude, and that his shyness of party spirit is precisely an obstinate disinclination to "behave responsibly and willfully." This attitude is common to the "post-war poets." Spender attacks Day Lewis for the latter's undue respect for Communists, but Day Lewis himself has expressed this view of the complete passivity of the poet very unambiguously when in *Noah and the Waters* he says of the poet:

> *His gaze that like the moonlight rests on all*
> *In level contemplation, making roof and ruin,*
> *Treachery, scorn and death into silver syllables*
> *And out of worn garments a seamless coat.*

"Poetry," says Spender in the *Epilogue* to his book, "is a language which can communicate simply the direct experiences that are not directly communicable in ordinary language." "Tendencies," he says on the same page, "are of no literary interest . . . because art does not illustrate a point of view, it does not illustrate at all, it presents its subject in a new form."

The logic of the last statement is, to say the least, rather lame. Because art presents its subject in a new form does it follow that the principles which condition the presentation are of no importance? What is the aim of communicating "experiences?" The "sensitive" theory of art had an absolutely definite answer to this question—that these "experiences" "enriched" human existence, were, in fact, the only really valuable content of a human existence. But surely Spender is not asking us to return to the fold of the Roger Frys and Clive Bells?

Of course Spender understands that "experiences" are valuable only insofar as they contribute to the building of a definite type of mind, insofar as they contribute to the construction of a human soul, human in the highest sense of the word.

But Spender's struggle against revolutionary guidance is desperate. The latter part of the book is almost entirely devoted to stating his case against a Communist literature. In this struggle he advances along several lines. He arraigns the whole of Soviet literature for its "lack of independence" and for its primitive artistic method, using as his principal source such trustworthy (?) evidence as the writings of the notorious Max Eastman. Moreover, Spender's notions of Soviet literature are of the haziest, and his appreciations are certainly not indicative of a high standard—he regards Panteleimon Romanov as one of the few proofs that real literary talent can exist in the USSR. It is amusing that here, too, he tries to play his game of gentlemanly fairness. He thinks that Eastman is not *quite* fair to Soviet conditions, for "he does not emphasize that some writers have been well treated. For example, he ignores *Nekrassov*." This would have been a venial offence in Eastman considering that Nekrassov died exactly forty years before the Revolution. In reality, however, Spender is in this section entirely dependent upon Eastman—thereby providing a good example of the sort of independence one wins when one insists on one's independence from the Communists.

That Spender's attacks on English and American Communist critics are far less gentlemanly than his discussion with Eliot, that they are, in fact, downright rude, may be extenuated by his irritation at the obvious ineptitudes of pseudo-Marxist criticism, practiced by intellectuals whose Marxism is sometimes only a few months old, but who think they know all about it. But this annoyance can hardly explain all his anti-Communist sallies, such as

his statement that *In a Province,* a South African story by Van der Post, is "a complete refutation of the revolutionary tactics of Communists." Spender's language has become "responsible and willful": "tendencies" have ceased to be of no literary importance. A literary work becomes a direct political action: Van der Post has completely refuted the revolutionary tactics of all the Parties of the Third International. We must not, however, take Spender too seriously. He does not really want to say that Lenin's tactics in November, 1917, or Dimitrov's tactics at the Leipzig trial were wrong. He has merely allowed his irritation to get the better of him. And the ultimate source of this irritation is that Spender, who is, after all, an anti-capitalist writer, does feel that despite all his desire for "independence," his work will be judged according to its revolutionary value, and that by this judgment he will have to abide.

Van der Post's story is about a young Negro who, after coming under Communist influence, gets killed in a mismanaged revolutionary demonstration, and about the callousness of the Communist organizer, who is not terribly upset by the Negro's death while the nice hero of the story laments the black boy's fate and regards it as a condemnation of revolutionary action.

Spender himself is by no means opposed to revolutionary action in general and does not really think that every partial defeat is a condemnation of revolutionary methods. His passages on Coloman Wallisch in *Vienna* reveal his respect and admiration for the leader of a defeated insurrection. What Spender is concerned with is that Van der Post's story would certainly be suppressed in the USSR; he is terribly upset by the idea that there is a country where measures are taken against crude anti-revolutionary propaganda.[1]

But the most aggressive form taken by Spender's struggle against revolutionary guidance is his attack on Communist knowledge. He accepts the *justice* of the Communist ideal but he insists that the Communists know nothing about the future, and that the "fearless foreknowledge" of the future "which Lenin regarded as the principal characteristic of Marxism" is merely dope "which may be necessary for the purposes of organization and confidence but is not really true." "It is not really true," Spender says, "that people know these things and it is the business of the artist to know it is not true."

Apparently, it is the business of the artist to keep himself as stupid as he can. If Spender does not know what Marx and Lenin knew, what Gorky knew when he wrote *Mother,* this is merely, as we say in Russia, "a detail of his biography" and makes him a less valuable writer than he might have been. Does Spender realize that, apart from everything else, he is defending a purely romantic attitude, the right of the artist to remain below the highest intellectual level of his day? That his attitude is qualitatively the same as that which regarded the poet as an inspired child and dictated to Wordsworth *The Ode on Intimations of Immortality*? And Spender goes on to affirm the right, nay, the duty of the artist to *complement* Marxism as a partially tenable point of view by the corrective of Freudism. That is to say to supplement the highest scientific achievement of the age by any quack theory he pleases.[2]

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[1] I have not read Van der Post's story and can only judge of it from Spender's summary, where it certainly does produce the impression of propaganda written with the express object of deterring hesitant intellectuals from "those cruel Communists." The literary value of the story, as retold by Spender, seems to be negligible.

[2] I am not competent to pronounce judgment on Freudism as a medical theory, but its extension into the field of social studies is patent quackery.

But this aspect of Spender's advocacy of Freudism is only one side of the story. His advocacy of psychoanalysis as the necessary ingredient of a genuinely "modern" view of the world is not merely an advocacy of charlatanism as a necessary ingredient of a philosophy, but also the advocacy of the passive, merely sensitive attitude—the very attitude he stigmatized in *Prufrock* —in preference to the "responsible and willful" revolutionary attitude. This fact is very clearly, not to say aggressively, illustrated in the little disquisition on war, pp. 255-6. Both psychoanalysis and Communism, says Spender, offer an explanation of war. "The Communist explanation is familiar . . . the psychological explanation is not nearly as cut and dried,"—it is much more exciting and poetical. "Psychologists regard war as an outbreak of passions which are repressed by the ordinary conditions of modern society. It is possible to cure man of the desire to express himself by fighting." And this suggestion implies "a criticism of the technique of revolution," for it suggests the question, "since the revolution is itself a form of fighting does it not necessarily defeat its own ends?"

So Freudism has been mobilized to call into question the very possibility and usefulness of revolution. Idealistic and anti-scientific quackery, as is its nature, has once again proved inseparable from the anti-revolutionary interests of the ruling class.

We have assumed throughout this discussion that Spender is a friend of the working class, and that his whole struggle against Communist guidance is merely a "survival" of the individualism of a bourgeois intellectual, a survival which in this particular case dies especially hard. We can only hope it is so. *Vienna,* which was written after *The Destructive Element,* seems to authorize such a hope and this hope has been once more confirmed by his recent retort to the anti-Soviet pamphlet of Aldous Huxley.

But, if not in the particular case of Spender, there are grounds to fear that strong tendencies are drawing some members of the "post-war" group away from the People's Front. *New Verse,* the periodical that has served as a major rallying ground for them, has by now lost every semblance of a genuine left-wing journal. In a special number devoted to G. M. Hopkins, it has lent its columns to Catholic propaganda (which may of course be a manifestation of that silly gentlemanliness I have noted). The publication has entered into a *bloc* with the French Surrealists. It is systematically hounding Day Lewis for what it regards as an excess of Communist loyalty. It has every appearance of becoming a cesspool of all that is rejected by the healthy organism of the revolutionary movement—a sort of miniature literary Trotskyism.

Lewis' book is both different from *The Destructive Element* and akin to it. His outlook is compounded of the same elements as Spender's, but they are not mixed in the same proportions. The idea of having to struggle for his independence is much less pervasive in Lewis, and his anti-Communist irritation much less blatant. In fact, Lewis is not afraid of openly avowing his political sympathies, and definitely classing himself as a writer of the Left. But he is not entirely free from the obsession which so warps Spender's outlook. Chapter VIII of *Hope for Poetry,* in which he discusses the influence of Communism on recent English poetry, is particularly significant in this connection.

There is much in this chapter that is simply muddled. When Lewis speaks of the impetus given to Communist tendencies in poetry by the economic crisis as "temporary and fictitious," he speaks as one who believes that poetry

is independent of the movement of history and not affected by economic changes. This does not appear in actual fact to be his theory. It is merely a somewhat infelicitous way of saying something that is ultimately true. The economic crisis did superficially affect many intellectual "rats" (Lewis' own expression) and scare them off the capitalist ship, which they believed was already foundering. Since then a number of the "rats" have scampered back to the ship, and we are not surprised to find some of the "communists" of 1931-32 in the ranks of Fascism or of Trotskyism.

Lewis is correct in warning that a "cleavage in the political movement" is inevitable in the near future. (This was written in 1934—today, as we see from *New Verse,* the cleavage is a fact.) The "rats" will go one way, the others "having made up their minds and taken it (Communism) to heart will be producing work of which Communism is the foundation and the integral framework, not the decoration and the facade." This is good, but what follows is again hopelessly muddled. "Such poetry will, of course, not be Communist, proletarian poetry: we could not expect that till a classless society existed in fact." How can *proletarian* poetry be expected in a society where there are no classes, and consequently no proletariat? This may be mere quibbling—perhaps Lewis simply has not acquired the language of Communist theory? But no, his point is that proletarian, Communist literature is *impossible* before classes are abolished. Now, Lewis ought to know that this is simply not true. Proletarian literature was a vigorous growth in Russia long before the abolition of classes, long before the beginning of the First Five-Year Plan. Gorky's *Mother* was written twelve years before the October Revolution. And what about the remarkable proletarian literature of Germany, to mention but one evident and indisputable case of a great Communist literature produced in a capitalist country?

The sequel to Lewis' argument brings us into an atmosphere strongly reminiscent of Spender's book. Lewis affects the position of contradicting the "orthodox critics," who assert "that the poet should never associate himself with any system, political or economic." Lewis does not agree with them. You must distinguish, he says, "between the poet as a man and the poet as a poet . . ." "While the poetic function of the man cannot be directly concerned with political ideas, his humanity may be concerned with them: in which case," Lewis allows, "they will inevitably come into communication with his poetical function and to some extent affect his poetry."

Notwithstanding his demurrals, Lewis ultimately accepts the "orthodox"—that is to say the bourgeois-decadent—conception of the poet as an "impersonal poetic instrument." This instrument may come into conflict with the man and the two may strike a compromise, but the poet *quâ* poet is not concerned with political ideas. What is he concerned with then? Apparently he is not concerned with ideas at all. Lewis' theory of the poet is that he is in part a mere maker of patterns, in part a membrane capable of recording mystical experience. "The poet is an artificer by profession, an architect experimenting with a variety of materials, concerned with levels and stresses, old foundations, new designs. Then suddenly, perhaps in one window only in the last of many houses he has built, a light shows. An unearthly visitor has taken up possession of the pure spirit of poetry" (pp. 76-77).

This is not only one hundred per cent "orthodox," it is, if I may be allowed a pun, "catholic." With extraordinary dexterity Lewis has succeeded in fusing the two conflicting idealist theories of art, two theories that are not on the face of it so easily reconciled, the (ultimately Kantian) theory of art as a

disinterested making of patterns "purposive without purpose," and the mystical theory of art as a sacred revelation from the beyond.

Thus in aesthetic theory does Lewis range himself quite unequivocally in the bourgeois and idealist camp.

Fortunately, to parody Lewis' own distinctions, there is in Lewis in addition to "theoretical function" a mere man. And the man has strong political feelings to which the poet gives expression in his verse. The presence of this man and poet in Lewis the writer gives us every ground to hope that the philosopher of aesthetics will ultimately, and even in the near future, give up his decadent-romantic conceptions of the poet as a fairy child lost in a world of politics and economics, or as an emanation of the divine Logos heterogeneously united within a single individual with an earthborn human being as orthodox theology declares God and Man were united in the person of Jesus.

The theoretical vagaries of Lewis are certainly a reminder of the unsatisfactory state of Marxist aesthetic theory in capitalist countries. In the USSR, aesthetic theory also lay under a blight, and only within recent years has it become genuinely Marxist—owing largely to the publication and study of the scattered but, when united, very massive utterances of Marx and Engels on art and literature. A close and critical study of the bourgeois aesthetic theory of the great period—notably of Hegel, and for us Russians of Belinsky—is also contributing to the growth and development of an aesthetic theory that is no longer a mere caricature of Marxism.

In advocating the synthesis of Marx and Freud, Spender quotes Thomas Mann as saying that "Karl Marx must read Friedrich Hölderlin." But Marx *did* "read Hölderlin." There was no province of imaginative literature that Marx had not explored, and his judgment was as considered and informed in aesthetic matters as in any branch of politics or economics. The Marxist critic must "imitate" Marx in this respect. He must get rid of facile solutions and must sincerely think out his critical problems in close connection with his general Marxist outlook, but without ever forgetting that these problems are specific problems and that solutions worked out in other fields of thought cannot be automatically applied to them. Stephen Spender, in one of his excesses of irritation, delivers himself of the very silly statement that "to the perfect Communist literary critic it must be a matter of almost dumbfounded astonishment that a Chinese coolie who is a member of the Party cannot write books far better than the bourgeois propaganda of Shakespeare."[1] Unfortunately, there are Marxist critics who might recognize themselves in this phrase as one recognizes oneself in a very bad caricature.

It is highly desirable that poets, too, should exercise their own brains to solve such problems and inquire into the nature of poetry and of the "poet's function." But in order that this should be profitable and conducive to real knowledge, it is necessary that the poets should be able to free themselves from the blinkers of decadent bourgeois theory. A critical familiarity with the earlier, more profound, and saner views of the classics of bourgeois thought would be, as I have already hinted, infinitely more useful. Diderot and Hegel will teach the modern poet and critic more than they can learn from Eliot, or Freud, or even from I. A. Richards.

Then they will necessarily come to see that poetry is neither a matter of spontaneous visits from angels nor a making of patterns *à la* Edith Sitwell, but, to use the words of Stalin, "the engineering of human souls," and that

[1] Page 255.

poets are primarily to be judged by the kind of human souls they help to build.

From this last point of view, the poetry of Auden, Spender, Lewis and the post-war group generally has much to be said in its favor, for it contains a sound human and revolutionary kernel. But the response to this poetry is limited by the "private" character of much of the language, which remains inaccessible to the masses, and its development is somewhat obstructed by the poets' perverse theories, which favor the least valuable sides of their poetic nature, and make them deficient in precisely those qualities the growth of which is particularly desirable.

B. Reich

Fascist Interpretation of Shakespeare

Fate in fascist philosophy and fascist ideology is a momentous factor. And the fascist idea of fate is that of a blind, irresistible force existing outside of and dominating man. The human will is of no avail whatsoever against it. Werner Deubel, an author fascist circles think much of, considers individual efforts of will merely a sort of "defense mechanism" emphasizing the supreme power of Fate. Emma von Rohitan, another fascist writer, gives even more explicit expression to this idea in her essay *Spheres of the Tragic* where she defines Fate as—"something which overwhelms us—we can neither force it nor avert it."

When Schiller said "the stars of fate the human breast encloses" he wished to convey that Fate is not something outside and apart from man—that it is something intimately tied up with his own volition, character and activity. Blunck would have it that man is only the vessel in which fate dwells—the blind instrument of fate. All man can do is unfold his own fate.

Fate, according to fascism, is the tyranny of the forces of life. But of what do these forces of life consist? Primarily one's blood. The fascist philosopher Ludwig Klages is franker—he says: "The essence of Fate consists of the active reality of images whose power intrudes into the mechanical world of things." Thus militant fascist philosophy reaches a point of view comparable only to that of savages in primitive crudity.

The purely reactionary idea of Fate is by itself much too progressive for the fascist. He needs must erase thousands of years of intellectual development to reach the source of his ideology. "We do not know whether Fate is volition too, or only resistance, negation of man," says Emma von Rohitan. We, however, do know—fascist Fate is the negation of man.

The political significance of the Fate idea revived by the fascists is perfectly evident. The Italian fascist Marinetti said in his Pen-Club speech: "War is Fate. Fate again and again confirmed and stamped with the seal of blood."

Bending all efforts to prepare for war which can be conducted only when the dissatisfied masses are firmly fettered to capitalism psychologically, fascism tries to inculcate the idea that life is intimately bound up with the life of capitalism and that the fate of capitalism is the fate of the people as a whole. All attempts to shun this fate are fruitless.

Fascism wants to have the people ready and prepared for all the misery and cruelty it has in store for them. Hence they identify Fate with doom. They would make the feeling of unavoidable doom which presses upon the moribund bourgeoisie general, make Fate and Death the dominant ideas of the age. Man is defenseless against the powers that "sow destruction and paralysis," "scatter lightning" (Deubel). But "Why fear Death?" writes Blunck. "Every day we go to meet it in sleep which is the same as Death." The people should get used to the idea of dying for their country. Deubel winds up his *Way to German Tragedy* with the paragraph: "To die heroically—in the full, heavy sense of the word—is the highest goal that can be reached by man."

In his speech on the achievements of the Food Industries of the U.S.S.R. the People's Commissar, Mikoyan, threw a very interesting sidelight on the

fascist frame of mind. Referring to Goering's promise: In view of the hard times never again to use any butter—Mikoyan notes that during the hardest times of hunger and food shortage no Bolshevik leader ever thought of making any such promise. On the contrary they spoke of eating very much butter in the near future. Goering's promise is indicative of the feeling of hopelessness of the bourgeoisie—there will never be any better times, any security. There is only one prospect—death.

The fundamental emotion of the hero, according to Deubel, is nostalgia—nostalgia for Death. The tragic hero is drawn to Death—"out of the distant stars the Kingdom of Death beckons." "Insomuch as the tragic hero thinks of life it is only to show that neither happiness nor unhappiness are the aim of life, but that both are only phenomena associated with Life."

The idea of the hero as heroically active must be destroyed. In its place fascism proposes the hero of passive suffering, the hero who is happy when he dies. So there may be no misunderstanding as to what sort of death is meant Deubel specifies: "The model of tragic doom is not the penitent saint but the warrior triumphing over the pain of the arrow which struck him."

In the writings of fascist theoreticians one frequently meets the statement that "the battle of Langemarck was the birth of the German revolution" *i.e.,* of the fascist movement. In this battle a regiment of very young volunteers took part. Commanding them were some ambitious officers. When the regiment was ordered to attack, the youngsters went erect, without any cover, their banners waving right into the enemy's machine-gun fire. They made an excellent mark and were mown down without anything practical being gained. This example of murderous self-destruction the "national revolution" has adopted as its ideal. The sinister god of self-destruction, delivering youth to cold, stony, senseless slaughter is the god of fascist tragedy.

This short summary of fascist ideas on Death, Heroism, Fate and Tragedy gives the basic principles underlying the fascist interpretation of Shakespeare.

Shakespeare is very contradictory. All the contradictions of England of the time are accurately mirrored in his works. On the one hand, like all the giants of the Renaissance, Shakespeare loved life and all its glorious manifestations. In his works, as Hegel once said, man becomes a god. His faith in man's strength is firmly anchored. On the other hand, the decay of old established ties and ideas gives him a feeling of hopelessness, and a great wave of pessimism rises in his works. Scattered throughout his works are passages in which the shattering of human designs, man's subjection to Fate, are shown with powerful imagery. The theme of Death is also prominent in Shakespeare's works. It is these, latter features of Shakespeare's works which fascist literary criticism picks as its starting point.

In spite of this point of contact, however, Shakespeare bothers the fascists a great deal—they are rather wary of him. After looking through the literary magazines for a number of years, one comes to the conclusion that fascist literary critics avoid mentioning Shakespeare. Characteristically, a fascist theoretician, Paul Kranzhals, writes a book on "the organic image of the world"; in the 800 pages of this book the author touches upon the most diverse phases of life, speaks in great detail of art, yet Shakespeare he mentions each time rather casually, tentatively.

This wariness is especially apparent in the few timid attempts they have made to handle the subject. These reveal quite a variety of nuances. Some take a clearly negative stand. Thus Kurt Langenbeck writes that Shakespeare may be a great writer but he is inimical to National-Socialist ideology and nothing worth while can be learned from him. Such views, however, are held by

only a few, and expressed rather casually, eruptively, as when Werner Deubel remarks in an aside that Shakespeare is lacking in profound religious culture, or when this same Deubel considers Kleists' *Pentnesilea* greater than *Romeo and Juliet* because "what lends this drama *(Pentnesilea)* its tone of high tragedy is the final impossibility of fulfillment of all great love shown more profoundly than Shakespeare did in *Romeo and Juliet.*"

Deubel's calumnies of Shakespeare are dictated by sheer sycophancy. He writes: "When one considers *Troilus and Cressida* in this light one understands why the idealist has always respectfully, inasmuch as he did not admit it spurious, relegated the play to the shelf. Because even though he is a party to the spiritual subjugation and, hence, benighting of the world, he must shiver at the Mephistophelian frigidity of a drama which offers no nourishment whatever to the need for higher moral feeling. Idealism must not and will not despair of the spiritual. He consequently averts his face so as not to see the soulless thing into which reality is turned by the frigid look of skepticism, not to hear the warnings of Cassandra which echo throughout the distorted world of this drama."

As against Deubel's prevarication let us see the thing as it really is. Though *Troilus and Cressida* was not received well by the German public, its fate was shared by *Coriolanus* and other plays. Besides, beginning with Goethe who in his *Conversations with Eckermann* extolled the freedom of this drama, literary opinion of it to this day is very high. It is, however, interesting to analyze the reasons why this drama in particular makes the fascists feel uncomfortable and raises their ire. *Troilus and Cressida* completely destroys all hollow ideas of the hero. The figure of the scurrilous Thersites, whom Homer makes the personification of the dissatisfied masses, is put in a much better light. It is the dethronement of bombastic heroics, the unveiling of the ruthlessness of war (like the scene when Achilles kills the unarmed Hector), revelations that seem almost incredible for the period, that Deubel calls a distorted world, takes as a basis for calling Shakespeare a skeptic.

The retelling of Shakespeare's plays by fascist interpreters is such that the original can hardly be recognized. Striking examples of this are Werner Deubel's account of the contents of *Macbeth* and *Hamlet* and that of *King Lear* by Gabele.

Deubel invents the following on *Macbeth:*

"When one says, as is usual, that *Macbeth* is a tragedy of ambition, one loses sight of the magic essence of this play. For this brave warrior and successful field-marshall enjoying the favor of a mild King is noble in character and the 'bosom friend of honor.' He is happy in the sunshine of his military success and free of the slightest stirrings of ambition. It is only after the witches, those sisters of Fate, entice him out of his own character by the vision of the crown that the magic work is done and he succumbs to the 'call from beyond,' incomprehensible to his conscious will. Everything that follows is a strange forced role he is compelled to play, like a 'poor comedian, against his own better nature. Horrified, he sees himself entangled in a series of events he neither wishes nor directs. He is driven resistlessly from scene to scene by the stream of events."

Naturally, the kind of Shakespeare the fascists have invented for themselves would write a play in which man was a mere puppet of fate so that the example of blind subjection might put the fear of life into the heart of the audience. They would like the mass to look on stunned. No one knows how he is being made a plaything of fate—that is the *fabila docit* of their Shakespeare interpretation. It does not matter to them that anyone reading the original will find

the contrary to be true: in his day Schiller thought that in *Macbeth* Fate does too little and man too much; Hegel considered *Macbeth* an example of a hero of great pathos and yet onesided. In fact two ideas that play a dominant role in Shakespeare's work are most clearly expressed in this tragedy. First—man's freedom, independence from Fate. Macbeth's ambitions are excited by forces outside him, the witches, but these forces are only an artistic expression of his innermost desires. His actions at first seem to be dictated by supernatural forces. But when all goes against him, when real events confirm the predictions of Fate and his destruction seems inevitable, he has recourse to his own will. He wants to die like a man and he grasps the shield to cover his breast. This breaking down of self-illusion, this return to self, to human will is the peculiar cathorsis of this work.

The second fundamental thought is expressed by Ophelia in her madness "Lord! we know what we are but know not what we may be." Take Macbeth's ultimate sense of spiritual devastation, of terrible despair, to use Hegel's expression. In Shakespeare this final devastation, this despair are the result of the development of a specific character under the influence of specific events and circumstances. Deubel gives it a mystic twist. "Against his will, against his own better nature, he is forced to play a strange role which he, 'poor comedian,' plays to the end."

The idea of the organic, immanent development of such characters is unacceptable to fascism. It is incompatible with the race-theory which predicates on a "scientific" basis, immutability, the compulsory and fate-like nature of definite preordained events. On the other hand to turn the development of a character into a game of fate by which it is changed into something entirely different chimes in excellently with the Fate idea as the fascists conceive it.

These ideas we have found in Shakespeare's works, are ideas of a period during which the basis for revolutionary thought was being laid, when the thought of a free will, the conception of development was born and the absoluteness of forms and conceptions of life generally was dying away. That is why Shakespeare shows the immense range of development of characters, hence the revelation of the lack of absoluteness of Lear's kingship, the tense formulation of the relative conception: "there is nothing either good or bad, but thinking makes it so."

However, the limitations of the period limit the conceptions of its greatest men. Shakespeare developed when the idea of the role of Fate was strong and this idea could only be destroyed by that of a free will. So Fate became to him the individual's nature. To the Greeks it was a force external to man. Man is the author of his own destruction—was Shakespeare's answer to the now problematic idea of Fate. That was something new though not entirely free of the old. Shakespeare also saw things in flux, saw old traditions crumbling, new possibilities arising. He knew that the world was changing but did not know into what. He feared the uncertainty of the future, the insecurity of the road which loses itself in mist. "We know what we are, but know not what we may be."

But Emma von Rohitan would have none of this and gives the following version of *Macbeth:* "In *Macbeth* negative transcendence (in her terminology negative transcendance is fate) comes as temptation. In *Macbeth* the belief in the possibility of supernatural powers is alive." This means nothing and only distorts things. Shakespeare himself believed in supernatural forces, but it is peculiar to him that in the end he destroys this illusion. Macbeth believes in the omens of Fate but at the end of the play he denies them by word and deed.

Another example—*Hamlet:*

To Deubel the action in *Hamlet* looks thus:

"Subtilizing will exhausts itself in vain on more and more complicated plans until mocking Fate throws the desired thing into his lap when he wants nothing any longer and lies crushed on the ground" (p. 331).

The end of *Hamlet* is striking. Logically Shakespeare should have ended the play with Hamlet suffering shipwreck because he is incapable of doing the historically necessary deed. It is in this sense that Lenin called Kerensky a little Hamlet. But for a dramatist of the magnitude of Shakespeare Hamlet is not only an interesting figure but also a clue to the life of the time. Hence the play cannot consummate itself with the death of Hamlet. It is evident that Shakespeare could find the solution only in the removal of Claudius, *i.e.*, in the removal of those forces which, as Hegel says, "have nothing in them to command respect." As a matter of fact that is the way the play ends—Hamlet does kill Claudius. Only he does it while himself marked by death. As he does not outlive his "triumph" he cannot serve to replace the base forces he defeated. This was particularly well said by Hegel: what Hamlet could not do during the entire play, happens in the course of events fulfilling both Hamlet's fate and that of his generation. Deubel loses the broad historical perspective given by Hegel and clings to the individual figure of Hamlet. As a result the objective meaning of the tragedy seems to lie in the idea that Fate is all-powerful while human design and human reason are futile—in other words he comes to the philistine adage—man proposes, God disposes.

In this play Shakespeare succeeded in showing the weakness of definite personalities. Classic German esthetics has understood this. Goethe turned it into a sentimental conflict between the idealist and the world—between the tender soul and the hard task before which it succumbs.

The fascist tries to make this example of the failure of a definite type of personality apply to mankind generally. Emma von Rohitan writes: "*Hamlet* is the tragedy of failure of the human will itself."

Gabele's interpretation of *King Lear* is in the same spirit. He makes the conflict between Lear and Cordelia the principal one of the play, placing the blame on Lear. He says it is all wrong to take *King Lear* as the tragedy of ingratitude of children, it should rather be understood as the tragedy of the ungrateful father.

Gabele indicts Lear with a whole list of sins. Lear is earthly, he is irreligious, he is pathetic but without pathos—he plans his actions, which to the fascist theoretician is a cardinal crime. Gabele writes further: "Lear does it all for Cordelia's sake. He wants to raise her to his own pathetics, wants to break down her integrity. Lear would throw her out on the heath to save her."

We leave it to Gabele's conscience to explain how the burst of anger of a superannuated despot could be twisted "metaphysically" into "Lear would throw her out on the heath to save her." The only item of truth in the whole thing is that in the first scene of the tragedy the renunciation of the throne and the break with Cordelia are the dramatic central points. But after this opening scene the action develops on vast, broad lines and Cordelia recedes to the background.

But Gabele sees this in a different light: "Here Fate steps in (presumably Fate cannot brook the moral violence done to Cordelia), and Lear does to himself what he would do to Cordelia. He throws himself out on the heath."

Such an explanation is conceivable—Lear's mad idea of the immanence of kingly power is the cause of his misery and misfortune. But the hand of Fate is nowhere to be seen—Lear is himself the author of his troubles.

According to the chain of motives created by Gabele (and by no means Shakespeare), Lear is punished for his sins. What he would do to others was done to himself—his punishment comes in that wherein he sinned. Gabele does not notice how closely he brings a work of "Germanic spirit" to the vengeful ideas of a Judaic Jehova.

But how does he continue the story of the relations between Lear and Cordelia? According to Gabele it appears that it was not the cruelty of his children that drove Lear out into field and storm—it was a magical moral compulsion that did it. "He throws himself out into the storm—because thus he can compel Cordelia to come back and share his misfortune and doom."

Here we meet again with those fascist principles of Shakespeare interpretation, which we met before. First of all—the arbitrary narrowing down of the broad world images given by Shakespeare, to the lives of petty, limited characters. Instead of the life of the period—the life and conflict between Lear and Cordelia. This impoverishment of the rich, pulsing life given by Shakespeare is compensated for by "philosophic" abstractions. In this case by "the struggle between the inner feeling of religious devotion to children and verbal pathetics."

In the second place—the complete negation of personality and a free will. Man's life is the plaything of blind Fate. As a consequence we have the complete negation of any organic development of the character. Instead there is a mechanical metamorphosis engineered by forces external to the character.

In the third place there are the magic forces we already found mentioned by Deubel as a feature of Shakespeare's tragedies. Here the relations between Lear and Cordelia are established by the magic of will and wish. King Lear wants to establish contact with Cordelia to effect her salvation. He therefore engages in a series of actions which, though they by "ordinary human criteria" cannot possibly effect this contact, metaphysically—magically do so. Cordelia comes to the heath—"attracted by Lear's magic will."

Lear, as interpreted by Gabele, becomes an example of the doomed hero turning into a "glorious ruin."

A similar interpretation of King Lear is to be found in Emma von Rohitan's *Spheres of the Tragic* where she construes Lear's renunciation of the throne as an attempt to sustain the external dignity of royalty. This is totally contrary to the actual facts. Lear renounces the external symbols of royalty in order to retire within himself.

"The tragedy of *King Lear* consists of his being bereft of power and dignity so that he fails not only as King but also as human being."

Here also the facts are distorted. King Lear is bereft of power, he is no longer a King, but Shakespeare, who knows life so well, shows how after the collapse of his external power, Lear's sight is opened and he attains real human insight. He does not at all fail as a human being—on the contrary, he becomes human.

These principles of fascist Shakespeare interpretation are to be found again and again, in the most diverse variation. Thus the author of *Spheres of the Tragic*, for instance, interprets Othello something like this: Iago is not a tragic figure. He is only the instrument of Fate, there to entangle Othello. As soon as this is accomplished Iago is cast aside as a useless tool.

In *A Midsummer Night's Dream* Gabele finds the symphony of Fate. Puck, to him, represents cruel, childish nature, neither good nor evil (hence Nietzschean. It makes no difference to him "what happens so long as something happens." The mental atmosphere of Hamlet is invented about Oberon. "Oberon wants to do one thing and does something quite different—that which Fate compels him to do."

In cases when it is impossible to drag in Fate, the fascist Shakespeare interpreters come in roundabout ways to the blind helplessness of tragic will. Coriolanus is taken as the tragedy of absolute loneliness! "The tragic remains alone with its Fate." Cleopatra is identified with dark, mystic, demoniac natural forces.

Romeo and Juliet gets the following interpretation: "The greatest passion of profound love belongs to the prime image of the demon of the soul glimpsed in the rare moments of ecstasy. But the lover embraces only the human bearer of that impalpable prime image. This is the cloud of Fate hovering over all great lovers (Hero and Leander, Tristan and Isolde, Romeo and Juliet). It is also the explanation of the mysterious phenomenon—that the most ecstatic lovers do not try to possess but fall into the profoundest melancholy."

This interpretation simply chooses to forget that the cause of the tragic end of the great love was the quarrel between two nobles. Shakespeare states this quite clearly at the end of the play:

PRINCE..... Capulet! Montague!
See what a scourge is laid upon your hate,
That heaven finds means to kill your joys with love!
And I, for winking at your discords too,
Have lost a brace of kinsmen:—all are punished.
. . . . . .

CAPULET . . . As rich shall Romeo by his lady lie;
Poor sacrifices of our enmity!

PRINCE . . . . . For never was a story of more woe
Than this of Juliet and her Romeo.

The death of the lovers—a result of perfectly definite circumstances and relations—Deubel turns into something general—an all-powerful Fate that unavoidably brings misery to mankind and in order to put fear into people's hearts he rhapsodizes about "the absolute inaccessibility of great love—consequently also of the love of Romeo and Juliet," and talks about "the profound melancholy" that is the accompaniment of love's happiest exaltations.

The black spirit of fascism appears in this treatment of the theme of love as it does in all other problems of life. Fascism would have us believe that possession is not the aim of love. The wish to possess one's beloved is evidently as prosaic, as "materialistic," as the desire to get decent wages for one's work. The aim of a really ideal love, according to Deubel, is "to change the material symbol, to raise the person to a deity, in place of a deity. This is truly idolatry, he quotes Klages, "and that is where the tragedy of Eros begins. Love aims at idolatry."

Deubel considers *Julius Caesar* the greatest tragedy in the world's literature. First of all because Caesar, "the greatest figure of antiquity," appears as

"the messenger of the gods" and not as an active creative agent. In Deubel's interpretation Julius Caesar has a "profound knowledge of the inevitability of his doom" and "submits to the will of the gods." It is because he knows the inevitability of his impending doom that he disregards all warnings. Brutus, on the contrary, is "the counterpart of Caesar." Brutus wills, Brutus acts and he discovers "the tragedy of attempting in vain to better the world, of effecting the opposite of what they aimed at." In this interpretation Brutus becomes own kin of Hamlet and the play as a whole an example of the futility of the human will. More, in Deubel's fancy the ethical act of noble Brutus in robbing himself of a friend shows the "powerlessness of even the moral will."

The heroism of Brutus, his struggle for freedom, is pictured as reactionary machinations. Brutus vainly pitted himself against the historically progressive idea of Caesar's dictatorship. His actions are characterized as "the tragic persistence to reach the unattainable" and the principles of Brutus' struggle are discredited as challenging Fate.

Examples of palpable distortions of Shakespeare's works by fascist writers could be multiplied without end. Those shown are sufficient to indicate the tendencies in fascist Shakespeare research. All their efforts are bent on distorting Shakespeare into an adherent of a theory of the drama which makes hopelessness, the certainty of pending disaster, and the necessity of blind obedience to fascist Fate, the only virtue.

Wilhelm von Scholz, in a lecture on "The Roots of the Drama in Life," has defined the core of their theory of the drama as follows: "The essence of the drama is—Fate and character. Fate drawing everything out of character and character drawing Fate to itself perforce." Out of this fundmental principle of fascist theory the following corollaries on Shakespeare ensue:

"The passions of Shakespeare's characters are not part of their characters as in Molière."

"The Shakespearean hero is the personification of his dependence upon the forces and the merciless domination of Fate," just "as the figure in antique tragedy."

"In Shakespeare's tragedies Fate, beyond the good and evil of human design, always triumphs."

As we have already suggested, although Shakespeare could not entirely overcome the limitations of the age he lived in, he very energetically fought free of them. He sings of the man, the deeds of the man who wants to achieve things. This is dangerous for the audiences of the Third Empire; in this respect Shakespeare is too stirring, too convincing. This must be rectified and the fascist Shakespeare interpreters anxiously point again and again at the theme of Fate, they drag in Fate under all circumstances, at any and all cost.

The self-assurance of man in Shakespeare is one intimately connected with the realities of life and human personality. In this Shakespeare's realism comes out.

Deubel would like to extinguish altogether this feeling of personality. Emma von Rohitan destroys the basis of the reality of Shakespeare's characters. She leaves them charm of individuality, but describes this individuality thus:

"Shakespeare's heroes want to attain the maximum in life. But the soul is predestined to come into conflict with Fate. With every step the innerly

glorious ego goes to meet its Fate, to be alone, to go away from all its human and worldly surroundings."

According to this, Shakespeare presumably would show the renunciation of the realities of life by the hero, his tragic loneliness. She leaves these heroes the poor consolation that they march towards this loneliness "innerly glorious." This poor consolation has already been offered by Rilke with his "poverty is a soft radiance within you." To which George Gross responded with his well-known bitingly satirical series of drawings "The Face of the Ruling Class."

Along with these interpretations of Shakespeare which attempt to show him in accord with National-Socialist ideology, there are of course those that are quite frankly political. Thus one critic (*Neues Theater Tageblatt,* March 26, 1936), apropos a performance of Othello in Cologne, expresses himself: "The marriage of the Moor Othello and the fair Desdemona would, of course, violate our natural feelings and taste had the great Briton seen it as the mixture of two races. But Shakespeare put the fair and beautiful Desdemona against the hot-blooded Moor for purely poetic reasons, in order to enhance the theatrical climax of the comedy. It would be unjust to misunderstand the author and to shift the problem."

The imagination of these hacks is really too limited. Here they could possibly put the proper interpretation of Othello and turn the unhappy marriage of Desdemona into an example of Shakespeare's condemnation of race mixture.

The Viennese dramatic critic Joseph Gregor succumbed to fascist propaganda and not only declares that fascist art will revitalize Shakespeare's works—he even becomes anti-Semitic in his interpretations of Shakespeare. Thus he discovers in the name Probestone (Touchstone?) and presumably Jewish intonations of his lines definite signs of his Jewish origin.

The fascists naturally also drag in Fate in their interpretation of the historical figure of Shakespeare himself. Gabele, for instance, explains Shakespeare's early abandonment of the theater thus:

"Because he was overwhelmed by tragic supersensitiveness of the world, saw himself no longer a worker and creator but an instrument and creature, in short, because he became a Fate-believing puritan."

The fascist cannot do without distortion of facts. Because Shakespeare left the theater early, Gabele reaches the conclusion that he became a puritan. The fascist "theoreticians" forget that by so distorting the facts of Shakespeare's biography they throw overboard their whole fabrication of the role of Fate in Shakespeare's plays. If he only began to believe in Fate when he left the stage he evidently did not when he wrote his plays. But one contradiction more or less does not matter to these gentlemen.

Deubel is quite ambitious. He is not satisfied with just investigating Shakespeare's biography. He must needs sociologize.

He "sees" Shakespeare in Renaissance surroundings in which "man becomes a cold, calculating, self-willed ego seeing reality in a new light and the morbid spirit of religion ends in disconsolate skepticism." A spiritual milieu in which, according to fascist opinion, the tragedy cannot thrive. But in spite of this he felt the "fundamentally tragic mood" of his age which imagined it can get the best of Fate. Shakespeare "knew the futility of active interference—man can never get the best of Fate." In this sense Shakespeare was the only one with clear sight among millions of blind.

Excellent! But how could Shakespeare, son of his age, so far outdistance it? The skeptical mind of an intellect-hyena cannot grasp such things. The fascist knows a way out. What he cannot explain, makes it impossible to explain—*is* unexplainable. Or to cover up his impotence with pretty phrases he speaks of wonders. And who is the author of these wonders? The Germanic race, of course! In other words, tragedy will once again come to life out of the deepset roots of the Germanic spirit.

The wonders of the Germanic spirit are really endless. And the greatest wonder of all is that with so many Germanic writers Shakespeare should be the one who was gifted while the deepset root of the Germanic spirit does not do them the least bit of good.

Translated by S. D. Kogan

Carlo Rossi

Guglielmo and Leo Ferrero

Anti-Fascist Literature

Four volumes by Guglielmo Ferrero and two by Leo Ferrero[1] are lying on my table. No mean contribution, so it might seem, to Italian anti-fascist literature, which is unfortunately so meager. (But is it legitimate to speak of anti-fascist literature, even if the authors belong to the camp of the adversaries to the Mussolini regime?)

Guglielmo Ferrero is a historian of world renown. He belonged to that generation of young Italian intellectuals who in the last decade of the 19th century were drawn towards Marxism and the Socialist Party which was then in the formative stage. His main work was and remains *The Grandeur and Decline of Rome* where a certain attempt was made to study the economic factors of historic events. Though he drifted further and further away from Marxism, Ferrero nevertheless did not bow to fascism. After several years of "liberty" under strict surveillance in Italy he finally secured a passport and he is now a professor at the University of Geneva. All his works were confiscated and banned by the fascist government. After the war he became a novelist and produced among others the series entitled *The Fetters of Life,* consisting of four novels: *The Two Truths, The Revolt of the Son, Prisoner of the Abyssinians, Liberation.* It is the tragedy of an extremely rich young man desperately searching for truth and liberty, his own liberty. The first two novels describe the third Rome which grew out of the Papal Rome, the capital of the Italian bourgeoisie which began to develop after 1870, which was at one and the same time the adversary and the ally of the landed aristocracy. The banker Alamanni, of plebean origin, makes millions and climaxes his success with the coronet of a marquis. He dreams of making his son the single heir of a new dynasty which will lack neither money nor rank. But Oliviero is bored with the society of his companions, cavalry officers, aristocrats, who from time to time remind him of his bourgeois origin in spite of his millions. He thirsts for truth and justice. He loses his first fight to save a young cousin, wrongly accused of having poisoned her husband and forced to die in prison by the idiotic hatred of an old stepmother and the sordid intrigues of the magistrate's politicians and men of science. He discovers that there are two truths: genuine truth and the truth which men and human justice forge for their own interests. And the latter is victorious in most cases. Tired of the society of magnates and politicians, scoundrels and corrupters, disgusted with the dissipation to which he delivers himself for a time, disgusted with the love of a young widow who prefers his enemy when the latter agrees to marry her, Oliviero revolts. He finds no other way out but flight, he volunteers in the war which Italy declares on Abyssinia in 1896. The third volume, *A Prisoner of the Abyssinians* is the best of the series. The author makes use of the documents, letters and unpublished memoirs of people who took part in this war, thereby providing us with many lively and fascinating pages. The novel begins with the description of the battle of Adowa.

Like Prince Fabrice de Stendhal at Waterloo in the *Chartreuse de Parme,* like Prince Andrew in *War and Peace* at the Battle of Borodino, Lieutenant Oliviero Alamanni, artillery officer under General Albertone, sees nothing, understands nothing of what happens on March 1, 1896 between the mountains of Adowa. Prior to that morning only four generals knew that the Italian troops were not to retreat but to march against the Abyssinians. Was it an offensive or a demonstrative march? Had the Abyssinians retreated or were they ready for a counter-offensive? No one knew anything. After the defeat, in prison, General Albertone confides in him that the commander-in-chief did not want to give battle and that he had given battle because a commander-in-chief always does the opposite of what he would like to do.

Was Plutarch really a liar? Alamanni ran and galloped about all day long but actually accomplished nothing. No one was where he should have been. The various brigades fought in isolation and let themselves be massacred one after another by the infinitely more numerous Abyssinians. He encountered the commander-in-chief completely

[1] Guglielmo Ferrero—*The Two Truths, The Revolt of the Son, The Prisoner of the Abyssinians,* French translation. Editions Rieder. (The Italian editions were confiscated by the fascist government.) *Liberation* in Italian, Edizioni di Capolago, 1936. Leo Ferrero: *Hope,* a novel, *Angelica,* satirical drama, Editions Rieder. Posthumous works.

dazed and isolated, knowing nothing of the battle which was going on utterly independently of him. Finally in desperation he musters a few soldiers around him and fights furiously up to the moment when he is surrounded and taken prisoner. A fearful march towards Addis Ababa then begins. Alamanni sees his comrades perish from hunger and wounds. The Italian prisoners are dragged along by Abyssinian tribes who also suffer because there is no supply service. They have to live off the country and the country is very poor. The Abyssinians are ignorant, cruel and fanatical. But they are, at the same time, capable of gratitude and generosity. Through misery and suffering Alamanni's spirit is exhalted and purified. "Without knowing it and without wanting to he had entered the school of fasting and of chastity whereby certain religions have managed to produce a small number of remarkable spirits." He entered Addis Ababa "barefoot, dirty, his clothing in tatters but his soul rejoicing. Beggar and victor he had climbed the first rung to wisdom.

"Only the first. In order to become the man he wanted to be and had to be he must climb the second rung and to this end face a new test and further suffering."

Alamanni is still a prisoner of the Abyssinians. He fights for truth and justice among the Abyssinian chiefs almost all of whom are pictured as brutes. Confined to a mountain-top he encounters another prisoner, "a sage who might have been a fool and a fool who might have been a sage." This new teacher teaches him that the human soul is always a prey to horrors which are the product of the human imagination. Man is "the supreme exterminator but he is also the only animal who asks himself if he has the right to kill." Man is born an assassin because he is born a coward. Finally truth is revealed to Oliviero: Man is no more than a prisoner, hemmed in by the limitations of his organs and his intellect. Everything passes. Man must content himself with approximations: he can approach truth, justice, good and wisdom but he can never fully attain them. True liberation is only given by death.

A gloomy philosophy! Guglielmo Ferrero scorns "the pride of the dying century which had flung its defiance to destiny, to truth, to history and to god and undertook to remake the world on a new plan." He observes the decadence of proud capitalist society; he is disgusted by its frantic efforts to survive, efforts which send it backward to barbarism.

"A chaos of brute passions, atrocious crimes, loathesome delirium which claims to save the fatherland or regenerate humanity. Hell unleashed under the noblest pretext. All measures falsified, law secretly conspires with crime. Science, wisdom, poetry, religion and philosophy debase themselves before the shouting and the epileptic convulsions of folly, trembling and bowing to all forms of violence..." [1]

Such is fascist society for Ferrero. And he adds "when despotism comes to power I have no doubts as regards myself and my duty. I believe that today the writer is the most miserable of lackeys if he does not at least serve truth with honesty."

But Ferrero has no faith in the future. He apparently would like capitalist society to rot without upheavals, without its partisans desperately seeking to save it, without a new society being born in its entrails, in the blood, in the struggle of the Italian liberals and republicans. Yet Pisano could return from exile and brave death to summon the Italian people to struggle. Yet Garibaldi, Mazzini and hundreds of others never preached resignation and non-resistance to evil. It is significant that Ferrero is not interested in the proletariat. In his novels Italian bourgeois society is pictured in a state of decay, but the proletariat appears only as the fearful specter on the outside, far from the ruling classes. Among all his characters there is only one worker, also a prisoner of the Abyssinians. But very little space is assigned to him in the novel; Ferrero places petty bourgeois officers and the servant who is slightly unbalanced and devoted to Alamanni in the foreground. Furthermore, this worker was a foundling, "he was like a bird cast from the nest at his birth, the illegitimate son of a higher class from which he had inherited not only his delicate features but his tastes and inclinations, his dislike of manual labor and of discipline, the instinct of insubordination and tyranny... Compelled to obey everyone without being able to command anybody, he took his revenge by hating his masters and preaching their extermination." If this "worker" is supposed to be symbolic of the proletariat then despair will be the master.

Guglielmo Ferrero did not hear the great words of Romain Rolland: "As though the elite could exist without the mass, as though intellectuals could justify their existence without the masses, as though they were capable of accomplishing anything at all in a struggle where the destiny of humanity is at stake, without the support of armies of workers and laborers who are the very lever of all action! Let us emphasize this! Action is the goal of thought. All thought which is not directed towards action is an abortion and a betrayal. So therefore if we are the servants of thought we must be the servants of action. We must also cement the union of intellectuals who are worthy of the name with those who are the very substance

[1] Preface to *"Angelica."*

of action, living action: the working people.[1]

In the long run Ferrero's philosophy of passivity serves fascism. Have we nothing still to hope for in the way of a decisive step forward? Will this great Italian intellectual, one of the very few who have not turned traitor, realize that liberty and justice are to be attained in the struggle and through struggle and join hands in genuine action with the millions of men who to the fascist objection, oppose their will and their faith in a better society where man will progress from the kingdom of necessity to the kingdom of liberty?

Leo Ferrero, son of Guglielmo, who died at the age of 30 in 1933 in an auto accident, left several writings. When he was twenty he staged *The Countryside Without the Madonna.* At the time Pirandello called on him to join the "Theater of the Dozen," an association of playwrights who wanted to revive the Italian theater. But it soon became impossible for Leo Ferrero to live in fascist surroundings. He saw all the roads closed before him: magazines, editors, theaters, lecture halls. He then decided to emigrate and write in French. *Espoirs* and *Angelica* were published recently, after his death, by his father. In *Espoirs* Leo Ferrero studies the first amorous and sexual experiences of a group of young people all of whom belong to wealthy aristocratic families. The World War breaks out and the young men enter the sordid life of the barracks. The novel which was to be the first of a series, *The Italian Comedy,* is profoundly pessimistic. The conclusion is perhaps provided by a somewhat ridiculous character who appears in the final pages: A Jewish industrialist, a Socialist and a war volunteer who teaches the young men that no one can know what is good for him, that "it is in sacrifice, in the suppression of one's instincts, in forgetfulness and in the control of oneself that happiness is to be sought," and that one must believe in god. Even among young bourgeois Italians it seems to me that the importance accorded to sexual questions and the indifference with which they appear to regard their departure for the war, that has already been going on for two years, is exaggerated.

Somewhat more interesting is *Angelica,* a satirical, fantastic drama where the ancient Italian masks represent characters who are at one and the same time real and symbolic: the rich bourgeois, the insane and cynical lover, the petty bourgeois with his nose to the ground, the politicians and scholars forever ready to betray and to serve. Orlando the champion of liberty wages a single-handed fight against the tyrant. He triumphs but is soon deserted by the men whom he has freed and is himself killed by "liberty," by "Angelica" whom he has rescued from the tyrant's rapaciousness. But why struggle, what is the good of liberty if men obey nothing but their wretched passions and petty interests? The tragedy of Orlando seems to us the tragedy of Leo Ferrero, of the young intellectual come from a line of great intellectuals (his mother was a Lombroso, the daughter of the Jewish Socialist scholar Cesare Lombroso) whose young hopes were dashed; who was thrown out of his country and found himself completely isolated, for he had no ties with the masses, with the people.

Orlando's dying words are:

"I too was born in this city but I left it in order not to see the injustices being perpetrated there. But from afar I pined for its brilliant sun, for its blond grapes, its twilight bathed by an ancient langor, its opaque sea that shimmers beyond the plains, its sweet devoted women, its quick-eyed men, its marble and its silence, its desolate grandeur. Isn't that what attracted all of its martyrs? Like an alluring and indifferent mistress one cannot forget it and wants to die for it. I returned; my friends told me that this city was too beatiful to let it fall to ruin . . . and I returned without hope . . . my friends, before loving those whom you love why do you await their death?"

Death took Leo Ferrero prematurely. Otherwise perhaps we, his companions in exile, perhaps the masses of Italian workers who want to live and to win their country could have given him hope and the certainty of a purposeful struggle, of victory.

Ferrero does not see the proletariat, and that is what explains his passivity and despair.

As we said this is the only worker whom Ferrero portrays in his novels. In the *Prisoner of the Abyssinians* the officers state their positions towards the war: one had gone to war to find an escape from a sentimental crisis, another because it was his profession, another with the hope of winning a promotion and improving his sorry position of a petty bourgeois. One alone declared himself convinced of Italy's need to conquer colonies like the other powers. The soldiers, on the contrary, have no opinion. They had gone to war because the government ordered them to. Even the "worker" has not a proletarian position. He does not clearly express the hatred of the war which affects the Italian working masses and impels them to strikes and violent demonstrations. He is full of envy, bitterness and

[1] Romain Rolland—Peace Through Revolution—paper delivered at the first session of the World Congress of All Parties Against War—page 48.

hatred for the owning classes but is not endowed with a desire to struggle for a better society. Although in 1898 the Socialist Party was already quite strong in Italy and the Socialist movement had already led broad masses in huge strikes, Socialism is non-existent for this "worker." In fact he hates the rich not because he feels himself exploited but because being a foundling he hates the class which in all likelihood cast him off, the class whose worst instincts he inherits. He is a *declassé,* uprooted, and not a genuine proletarian.

Ferrero does not see the proletariat. He did not see it in the colonial war or in the imperialist war. He did not see it in the anti-fascist struggle, as a new revolutionary class with the historic mission of destroying the capitalist regime and building a new society, a new civilization. And since he sees no other force—indeed there is none—he adopts resignation which borders on despair.

A. Leites

N. Virta

About "Loneliness"

"People say that in the years of severe trials, in the years of Civil War and hunger they acquired confidence in man for the first time in a millenium."—*From André Malraux's speech at the First All-Union Writers' Congress.*

That was the enemy's last decisive stand, a stand based on the peasant, on his property instincts. Even after the Soviet Union had victoriously repelled invasion by fourteen states, the enemies of the working class kept on hoping that the peasant would bring about the downfall of the Bolsheviks. And when, in 1921, the counter-revolutionary uprising flared up in Kronstadt, when in the same year Antonov's bands became active in the Tambov Gubernia, the bourgeoisie joyfully proclaimed that the end was in sight.

How that last offensive started and how it finished is depicted in Nicolai Virta's novel *Loneliness,* the story of the counter-revolutionary uprising in the Tambov Region which went down in the history of the Civil War as the "Antonovshchina."

Antonov was one of the leaders of the kulak white-guard bandit movement in Tambov. A former revolutionary, he had degenerated into an unprincipled adventurer and during the Revolution was obsessed with the single desire of getting power. Such figures were not rare in the petty-bourgeois Socialist-Revolutionary Party, which encouraged adventurism among its followers. The Socialist-Revolutionary Party made wide use of these people after the October Revolution to organize underground military resistance to the Soviet government.

Although he directed the entire military operations of the counter-revolutionary uprising, Antonov is not the central figure of the novel. He appears in the beginning of the book, but as the story unfolds, he dwindles into the background and Peter Storojev, a kulak of the village of Dvoriki who commands one of Antonov's regiments, gradually assumes the principal role. The author ably and strikingly shows how Antonov and the Social-Revolutionary Party rely on Peter Storojev, and seek to realize his hopes and longings. Peter Storojev is portrayed as a representative type of kulak.

"I know the moujik," Antonov declares during a conversation with the Socialist-Revolutionary Tokmakov. "There is a Peter Ivanovitch in everyone of them, you can take my word for it! That's how the world is made."

This answer gives food for thought. It is the key to the major theme of *Loneliness.*

But the significance of the novel is by no means confined to the presentation of one of the most dramatic, but heretofore little known episodes of the Civil War. *Loneliness* is deeply psychological, a fact in no way surprising. In the period of the Civil War more than the force of arms decided the great argument between the new world in birth and the old one which did not want to die; two world views clashed, two attitudes to man. One side staked its hopes upon the "petty and selfish soul" which was assumed to be in every moujik. Others believed that a new man could be called to life in the peasant. They believed and won.

How did they win? It is a big, complicated subject fraught with profound philosophic significance.

Step by step, analyzing concrete facts in the historical episode, the young writer, Nicolai Virta, demonstrates how the kulak Peter Storojev came in the end to be completely isolated socially. In this manner, the author gives a revealing portrait of the kulak.

2

It must be stated that the portrait of Peter Storojev is painted in such detail, with such psychological precision that many critics not only failed to grasp the basic spirit of *Loneliness* but even greeted its appearance with suspicion. "Is there any necessity of recording the emotions of an enemy in such detail?" they asked. Is it necessary to delve into all the emotional phases of his personal life? Does not this weaken our hatred for the enemy and our vigilance?

More than once, critics have argued this question. Life has supplied the answer.

The Civil War in 1918-19, like the struggle which ensued, was not a merely military encounter in the old sense of the word. It was, aside from everything else, a war for a new, psychologically higher type of man. Precisely because of this fact all well-presented psychological images of the enemy are the best way of destroying him.

When, during the October days, Storojev entered the waiting room of the Tambov lawyer, Gorsky, the kulak immediately produced the impression of a man who believes in his own cause—personal interest.

" 'Well, now, Peter Ivanovitch,' Bulatov turned to Storojev again. 'The Bolsheviks

have seized power in St. Petersburg. That's a fact. We've got to be ready for anything. You're a prominent man in your district, you ought to go about the countryside and strengthen our connection with the people there. You remember all those we talked about? That's right. Tell them—from the committee—that they've got to be ready.'

" 'All right,' Storojev agreed quietly, 'I think I'll see the lawyer now. I've come about a bit of land. I've got to see about the title deed. I bought the land by the lake—from the local landowner.'

"Bulatov gave a chuckle. 'Why are you in such a hurry, Peter Ivanovitch? It'll be yours in any case.'

" 'That's true, it should be ours. But still, this is safer; if the money's paid it's all perfectly legal.'

"Storojev held out his hand, first to Bulatov and then to Antonov."

These two short answers reveal Peter Storojev. He is a member of the Constituent Assembly. He joined the Socialist-Revolutionary Party. But Storojev believes neither in the demagogic slogans of the Socialist-Revolutionaries nor in the Constituent Assembly. He believes in only one thing—a deed of purchase. He believes in the established order of things, in the predatory laws of capitalism.

The more firmly the Bolsheviks struggle to remove these predatory laws, the greater force the Revolution acquires, the more Peter Storojev is tormented by discouragement and lack of confidence in his cause. The author shows with inexorable and logical consistency how, with the kulak's growing uncertainty and despair, his fury increases, and his brutal instincts are strengthened and deepened.

In the last part of the novel, which deals with the defeat of the Antonov uprising, Storojev is transformed into a human wolf. He ranges through the woods, disappearing and re-appearing on the roads. He fires on his native village at night, and assaults peaceful peasants.

The author portrays the course of Storojev's psychological despair with great vividness. This fact makes his image typical. He sheds light on the subsequent behavior of the kulaks in the years of socialist construction in the land.

"We must keep in mind that the growing might of the Soviet State will increase the opposition of the last remains of the dying classes. For the very reason that they are dying and are living their last days, they change over from one line of attack to other more violent methods of attack," Stalin said in his speech on the results of the First Five-Year Plan.

Although Virta portrays Storojev only during the period from 1917 to 1921, the behavior of his "hero" is a convincing illustration of these remarkable words of Stalin.

Storojev's internal despair is portrayed by the author with such conviction, and is so typical of the remnants of the dying class that no questions or doubts arise in the reader's mind. And only one puzzling question remains in his mind after he finishes the book: why did the author allow Storojev to live? Why did he let him escape? It is not difficult to answer the question. The author could refrain from destroying Storojev physically because he had already killed him morally. By the end of the novel Storojev has become a living corpse.

"How can he live among people half of whom hate him and half of whom are afraid and avoid him? How, after having staked all his hopes on becoming the first of the first, can he live possessing only what he has on his back, forgetting the words 'my land,' 'my farm,' 'my authority'? By going a thousand versts away, disappear from his native locality? No, even there they will feel his steel, cold eyes and point to him saying: 'Beware of him, he killed us and burned us.' "

At the same time, by allowing Peter Storojev to live the author seems to remind us that the matter is not yet finished. In the years of socialist construction, the enraged kulaks again and again showed their wolfish fangs. In fascist countries there are still people like Storojev. The living corpse can still fight back, can still do evil. Study their habits carefully!

3

The majority of critics reviewing Virta's book defined his main subject as that of the enemy. This is untrue. The center of gravity in the novel is not the activities of Storojev, but how it became possible to isolate such "mad wolves," to score victory against them.

Loneliness does more than present the image of the enemy. It gives the figure of a friend whom socialist power gradually won over.

. . . Uncle Vassili Bocharov, angered by the confiscation of his cow, betrayed a member of the village Soviet to the Antonov bands. The latter shot the Soviet member, and consequently the Cheka arrested Uncle Vassili Bocharov.

Then one day Uncle Vassili, together with other arrested peasants, was invited to the Kremlin to talk to Lenin.

Lenin began to outline what the Party had decided to do in order to help the war-torn countryside. Uncle Vassili narrowed his eyes. What the fellow in the black suit said was similar to what he himself had thought of many a time, though Vassili had never been able to assemble his thoughts.

The moujiks stirred, smiled. They all smiled, even those sitting next to Lenin. Kalinin took part in the conversation.

"Each of us," he said, "knows beforehand that he must contribute to the state for the support of schools, armies and hospitals." He smiled vivaciously.

The moujiks applauded. Uncle Vassili applauded and laughed as he hadn't laughed for a long time.

"As for the rest of the grain, do what you like with it! Improve your farm, mend your shoes or your clothing, do what you want."

At the end, Kalinin declared that all the peasants would be released and sent home. He asked them, when they got there, to recount what they had seen and heard in Moscow.

"As soon as you get home, sound the gong, call the people together. Here's the truth; tell it to them . . ."

Uncle crossed himself, became emotional and burst out crying. He wanted to kiss Mikhail Ivanovitch's hand, but the latter got angry.

After Uncle Vassili Bocharov had brought excerpts from Lenin's speech on the tax in kind back to his village, no outrages of the Antonov bands could deter Vassili Bocharov, and the many hundreds of peasants like him, from the correct path.

4

The author not only discloses the vacillations of the bulk of the peasantry but also draws a sharp demarcation between the psychology of Storojev and that of the majority of peasants.

The writer makes this differentiation with great skill.

The peasants, exhausted by years of Civil War, yearned for land, for peaceful farm work. Storojev also yearned for land. The author does not dwell upon Storojev's moments of rapture by chance.

"Land: the crumbling clods that he loved to scoop up with his hands, pressing them between his fingers, smelling and even tasting it: bitter, close soil. It contained everything—honor, wealth, power.

" 'Everything changes, and drifts away,' Storojev argued. 'People come and go. But land never dies in the hands of a good farmer—it lives—forever. . . . There's nothing dearer than land.'

"He wanted to plough more of it, seize more, squeeze it tight in his hands, guard it from people with a strong fence, keep fierce dogs to watch it night and day, dogs that would tear in pieces anyone who dared to encroach on his land, his strength.

"He ought to have more sons who would settle on more land and own it, so that all the folk would look up to them and respect them for their strength.

"He was greedy, covetous of land. Often he would go to his neighbors' land and, sighing enviously, think to himself:

" 'Ah, if only I had this. If only I owned more land. Only let me set foot on it firmly like a master! Then I would really be someone. Then all the moujiks would look up to me, and all the local officials would cringe before me.' "

Together with this "lust," Virta portrays a more genuine love of the land, love for work on the land which characterizes the peasant masses.

The longing for land of the working peasant who dreams of his own horse and cow, his thirst for peaceful work on the land are vividly contrasted by Virta with the lust of the kulak ready to quench his thirst for property in an orgy of blood.

The struggle for the soul of the peasant—such is the subject of *Loneliness*. Lenin spoke of the two souls of the middle peasant (the owner and the worker). Lenin's words are vividly illustrated in this novel. "You can't change the peasant; he is a property-loving swine!" the enemies, skeptics, carpers and cowards shouted. "He can be changed," the Party of Lenin and Stalin replied. The Party staked its hopes on the best that was in the peasant in the years of the Civil War and in the years of the liquidation of the kulaks as a class. These expectations were fully justified.

Storojev remained alone . . .

5

Nikolai Virta's novel is imbued with a healthy optimism which is foreign to most bourgeois novels even when they have so-called happy endings.

And thus Storojev continues to wander here and there, a savage mad wolf. Needless to say *Loneliness* calls for vigilance, for alertness and ruthlessness in dealing with the enemy. It is significant that *Loneliness* bears out how the Bolsheviks combine ruthlessness toward the enemy with tremendous confidence in the popular masses and in the new man who, in the years of social revolution, is born among millions of working people. His birth guarantees permanent defeat for the cause of the Storojevs.

Herbert Marshall

Latest Soviet Cinema Productions

The Soviet Cinema Industry is going through a period of intense reorganization. Since the journey of leading cinema organizers abroad, to study foreign cinema technique, the project now is the reconstruction of the out-of-date silent cinema studios into modern sound film studies, based primarily on American methods of organization. The main production center will be shifted to the South, probably the Crimea, to obtain the highest number of sunny days coupled with the most varied scenery. A special committee is now working on this scheme. They plan for a Soviet Hollywood that will eventually produce up to 800 films a year. The first section should be ready within three years with a capacity of two hundred full-length films a year. This will obviate the present irrational method of practically every film unit shooting part of its material in the Moscow or Leningrad studios and then traveling several thousand kilometers to shoot on location. Everything in the new Soviet Cinema City will be on the spot: sea, desert, jungle, village, town. And nearly three hundred sunny days a year.

Meanwhile the Moscow studios are being reorganized. The last separate cinema organization Mezhrabpomfilm has been liquidated and merged with the rest of the Soviet cinema studios under one State Board of Cinema and Photo Industries. The studios and equipment of the Mezhrabpom have been made into a special center for the production of children's films only, thus making the first Children's Cinema Studio in the world.

Mezhrabpomfilm is famous as the studio which produced such films as *Mother, The End of St. Petersburg* and *Storm over Asia* by Pudovkin. Now he and other producers will work in one united organization with Eisenstein, Roshal and the other leading Russian directors.

The cinema industry as a whole has been fulfilling its plan badly and the quality of the productions this year have not equalled last year's *Chapayev* and *We from Kronstadt.* The outstanding productions are most varied:

CIRCUS. Regisseur: G. Alexandrov. Cameraman, Nilson. Composer, Dunayevsky.

This is Alexandrov's second independent production after *Jazz Comedy, (Merry Fellows* or *Moscow Laughs* as it is sometimes called abroad). It is more melodramatic and less comic than the first. Though its theme is very hackneyed (how many "circus" films have been made!) one naturally expects new treatment from a Soviet producer. One of the milestones of silent cinema was *Vaudeville* produced by Joseph von Sternberg and featuring Emil Jannings. This film has never been surpassed, either in acting or drama, by any other circus film. And Alexandrov's film cannot be put into the same artistic category with it. Except for the happy ending, the one situation that is through and through Soviet and could happen nowhere else in the world, the rest of the *Circus* is made up of situations, gags, tricks that have been seen dozens of times in most average American films (which on the whole, however, may be new to the Russians), and the regisseur is not able to master these enough to give them a new quality. Somehow the whole film has the stamp of Hollywood, even the hero reminds one of the average American stars. Yet the theme is one that could have original treatment in the USSR: a white woman bears a colored child "illegitimately," she is "befriended" by a circus acrobat who trains her and keeps her, using his knowledge of her "crime" to blackmail her into submission. They come to the Soviet Union to perform in the Moscow circus, both apparently unaware of the entirely different attitude to racial, sexual and moral questions existing here. Eventually, however, she wishes to remain in the USSR, he wishes to go, and takes out his trump card thinking thereby to force her to leave. He announces during a public performance in the circus that this woman acrobat has the stigma of being the mother of a black child—and for proof he holds up the baby for all to see. The result is of course the opposite of what he—and she—expects. The baby is welcomed with open arms by the whole Soviet audience, and to the singing of national lullabies the baby is passed from Russian to Uzbek, from Armenian to Jew, from Aryan to Oriental—a welcome citizen to whom no stigma is attached in the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics.

This was the outstanding dramatic part of the whole film. It had some lyric quality that was rather impressive. Also, the theme-song, written by Dunayevsky, was not bad; it is now being sung everywhere in the Union. The photography was not first class, and the composition very poor. Orlova, an actress of ability, who played the lead, seemed stifled and lost in the artificiality of her scenic environment. But her singing was beautiful.

Probably the real value of the film is in its technique. Here Alexandrov shows that he can equal any trick maker of Hollywood. Now the job for him is to use that technique and without being swamped by it, to produce a full-blooded Soviet film.

The other big production is *Nightingale Little Nightingale,* also a film that has more technical value than artistic. It is the first full-length color film to be made in the Soviet Union. Its regisseur and inspirer is Nicholas Ekk, the man who made *The Path to Life,* which incidentally was also the first sound film to be made here.

The colors have a very limited range (it is a two-color process)—orange and brown come out best. Consequently the best scenes are the autumn landscapes and rain. There is some attempt at the use of color as leitmotif, Nightingale's color being blue matching her eyes, but of course in a first color film this is very limited.

Ekk spent three years experimenting and making his film. Before that there was no color system in use in the Union. Now his group is working on a three color system. He wants his next film to be *Hamlet!*

FIGHTERS. Regisseur and Scenarist Gustav Wangenheim. Cameraman: Monastirsky. Composer: Hauska.

This film, soon to be released for general showing, is undoubtedly the most significant film of its kind yet produced in the Soviet Union, chiefly because it is practically an all-German production. Hitherto films on foreign themes produced in the Soviet Union (such as *Horizon,* by Kuleshov, etc.) have been unconvincing either because the regisseur had never been outside the Soviet Union and produced it with a 'consultant'; or else because a foreign producer had to use an all-Russian caste and direct it through an interpreter. (Such as *Revolt of the Fishermen* by Piscator, until now undoubtedly the best foreign film produced here.)

Gustave Wangenheim has succeeded in producing a film—in the German language, about Germany, with mostly German actors —which is absolutely convincing. Germans, and foreigners of all kinds who have seen it, say—*that* is Germany today.

A year or so ago George Dimitrov, hero of the Leipzig Trial, in a talk to writers and artists, complained that they so rarely wrote about the great historical events in revolutionary history, and mentioned in particular the burning of the Reichstag and the exposure of fascist provocation at the Leipzig Trial.

Wangenheim took up the challenge and wrote a scenario based on these events. He conferred with Comrade Dimitrov and with the late Maxim Gorky. They approved of it. He got to work in Mezhrabpomfilm, gathered together all the German colony in Moscow, both actors and non-actors—all refugees from fascist terror, and many who had suffered in concentration camps and prisons.

The producer had a difficult task: to portray Germany, without being able to go there, to avoid "anachronisms," and to merge documentary material with playfilm, non-actors (Dimitrov, for instance) with actors.

The result is excellent. The scenario is based on the method of "reflected action"—the chief events and their movers are seen through their reaction on a certain limited group of people. That is the Reichstag fire and the Leipzig trial are reflected in a little provincial town, and only when the trial rises to high dramatic conflict is the action transferred to Leipzig and to the man who eventually overshadowed all—Dimitrov. Not until the last part of the film is Dimitrov actually seen, but throughout the film you are aware of him, through acquaintances, through hearsay, through the fascists, through the revolutionaries, through the radio, through the Brown Book, through demonstrations. At first we come close to his cell, hear what the warders have to say about him, they take in books to him from the prison library, he requests Shakespeare, Goethe, Law Books. Then we see him writing his diary, draw the famous "devil's ring," unerringly revealing the loopholes and tricks in his enemies' accusations, and as demonstrations mass throughout the world we see his chains drop off under the pressure of world opinion, we hear him and now see him giving his famous court speeches, and finally he is on his way to the USSR and freedom.

And all this action is inextricably bound up with the history of a family in a provincial town, of a mother and son and his sweetheart, of the every day struggle in illegality, of the provocation of fascists, of their terror in the concentration camps, of the incredible heroism of the workers and revolutionaries.

The action is so complex that it cannot be described in a short article. There are unforgettable scenes such as the speech of Henri Barbusse in defence of Dimitrov, which though documental material is amazingly stirring in its drama; the wonderful acting of Lotte as the Mother, whose image stands out and competes with such roles as in Pudovkin's film *Mother.*

This is Wangenheim's first film, previously he had his own theater in Berlin. He is also a playwright and an actor.

Wangenheim is now preparing a scenario based on the Life of Young Engels, in which incidentally I am collaborating, for many important years of Engels were spent in England.

SOVIET CHRONICLE

A Letter to Gorky

Dear Gorky!

I read Pushkin's "The Country-Maiden." He didn't finish it. I wanted to write him to find out how it ended, but Mamma says he is dead. I was very sad. I read Gogol. I ask Mamma, "Is he alive?" Mamma says he is dead. I read Tolstoi. Is Tolstoi alive? Mamma says he, too, is dead. I have read ever so much. And ever so many writers are dead. I read Gorky's *Mother* and *Childhood.* I ask, "Is he alive?" Mamma says, "Yes, he's alive." This made me very happy. Then I thought of writing you that I also want to be a writer. I want to ask you why Pushkin and you, too, do not finish your books, why I must read them many times to find the end. But I never do find it. I never understood—did *Mother* die or was she sent in exile? I shall also write. But I shall positively have an end so that I shall not torment my readers. I am sending you my stories and tales. Can I become a writer? I asked Mamma. She says, "I don't know." When I go to sleep, I compose and compose. But in the morning when I get up I have forgotten almost everything. Mamma read to me from *Pravda* how you wrote to the Penza children. I asked Mamma to dictate to me. I made five mistakes. I was ashamed. Then I decided to write without a mistake. I began to copy from *Pravda* every day; at the beginning 50 words, then 100 words and now even more. Thus once (crossed out) thus once my mother began to give me and Natya dictation. I made four mistakes and she six. I was very happy. Although I was a little sorry for her. But I began to copy from *Pravda* even more. I told her but she didn't listen. Please send me your address. I do not know where you live. No one knows. In any case I am sending you this letter care of *Pravda.* The *Pravda* knows everything. It is Diana Pavlova writing you from Chita. And my address is Zaiskaya 22 . .

My mother says that you are too busy but I believe that you will write to me because I want very much to be a writer . . .

Or better, write to me at Chita, Military Hospital, Grigory Alexandrovich Pavlov, "for Diana," where I am sure your letter will reach me.

Editorial Remarks:

The original letter was really written without mistakes and shows signs of long and persevering effort. The original letter was delivered to Alexei Maximovich Gorky as well as the enclosures of stories and tales of Diana Pavlova's own composition.

Translated by Selma Schwartz

Active Militant Humanism

Opening the book at random, one is amazed to come upon an illustration entitled: "Their love of pigeons kept many from leaving." The picture shows a roof white with pigeons and a young lad among them.

Another illustration shows the gloomy Russian village Kostino under a dreary autumn sky. As you turn the pages, however, you find landscapes of a totally different sort—pictures of structures breathing culture and evidently newly erected.

It is as if you turned the pages of a geographical magazine with illustrations showing different countries, or looked at landscapes by artists of different periods. And yet you know they are all pictures of one and the same place and that it is a transformation of one and the same landscape—and it is not just art but real pulsing life, a new and wonderful art of life.

With heightened curiosity, you continue to read the book through its illustrations, feeling that they are living documents of something entirely new and unusual.

There is the door of the first store the world ever saw run by people who had but recently been petty thieves, for customers of a like nature. Then you come upon a picture of "the first horse" and you know it is pioneer surroundings of a newly settled territory. What is most striking is that this is not the impression of a chance artist but an actual photographic document of that life and of its creative development.

Where is this newly discovered country? Who are these people engaged, as the photographs show, in making sport accessories while cultivating this virgin territory, and who seem to be such excellent sportsmen themselves?

You continue to look through this book and the new world that seems to develop right before your eyes. You come to the children's room, where little tots are shown in snow-white beds, women who found the joys of motherhood in their new home. You

see frescoes of the school auditorium, corners of exhibitions of bright colored paintings. A joyous world of construction. labor, art and health.

These are the graphic documents in the book *Bolshevists*—recently published by the editors of *Plant Histories*—historical essays on the world-famous Bolshevo Labor Commune of the People's Commissariat of the Interior.

The book is the collective work of a number of authors who have created a monumental work recording a remarkable experiment in recasting petty thieves and criminals into useful members of society. It tells the story from the very beginnings of the commune until its triumphant decennial.

"The great merit of this book," wrote Gorky in the editorial preface, "is the thoughtfulness with which the process of individual reclamation is shown.... The story of the wise and difficult labor of the Cheka educators is generally successful, that is, convincingly true."

Considering this work of great international significance, Gorky further remarks:

"Proletarians of all countries should know how and in what form, by what means an active, militant proletarian humanism should be shown."

The French Classics in the Georgian Language

Georgian writers informed André Gide when they met him during his tour of the Caucasus that they are now in a position to read the works of Hugo, Stendhal, Balzac, Merimée, Flaubert, France, Maupassant and other great French writers in their native language. André Gide pointed out the great cultural significance of Georgian translations of Montesquieu, Voltaire and Racine.

Gide was very much interested in the statement of the Georgian writers about the translation (in prose) of the immortal poem of Rustavelli *Man In the Panther Skin* made by the Academician M. Brosseau during his life and found only recently in his files.

At the request of André Gide, a copy of this manuscript will be sent to him in France after a correction of the translation by the committee on Rustavelli.

The Movement for the Latinization of the Alphabet

Arabian script is so complicated and difficult that in his time Engels was forced to give up the study of Arabic.

The Socialist Soviet Republic of Azerbaijan adopted a Latin alphabet in 1922. By 1932, all the Turkish-Tatar nationalities of the USSR had adopted the new alphabet and successfully liquidated their illiteracy. In Azerbaijan, Uzbekistan, the Tatar and Bashkir republics and others, scarcely two per cent of the population possessed a knowledge of the Arabian alphabet. In 1932, 50 to 70 per cent of the men and women were literate.

Sixty-eight nationalities of the USSR now have a Latin alphabet—one of the most significant factors in the rapid growth of culture.

At the present time, there are 544 printshops in the national republics of the Soviet Union, which issue works in the new alphabet. In nine republics, courses are being given in stenography and typing. In the city of Kazan, a factory is being built which will turn out 100,000 typewriters a year with the new alphabet.

Tours to the Arctic

The varied experience of the Soviet Union in bringing great art to the masses was widened last summer with the sending of theatrical groups to the Arctic. The Bolshoy and Maly Academic theaters, pioneers in this splendid experiment, sent brigades and troupes headed by Honored Artists of the Republic.

"It is customary to consider the North grim and cold. But to us it seemed warm and inviting. Beyond the Arctic Circle we ate fresh cucumbers and tomatoes, were presented with a bouquet of flowers grown on the Polar State Farm. We adapted ourselves very easily to the long flights—6,500 km. by airplane. Thirty concerts, 20,000 spectators —these are the facts of our stay in the North." Such are the impressions of the members in the brigade of the Bolshoy Theater when they returned from their trip to Turukhanss-Port-Igarka, and Dickson Island.

The vastness of the North and the intense life of the polar collectives provoked great creative enthusiasm among the artists.

Homers of the 20th Century

The powerful movement of a rebirth of life and the renaissance of the creative power of the peoples of the Soviet Union has, it appears, given new life to the art of the old bards and story-tellers. Surrounded by attention, the Cossack akhini[1] and zhikshi[1], the Caucasian ashug[1], sang out in full voice.

Here are some facts about this extraordinary literary process:

The world-famous epic poem *Manass* of the story-teller, Sagin-bai, was recorded by research workers in Kirghizia over a period of years. Shortly before Sagin-Bai's death (he died recently in Kirghizia) the story-teller, who possessed a phenomenal memory, re-

[1] Bards and minstrels.

cited the last lines of his poem. In all, 256,000 lines have been recorded.

His complete works, which are preserved for world culture, are in size many times greater than the *Illiad* or *Odessy,* and from the point of view of the history of the Tyurk people, are just as important as the epic poem of Homer is for the history of Greece.

At the present time, in the city of Frunze, preparation has begun on the publication of the epic poem *Manass* in Russian.

"Cherish people who are capable of creating such gems of poetry as Suleiman creates," said Gorky at the First Congress of Soviet Writers, where the appearance of the Daghestan bard, Suleiman-Stalsky, made a tremendous impression.

Recently, a large collection of poems and songs by this splendid people's poet of Daghestan was issued. This publication is a splendid realization of one of the most important principles in the movement of Soviet literature—interest in the growth of people's literature.

We also consider it noteworthy, as a unique case of resurrected creativeness, that at 25 years of age the illiterate poet merely gave voice to his songs. Subsequently they and their emotional content faded into the past, became just memories until the time came for them to become a recorded literary heritage.

In analyzing the works of Suleiman-Stalsky, the critic notes that the theme of the people's rejuvenation and of joyously flourishing labor inspire the poet.

In his autobiography, Suleiman-Stalsky describes the moment when he, a poet of the Lezghian poor, created his first song: "Once I returned home to eat. I was surprised to see a crowd of people on one of the streets. What was it? In the center of the street some wandering bards with tambourines in their hands were seated and singing songs about the nightingale who was pining for the sun.

" 'Why, those are my words,' I cried.

" 'How, pauper?' they answered me. 'Look at yourself. Could one with such a face write such words as these, you nightingale!. . .'

"I returned home humiliated.

" 'Anyone can sing about the nightingale,' I said to my wife, and taking my sheepskin cap by way of a tambourine, I began to versify for the first time in my life:

O Nightingale,
Held in enchantment by flowers,
Dost thou not see
The suffering, agony and poverty
The weeping and the tears.

This stanza is one of my first songs, which I composed towards the end of that same day.

The following verse of the Tajik kolkhoz poet, Saadula Raben, gives some idea of the fantasy and poetic scope of contemporary people's bards:

They do not let me sleep of night
These ancients—Hafiz, Saadi and Firduosi
I must exert the sinews of my verse
And show them how a real kolkhozny poet can sing

The Union of Cossack writers, numbering 70 Cossack poets and prose writers, includes also 60 akhini and zhikshi.

A People's Magazine

Among the many splendid publications fostered by A. M. Gorky, one of the latest was the magazine *Kolkhoznik,* to which the great writer gave the maximum of his inimitable care.

Kolkhoznik entered the ranks of the so-called "solid" magazines not only because of its large circulation but because of its entirely new content. It is a literary magazine for the new reader in the Soviet village. It was a large cultural undertaking which can only evoke a feeling of pride.

Everything, including its appearance—good paper, beautiful, colored reproductions of pictures of the best artists, the carefully considered layout of the whole magazine—is in sharp contrast to the usual so-called "popular publications."

The significance that A. M. Gorky attached to the direction of the magazine is revealed by the fact that the great writer regularly published his works in the magazine, and in the 600 days of its existence, he carefully read, reviewed and edited 300 manuscripts.

To bring culture to the people of a socialist country, and to supply their cultural requirements, means to give them literary works which best express all the variety and richness of life. It was Gorky who set this task before the magazine. Scrupulousness as regards content, realism and timeliness demanded of those who write for the magazine, and the impartial, strict criticism of their work regardless of reputation have become indispensable conditions in the editorial code of the magazine.

Within a very short period, *Kolkhoznik* reached a circulation of 120,000, or a reading public of at least a half million. This figure by no means represents the limit, but is merely an indication of what possibilities there are for the mass circulation of this magazine.

Kolkhoznik broke away from the tradition of so-called "peasant literature"—saccharine, naturalistic writings about the village.

Gorky has bequeathed to Soviet literature through *Kolkhoznik* a real standard for a people's magazine, the existence of which is possible only in a democratic country like the Soviet Union.

Not the narrow theme of the village but everything in the world that deserves attention is within the scope of the magazine. The fact that material is chosen with a view to its comprehensibility is not detrimental to variety and content; current topics do not preclude works of high literary merit.

The editorial collective of the *Kolkhoznik* continues its work guided by the principle of publishing literature which neither flirts nor jests with the reader, but is marked by literary skill and creative feeling. The editorial collective strives to embody in the magazine a truly "Gorky" hunger to master all the cultural riches which Gorky tried to implant in the masses, and which he himself drew from the depths of the people.

The latest issue of the magazine contains a series of vivid and substantial articles on the national republics of the Soviet Union (Chuvash, Kazakhstan, White Russia, Abkhasia). These articles treat of the history, the diversified culture, recent achievements and the prominent men and women of these peoples of whom very little was known before when they were all contemptuously classed merely as "non-Russian."

Examples are given of their picturesque folklore—tale, song and epic. A number of essays are devoted to their national movements and heroes (Karmeluk. Pugachov, Frunze, Schors). There are lively reviews of events in European countries (Spain, England, Yugoslavia). There are also articles by prominent men of science on new developments in their fields or giving scientific explanations of everyday phenomena. An article by Prof. A. Arkhangelski on the human fetus and abortions is scientifically precise and artistically vivid.

The magazine devotes a great deal of attention to the work of Jewish writers in which the life of that people is shown truthfully.

Lately there have also appeared translations of the works of L. Norris, Erskine Caldwell and others. The special number of the magazine in honor of International Women's Day contained some really excellent material (essays by Gorky *On Women*, and *Wives*, the essays of Elena Washentzova-Novikov and G. Storm) of universal interest and by no means limited to that of the day.

The press has taken notice of the fact that in the villages each issue is impatiently awaited. The magazine is carefully saved, though it passes from hand to hand like a precious encyclopedia.

Several of the younger writers developed by the magazine *Kolkhoznik* have recently been elected to membership in the Union of Soviet Writers.

A Little Item of the People's Memorial to Gorky

Forty-five years ago young Gorky wandered along the steppes of Southern Russia. On July 15, 1891 he passed through the village of Kandibino. Here he witnessed the savage violation and punishment of a defenseless wife by a husband. Rushing to the defense, he was very cruelly beaten by the ignorant and infuriated crowd. Gorky described this incident in his essay *Conclusion*.

The inhabitants of Kandibino sent two delegates by airplane to Gorky's funeral, and have introduced a petition to change the name of the village to "Peshkovo."

Editor-in-chief SERGEI DINAMOV

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