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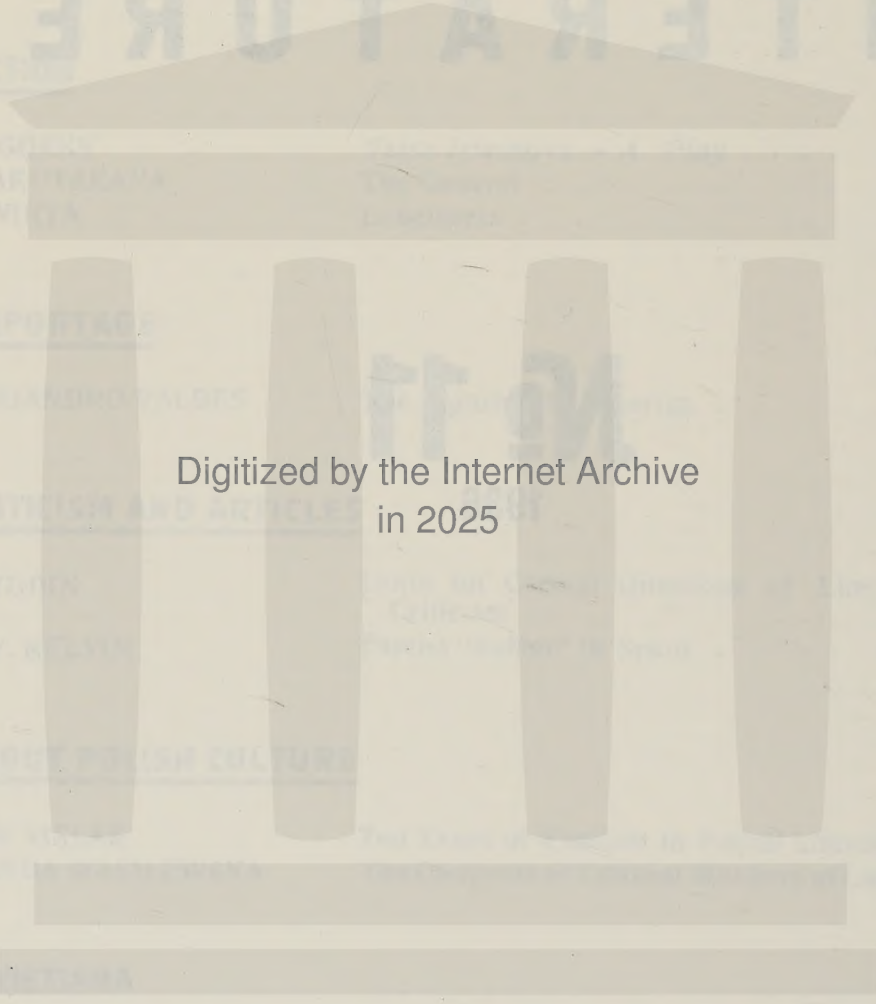

Maxim Gorky

Vassa Jelesnova

A Play

(Second Version)

Shortly before M. Gorky's death, a new version of his drama, *Vassa Jelesnova,* first published in 1910, appeared in the ninth issue of the anthology *Year Nineteen.* The new version differs so radically from the originally published one that it may very well be regarded as an entirely new work.

The action takes place in Russian merchant surroundings which Gorky knew so well. This milieu occupied Gorky's attention persistently and his last dramatic works, including the remarkable play, *Yegor Bulichev,* are devoted to portraying it.

The original version of *Vassa Jelesnova* had the curious subtitle *Mother.* It would seem as if Gorky wished to stress the fact that the merchant-class mother about whom her son says, "Mother believes only in the dollar," is a contrast to his own famous and wonderful working-class mother, Nilovna.

A study of the two versions separated by such a lapse of time is interesting. It shows the changes which had taken place in the author's view-point, in his convictions and his entire conception of art.

Gorky's return to his old theme is of particular significance. There is strong evidence that Gorky wished to review his old subjects in order to say freely now, under conditions of a free Soviet Russia, what he had to subdue under pressure of the tsarist censorship.

CHARACTERS:

VASSA BORISOVNA JELESNOVA	— *a woman of about forty-two; looks less than her age.*
SERGEI PETROVICH JELESNOV	— *her husband, a man of sixty, formerly captain of a Black Sea ship, afterwards served on river-steamers.*
PROKHOR BORISOVICH KHRAPOV	— *Vassa's brother, fifty-seven years of age.*
NATALIA	— *A girl of eighteen* } *Vassa's daughters*
LUDMILA	— *A girl of sixteen* }
RACHEL	— *Vassa's daughter-in-law, getting on thirty.*
ANNA ANOSHENKOVA	— *a woman of over thirty, Vassa's secretary and confidante.*
MELNIKOV	— *Judge of the District Court*
EUGENE	— *his son*
GOURI KROTKIKH	— *Vassa's shipping-manager.*
LISA } *PAULA* }	— *housemaids.*
PIATYERKIN	— *a man of twenty-seven to thirty, an ex-soldier and sailor on the river steamers. His coarse, luxurient hair covers his head like a turban, and his moustache is evidently well-cared for.*

ACT I

A large room in the corner of the house. In this room Vassa has spent the greater part of the day for the last ten years. The furniture consists of a large desk, before which stands a light armchair with a hard seat, and a fireproof safe. On the wall hangs a vast, brightly-colored map of the upper and middle Volga—from Ribinsk to Kazan; underneath the map stands a broad divan upholstered in carpeting and heaped with cushions. The middle of the room is occupied by a small oval table and some high-backed chairs. A French window leads to a veranda that looks on to the garden. The other two windows look on to the garden as well. There is a big leather armchair; some pots of geraniums decorate the window-sills, and in the space between the two windows stands a laurel-bush in a tub. An antique Slavonic jug of silver and some old-fashioned gilded dippers stand on a small shelf. Near the divan is a door into the bedroom, and, in front of the desk, a door leading to the other rooms. It is a morning at the end of March. The cheerful sunshine comes in through the glass door and windows. The general impression is of a bright, spacious, cheerful room.

Vassa and Krotkikh enter.

VASSA: Three rubles-fifty a thousand poods—that's a thirty-five hundredth of a kopek per pood. It's not much for the stevedores of the steamship companies—they have to drag the cargo forty yards and more. They earn on an average a ruble a day, they need a lot of food and they can't do without meat. You ought to make a note of that, and get someone to write a newspaper article. And you should find a fellow to talk to the stevedores. Think you can find someone?

KROTKIKH: (*gaily*) Oh, we'll find someone all right.

VASSA: Well, then! That'll damage the big steamship companies. Our firm's a small one, and the cargoes are light: our own sailors can chuck them straight from the ship on to the wharf. We don't often need stevedores, as you know.

KROTKIKH: It's not *quite* so simple as that. Two rubles a thousand poods is very little for the sailors.

VASSA: And why should I give them more? You see to it that the Caucasus and Mercury Company and the rest of the big companies raise the price to five rubles the thousand poods, and then our steamers'll be more sought after by people, and we'll give the sailors a raise. That's what we'll do. And you'll excuse me—but I'll scrap that note of yours.

KROTKIKH: (*with a grimace*) Yes, but look here, Vassa Borisovna. . . .

VASSA: Now, what you ought to do is to talk to the potters, and the small millers, what you might call the small fry, in general. Make them little reductions so they'll let us have their cargoes. It'd be very useful if you did that . . .

KROTKIKH: (*not without a certain pride*) We wound up well last year; the profits were pretty good!

VASSA: What about it?—everything's *pretty* good—and no more. Well, what we want is that it should get still better. You get sick of things being just "good." Well, I'll wish you good-day now—I'm up to my ears in work.

KROTKIKH (bows without speaking and goes out)

VASSA: (*listening*) Anyuta! (*Anna comes in*) Here you are—copy this and be quick about it. Did Gouri grumble as he went out?

ANNA: Yes, he didn't look at all pleased.

VASSA: What did he say?

ANNA: I couldn't quite catch it. Something about conservatism.

VASSA: Oh, of course. He's a socialist, see. And socialism means about as much to him as god does to my brother, who prays out of habit, but dosen't believe at all. Don't you take any stock in his high-falutin' talk. . . . What were you speaking about yesterday evening?

ANNA: He told me about the German socialists cooperating with their king.

VASSA: See he doesn't make your belly swell with his talk of socialism of a night.

ANNA: Oh, I'm not so green. He's courting Natalia Sergeievna.

VASSA: I know. Well, Natka's no fool.

ANNA: He's after Ludmila as well . . .

VASSA: Seems to like plenty of strings to his bow. (*The telephone rings*) Yes, it's me. Yes, do. I'll be expecting you then.—That was the tenant Melnikov. (*Dismisses Anna with a wave of her hand. Sits down at the desk. She is evidently considering something as she sorts her papers, and re-arranges things. Then she frowns and stares in front of her.)*

MELNIKOV: (from Anna's room) Good morning, my dear.

VASSA: Thank you for coming. Shut the door. Sit down, won't you? Well?

MELNIKOV: I've no good news. The preliminary investigation is over. Now it's all in the hands of the Public Prosecutor. The examining magistrate assures me that he toned down the accusation as much as he could.

VASSA: For three thousand he could have toned it away altogether, I should think.

MELNIKOV: Impossible. I read the evidence of that procuress. She seems to have opened her heart as if she were at confession.

VASSA: So it'll have to go to court?

MELNIKOV: That's unavoidable.

VASSA: What's the punishment?

MELNIKOV: Possibly—penal servitude.

VASSA: What's the legal name for this?

MELNIKOV: For what, exactly?

VASSA: For this—sort of—playing about with little children?

MELNIKOV: Corruption of children.

VASSA: Nasty, slimy words, too! Well—what'll happen next?

MELNIKOV: The Public Prosecutor will draw up a bill of indictment and hand it to the defendant, who'll be arrested.

VASSA: All of them'll be arrested, will they? And the procuress, as well?

MELNIKOV: Yes, of course.

VASSA: But the Prosecutor can still let them off lightly?

MELNIKOV: A Public Prosecutor can. But this fellow wants to make a career, so he'll hardly do that. Although there's a rumor that the accomplices are—trying to get something done about it . . . .

VASSA: Aha! There you are, now. Well, then, we'll try too. Have a go at it, do. Offer the Prosecutor good terms to hush it up. I want it to be quashed altogether. I've got daughters.

MELNIKOV: Vassa Borisovna, although I've the greatest respect for you and feel the warmest gratitude to you for your generosity . . . .

VASSA: Cut it short, will you. We'll talk about gratitude when we've finished this affair in a quiet, decent way. You must act!

MELNIKOV: I'm really quite unable . . . I simply can't.

VASSA: Bear in mind—I don't begrudge money—in a case like this. If it turns out all right, I'll give you back your bond. And I can add another fifteen hundred to make it up to five thousand. That enough?

MELNIKOV: Yes, but—still I . . .

VASSA: You must be bolder!

MELNIKOV: It would be better if you yourself . . .

VASSA: Oh no, that'd be too much honor for the Prosecutor if I were to go and bow down to him. I'm ready to pay him—yes, but I won't bow down to him. Besides—I'm a rough, straightforward sort of a person. I wouldn't be able to bring it off properly. You'll do that today, please. Then you'll ring me up and tell me the figure. I wish you luck. Well, now?

MELNIKOV: I'm afraid I must be going, I'm in a hurry to get to court.

VASSA: That's right, hurry up! *(Sits a few moments with her eyes closed Pulls out a drawer in the desk, searches for something. Finds a small box, examines the contents and stirs them with her pen-holder. A noise is heard behind the door and she swiftly hides the box in her pocket. Ludmila enters)*

LUDMILA: (*calling her by a man's name*) Hello, Mother Vassya! My dear fellow, I've had such an extraordinary dream, so uncommonly beautiful.

VASSA: (*kissing her*) Life's nice for you when you're awake, too, Ludok.

LUDMILA: But listen . . . .

VASSA: You'll tell me at dinner-time.

LUDMILA: No, Natka'll laugh at me then or somebody'll interrupt me, or I'll forget. Dreams are so awfully easily forgotten. Listen to it now.

VASSA: No, Ludok, go out of here! And tell Lisa to come here quick.

LUDMILA: Oh, goodness me. How nasty you are today.

VASSA: (*alone, grumbling to herself*) Nasty . . . Silly thing. (*Lisa comes in*) My brother's complaining that you don't do as he tells you, and that you haven't oiled the locks.

LISA: Vassa Borisovna, I can't get round to everything. I'm the only servant for the whole house . . . It's hard for me! Let me have help—some young girl.

VASSA: Don't expect it for a moment. I can't stand idle people about the house. The young ladies help you. You get good wages. Do your best. Sleep less. Is my brother in?

LISA: No.

VASSA: Tell Sergei Petrovich to come to me. (*She stands in the middle of the room thinking. Snaps her fingers, feels her pocket. Jelesnov comes in. He wears a dressing-gown, his curly hair is tousled, cheeks and chin are covered with stubble, and he has a thick, grey moustache.)*

VASSA: Just got up, or going to bed?

JELESNOV: What do you want?

VASSA: (*shutting the door into Anna's room very firmly*) Don't shout. It doesn't frighten me.

JELESNOV: (retreats toward the other door)

VASSA: (*going around him and shutting that one, too*) The accusation against you has been signed by the Public Prosecutor.

JELESNOV: (*clutching the back of a chair*) I don't believe it! You're lying!

VASSA: (*quietly*) Yes, he's done it.

JELESNOV: And I specially lost nine thousand to him at cards, the cur! I tried to make it plain to him, too . . . I'd have given him eleven thousand more . . .

VASSA: In a few days you'll get the bill of indictment, then you'll be arrested, and locked up in prison.

JELESNOV: And it's all because you were too stingy, too damned stingy; you gave too little to the examining magistrate. And to Melnikov as well, that's clear. How much did you give, tell me?

VASSA: The punishment for corruption of young children is penal servitude.

JELESNOV: (*sits down suddenly. His head rolls about, he speaks in a hollow voice*) You're glad?

VASSA: You've got grown-up daughters. What will it be like for them when you're sent to penal servitude? What decent fellow will want to marry them? You've got a grandson, too; he'll soon be five years old. You'd have done better, Sergei, to murder someone than to do the filthy things you've done!

JELESNOV: I should have murdered you, that's what I should have done. I should have killed you and torn your cruel heart out and thrown it to the dogs. It's you who muddled me up and led me astray . . . You . . .

VASSA: Don't lie, Sergei, it won't help you. And besides, who're you lying to? To yourself. So don't do it, it's disgusting to hear you. (*Goes over to her husband, presses her palm against his forehead, raises his head and looks into his face.*) I'm asking you don't let it come into court, don't disgrace your family. It's little I've ever asked of you—the whole of our life together, and a hard, shameful life I've had of it with a drunkard and a rake. And what I'm asking you for now is not for myself but for the children's sake . . .

JELESNOV: (*in mortal terror*) What do you want of me? What? . . .

VASSA: You know.

JELESNOV: It'll never be! No, never . . .

VASSA: Do you want me to go down on my knees to you? I'll do it! To you!

JELESNOV: Get away from me! Let me go! (*makes an effort to rise*)

VASSA: (*placing her hands on his shoulders and pressing him down into the armchair*) Take this powder.

JELESNOV: Go away . . .

VASSA: Think—first, you'll be put in prison; then, the whole town will come to the trial to stare at you. After that you'll die a slow death as a prisoner, in penal servitude, in loneliness—a terrible, shameful death'll be yours. While here—you'd die at once, without pain or shame. Only the heart will stop beating and—you'll fall asleep.

JELESNOV: Leave me alone—go away from me! Let them try me. It's all the same to me.

VASSA: And what about the children? And the disgrace?

JELESNOV: I'll ask to be sent to a monastery. Let them shave my head and make a monk of me. Even if I have to live under the ground—I'll still go on living!

VASSA: You're talking nonsense. Take this powder!

JELESNOV: (*rising*) I won't! I won't take anything from you . . .

VASSA: Take it of your own free will . . .

JELESNOV: Or else—what? You'll poison me?

VASSA: Sergei, think of your daughters! They've got to live. Children shouldn't have to pay for their fathers' filthy crimes.

JELESNOV: And for their mothers'?

VASSA: You talk nonsense. You must understand, Sergei, I'm not going to keep my mouth shut at the trial. I'll tell them how you used to bring street women into my house, how you carried on with them and showed them to Natalia and Ludmila. I'll tell how you taught the children to drink . . .

JELESNOV: It's a lie! It was Prokhor, your own brother, who taught them. It was Prokhor . . .

VASSA: You frightened Ludmila and that's what made her a bit weak in the head. She can't learn, she's no good for anything.

JELESNOV: Still, Natalia took after you, in every way.

VASSA: Well, now you know: I'll tell everything at the trial. I'll let everyone know.

JELESNOV: (*standing up and bawling*) Get away from me! It frightens me to look at you. Let me go! (*pushes her away and makes for the door*)

VASSA: (*following him*) Take the powder, Sergei.

JELESNOV: No! (*They go out. Lisa appears in the doorway, with padlocks of various kinds on a tray. Directly behind her comes Prokhor Khrapov with a large storehouse lock in his hand.)*

PROKHOR: (*in a surly tone*) What were they fighting about?

LISA: I don't know. I only heard her trying to persuade him to take a powder.

PROKHOR: What sort of a powder?

LISA: Some medicine or other, I suppose.

PROKHOR: What sort of medicine?

LISA: How should I know?

PROKHOR: What a fool you are! Sergei doesn't need any medicine. He's as healthy as a camel. We were playing cards and nourishing ourselves on brandy all night—till four o'clock in the morning.

LISA: Then it must have been soda she was wanting him to take.

PROKHOR: Fool again. You don't want soda after brandy. What are you hanging about here for? Put the locks down on the table. You never see anything, you never know anything. What do I give you presents for?

LISA: Yes, you've given me a present, haven't you? Everybody'll notice it soon—this present of yours.

PROKHOR: Better me than Piatyerkin. Move that leather armchair away, leather spoils in the sun, and it's worth sixty-four rubles.

LISA: What, the sun?

PROKHOR: The armchair, my present to my sister. The sun isn't worth anything. Wait, now! What did you mean? Joking, were you? Don't you forget yourself, mind. The sun, indeed. My sister's spoilt you—like old maids spoil their cats. Clear out of here to blazes! (*Looks over the papers on the and sneezes. Signs:)*

On a wild sad autumn evening
A maiden walked forlorn.
Love's secret pledge bearing
And . . .

NATALIA: (*coming in*) What a nice day.

PROKHOR: That remains to be seen, the day's only just begun. Why do

you rush in like a skunk-bear? Without so much as your hair done—untidy slut!

NATALIA: Do you know what? They've decided to bring Father up for trial.

PROKHOR: (*startled*) Who said so?

NATALIA: Melnikov's son, Gene.

PROKHOR: (*sitting down suddenly*) Oh, hell! . . . So the captain couldn't slide out of it. There go the Jelesnovs! There go the Khrapovs, an honorable old name! So that's what we've come to! That's where the captain's steered our vessel. Oh, what a disgrace it'll be! It'll shame us to our dying day.

NATALIA: Perhaps they'll acquit him?

PROKHOR: That's not the point! Think of the trial, the disgrace. And they probably will sentence him. It's the fashion nowadays: if you're rich, you must be guilty. They're the most unfortunate people—the rich. You must understand—it's not so much Captain Jelesnov they'll judge as us Khrapovs.

NATALIA: Can't anything be done?

PROKHOR: We can run away to America where all the crooks hide.

NATALIA: Can't we bribe the court?

PROKHOR: We've done that. My sister's scattered more thousands than one trying to put down this scandal. The police have been given something, the examining magistrate, too. It looks as though nothing's come of it. Now I'll never be mayor, and you and Ludmila will never find husbands in your own set, even with your dowries. Your father's dirtied your name for good, the son-of-a-bitch, the low scoundrel. Oh, what an idiot she was!

NATALIA: Who? Mother?

PROKHOR: Yes, of course.

NATALIA: She's no idiot.

PROKHOR: Then what the devil did she go and marry that captain for? He's nearly twenty years older than she is.

NATALIA: You persuaded her to do it. He was your bosom friend.

PROKHOR: Did I? Well, I'm a man who's not worldly, not of the earth. I'm a good-natured fellow. An artist by nature. When I was young—I dreamed of playing the comedian in light opera. And he was sailing the seas. Huh!—as if that meant anything. As if there weren't all sorts of muck floating about the seas!

NATALIA: Did she love him?

PROKHOR: Aw, go to hell! That's not love—if a girl breaks away from her own herd. It's madness. Even if the gentry did marry gypsies and actresses, it's not an example for our class—we needn't take them as the law, surely!

VASSA: (*coming in at this moment*) Who isn't a law for you?

PROKHOR: We're just Natalia and me here . . .

VASSA: I can see you're here, Natalia and you . . .

PROKHOR: How's Sergei?

VASSA: All right. Complaining of his heart. Natalia, tell them to send me in some tea.

NATALIA: You might as well have said straight out that I'm in the way . . .

VASSA: Yes—you are in the way. And I haven't had tea yet. What were you shouting about?

PROKHOR: It's enough to make anyone shout. So the trial couldn't be avoided?

VASSA: You needn't tell the girls that yet. I'll tell them myself.

PROKHOR: Natalia knows. It was she who told me.

VASSA: But—who told her?

(Ludmila comes in quietly)

PROKHOR: Melnikov's son. The girls shouldn't have him around here.

LUDMILA: He's interesting and it's dull for us here. Our girl friends are always ill now, they never come to see us.

VASSA: Luda, go and help Lisa to tidy the rooms.

LUDMILA: I want to stay with you. Why are you always shoving me off somewhere?

VASSA: There's business to be attended to, Luda.

LUDMILA: Oh, it's all business, business, business with you! And never a minute to spare for your daughters.

VASSA: Well, I'm going to have tea soon, then you can come in for a chat, but you must go now.

LUDMILA: It makes me want to cry. I know you're going to scold Uncle Prokhor for calling Dad a rake. I know it!

VASSA: (*stroking her daughter's head as she takes her to the door*) To call anyone a rake isn't an insult. A rake—rakes up things. If anyone strews a lot of rubbish about, a rake collects it. Take me, for instance, I've been raking all sorts of rubbish all my life . . .

LUDMILA: Now you're just making fun of me. I know what a rake is. It's Uncle Prokhor!

(Vassa makes an unsuccessful attempt to shut the door on Ludmila)

LUDMILA: (*wriggling free from her mother's hands*) He's a rake. He's made Lisa pregnant. He abuses Dad, he doesn't love him.

PROKHOR: You're making it all up! Anyhow, old people aren't so free with their love.

LUDMILA: And you, Mamma, don't you love him?

VASSA: Now, that'll do, that'll do.

LUDMILA: Why don't you love him? Uncle's a drunkard, too, and still you love him . . . Drinking's a disease. Gene Melnikov says . . .

PROKHOR: The fountain of wisdom—devil take him!

LUDMILA: It's something like the colic . . .

(Lisa brings in a small samovar. Natalia follows her with a tray of china. Vassa walks about the room with her arm around Ludmila; she seems to be listening for something. She is excited, but tries to hide her excitement. She stops to look at the locks.)

VASSA (*to her brother*) So you're still playing about with these toys, you're not sick of them yet?

PROKHOR: They aren't very expensive toys. Perhaps they're not such toys, either.

VASSA: What are they then?

PROKHOR: Well, after all, who knows? No one collects old locks, but I do. And I may turn out the one white-headed boy in a thousand. M-yes. A lock is something. When everything's under lock and key, everything's secure. If we hadn't learned to lock up our property, there wouldn't be any. Without a bridle you can't break in a horse.

VASSA: Aha!—You're not so silly. Pour out the tea, Natalia.

PROKHOR: (watching her) You think I waste maney, but this storehouse

lock cost me only seven rubles and I'm offered twenty-five for it now. When I collect a thousand locks—I'll sell them to a museum for, say, twenty thousand rubles.

VASSA: Oh, very well, then, very well. Let's hope our mouse'll catch a cat yet. (*To Ludmila, unexpectedly and loudly*) I fell in love with your father before I was fifteen. At sixteen—we got married. Yes. But at seventeen—when I was pregnant—with Feodor—and we were at tea on Whit-Sunday—the maidens' Holy-day—I happened to spill some cream over my husband's boots. He made me lick it off with my tongue. And I did it, too. Before strangers. And folks didn't like our family—the Khrapovs.

LUDMILA: Oh, Vassya, why did you tell us this?

NATALIA: (*watching her mother intently all the time from behind the samovar*)

VASSA: He was a jolly fellow. Full of fun.

LUDMILA: Was he?

VASSA: Natalia, do you remember how you bored a hole in the partition to watch your father's diversions?

NATALIA: Yes. I remember.

VASSA: And then you ran crying to me and shouting. "Chase them away, chase them away!"

NATALIA: Yes, I remember. This a domestic court you're holding?

PROKHOR: Oh, what a tongue!

VASSA: So you *do* remember, Natalia? That's a good thing! You can't live without a good memory. I bore nine children, there are only three of them left. One was still-born, two girls didn't live out the year, two boys lived only till they were five, and one died at seven. That's the way things are, my daughters. I told you this so's you wouldn't be in too great a hurry to get married.

LUDMILA: You've never talked to us like this before.

VASSA: There was no time.

LUDMILA: Why did they all die, and we're alive?

VASSA: That's your—luck, shall we call it? They died because they were born weaklings, and they were born weaklings because your father drank a lot and beat me very often. Uncle Prokhor knows that.

PROKHOR: M-yes, he used to beat you. That's true. I used to have to drag her out of the Captain's hands. He learned to beat folks when he was at sea, so he did it pretty thoroughly.

LUDMILA: Why did you never get married?

PROKHOR: I did. There's a song in one of the musical comedies that says:

"Getting married's easy enough,
It's living together that turns out so tough . . ."

LUDMILA: All your songs have the same tune.

PROKHOR: It's simpler. You remember the words better. I lived four years with my wife. Couldn't stand it any longer. Living by yourself is quieter: you're your own master. Why keep your own horses when there are fast ones for hire?

NATALIA: Is Feodor coming to live with us?

VASSA: When he gets better—of course he will.

NATALIA: And Rachel?

VASSA: Well—of course—she's his wife . . .

LUDMILA: How good she is—Rachel!

NATALIA: But—after Father's trial—do you think they'll come to live with us?

VASSA: (*flaring up*) You ask too many questions, Natalia! And there's something very nasty about your curiosity, too.

LUDMILA: Don't be angry—you mustn't—

LISA: (*coming in, terrified*) Vassa Borisovna—Sergei Petrovich—

VASSA: (*starts, but speaks calmly*) What? Is he calling me?

LISA: Seems as if he's dead. . . .

VASSA (*angrily*) You're crazy! (*Goes out quickly, Ludmila follows her. Natalia has risen to her feet. She stands staring at her uncle, who gazes at her in bewilderment)*

PROKHOR: Funny—my legs are shaking! Go along, Natka, go . . . What's happening there?

NATALIA: If he's dead, then there's no one to be tried?

PROKHOR: Go along, I'm telling you! (*Remains alone, drinks some cold tea. Mutters*) Hell of a business, ugh!

LISA: (*running in, and speaking in a terrified undertone*) Prokhor Borisovich, what does this mean? He was quite well . . .

PROKHOR: What—why? Was, and now he isn't any more. It may be only a faint, though?

LISA: He was perfectly well . . . Prokhor Borisovich—what about that powder—a little while ago . . .

PROKHOR: (*overwhelmed*) Wha-a-at? So you're—(*in a sudden rage seizes her by the throat and shakes her violently*) If you, you savage ugly mug, don't forget—if you . . . ah, you serpent! What's this story you're inventing, eh? How dare you? (*Pushes her away and mops his bald head.)*

LISA: You told me yourself to tell you everything.

PROKHOR: To tell me what? What you've seen, what you've heard—you can tell me that! But—did you see this? You made it all up! Made—it—up—you didn't see it at all. Clear out of here, you idiot. I'll give you—powder. You just forget that word . . . (*Drives her out. Rushes about the room, reaches the door and seems unable to move another step. Vassa and Ludmila come in, followed by Piatyerkin)*

PROKHOR: What is it, Vassya? Is he really? . . .

VASSA: Yes, he's dead.

LUDMILA: Mamma, I'm taking the laurel out?

VASSA: Yes, take it.

(Piatyerkin rolls out the tub with the laurel. Ludmila takes the pots of flowers from the window-sills and goes out but return directly)

PROKHOR: Amazing—how did it happen? He was perfectly—well . . . Till four o'clock this morning we were . . .

VASSA: Drinking brandy.

PROKHOR: That's right. Lisa was just telling me—about a powder . . .

VASSA: He was complaining of heart-burn. Asked me for soda.

PROKHOR: (*delighted*) Soda? A-a-ah!

LUDMILA: Uncle Prokhor, you *are* awful! Dad's just died and you're smiling. What do you mean by that?

PROKHOR: Never mind, Ludok . . .

VASSA: (*at the telephone*) 6-53. Yes. Thanks. Who? Is that you, Jacob Levovich? Please come. No, now, at once. Yes, Sergei Petrovich is dead. No, he was quite well. Quite suddenly. No one saw, how . . . Yes, please.

PROKHOR: (*softly, with admiration in his voice*) You're a grand chap, Vassa, by god, you are!

VASSA: (*astonished*) What's all this now? What are you talking about? Lost your wits? Fool!

ACT 2

A few months later. The same cheerful room. Vassa is sitting in the leather armchair. Ludmila, Natalia, Anna and Eugene Melnikov are sitting on the divan. They have just finished tea and the tea things and samovar are not yet cleared away. It is evening and the lamp is lit, but the room is in a soft twilight glow. Through the windows the black trees in the moonlit garden can be seen.

VASSA: Well, now, I've told you about marriage rites in old times, I've told you how wives and husbands lived together in days gone by.

ANNA: (*softly*) It is terrible.

NATALIA: And very silly.

LUDMILA: Why are people unhappy, Vassya?

EUGENE: Because of their stupidity.

VASSA: Why they're unhappy I don't know Ludka. Natalia and Eugene Onegin here know: they say it's all stupidity. But I've heard tell—yes, and I've seen it myself—that the clever folks are more unhappy than the fools.

EUGENE: If you take it that the rich are cleverer than the poor . . .

VASSA: Of course the rich are cleverer, but they live rotten, mean lives and the rich man never enjoys himself right-down heartily like a poor man does.

ANNA: That's true.

NATALIA: So one ought to live in poverty, is that it?

VASSA: That's it. Exactly. You have a go at it, Natka; just try it. Marry Onegin here and live your life. He'll be a sub-lieutenant in the infantry, and you'll be the regimental darling—there are such women. I'll give you no dowry so you'll have to live on forty rubles a month. On that sum you'll have to feed and clothe yourselves and keep boots on your feet, you'll have to entertain and feed your guests into the bargain. You'll breed children on that money, yes . . .

NATALIA: I'm not going to have any children. Why should one increase the number of wretches?

VASSA: That's sensible, of course. Why should one do it, as a matter of fact? So you know now, Onegin, that you've only forty rubles a month to look forward to and your orderly will be frying you cutlets made out of cheap, stringy meat every day.

EUGENE: (*gloomily*) Perhaps I'll get myself transferred to the navy.

LUDMILA: I'm not going to get married, either; I'd be terrified. It would be better to travel and see all the botanical gardens, hot-houses, Alpine meadows . . .

NATALIA: It's all got to be changed—marriage and—the whole of life, everything!

VASSA: Well, start and change it. Gouri Krotkikh will show you how to begin.

NATALIA: I don't need him to tell me, I know it'll begin with—revolution.

VASSA: Revolution did blaze up, but it burned out, and left nothing but smoke.

ANNA: You mean the Duma?

VASSA: Well—supposing I do. The brands are still hissing there. Damp wood burns slowly. A fine teacher Gouri. For two hundred rubles a month he teaches me to manage the business, and for fifteen rubles or so he'll

teach you how to make a revolution. Fifty kopeks a lesson. When he first came to work for me, he wore crumpled trousers and now—! I was looking at him in the theater not so long ago—his wife had gold things shining on her. That's the way of it, girls. So you're going to be a sailor, Onegin?

EUGENE: It isn't decided yet. Why do you keep calling me Onegin?

VASSA: Better decide. It's time you had a commission and you're still only a cadet. And I call you Onegin because . . .

NATALIA: He isn't in the least like Onegin in the opera.

VASSA: No? He looks like him to me—self-opinionated. . . . Oh, very well! Of course, you ought to know best, Nata, who he resembles.

NATALIA: Nobody.

VASSA: What, not like a man at all?

EUGENE: (*in an offended tone*) I really don't understand when you're joking and when you're serious. A curious way you have!

VASSA: Now don't you get mad, and don't get offended. Try to understand! I'll tell you something: when there was a strike down on the docks and the soldiers came, a fitter called Veslomtsev said to the sub-lieutenant: "Your honor gets forty rubles a month, I earn seventy-five and I can make up to a hundred. Since you serve the rich," says he, "and I'm richer than you, it follows that you oughtn't to shout at me."

EUGENE: I really don't see any point in this.

NATALIA: Mother likes teasing people.

VASSA: Yes, that's one of my faults! I'm an enemy of the people!

LUDMILA: That's not true, Vassya!

VASSA: Yes, it is. An enemy. Oh, very well. We've chatted and told each other stories, now you must go back to your own rooms, girls, and I'll do a bit of work. You stay here, Anna. Clear out, all of you, we'll see each other again at supper time. (*To Anna*) Now then, is it true Eugene's father has joined the "Union of the Russian People"?

ANNA: Yes, it's true.

VASSA: It's all on account of his son. They want to chuck Gene out of the Cadet School. I'm afraid he'll ruin my girl, that fop.

ANNA: In my opinion, Natasha bothers with him only out of sheer boredom.

VASSA: Bad-natured folk are never bored.

ANNA: She's been very gloomy since Sergei Petrovich's death. And, of course, those rumors. . . .

VASSA: Are they still going round—those rumors?

ANNA: Yes.

VASSA: And do you believe them?

ANNA: No. Only Lisa's suicide upset me. I can't understand why she took her own life. She was such a nice girl. She'd been with you since she was a child; everybody was fond of her.

VASSA: That was Prokhor's doing. He drove her to it.

ANNA: She lived with him, did she?

VASSA: He forced her to. But don't people believe Lisa was suffocated by the steam in the bath-house?

ANNA: Very few do.

(Paula comes in)

VASSA: What do you want? Well? What are you mumbling and shuffling for? Speak up.

PAULA: (*in a low tone*) There's a woman come. . . .

VASSA: What kind of a woman? At this time of night?

PAULA: It's a hard name—Moiseievna or something.

VASSA: Who-o? (*Steps forward briskly, then stops short. To Anna*) Don't say anything about this to the girls. I'll give them a surprise. Don't let anyone disturb me. (*To Paula*) Take away this samovar and put on the little one. (*Goes out*)

ANNA: Well, getting used to things here?

PAULA: It's a hard place. I thought I'd only have to look after the girls and that the mistress would have her own maid. Prokhor Borisovich needs a man-servant for himself—I can't do everything for him.

ANNA: Does he annoy you?

PAULA: Oh, he's such a shameless fellow—past bearing! Just now he's walking about with nothing on but his singlet, and singing, singing the same tune over and over again. After everybody had gone to bed last night, there he was, rattling those old locks of his and singing. Gives me the blues. What's he go on like that for, Anna Vassilievna?

ANNA: He's not quite right in his head; he's a dipsomaniac—that's to say, a boozer.

PAULA: I'm very thankful to you, though, it's a good house.

ANNA: But the people are no good, is that what you want to say?

PAULA: I'm not going to set myself up as a judge over people. I've been in court myself. And although they let me off, still, I've been in prison. Another thing, too, they say the last servant hanged herself in the bath-house.

ANNA: It's a lie. She was suffocated by the steam. She was pregnant.

PAULA: There you are, you see, pregnant!

LUDMILA: (*comes in carrying a round stool. She is followed by Piatyerkin, carrying a plant in a tub*) Here, put it here, it needs a lot of sun. No, you haven't put it right, move it into the middle.

PIATYERKIN: I will. How's that? (*he is kneeling as he asks*)

LUDMILA: That's right. What awful hair you've got. It must be as stiff as anything.

PIATYERKIN: Not a bit. Feel it.

LUDMILA: (*passing her hand over his mane*) It's just like a lion's.

PIATYERKIN: That's true. That's what everybody says.

LUDMILA: Who's everybody?

PIATYERKIN: All the folks I know. And—folks in general.

LUDMILA: What are you kneeling down for all the time?

PIATYERKIN: I like to kneel down before you.

LUDMILA: Now—you're just making that up! I'd never kneel before a man.

PIATYERKIN: You don't need to, he'd kneel before you. . . . You can do anything you're curious to do with a man.

LUDMILA: But I don't want anything. And I won't.

PIATYERKIN: That's just as you like.

LUDMILA: Wait a minute. I'll go and ask the gardener what we should take out of here. (*Goes out.*)

ANNA: (from her room) You're biting off more than you'll be able to chew, Piatyerkin.

PIATYERKIN: Don't be jealous. What do you know about it? You've got to have a try at everything.

ANNA: If Vassa gets to know of the talk you go on with. . . .
PIATYERKIN: Who'll she get to know it from?
ANNA: . . . . You'll go flying out of this house in two ticks.
PIATYERKIN: You'll never tell, and Ludmila will only understand the game when it's too late. Only don't you spoil it. There's no profit in your spoiling it for me. You get your share regularly, while I may be chucked out tomorrow. Well, and then your game'll be queered, too. . . .
ANNA: What does it all matter to me? Still, I don't fancy seeing you among the bosses, that would be a bit of a sell . . .
LUDMILA: (*returning*) You can go, Piatyerkin, there's nothing else.
PIATYERKIN: I wish you every happiness today and to the end of your life.
LUDMILA: Obliging fellow, isn't he?
ANNA: Yes.
LUDMILA: And you should see him dance! He's marvelous!
ANNA: Still, you ought to be careful with him, Luda.
LUDMILA: What harm can he do me?
ANNA: Make you pregnant—you'd have a baby.
LUDMILA: Ugh! How disgusting!
ANNA: What, the baby?
LUDMILA: No, you! You say disgusting things. (*Goes out*)
ANNA: (*calling after her*) But I'm only talking about a baby!
VASSA: (*comes in and dismisses Anna and Paula with a sweeping gesture. Rachel is a strikingly handsome woman of about thirty, dressed with severe and simple elegance*) Now, then, Rachel, sit down and tell us where you've come from and how?
RACHEL: I've come from abroad.
VASSA: Oh, I understood that. So they did let you into the country, after all?
RACHEL: No, I came as companion to a woman—a musician.
VASSA: You mean—with someone else's passport. You're a daring one. Bravo! And you're handsomer than ever. With looks like yours—m-yes. All right, then. How's Feodor? Tell me the truth.
RACHEL: It's not my business to hide the truth. There's no hope for Feodor, Vassa Borisovna. He's fading away. The doctors say he won't last more than two or three months.
VASSA: So he's wasted away, Captain Jelesnov's son?
RACHEL: Yes. He's so thin, almost transparent. He know he's doomed. But he's as gay and witty as ever. How is my Kolya?
VASSA: Feodor Jelesnov's wasted away. My heir. The head of the whole business.
RACHEL: Is Kolya asleep?
VASSA: Kolya? I don't know. Yes, I suppose he's asleep.
RACHEL: May I go and have a look at him?
VASSA: No, you mayn't.
RACHEL: Why?
VASSA: He's not here.
RACHEL: But—excuse me—what does this mean?
VASSA: It doesn't mean anything bad. Kolya's in the country, among pine-woods. Sandy soil. It's nice there. Living in the town's bad for him, he has something wrong with his tonsils. He's inherited bad health from his parents.
RACHEL: Is it very far away?
VASSA: About sixty versts.

RACHEL: How shall I get there?

VASSA: You don't need to go there. Now, then, Rachel, let's have it out with each other.

RACHEL: He's dead?

VASSA: No, there wouldn't be anything to talk about then, it could all be put in one word. No, he's alive and well, a fine, bright boy. What do you want with him?

RACHEL: I've decided to send him abroad. I've got a sister there who's married a professor of chemistry, and they've no children of their own.

VASSA: Just what I thought to myself: Rachel is sure to want to drag that child into her set. But I'm not going to give him up to you. I won't let you have Kolya!

RACHEL: What do you mean? I'm his mother.

VASSA: And I'm his grandmother. Your mother-in-law. Do you know what that means? I'm a law unto you. I'm the grand-dam, the head of the clan. My children are my hands, my grandchildren are my fingers. Understand that?

RACHEL: Just a moment . . . I really don't understand you. Surely you're not serious? This is something positively antediluvian. You're an intelligent woman, it can't be that you actually think like that.

VASSA: So's we needn't waste words, you'd better hold your tongue and listen. I won't give you back Kolya.

RACHEL: Impossible!

VASSA: I won't. Think, what can you do against me? Nothing. For the law—you don't exist as a person. The law knows you for a revolutionary, a fugitive. If you declare yourself, you'll be put in prison.

RACHEL: Would you actually take advantage of my position? I can't believe it! You won't do that. You'll give me back my son!

VASSA: You're talking foolishness. You're only wasting words. I'll do as I've said.

RACHEL: No!

VASSA: Don't bawl out like that! Keep calm. I won't give you Kolya. He's to have a different fate.

RACHEL: But . . . what . . . are you a wild beast?

VASSA: I'm telling you not to bawl. What's the sense in all this shouting? I'm not a wild beast. A wild beast feeds its young and then says: "Run off and fend for yourself—any way you like. Eat chickens if you like them, get calves if you fancy them more." Of course, I don't mean hares and the like, but the real wild beasts. You don't let your offspring go and search for his food. And I won't let my grandson out, either. My grandson's the heir to the Khrapov and Jelesnov Steamship Company. The only heir to a business worth a million. His aunts—Natalia and Ludmila—will get small portions—fifty thousand each, too much for them at that. The rest'll go to him.

RACHEL: You're mistaken if you think you can bribe me or console me that way, quite mistaken. It's impossible.

VASSA: Why should I bribe you? Why should I console you? You know, Rachel, I never regarded you as an enemy, even when I saw you were leading my son away from me. What use is he to me, sick as he is? I was never kind to him and I saw you were fond of him. And I said to you then: "It's all right, love him! Even a sick man needs a bit of pleasure." I was grateful to you for Feodor's sake.

RACHEL: (*flaring out*) It's all a lie! It's loathsome. I can't believe it . . . It's beastly!

VASSA: You don't believe it, yet you abuse me. Never mind, abuse me if you like. You do it because you don't understand. Think, what can you give your son? I know you, you're a stubborn one. You'll never give up those fanciful dreams of yours. You want to fan the flame of the revolution again. I want to strengthen my business. You'll be driven from prison to prison, from one place of exile to another. And the boy will have to live with strangers, in a strange country—an orphan. Rachel, make up your mind to it—I won't give you your son, I won't.

RACHEL: (*contemptuously, but in a quieter tone*) Yes, of course, you can do that, I know. You can even give me up to the police.

VASSA: Yes, I can do that, too. I can do everything! All's fair, they say, in love and war!

RACHEL: How can I touch your savage mind? Your heart—the heart of a wild beast?

VASSA: You're at it again—calling me wild beast. Let me tell you this: people are worse than wild beasts! Much worse! I know it! There are people in the world that make one want to bring the sky crashing down on them. Pull down their houses, burn everything they have, strip them all naked, starve them, freeze them out like cockroaches . . . So there!

RACHEL: Devil take you, there's something in you, in this hatred of yours, something valuable. . . .

VASSA: You're clever, Rachel, and maybe I regretted more than once you weren't my own daughter. Did I never say so to you? I always say everything I think.

RACHEL: (*glancing at her watch*) I suppose I may stay the night here, may I?

VASSA: Why not? Sleep here. I won't give you away to the police. The girls will be glad to see you. Delighted, they'll be. They're awfully fond of you. But I won't give Kolya back to you. So you might as well know it.

RACHEL: We'll see about that.

VASSA: You'll try to steal him? That's silly.

RACHEL: No, I'm not going to talk about it any more. I'm tired and unnerved, and besides, you've quite dazed me. You're enough to frighten anyone. When one listens to you, one begins to think there is such a thing as a criminal type.

VASSA: There's everything. Nothing worse can be invented, everything's been thought of already.

RACHEL: But you haven't very much time left now—you and your class—the masters. There's another master growing up, a force that's gaining strength and will crush you one day—crush you out of existence!

VASSA: My, how terrifying! Aye, Rachel, if I believed that, I'd say to you: "Rachel, take all my property and all my slyness for yourself—here take it all!"

RACHEL: Now that's a lie . . .

VASSA: . . . But, you see, I don't believe you, my prophetess. I can't believe you. It'll never happen—what you've prophesied, no!

RACHEL: And you're sorry? Are you?

VASSA: And what if I were to be sorry? Eh? Oh, you, you'd never understand. When my husband lost all the steamers, the wharves, the houses, the whole business—at cards one night, I was glad! Yes, believe me or

not, as you like, I was glad. He staked his last ring on a card, won back all his losses, with a bit over . . . After that, as you know, he started this ugly boozing and now for fifteen years I've been carrying this burden on my shoulders, this tremendous business of ours. I do it for the children's sake. The strength I've spent on it! But the children are all my hope and my grandson's my justification.

RACHEL: Just imagine how pleasant it must be for me to hear that my son is destined to be the justification for your shady dealings . . . to be sacrificed to your dirty business.

VASSA: It isn't pleasant? Never mind, I've heard one or two acid remarks from you, too. Let's have some tea now. We'll be polite to each other before the girls, won't we?

RACHEL: Don't tell them I've come over under an assumed name. And there's no need for them to know what we were arguing about. They won't be able to settle anything, anyhow.

VASSA: Of course not, that's clear. (*Paula appears in the doorway*) Call the girls in. But not that cadet—tell them. Whisper to them, so's he won't hear. And bring in the samovar. Go along. So that's how we met, Rachel!

RACHEL: An unpleasant meeting.

VASSA: What's to be done? Only children live in a pleasant world, and that not for very long, either.

RACHEL: Still, it seems so fantastic to me—all this . . .

VASSA: (*kicking a chair*) How do you mean—fantastic?

LUDMILA: (*running in, followed by Natalia*) Oh, who's this? It's Rachel! Rachel!

NATALIA: Why didn't you wire?

VASSA: Natka likes asking questions. If you were to say so much as "good morning" to her, she'd ask "why?"

RACHEL: You haven't changed, Ludmila, you're just as sweet as ever; you don't seem to have grown at all these last two years.

LUDMILA: That's bad, isn't it?

RACHEL: No, of course not. Now, Nata . . .

NATALIA: Has grown old.

RACHEL: You don't say of a girl that she's grown more manly, but that's exactly the impression you give.

NATALIA: Ripened—is what you should say.

RACHEL: No—that's something different. (*The girls are delighted to see Rachel, who speaks rather wearily, hardly taking her eyes off Vassa. The sisters make her sit down on the divan. Vassa sits at the table, calmly making tea.*)

LUDMILA: Sit down, tell us about yourself.

NATALIA: How's Feodor? Is he getting better?

RACHEL: No, Feodor's in a bad way.

NATALIA: Why did you leave him, then?

RACHEL: I've come for my boy, for Kolya.

VASSA: But I'm not letting him go abroad.

LUDMILA: Rachel dear, he's grown so charming, Kolya has. So clever and daring. He lives in Khomutovo, away in the woods. A lovely village. Such pine woods.

NATALIA: Why, has he been taken away from Bogodukhovo?

LUDMILA: Bogodukhovo's a lovely place, too. There's a grove of lime-trees and lots of bee-hives.

RACHEL: It seems that you don't know exactly where he is either, do you?
VASSA: Come up to the table, all of you.
RACHEL: Tell me how you're getting on?
LUDMILA: I—I'm getting on splendidly. In the spring, you see, Vassya and I began to work in the garden. Early in the morning she comes and calls me: "Get up!" she says. We have our breakfast and then go out into the garden. Ah, Rachel, you should see what it's like now—our garden! (*Anna comes in, shakes hands with Rachel in silence. She says something to Vassa and they go out together.*) As soon as you get into the garden, you see, it's all spattered with dew and glitters in the sunshine—just like a brocade chasuble, really your heart seems to grow faint—it's so beautiful! A couple of years ago we sent for nearly a hundred rubles' worth of flower-seeds. Nobody else in the town has such flowers as we have. I've got books on gardening, too, and I'm learning German. So we work as silent as nuns, as if we were dumb. We don't talk but we know what each other is thinking. I sing something perhaps. Then I stop, and Vassya calls out: "Sing!" And I see her face—a long way off, a kind good-natured face . . .
RACHEL: So you're happy, eh?
LUDMILA: Yes! It makes me ashamed, even. It's so surprisingly good—life is!
RACHEL: And you, Nata?
NATALIA: I? Oh yes, I'm surprised, too.
PROKHOR: (*coming in tipsy, with a guitar*) B-bah! It's Rachel! (*Sings*)
"Whence come, fair child?" Oh, how much prettier you've grown!
RACHEL: You're the same as ever.
PROKHOR: Yes, no better, and no worse. And just the very same trump cards in my hands.
RACHEL: On a spree all the time?
PROKHOR: Exactly. It's my trade. My great point is my open-hearted gaiety. It's my nature. Captain Jelesnov died, so for the glory of the family and the business, I have to do the boozing for both of us.
RACHEL: Been dragging on a long time?
PROKHOR: Oh yes, he'd been dragging on a long time. Time for him to go, that's true.
(*Ludmila giggles*)
RACHEL: I didn't mean that. I meant had his illness been dragging on a long time?
PROKHOR: Who, the Captain? He wasn't ill. It happened all of a sudden—and then—"Rest with the saints in peace!"
NATALIA: Stop it, Uncle! Indecent, I call it!
PROKHOR: What, the saints are indecent? Don't you teach me, girl, you're too young to teach anyone! But where have you sprung from, "lady—that blighted—my—life?" From Switzerland? Is Feodor still alive?
RACHEL: Yes.
PROKHOR: Is he in a bad state?
RACHEL: Yes, very bad.
PROKHOR: The Jelesnov breed isn't long-lived, we Khrapovs are a bit sturdier! Still, your son Kolka's a fine little lad, the scamp. So sharp. Once Jelesnov and I were abusing each other at dinner time. Next day, when I saw the boy, I said, "Hello, Kolya!" and he says to me. "Clear

out, you tipsy mug!" Knocked me over, it did. It was in the morning, too, I was quite sober. But what's going on here? You're having tea. Only cabbies drink tea, the right kind of people quench their thirst with wine. . . . It'll be here in a moment. Port, and such port! Even the Spaniards have never even had a whiff of it. Natalia knows . . .

(Moves towards the door. Vassa comes forward to meet him)

VASSA: What happened at the club?
PROKHOR: At the club? How do you know?
VASSA: I got to know over the telephone.
PROKHOR: There was a row over something political. Quite simple.
VASSA: They'll be writing about you again in the papers.
PROKHOR: Why about me? I only struck one blow. The fellow was yapping about the Duma, and I gave him one in the eye.
VASSA: Listen, Prokhor . . .
PROKHOR: I'm coming back in a minute and then I'll listen. (*sings*)
"Tempt me not if need be one."
LUDMILA How funny he is, isn't he? He drinks more and more nowadays. He teaches Natalia to drink, too.
NATALIA: He's taught me already.
RACHEL: Are you serious, Nata?
NATALIA: Yes. I like wine very much. And I like to feel tipsy.
VASSA: You'd better add—"and there's no one to thrash me for it."
NATALIA: And there's no one to thrash me for it.
VASSA: Natalia, don't act silly.
NATALIA: You told me to add that and I did.
VASSA: You're lucky I've no time to knock the devil out of you.
LUDMILA: Nata's awfully impertinent to Mother, Rachel, as you can see. That's very bad, in my opinion.
VASSA: You aim at living like gentry, Nata. With good manners. But you're just a pig, for all that.
NATALIA: Pigs of a good breed are prized very highly.
VASSA: (*indignantly*) That's the way we live, Rachel.
RACHEL: It's a bad way to live, but you don't deserve any better. This senseless life is only what you deserve.
VASSA: It's a lie.
RACHEL: Not only you, personally, but your whole class.
VASSA: Now, she's off!
RACHEL: People abroad live just as badly. Perhaps, they've sunk even lower, because they're quieter and torment each other less than you do.
NATALIA: Is that true? Or are you only saying it to console us?
RACHEL: It's true, Natasha. I'm not the sort to offer consolation to anyone. The world of the rich is tumbling to pieces, although they're better organized there than here. Everything's tumbling to pieces, beginning with the family, though the family there is like a cage of iron, whereas with us it's only a wooden one.
VASSA: Rachel!
RACHEL: What?
VASSA: Stay with us. You said yourself Feodor will die soon. You've done enough knocking about the world, traveling from place to place, hiding. Live with us and bring up your son. Here are my little girls. They're fond of you. You're fond of your son.

RACHEL: There's something immeasurably higher than our personal ties and attachments.

VASSA: I know. There's one's business. But it turns out like this: although you can gain something, and you've got somewhere to put it—still, sometimes you don't want to take it.

RACHEL: This isn't your own thought—that you're expressing now.

VASSA: What do you mean?—Not my own?

RACHEL: You may sometimes feel tired of your business, perhaps, but you never feel the utter senselessness, the cruelty of it—never. I know you. You're a slave, when all's said and done. You're clever and strong, but you're a slave. The worms and mildew and rust spoil things, and things spoil you.

VASSA: Sounds complicated. But it can hardly be true. What I wanted was that the Governor of the Province should have to carry chamber-pots out for me, that the priest should say his prayers—not to the holy saints—but to me—a black sinner, to my wicked soul.

RACHEL: That sounds like Dostoievsky, and it doesn't suit you.

NATALIA: Mother doesn't know anything about Dostoievsky, she doesn't read books.

VASSA: What Dostoievsky? The thought of how I've been wronged made me say it. Things I never deserved. The girls know, I was telling them today, how I was . . .

PROKHOR: (*comes in carrying two bottles of wine*) Here you are! Now, then, let's be serious. Vassya, allow me to treat you to a glass of this? You won't regret it. It's a rare good wine.

VASSA: All right, then, come on! Come up to the table, girls! Why shouldn't we have some wine? My daughter-in-law's come to see us. Let's drink, Prokhor. Who was it you assaulted today?

PROKHOR: Our tenant Melnikov—gave him one in the eye. Someone else, too. It was nothing, though. It'll soon heal up!

VASSA: Do you know what? Melnikov's got his name down in the "Union of the Russian people."

PROKHOR: Well, what about it? As if that was of any importance. I've got my name down in the telephone-book and I'm not proud. Glasses!

(The telephone rings)

VASSA: That's for me. *(At the telephone)* Who's that? Yes, it's me. What steamer? Why? The idiots! Who loaded it? At Ufa? Terentiev? Sack him, the blockhead! It's necessary for me to be present? Why? They've seized the barge? What else? Besides leather . . . Oh, the devils! The sanitary commission's there? And the inspector as well? I'm coming over at once. *(Flings down the receiver)* Well, you wait for me quietly here. There's a row: they've seized a barge, the idiot of a clerk let them load hides on it before they were stamped by the sanitary inspector. There are sheepskins and bast and tow on the barge besides. Well, I'm off. *(Goes out, catching Rachel's eye as she does so)*

PROKHOR: Gone to bribe the river-police. The river-police here are regular robbers. And the land-police are no better. To the devil with them, anyway. I'm filling up the glasses. Natalochka, this'll be even better than your favorite wine. *(Chants as if in church)*

"Fill your glass, brother, fill your glass,
Drain your glass, brother, drain your glass"

ACT 3

Directly after Vassa Jelesnova's departure. Prokhor is smoking a cigar. Ludmila is engrossed in the biscuits she is dipping in a saucer of jam and eating. Natalia is seated beside Rachel, holding a wineglass. Rachel appears thoughtful.

PROKHOR: This is the sort of life we live, Rachel, a restless life. We're for ever being bothered by the police. *(Guffaws)*

RACHEL: Are you mayor now?

PROKHOR: I have been—in my dreams. But afterwards I thought to myself: "What the devil do I want to saddle myself with a burden like this for? Surely I'd do better to live—free as a Cossack.

NATALIA: It's not true. You're not a bit of a free Cossack. And you backed out of the elections because you're a coward.

PROKHOR: It's terrible the way Natalia loves to bully me. She bullies everyone, as a matter of fact. Young as she is, she's a reguiar harpy. Very like —m-yes. She told the truth, however, whem she said, I was very discreet. After the Captain died . . .

NATALIA: After Father died, it was rumored that he had poisoned himself . . . They even said we poisoned him, so as to avoid the disgrace of the trial.

LUDMILA: Such nonsense.

PROKHOR: Nonsense, that's exactly what it was. And this filthy business was stopped by the Public Prosecutor . . .

NATALIA: For lack of evidence. But Uncle was so scared by the rumors; he thought he wouldn't be elected mayor.

PROKHOR: That'll do, Natka!

NATALIA: What he should have done was to go on in spite of the rumors, in spite of the people . . .

PROKHOR: She's always like that—all for going on in spite of everyone.

RACHEL: (stroking Natalia's hand) That's how she should be!

NATALIA: Rachel, if the evidence is insufficient, it doesn't mean that the defendant is innocent, does it?

RACHEL: No, it doesn't.

LUDMILA: But must one really go against everyone, Rachel? Can't one just live . . .

NATALIA: Like a fool, like Ludmila Jelesnova.

LUDMILA: It's no use calling me names, it doesn't make me angry. Oh, Rachel, I don't like hatred and all that sort of thing.

NATALIA: She likes biscuits and jam.

LUDMILA: You're only envying me because I do like them. You're vexed because you've no appetite. If you ate more, you wouldn't be so bad-tempered.

PROKHOR: (sings) "I feel no anger though my heart is sore." Apart from biscuits and jam and all kinds of sweet things, Ludmila adores something military, adorned with feathers—like a Red Indian.

LUDMILA: 'Tisn't a bit true!

PROKHOR: You know what, let's chuck all this talk about the family, the past, and the rest of it—to blazes. Let's kick up a bit of a shindy while the missus is away. I'll show you a dancer, Rachel—o-oh, you'll simply gasp. Now, then, Luda, call in Piatyerkin.

LUDMILA: Oh, that'll be grand!

PROKHOR: Let him fetch his guitar. *(To Rachel)* When are you going to see your son?

RACHEL: Is he far away?

PROKHOR: About twenty-three or twenty-five versts. A regular cure, he is. Not very strong, but a nice little fellow.

RACHEL: His grandmother doesn't want to give him back to me.

PROKHOR: She's quite right, too. What do you want with the child, while you're a fugitive?

RACHEL: What do you think, Nata?

NATALIA: Make her give him up to you. If she won't, steal him.

PROKHOR: Oho!

NATALIA: Yes, do, steal him, take him away, and hide him. You see the kind of people we are! You can see . . .

RACHEL: Steal him? Take him away? This I can't do.

NATALIA: Why?

RACHEL: I have more serious business to attend to.

NATALIA: More serious than your son? Have you? Then why did you have a child, if you have more serious business to attend to? Why?

RACHEL: I know it was a mistake.

NATALIA: But what is this business of yours? Is it—what you were talking about—two years ago. I remember, I remember very well.

RACHEL: But—you don't believe in it?

NATALIA: No, I don't.

RACHEL: That's because you don't understand it. As for me—I have no other life outside this. And even supposing I lose—even supposing I never see Kolya again . . .

PROKHOR: Wait! That's a good idea, though,—to steal him. It would be splendid, Rachel! Phew, that'd be like a pitchfork in my sister's side! Rachel, do something, will you! Natka and I will help you, honestly. And then I've got Piatyerkin—he can do anything.

RACHEL: Oh, stop!

PROKHOR: Aleshka Piatyerkin? Why, he'd steal a bishop, let alone a little boy!

RACHEL: As if I'd let you fool about with my son . . .

PROKHOR: He's a bold lad, Piatyerkin, served in the army—at the base mostly. Leshka, let's sing "God's little birdie!" Remember, it's for abroad, for Europe, understand. It's got to be perfect. Absolutely faultless! *(Prokhor takes the guitar from Piatyerkin's hand and tunes it. Ludmila has brought in a balalaika, and a tambourine which she hands to her sister)*

PROKHOR: Now, girls, with tender melancholy. Particularly the tambourine. It should be made to hum, not be thumped . . .

LUDMILA: We know.

PROKHOR: Begin. *(In his usual chant. Ludmila and Piatyerkin join in)*

God's little bird knows nothing
Of toil and care and strife.
We never find him hindering
Us in any walk of life.
He dozes on his perch all night,
And with the morning light,
God's voice he hears and preens himself
And sings with all his might.

(chorus)

Lady, my lady
Want a bit of fun,
Lady, my lady,
You're the very one!

Go it, Leshka, keep it up. Put a bit more devil into it. Hey, hey!

From Rostov came a lady
At Tolstoi for to look,
From Orel came another
And then she took her hook!"
Lady, my lady . . .

(Piatyerkin gives an excellent comic demonstration of the old "Barinya" dance. Ludmila sings with gusto. Prokhor is excited. Natalia shakes the tambourine mechanically and gazes at Rachel, who sits as if in a dream)

My lady has affairs abroad,
To gay Paree she took the road
And when she got there what did she see
But a red-haired Frenchie on the spree.
Lady, my lady . . .

NATALIA: That's enough.
PROKHOR: Why?
NATALIA: I don't want it any more!
LUDMILA: Phew, isn't she horrid!
(Rachel rises and moves away. Natalia follows her in a more leisurely way and stands by the window)
NATALIA: What do you think of it?
RACHEL: It's dreadful.
NATALIA: I'd rather kill the child than leave him here.
RACHEL: (putting an arm around her shoulders) I can't take him abroad without Vassa Borisovna's help.
NATALIA: Uncle will arrange it for you. He'd be delighted to get at Mother in some way or other. He'll steal the boy and we'll hide him. Then we'll send him to you.
RACHEL: Where to? I don't know where I'll be living. If I manage to get back to Switzerland, I'll only stay there a few weeks. I must come back to Russia. There's no chance of my being able to bring up Kolya myself. But if he was with my sister in Lausanne—that would be the best thing for him.
PROKHOR: (stops Piatyerkin and shouts) Didn't you like it?
RACHEL: No.
PROKHOR: You've no feeling for art!
RACHEL: And your singing's unbearable . . .
PROKHOR: You'll have to excuse that. My line is boozing and cards—you can't beat me at them, but I haven't been gifted with a singing voice by nature. My soul is tender, but my throat's dry. Inclined to creak. Clear out, Piatyerkin, you're no good. We didn't appeal to the audience. Rachel, come on up to my rooms, I'll show you my collection of padlocks.
RACHEL: I've seen it.
PROKHOR: When? You should see it now! I've got thirty-seven store-house padlocks, four fortress-locks, forty-two—with music—for trunks. You'll

never see such a thing anywhere. And besides that—but come along. I want to have a word with you. Very important. *(Takes her arm and leads her away: she accompanies him with reluctance)*

NATALIA: (glancing at her sister) What's up with you?

LUDMILA: Nothing. I want to go to sleep.

NATALIA: Go along.

LUDMILA: I feel dull and lonely. I'd like to cry.

NATALIA: Go to bed and cry yourself to sleep.

LUDMILA: It always happens like that. I'll wait up for Vassya. I hate when she's not at home.

NATALIA: You call her by a man's name oftener and oftener now.

LUDMILA: Because I love her and you don't.

NATALIA: And I don't love her.

LUDMILA: She knows it.

NATALIA: Yes, it would be funny if she didn't.

LUDMILA: Yet you're very like her, very.

NATALIA: That's why we don't care for each other.

LUDMILA: She is fond of you.

NATALIA: She's fond of tormenting me.

LUDMILA: It's you who torments her.

NATALIA: So I do.

LUDMILA: How silly you are! Uncle's awfully silly, too, suggesting Kolya should be kidnapped.

NATALIA: Don't tell Mother anything about it.

LUDMILA: Of course I will.

NATALIA: What for?

LUDMILA: All right, I won't then, it'll only upset her, I won't tell.

NATALIA: (sighing) Yes, you're a bit balmy. A degenerate. Not like anyone else.

VASSA: (coming in) What—are you quareling?

LUDMILA: No, just chatting.

VASSA: A bit loud for an ordinary chat. Prokhor's been smoking a cigar in here—the times I've asked him not to smoke his cigars in my room. Natalia, you've had too much to drink, it seems.

NATALIA: I can still stand on my feet.

VASSA: (pouring out a glass of port) Is the tea cold? Pour some out for me.

(Natalia pours it out)

VASSA: Seven hundred rubles—and I might as well have thrown them into the fire. Everywhere there are people taking bribes and everyone has his price. What have you been doing here?

NATALIA: Having tea.

LUDMILA: Piatyerkin danced. And Uncle tried to persuade Rachel to let them steal Kolya.

VASSA: Likes his little joke, doesn't he? And what did she say?

LUDMILA: She wouldn't agree. She's grown very dull, somehow. Much worse than she was. Unpleasant. All clever people are unpleasant.

VASSA: Oh, am I a fool, in your opinion?

LUDMILA: You're not a fool and you're not a clever person: You're simply a human woman.

VASSA: I'm sure I don't know what that means. Is it something worse than a fool? Well, we'll leave it at that, then—a human woman. Take out

the samovar and tell them to light it again. Natalia, would you like to go abroad?

NATALIA: Yes, I would. You know it.

VASSA: You can go. You'll take Anna with you.

NATALIA: I won't go if I have to go with Anna.

VASSA: Why?

NATALIA: I'm sick of her here as it is.

VASSA: I won't let you go by yourself. Aye, girl . . .

NATALIA: Yes.

VASSA: I've no time to talk to you.

NATALIA: But you'll find time to bring up Kolya, won't you?

VASSA: He doesn't need much.

NATALIA: He needs more than I do.

VASSA: Go abroad with Anna; you'll see Feodor.

NATALIA: That doesn't tempt me.

VASSA: (screaming) You devil! Hold your tongue!

NATALIA: Very well, I will.

RACHEL: (coming in) What's the matter?

VASSA: I was shouting—for nothing. Yes, for nothing. I came in upset. It's given me a sort of stitch in my heart. Well, Rachel? So Prokhor's offered to steal Kolya for you?

RACHEL: He was tipsy when he said it.

VASSA: He might do it when he was sober, though. You ought to be going to bed, girls, it's getting late, isn't it?

LUDMILA: But what about supper?

VASSA: Oh, I forgot. I'm thirsty. I'd like some hot tea. Well, go and tell them to set the table. What have you to say, Rachel?

RACHEL: Listen, Vassa Borisovna. Give me back my son and I'll send him abroad.

VASSA: So you want to start arguing with me again? No, I won't give him up.

RACHEL: I can't imagine what you're going to do with him? How will you bring him up?

VASSA: Don't you worry, we'll manage that. We're settled folks. We've got money. We'll hire the best teachers, professors. Give him an education.

RACHEL: You won't have him taught what an honest man should know. Kolya'll have to live in this house with all these balalaikas, and guitars and rich food, and his tippling uncle and two young women: one almost infantile, the other—too malevolent. Vassa Borisovna, I know your class quite well, both here and abroad: It's a class that's suffering from an incurable disease! You live automatically, enslaved by your business, submissive to the power of things not created by you. You go on living, despising one another and never facing the question: what do you live for? What use are you to anyone? Even the best of you, the cleverer among you, only live because you loathe death, and are terrified of it.

VASSA: Have you finished? Well, have a rest and listen to me. What I don't understand about you is this: how can it be that a bold mind like yours goes blind and lame when you talk about life? It's all class, class. My dear, my shipping manager Gouri Krotkikh understands more about class than you do: revolutions are only right when they're useful to this stupid propertied class. But you're talking about illegal revolution—something that isn't real. It's all clear to Krotkikh: the Socialists should unite the workers in the interests of industry and trade. That's what he suggests and—he's

right! He's no fool in that way, although he's not very sharp in business yet.

RACHEL: His name's Krotkikh—that means meek. And he preaches a doctrine that suits his name, that'll make all the proletarians meek. He's not the only one of the kind. There are plenty of them to be met with. And, since he's your faithful slave, you've allowed him to climb fairly high.

VASSA: You must understand, Rachel, I'm—Vassa Khrapova—and I have nothing whatever to do with this class. It's dying out, you say? That doesn't concern me. I'm quite healthy. My business is in my own hands. No one can hinder me, and there's nothing you can frighten me with. I've enough to last my time, and I've saved a tidy bit for my grandson. That's what my conversation amounts to, that's the long and short of it. I shan't give Kolya back to you. Let's make an end of it, then. It's time for supper. I'm tired.

RACHEL: I shan't have any supper. Your bread would choke me . . . Where can I go and rest?

VASSA: Go along then. Natalia will show you where. *(Rises with difficulty from her chair. Sits down again. Calls out)* Anna! *(There is no reply)* My bread would choke her . . . Who else would dare to say such a thing to me? Ugh! the vixen! *(Rings the bell)*

PAULA: Did you ring?

VASSA: No, it was the devil under the stove! Where's Anna?

PAULA: With the young ladies.

VASSA: Send her here. *(Sits listening to something, feels her throat and coughs. Anna comes in)* What went on while I was out?

ANNA: Prokhor Borisovich offered to steal Kolya.

VASSA: Did he suggest it himself?

ANNA: Yes. At first he said: "Vassa's quite right, there's no point in your having your boy with you," and then all of a sudden he seemed delighted to think what a slap in the eye it would be for his sister.

VASSA: What did Natalia say?

ANNA: It was she who suggested stealing the boy.

VASSA: You must be muddling it up. You're lying.

ANNA: I'm not muddling anything. It was this way: When Rachel Moiscievna said you were going to keep Kolya, Prokhor Borisovich said: "Quite right, too." But when Natasha suggested stealing the boy, he agreed.

VASSA: He did?All he wants is to get at me somehow. If he could snap at my heel, even, and bite it, he'd be glad.

ANNA: He said Piatyerkin could steal a bishop for him, let alone a child.

VASSA: That's a dirty dog, that Piatyerkin.

ANNA: A regular low-down boot-licker. Hasn't a spark of conscience or honor. And such a hard, impudent fellow.

VASSA: We'll soften him.

ANNA: Don't you feel well?

VASSA: Why?

ANNA: I can tell by your face.

VASSA: My daughters didn't notice anything in my face. All right. I'm sending you abroad, Anna.

ANNA: (dumbfounded) Me?

VASSA: Yes, you. With Natalia. Or perhaps by yourself.

ANNA: Good heavens, how glad I am! I've no words even to thank you.

VASSA: You don't need to. You've deserved it. You never lie to me, do you?

ANNA: Never.

VASSA: That's that, then. You'll take a letter to Feodor. Don't show the letter to Natalia. Write at once to me and tell me how Feodor is. Ask the doctors there. Do you remember your German?

ANNA: Yes, oh yes, I remember it.

VASSA: Well, then . . . If Feodor's in a bad way—wait for the end. Oh well, we can talk over everything afterwards. And now—this is what you have to do: go to the Political Police and ask for the colonel of the gendarmes—Popov's his name. You must find him at all costs! Make them send for him if he's not there. Tell them it's very urgent and important.

ANNA: Vassa Borisovna . . .

VASSA: You listen! Tell him Rachel Topaz, the political emigrant, has arrived from abroad and is at my house. He knows who she is. It was he who arrested her last. Tell him that if it's necessary to arrest her again it should be done outside—in the street somewhere, but they shouldn't come to my house. Do you understand?

ANNA: Yes, only . . . how?

VASSA: You listen, listen! If they come to the house, then it'll be clear that you gave her away. Or I did. And I don't want any more foolish rumors to get about the town again. See?

ANNA: I . . . can't . . .

VASSA (surprised) You can't? Why?

ANNA: I can't make up my mind to do it.

VASSA: You're sorry for her? And you're not sorry for Kolya? She'll be arrested anyhow, if not tomorrow—then the day after tomorrow. What, are you refusing to do something for me? That's strange. I can't believe it.

ANNA: No! Oh, Lord, no! I'd give my life for you! Why should I be sorry for that Jewess? She despised me, you know.

VASSA: (suspiciously) What are you mumbling about, eh? I don't understand you.

ANNA: I'm afraid of going there at night, to the police.

VASSA: Oh, don't be silly . . . What can they do, they can't eat you. *(Looks at her watch)* Perhaps you're right, though, it is rather late. Popov'll be out playing cards somewhere. All right. You'll do it tomorrow morning, early. About seven o'clock. Insist that they should wake the Colonel.

ANNA: Well—thank you very much . . . *(Seizes Vassa's hand and kisses it)*

VASSA: (wiping her hand on her skirt) Silly fool! Why, you're all in a sweat, your face is dripping . . . *(Anna wipes her face)* Rachel is trying to frighten me, croaking and quacking at me all the time about class, class. What class, I'd like to know! I'll show them class! She hates me. Yes, me. Stole away my son from me, she did, just like a gipsy would lead away a horse. But she won't get her son back, no! *(Sits silent awhile thinking)* I don't feel well, somehow. Am I tired or what? Make me some raspberry-tea, I'll sweat it off.

LUDMILA: Vassya, supper's ready.

VASSA: Aren't you fond of eating?

LUDMILA: Yes, I am. Very fond of it.

VASSA: I've got a nice surprise for you. It's not anything to eat, though. It's for living in.

LUDMILA: You always . . .

VASSA: I've decided to buy our neighbor's house, Princess Kugusheva's: that'll add a bit to our little garden, won't it?

LUDMILA: Oh, Mother, how lovely!

VASSA: That's right. The young prince has evidently got into a scrape, gambling.

LUDMILA: How nice! Goodness me!

VASSA: The Princess is selling it in a hurry. I'll pay the deposit tomorrow. It'll be as good as a holiday to you.

LUDMILA: How do you manage to find time for everything? Come on, let's go and have supper.

VASSA: I don't want any. I'm not well. I'll just have some raspberry tea and go to bed. Have your supper without me!

LUDMILA: What about tea?

VASSA: Yes, send the samovar in, I'd like a drink. Is Rachel there?

LUDMILA: She's locked herself into the yellow room; she doesn't want any supper, either. How disagreeable she's grown. So important!

VASSA: Go along, Ludka, go along.

(Left alone, she moves about the room, treading cautiously as if on ice, clinging to the backs of chairs, coughing and growling) Business—affairs—more and more of them. *(Is about to sit down, but hesitates, standing with her back to the door)* Ought I to send for the doctor, I wonder?

PIATYERKIN: (tipsy and more tousled than ever—his hair literally standing on end—comes in, puts out his tongue at her and distorts his features into a frightful grimace. Then picks up his guitar and gives a twang to the bass string)

VASSA (starting) Oh! What's that—who is it? What do you want?

PIATYERKIN: I just came in for my g-g-guitar . . .

VASSA: Clear out, you devil!

PIATYERKIN: I'm going . . . Why not? Why, I'm not a dog, I'm not going to live in gentlefolk's rooms.

VASSA: Fool! What a devil . . . *(Sits down heavily on the divan, tries to undo the collar of her blouse. Falls over on her side. For a few seconds there is dead silence.)*

ANNA: (with a tray on which are cups and a teapot) Shall I take it into your bedroom? *(Stands waiting for a reply. The tray shakes in her hand and a cup rattles. She sets the tray cautiously on the table, and bends over to look in Vassa's face. Then straightens up at once, speaks in a loud whisper)* Oh ,lord, Vassa Borisavna, what's the matter with you? *(Listens a while then darts over to the desk and pulls open a drawer. Rummages in it, finds some money and thrusts it into the bosom of her dress. She opens the dispatch-box on the table. There is money in this, too. She hides it, takes out the keys, puts them in her pocket, and slams the box shut noisily. Then she runs out of the room.*

NATALIA: (comes in quickly, followed by Prokhor. The others, Anna, Paula and Piatyerkin, appear one by one. Natalia feels her Mother's face and says in an unnecessarily loud voice) She's dead.

PROKHOR: Now, there you are! Jelesnov went off suddenly, and now—she's gone. The town'll begin to talk again—the same old nonsense. Phew! If that isn't . . . the very devil . . .

NATALIA: Shut up!

PROKHOR: What is there to shut up about? Nata, better keep your eye on Anna. We'll need the keys. The key of the safe. She knows everything, does Anna! See if the keys are in the pocket of Vassa's skirt.

NATALIA: I don't want to. Go away.

PROKHOR: Oh, yes, I'll go out all right; you catch me doing it.
ANNA: (in tears) Natalia Sergeievna, Ludochka's fainted . . .
NATALIA: Ring up the doctor . . .
ANNA: I've rung him up. Heavens, what shall we do?
PROKHOR: Where are the keys? Where's the key of the safe?
NATALIA: Have they told Rachel?
ANNA: Need we tell her, Natalia Sergeievna?
NATALIA: You're a downright swine! *(Goes out quickly)*
ANNA: (whimperingly) What did she call me that for?
PROKHOR: Now then, you . . . don't go on soft! The key of the safe I'm asking you? Where is it?
ANNA: Prokhor Borisovich, don't forget—for thirteen years I've faithfully, loyally . . . *(Fumbles about in the pockets of Vassa's skirt)*
PROKHOR: You'll get as much as you 're worth.
ANNA: All my best years I've given you . . . Here's the key!
PROKHOR: (goes over to the table, saying to Piatyerkin) Leshka, don't let anyone in. Stop . . . What's this? *(With obvious gratification)* I'm to be guardian until the children come of age. Well, if that isn't . . .! I can't realize it yet! Eh! *(Chuckles, glancing at Anna)* Go to blazes, Anna! You're not going to live here like a pet cat any more. Go to the devil! Tomorrow. I'm sick to death of you, eavesdropping and spying, I'm sick of you, you bitch!
ANNA: Prokhor Borisovich, you'll regret it. It's no use for you to . . .
PROKHOR: Go along now. You've had your share, you've pinched enough. Quick march!
ANNA: No! Allow me! I have something. . . .
PROKHOR: Yes, you have. I bet you have something. That's just what I'm saying. *(Rachel and Natalia come in)*
RACHEL: (to Prokhor, who is rummaging among the papers on the table) Stealing, are you?
PROKHOR: Why should I? I'm only taking what's my own.
(Paula leads Ludmila in)
LUDMILA: (breaking away from Paula and flinging herself down on the divan) Mother! Mother!
RACHEL: (to Prokhor) Your own! What have you of your own?

Translated by Anthony Wixley

R. Akutakava

The General[1]

Ryunoske Akutakava was one of the most gifted Japanese writers in the decade that followed the world war. His favorite medium was the short story. His treatment and subject matter—the stylized rendition of the historic past, search for the colorful and the unusual—show a strong influence of late 19th century Western literature.

Akutakava traveled a lonely road. The evils and injustices of the feudal-imperialist society in which he lived repelled him, but his training and environment prevented him from rising above his class. Instead of going with the revolutionary intellectuals who took their stand with the proletariat he conducted a solitary and fruitless quest for permanent moral values. The failure of such efforts caused him to abandon himself to cynicism and discouragement. His despairing attacks on the society around him, which were devoid of any clue or suggestion of something better, merely alienated the reader and increased the writer's own sense of his emptiness and isolation.

It was this growing sense of futility, coupled with the signs of approaching insanity, hereditary in his family, that caused him to commit suicide in July, 1927.

1. The White Tasuki Detachment[2]

It happened at dawn on the sixth of December in the 37th year of Meitsze.[3] A white tasuki detachment of the . . . th regiment, . . . th division, was on the march, ordered out to attack Hill 93 from the north side, and capture the enemy reserve battery, strongly entrenched in the Sunshushang mountains. On the winding road, protected by mountains, the detachment moved ahead, in columns four abreast, — a regiment marching on a dark, lonely road, the white of the tasuki dimly visible in the early morning gloom, measured steps breaking the dead silence. The commander, Captain M., was quiet; the soldiers, as usual, cheerful—stimulated by the spirit of "Yamato-tamaskii," and rations of alcohol.

About daybreak, the detachment reached a rocky river valley, over which strong winds blew from the mountains.

"Look back," called out private Taguti, a former paper merchant, to private Horiyo. "Look there! They're giving us a salute!"

Horiyo looked around. On the crest of a hill, a rising black silhouette against a reddish sky, a group of officers, headed by a colonel, were waving farewell to the soldiers, departing for fields of death.

"Swell, isn't it? To be in a white tasuki company is an honor!"

"You think so? What sort of an honor is it?" Private Horiyo asked bitterly, and swung his rifle over his shoulder. "We're all going to our deaths. Now, they even say . . . . . Doesn't it cost little enough?"

"Don't talk like that! It's not good to speak so before . . . . . ."

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[1] The story *General* is dedictated to a historical figure, General Nogi. General Nogi belongs to the group of statesmen of "new Japan," particularly to the period of the Russo-Japanese War; men whose names are widely used for nationalist propaganda. The biography of General Nogi serves as a permanent illustration of those monarchistic ideas, which are today being instilled in all students.

The blank spaces, filled in by rows of dots, which appear frequently in the story, are the results of the "labor of the Japanese censor, who did a conscientious job with the story *General.*"

[2] Tasuki are ribbons used to tie the wide sleeves of Japanese uniforms so as not to hinder work. With European-cut sleeves, tasuki serve only as a decoration. Tasuki are also called shoulder-knots.

[3] 1904.

"Good, not good—what the hell! A liter of liquor in a soldier's canteen—and even that he wouldn't sell for your honor."

Private Taguti grew silent. He was used to his comrade's jeering after a few drinks. But Horiyo stubbornly continued the conversation.

"No, you won't buy it for honor. That's why they're all blowing so hard about honor. But it's all lies! What do you say? Isn't that true?"

This last was addressed to a quiet non-commissioned officer, Egi, a former elementary grade school teacher. For some reason the usually quiet N.C.O. became excited.

"You fool! As if we weren't going to our deaths!" was the angry reply.

The white tasuki detachment was now clambering up the far side of the river valley. They reached six or seven mud-plastered huts, vague in the half-light, above which loomed the cold, dark brown Sunshushang mountain. Passing through the village, the soldiers scattered to numerous mountain paths, and began to crawl slowly toward the enemy's position.

The N.C.O. squirmed upwards on all fours. "A liter of liquor in a soldier's canteen, and even that he wouldn't sell for your honor." Horiyo's words still burned in Egi's mind and hurt like an old wound. Creeping over the hard ground, he thought of the war, of death, and in all these thoughts, he could discover not one ray of light. Let it be death and . . . . . after all, it still is a cursed monster. War . . . . he almost did not consider war a crime. But . . . And that's all! Yet he, and not only he,—more than two thousand men, chosen from different divisions for the white tasuki detachment, willingly or unwillingly, must die in the name of the great . . .

"They've arrived! They're here! What regiment are you from?"

Non-commissioned officer Egi looked about him. The detachment had reached the mustering point at the foot of the Sunshushang. There, already gathered, were soldiers from various divisions, in khaki uniforms, decorated with old-fashioned tasuki. One of them, sitting on a stone, squeezing a pimple on his face, called to him.

" . . .nth regiment,"

"The bread regiment."

N.C.O. Egi with a gloomy face did not respond to the jest.

A few hours later shells were screaming overhead. On the slope of Sunshushang, towering directly before them, Japanese naval artillery, stationed at Litsiatung, was blowing up clouds of yellow dirt. Each time a cloud of earth shot upwards, a lilac-colored flame appeared for a moment in the air. Despite the heavy bombardment, the white tasuki soldiers, not to be crushed by fear, kept up a forced gaiety—that was all they had left.

Thus it went on!

Horiyo looked at the sky. A weird howl cut the air, directly over him. He instinctively drew in his head and turned to Taguti, who was covering his nose with a handkerchief, against the dust and sand.

"That was a 28 cm. shell."

Taguti grinned weakly, and glancing quickly around, he hid his handkerchief in his pocket. It was a fancy one, with embroidered edges, given him by a Geisha girl, just before leaving for the front.

"The 28 cm.'s have a different sound," he answered, and suddenly stood up confused. At the same time, other soldiers, as if by silent command, jumped to attention. General H., accompanied by several staff officers, was approaching.

"Quiet! Quiet!"

The general took in the detachment with a glance. "A bit crowded here." His voice was studied. "You need not salute. You white tasuki, what regiment?"

Taguti, seeing the general looking at him, was as confused as a girl.

" . . nth infantry regiment."

"So! Well, show your best!"

The general shook his hand, and turning to Horiyo, shook his hand also. "And you too, show your best!"

As the general spoke to him, Horiyo stood as if turned to stone; broad shoulders, big hands, weather-beaten face with prominent cheek bones,—this, in the eyes of the old general, was a typical warrior of the Empire. The general continued energetically:

"Over there is a battery, which is firing at us. You will take that battery tonight! The reserve forces that will follow you will capture all the other batteries in the vicinity. That means—attack, and all attack at once." His voice sounded a bit theatrical. "You understand? Of course, no stopping on the way. No shooting! A headlong attack! As if your body was a shell! Be brave!" The general again shook Horiyo's hand, to emphasize the word "brave," and walked on down the line.

"Not much to be gay about," Horiyo turned to Taguti. "Well, well. So the big shot shook hands with you!"

Taguti smiled lamely. At the sight of this Horiyo felt uncomfortable and at the same time disgusted.

N.C.O. Egi joined the conversation: "Well, how was the handshake . . ."

"Now, that's enough. What's the use of poking fun." At this point Horiyo couldn't help but smile.

"When I think about it, that . . . . . ., I get mad. I know that I'm giving my life away," said Egi.

Taguti answered him: "Yes, we're all giving our lives for our Fatherland."

"What for—I don't know, only I do know, that I'm giving it away. Look . . . . . " Egi's eyebrows twitched nervously.

"Yes, that's the way I feel about it. If thieves steal money from you, they won't tell you . . . But we'll have to die wherever it may be. But if we must die, then doesn't it pay to make. . . ." While he spoke, there appeared in the eyes of the half-drunken Horiyo, a look of contempt for his good-natured comrade. "To give away your life—and that's all?"—He looked up at the sky thoughtfully and decided that that very night, together with the others, in answer to the general's handshake, he would become a live shell. . . .

Shorty after eight o'clock that night, N.C.O. Egi, struck down by a hand grenade, lay on the slope of Sunshushang, his body charred black. Tearing his way through the barbed wire entanglement, a soldier from the white tasuki detachment staggered towards him. Seeing the lifeless body, he stopped, put his foot on the charred chest, and broke into peals of laughter—loud and horrible above the awful din of the rifle fire.

"Banzai! Long live Japan! The devils are surrendering! The enemy is smashed! Long live the . . . nth regiment. Banzai! Banzai!"

Again and again he screamed, waving the rifle, not noticing the explosion of the hand grenade that split the darkness. The flare of light revealed the face of private Horiyo, who, wounded in the head, had gone mad.

Translated by E. Peterson

2. Spies

On the morning of March 5 in the 38th year of Meidzi[1] two Chinese were being questioned in a dimly lighted room, at the headquarters of Cavalry Squadron A, located at Tsuan-shenchu. They had just been detained on suspicion of spying and had been brought to the headquarters by a sentry from . . . Regiment which was temporarily attached to the brigade.

This day as usual, the kany[2] filled the low-lying hut with a mild warmth. But the dreary atmosphere of war pervaded everything and was emphasized by the clink of spurs on the brick floor, the color of the coats thrown over the table. The photograph of a Geisha girl, with a European hairdress, hanging on the dusty white wall spangled with red paper strips, lent a singular note of tragi-comedy.

The Chinese, who were surrounded by the staff officer, his adjutant and the interpreter, gave clear answers to all the interpreter's questions. Indeed one of them, apparently the older, who wore a small beard, began his explanations even before the interpreter had had time to ask him anything. But the very readiness of the answers aroused a vague mistrust in the staff officer and made him even more inclined to suspect the two of espionage.

The commanding officer called in nasal tones to the sentry who had detained the Chinese. This soldier was none other than the private Taguti from the detachment of the white tasuki. He stood in the doorway and gazed at the picture of the Geisha girl. Frightened by the officer's tone, he shouted at the top of his lungs:

"Yes, sir!"

"It was you who caught them? When did it happen?"

The good-natured Taguti replied as though he were quoting from print:

"I was standing at my post at the north end of the village on the Mukden road when these Chinese came from the direction of Mukden. At that moment the regiment commander in the tree . . ."

"What regiment commander in the tree?"

The staff officer raised his eyebrows.

"That's right. The regiment commander had climbed a tree in order to get a better view. The commander of the regiment ordered me to arrest them from the tree. But when I tried to detain them, that one, without the beard, started running. . . ."

"Is that all?"

"That's all."

"Very well."

With a disappointed expression on his beefy face the staff officer conveyed the contents of the next question to the translator. The translator spoke with a forced animation in order to hide his boredom.

"If you aren't a spy, then why did you run?"

"Why shouldn't I run? Why, the Japanese soldier almost rushed at us," answered the second Chinese without the least hesitancy. His skin was a leaden color, probably from opium poisoning.

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[1] 1905

[2] Heating system used in China and Korea, which consists of heating the floor and benches from below.

"But weren't you walking along a road where a battle was going on? No peaceful person would be walking in such a place," said the adjutant, who knew Chinese; he darted an ugly look at the suspects.

"No, we had our reasons, as we just told you, we were on our way to Sinmyntun to change paper money. See, here are the notes."

The bearded Chinese calmly scrutinized the officer's faces. The staff officer sniffed. He secretly enjoyed the adjutant's discomfiture.

"Risk your life to change money?" The aide laughed drily, not wishing to concede the point.

"In any case we'll make them strip."

The interpreter translated the officer's order. The Chinese rapidly undressed without the least trepidation.

"One of them still has a stomach band on. Make him take it off!"

When the translator took off the stomach band he felt that the white linen was still warm from the man's body and this aroused a vague feeling of revulsion. Three large pins were fastened to the band, three suns[1] in length. The officer lengthily examined the pins in the window light. However, save for the colored pattern on the flat end there was nothing unusual about them.

"What's this?"

"I take injections," said the bearded one calmly.

"Take off your shoes."

Even though they had uncovered parts of the body that were never uncovered, they regarded the result of the search with almost complete equanimity. They found no evidence in either the socks or the shoes, not to mention the trousers and jackets. All that remained was to rip the shoes apart, and the adjutant was on the point of suggesting this to the officer when the brigade commander and officers from Staff Headquarters led by the commander-in-chief came in from the next room. The general was paying a visit to the brigade commander in order to settle something with the adjutants on the staff.

"Russian spies, eh?" the General asked, halting before the Chinese. He regarded them sharply. His eyes had a way of acquiring an insane glitter at times.

The staff officer briefly reported the circumstances to the general. The general merely nodded from time to time as though reminded of something.

"All that remains is to flog them in order to make them confess," the staff officer said. At these words the general motioned with a hand which grasped a map, towards the shoes of the Chinese lying on the floor.

"Examine the shoes."

The turned the shoes inside out; as they did so five or six papers and secret documents, sewn to the inside, fell out. Seeing this the faces of the Chinese changed. However, they continued to stare blankly at the floor.

"I thought so," said the general with a smile of self-satisfaction, turning to the brigade commander. "Shoes are always suspicious. Have them dressed, I've seen plenty of spies like them before!"

"I am amazed at your excellency's penetration," said the aide with an ingratiating smile, handing the proof of espionage to the brigade commander,

[1] Sun — 3 centimetres.

as though he had forgotten that before the general came in, he himself had thought of the shoes.

"Well, if you didn't find anything even when they undressed, that meant that the only place left for them to hide anything in was their shoes." The general was still in a good humor. "I always suspect shoes right from the start."

"Yes, the local population is very unreliable; when we first came they hung out Japanese flags and when we searched the houses we discovered they had Russian flags stowed away."

The brigade commander was also in high spirits.

"A slippery lot!"

"Exactly, you have to treat them rough!"

Throughout this conversation the staff officer and interpreter continued to search the Chinese. Turning suddenly to the private Taguti with a peeved expression the officer literally spat out the command:

"Well, soldier, you caught the spies. You go shoot them."

Twenty minutes later, south of the village at the road edge, both Chinese sat on the trunk of a dead willow tied together by their pigtails. Private Taguti fixed his bayonet and untied their pigtails. Then, raising his rifle he stood behind the older Chinese. However, before stabbing he wanted to warn him at any rate.

"Nee," [1] he began, but he didn't know the Chinese word "to kill."

"Nee, I'll kill you now."

Both Chinese, as though by agreement, looked around simultaneously but without any sign of fear they began bowing in different directions "bidding farewell to their country." That was how private Taguti explained their behavior to himself as he fixed his bayonet.

Having finished bowing, they were apparently inwardly prepared for death and calmly craned their necks. Private Taguti grabbed his gun. But in the face of their resignation his hands didn't rise to thrust the bayonet.

"Nee, I'm going to kill you," he involuntarily repeated. At that moment a cavalry man came riding up from the direction of the village. The horse's hooves raised a cloud of dust.

"He, soldier!"

He came closer. It turned out to be a sergeant-major. Seeing the Chinese he reined his horse and shouted loftily:

"Russian spies, eh? They must be Russian spies. Let me finish off one of them."

Private Taguti gave a wry smile.

"You can have both of them!"

"That's what I call generous!"

The corporal jumped down lightly from the saddle, then going behind the backs of the Chinese he drew the Japanese sword that hung at his side. At that point the clatter of galloping hooves again approached from the direction of the village. Three officers arrived. Unmindful of them, the corporal raised his sword. But before he had swung it the three officers came over to him. The commander-in-chief! The corporal and Private Taguti turned towards the general on horseback and saluted.

"Russian spies!"

The maniacal gleam came into the general's eyes for an instant.

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[1] Nee—"you" in Chinese.

"Give it to them!" At these words the corporal swung his sword and with one stroke cut down the young Chinese. The severed head bounced over the willow roots. The blood spread in a broad stain on the yellowish earth.

"Splendid!" Bending down with a satisfied expression the general spurred his horse.

Having followed the general with his eyes the corporal raised his bloody sword and stationed himself behind the second Chinese.

"If only I could kill," Private Taguti thought, sitting down on the willow. The corporal again swung his sword. The bearded Chinese silently craned his neck without batting an eyelid. . . .

One of the commanding officers, accompanying the general—Colonel Hodzumi—surveyed the bleak plain.

But his eyes saw neither the withered thickets in the distance, or the heaps of stone along the roadside. The words of his former favorite author, Stendahl, were ringing in his head.

"When I look at a man covered with decorations I can't keep from wondering what crimes he had to commit in order to win those decorations."

When he awoke from his reverie he noticed that he had lagged far behind the general. With a slight shudder he spurred his horse. The gilt trimmings on his uniform flashed in the pale light of the sun which had just cleared the horizon.

N. Virta

Loneliness[1]

Antonov's winter campaign had ended successfully. He had cut off Saratov, Balashov and Kamyshin—the best grain districts—from both Moscow and Tambov, had upset regular traffic on the South-Eastern Railway, derailed trains more than once, won in battle the biggest and richest hamlet in the province, Rasskasovo, looted it and distributed salt, kerosene and dress materials among the peasants. More than once, he threatened the town of Tambov itself.

The spring was a good one for Antonov's purpose: there was a great deal of water everywhere, and the roads were in a terrible state.

The rivers that spring were turbulent: the snow was melting fast in the warm sunshine; through the dells rattled little streamlets, and when the ice began to move, the rivers rose to an unheard of height and flooded fields, villages and isolated farmsteads.

And, like a full river, the rebellion overflowed and spread farther and farther, as if the old, peaceful, quiet life had overflowed its banks. Plujnikov and Ishin got no sleep for a week sometimes. They rode about the villages, forming committees, organizing intelligence work, catching supporters of the Reds.

"The Bolsheviks are shouting that the war is over, that the bourgeoisie has been crushed, and all that's left now is to beat us. But if the war is over, why aren't things easier for the peasant? Why don't they do away with the grain-assessment? All right, let's allow that formerly the grain went to the troops, but where does it go now? Now, brothers, it goes to the towns, because the worker's on strike, the worker's on strike, the worker's in a nasty mood, the worker'll rebel before we know where we are! So he's got to have his mouth stopped, and they squeeze the peasant and there it goes—there's no end to it."

The moujiks were disturbed. Just then came the news of the Kronstadt mutiny.

On the fifth of March, a messenger galloped into Kamenka. His exhausted horse was staggering, and barely reached the steps of headquarters before it fell. The horseman was pale and swayed as he walked; his clothes were covered with mud, locks of his matted flaxen hair stuck out from under his cap.

He handed a letter from Gorsky to Antonov, who read it aloud to the hastily-summoned leaders.

"On March 2nd, in the Kronstadt, a provisional revolutionary committee was formed of sailors, Red Army men and workers who declared themselves in power. General Koslovsky (a general has poked his nose even in here, flashed through Antonov's mind) General Koslovsky has taken over the command of the defense of the fortress. The mutineers demand the summoning of the Constituent Assembly, soviets without Communists, and freedom for private trading. The army, with Voroshilov and Tukhachevsky at the head, has been sent to put down the mutiny."

"I've been in the Kronstadt," Antonov cried. "They'll never take it. Those

[1] This is the third installment of the novel. For the first two, see Int. Lit. Nos. 9 and 10. For review of the play see Int. Lit. No. 10.

bastards'll never take the sailors. Ride round the villages, boys, and spread the news!"

The alarm bell was rung in the villages, calling the people together, and through the countryside the word was passed: "Petrograd's ours! It's the end of the Communists!"

There had not been such a holiday for many a day in the villages of Tambov. Dressed up in their best clothes, the people paraded the streets. Accordions and gay clothes appeared, a strong smell of home-distilled vodka hung about: gallons of it were drunk that day.

"No point in saving the grain, now that all Russia's going to be ours!"

The village lasses, shaking their shoulders and stamping their feet with abandon, sang:

"Oh, listen dear lass, to my woe today,
My handsome sweetheart has gone far away,
With the sailors out to sea."

To which another would reply:

"Oh, listen, dear lass, to my news today,
It'll make you wipe your tears away.
Our sailors have won all Russia for me!"

When the celebrations were at their height, a sailor named Brajny came from Kamenka with some friends of his. They were all in sailor togs—caps with long fluttering ribbons, wide trousers; they were very drunk, armed to the teeth and mounted on fiery horses! They cantered through the village, flourishing their whips, flirting with the girls, and bawling ribald songs. At the gate of Seliverst Petrovitch's yard they were stopped by Ilya.

"My father wants you to come in to dinner!"

Brajny made a fuss, put on airs at first but eventually agreed, and the gang made for the house.

Seliverst put on his blue cloth jacket, hung his medal on his chest to show that he was not just a common nobody but had visited the tsar along with other village elders and received a royal favor.

His boots creaked and smelt of tar; he made all his meek, rosy-cheeked daughters and daughters-in-law sit down at the table. The sailors sat down among them, squeezing close, stroking their stout thighs and sweating.

Seliverst raised the first glass.

"Let's drink to freedom, sailors and brothers," he said in an oily tone. "For ever and ever."

"Hurrah!" Brajny barked, giving a pinch to Ilya's wife. She squealed, but Ilya only frowned—what could one say to an honored guest?

"What's the Kronstadt?" boasted Brajny, who, it should be mentioned, had never been in the Kronstadt and had never been a sailor.

"It's a fortress! A fortress!" he went on. "And the boys there are all our own flesh and blood."

"We'll not allow it! One, two—and we'll send all Russia to the devil. Three!—there'll be nothing left of it. That's your Kronstadt for you," he concluded.

Thoroughly drunk now, this being the fifth or seventh village where he had been boozing, Brajny threw his arms around Ilya's wife and wept.

Seliverst was startled and insulted, but the sailors kept pulling and tugging at him; they all demanded that he should clink glasses with them and kiss them. Seliverst, who had already had too much to drink, grew red and merry and started to dance.

The curious neighbors stared in through the windows, the lads and lasses giggled, and flattening their noses against the panes, watched the goings-on.

"On an occasion like this," cried Seliverst, "we ought to have a prayer-service."

"Fetch your priest over here," bawled Brajny, waking up. "I'll make mincemeat of him, the curly devil. Let him read the funeral service, god help him."

They dispatched a rider for the priest. Father Stepan arrived very soon; he had been driven by the whip of the rider whom Seliverst had sent for him and the deacon.

Storojev, grave and important as usual, came to the service. He and Father Stepan and the deacon whispered together for some time wondering what government to mention and how to pray.

Storojev, experienced in ecclesiastical matters, composed in less than no time a prayer for "the people's hero, Antonov and his brothers-in-arms" and "our fearless peasant troops."

During the prayers, Brajny behaved rowdily and attempted to sing something. The priest was annoyed and shook his head disapprovingly.

After prayers the sailors went up to kiss the cross. Brajny almost vomited over Father Stepan's cassock and stole, but eventually embraced him and fed him with drink until the priest went to sleep under the table. In the evening the sailors roamed about the village, broke some windows, beat some people with whips, and assaulted girls. Towards morning the sailors were found beaten almost to death, while Brajny lay with his skull broken; that was the end of the spree. . . .

Life was gay in Kamenka those days. Once Storojev happened to glance in at headquarters.

What he saw made him sick. Antonov was sitting in an armchair, with his tunic open and his feet bare; his hair was tousled and his bloodshot eyes looked crazy.

Before him stood the commissar of a division that had been beaten by Safirov near Kamenka.

"What is it you want, eh?" Antonov demanded, hiccoughing. "Go on, kiss my foot, and I'll let you go home, honestly, I will."

"I want death," said the man in a low, weary tone. "Kill me if you like, but don't mock at me."

The man was tall, thin, unshaven and blood-stained. His long nose looked pinched like that of a corpse.

"Give him the long leave," Ishin said, guffawing.

Hermann was singing a wild song. Only Plujnikov looked slyly on at the scene, his eyes gleaming oilily from all the vodka he had drunk. About twenty of the men at headquarters were drinking, kissing each other, and squabbling. The house literally shook with the row. Tokmakov was not there; he had gone eastwards with the army.

"This won't do, Alexander Stepanovitch," said Storojev. "Folks are starting to act like rowdies and misbehave themselves. They finished off a sailor for this sort of thing and what are you doing?"

"Hold your tongue, swine!" Antonov shouted, trying to rise.

"Give 'em both the long leave," Ishin bawled. "He's too clever, that grey-headed devil."

Then Storojev stepped in front of the tall, thin man, and pulling out his colt automatic shook it under Antonov's nose.

"I could knock the guts out of you in half a crack! Now then, put away your gun."

Ishin roared with laughter.

"Come along," said Storojev, white with passion, to the commissar. He took him out and shot him behind the shed in the garden.

The Kronstadt mutiny had turned Antonov's head. He invented extraordinary plans, took no notice of the looting that had begun, and quarreled with Tokmakov, Plujnikov, and his other friends whenever they warned him of approaching catastrophe.

He had become very high-handed. Now he aimed at making himself the leader of a national rebellion.

He took up with suspicious characters, about whom disgraceful things were rumored, and made them commanders of regiments. He sheltered whomever Gorsky sent him, all who were refugees from the Soviet government. He surrounded himself with ex-officers and threatened to appoint as chief of staff a slobbering general who had made his way to Kamenka and was a relative of Gorsky's. To protests, Antonov answered: "That's enough! I'm in command here now!"

Once, in the course of a conversation with Plujnikov, Antonov flung out contemptuously:

"You? What would any of you have done without me? Who'd be in command? Writers and talkers—to hell with them! I'm in command of the people's army and I'm asking you to hold your tongue."

A week after the villages had heard of the events in the Baltic, Storojev grew bolder. He came to Dvoriki, called a village meeting, and announced that he would shoot with his own hand any man who dared to plough his acres at Lake Lebyaji. The peasants listened in silence to his short speech and departed.

The land belonged to Peter Ivanovitch once more. Again he prepared his seed, gloating over it, sorting, cleaning and airing it, putting the ploughs in order, mending the carts. He hurried the work and shouted at his sons when they seemed to him too slow in making preparations for the spring.

He could not quite believe yet that the land was his again. He hastened to sow it, to say to the world again and again:

"It's my land! I bought it! I'm taking care of it. Don't touch my land."

It made him mad to think that a stranger might come to those acres and stand on those boundaries, might call himself master of the land and snatch it from Storojev and his family. And the more he feared and trembled for his land, the fiercer and more unquenchable grew his hatred of the people who attempted to lay hands on it.

Those days he resembled a hungry dog when a fat toothsome bone is taken away from him.

Had it been possible, he would never have left his land, but would have died there, defending his fields, his sown soil, his right to dispose of the lives of the weak and the poor, to command, to have power, to grow rich, to put by rubles and kopeks in the bank, to buy new estates, new pastures.

There it was, the land he had secured for himself. And now he had won power and respect for himself. People were afraid of him, conversation ceased when he passed their houses, people envied him. . . .

But there was no permanence about this power and strength.

"They'll come from the north," he thought to himself, "people from the north, from Moscow, will come for my land, and snatch away my strength

as they snatched away my laborer, Lenka. They're coming to break my power, and set people over me, over us Storojevs. They'll set up the rag-tag-and-bobtail and all the rabble from Fool's End—Mitka Besperstov or my brother Simon. And I'm to bow down to them, I am to be under their heel. To give up my land."

The thought stung him, his malice increased, his hatred never cooled for a moment. It made him still more indefatigable in his search for enemies. He went out scouting alone, or with a handful of his men, burst into villages where small detachments of Reds had halted, interrogated people, shot them, burned down houses, whipped peasants suspected of communicating with the Reds, formed secret Social-Revolutionary committees in the villages that had not yet joined the rebellion.

He was clinging to his land, fighting to save his power.

Now the earth flung off the last remains of blackened, porous snow. Streams rattled through the dells. The river receded within its banks. The spate was over.

Beyond the villages lay steaming, black juicy fields upon which the moujiks gazed yearningly. There had been no ploughing done in the autumn and now there were no horses to plough with and no seed to sow. Exhausted, mangy horses wandered about the yards as if blind; there were few enough of these poor beasts. Antonov's army was growing, the regiments had to be supplied with mounts. Antonov had been unlucky in his search for horses in Saratov, he had been obliged to turn to "his own" districts.

The peasants had turned nasty, and had only made wry mouths when the agitators explained that it was for the peasants' own good that the horses were taken.

There were no more military sprees. The floods had ebbed, the day of reckoning was at hand.

On the seventeenth of March the Red Army, headed by Voroshilov and Tukhachevsky, attacked the last bastion of the Kronstadt.

The delegates to the Tenth Party Congress, sitting at that time, went in the front rank of the warriors. In the chill, foggy dawn the fortress fell. When the news came to Kamenka, Antonov drowned his sorrows in drink. He retreated further and further from his comrades-in-arms, and often sat for hours in the woods, thinking of something vague that weighed him down.

A week later Peter Tokmakov was wounded in a skirmish near Chemlyk; he was brought home dead to Kamenka. His yellow eyes, his narrow, blue mouth were closed forever. Now he would never have to think and worry any more over anything.

Antonov sat all night by his friend's coffin. Then he cried all day, with his head on Marussia Kossova's knees. At last she had won Alexander Stepanovitch over to loving her, but his love was malicious. He treated her with contempt, as if he vented on her all that he had suffered himself.

But sorrow had to be put aside. He had to think of business, and find a new commander for the First Army. Once again the Union and the military headquarters were at loggerheads.

Antonov, egged on by Bogulavsky, who was in command of the Second Army, and by the ex-officers, wanted to appoint Gorsky's relative, the slobbering general, to the command of the First Army. He justified this desire by asserting that the Reds were preparing for decisive action and that there-

fore it was necessary to place at the head of the troops people who were thoroughly well-acquainted with military affairs.

The Union protested. Ishin was loud and violent in his opposition to this move at the meetings.

"What the devil's all this?" he shouted, trickling saliva. "Wherever anything starts brewing, you're sure to find the generals. In Jaroslavl Savinkov started the job; then they found Colonel Perkhurov. In Siberia they dragged in Admiral Kolchak, in the Kronstadt, General Koslovsky suddenly turned up. To hell with them all! . . . ."

Plujnikov supported Ishin.

"When the generals come in, we'll be chucked out. We do the cooking and they'll do the eating. But don't you think we're going to allow it for a moment."

Passions raged for a whole week. Antonov often held meetings to which none of the committee-members were invited. Ishin threatened to raise a counter-rebellion against Antonov.

"Look out," cried Ishin savagely, "you'll go too far yet."

But the arguments were unexpectedly cut short . . . Safirov shot the general, whom he caught doing something indecent with a young boy. The command of the First Army was accepted by Kusnetsov.

He took the reins into his hands quickly, but things had taken a threatening turn. Forces they had not anticipated were moving against them.

In February, Lenin sent for Nemtsev, the secretary of the Tambov provincial committee of the Party, to come to Moscow. Even before then, Vladimir Ilyitch had brought up the problem of the struggle with banditry, at the meetings of the Political Bureau and the Labor and Defense Council. He had kept an eye on the course of events in Tambov Province and had read the Tambov papers. Through the Military Headquarters at Tambov he had received triumphant reports that told him of battles and victories; yet the movement seemed to be spreading and growing stronger, nourished from some unknown source.

Nemtsev arrived. Lenin held long conversations with him more than once, and the secretary of the provincial committee gave Lenin an account of the situation.

A telegram ordering the immediate cancellation of the grain-assessment was sent to Tambov. That was the first news of the great and important changes imminent, the first mine laid under the *kulak* rebellion by the Party.

At that time, over 800 Tambov moujiks were in prison in Moscow and Tambov. They had been arrested on various charges, some for aiding Antonov, some for espionage, some for armed resistance to the soviets.

There were all kinds amongst them: rich moujiks, others who had joined Antonov's army but not entirely of their own free will, and some like grandad—Vassili Bocharov—from Bakharevo. The story of grandad's arrest was as follows: he was one of the poorest of the poor peasants. He and his old wife had nothing but potatoes to eat all year round. When Antonov came to Bakharevo, he dropped in at Vassili's miserable little cabin. The old man was thunderstruck and began to kiss Antonov's hands and beg from him. Antonov gave orders that Vassili be presented with one of the cows that had been taken away from the Communists. The cow was brought to him. A week later her owner turned up and led her away. Grandad did not forget. Once the cow's owner—a member of the soviet—was slow in

escaping from the village when Antonov's men were entering it. He hid in the hemp. Grandad saw him, crept away to headquarters and gave his enemy up. The man was shot dead on the spot. The cow, by the way, was not returned to grandad. Antonov's men killed and ate her then and there. Grandad was arrested for this affair. It was his third month in prison; he cursed himself for his greed, prayed fervently and abused "that cheat," Antonov, for all he was worth.

"Pulled my leg nicely, the son-of-a-bitch," he muttered. "A poor fellow like me," he muttered. " A poor fellow like me, ah, how unfortunate I am!"

One day Vassili was called to the office and told that Lenin wanted to see him.

"Well, that's the end of me. Lenin'll kill me," said the old man, shaking all over. But the chief patted him on the shoulder and quieted him.

That day Lenin was receiving a delegation of Tambov peasants in the Kremlin, and having a plain, heart-to-heart talk with them. There were others present: the sturdy, black-moustached Stalin, the bespectacled, smiling Kalinin, some military men, and Nemtsev, the secretary from Tambov.

Grandad Vassili had greased his hair and smoothed it down. Decent-looking but feeling very shy, he asked his neighbor in a whisper which was Lenin. Wasn't it that fellow over there? He pointed to a huge, stout, military man.

"No," replied his neighbor, "that one."

"Go on, you're lying," said grandad Vassili incredulously.

His neighbor crossed himself and swore it was the truth. Vassili shook his head: so that was the case. Well, to think of that now! Lenin tore his attention away from the papers piled up on the table, leaned back in his chair, stuck his thumbs in the armholes of his waistcoat and smiled pleasantly. "That's a sly fellow!" thought grandad Vassili. Kalinin said we should let bygones be bygones and laughed, and grandad Vassili laughed too, and felt more at his ease. But he never took his eyes off Lenin and his companions.

A moujik whom grandad did not know was talking about the Soviet farm and the land that was taken from Prince Lichtenberg.

Lenin took notes.

"So that's the way things are, Mikhail Ivanovitch," the moujik was saying calmly and simply to Kalinin. "You're asking me now, what we're dissatisfied with, and why Antonov is still on the go? All right, I'll tell you. This Prince Lichtenberg must have owned 3,000 *dessyatins* round our village. Two thousand went into the Soviet farm. Well, all right, the government needs our grain; we understand that. But the *sovkhoz* is spoiling the land, making it filthy. It turns out that neither you nor the dog will get anything out of it! The potatoes have been taken away from us again. They take stuff from us and then let it rot. And there's no salt. Things are bad in the country.

"We were given salt once—that's all. There aren't any clothes to be had. No boots. So the people are dissatisfied. And Antonov's a sharp fellow; he guessed what was up . . ."

Lenin leaned over and asked Nemtsev something. The latter took out his writing-pad, opened it and made some reply. The black-moustached Stalin listened to the conversation and drew something on a piece of paper. Kalinin's spectacles flashed as he looked over the peasants. They talked together for a long time. One after the other the moujiks spoke, complainig of the grain-assessment, explaining their troubles and grievances, and declaring that farming was beyond them now. Lenin listened, screwing up his eyes, evidently

turning over something in his mind. Occasionally he whispered to his neighbors. Towards the end he spoke. Grandad put his hand to his ear and listened.

"Comrades," Lenin began. Grandad was astonished to find that Lenin spoke in such a plain way; he did not sound his "r's" quite perfectly.

Lenin spoke so simply that old Vassili understood everything: the kind of war Russia had been flung into and how the generals had started a campaign but broken their necks, and why the grain-assessment had been unavoidable and all about that cheat Antonov and how folks in Moscow were racking their brains over the affairs of the moujiks.

"Well, comrades," said Lenin, "we must now try to meet the requirements of the peasants, who are still dissatisfied and have a perfect right to be dissatisfied and could not be otherwise. . . . Yes, this state of things mustn't go on any longer."

Lenin began to tell them what the Party intended to do to assist the villages ruined by the war.

Grandad Vassili screwed up his eyes with pleasure: everything Lenin said tallied exactly with all that Vassili had always thought, only Vassili had never been able to collect his thoughts in a heap like that.

"The tax we're going to substitute for the grain-assessment will most likely be fixed at the lowest rate."

The moujiks stirred: a murmur of approval arose from their ranks. They smiled, and so did the people sitting beside Lenin. Then Kalinin joined in the conversation.

"Everyone of you," he said, "will know beforehand how much he must give back to the State for the upkeep of the schools, the army, and the hospitals." He smiled cheerfully.

The moujiks clapped their hands. Old Vassili clapped, too, and laughed as he had not laughed for a long time.

"And as for the rest of the grain—do what you like with it! Improve your homes, get yourselves boots and clothes. It's all in your own hands."

In conclusion, Kalinin announced that all the moujiks were to be released from prison and sent home. He asked them to tell the people in the villages what they had seen and heard in Moscow. The moujiks—happy, cheerful, and grown young all at once, clapped again. Then Lenin had his photograph taken with them. The photographer set up his camera, some sort of a machine clicked, there was a burst of flame that set grandad all of a tremble.

The moujiks had supper with Kalinin, who chatted in homely fashion with them. He told grandad Vassili: "Mind you tell the moujiks the truth when you get home."

Grandad swore he would, and then broke down and cried. He wanted to kiss Mikhail Ivanovitch's hand, but that only made Kalinin indignant.

Grandad did not go home at once. While his papers and his railway tickets were being prepared he wandered about the city, looking at things and thinking what he might buy. At length he went home. He was given various proclamations about the grain-tax to take with him, and it was explained to him that there was to be an end to the grain-assessment, that a resolution to that effect had been passed at the Party Congress, and that it would be kept.

It was growing light as Grandad Vassili trudged from the station to Bakharevo. The fields, now clear of snow, were steaming, warmed by the morning sun as, radiant and fresh, it rose over the world. The old man walked straight through the spring puddles; his new boots did not let in water. He was

muttering to himself and smiling. He took off his cap and glanced about him. Broad—almost limitless—his native plain spread before him.

From hillock to hillock it rolled and stretched far away to the west. Here and there the clear outlines of wood and grove could be seen, and at the foot of the hill on which Vassili was standing, a little river wound its way. Ducks quacked in the marshes. Vassili could see from where he stood the squat grey village church, with its golden crosses glittering in the sun. He knelt down, crossed himself, kissed his native soil, and then hastened homewards. The village was just awakening. Smoke began to curl from the chimneys, and good housewives were up and about.

Suddenly, through the morning stillness, the alarm-bell boomed.

The sleepy peasants, fastening their clothes as they went, hurried out into the streets. The air was clear, a warm sun shone.

The village elders ran to the church, with anxious hearts. What new trouble could there be? Where was the enemy this time?

But on the bell-tower, they saw Vassili Bocharev with his shining bald pate. He was gay and looked years younger. Flourishing a paper in his hand, he kept shouting something, almost choking with delight. He wanted to kiss them all, embrace the whole world. The astounded folk listened to Vassili and could not believe their ears. Was it possible that they were free again to plough and sow and reap, to pay their taxes and do as they liked with what remained? Could this be the end of bad times? Would the shops and markets be opened again? Did this mean the end of quarreling and fighting?

"Lenin himself goes about in an ordinary jacket, a red-haired chap he is—and as plain as they make 'em. He's not the sort to cheat. He'd never cheat you, never, and I saw him as plainly as I see you."

He showed the people his new boots, trousers and short wadded coat. The village school-master came up to the porch and read the paper Vassili had brought with him. It told about the tax and about Antonov.

All day, till late in the evening, and next day as well, they talked of the tax, of trade and of the new life. Antonov's committee-men, pale and trembling, were afraid to show themselves. The militia-men had disappeared too.

Grandad Vassili was an honored guest in every house. With his old wife, who had received a shawl and a pair of shoes as a present from Kalinin himself, he went about the village, describing over and over again his meeting with Lenin, Lenin's kind speeches. Things were quiet in other provinces, he said, no rebellions or battles seemed to be going on.

But early on Sunday morning Storojev appeared, nosing about the yards like a wolf, searching for the papers old Vassili had brought and finding none. Then he beat all the people in turn and went away, taking Vassili to Kamenka with him, as Antonov had ordered.

Antonov had been informed of old Vassili's doings: how he had sounded the alarm, roused the moujiks, and shown them a paper that told them about the tax, and free trade.

Vassili was brought to Kamenka in the evening.

The bent old man with his long beard went fearlessly up to Antonov, pulled off his cap and bowed.

"Is it you who's been to see Lenin?" Antonov asked, toying with his whip. "Tell us what they gave you to eat and drink, and how much they bought you for?"

"With kindness and truth," replied the old man delightedly. "I must say.

Alexander Stepanovitch, they're very kind people—Lenin and Kalinin and the rest. They explained all our foolishness to us."

"That's enough of your gab," shouted Antonov. "They've been fooling you, you idiots, and you listened to them."

"Why, how did they fool us?" Vassili returned, offended. "When we were coming here we didn't see any rebellions anywhere, only people getting their ploughs ready for spring. And when your name was mentioned they laughed and said they'd never heard of any such bandit . . ."

Antonov said nothing, only stared fixedly at the old man who stood quietly, looking him straight in the eyes without even blinking.

"Did you fetch a paper with you?"

"Yes. It tells you this is the end of the grain-assessment and that the average peasant—the one who's neither rich nor poor—is to be taken care of."

"Hand it over!"

Vassili carefully pulled out a sheet of paper from his bosom. The printing was worn away, hundreds of people had read it, thousands of hands had held it—that scrap of grey paper.

Antonov read extracts from Lenin's speeches on the grain-tax in kind. "You son-of-a-bitch," he cried. "They've been fooling you. They've fooled you sixteen or seventeen times already and they'll do it again. Surely, you don't believe them, grandad?"

"Lord bless you, what are you thinking of?" Vassili exclaimed, crossing himself. "You fair frightened me out of my wits, Alexander Stepanovitch. Look here: who am I to believe—you or Lenin? Lenin's—oho! He's got all Russia and you've got—what? A lump of hay under your backside, and soon you won't have even that."

Antonov's lips tightened. He tore the paper into tiny scraps, swore obscenely, then rushed at the old man and struck him with his whip three times across his shining bald head. Blood spurted, the old man closed his eyes, and, falling on his knees, wept. But Antonov went on beating him, trampled on him, kicked him in the face, screaming that he would kill him.

"Take him home," Antonov ordered panting heavily, when Storojev ran in.

The old man was flung on to a cart and driven away. He came to himself on the way home.

"Why did he set on me like that?" he asked Storojev.

Storojev preserved a gloomy silence. Vassili went on: "I only told the truth, I'm an old man, soon I'll be in my grave—would I be likely to make up a story? And I'm not the only one; 800 of us were let out; is he going to beat us all?"

Storojev felt by no means cheerful; he was recalling the scandalous debauchery he had witnessed in Kamenka. He remembered Maria Kossova's bruised, scratched face, remembered Lenka. He could not get used to the idea of Lenka's escape, could not understand it. After all, the boy had been with him for fifteen years, had been one of themselves—like a son!

Now these rumors about the tax! It would turn the moujik's brain when he learned the truth. How could it be kept from him? How could it be hidden? You could not beat truth out of people nor kill it.

"This is the end," Storojev thought.

His road led through Griasnoye, so he called at Natalia's. He felt he would like to tell her his thoughts; perhaps she would understand, and say something.

Natasha was delighted to see Storojev. She was very anxious to know what

had happened to Lenka. She had heard rumors of his having been taken prisoner, but where he was and whether he was alive or not she did not know. The Reds had not penetrated to Griasnoye. Antonov's regiment still stood firm around the village and Lenka could not get any messages through to Natasha. He grew thin and worn with worry, but what was to be done; no use knocking your head against a brick wall.

Natasha had grown stouter, there were grey, clay-colored shadows in her face. Her eyes wore a kind, caressing expression, like that of a young calf. She was very careful of her figure, which was rounding out now, and took no notice of sneers and reproaches. She kept up her courage, though she did not sleep of nights, and was alone with her thoughts of life and Lenka.

She was very glad to see Storojev, and fussed over him. She could not do enough to make him comfortable, did not know what to offer him to eat. They sat in silence. She was waiting for his words; he was waiting for her to say something.

"Lenka"—Natasha began, bursting into sobs. "Did he give himself up or was he taken prisoner—or have they killed him?" she asked.

Storojev's anger rose against Lenka. "He gave himself up, of course," he decided in his own mind.

"We can only suppose he gave himself up," he said calmly. "Folks in the village say he went there and bragged of how he was getting married. . . ."

"To whom?" Natasha gasped.

"To some Communist girl or other," said Storojev in a low voice and turned away—he could not look Natasha in the eyes.

Children were roaming down the street. The roads were drying in the sun. Black fields stretched to the horizon and drew Storojev homewards. He remembered Lebyaji, his estate, his fat *dessyatins* of land.

"Married a Communist girl? So he's forgotten me, then?" Natalia writhed in Storojev's arms, sobbing and wailing as peasants do over their dead.

"We may as well suppose he has. He boasted of it and mentioned you: 'There's that silly thing in Griasnoye,' he said, 'she'd come if I only whistled to her!'"

And Storojev gave a short, dry laugh, rolled himself a cigarette and smoked it.

"The Reds have led the fellow astray and ruined your life," he said with a sigh. "I feel sorry for you, my girl, downright sorry. You're the meek, quiet kind that can't stand up for herself. Another girl wouldn't let an insult like that pass."

Natasha turned and looked at him. Her eyes were dry now.

"Lenka'll pay for those tears of mine yet, and if he doesn't, his friends will," she gasped. "I'm meek and mild and can't stand up for myself, can't I? You don't know me, Peter Ivanovitch."

"Well, goodbye, Natasha. I've got to be going." He scrambled heavily into his saddle and rode away.

"That's one more I've done for," he said to himself. "Why did I do it?"

For the first time in two years he went to the widow who lived at the far end of Griasnoye, and drank for two days without stopping. He said nothing, only smoked his cigarettes and laughed—a hollow, frenzied laugh.

Now days full of anguish dragged on for Natalia. Formerly she had been waiting for Lenka, had awakened at the thud of a horse's hooves, at every knock, thinking it was he. Formerly she had dreamed of a quiet life when the

war-clouds had passed. Lenka would take her away from Griasnoye, where every snotty-nosed puppy could jeer at her figure. And she would bear a flaxen-haired son, the image of his father; and the cricket would be chirruping quietly on their hearth.

Once she had thought, too, that the boy had had no time to come to see his love in the village, that he was far away with his detachment.

But now—what was there to wait for? Everything was clear: he had cleared out, a traitor to the cause he had once defended, and he had thrown her over. He had forgotten his conscience. The blackguard!

What was she to think of him now? He was kissing and caressing another, calling her his sunshine, courting her, spending his nights with her, laying his curly head upon her breast.

And she, Natasha, disgraced, pregnant, laughed at by everyone, was alone, quite alone, in this sunny, singing, springtime world.

"God help me—what shall I do? How shall I live and feed this son of mine?"

Her father never spoke, never looked at his daughter, only sighed heavily and muttered to himself—goodness knew what—at nights.

Lads passed the windows, singing obscene couplets about Natalia. Her father would give a start, grind his teeth, and, flinging his spoon on the floor, rush out of the house. He would come creeping in on all fours late at night, sodden with drink. But even when he was drunk he said nothing, only tried to strike Natalia, aiming at her belly.

The days went on. Sometimes they dragged till her heart was ready to break.

She would think, if only night would come quickly! Other times they raced on, where? Oh, if the hours would only stand still and not fly by so fast, she thought. If they would give me a little breathing-space, a little while to think, and decide what I ought to do, and how I should manage?

There were times when Natalia raved, even in her waking moments, of the punishment to be dealt out to the spiders, and flung herself at the walls, clutching at vacancy, and giving vent to dry, hard laughter. Then she would stand stock still for hours without moving until her father came home, or would sit rocking herself to and fro on the bench, repeating the same words: "I'll kill them, I'll kill them . . ."

Or, again, she would jump up and scream: "Aha, I've caught you! Where's my Lenka? What have you done with him? Made him a prisoner, ruined him, sucked his blood, curse you!"

The spring was warm and joyful. The fat, sweating soil had drunk its fill of the spring floods. Heavy mists melted in the meadows of a morning.

Every day the weather grew warmer, and already the first timid grass was growing on the hillside. Black, lumpy, and fat—the soil was waiting for the moujik with the plough of wood or iron, the harrow and the sower. And he—the moujik—like a hunter who feels a nervous fever in the spring, came out into his garden, wandered about the damp earth, picked up the heavy clods in his hands and inhaled their hot, juicy smell melting in the spring warmth.

He went out into the fields and let his hands fall with a gesture of despair as he left them again. They had not been ploughed since autumn, and would be overgrown with weeds.

This was the time to plough, just the right time. But how could one plough if these damp fields, this moist earth were to be trampled by regiments? Field-

guns thundered, and machine guns rattled where only the song of the ploughman should be heard.

During those fine March days a man was making his way to Kamenka through the fields, across turbulent rivers, by dells flooded with spring waters. In every village the man changed horses. He galloped over ploughed fields, never noticing the paths; he slept in snatches and came by back yards to Antonov's headquarters with a letter from Gorsky.

Antonov's face grew gloomier as he read the letter.

"Dear friend," wrote the lawyer. "Beware: it looks as though they were after you in good earnest this time. Lenin himself is meddling in this Tambov business. A special commission with full authority has been formed and has been given two months in which to deal with you effectively. Tukhachevsky has been put in command of the armed forces sent against you. Kotovsky and Uborevitch are with him, too. I expect you've heard of them. Be prepared!"

"Well," Antonov frowned, "two bears in one den won't do. Either they'll shove me out or I'll shove them out. We'll see."

Once more the agitators from the Union of Toiling Peasantry, the staff-officers and commanders galloped about the villages and farmsteads, striving to raise the moujiks, appealing for help.

There were many arguments in the committee.

"Mobilization will have to be introduced," Antonov, now thin and hoarse from sleeplessness and worry, insisted to his friends. "If it's a moujik's war, then let all the moujiks come out and fight it. Every man who can shoulder a rifle should do it. Anyone who refuses—should be shot. This is no time for joking. Look at the forces that are coming against us!"

But the moujiks stubbornly resisted. They would not listen to the agitators, would not join the army, laughed at the idea of mobilization. At meetings, moreover, they demanded of Antonov's agents, without turning a hair: "Is it true the Communists have done away with the grain-assessment?"

When Tukhachevsky came to Tambov to take command of the troops against the Social-Revolutionaries, he was 28 years of age. Young as he was, his glory had spread throughout the world. General staff-officers and aged generals whom he had beaten on every front were astounded.

"He never graduated from any military academy. A mere stripling. And what strength!"

Marshal Joseph Pilsudski, the head of the Polish State, pronounced the name of this young leader with respect. Pilsudski remembered all his life the mighty onward movement of the Red troops, like the sweep of ice-floes downriver, to Warsaw.

Tukhachevsky had been in command of that march on the West.

Now the Republic had given him orders to crush Antonov.

Tukhachevsky drove through the Tambov streets, running with spring waters. The sun dappled the surface of the lake that flooded the town.

Tukhachevsky was thinking of the new war, the new front; it was the first time he had had to deal with that kind of front.

He had fought on the Western and Eastern fronts and against the mutineers of the Kronstadt as one fought in real war. There one knew who and where the enemy was and how to fight him. It was not precisely known who the enemy was here. Not all the peasants were following Antonov; they could not all be lumped together. Fighting Antonov in the same way as on an ordinary front had been tried in Tambov Province; it had proved an utter failure

He remembered the conversations in the Kremlin before leaving Moscow. He had been warned that the situation was very complicated, that it was a delicate, tangled matter, that the knots tied by the Tambov Social-Revolutionaries and kulaks would need to be not simply cut but disentangled, that the true nature of the rebellion must be understood, that the middle peasant must not be scared away but attracted to the side of the Reds.

"We suspect, Mikhail Nikolayevitch," they had told him in the Kremlin, "that the peasants in the province know nothing yet about the resolution of the Tenth Congress and the decree about the tax. Antonov is keeping the truth from them. Try and verify this fact and start from it. The main thing is that the moujik should get to know about the new policy."

On his way to Tambov, Tukhachevsky read over all the reports of the Tambov authorities, the evidence of prisoners and of casual witnesses who had given themselves up.

The people in the Kremlin had been right: the Tambov peasants knew nothing about the new decrees. The rest of the country knew. The rest of the country lived on them, and talked of nothing else. But they had not reached the Tambov peasant. The voice of the Soviet government had not penetrated to the remote villages, and where it did penetrate, there Antonov's agents would appear and close for ever the mouths of those who knew the truth and wanted to communicate it to the peasants . . .

So where was the enemy? How was one to fight him? How should the war be begun? . . .

"Let's make this clear," Tukhachevsky was telling the members of the commission, "we've got to begin by telling the peasant about the new policy. But how shall we tell him?"

The rebellious district would have to be surrounded by an iron ring, the hostile villages occupied and the Reds entrenched there. The woods, fields and shrubs must be combed clean of Antonov's men. The committees of the Union of Toiling Peasantry must be done away with. The Soviet government must be set up, and never for an hour, never for a minute should the principal thing be forgotten—that the peasants must be informed of the new Party resolutions, and have the new decrees and new ways explained to them.

Until late at night a light burned in the windows of the house where the commission was sitting. Arguments waxed warm, and out of these passionate arguments the plan of the war with Antonov was born.

"We've got 30,000 bayonets and 8,000 sabers, as well as machine-guns, fields-guns, airplanes, armored cars and wireless. We have 7 000 Red cadets. The enemy is very strong, that is why we are placing such a big force against him. But this force will have to be used correctly. We mustn't be misled by victories over large forces of the enemy. We must not only destroy Antonov's regiments, but we must also catch every single soldier of his as well. Whoever doesn't give in must be killed."

Soon new reinforcements arrived in Tambov. The Central Committee of the Communist Party sent some of its best men—agitators and propagandists.

Life grew lively in the old town that had trembled more than once before the regiments of Antonov.

People remember to this day the spasmodic booming of the works' and factory sirens, heralding the approach of the "Greens."

At that time people were arriving from outlying districts, stations, villages, towns and workers' settlements, for the Provincial Party Conference. Hundreds of people who were longing for peace and work came to it. They

came from places where the struggle was at its height; they were waiting for new words and new actions.

Sternly and harshly the Communists of Tambov Province criticized the blunders of the former command, the dissipation of forces, the pursuit of occasional victories and trophies, the endless roaming about the countryside in search of Antonov, the failure to unite the poor peasants. . . .

Tukhachevsky's speech was full of passion. He saw before him a countryside racked with strife, and hundreds of thousands of people tormented by war. He saw thousands of stubborn, fierce enemies and tens of thousands of people who had been deceived and had now to have their eyes opened.

Tukhachevsky announced to the delegates that the commission had been working thirty days on the plan of the campaign and that it was ready. He warned them that it would be a severe and difficult one. . . .

In May the Red Army began its famous planned attack on Antonov and his troops. Over the villages airplanes appeared; the inhabitants rushed into their houses, but the aviators threw no bombs. Instead of that down fluttered sheets of paper informing them of the new decrees regarding taxes, the repeal of the grain-assessment and free trading. The papers were whipped up like lightning. From the villages the airplanes had not visited, people drove in, secretly, to obtain copies for themselves.

Antonov's agitators drove the country people with whips to meetings and shouted about a new fraud.

"Lenin's issued a new decree," Yegor Ishin bawled. "He wants to hand over Russian factories to the foreign bourgeoisie. We've chucked out our own bourgeoisie, now they're calling in the foreign bourgeoisie. They've sold Russia, and cheated the people. Don't believe them, it's all a yarn they're telling you. They'll only skin you through this new tax. Stick to us, moujiks, if we're to go to the devil, then we'll all go together!"

But the Red troops came on steadily, taking one village after another in battle. The enemy worried them night and day, at the rear and on their flanks, in big masses and small detachments, capturing supplies, giving them no peace for a moment. The front was everywhere: every farmstead was a front, every village a fortress.

The troops advanced, posting an armed guard in the villages, electing revolutionary committees and then moving on, pressing Antonov's main forces towards the center.

Meanwhile the Revolutionary Committees caught the emissaries of the Union of Toiling Peasantry, confiscated the property of the *kulaks* who, having joined Antonov, were absent from their homes, and distributed it among the partisan families that had been robbed by Antonov and his men. In every peasant family appeared newspapers that told of the new decrees, the new ways, the new life.

The villages saw that this time it was impossible for Antonov to escape.

The villages hesitated. The fate of the rebellion was sealed.

In the beginning of May, Listrat and his detachment occupied Dvoriki. He put off going to Griasnoye from day to day. There were no means of communication between the village and the town, and he was cautious. He did not care to take any risks, although Lenka, who was worried about Natasha, gave his brother no peace.

At last, one morning news came from Griasnoye that a Red detachment coming from Sampur had entered it and was clearing Antonov's men out of

the district. Listrat went to the Revolutionary Committee, spoke to Sergei Ivanovitch and gave orders to be ready by morning. He told Lenka that a detachment was going to Griasnoye to establish the Soviets there and would remain for a long time. His young brother uttered a yell of joy, clung to Listrat's neck and shook him until the latter protested angrily.

Suddenly the thund of horse's hooves was hearl; the rider reined in his horse at the Revolutionary Committee premises, and called for someone to come out to him. Lenka went out.

"Where's Sergei Ivanovitch?" the rider croaked. He was panting heavily.

"At dinner."

"This is a letter for him—urgent. I've come from Griasnoye, something awful's happened . . ."

"What is it?" Lenka asked.

"A girl called Natalia Bayeva smothered a Red Army man," the rider called out. "Sitting in the haystack she is, with a revolver, screaming, 'I'll kill anyone who comes near me!' She's like a wild beast."

Then, whipping up his horse, the rider galloped on.

Lenka turned white and shook all over. He screamed.

"What are you yelling about, you fool?" Sashka Chirikin demanded as he came up to take Lenka's place.

Lenka rushed home. Sasha made a gesture of bewilderment, sat down on the step and lit a cigarette.

Lenka burst into the house, seized his saddle, straightened the straps with trembling hands, and led the mare out from the shed. After he had saddled her, he rushed into the house again for his revolver, sprang into the saddle and was off like the wind.

"Hey, where are you off to? Stop!" shouted Listrat, coming up to the house at that moment. Lenka neither heard nor saw; he only lashed his horse frantically. "What has she done, what has she done!" the words kept boring into his brain. "What has she done, what has she done!" he moaned. "And what shall I do now!"

The mare went hell for leather, as though her master's frenzy had imparted itself to her, as if she understood that she must make haste, make haste, make haste. . . . Stretching her neck, she bore him on till the wind whistled past her ears.

It was growing dark when Lenka reached Griasnoye. Leaving his panting mare by the wall, he burst into the house. It was empty. He heard an alarmed whispering in the yard where the moujiks, pale and trembling, were assembled.

Frol was one of them.

"Now, then," Lenka advanced on them savagely, pulling out his revolver. "What do you want?"

"You son-of-a-bitch!" Frol shouted. "Ruined the girl, you rascal! Floggins!"

"Clear out of here," Lenka said in a cold, cruel tone.

"We're standing guard over her," a small moujik protested. He held an axe in his hand.

"Who did I tell to clear out"—Lenka's eyes flashed . . . "I'll stand guard myself. See!"

The moujiks exchanged glances and drifted away, taking Frol with them.

Lenka found Natalia in the vegetable garden, sitting by the haystack and fingering bits of straw.

"Lenka-a-a!" she screamed wildly, and fell back insensible on the straw.

She came to herself on Lenka's shoulder. Her white, haggard face was ter-

rible to see. Nothing remained of the old Natasha except her great, mad black eyes.

"Lenka, Lenyushka, Lesha!" she babbled, trembling all over and making Lenka tremble. "They're coming soon, they'll take me away, this minute. They sent for you, Lesha. Leneshka, save me, hide me, dear!"

He embraced her, kissed her and played with her hair as he had done in those happy, far-off days. She grew calmer and ceased trembling.

"They told me, Storojev told me you'd found another girl, a Communist," she burst out, suddenly sobbing and flinging herself back in the straw.

"Hush, hush," Lenka whispered. She pressed close to him with her big stomach and told him how she had burned with grief and resentment and hatred, how the days and nights had dragged slowly on, how she had come to hate the little creature stirring under her heart, how, when someone from the Red Army—a boy as young as Lenka—had come yesterday, she had filled the room with the vapor of burning charcoal and the boy, being very sleepy, had smothered and never awakened.

"I was thinking of you, Lenka, of how they'd sent you wrong and made my life a curse to me. If there'd been more, if there'd been five of them even, I'd have smothered the whole five. . ."

"Hush, hush, hush," Lenka whispered, grinding his teeth.

"You'll stay with me now, won't you?" she pleaded. "You've run away from them, haven't you? You'll take me away from here, else they'll come for me! Lenka, look! There they are, they're coming for me." Madness came into her eyes, she writhed and moaned and ground her teeth.

Then she quieted down and forgot everything except Lenka. Her kisses, her embrace breathed passion; she laid his hand on her stomach and he felt the beating of the new life within her . . .

Then madness descended upon her again. She screamed words of abuse, foam gathered on her lips. Afterwards calm descended and she lay still beside Lenka.

At last she dozed off, whimpering in her sleep, starting, grinding her teeth and muttering.

Lenka looked at her and wept. Scalding tears rolled down unhindered and fell on her cheek. It was for his ruined love that he was weeping, knowing that he would never be able to forget what she had done, never be able to forgive her. He knew that people would come for her at any moment and take her away. Everybody would know what sort of a bride, a wife he had. People would point their fingers at him, and his comrades would look at him with indignation in their eyes.

Lenka drew his revolver out of his pocket and fumbled for Natasha's heart. It beat regularly, hollowly. He placed the barrel of the revolver against it.

. . . And could not bring himself to pull the trigger.

In the morning Natalia writhed in a fit. When it had passed, she lay there, looking white and drawn, recognizing no one and singing a lullaby to herself.

She never regained her reason. She was taken away to the hospital and delivered that very day of a flaxen-haired son, whom Frol took home to live with him.

The Red Army moved its Red cadets to the south, to the Kirsanov district; to the forests whence Antonov had started his campaigns. The crack troops were assigned to the Injavin, Kaluga, Ramsin and Koslov districts. They pitched their camp in Treskin Meadows, those same meadows where, two

years before, Antonov's glory had begun. He was now forced to leave Kamenka.

For the last time, at the head of his special regiment, he rode through the gloomy streets of his capital. For the last time the peasants heard the wild ripple of the accordions and the couplet:

Rat-a-tat-tat! the machine-guns go,
"At 'em, my lads!" shouts Antonov. "Oho!
Though in blood knee-deep I stand,
I'll hold all Russia in my hand!"

He was still clinging to it, to his power, was still writing appeals, and boasting of his forces.

But even the most faithful of the villages and farmsteads looked upon him with hostility. Desertions from the regiments grew more frequent. The rich moujiks, of course, did not think of giving in, but what sort of a force was that? You couldn't fight long with only the rich on your side, as Antonov well knew.

At the end of May, he asked for a meeting of the committee to be called. He came to it dirty and unshaven, in torn clothes.

The committee-members who had come from distant villages brought the news that they had been asked to help to put an end to the rebellion.

Antonov shouted roughly at them, called the delegates "sons-of-bitches" and threatened to shoot them.

The delegates left the meeting in a rage. Antonov remained alone. His friends looked gloomy. Even Ishin was surly.

Hard times were coming. The villages were deserting Antonov. Soon the army had nothing to eat and nothing to ride. Antonov gave orders for horses and provisions to be requisitioned wherever they could be got, regardless of anything. There was no other course open to him. For a long time, the Reds had not allowed Antonov into the province of Saratov and had barred Voronezh and Orlov to him. The Red divisions moved an iron wall of field-guns and armored cars against the rebels, and pressed Antonov towards the lakes. He retreated there like a wolf to his lair, to rest awhile and heal his wounds, so that after regaining his strength he might go out on the hunt once more.

At a conference of leaders of the rebellion, it was resolved to fight while their strength held out, and to continue explaining to the moujiks that the latest decrees were simply sly, new devices of the Communists.

Ishin suggested clearing the outlying districts. At the end of May, Antonov ordered Kossovoi to take over from Storojev the command of the frontier regiment, Storojev transferred to the army all the armed forces, provisions, forage and arms from the zone bordering on the Communist provinces.

One warm evening Storojev appeared at headquarters, which were now in a dense wood on the banks of Lake Ilmen. Antonov greeted him gloomily. His brow wore a sullen frown; he was drinking heavily those days.

He told Storojev to prepare to go alone, to the frontier district. What was necessary now was to keep in touch with each other, and recruit new men, if possible; and to hold on till the last breath, so that people would know that Antonov was still alive, still fighting, still strong. . . .

Before leaving for his native district, Storojev dropped in to see Ishin.

"Never mind," said the latter, slapping Storojev on the back. "We'll have some fun yet, we'll show the stuff we're made of. Our army's still whole, and we're still alive. We'll do some fighting yet. Hold on, Peter. Wait a bit, we'll send for you!"

To be continued

REPORTAGE

Alejandro Valdes

The Fighting in Asturias

Narrative of the Participants in the Uprising

The book *Asturias* by Alejandro Valdes, which appeared in 1935, described the heroic struggle of the Asturian workers who rose in October 1934 in reply to the attempt of the bourgeois-landlord bloc to establish a fascist dictatorship in the country.

This account gives the lie to the official versions of the Asturian events. The author makes it his aim to present an honest and unbiased account of the October days in Asturias and on the basis of a Marxist-Leninist analysis to show the causes for the temporary defeat of the Spanish revolution, so that the proletariat might draw the necessary conclusions and prepare for new battles.

Valdes's book was written "for the entire Spanish proletariat and for those who are against fascism and against all oppression."

The book contains an introduction which gives a general summary of the preparations for the uprising all over the country. The main part deals with the struggle of the revolutionaries in Oviedo. The conclusion deals with the struggle of the workers in the coal district and analyzes the mistakes which resulted in the defeat of the uprising of the Spanish people.

Among the voluminous Spanish literature dealing with the Asturian uprising Valdes's book holds a place of honor. In neither the work of the socialist Manuel Benavides *(This is How the Revolution Happened)* and Margarita Nelken *(Why We Made a Revolution)*, nor *Red Asturias* by the moderate radical Diaz Fernandez do we find that factual presentation of events which is provided in *Asturias* by Valdes, a devoted adherent of the United Front.

Analyzing the causes of the Asturian failure, the author persistently emphasizes that without the unity of all proletarian and semi-proletarian sections of the population, victory was impossible. Attributing tremendous importance to the spontaneous initiative of the masses, the author at the same time points out the need for a strong and unwavering revolutionary leadership which fully grasps the aims of the uprising.—*Editors.*

Introductory Remarks

Nine months have passed since the October Revolution willed to us the proletarian epic of Asturias. We can thus describe it because it took place in the province of Asturias where it reached its fullest extent and strength.

So far we have had only the official version of the uprising to go by—the foul perjury of the police, vile slander and distortion, the product of the hatred, vengefulness and terror of the ruling class, whose foundations were shaken and threatened to collapse. They range from the testimony of "special correspondents" who concocted melodramatic tales which would have been ludicrous and silly had they not formed part of the tactical plan of cowardly criminals, to the libel of volunteer literary spies generously rewarded from the secret funds of the Ministry of Home Affairs.

It is high time that, in spite of the gags which stifled all mouths eager to proclaim the truth, another note be heard amongst the chorus of slanderers who monopolized "truth" and the right to shed light on historic events.

Against the background of the dirty contemptible falsehoods of the reactionary perjurers, this book gives a true picture of the Asturian uprising in all

its scope and significance. Here is collected the genuine testimony of those who took direct part in the Asturian uprising.

The revolutionary events are still too fresh, too near to us, for us to give a historic survey of the October uprising as a whole. This is only a narrative, mere testimony, which we hope has a ring of genuine truth and serves its purpose. For the Spanish proletariat and for the proletariat of the whole world, the Asturian epic serves as a living lesson by the mere fact of its existence. We therefore hold that an honest account of events by those who took part in them, combined with a Marxist-Leninist analysis, will serve as a basis to prepare workers for coming battle, and provide a lesson and an example for the future.

The author of this book did not invent anything. The book does not contain a single line which contradicts actual events. There is not a single character who does not correspond to some fighter of Asturias; every episode in the book accurately reproduces some event of the great Asturian uprising.

Step by step there unfolds the picture of the activities of the Communist fighter Rios, a member of the first revolutionary committee, who stands out strikingly among the leaders of the movement. Does this mean that the book is the memoirs of one fighter? No. Rios is not the hero of the book. The book has no hero, or it would be better to say that the hero of the book is the armed proletariat, Asturias, the miners, the workers, the revolution. The hero of the book is the power of the workers and peasants in Asturias which in the two weeks of its existence developed the main features of a new society.

Fifteen red days which shook the land and its decaying bourgeois feudal social system to its foundation. Fifteen days which opened the road to the emancipation of all the exploited. Fifteen days of fire, blood and struggle for power. Fifteen days which brought honor and glory to the workers of Spain.

We confine ourselves to a presentation of Asturian events because they alone are truly proletarian in their character and are endowed with a purely revolutionary significance. Besides, we have not the temerity to present other events which we are unable to enlighten with the same precision and vividness as a direct participant. For the same reason all those episodes of the struggle in Asturias have been omitted regarding which we were unable to gather first hand testimony.

We want to make a permanent contribution to the history of the revolution, to clarify events which in their scope and depth have no equal in our history, and to do all this with the profound knowledge of the responsibility which the title of revolutionary fighters imposes on us.

And now, comrade reader, we unfold before you the events of the Asturian revolution which will arouse stinging pain and fury in your heart, the joy of victory and the pride of class-consciousness.

These events were experienced by your brothers, people who were trained by disciplined, proletarian organizations and who are instinctively angered, aroused by all exploitation. They again experience these events for your sake in order to help you to prepare for the struggles of the morrow.

You will learn what occurred on separate sections of the front, why things happened as they did and not otherwise. How the various people behaved, what Asturias was like during the two weeks of worker and peasant power.

This book is written by revolutionaries, direct participants in the uprising, who were tempered in the front lines by the flames of revolution.

We give you nothing but the truth. Factual account for working people,

a chain of facts telling of the greatest events in the history of the Spanish revolution.

The book is written for you, Communist, Socialist and Anarchist comrades, for you our class brothers, for all working people. It is written for the whole Spanish proletariat and for all who are against fascism and oppression, who are for a free Spain and the rule of the working people.

It is written for the sake of comrades who fell in glorious battle, for the wives and children of the workers and peasants who rose in arms against the regime of plunder, starvation and imprisonment, for comrades languishing in prisons awaiting the cruel sentences of the fascist court, for the sake of those who were killed by sentence of that court, for those who are serving their sentences, for the sake of all who are deprived of their freedom for a total period that amounts to centuries of imprisonment.

These pages on the Asturian uprising and its living heroes who obtained victory were written with the thought of you, with the thought of the slain, the wounded, and the prisoners who heroically and steadfastly held out for two weeks.

This narrative is also written for the workers of the Soviet Union who rose against exploitation and terror like their brothers of Asturias, who fought heroically in bloody conflict and scored a decisive victory under the leadership of the glorious Bolshevik Party, who established the invincible power of the working class and gave the world proletariat a brilliant example of triumph, and of how to wage the struggle for freedom, for a new culture without oppressors and oppressed, an example of socialist construction.

Miners

Dawn. Four kilometers from Oviedo at the village of San Esteban de las Cruces, several hundred men march down the road from Mieresa Langreo. Below their caps the rumpled hair hangs on their hot foreheads. The fire in their eyes lights up their dusty faces. The red shirts of Socialists and the blue jerseys of Communists are visible beneath unbuttoned jackets. That is their only uniform, their only device.

Some carry rifles over their shoulders, they impatiently caress the weapons with hands grimy from digging coal in the bowels of the earth. Others are armed with shot-guns, which in time of peace were regarded as inoffensive but which play an important role in civil war. Almost all of them wear cartridge belts laden with sticks of dynamite.

These are the miners. These are the workers of the mines of Asturias advancing to conquer Oviedo for the revolution. They come from the district of Mieres where they routed the forces of reaction, stormed the barracks of the civil guard and took prisoners all who remained alive. There are also miners of Olloniego, who followed the example of their comrades in Mieres. The column of revolutionary forces moves forward at a quickened step. They are not accompanied by Comrade Peinado whom the revolutionary committee has appointed to command the armed forces. They have not seen Comrade Peinado. They have not formed the detachment and undertaken the march on Oviedo on their own independent initiative but have acted according to the order issued before the fighting began: "After you succeed in the villages march on Oviedo," and they have been guided by the clear foresight of one of the Communist comrades. And that is why they are now moving on Oviedo, firmly determined to enter the town at any price, even over the

bodies of their enemies. Since their victories in the villages were attained fairly easily they do not anticipate stubborn resistance in the city. The possibility of retreat never occurs to them for a moment. Retreat, when they are armed with rifles and machine guns, and well-stocked with dynamite! Such a thought could only occur to simpletons. Their strength is irresistible. And their determination to enter Oviedo is greater than their strength.

The column advances almost noiselessly. The revolutionaries talk in low tones. They exchange anecdotes about the events of the previous day. One of the miners of Mieres tells that he had never laughed so much before in his life. The wealthiest reactionary in the town, a notorious fascist, seized by a terrific panic, came out on the balcony of his house to applaud the red militia which marched past along the nearby street, and cheered the revolution at the top of his lungs.

"And you know what that scoundrel did in an effort to deceive us and make us believe that he was glad of our victory?"

"I don't know. I wasn't there. Tell us about it."

"Well, hold on—not satisfied with howling like a dog from his balcony and raising his clenched fist, he chose the moment when we were passing below the balcony to toss a large crucifix, apparently made of silver, at our feet, while he yelled: 'To hell with Christ! Long live the social revolution!' "

A section of the column broke into peals of laughter which found its echo in the surrounding mountains. One or two of the miners even halted in order to enjoy their mirth to the full. When the laughter had subsided the worker from Mieres earnestly insisted that what he had told was the honest truth. Other comrades who had witnessed the incident corroborated his story.

Suddenly, there was a hush. Somewhere nearby a rifle volley had been fired. The headlights of a truck shone on the column of revolutionaries.

"To arms comrades," those up ahead shouted.

"Everybody get off the road," an authoritative voice boomed out.

However, this order was unnecessary. Not a single revolutionary remained on the road. The miners had taken cover in the road ditch and behind rocks and hillocks. A hail of bullets pelted the trucks. The daylight was now strong enough to make them out—the advanced detachments of the enemy, a motley array of civil guards, storm troopers and a dozen soldiers.

The government forces had also taken up their position, trying to cover themselves as best they could. For a half hour nothing was heard save the constant rifle fire and the giddy rat-tat-tat of machine guns. Coming out from behind their cover the miners took the offensive, moving forward without any losses. The distance separating them from the trucks was fairly great and it was hard for the enemies' bullets to find the range. Now the revolutionaries advanced rapidly. Unfortunately they were too eager to get where they could use their dynamite. Several of the boldest came close up to the enemy. The firing continued. When the miners were about to charge the enemy, the gendarmes, convinced of the superior forces and bravery of the miners, and their thorough knowledge of the locality, hastily retreated. The miners raced foward in order to cut them off. At the risk of their lives several young workers came out on the road and discharged their rifles. But it was too late. The enemy "heroically" fled on balloon tires.

"Stop, you cowards!"

The government forces which had been sent to stop the advance of the miners made a swift retreat. They halted not far off. Reinforcements were

sent up from Oviedo, more gendarmes and soldiers dispatched by order of the government hurried to the support of the first detachment.

The firing on the miners was renewed. In spite of the reinforcements which had come to the aid of the counter-revolutionary troops, the miners continued their attack. A regular battle ensued. Now both sides fired unceasingly, almost point-blank. There were casualties on both sides. Danger increased the courage of the red fighters. Their marksmanship was almost as good as their adversaries'. Indeed, the advantage was on the side of the miners because of the cool-headedness which governed their actions, their fearlessness and dauntless bravery. A perceptible advance on the part of the miners brought them close to their enemies. At this point the latter felt themselves attacked on one flank. The miners had encircled them. The battle entered its critical phase.

It was already daylight; the miners were a few paces from the working-class suburbs of the city. From the porches and roofs of tall houses thousands of the inhabitants of Oviedo followed the course of the battle. The workers shouted encouragement to the miners—they were easy to distinguish by their red and blue shirts. Tying red handkerchiefs to their gun barrels the miners waved greetings to the proletariat of Oviedo. They received a similar answer from the neighboring houses and above the whine of bullets and the rattle of machine guns an animated revolutionary dialogue began.

The battle neared its end. The dynamite began to speak. Groups of heroes, true heroes of the revolution, laying down their guns and braving the bullets, advanced on the enemy. Several crumpled under the fire of the gendarmes. But the bulk of them advanced. Every miner wore a belt with sticks of dynamite. In their mouths were lighted cigarettes. They lifted their hands to the level of their chins. The fuses of the sticks sputtered; their arms described a semi-circle and the dynamite exploded with a deafening roar close to the enemy. As they threw the dynamite the miners recoiled slightly. But only for an instant. Before the smoke of the explosion drifted off, a few bounds brought them close to the enemy. How many charges were exploded? Ten, twenty or fifty? It was impossible to keep count. Judging by the effect on the enemy ranks there probably were a good many of them.

Scarcely a single shot was heard. Dynamite decided the victory of the miners, of the brave, self-sacrificing and heroic detachment of the revolutionary army.

The soldiers in the first ranks who were ordered to meet the revolutionaries in hand-to-hand encounter, no longer loaded their guns. A rapid encircling movement cut off their retreat and they surrendered without resistance. Victory!

Thousands of citizens of Oviedo saw the victory with their own eyes. It was a complete triumph. The workers of the city, who witnessed such a fight for the first time in their lives, inferred that the firing had ceased because the government troops had been put to flight. They were not mistaken. The dauntless revolutionary fighters of Asturias were victorious.

The people of Oviedo were already rendering first aid to the revolution, helping the miners of Mieres and Olloniego. The revolutionaries had reached the proletarian suburb of San Lazaro. The suburb, which smelt of powder just as if fireworks had been set off, celebrated the revolutionary holiday.

The spontaneous singing of the revolutionary hymn swells throughout the suburb of San Lazaro, the mighty wave of the International rises to meet the victors. They enter the city in triumph! Men, women and children come running out of poor tenements and huts to acclaim the liberators of Oviedo.

This is the name that they bestow upon them. "Yes," says one old woman, "they really freed the city, because Oviedo was held prisoner by the bourgeois swine with all their different varieties of guards!" The old woman is right, they have freed Oviedo, or are on the point of so doing. The hearts of proletarians are filled with joy. Revolutionary songs and shouts of triumph are heard on all sides. In San Lazaro the fighters are fed. The few wounded are given milk and a place to rest. Forward, miners! You know the order: to take Oviedo. We haven't finished yet. We have only reached the suburb of San Lazaro, where we have been met by the rejoicing and enthusiasm of the proletariat.

The victors from San Esteban de las Cruces did not delay long in San Lazaro. They realized that they must advance, that they must defeat all the counter-revolutionary forces in the city, and smoke them out of their murderers' lairs, overcome them with gunfire and dynamite, capture all the gendarmes who remain alive. Wasn't that what the orders said? Wasn't that what they had done in their own villages? So, forward, comrades! These were the thoughts of one of the miners who imperceptibly became the leader of the revolutionary detachment. He had always fought in the front ranks and so far he had escaped the bullets. The miner's name was Ricardo Llaneza. He belonged body and soul to the revolution, and had worked for many years in the ranks of the Communist Party of Spain. Llaneza had decided it was time to move on. And hoisted up on the shoulders of his comrades he declared in a loud voice:

"Comrades, we must go forward to the governor's house. Just as in Mieres, we must clean the enemy out of Oviedo. Don't lose time. Long live the revolution! Long live the United Front! Long live the power of the working people!"

A short speech. A revolutionary fighting speech. It was better this way, because if the Communist Ricardo Llaneza had to say these same words in peaceful surroundings he would have been unable to do so. He is no orator. He is a man of action and he has fully proved this. He does not regard himself as the leader of the detachment any more than the comrade marching at his side, whom he taught to shoot. Nevertheless, in spite of his wishes and in spite of his inherent modesty he is the leader here. In struggle, a Communist is expected to be a leader. But Ricardo is not the only Communist in the detachment. There is an equal number of Socialists and Communists here. And the Socialists and Communists put together are outnumbered by miners belonging to no party but who are members of the trade union.

The red battalion resumed its march between a double file of clenched fists raised skywards, and accompanied by thunderous revolutionary cheers. Cautiously reconnoitering the way, to avoid being ambushed, they passed several streets and almost reached the center of Oviedo. Soon they would come out on Magdalena Street. The miners went forward confidently, but were prepared at any moment to encounter the enemy, well barricaded behind thick walls.

They had barely reached Magdalena Street when a hail of bullets encountered them. The firing came from the neighboring headquarters of the Carabineers.

The first rank of miners wavered; several men fell to the pavement. One was killed, the others wounded. The one killed was the Communist Ricardo Llaneza, the hero of San Esteban de las Cruces, a brave fighter, who never flinched from danger. He knew that the revolutionary struggle demanded

victims and human life, that the emancipation of the oppressed could only be achieved at the cost of rivers of blood. And now the murderous hand of an invisible enemy had killed the Communist Ricardo Llaneza. The Carabineers, whose function it was to track down smugglers, were shooting revolutionary workers.

One more son of the revolution had been sacrificed. The miners glanced at their comrade's body. They picked him up and carried him off, together with the wounded. The door of one of the houses opened and the wounded were placed in the charge of two women who assumed the duties of nurses in the revolutionary Red Cross.

The strategic position occupied by the Carabineers prevented the miners from advancing along Magdalena Street. Leaving a guard here, the revolutionaries altered their course. Dividing up into groups they advanced along the side streets to come together again at the headquarters of the municipal guards. Here after a few shots the defenders laid down their weapons and surrendered without resistance. The revolutionaries occupied the building, took prisoners and awaited the orders of the revolutionary committee. The position won from the enemy was very advantageous. It was near the Ayuntamiento which was defended by 40 storm troopers.

Without a respite, the miners, led by workers who knew the city, attacked the Ayuntamiento from the flank. A few of the more daring wanted to go out on the square but the commanders dissuaded them from sacrificing their lives without in the least helping the revolution. The fire of rifles and shotguns, combined with the deft throwing of dynamite, decided the issue of the battle.

An hour after the attack began the "brave" storm troopers took flight and the red forces occupied the building. This was the center of Oviedo. But it was necessary to continue the struggle since the enemy held the most strategic positions, especially around the Ayuntamiento. A new attack by the tireless miners and the building of the Spanish Bank of Credit, where storm troopers had barricaded themselves, was in the hands of the revolutionaries. The insurgents gained possession of the Ayuntamiento Square and the main buildings facing on it. This victory helped to form an iron ring around the headquarters of the Carabineers, who still held out; two revolutionary detachments encircled the building. But the miners attacked without waiting for the Carabineers to surrender. Forward, forward! Always attack! Where did these people who lived in the bowels of the earth learn strategy? A few moments later they captured the electric power station which was also in the upper part of the city. Almost simultaneously they captured the Mutual Aid Society, the Court House, and the Ovito Domingo Convent. Next, they surrounded the City Hospital and the public guards who defended it, more dead than alive from fright, surrendered to the first revolutionaries who arrived. Having disarmed the prisoners, the red fighters exchanged their shotguns for rifles. The public guards were escorted to the Ayuntamiento between two lines of armed revolutionaries.

"We believe you won't escape," said one of the workers. "But we'll shoot at the least attempt. We can't waste time."

"Don't worry, don't worry, friends," hastily answered one of the prisoners, "we too are sons of the people and are very glad of your victory."

"We aren't interested in your opinion of our actions. Get a move on!"

They led the captured gendarmes through the streets of Oviedo. Gendarmes under arrest! Those same gendarmes who were paid by the bourgeoisie to

oppress the working people, who a moment earlier had been defenders of the capitalist system, smiled at the groups of armed revolutionaries whom they encountered and raised their clenched fists.

"Greetings, comrades," they shouted. "We too are sons of the people."

The revolutionaries do not return their greetings, but laugh at the irony of the situation, gendarmes under arrest who raise their clenched fists, while only yesterday they had clubbed workers with their rifle-butts for making this same gesture. Remarkable.

"They want to save their skins," said one of the miners. "You've got to keep a sharp lookout with those cowards! If I were the revolutionary committee. . . they'd pay me in full for everything."

With remarkable courage the miners captured a large section of the city, in the shortest possible time, a few hours at the most. Courage had carried them a long way without any definite organization. They did their best to catch the enemy napping, but in this they failed. Every hour, however, they scored new victories, retaining their moral superiority over the adversary, paralyzing him in an iron grip. Such were some of the tactical methods of the uprising which secured the victory.

II. The First Day of Power

Rios joined the triumphal march of the miners from San Lazaro. His party comrade, Ricardo Llaneza, fell before his eyes. This sorrow was followed by the joy of rapid victory. The miners were joined by the workers of Oviedo armed with whatever weapons they managed to find. After the buildings and strategic positions had been occupied it was deemed inadvisable to proceed further without first coordinating the movement, and only those measures were taken which the immediate situation demanded. Before taking further action, they must consult with the revolutionary committee.

To complete the story, we must tell what the committee had been doing meanwhile. The previous day, Octber 5, the committee, the leading body of the Asturian insurrection, met with everyone present save Rios and Peinado and decided to reorganize. The purpose of this measure was to centralize the leadership as much as possible. The Socialist comrades maintained that there were too many members on the committee and proposed to form a sub-committee from among its members. The main committee included the Socialists Peinado, Garcia Artal and José Deogracias and the Communist Vale. The sub-committee was composed of two responsible members of the Young Socialist League, one member of the Socialist party and the Communist Rios. The method of contact between the two committees was agreed upon. The responsibility for maintaining contact was assigned to several comrades including the Communist José Fernandez. Actually the sub-committee's sole function was to replace the first committee in case of the latter's arrest or disbandment for any reason. It must be kept in mind that no one had anticipated such a swift victory. Each committee took up its position. The main committee established itself on the edge of the city. The sub-committee remained in the center. That was why the members of the sub-committee were the first to learn of the miners' arrival and were able to take part in their heroic struggle.

But things do not always work out the way they were planned, especially in times of revolution. It so happened that the contacts between the two committees failed to function and the second committee had no news of the first committee and vice versa. Rios and his comrades were somewhat dazed by

the rush of events. What should they do? Should the sub-committee give orders, or refer everything to the main committee? The Socialists held that discipline must be observed and that they must abide by the arrangement previously agreed to. In other words, all orders should be given by the first committee and Peinado. But they held this opinion before their meeting with the heroes of the day, the miners who had defeated the troops and reached the suburb of San Lazaro. Rios and a Socialist comrade from the sub-committee set out to meet the victors. They wanted to talk to them and learn what orders they had received, question them on the situation in their provinces and establish contact with those who headed the revolutionary forces.

Great was the surprise of Rios and his friend when they learned that the revolutionary column had been formed at the initiative of a few local comrades and had not been sent by order of Peinado. The miners had not seen Peinado and didn't even know where he was. They were more surprised when they learned that the revolutionary detachment had no command in the accepted meaning of the word. The fighters, by tacit agreement, obeyed a group of comrades who had gradually assumed the position of leadership in the detachment because of their bravery and daring in battle. Among them was the fallen Ricardo Llaneza and several Communists from Mieres. The miners related all this in their newly won headquarters, the Ayuntamiento. They spoke uncomplainingly, with childlike candor.

There were other grounds for astonishment. In their victorious advance the miners had not met the workers' detachment which had been waiting for them two days on the outskirts of Oviedo. What had become of these hundreds of armed workers? Most of them should have been right at San Lazaro. Rios could not imagine what might have prevented their joining up with the miners. The miners knew even less. Their knowledge of events in Asturias was confined to the sphere of their victories which were capable of astounding even the most exacting leaders of the uprising.

Rios' surprise gave way to alarm. He regarded what had happened as inexcusable, and his admiration for the heroes who, impelled by their revolutionary consciousness and led by a group of Communists and Socialists, had hurled themselves on the enemy knowing nothing of his numbers or position, increased still further. During a few hours this unorganized mass, without leadership or a previously conceived plan, wrote the most vivid page of the Asturian revolution.

The miners' victory raised several questions that had to be decided in a hurry. They held a considerable part of the city, and some elementary organs of proletarian power had to be established as quickly as possible. Rios' usual energy became a tremendous driving force. Without consulting anyone he decided to go to the revolutionary committee. That was a dangerous undertaking since the way lay across the white zone, where the enemy, barricaded in fortified strongholds, swept the streets with machine-gun fire. Rios ran along the street without stopping for an instant, disregarding the bullets which spat at his feet. At last he reached the place where the executive of the revolutionary committee was hiding. When the people there saw Rios' excited face they decided that some catastrophe had occurred.

"What's happened, Comrade Rios? Why did you run so?"

"I've been wanting to ask you what happened. What are you doing here? Don't you know what's going on?"

"All we heard was shooting, we know nothing more."

"Don't you know that a large part of Oviedo is in our hands? Don't you know that the miners entered the town, carrying all before them, and are now at the Ayuntamiento? I consider it an outrage that you, the revolutionary committee, know less of what's happening than any worker in Oviedo. I came to tell you that things can't go on this way, that we must take action before the enemy recovers."

The comrades of the revolutionary committee listened to him excitedly. They asked him to tell them everything and Rios related all he knew in detail, punctuating his story with scathing remarks about certain leaders of the movement. He criticized the whole plan which had been drawn up at the earlier meeting and announced that on the way to Oviedo the miners had seen neither Peinado nor the workers' detachment which had been sent to the outskirts two days previously, that there was no unified command, that the revolutionary forces had been left utterly leaderless and that if by night they did not deal the enemy a decisive blow, the latter would recover and take the offensive. Finally, Rios declared that the revolutionary committee must immediately establish connections with the armed forces of the miners, and for that purpose it must move over to the red district.

The committee listened calmly to his angry words. They immediately began to act on his advice, but they regarded moving to the red zone as premature in view of the uncertain situation. Rios had to be content with the promise given him, and return to the territory held by the red fighters. The committee was extremely surprised that the miners had come alone. No one knew where Peinado was. They feared that some accident had befallen him. Thus, in the first moments of the uprising utter disorganization held sway. Would this situation continue?—Rios asked himself on the return trip to staff headquarters, prepared to do anything he could to improve the situation.

Along the way he encountered several comrades, among them Rivas from the workers' detachment which had left the city two days previously to join up with the miners. From him Rios learned the Odyssey of the workers' detachment.

"After we left you yesterday afternoon, we decided to go back and wait for the miners in order to enter the city together with them. In the evening we heard firing. We decided that the gendarmes were shooting in order to scare the inhabitants. Comrades who had just arrived confirmed this opinion. The shooting continued all evening. Around ten o'clock we received orders to go to the slope of Naranco where the column of miners would join us together with Peinado. Apparently Peinado believed that from there it would be easier to seize the town. We spent the whole night there. The miners did not arrive, the shooting continued. Morning came and I and a few other comrades decided to find out what had happened and why we had waited so long to no purpose. And imagine our surprise when we learned that the miners had entered Oviedo by way of San Lazaro. I immediately decided that we had been duped and that our orders had been issued by a provocateur. Returning to where the detachment was waiting I told the comrades of what had happened. They didn't believe me. The commander of the detachment called me a provocateur and threatened to shoot me. I spent an uncomfortable moment! It took me a long time to convince them. You know, I never imagined I'd have such an experience. Finally, several workers spoke up and proposed sending a small detachment to verify my report. It all turned out to be true and now a considerable part of the detachment is here but we don't know what to do. . ."

"I don't understand who could have ordered the occupation of the slope of Naranco as that's the very last place to look for the miners! Well, we'll investigate that. . ."

Rios briefly informed him of how things stood and advised him to come to the Ayuntamiento that evening with other comrades as the first organs of proletarian power would begin to function and they intended to work out the plans for the attack which was scheduled for the morning. Having questioned Rivas, Rios went to the place where his comrades on the sub-committee were stationed.

U. H. P.

Oviedo became a battleground. On October 6, the first day of the workers' power, the shooting continued all day. But now the gendarmes were no longer fighting with an "invisible enemy." The enemy was now not only visible but had a definite majority and answered the barricaded gendarmes and soldiers, bullet for bullet. The oncoming darkness hampered the activities of the insurgents. It was dangerous to walk in the section held by the reactionary troops. One could only walk in the territory occupied by the workers' detachments, and this did not hold good for everybody.

Only friends of the revolution were allowed to move about freely on the streets of the red zone; to be more specific, only fighters active in the revolutionary army. The new law of civil war had introduced a password whereby friends were distinguished from enemies. That password consisted of the three initials U.H.P., which stood for the words: "Proletarian Brothers Unite." The revolutionary committee had chosen a good password. It never occurred to the counter-revolutionaries that these three letters gave them the right to pass the revolutionary sentry posts.

There were still many enemies of the revolution on the territory occupied by the miners who awaited the new day in terror. Under cover of night, many tried to find shelter in the houses of friends. Hugging the walls they tried to reach the square of the Government, or other points protected by the gendarmes.

A voice would command them to halt: "Give the password!"

"I'm a comrade," the bourgeois would lie.

"A comrade, eh? Very well, I'll accompany you."

And the worker would escort the bourgeois to headquarters, to the assembly hall which had been turned into a temporary revolutionary prison.

If he really turned out to be a comrade all he had to do was to pronounce the three magic letters and the red fighter greeted him with his raised fist. In the dark of night, amid the din of shooting the password summoned all proletarians to battle.

As he pronounced the password Rios gave the stocky fighter on duty a friendly slap on the back. The latter, holding his gun in his calloused hands, aimed it at the house across the way. He was the leader of the patrol, an anarchist by conviction. According to him someone had fired on the Reds from that house.

"Some insolent sniper," the fighter said.

"Well, improve your aim. Maybe he'll keep quiet. Good-bye."

"Good-bye, comrade!"

Rios was accompanied by a comrade from the sub-committee, a member of the Young Socialists. Both had rifles. They had decided to reach the house

where the members of the revolutionary committee were quartered. No one besides Peinado and Deogracias knew where they were. They barely got beyond the limits of the red zone when a few shots were fired near them. It was obvious that counter-revolutionaries were doing the shooting. Only they used dum-dum bullets.

Rios and his comrade fell flat on the pavement. An instant later they resumed their journey, but they had to move forward slowly. When they had almost reached their goal it became impossible to go any further. They had to lie down on the sidewalk again and fire into the pitch darkness. Storm troops from the neighboring house kept up a running fire. They waited a half hour, gazing intently into the inky darkness. The firing did not cease. They had to turn back and move with great precaution, repeating the revolutionary password at every step. Their failure brought Rios to the point of despair.

"It seems to me, comrade, that we will have to give up our senseless role of substitute committee and take up organizational problems. We can't get through at present to find out what the main committee thinks. And yet by tomorrow we must give the fighters concrete orders as to where to direct their attack. We must organize the provisioning of the comrades who have been fighting all day on an empty stomach. What do you think, Rodriguez?"

"I think that we have no right to exceed the functions of a sub-committee. We must help the revolutionary committee without infringing on discipline."

"Even if the whole world went to ruin? No, I don't agree with you. You saw what the miners did this morning. They entered the town even though no one had given them definite orders to do so. They were not given a plan of action, they didn't know whom to take orders from and yet they entered Oviedo and routed the government troops. It seems to me, that is a splendid example for us. If the main committee does nothing and issues no orders, then it is up to us to take the initiative, formulate the plan of attack and organize supplies because there is nothing more harmful to any army than inactivity and the lack of definite plans."

"I agree. And yet we must wait, Rios. The committee will realize the difficulty of our situation and doubtless take the proper measures."

There was nothing to be done. Rios was fully aware that three members of the sub-committee were against him. He was prompted to turn back and make one more effort to reach the revolutionary committee. But the firing was again intensified and he realized the impracticability of his plan. The bullets cut him off and a daring exploit could not help matters.

His disappointment diminished as he encountered patrols along the way who asked the password and with unflagging vigilance guarded the buildings that had been taken by storm. When he spoke of complete disorganization it was actually untrue. There was organization, although in a primitive form, partly a result of mass initiative. The leaders of groups and detachments enjoyed authority and their orders were promptly executed.

The expression—mass initiative—is not an empty phrase. World history testifies that without mass initiative there can be no victorious revolutions. And events in Oviedo served to prove the importance of this initiative.

Of course, besides the will of the masses, there exists the Party which gives impetus to the movement. The Communist Party uses the experience acquired over many years of revolutionary struggle and applies the tactics and strategy that led to the victory of the Russian Bolsheviks. That is why the Communists hold first place in the ranks of the fighters and are imbued with a spirit of self-sacrifice and a firm understanding of their historical res-

ponsibility. Thus in practice they prove the correctness of the assertion that where there are Communists there is proletarian leadership along the right path to the victory of the revolutionary struggle of the working people. They apply the experience of the revolution in Russia, China and other countries, adapted to local conditions in each country.

This was proved by the facts. In the victorious march of the miners, mass initiative played its part. But the activity of a small group of self-sacrificing Communists, their instructions and advice, based on past experience, played a tremendous role.

As he reached this conclusion Rios gradually felt the pessimism which had gripped his heart, disappear.

Returning to the camp of the Reds, Rios saw comrades conversing in low tones.

"Listen, comrade, how can we get some dinner. I haven't swallowed anything but powder since yesterday."

"I think it's time we took what belongs to us."

"Yes, but so far we've received no orders regarding the matter."

Rios listened to them in surprise.

"Isn't this our city? Don't the stores full of food belong to us?"

But they guarded collective property. They felt the pangs of thirst and hunger yet they were unwilling to desert their posts and begin confiscating the things that belonged to them.

Peaceful merchants naturally would not have argued with them. A few shop-keepers voluntarily handed the keys of their shops over to the revolutionaries without waiting for orders. They welcomed the power of the working people.

Outside windows heaped with foodstuff the fighters of the revolution stood, pale with hunger, incapable of violating the sacred principle of collective property.

What do the rich property owners, who seek the shelter of the law, the gendarmes and the prisons, know of this strict morality? In the mentality of such folk there is no place for any instincts save murderous ones. A fat-bellied shop-keeper skulked in the back room of his store. He couldn't explain the behavior of the revolutionaries.

"I don't understand. What are they waiting for? Why don't they begin?"

If only he could do as he pleased with that store across the way, completely unguarded and left to the mercy of fate.

Rios quickly made up his mind.

"It's a very good thing, comrades, that you haven't thought of plundering or stealing. But the city belongs to us. The wealth of Oviedo belongs to the revolution. Take whatever you need from the shops until we organize supplies. You don't have to be reminded that you must only take what is most necessary. And continue to guard what belongs only to you."

Thousands of revolutionaries who had fought at Oliengo, Manraneda, San Esteban de las Cruces, who had taken Oviedo by storm wearided by several days of fighting, endured the pangs of hunger, standing at the doors of food stores. This was, perhaps, an unnecessary scrupulousness which no one had imposed on them, which was only dictated by their internal discipline.

This illustrates the much-advertised "banditry" of the miners, Rios thought. This is the mass plundering, destruction and theft which the real pirates and bandits of reaction are so fond of harping on.

This is why the government sent the bandits of the Foreign Legion and

the Moors of the regular army to plunder and murder in Asturias, for it was easy later to lay the whole blame on the miners.

IV. The Headquarters of the Revolutionaries

The Ayuntamiento was in the very heart of the city. From the square which the miners had taken at noon to the suburb of San Lazaro the revolutionaries had nothing to fear. The municipal building was on the edge of the red zone.

Beyond, the white zone began. And the enemy's stray bullets from time to time landed in the building. It was impossible to walk along the broad windowed corridor that faced the enemy's camp. It was dangerous to go along the central arcade of the building which opened onto the street. A number of workers fell in that cursed arcade, struck down by enemy bullets.

And that night the Ayuntamiento building was a dangerous place for careless people.

Yet the revolutionary fighters made the Ayuntamiento their headquarters. It seemed as though by their courage they wanted to break the enemy's resistance. But the fact that they located here, a few steps from the headquarters of counter-revolution, was doubtless a proof of their confidence in complete victory.

The cathedral cast its sinister shadow over the building of the Ayuntamiento. It towered skywards like a huge black specter, like an evil monster that vomited lead and shrapnel from between the filligree work and arches; the heads of saints and virgins, the bloody crucifixes and the altars served as gun-rests for the gendarmes. This was the symbol of black Spain which was to be cast into oblivion. This was all a symbol of the black Asturias which the slaves of yesterday were seeking to crush.

And that evening the assembly hall of the Ayuntamiento was turned into a place of detention for the prisoners of the revolution.

The counter-revolutionaries were fortunate. When they arrested revolutionaries they did not quarter them in the assembly hall of the Ayuntamiento to wait for their sentence. The dirty building of the commissariat was also too luxurious for workers. "Why stand on ceremony? Put the rebels in prison. Break the backs of those swine who defile our society, that revolutionary rabble which discredits us abroad!" This was how the agents of reaction reasoned.

The "savage" revolutionaries, "murderers" and "incendiaries," when they arrested their mortal enemies, the gendarmes and the bourgeoisie, led them to the assembly hall of the Ayuntamiento. Those coarse proletarians armed with rifles were regular savages, instead of shooting their enemies they held them in a splendid hall to await trial in the people's court of the revolutionary committee and the revolutionary workers' and farmers' government of Asturias.

Actually, in Oviedo there already existed a new power—the revolutionary committee. Good, bad or indifferent, this was the only strong power in Asturias on the night of October 6, 1934, the power of the workers and peasants who constituted 90 per cent of the total population.

Here, at the general headquarters of the revolution, the government of the armed people was really to be found. Hundreds of armed people were within the building. The leaders of hastily formed detachments and departments constantly came and went bringing in prisoners, receiving orders or report-

ing what was happening in this or that section of the city. No dazzling gold trimmings, epaulettes and stars were to be seen in these headquarters. Here the gesture of greeting was a raised fist. This was the headquarters of the revolutionary army—the armed workers of Oviedo and those who had not yet received arms, the representatives of the revolutionary committees of each village and settlement, the workers and peasants of Asturias. All of them comprised the workers' and peasants' government. They were the real power, and they knew it. This was expressed in their joyous faces, the happy expression in their eyes. The spirit of these fighters was a thousand times better than the morale of their enemy, half defeated, chased into his lairs. They outnumbered the enemy by several thousand and the cause for which they fought was the cause of all humanity, the cause of those who work, who by a surge of invincible strength had broken the chains of slavery.

Thus ended the day of October 6 in Oviedo. The uprising was victorious. Proletarian power was already established in its elementary form and there existed a revolutionary army which maintained iron discipline under the fire of the retreating enemy.

The dark of night brought the first breath of freedom. And the working people of Oviedo and all Asturias inhaled its freshness to the full.

The powder which saturated the night air serves as the best disinfectant against reformism and all enemies of the revolution.

The Madrid government sent huge mercenary forces—the colonial troops and the Foreign Legion—against the workers' and peasants' power in Asturias which had not yet had time to consolidate. The young Red Army retreated to the coal district where it continued to fight heroically against superior enemy forces.

V. Red Train

When silence had set in, when the workers had formed a circle standing shoulder to shoulder, when it was possible to feel the pulse-beat of the crowd, Rios began speaking.

He looked like a child in his dirty blouse, with his well-knit animated figure lost in the milling circle of the crowd.

The first line was a solid wall of guns. The Red Army was leaving for the front.

A red glare overhung the locomotive stack.

"Comrades, fierce battles lie ahead of us. The heroic peasants of Asturias are fighting together with us. They realize that the revolution is our common cause, that it will free them from the oppression of the landlords and speculators, from the yoke of feudalism which drags them down. The reaction is preparing cruel repression but it cannot vanquish the proletariat and peasantry which have declared war upon it. You are to relieve our comrades who are fighting in Oviedo. Do not allow adventurers and Moors to destroy our homes and murder our families. Forward comrades, for a workers' and peasants' government! Long live the revolution, long live the Red Army, long live the Soviets!"

The shout of the throng of thousands swelled and reverberated like the stroke of a Titan on bronze:

"Long live the revolution!"

"Long live Rios!"

"Long live the Communist Party!"

"Long live the workers' and peasants' government!"

Seizing their guns the fighters climbed into the train which had just been formed, while the crowd that had come to see them off cheered itself hoarse.

Women were saying good-bye to their life-long companions, companions in a cursed life full of toil and privations; they kissed the departing for the last time, smiled, and raised their fists although their hearts were bleeding.

A dark spot stood out against a crimson background. Black from coal-dust, the engine driver shouted:

"The International, comrades!"

The song of the workers of the whole world thundered deep and loud:

"Arise ye prisoners of starvation,
Arise ye wretched of the earth."

The train pulled out slowly as though propelled by the cheering and singing.

It was taking hundreds of armed people to the front.

A forest of raised fists waved, guarding the achievements of the revolution.

The signalman's flag flashed on the line.

VI. Battle

A fine, persistent, northern rain was falling.

It was reported at headquarters that it would be dangerous to proceed further. A few kilometers ahead a column of soldiers and gendarmes was waiting. They had been brought here on trucks. Three hundred excellently armed men.

Taking stock of their forces and meager supply of cartridges, the detachment decided to halt. It was impossible to engage fresh and well-armed enemy forces thrice their number and three times better armed. They had to take a rest in order to prepare for the battle.

Machine-guns were stationed on the flat roofs of the headquarters.

Breastworks were constructed with bags of earth. While one detachment moved on the enemy for the purpose of dislodging them from their position the other would remain under cover, awaiting the moment of attack.

The red front began firing at a given signal.

The enemy, taken by surprise, answered with a rifle volley and retreated.

The revolutionaries boldly lunged to the attack finding cover and ceasing their shooting when the enemies' fire increased.

The demoralized enemy maintained a sporadic fire.

The machine guns rattled with giddy rapidity. Under cover the revolutionaries waited for the enemy to exhaust their ammunition.

A short lull set in. Believing that the revolutionaries had taken flight the enemy came out on the road. The lacquered three-cornered hats of the guards stood out against the dark valleys. A splendid target! The revolutionaries pelted them with a terrific hail of lead. Stopping in their tracks the enemy replied with an aimless, random and fitful fire.

"Have one detachment go down on the right and cut off their retreat. They're in our hands."

A downpour began. The revolutionary fighters who had no raincoats were soaked to the skin. A heavy mist descended on the road and hid the enemy. The revolutionaries had to aim by guess at the bursts of flame.

"Those bastards will get away from us."

"Damn the fog."

They had to cease firing as it would have been pointless to continue. Drenched through, the revolutionaries felt dispirited. Water trickled down their backs, the wind lashed their faces. They were hungry and weary from the feverish excitement and fierce battle. They had no provisions.

Suddenly they heard the familiar sound of motors. Was the enemy preparing to attack?

"Fire!" a former sergeant shouted.

A volley thundered. The noise of motors grew fainter. The detachment rushed forward in order to cut off the enemy's retreat. The gendarmes fired continuously from the trucks.

"Look, they're retreating backwards, like crabs."

And, indeed, the counter-revolutionaries were "heroically" retreating, without even nosing the machines around, and blessing whoever it was that had been smart enough to provide trucks with reverse speed.

The workers returned to Grado in triumph.

A hundred poorly-armed revolutionaries had put to flight over 300 dashing defenders of "law and order." The population greeted the battalion with enthusiastic cheers.

Exhausted, hungry and soaked to the bone they returned singing and laughing.

"Long live our heroic red fighters!"

Rios remarked the high fighting quality of these hastily formed detachments which had only their own bravery to rely on. In spite of their hasty organization and complete lack of preliminary training they were able to put to flight a strong and well-armed adversary who was specially prepared for war and schooled by rigorous discipline.

The city workers organized a noisy demonstration. Working women, old men and children who could not directly take part in the struggle came out joyous and excited to welcome the victors.

Señors and *señoritas* gazed down panic-stricken, hiding behind the balcony windows.

Their faces expressed terror and apprehension. Hatred, century-old class-hatred had given way to fear, insane fear which penetrates to the marrow and dulls the eyes. The privileged members of society experienced the same fright as the gendarmes who had fled backwards from the revolutionaries. In those days shivers ran up and down the spines of all reactionaries in Spain.

VII. The General

At headquarters the general, with his medals and decorations, leaned over the table and stuck little flags on the unfolded map of the Asturian province.

The general was worried. His aides also leaned over the map. One of them was drawing the firing line with a red pencil.

"The most dangerous hotbed," said the general, "is, of course, that side of the coal district."

One of the aides straightened up and muttered, "We've still got a stiff battle ahead of us, general. Those people are made of iron."

Another added: "And they're very skillful when it comes to. . . ."

An exclamation full of intense anger escaped the general.

"Dynamite!"

"Yes, dynamite. It's an amazing weapon in the hands of revolutionaries. Asturias lives under the sign of dynamite. They lay a fuse in the depths of the mountains, they light it and blow the mountain to bits, just as easily as a gust of wind can blow away this map with the little flags on it; a charge of dynamite can blow up a city, or the barracks where reactionary troops are quartered, or even the small, lively figure of the famous general Lopez Ochoa, a republican in the service of the Jesuits."

"No reply from the insurgents, yet?" the senior aide asked with a slight uneasiness.

"Not yet," answered the general. "But none of these agreements bind us in the least. It's all a part of a higher military strategy."

The aides smile and the general smiles. The heroes of the Moroccan debacle fully understand that smile language.

From time to time a cannon volley is heard, the echo carries a long way.

"What's that," the general asks, jumpily.

The general is unfamiliar with the noise of guns.

The battles in Africa are now in the distant past. Besides, the noise of cannon hardly ever reached the general's ears as he spent the whole time at headquarters. Now it thunders close at hand, too close, extremely close.

"Those are the rebels' shots, general," the aide explained.

The general fidgets nervously and paces the room with long strides.

"The swine, they even have cannon."

"They've been shooting all day without a stop," the aide said with a deep sigh.

"I'll make them shut up! I trust I can make them shut up. Do they know who I am? How dare they use cannon! I'll silence them this very day, on my honor as a soldier!"

"We ought to wait for the reply from the insurgents."

The general stopped short.

"Yes, of course. It would be too risky to take the offensive. Yes, we'll have to wait. Cannon, dynamite. No, I can't risk the lives of my men."

The aide bowed respectfully. The general became serious. But the revolutionary cannon again disturbed the solemnity of the moment.

A captain appeared on the threshold:

"Two revolutionary insurgents want to speak to your excellency!"

"Let them come in immediately!"

Conclusion

Thus ended Red October, red as the blood that flows in the veins of the working people, red as the victorious banner which for fifteen days floated above the towering crags of invincible Asturias, red as the insatiable thirst for struggle of the disinherited slaves of capitalism.

October came to an end. . . and those of the revolutionary fighters who managed to escape the savage repression, who were not cut down by Moroccan daggers, embodiment of bourgeois civilization, and the murderous knives of the Foreign Legion, who did not die in the prisons and barracks from the sabers and bullets of gendarmes and storm troopers, or savage tortures, which were known by such titles as "trimotor," "sea bathing," "laughing tube," think unceasingly of the lost battle and analyze the causes of that temporary defeat. Having enriched their fighting experience from the epic of

October, they continue the fight. They formulate plans and follow political and social developments, and adjusting themselves to the new situation, they prepare for new revolutionary battles and work to vouchsafe the victory.

Yes, many were killed. Many were tortured. Many of our class brothers were flung into prison, but as against this, many new legions are constantly rallying under the red banner of revolution, many workers, unwilling further to endure a wretched, beggarly existence, many starving peasants plundered by the reactionary authorities. The revolutionary army, the nucleus of the detachments of the Red October, was not vanquished, it retreated and is now gathering strength and preparing for a new decisive attack on the stronghold of reaction and fascism, for a victorious assault on the ramparts of capitalism.

The Spanish proletariat received an unforgettable lesson. It became convinced that for the struggle against the bourgeoisie it must unite and attack in unison. The proof of this is provided by Asturias. It knows that it needs powerful revolutionary organs of unity. Such organs are provided by the Workers' and Peasants' Alliances. Workers' and peasants', because without the alliance with the peasantry, as has been proven by experience, we shall again be defeated. Alliances because Asturias showed that these organs can seize power by revolutionary means and organize soviets.

The heroes of the Asturian uprising appeal to the proletariat, pointing to the Soviet Union and Soviet China.

CRITICISM and ARTICLES

F. Yudin

Lenin on Certain Questions of Literary Criticism

The point of departure of Marxist-Leninist literary criticism is the historical materialist conception of basis and superstructure. Literature, like all products of the human mind, is ultimately determined by society's economic relationships, its means of material production. The creative functioning of man's mind or "the spiritual process in life generally" (Marx) is a phenomenon which takes rise from and is determined by the material means of production.[1] Various forms of material production condition the correspondingly various characters of man's relations to nature. The various forms of production and the correspondingly various characters of man's relations to nature determine the whole complex of social superstructures and the philosophy of man, "consequently also the nature of his spiritual products."[2]

Consciousness of social relations, the struggle of classes, the conflicts of productive forces and productive relationships, constitute the mould of man's spiritual life in every age.[3] Consciousness is not passive, not an inert reflection of existence. It is an active force in material production. In the labor process, mental and physical work are united; and it is only later, by virtue of specific social conditions, that they have become divided and reached hostile and diametrically opposed positions.[4] Social consciousness, that is, ideology, being ultimately determined by material existence, in turn affects material existence. The reaction of ideology on the material, economic base is not identical either in various historic epochs or in the bounds of one and the same epoch; also various types and forms of ideology—art, philosophy, science, etc.—are not identical in the character and force of their reaction upon the material economic base.

The oversimplified and vulgarized conceptions of the clear and direct dependence of different kinds of ideology upon economic relations have nothing in common with Marxism-Leninism. The various ideological superstructures are in various degrees removed from the economic base, are connected with it in various ways, and both the influence of economic relations on those ideologies and the influence of ideology on the economic relations are expressed in various ways.[5] Such kinds of ideology as political doctrine, theories of law and science (particularly the technical sciences, natural sciences and political economy) are to be found closer to the economic base. In the ideological spheres "which soar still higher in space—religion, philosophy and

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[1] "The means of production of material life determine the social, political, and spiritual process in life generally. It is not the consciousness of people that determines their everyday life, but on the contrary, their social life determines their consciousness." (Marx: *Critique of Political Economy*, 1932.—*Ed.*

[2] Marx: *Theory of Surplus Value.*

[3] Marx: *Critique of Political Economy.*

[4] Marx: *Capital*, Vol. I.

[5] See Engels: *Letter to Conrad Schmidt*—Oct. 27, 1890.

so on" (Engels) and are still further removed from economics, the connection with economics is to be seen not in such a clear and direct form but through a whole series of intermediacies. To this series of ideological spheres "which soar still higher in space" art belongs.

The connections and inter-reactions of these spheres of ideology and economy proceed through politics, morals and science. Economics exerts its influence on artistic creation through the whole complex of political and ideological superstructures. The economic base is reflected in artistic creation through the prism of the political views of the artist and the class to which he belongs, through the morals and conceptions of justice which the artist has. The reflection in art of man's relations to nature and his social milieu is affected by the scientific development of the age, the extent of the artist's own scientific knowledge, and by the philosophical and religious conceptions and attitudes which the artist and his class hold. "It is well known that Greek mythology was not only the arsenal of Greek art, it was also its very soil. . . . Greek mythology, that is nature and social forms, transformed with unconscious art by the popular imagination, is the pre-requisite of Greek art." (Marx: *Critique of Political Economy.)* The world view of the epoch and of the artist himself constitute a species of subject matter for art and postulate the artist's relations to the phenomena of nature and society; all this affects the content and form of art work, as well as the methods by which the artist strives to bring his ideas and conceptions to the attention of people. It is impossible to separate art creation from the philosophy of the artist. The artist as creator and the artist-thinker as social being with a certain understanding of the exterior world are not two separate and opposed persons. Creative work is a conscious process in which feeling and reason participate. The materials supplied by the sensory organs are subjected to a rational reworking. The consistancy of this process and the extent to which one or the other aspect of the single process of perception and reflection predominates is another question.

It appears, then, that to put the question in such a way as to attempt to separate the creative work of the artist from his philosophy is false at the very root.[1]

In fact, it is impossible to attain anything like a scientific understanding of the creative work of Leonardo da Vinci or Raphael if one does not take into account, not only the social relationships of their times, but also the state of science and art in their period and the degree to which the artists themselves were acquainted with art and science. "The works of Raphael as of any other artist were determined by the technical achievements in art before him, by the organization of society and the division of labor existing in all the countries with which his native land had connections" (Marx). It is impossible to understand Dostoyevsky's *Possessed* and *Crime and Punishment,* Tolstoi's *War and Peace, Anna Karenina, The Kreutzer Sonata,* just as it is impossible to understand any of the works of Dostoyevski and Tolstoi, if one ignores their philosophical views, if one ignores them "as thinkers." Without studying the social relationships and philosophical views of the artist, without studying the whole complex of political and ideological intermediacies, which determine the character of the influence of economic relationships on artistic creation, it is impossible to understand either the content or the form of art works.

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[1] Plekhanov was wrong in trying to distinguish Tolstoi the artist from Tolstoi the thinker; "of course when I say, 'Tolstoi is terrifying' I have in view Tolstoi the thinker and not Tolstoi the artist." (*Collected Works of Plekhanov,* Vol. XIV.)

Ideological superstructures arise under the influence of the economic base and in the final analysis are determined by it. But once they have arisen, they acquire a relative independence in their development, have their own laws and their own logic of motion.

In the development of productive forces there is historical continuity: each new generation must needs accept the existing level of productive forces—that is, the result of preceding activities—as a basis for its subsequent activities. Further movement ahead is possible only on the basis of the previously achieved level of the productive forces of society.[1]

This, to a certain degree, is also true of "spiritual production." Historical continuity in the development of productive forces is the basis of historical continuity in the development of ideology. But there is here not a simple mechanical correspondence. Ideological superstructures, as has been pointed out, have their own specific laws and their own logic of motion. The ideologies of preceding historical epochs are the material and in a certain degree the condition for the further development of the ideology of the succeeding historical socio-economic formations. Thus we obtain, as it were, an independent process of development of social consciousness.

Engels points out further that the ideologies "which soar still higher in the air" than politics and law have a pre-historic content with which they are obliged to reckon and the origin of which in its time was conditioned by the low economic level of the pre-historic period: incorrect conceptions of nature of man himself, of spirits, of mysterious powers, and so on.[2] Every sphere of human cognition and artistic creation has its own specific history and its own special laws of historical development.

This may be seen from the history of science, from the history of philosophy (in this connection Lenin's *Schema* of the circles in the history of philosophy is exceedingly interesting[3]), from the history of art and literature.

Lenin established this continuity in connection with the history of Party literature; he considers the literature of the revolutionary *raznochintsi* (petty-bourgeois intellectuals in Russia during the Nineteenth Century)—Belinsky, Pisaryev, Dobrolubov, Chernishevsky—as forerunners of Marxism.

The art of the Renaissance and of the epoch of classicism both made use of, both imitated, the culture of the antique world. But the way in which antique culture was used and imitated in the Renaissance epoch is different from the way it was used and imitated in the period of classicism. This difference in the utilization of the heritage of preceeding art is to be explained by the difference between the historical epochs of the Renaissance and classicism—the difference in their social economic formations and the different levels of development of art itself in these epochs.

The influence of the social relationships on the art of his epoch was splendidly expressed by Savonarola in his accusatory political speeches: "You artists commit a mortal sin in drawing now this, now that, on the walls of the churches, so that the people in the streets can say this is St. Magdalene and

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[1] "Due to the simple fact that each succeeding generation finds the productive forces as attained by previous generations and these productive forces serve it as the raw material for new production—due to this fact, there arises the interconnection of human history, arises the history of humanity which becomes history in so much the greater degree as the productive forces of men and, consequently, their social relationships have grown (ont grandi)." (Marx: *Letter to P. V. Annenkov*, Dec. 28, 1846.)

[2] Engels: *Letter to C. Schmidt*, Oct. 28, 1890.

[3] Lenin: *Collected Works*, Vol. XII.

that is St. John and this is the Holy Virgin . . . you dress and adorn the Mother of God like your courtesans and give Her the features of your mistresses." (I quote from Hausenstein, *Art and Social Life.*)

Connected with the character and state of the productive forces (progress, stagnation, decline) and owing to the relative independent development of ideology and society, history reveals both cases of colossal intellectual advance, ages ahead of the economic achievement, and cases of terrible intellectual conservatism, centuries behind the economic advance.

The history of western European thought of the 17th and 18th centuries has provided examples of bourgeois achievements in philosophy, history and art, which were certainly scores of years in advance of the economic development of the bourgeoisie. It is precisely in the epoch of the rise of the bourgeoisie, in the epoch of its struggle for political power, that its world outlook was revolutionary. With its assumption of power, from the moment it became the dominant economic and political class, its ideology grew more and more reactionary.

It is this very peculiarity of ideological development that explains a phenomenon frequent in history, when countries economically backward progress in their arts and sciences far ahead of countries which have long since attained leadership. Thus, for instance, France in the 18th century and Germany at the end of the 18th and beginning of the 19th centuries accomplished a vast ideological revolution. Backward Germany produced a great number of men of genius in the sphere of spiritual culture: Goethe, Kant, Fichte, Shelling, Hegel, Feuerbach, Heine.

This to a certain extent is also true of Russia in the second half of the 19th and the beginning of the 20 centuries: Belinsky, Gogol, Pisaryev, Dobrolubov, Chernishevsky, Tolstoi.

A certain degree of independence in ideological development does not, however, signify a breach of ideology from the economic base, its complete independence of the latter. For economic changes determined ideological changes in the past and are giving direction to the ideological changes in the future. Every ideology is the result of the economic development of the given epoch.[1]

"Both in France and in Germany, philosophy and the flourishing of literature generally were the result of the economic development of that period (the 18th century). In the final accounting the dominating role of economic development upon these spheres also is indisputable to me, only this role is played within the framework of conditions dictated by the given sphere itself. . . . *Economics* here creates nothing afresh *(a novo)* but determines the alterations in, and the further development of the material for thought which is already available; but even this is achieved for the greater part in an indirect way." (Engels: *Letter to Schmidt)* Thus, the economic influence on the course of development of ideology, including, consequently, artistic creation, is to a certain degree determined by the very character of one or another sphere of spiritual production.[2]

[1] The idealist historians of social thought usually consider the history of ideas as an independent process not linked with the whole course of development of society. And it is not surprising that they fall into the most contradictory situations. Thus, the historians of the period of Restoration, for instance, were unable to understand why materialist philosophy flourished so bountifully in the 17th and 18th centuries. Even Hegel could not understand this; he saw in the materialism of the 18th century simply one of the stages of the self-development of the absolute spirit.

[2] Marx, in *The Introduction to the Critique of Political Economy,* says that "with respect

Now as to the manner in which the ideological superstructure affects the economic base. That varies in various socio-economic formations and even within the bounds of the same formation. In pre-class society this reaction was rather direct and immediate, just as was the connection between economy and primitive ideology. Songs, dances, frescoes, the artistic decoration of household utensils, etc., had the direct and immediate aim of influencing economic activity.[1] In the slaveholding and feudal societies, with the formation of parasitic classes, with their complete separation from the process of production, intellectual activity became the special realm of priviliged classes who arrogated to themselves scientific, artistic, and other pursuits similarly remote from direct participation in the process of material production.[2] In capitalist society the separation of physical and mental labor attains its utmost limit. There are created special theories which attempt to justify this unnatural and mutilating separation of physical and spiritual activity: art for art's sake, classless science, and so on and so on.[3] In these conditions the reaction of the superstructure upon the base takes place in an extremely confused and anarchic form. But notwithstanding the anarchy and isolation of intellectual activity under these circumstances, its purpose, in the last analysis, is to organize the will and consciousness of the people in accordance with the needs of the ruling class.

This becomes particularly clear, clear to the point of obviousness, in epochs of sharp overturns and the breaking up of old social relationships. In such epochs ideology, including art, drops all pretensions to independence and to being "above classes." The late imperialist war and the great October Revolution are particularly instructive. During the war, all intellectual and emotional life was permeated with extreme nationalism, chauvinism and militarism.[4] In the October Revolution, when the life of the old society was at stake, there was no room for neutrality either in science or in art. For or against, with the old world or with the proletarian revolution, science and art ranged themselves either for or against the revolution. In the transition from capitalism to Socialism, the question of the inter-relations between the base and the superstructure acquires special interest, the most characteristic feature of this period being the bursting of new millions into culture. There, revolution extends into every aspect of the superstructure. Politics is the first. New millions join in throbbing political activity. The Soviet system, the Communist Party, the Young Communist League, and other

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to art it is well known that definite periods of its flourishing do not at all correspond with the general development of society, and consequently, with the development of the material foundation of the latter which composes, as it were, the skeleton of its organization; for instance, the Greeks in comparison with contemporary peoples, also Shakespeare. With respect to certain forms of art, the epic for instance, it is even acknowledged that in their classic form, when they constitute an epic in world history, they can never be created as soon as artistic production, as such, has begun; that thus, in the sphere of art itself certain forms of great significance are possible only at a relatively low level of artistic development." (*Critique of Political Economy.* 1932 edition.)

[1] See Bucher: *Work and Rythm,* Yu. Lippert: *History of Culture,* Levy-Bruhl: *Primitive Thinking.*

[2] In the epoch when slave-holding society was on the eve of dissolution, when parasitism had attained its highest level, the slave-holders began to draw the slaves into artistic professions and other spheres of spiritual activity.

[3] The commodity, commercial character of economy in capitalist society puts a definite stamp upon all kinds of spiritual production. Precisely because of this, Marx says that capitalism is hostile to certain kinds of spiritual creation such as art and poetry.

[4] See V. Gross: *War in Art.*

mass organizations, raise the political activity of the masses of the people to unheard-of levels. Science, formerly a monopoly of the privileged classes, becomes democratic too, drawing vast masses of people into its sacred precincts. The higher schools become genuinely popular (workers and peasants constitute the overwhelming majority of the students of universities and institutes.) Scientific work is placed directly at the service of Socialist construction. The immediate practical connection of science with Socialist construction stimulates enormously the growth of science.

The revolution in the sphere of art is characterized by the same features as in politics and science; the old conceptions of the role of art in the education of the masses are broken down; broad sections of the working population become associated with art and creative work. The content of art is increasingly permeated with the ideas of the proletariat.

The relationship and connections between the various aspects of the superstructure undergo considerable change. The relations of art to politics, science, and religion, undergo an especially sharp change. The point of view of the proletariat—the Marxist outlook—affects every phase of artistic activity.

Art adopts the scientific point of view—scientific conceptions of the laws of development of nature, of society, of the psychology and consciousness of people. Mysticism and religiosity are mercilessly cleared away.

The constant stress on such qualities as mass appeal, driving principle, scientific outlook, connection with the tasks of the working class, changes radically the relation of ideology, including art, to the economic base. The connection between the two becomes more immediate and direct and the influence of the former on the latter grows to an extraordinary degree. Naturally the Socialist system is a system without capitalist employers; it presupposes the active participation of every toiler in Socialist construction; and that, to be successful, implies heightened class consciousness and a new scientific attitude among the masses. This circumstance raises immeasurably the role and responsibility of those sections of the population who have the special task of moulding that consciousness and forming that attitude.

Creative literature occupies a very honorable and responsible post in this great work. It is one of the most popular arts inasmuch as its medium is language, the most accessible form of intercourse among men. The suggestion that the writer is an engineer of the human soul is not simply a beautiful phrase, it is a profound definition of the special nature and social significance of creative literature.

The peculiarities of the interrelations between the economic base and the ideological superstructure; the complex and special manner in which economic relations condition art, science, religion, law, ethics, etc.; the various and ever-changing character, form and force of the reactions of all these ideological disciplines through various historical epochs—all this must be understood, clearly and distinctly, by Marxist-Leninist literary criticism. Any attempt to ignore the Marxist conception of base and superstructure, any effort to present creative literature either as something completely self-motivated or as an immediate and direct expression of vulgarly understood economic forces have nothing in common with Marxist-Leninist literary criticism.

Such criticism mis-educates the writer, disorganizes the reader, and hinders the growth not alone of creative literature, but of all art.

Lenin's articles on Leo Tolstoi have extraordinary interest. They not only

give a full and profound appraisal of Tolstoi as an artist and thinker but they also reveal Lenin's general approach to the questions of creative literature and literary criticism.

Lenin begins his examination of the philosophy and creative work of Tolstoi with an explanation of the historical period—1861 to 1905—and environment in which Tolstoi lived and which were reflected in his creative work. The period was that of transition from semi-feudal serfdom to the bourgeois order. The reform of 1861 decided irrevocably that Russia should enter upon an era of capitalist development, following one of the two conflicting paths—the Prussian-Junker or the American-farmer.

The conflict between the two possible paths of capitalist development fills the entire epoch between 1861 and 1905.[1] In the main, however, Russia's development went along the Prussian-Junker path. The serf-owning latifundia grew into capitalist economies—a process that imposed endless suffering and repressions upon the peasantry. The peasant was squeezed doubly—by the serf-owners and the bourgeoisie. Still, progress along the Prussian path was achieved not without encountering stubborn resistance. This is demonstrated by the history of the peasant movement throughout those years, especially in the Revolution of 1905.

The entire period between 1861 and 1905 was one of preparation for the Revolution of 1905. In desperate suffering, in the clutches of the most repulsive political system, the system of the tsars, landowners and police, the revolutionary forces matured.

On the one hand, there was the ancient and ever growing discontent in the village with the landowning system—a discontent which gradually matured into a political-revolutionary movement of the peasantry; on the other hand, there was the emergence of the proletariat—a new revolutionary force created by the rise of capitalism. Such was the epoch which was reflected in the creative work of Tolstoi, and which formed the historic and economic basis of his creative work.

Giving a general characteristic of the epoch Lenin then goes on to a detailed examination of its main features revealing the various mental attitudes, the various ideologies, and the numerous contradictions among the then existing classes. He shows all the complexity and peculiarity of the historical environment. Here there is not a shade of oversimplified "economic materialism," reducing ideology to terms of economics, not a shade of the vulgar and oversimplified materialism which goes no further than the crude scheme: Tolstoi was a landowner and consequently in his artistic productions there was expressed the interest of the land-owning class.

Lenin examines to what extent in Tolstoi's creative work his historic epoch is correctly reflected, to what extent the events and the behavior of his heroes correspond to historic reality; that is, he puts forward a fundamental question: do we find in Tolstoi the truth about that reality to which his main works were devoted?

And Lenin, on the basis of a detailed analysis of Tolstoi's works, answers: yes, Tolstoi correctly reflected his epoch, he saw and understood his epoch with the eye of a great artist and the mind of a great thinker. It is precisely this that makes his creative works so magnificent, it is precisely this historic truthfulness that constitutes "a step forward in the artistic development of humanity" (Lenin). But Tolstoi, although he correctly reflected the basic

[1] Lenin: *The Agrarian Program of Social Democracy in the First Russian Revolution of 1905-07.*

content of the epoch, none the less did not understand this epoch to the full. He understood the way of life of the basic classes of his epoch, he understood the way of life of the overwhelming majority of the population of the country—the peasantry—and correctly reflected this in his creative work. But Tolstoi completely failed to understand the historical perspectives, the paths of development, and the motive forces of his epoch. Yet those were important, sufficiently important, indeed, to decide the question of a complete change of the then existing system.

"In *Anna Karenina,* through Levin," writes Lenin, "Tolstoi most brilliantly expressed what constituted the great turn in Russian history during this half century. Conversations about the harvest, the hiring of workers and so on, which, Levin knew, it was accepted to consider as something very low . . . now seemed to Levin to be the only important things . . ." "with us all this has been radically changed and is now only being rearranged"—"it is difficult to conceive (Lenin writes further) a more accurate characterization of the period between 1861 and 1905."[1]

In the main Tolstoi wrote of pre-revolutionary Russia, of the old village which had not yet outlived the remnants of the serf-owing system. In his fiction he reflected the *mood of the patriarchal peasant,* his elemental hatred for the new order which was coming from somewhere unknown and bringing with it terrible sufferings. It was precisely the Prussian path of the development of capitalism in agriculture which fated millions of peasants to bondage, to personal and economic dependence upon the latifundia which were becoming capitalist. This aroused both anger and fear against capitalism, against the city, against foreign countries, against all that was breaking down the old patriarchal order; both anger and fear, revolt and humility, outbursts of hate and appeals to supernatural powers, ferocity in mob attacks on the landowners and servility in face of the existing order. Contradictoriness, dividedness, hesitation, the absence of a clear perspective and the desire to hold on to the old patriarchal order, hatred and humility, curses and prayers—all this existed side by side in the emotions of the peasantry. And Tolstoi with the great power of an artist genius reflected these moods of the peasantry.[2]

These are the things Lenin discusses first in his appraisal of Tolstoi's creative work. Lenin takes the creative work of Tolstoi not as some sort of abstraction; he approaches Tolstoi as the ideologist of definite social forces, examines his works as an ideological, spiritual superstructure which had

[1] L. N. Tolstoi and his Epoch, *Collected Works,* Vol. XV.

[2] "In Tolstoi's works both the strength and the weakness, the power and the limitations of precisely this mass peasant movement was expressed. His warm, passionate, frequently relentlessly sharp protest against the government and the police-official church, conveys the frame of mind of primitive peasant democracy, in which ages of serfdom, arbitrariness and robberies of officials, clerical Jesuitism, deceit and trickery had amassed mountains of bitterness and hatred. His unbending condemnation of private property in land conveys the psychology of the peasant masses at the historical moment when the old mediaeval landowning system, both that of the landowners and the official-'allotment' system, had finally become an insufferable hindrance to the further development of the country, and when this old landowning system was inevitably due for severe and merciless destruction. . . . In his works, however, this warm protester, passionate accuser, and great critic at the same time displayed such a lack of understanding of the causes of the crisis which was moving on Russia and of the ways out of this crisis, as was characteristic only of a patriarchal naive peasant and not of a cultured writer of European education . . . The indictment of capitalism and the misfortunes it brought to the masses coincided with a completely apathetic attitude to that world-struggle, which is conducted by the international socialist proletariat" (*Ibid.*)

arisen on a definite historical soil. This is the first and basic criterion of Marxist-Leninist criticism with which we must approach the appraisal of creative literature.

Lenin's first test of a work of art is: in what degree does that work correctly reflect the epoch, the movement of social forces, the struggle of classes, political emotions, the hopes and fears of the masses. Lenin views creative literature as a product of the social activity of people, of the intellectual and emotional life of man, reflecting all the involved relationships of objective reality. For Lenin creative literature, besides being an instrument of mass education, was a method of cognition of reality, a method for deeply penetrating into the dialectic of the real world.

He investigated the development of capitalism in Russia, studied a huge amount of statistical material characterizing economic processes in post-Reform Russia; alongside these statistical tables and economic data, he also utilized creative literature as one of the sources for the cognition of real relationships and as one of the important arguments confirming his conclusions. In his work, *The Development of Capitalism in Russia,* he makes wide use of creative literature as a reflection of the inception of capitalism in the village and of the situation of the peasantry.[1] In his appraisal of creative literature, his first test is historic truth.[2]

Examining a book by the whiteguard A. Averchenko, Lenin notes that exactly where Averchenko depicts things he knows (the life of old Russia, representatives of "landowning and mercantile, rich and swindling Russia" the effect is unusually brilliant and correct; where, on the other hand, he treats of things not familiar to him, the effect is false and incorrect; "when the author writes tales about things unknown to him, the result is inartistic."

Lenin everywhere demands of the writer knowledge of the events and facts which he describes. This knowledge must be not the superficial knowledge of the dilettante, it must be profound, even as to details. It is impossible to write correctly, convincingly, artistically, of events of which the writer himself has only a hazy conception and piecemeal impressions.

It is with this very criterion of historical truth that Marx and Engels approach artistic literature. They criticize Lassalle most of all because in his "Sickingen" he incorrectly depicted the epoch, the relationships of classes and the individual roles of historical personages.[3] Engels valued Balzac precisely because of his realism, his historical truthfulness. Marx in his letters and in *Capital* repeatedly emphasized this very aspect of Balzac's creative work.[4]

According to Marx, Engels, and Lenin, the power of a work of art to influence people, even to the point of affecting economic relations is in direct ratio to its historical truth. Historical truth is the corner stone of philosoph-

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[1] Thus, for instance, characterizing the dissolution of the peasant economy, Lenin quotes Saltikov-Shchedrin in confirmation of his conclusion "regarding the standard of living and the living conditions of the Russian peasant in general" (Lenin, *Collected Works,* Vol. III,

[2] *Collected Works,* Vol. XXIV.

[3] See Marx's letter to Lassalle, Apr. 19, 1859.

[4] In his last novel *Peasants,* Balzac, who is in general remarkable, for a deep understanding of actual relationships, accurately depicts how the small peasant carries out all kinds of labors gratis for his moneylender, in order to preserve the benevolence of the latter and at the same time supposes that he is not making the usurer a present of anything inasmuch as for himself his own labor involves no outlay." (Marx—*Capital,* Vol. III).

ical materialism, of Marxism. Historical truth, that is, the objective reflection of real relationships, informs a work of art, even if it deals with the remote past, with political significance and ideological purposiveness. Marx pointed this out to Lassalle when he said that if the latter had correctly depicted the historical reality of the past in his *Sickingen*, "then you might have expressed much more precisely the most contemporary ideas in their purest form."[1]

The analysis of the founders of Marxism-Leninism of the nature of art leads to the indisputable conclusion that the greatest works of art are the result of profound generalization based on the thorough study of vast concrete historical material. The manner of the artist's approach to historical reality, plus the historical material itself, determine in a certain degree the creative method and the artistic form. One need not, of course, oversimplify the matter and mechanically transfer philosophical categories to artistic creation. But the key to the solution of the problem of content and form, the understanding of the special nature of artistic creation and the dependence of it upon content, undoubtedly lie along this line.[2] It is of this that Marx spoke when he pointed out to Lassalle that if the latter had better understood and depicted historical reality, he would naturally have had to "Shakespearianize" more, but since his historical approach was unsound, he had quite inevitably had to "Schillerize" more.

After analyzing the class essence and historical truthfulness of a work of art, Lenin proceeds to examine the world outlook of the writer—that is, the writer's point of view with regard to the world—as it is reflected in his creative work. Is the writer a materialist or an idealist, a conscious materialist or an elemental materialist? These are questions which have a clear and direct relation to creative work.

It is precisely the writer's world outlook, the philosophical aspect of his make-up, that constitutes one of the most important intermediary lines between his creative work and his social milieu, including his relation to various class and political parties.

A world outlook in general, and consequently that of separate individuals, is formed completely under the influence of social relationships. It cannot occupy any sort of subsidiary position as regards the creative work of a writer. The writer, like anyone studying and investigating nature and society, approaches reality with certain already formed conceptions and comprehensions. These determine his attitude to the concrete material: a positive or negative attitude to this or that set of events and people; a tendency to tone down or distort or emphasize this or that process or set of characters.

Certainly the artist's world outlook has a direct effect on his creative work. Even if the artist does not directly express his own views, approvals or condemnations of one set of actions or another, the objective significance of the

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[1] This demand for historical truthfulness of artistic productions was splendidly understood by the great critic, writer and philosophical materialist, Chernishevsky. He put forward truthfulness as the first standard of artistry: "The first criterion of artistry consists in the following: it is necessary to depict objects so that the reader will conceive them in their true aspect; for instance, if I wish to depict a house then I must make sure that the reader will conceive precisely a house and not a hut or a palace. If I wish to depict an ordinary man then I must make sure that the reader will conceive neither a dwarf nor a giant." (*What Is To Be Done?*)

[2] Volumes are written and spoken by inveterate literary specialists and certain writers on specific forms, but without the least attempt to say concretely and in a human way what is form with respect to a work of art. Form with them becomes a sort of thing-in-itself.

events and characters he treats cannot but reveal the world outlook and motivating idea contained in his work.

Engel's words addressed to some naturalists are completely applicable to writers: However much naturalists may try to screen themselves off from philosophy, however much they may try to stand on the ground of pure facts and experimental data, all the same in their approach to the facts, in their generalization on the basis of those facts, they are guided by definite theoretical conceptions, by a philosophy. The only difference, says Engels, is that in such cases they are usually guided by the very worst philosophy, by idealistic and eclectic systems and systemettes.[1]

The suggestion that the writer should master the Marxist philosophy ought not to be vulgarized and distorted into a demand that the writer write in accordance with the method of dialectical materialism ("the dialectical materialist creative method"). This idea of the RAPP (Russian Association of Proletarian Writers) and its leader, Auerbach, has been sufficiently exploded. Yet it is true that the Soviet and proletarian writer, if he wishes to be an artist-thinker and not simply a chronicler and recorder of facts, must seriously master the philosophy of the proletariat, its world outlook—dialectical materialism. This is an indisputable truth which must be taken for granted.

Lenin characterizes Tolstoi's philosophy as idealistic. Tolstoi acknowledges only one principle, the omnipotent, eternal and all-governing "Universal Spirit."

From this point of view Lenin studies *Lucerne, The Slavery of Our Times. The Meaning of Life, The Kreutzer Sonata, etc.* On the one hand, Tolstoi preaches "the most sober realism," unmasks the villainy of tsarism and the official church, tears away all the veils from the social system of the police autocracy, the courts, the bureaucratic institutions, the church and so on;[2]—on the other hand, he advocated "one of the most odious things there is in the world, namely, religion—the striving to put in the place of those who were priests by virtue of state appointment, men who would be priests by moral conviction, that is, the cultivation of the most refined and therefore particularly loathsome clericism." (*Leo Tolstoi as a Mirror of the Russian Revolution.*)

Furthermore, Lenin shows Tolstoi's idealism expresses itself in his conception of the laws of social development. Tolstoi considered that "there is no general law of human progress, as is demonstrated to us by the immobile Eastern peoples." Those views are characterized by Lenin in the following fashion: "It is precisely Tolstoism in its general historical content that is the ideology of an Asiatic system of society. Hence, his asceticism and his non-resistance to evil by force, and his deep notes of pessimism and his conviction that 'everything is nothing, everything material is nothing' . . . and his belief in the 'spirit,' 'the universal principle' in relation to which principle man is but 'a workman appointed to the saving of his own soul.' "[3]

Tolstoi's world outlook, wholly idealistic and reactionary "in the most exact and deepest sense of the word," is utopian. But Lenin emphasizes that along with this, there is much in Tolstoi that is of positive worth; it is precisely the critical aspect of his creative work that has positive value. Lenin's

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[1] *Marx and Engels Archives,* II.

[2] Lenin's point of view was so ill-understood by the Rapp-ists in their time that they made "tearing off of all masks," the basic slogan of proletarian literature.

[3] "L. N. Tolstoi and his Epoch," *Collected Works,* Vol. XV.

appraisal of Tolstoi's creative work is historical. He points out that in Tolstoi's time (up to the 80's of the 19th century) the critical aspects of his teachings "might in practice be of some benefit to certain sections of the population, despite the reactionary and utopian features of Tolstoyism."

But with the further development of the revolutionary movement, when the revolutionary proletarian ranks were storming with ever increasing violence the old foundations of the serf-owning system and the capitalist relations, the direct practical benefit of Tolstoi's teachings, their critical aspects, become obsolescent and useless.

What remains of value in Tolstoi is his magnificent works of art reflecting the past stages of historical development, an acquaintance with which is essential to a deeper understanding of the historical tasks of the present. We can still learn from Tolstoi, and for many years to come people will turn to him for a taste of great art on a grand historic scale.

Lenin attached great importance to the working out of a world outlook by an author, to his mastery of the rich sources of philosophy. In a letter to Gorky he wrote: "Further, I consider that the artist can draw much that is of value for himself from any philosophy. Finally, I am fully and unreservedly in agreement that in questions of artistic creation, all books are of use to you; deriving *this* kind of outlook both from your own artistic experience and from *even idealistic philosophy,* you may come to conclusions which will be of tremendous benefit to the workers' party."[1]

These words of Lenin are not all to be understood in the sense that there is no difference in the kind of philosophy, idealistic or materialistic, so long as it is a philosophy. Here Lenin merely pointed out that even from idealistic philosophy the writer may derive some benefit for himself. And this is undoubtedly so. Knowledge of the philosophy of the class enemy increases the proletariat's fitness for struggle. Moreover, after rejecting the idealistic rubbish, one may draw from the idealistic philosophies some needed information and factual material. Lenin made it clear that what he had in mind was the knowledge to be obtained from idealistic philosophy, and not the philosophy itself, that is, the idealistic point of view regarding the world. It is with the aid of such knowledge and on the basis of his own artistic experience that Gorky, according to Lenin, might arrive at conclusions which could perhaps be useful to the proletariat. Lenin furiously rejected any, even the tiniest attempt to drag clericism and idealism into the world outlook of the proletarian writer.

The analysis of Lenin's views on creative literature shows that to him the question of the political tendency, the "partyism" of literature, was one of the most important elements in criticism. Creative literature was to him not a private affair of the writer; it was a weapon for the political education of the masses, a mighty weapon in the moulding of a social consciousness and in exerting influences on economic relations.

That which comes from the pen of the writer ceases to be his private possession the moment it is published. The ideas and views put forward in his works no longer depend on his will, but are completely determined by the objective conditions and the interrelations of classes.[2] Furthermore, Lenin adopted as a point of departure the position that "art belongs to the people,

[1] *Selected Works,* Vol. I.

[2] In a letter to Gorky, Lenin wrote: "But this good intention of yours remains your personal property, a subjectively 'innocent wish.' Once it is written down, it *has gone out to the masses and its significance* is determined not by your good intentions but by

it should have its very deepest roots planted in the very center of the toiling masses. It should be understood by these masses and loved by them." Therefore, any judgement concerning the content and form of art, without this vital circumstance being taken into account, is empty, politically incorrect, and harmful from the point of view of art itself.

Lenin said that "there is no question but that in this matter it is absolutely necessary to secure great scope for personal initiative and individual tendencies, scope for thought and fantasy, scope for form and content." Demanding political purposefulness and "partyism" in literature, he, at the same time, categorically rejected oversimplified, crude, stereotyped identification of literary activity with other kinds of social and political work. Speaking of Party literature, Lenin wrote: "All this is indisputable, but all this merely demonstrates that the literary part of the Party work cannot be identified in stereotyped fashion with other sections of the Party work of the proletariat."

Particularly majestic are the perspectives drawn by Lenin for the flowering of creative literature following the triumph of Socialism, when social forces would be liberated from the anarchy of capitalist society, when the workers and peasants who had been oppressed for centuries would freely develop their creative capabilities, when out of the people there would come forth hundreds and thousands of talents in all kinds of spiritual creation. Lenin wrote: "This will be a free literature because not gain and not a career but the idea of Socialism and the sympathy of the toilers-will enlist ever new forces in its ranks. This will be a free literature because it will serve not a satiated heroine, not the 'upper ten thousand' who are bored and suffering from obesity, but millions and tens of millions of toilers who are the flower of the country, its strength, its future. This will be a free literature impregnating the last word of revolutionary thought of humanity with the experience and live work of the Socialist proletariat and will create a continual interaction between the experience of the past (scientific Socialism, the completion of the development of Socialism from its primitive utopian forms) and the experience of the present (the present struggle of our comrades the workers)."

In any Marxist analysis both of the action of economic conditions upon ideology and of the reaction of ideology upon social relations, it is constantly necessary to take into account the circumstances that consciousness as a rule lags behind social relationships.

In each case consciousness is the reflection of already formed social relations—consciousness is the perception of being, as Hegel says.

The conservatism of consciousness is expressed with special force in bourgeois society. In capitalist conditions social relations reach the consciousness of people only after they already have been formed.

Under Socialism, when anarchic production has been changed for planned production, the relationship between social life and the perception of this life undergoes a radical change. Engels, in *Anti-Dühring*,[1] wrote that planned

the inter-relations of social forces, the objective relations of classes." (*Selected Works*, Vol. I.)

[1] "The forces operating in society work exactly like the forces operating in Nature: blindly, violently, destructively, so long as we do not understand them and fail to take them into account. But when once we have recognized them and understand how they work, their direction and their effects, the gradual subjection of them to our will and the use of them for the attainment of our aims depends entirely upon ourselves . . . But once their nature is grasped, in the hands of the producers working in association, they can be transformed from demoniac masters into willing servants . . . A. . . . man-

relationships, before being formed, would proceed through the consciousness of the people. Under Socialism, society is quite cognizant of the nature of the relationships to be formed in the near future. This is clearly manifest in the USSR. The first and second five year plans determined beforehand the development of productive forces and the types of social relationships. Thus, for example, we firmly know, and in the practice of Socialist construction are attaining the realization of this knowledge, that by the end of the second five year plan the reconstruction of all departments of the Soviet economy will be completed—in particular agriculture will be completely equipped with the advanced contemporary agricultural technique, all the agricultural districts will have machine-tractor stations.

In as precise a fashion we know, and in practice we are realizing our knowledge, that in the second five year plan the final liquidation of capitalist elements and the abolition of classes in general is to take place.

The radical changes under Socialism, in comparison with the anarchic methods of capitalist production, in the relationship between social existence and social consciousness does not in the least mean that existence ceases to determine consciousness.

In each given historical moment social existence, the level of development of the material productive forces, basically determines our possibilities in the near future, and our awareness of future relationships.

Socialist relations in production create the conditions for eliminating the usual lag of social consciousness behind economic development. It cannot be said that this lag has been completely overcome in the USSR. This is particularly true of the collective farmers, who psychologically still lag far behind the highly advanced Socialist relations already formed in the sphere of agricultural production. This lag is still far from having been overcome even in the Soviet working class. The task of the whole cultural front, including, and in particular, creative literature, is to overcome this lag.

The founders of Marxism foresaw the ultimate bringing together of social consciousness and social relationships. They devoted the most brilliant, the most flaming pages of their work to this great future which in the USSR has already become the present.

"The social system which until now has been for men, as it were, something given, apart from nature and history, will then be their own free affair. The objective exterior forces ruling over history will come under the control of man. And only then will people begin in a fully conscious manner themselves to create their own history, only then will the social causes put into action by them have the desired results in a considerable and ever increasing degree. And this will be mankind's leap from the kingdom of necessity into the kingdom of freedom."[1]

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ipulation of the productive forces of the present day, on the basis of their real nature at last recognized by society, opens the way to the replacement of the anarchy of social production by a socially planned regulation of production in accordance with the needs both of society as a whole and of each individual." (Marx and Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. XIV. *Herr Eugen Dühring's "Revolution in Science"* (Anti-Dühring) by F. Engels, Co-operative Pub. Society, Moscow, 1934.

[1]Marx and Engels: *Collected Works*, Vol. XIV.

F. V. Kelyin

Fascist "Kultur" in Spain

Men of letters have always played an important role in Spanish political and social life. One can prove the correctness of this assertion without referring to the Spain of the 18th century, or the age of Romanticism with its minister-poets. It is enough to recall that in recent times men prominent in political life—holding senatorial, diplomatic, or ministerial posts, or seats in the Cortes—have almost without exception been foremost representatives of the Spanish Parnassus. Recall the political careers of Juan Valera, Jose Echegaraya Benito Perez Galdós, Vincent Blasco-Ibañez and many others. The literary circles (so-called "Tertullians") of this or that great writer that gathered in cafes or private houses throughout the 19th century and during the first three decades of the 20th century frequently served as laboratories which produced the most daring political combinations. Special fame in this respect attaches to the Madrid literary club *Ateneo* which for an entire century was the center of the Spanish intelligentsia, and in recent times became an anteroom of the Cortes.

Not for nothing was the *Ateneo* closed down in the time of Primo de Rivera. Restored to its rights by the latter's successor, General Berengwer, the club took an active part in organizing the republican coup d'état of April 14,1931.

After the overthrow of the Spanish monarchy, the connection between the literature and the political and social life of the country became even more apparent. Thenceforth, a number of great writers began to represent Spain abroad and in the League of Nations (Ramon Perez de Ayala, Jose Ortega-y-Gasset; Salvador de Madariaga). Others occupied semi-ministerial posts in various government departments (Miguel de Unamuno, Luis Araquistain, Valle-Inclan). A third group entered parliament. The close relationship between Spanish literature and political life continues to the present time. In fact, Manuel Azaña, President of the Republic of the Spanish People's Government, fighting against the military-fascist rebellion, is not only an important political figure but also a prominent man of letters.

The names of several revolutionary Spanish writers have long been familiar to workers throughout the world. Rafael Alberti, who reads his poems at meetings and demonstrations before audiences of 50,000, is a heroic figure of contemporary Spain. The literary work of Alberti, Arconada, Sender, Beltran, Falcon and others is inseparably bound up with service to the masses, with the struggle for emancipation. They regard participation in political and social life as the prerequisite of all their creative endeavor.

The role of writers and men of letters in Spanish political life could not escape the notice of world fascism, and of German fascism in particular. This explains why, in recent years, the struggle in Spain between the forces of reaction and revolution has taken place simultaneously on the political and the literary fronts. The events which we now observe in Spain are merely the culmination of a long period of previous preparation by fascism, especially German, for the "Spanish heritage."

The period from 1933 to 1936 was the time when the theorists of German fascism made special efforts to capture the leading role in the country, devoting every means and tremendous resources to this task.

In order to understand clearly the separate stages in this struggle, it is necessary to point out that German culture has enjoyed the warm sympathy not only of the reactionary Spanish bourgeoisie but also of its more liberal wing, to which the majority of the Spanish writers and scientists belong. There figured in 19th century Spanish literature many prominent writers of German origin, such as the remarkable romantic poet, Gustavo Adolfo Becker, the playwright and critic, Eugenio Harcenbuch, the romanticist Fernando Caballero (Baile de Faber) and others. Likewise, nineteenth century Spanish philosophy is closely linked with Germany: the most noted of its schools, the "Krautzian," derives its name from one of the secondary followers of Kant. Even more striking evidence of German influence is to be found in the Spanish schools, especially the higher schools. When, at the end of the 19th century, the Spanish Government, yielding to the pressure of the more advanced sections of the intelligentsia, decided to modernize its medieval schools, it took as its model for this reform not the educational system of France, which because of kinship of race and language should have attracted it, but that of Germany.

German schools, especially the higher institutions, provided the model for all teaching institutions of Spain. The German type was considered the embodiment of perfection.

The principles of the German school guided the selection and training of teachers and the inner structure and organization of scientific centers. The postulate of scientific life was provided by the erroneous concept of German scientific institutions: first develop science and then find necessary practical applications for it. Doubtless, the chauvinist tendencies which were so deeply inculcated in the German youth, especially students, also found their counterpart in the Spanish schools. The application of this reform was largely facilitated by the fact that it was carried out under the regency of the "Queen Mother," Maria Christina (1880-90) who was an Austrian Duchess and the main bulwark of German and Austrian influence on the peninsula. After the World War it came to light that during this period Spain was formally linked with Germany and Austria by a treaty directed against France and Russia.

Striking testimony of the pro-German sympathies of the Spanish intelligentsia at the end of the 19th century and early in the 20th century is furnished by the fact that when a group of teachers headed by Jiner de los Rios, famous in the history of Spanish education, decided to break with the official school and found the so-called "Free Institute of Teaching," this group also turned to German models. True, the latter were not taken in their most typical form. At first glance English methods seemed to predominate. But on closer examination it became evident that the point of departure in this case was also the German school.

It is not surprising that in 1898-99, as a result of the complete bankruptcy of clerical feudal Spain, which had absolutely ruined its prestige in the inglorious war with the United States, the best elements of the Spanish intelligentsia, particularly the younger section, turned against the government. The new generation, which called itself the generation of the disaster of 1898, sought salvation from Western European and especially from German models. Most of the younger intelligentsia issued from the Spanish lower middle class, which was most unstable ideologically and in the main inclined to anarchism. By its refusal to cooperate with the government and to take part in the country's political life, this class not only failed to administer the death blow to clerical feudal Spain but on the contrary helped it to recover. The attitude

of non-resistance of the Spanish bourgeoisie played directly into the hands of the forces of reaction, which advanced the slogan of "unity" around the young king whom "providence" had supposedly charged with the historic mission of "reviving the great Spain of the Catholic kings, Charles I and the Phillips."

Among the leaders of the young generation (Unamuno, Baroja, Benavente, Valle-Inclan, Asorina Maestu, and others) two tendencies were apparent almost from the outset. One of these, which we will term the "populist," sought to revive the Spanish ideals of the Middle Ages. The most outstanding representative of this trend was Unamuno, who is now ending his days ingloriously in the camp of the fascist rebels. The other tendency, without denying national culture, sought salvation in a rapprochement with the great countries of Western Europe.

Certain varients of this so-called Western tendency developed—the French (Azorin), the English (Maeztu) and the German (José Ortega y Gasset). Among these variants, as the subsequent course of events revealed, the strongest turned out to be the German variant of José Ortega y Gasset—his Tertullia and the magazine *Revista de Occidente* (*Western Review*) which he founded somewhat later. Interest in German philosophy and German literature was in many respects profitable to the Spanish intelligentsia and to the writers among them. But it is impossible to overlook the fact that this interest was cunningly exploited by German imperialism, which, by the end of the first decade of the 20th century, had succeeded in obtaining a solid footing in the Pyrenean peninsula, especially in Spain. This development was largely facilitated by the fact that the Spain of Alfonso XIII continued to suffer international defeats, this time in Africa, and certain Spanish groups were inclined to lay the responsibility for these defeats on France's doorstep.

German imperialism succeeded not only in maintaining, but also in increasing the pro-German sympathies of Spanish social groups. For this purpose Germany's own cultural and scientific forces were drawn upon to create a kind of Spanish cult in Germany itself. The Germany of Wilhelm II expended considerable effort in winning over the Spanish intelligentsia and worked quite skillfully in this respect. It is common knowledge how great is the debt of Spanish science (medicine, biology, etc.) to German scientists. In the spheres of philosophy and the study of literature, the Germans were the direct teachers of the young Spanish scientists. It is enough to recall the services rendered Spanish philology by E. Menerlyubke, B. Baist, Jansen and others. It may be asserted that at the time of the World War, Spain like the Scandinavian countries had to a considerable extent been Germanized.

Although during the war a certain section of Spanish society, including the writers Blasco Ibañez, Unamuno, and Valle-Inclan were on the side of the allies (more specifically of France and Italy, with whom they were bound by the ties of Romance culture), the main section of the Spanish intelligentsia openly sympathized with the central powers and counted on the victory of the German *bloc*. Thus the painstaking work of German imperialism which was clothed in the mask of cultural assistance fully paid for itself and bore returns. As for the Spanish writers, during the World War, several of them definitely adopted a pro-German position and retain it to the present time. This is true of the most famous of Spanish humorists of the late 19th century and early 20th—Jacinto Benavente.

The Germans intensified their efforts to subjugate the peninsula after the Versailles Treaty, Deprived of her sources of raw materal and foreign

markets, Germany concentrated her attention on the so-called Spanish-speaking countries, Spain and Latin America.

To this policy were soon added strategical considerations, which increased as there developed in Germany the idea of *revanche,* which under the Third Reich became the open effort to encircle France in a strategic ring and to reach the Mediterranean Sea and the regions of the African coast. Germany acted directly and through the mediation of Italy. Much excitement was occasioned in the European press by the publication of the secret clauses in the Italo-Spanish agreement, drawn up in the days of Primo de Rivera (1926) and directed against France, with whom the Spain of Alfonso XIII on the surface (although with certain inconsistencies) had gone hand in hand as regarded African affairs, thus enabling her to strengthen her wobbly position in Morocco and to defeat Abd-el-Krim. But the secret links between Germany and Spanish fascism, though well disguised, came to light. Spain's withdrawal from the League of Nations in 1926 undoubtedly occurred with the knowledge and direct approval of the Berlin diplomats.

After the Versailles treaty, German imperialism created a vast military apparatus for the peaceful conquest of Spain, with the aim of transforming her into a military colony. The center of propaganda was Berlin, where there were established a Spanish-American Institute and a special organization, the "German-Spanish center," which prior to the fascist military rebellion maintained a number of branches in Spain, the principal ones being in Madrid, Barcelona and Seville. The second propaganda center was Hamburg. The official purpose of these organizations was to strengthen cultural ties between Germany and Spain and through the latter with the countries of Latin America.

Every year the German-Spanish center sent scientists, lecturers and men of letters to Spain (mainly the latter, who were its agents and propagandists). If we examine the annals of Spanish life for the last five or six years, we come across many names of Germans, famous and obscure, who visited Spain and delivered lectures and papers at the Madrid Ateneo, and other cultural centers. The majority were historians and jurists, but there were also many representatives of the other professions; physicians, biologists, etc. However, this contact did not satisfy the German imperialists. In Germany the teaching of Spanish was made compulsory in many of the upper and middle schools, and in Spain special German schools were opened at the same time. An idea of the importance of these schools is provided by a speech delivered by Schultz, the director of the German school in Madrid, at the Darmstadt congress of German teachers working abroad, in August, 1933. "German teachers in Spain," Schultz said, "must first of all be spiritual missionaries."

Another center of propaganda in Spain was the summer university established in Santander by a decree of the Spanish government on August 23, 1932. Organized at the initiative of the Minister-socialist Fernando de los Rios, with the noble aim of increasing Spanish prestige abroad, in the three years of its existence the "international university" was transformed into a center of German propaganda. Its constitution placed the university under the control of a special board of trustees which included foremost names in Spain, among them the famous Spanish philologist Ramon Menendez Pidal (who was the rector), Miguel de Unamuno, José Ortega y Gasset and others. Even in the first year of the university's existence Germans comprised the majority of the students. Among the foreign professors invited were five representatives of German science, including Karl Vossler, professor of literature, who was then rector of the Munich University. By 1935—the last year

of the Santander University—German influence had further increased. This fact is easy to understand since this was the time when Gil Robles, Lerroux and Co. were in power. It is not surprising that in 1935 the Madrid press devoted pages to printing the lectures and speeches delivered by German professors at Santander.

The year 1935 marked the jubilee of Lope de Vega. Karl Vossler, then a Santander faculty member, wrote a book about the great playwright. Spain has many experts of its own on the history of the theater, several of them (J. F. Montesinos) world authorities. Nevertheless, in October, 1935, Vossler was invited to Spain to read papers on Lope. He lectured in Seville and in several other Spanish cities. During the jubilee (August, 1935) excerpts from Vossler's book were run as features in the Madrid papers. Needless to say passages were quoted in which Vossler paints the social characteristics of Lope de Vega in hues congenial to the German propaganda agents.

Two months later (in October of last year) the Spanish government imprisoned the radical writer Antonio Espiña without the least investigation merely on the request of the German Consul in Bilbao. He was indicted for an article against Hitler. Antonio Espiña, a well-known writer, was one of the editors of the Madrid newspaper, *El Sol*. But the Lerroux-Gil Robles regime did not stand on ceremony with writers. Recall the tragic fate of the journalist Luis de Sirval, who was brutally murdered by Foreign Legion officers in Oviedo in October, 1934. Soon after the arrest of Antonio Espiña, another writer—the Communist Isidoro Acevedo—was imprisoned. His "crime" was making several improper remarks regarding the Abyssinian policy of Mussolini. With every month the government of Spain was becoming more and more the vassal of world fascism. The Spain of Lerroux-Gil Robles had already ceased to be an independent country—a state with the rank of a world power. It had become a vassal state taking orders not even from the German ambassador, but from a mere consul in Bilbao.

Is there, indeed, any ground for surprise? One of the members of the Santander scientific faculty, Professor Saks, in a lecture delivered at the international university in August, 1935, proved that the Spanish people were merely a branch of the German people, although their blood had been diluted by intermingling with other races—something highly undesirable from the standpoint of the worthy professor. Gothic blood, however, continues to flow in the veins of many Spaniards according to Saks. To be a Goth in our times means to belong to an ancient and noble family. Saks found a strong Gothic linguistic influence in the names of many Spanish localities. True, the Goths were unable to retain their identity in Spain; they became too acclimated and were eventually absorbed by the native Roman-Spanish population. But Saks hastened to console his listeners by showing with great conviction that the Goths did not delay returning to Spain, first in the powerful figure of Charlemagne and his Paladins, and later in the modest guise of merchants, scientists, artisans and settlers. With tears of genuine gratitude, Saks recalled the famous house of the Augsburg Fuggers who helped Charles III to ascend the throne and went bankrupt as a result of their Spanish ventures. According to the professor, the Goths who took part in the second conquest in Spain were Herder, Goethe, Schiller, Tiek, Schlegel and almost all of the German romanticists. Saks ended his paper with a word of praise for the Santander University which "in the three years of its existence has enabled innumerable scientists to acquaint their listeners with their scientific work (although in abridged form) and exchange impressions with their Spanish colleagues,

thereby deriving mutual benefit. It has also enabled German scientists to carry away with them memories of the beautiful country of Spain with its charming landscapes and its ancient and ever youthful civilization, of its peacefulness and of the new generation of professor-students and student-professors who founded the Santander University and make it possible for Spain to win the position in the scientific world which is rightfully hers."

When one reads these unctuous phrases of the German fascist one involuntarily recalls gay, peaceful, somewhat provincial San Sebastian, with its white houses lying along the shores of the smiling blue gulf. San Sebastian, reduced to smoking ruins, drenched in the blood of revolutionary fighters, has learned from experience what "the return to Spain of the Goths" means in the language of fascism: the German fleet anchored off San Sebastian, and German arms and airplanes for the fascist rebels. This is the savage face of the "Goths" who returned to Spain. Despite the many lectures delivered professorially by Saks, *ex cathedra,* they have now been unmasked by history. And the Spanish people, fighting with such heroism in the rocky gorges of the Asturias and Guadarrama, on the plains of Estremadura and Andalusia, in the streets of almost every Spanish city and village, will never forgive or forget.

II

Above we have endeavored to portray the various stages in the cultural enslavement of Spain by German imperialism. We saw how long and persistently German policy, German diplomats and scientists have worked for this end. The arrest of Antonio Espiña reveals what influence the German embassy at Madrid exercised as recently as a year ago. But the victory of German fascism in Spain turned out to be an illusory one. True, German fascism has succeeded in maintaining up to the present its predominating influence among the more reactionary sections of Spanish society—the Catholic circles, the agrarians and certain sections of the students and teachers. Much has already been written regarding the Berlin connections of Gil Robles, General Sanjurjo and Franco. The Berlin orientation of both monarchist parties (the Bourbon and the Carlist) is also an established fact.

On the other hand, the main section of the Spanish intelligentsia, the very elements which German fascism seemed most entitled to rely on, have been completely alienated in the last seven or eight years. This noteworthy fact largely explains what motivated the Berlin wirepullers to hasten the organization of the military fascist rebellion in Spain.

The emancipation of the Spanish intelligentsia from the enslaving influence of German political and social thought made itself felt in the middle 'twenties. The collapse of the Kaiser's Germany, the entire course of her historical development after Versailles, and her transformation into the Hitlerite Third Reich were destined to produce a deep impression on her Spanish friends. If Germany or, more specifically, German culture was accepted in Spain before the Versailles period without any reservations, in the middle 'twenties the Spanish intelligentsia began to differentiate more clearly between its various aspects. This discrimination was further facilitated by revolutionary events in Spain herself. As class differentiation proceeded within the country, and the tempo of the revolutionary struggle heightened the antagonism between the two Germanies—the revolutionary and the reactionary—the Germany of ancient culture and fascist barbarism became more and more plain to the Spanish intelligentsia.

Gradually freeing itself from the yoke of German fascist and semi-fascist thought, the Spanish intelligentsia eagerly sought new inspiration. The turning point was reached in 1928, when the long-accumulated interest in the USSR, in Soviet literature, art, etc., came to the surface despite all the obstacles placed in its path. On the other hand, 1928 marked a turning point in Spain's hostile policy towards France. The collapse of the economic war which the dictator waged against the latter in 1928, the comparative weakness of Spanish industry, etc., resulted in the long awaited change in the attitude of Spanish circles towards France.

The Soviet Union and progressive France became the "promised land" for the best elements among the Spanish intelligentsia in the years that followed the overthrow of the clerical-feudal monarchy of Alfonso XIII and his generals. At the same time, there developed what was first a negative attitude towards, and then a positive condemnation of German fascism, which turned into hatred with the establishment of Hitlerism in Germany.

Spanish revolutionary and radical writers—the vanguard of the Spanish intelligentsia—keenly feel this process and not only feel it but to a large extent direct it. Proof of this fact is the revolutionary activity and writings of the group of Rafael Alberti, Isidoro Acevado, Maria Teresa Leon, Cesar Maria Arconada, Arturo Serrano-Plaja in Madrid; of the Valencia Association of Proletarian Writers, led by the remarkable revolutionary poet Pla y Beltran, Ramon J. Sender and the Writers' Collective "Tensor" which he organized; the efforts to create a revolutionary theater (the undertakings of Gerena and Sesar Filkon); the extensive work of organizing proletarian clubs, libraries, choruses, and the like carried out in the last five years by our Spanish comrades. These activities indicate the direction taken with the spiritual growth of the best sections of the Spanish intelligentsia, whose ardent sympathy for the Soviet Union and for progressive France found a warm response in those countries. The names of Gorky, Barbusse, Rolland, Aragon, Malraux, Cassou, Jean Richard Bloch, Ehrenburg, Sholokhov, and others are highly honored in Spain today. The unity of thought and feeling found brilliant expression in the All-union Congress of Soviet Writers in 1934, when the delegates from the Spanish Association of Revolutionary Writers and Artists, Rafael Alberti and Maria Teresa Leon, appealed to Gorky to advise on the organization in Spain of a publishing house for Soviet *belles lettres* and received a warm response from the great writer.

A no less striking expression of *unity of thought and feeling* was the Paris Congress in defense of culture, in June, 1935. The Spanish delegation was headed by the left-wing Socialist and warm friend of the Soviet Union, Julio Alvarez del Vayo. These sympathies were confirmed in the tragic October days, when a large section of the Spanish intelligentsia found refuge abroad from the savage terror of Gil Robles and Lerroux, and grew even stronger after the victory of the People's Front in Spain (February 16, 1936).

The welcome extended in May of this year to the delegates of the French People's Front, André Malraux, Jean Cassou and H. R. Lenormand, the sympathy which was bestowed on Jean Richard Bloch who arrived there later, the deep sorrow with which the foremost section of the Spanish intelligentsia received the news of the death of the great friend of revolutionary Spain, A. M. Gorky, a feeling which found expression in speeches made at the memorial meeting in the Madrid Theater "El Español" by Dolores Ibarruri (Pasionaria), Margarete Nelken, Vensesleo Roses, Julio Alvarez del Vayo and others, can convey an idea of the progress of this movement. But its actual

extent was only revealed by the events of the last two months of heroic struggle against the fascist rebellion. A manifesto supporting the republic was signed not only by radical writers and scientists whose position was clear from the first day of the struggle, but by many on whose sympathy the rebels and their Berlin masters seem to have a claim. The manifesto bears the signatures of individuals long connected with German culture, of outstanding cultural leaders. They include Spain's greatest philologist, Ramon Nenedas Pidal, and the philosopher Jose Ortega y Gasset, who recently passed through a phase of *Spenglerism* and was regarded as the foremost representative of German influence, the former ambassador to London, Ramon Perez Ayala, the artist Ramon Gomez de la Serna, the greatest poets of the older generation, Antonio Machado and Juan Ramon Jimenez, the physician and sociologist, Grigorio Marañon and others.

Does this mean that the new Spain has completely turned its back on German civilization and has broken with it entirely? Of course not. The new Spain regards the German cultural heritage with great respect and is warmly sympathetic to the best representatives of the German revolutionary intelligentsia, to those persecuted by the Hitler regime. By publishing translations of the poems of Becher and Weinert, the essays of L. Renn and others who voice their hatred of the Third Reich, the progressive section of Spanish society and its foremost writers show how much stronger they have become in the heat of the class struggle. German fascism was not helped by the lengthy activities in Spain of Bismarck and Wilhelm, by the powerful propaganda apparatus or the sending of apostles of culture, or direct methods of action such as corrupting the press. In the critical hour, only embittered old men like Miguel de Unamuno and Ramiro de Maestu took the side of the fascist rebels, and in that sense the card of world fascism in Spain was beaten. The best section of the Spanish intelligentsia and its vanguard, the writers, took a firm stand on the side of the Spanish people, who have cast off the yoke of century-old slavery and are eagerly following the road to a new and better life.

III

But the reader may ask how it happened that German fascism, which had such a powerful apparatus at its disposal in Spain, did not try to change the situation in its favor? Did it really surrender its positions on the ideological front so easily and satisfy itself with the advantages which it derived from its strong influence among the reactionary circles of government of Spain? Of course not. German fascism made efforts to control the situation. In this it acted through the medium of the institutions of higher learning whose Germanization we discussed and which almost to the last, in spite of all steps taken, retained the internal and external aspects of medieval immobility. After the *coup d'état* of April, 1931, several of the writers went over to the camp of fascism, among them Jimenez Caballero, Ledesma Ramos, D'Ors. In other words, among the writers and professors, the German fascists had allies through whom they could pursue their policy of winning over the Spanish intelligentsia.

In a previous article we acquainted readers of *International Literature* with one such attempt—the book *South American Meditations* by Count Keyserling. Translated into Spanish and published by the Madrid publishing house, Espasa-Calpe, Keyserling's opus was widely advertised. But because of its

extreme abstractness, which was ill-suited to the Spanish temperament, it enjoyed little success. *South American Meditations,* written by a philosopher, required a trained reader. It was meant for the scientist; the average reader was unreceptive.

The role which Keyserling played in the interpretation of the Spanish race and its genuine national character was undertaken in the literary field by a German literary historian with a world reputation, the former rector of the Munich University, Karl Vossler. Having been invited to Spain in 1933 to lecture at the Santander University, he gave a course on *The Golden Age of Spanish Literature.* The six lectures he delivered in 1934 were translated into Spanish by Ramon Gomez de la Serna and published by the catholic publishing house "Crue y Raya" in Madrid, with an introduction by the prominent Spanish literary historian, J. F. Montesinos. The book was warmly received. At first no one realized that the author, a great scholar and an able popularizer, had smuggled into intellectual circles a number of ideas of a glaringly fascist character.

A few words regarding Vossler himself. To every specialist in Romance philosophy, his name calls to mind important works on the Italian "Dolce stil nuovo," on Dante, on Racine, La Fontaine and Leonardo. After the World War, Vossler became increasingly interested in Spain. His first works on this subject were written in 1924. Vossler focuses his attention on the age of Lope de Vega and on the great playwright himself, to whom he dedicated an extensive study. This work was translated into Spanish and widely advertised. Vossler set forth his conception of the historical role of Spain in *The Meaning of Spanish Culture to Europe,* an article published in the scientific magazine *"Deutsche Vierteljahrschrift für Literatur, Wissenschaft und Geistesgeschichte"* (VII).

The underlying thought of this article is that in the past Spain was Europe's mentor in the sphere of morality. This morality consisted on the one hand in an exalted consciousness of its national unity, and on the other in a "serious and moral attitude to life." The historic mission of Spain "to be the mentor of Europe" became possible in Vossler's opinion because of two factors—the catholic religion and the "Spanish national essence" expressed in a "spirit of social solidarity, discipline and respect for the hierarchy." In choosing *The Golden Age of Spanish Literature* as the subject of his course at the Santander University, Vossler approaches it from the standpoint of language, style, social and literary forms, religious, historic, idyllic and satirical motifs.

The conclusions which he draws from his investigation is that the idea of christian stoicism underlies Spanish civilization in general, and consequently the literature of the Golden Age. Vossler attributes the decline of Spanish letters in the 17th and 18th centuries to the Counter-Reformation, because the latter transformed religious feelings as well as the idea of political loyalty, which in the middle and golden ages were still personal, mystic, free and active, into something more general, dogmatic, conventional, abstract and passive. Religious feeling and the idea of political loyalty were crystallized, petrified and changed into the holier-than-thou "do not touch me." "Instead of pumping healthy blood into the national organism, the metaphysical ideas went sour. They were hoarded and distributed like the gold reserves of our day." The true heroes of the national spirit in Vossler's opinion are the "staunch Prince" Calderon, who regarded worldly success and fame with contempt, not out of vanity but in order that his words might not be at variance with reality, and Don Quixote, who in all his misadventures retained a cer-

tain moral nobility. In Vossler's opinion, the basis for these views on heroism in Spanish 16th and 17th century literature is belief in the meanness and corruption of earthly existence. Hence, for Vossler, the Spanish hero is a tragic type. He is a martyr full of christian resignation, who is prepared to suffer in silence for the sake of his ideals, in the expectation of rewards in heaven.

If we recall that all revolutionary Spanish literature of recent years dealt with an entirely different type of hero—a self-sacrificing person who fought with enthusiasm for a noble cause—not a martyr but a fighter, we will appreciate the purpose behind Vossler's interpretation of the Spanish "Golden Age."

In revolutionary times, such interpretations have only one aim—to diminish the activity of the revolutionary masses and undermine their enthusiasm. Behold—said German fascism through Vossler's mouth—your Golden Age. It was golden only so long as Spaniards lived according to christian stoicism, which made them despise everything earthly and patiently await the rewards of their martyrdom in the afterlife; revive that trend and your Golden Age will return.

Vossler's harmful idea unfortunately found followers among Spanish writers at first. But not for long. In the year of the Lope de Vega jubilee, Vossler was indeed invited to deliver a course of lectures in Seville and Madrid. But a healthy reaction had set in among the Spanish writers themselves. In one respect, Vosslerism was even beneficial, as it focused the attention of Spanish writers on the problem of their literary heritage. This resulted in several articles by Cesar M. Arconada on Cervantes and Lope de Vega and a long essay by Ramon J. Sender *Underground Spanish Literature*. The conclusions that both these writers arrived at were the direct opposite of those of Vossler and his followers. The heroism of the Spanish people taken historically is not a tragic propensity for silent suffering or christian stoicism, but the heroism of struggle. Here is what Ramon J. Sender writes in this connection in his article: "The standpoint of human thought and writing in Spain was always the standpoint of protest and struggle. All who left a noteworthy mark on our culture passed through prison. Many died on the gallows or at the stake, and all of them were in one way or another connected with the people and its ever present deathless culture. This is why the ruling class in Spain always hated and despised writers and scientists who came from among the people, regarding them ahead of time as harbingers of ideological 'insurgence.'

"From the standpoint of the ruling class, literature was open only to canons and counts. All others were 'branded people' and contemptible riff-raff.

"In its way, the ruling class was right. It had fifteen centuries of bloody experience in this respect, bloody conflict with our immortal national culture and its spiritual offspring in the field of art—revolutionary rebels, writers and artists.

"The class of oppressors now disguises itself by a hypocritical bourgeois culture and civilization. They try to persuade us that the cultural achievements of Spain were attained through their efforts, when as a matter of fact they were attained by the people, by the working masses. The Spanish people attained them with their heart's blood, sacrificing their best representatives in the sphere of science and culture over many centuries, bravely fighting for the triumph of new and lofty ideals."

Thus, Vossler's effort to lead the Spanish intelligentsia and writers along the perilous path of passive acceptance of things as they are, met with failure.

Not conciliation but active heroism and struggle is now the substance of Spanish reality and at the same time provides the subject matter of Spanish revolutionary literature. On July 17, when the cannons of the military-fascist rebellion roared in the south of Spain and echoed in the ravines of Guadarrama and in the mountains of the Asturias and Aragon, the revolutionary and radical writers who belonged to the Madrid and Valencia Associations submitted to the goverment a joint request for the formation of a special writers' detachment. The writers of the Spanish revolution proved to be worthy children of their great and heroic people.

ABOUT POLISH CULTURE

Yan Vislak

Ten Years of Fascism in Polish Literature

May 13, 1936 marked the tenth anniversary of the seizure of power by fascism in Poland, the day of the so-called Pilsudski May coup.

"Joyful creative work"—such was the slogan and promise with which fascism came to power. "Joyful creative work" was to become the distinguishing feature of fascist Poland. Literature in particular was to echo paeans of joy, according to the promise of Pilsudski himself.

Pilsudski attributed great importance to this mission of literature. Soon after the seizure of power, in 1926, he proposed the formation of the Polish Academy of Literature. The Academy was to receive large funds from the state budget, for the maintenance of writers who worked for fascism. This was an attempt to seize the leadership of the literary movement.

Pilsudski's proposal was not realized immediately. Pilsudski did not succeed in enlisting the support of many Polish writers politically connected with the bourgeois party of the National Democrats which he had ousted from power. These writers on whose attraction Pilsudski had mainly relied failed to follow him. The Academy was only established in 1936. The fascists placed their best literary forces at the head of it. The chairman was Pilsudski's faithful henchman, the former revolutionary and political prisoner Waclaw Sieroszewski. The post of secretary was filled by the prominent Polish fascist writer, Juljusz Kaden-Bandrowski. In spite of such an illustrious leadership the Academy did not live up to the hopes which had been placed on it and it by no means plays the leading role in contemporary Polish literature.

Fascism launched the most barbarous persecution of proletarian writers and proletarian publishers. The proletarian literary cultural groups and their printed organs which had developed through tremendous effort were almost immediately smashed.

It would be senseless to list the names of all the proletarian or Leftist magazines which were unable to issue more than one number. I shall mention only two which somehow managed to keep going and played an important part in the development of Polish proletarian literature. In 1927 the monthly *Dzwignia* was founded which succeeded in publishing only five issues before it was stifled by persecution. Mieszystaw Szezuka, a painter of great talent, came to the labor movement through this magazine. In 1929 the publication *Miesieceznik Literacie* began. It managed to keep going until the fall of 1931 when the entire editorial board was put in prison. *Miesieceznik* played an important part in the developing and deepening of Marxist criticism in Poland. It popularized the cultural, and especially the literary achievements of the Soviet Union and developed a number of writers from among the workers and peasants. Henry K. Drzewieski, Emil Schurer and others came to the labor movement through this magazine.

What fruits did fascism reap from its literary policy?

The leader of fascist literature in Poland is Juljusz Kaden-Bandrowski. After the Pilsudski coup he published five volumes of a large social novel under the general title of *Black Wings*. The first two volumes *Thaddeus* and *Lenora* (1929) described life in a large proletarian center of the Dombrowsky Basin. Bandrowski does not spare dark colors in describing poverty and ignorance, especially the poverty and ignorance of the working masses. In Bandrowski's interpretation the enemies of the working masses are not so much the capitalists (although Bandrowski does not deny the facts of capitalist exploitation) as they are the party and trade union organizations created by the workers' defenders. These are the people who, according to Bandrowski, confuse the workers and mercilessly exploit them. There can be no thought of proletarian culture. The working masses live off the wretched scraps of bourgeois culture. Communism and hatred of the bourgeoisie are only products of the workers' ig-

norance. A former legionnaire-intellectual plays an important part in the novel. He fought for his country along with Pilsudski but he was afterwards removed by the National Democratic Party which came to power. This legionnaire wanders through the coal basin looking for odd jobs and meeting workers. He often expresses the thoughts of the author himself. When a Communist worker—whom Bandrowski pictures as an honest but dull and ignorant fellow—is killed in a quarrel between exploiters, the legionnaire sacrifices his one new coat which he had acquired with great effort, in which to bury the Communist. By means of this rather crude symbolism the author of *Black Wings* evidently wants to show that the Pilsudskiite was the Communist worker's only friend.

Further volumes of this saga (1933) describe the situation in the Polish Sejm before the May coup. A vivid picture of the political short-sightedness, corruption, and careerism of all the Sejm parties is presented. As opposed to this there are no Pilsudskiites on the scene for at the time they did not constitute a special party but carried on conspiratorial, provocateur work in all parties, preparing the fascist uprising. From the artistic stand-point this part of *Black Wings* is considerably worse than the story of the Dombrowski Basin.

It is characteristic that Bandrowski, the leader of fascist literature, formerly a writer on current topics, for the ten years since the fascist coup has not found it possible to depict contemporary Poland "made happy" by the Pilsudskiites. in any of his works. All Bandrowski's writings are confined to subjects of the pre-fascists period.

Mary Dombrowska is also a writer close to the Pilsudski camp. In her latest four-volume novel *Days and Nights*, she describes in detail the social environment which in her opinion produced the Pilsudskiites, but she too does not go beyond 1914. Pola Gojawiezinska collaborates with the official Polish organ *Gazeta Polska*. The scope of her novel *Elizabeth's Land* is confined to portraying the complete material and moral decline of the lower middle class. The author proved unable so much as to hint at the way out of the catastrophe. The novel ends with a mechanically appended and false scene: Polish workers in the mining districts of Silesia attempt to cross the German border, since presumably under Hitler's government there is no unemployment—"factory chimneys smoke."(!)

If any bourgeois writer tries to expose the meaning of this decay, the result is a work like Yalu Kurek's book, which has justly been compared with *The Journey in the Land of Night* by Selin. We have in mind *Grippe Rages in Naprawa*. This is a description of life in a Polish village a few kilometers from Krakow and in the neighboring village of Jordanow. Naprawa and Jordanow are by no means imaginary localities. The village is dying of starvation. Officially it is termed an epidemic of grippe—"people walk about in rags and barefoot and for months on end do not see money to the amount of one zloty." Life in semi-starvation begins in the fall, almost immediately after the new harvest. In April, waiting for the new harvest, hunger sets in in earnest in the village. "The poor peasants eat rotten or frozen potatoes and birch bark." "The children become swollen from this diet." The peasants receive little of the blessings of civilization. "There is no kerosine, no money to buy it with." In one peasant house "the pot of salt water to boil the potatoes has been standing three weeks;" elsewhere "they sell nine matches for two groshi; at home these matches are split and are used eighteen times." Soapy water for laundry is carried from house to house and it "already contains the dirt of the third household." The State is represented here exclusively in the person of the court executive or the policeman. People die without the least regret. "Poverty grew incredibly fast." "The death of the sawmill deeply affected the whole town." Some of the inhabitants of this town, "fantastical and ignorant, live as though transplanted from the Middle Ages."

"The population is poverty-stricken and panic-stricken." "Everybody who knows conditions in Poland realizes that Naprawa and Jordanow are not exceptional but typical instances."

And Kurek sees no way out. Such is life and it cannot be otherwise. The whole world is gradually moving towards its doom:

"The twilight was tragically beautiful. The sky was bathed in golden glow.

"The earth was frightened.

"The glow was cast upon it like the shade of the greatest crime.

"Blood stained everything around, above and below."

And here is the sunrise.

"A large cold gray expanse into which the sun drifts slowly."

And the book ends with the following definition of Naprawa:

"The village of sudden death was entirely covered by snow. The sun rises over the world... someone in the emptiness."

The book is full of the most pessimistic aphorisms.

"The world is everywhere a lie. Lies above and lies below."

"Civilization passes. Only the snow remains."

Kurek is convinced that all attempts to struggle with social evil are quixotic. The only thing which deserves interest is the "society of good death," that is, the society of organized suicide.

Such is the most striking instance of the literature of fascist "Joyful creative work."

And Kurek, who is thirty years old, is a highly gifted writer and a person of great culture.

Other bourgeois writers plunge into mysticism—Jozef Wittlin takes up psychological and ethical metaphysics; Marya Kuncewiczowa and Zofja Nalkowska seek salvation in "evasion" well known in France.

But contemporary Polish literature is not limited to bourgeois writers. The failure of the fascist predictions to materialize, the fact that the bourgeois Polish state is bankrupt, fills the bourgeoisie with panic and compels its writers to refrain from depicting contemporary Poland or else subjects them to the blackest pessimism. But this fact causes the opposite reaction on the part of the proletarian and peasant masses and the laboring intelligentsia close to them. It leads to the realization of the forces of the fighting proletariat and the struggle for a free and happy future.

The last years of fascist rule in Poland are characterized by the fact that the ever increasing fascist terror is accompanied by the constantly-growing oppositionist and revolutionary activity of the worker and peasant masses, the spreading influence of the underground Communist Party, the unprecedented radicalization of broad sections of the laboring intelligentsia.

A new form of revolutionary literature is also appearing in Poland, not only the product of a proletarian environment, not always consistant in its ideology, but definitely sharply opposed to the bourgeoisie and the fascist regime and full of enthusiasm for the great successes of the Soviet Union. This literature is of great artistic merit and enjoys tremendous popularity in the broad section of the laboring intelligentsia.

The beginning of this literature may be regarded as the appearance of the novel *Kordjan i Cham* by Leon Kruczkowski in 1932. Kruczkowski's book deals a powerful blow to the mendacious bourgeois legends of national unity, which supposedly obtained during the Polish national uprising against the tsar in 1830. These legends play a tremendous part in the education of the Polish youth. Kruczkowski reveals the deep class contradictions and strikingly exposes the narrow class selfishness of the ruling clique in the Poland of the time. He deliberately connects the historic events of the past with present-day Poland. In another of his noyels Kruczkowski shows the class struggle between the kulaks and poor farmers in the Polish countryside on the eve of the World War.

The young peasant poet Marjan Czuchnowsky writes poems in which he tells of the condition of the village poor and describes the stubborn class struggle. His poems are imbued with bitter class hatred of the peasant for the exploiter. Marjan Czuchnowsky is the editor of a rural revolutionary literary magazine which he founded, *The New Village*, where young peasant beginner-authors write. Unfortunately, Czuchnowsky is not free from formalist twists which strongly interfere with his artistic development and that of his pupils.

Antonina Sakoliez in *Caesarean Operation* destroys legends of national unity, which supposedly existed in the uprising against the tsar in 1863.

The poetess Ewa Szeplinsca, in her collection of poems, speaks of the oncoming social revolution as the only salvation for the world doomed to destruction.

One may mention the names of a number of other young writers. They are all representatives of the new leftward movement in Polish literature.

Wanda Wasilewska should be placed at the head of this young movement. She is a young writer of tremendous ability and definitely revolutionary subject matter.

In 1934 Wasilewska published a book of sketches *Outline of the Day*. These are able sketches on the life of day laborers in Poland and constitute a single narrative. They end with the outbreak of the social revolution, which the author regards as the only way out of the terrible situation, the beginning of a new world.

Within a year a new book by Wasilewska appeared, no longer outlines, but a complete well-written novel, which ushered in a new period in Polish literature.

From the literary standpoint Wasilewska is the best pupil of Zeromski, the most noted writer of pre-war Poland (died in 1926). Best not only as regards her adoption of his literary mastery, but because she overcomes his ideological influence.

Zeromski writes of the struggle for a free Poland, for a bourgeois fatherland. He is full of genuine sympathy for the disinherited, he decries exploitation of the working masses, since in his opinion these masses can decide the struggle for the fatherland. The last of his works, written a year before his death, *The Beginning of Spring*, expresses deepest amazement, genuine horror at seeing the way the Polish bourgeois State created with the blood of

victims is torn by a bitter class war which threatens its existence.

Fatherland, Wasilewska's last book, in contrast to Zeromski, shows that the bourgeois native land is by no means the native land of the workers, that the working masses were unscrupulously deceived when they were involved in the struggle for a bourgeois Polish State. For Zeromski the class struggle in Poland is a terrific misfortune; for Wasilewska only the most ruthless class struggle ending in the victory of the workers can lead to a really independent, to a workers' and peasants' Poland.

For the first time in Polish literature Wasilewska presented the problem of the native land not from a standpoint of a city-dwelling intellectual, but from that of the most disinherited section of the proletariat—the agricultural workers.

Wasilewska's artistic method is realism, approaching socialist realism. In *Fatherland* she creates a striking image of a farm worker and with great conviction shows how in "independent" Poland nothing has changed for the better as far as he is concerned. Many pages of this book are among the best examples of Polish literature.

Two books which are basically different enjoy the greatest success in Poland today: *Grippe Rages in Naprawa* by Yalu Kurek and *Fatherland* by Wasilewska. This is one indication of the process of radicalization which affects all sections of the Polish intelligentsia. Kurek exposes all the horrible results of the fascist regime; he shows the decay of the bourgeois order of society. Wasilewska attacks that basic element of bourgeois demagogy, the concept of the native land, and shows the revolutionary way out of the existing situation.

The process of radicalization of the Polish laboring intelligentsia acquires even more striking forms.

In May 1935 the Congress of Peasant Writers took place in Krakow and adopted a resolution on the necessity for forming a "broad united front of the exploited classes, a united people's front of workers and peasants for ruthless struggle with fascism and fascist oppression."

In October 1935 there appeared the manifesto and call of a number of prominent writers asking for the creation of a united writers' front of struggle against fascism and the war-makers, against the oppression of the working people and national minorities, for freedom of the press, speech and assembly. The manifesto declares its solidarity with the Paris Congress of 1935 in defense of culture. The manifesto is signed by a number of prominent Polish writers. Among them there figures the signature of Andrzej Strug, a famous Polish writer of the older generation, who was once a steadfast supporter of Pilsudski.

Wanda Wasilewska played a prominent part in organizing this manifesto. It was signed by the above revolutionary writers, as well as by scores of others. Only a year ago it would have been impossible to gather so many signatures under a similar manifesto. On May 16 and 17, 1936, the Congress of "Cultural Workers" took place in Lwow. It became an important political demonstration of the writers' anti-fascist united front. The Congress appointed a commission to organize a permanent center of struggle against fascism, affiliated with the corresponding Paris Center. The Lwow Congress showed that the Writers' United Front is rapidly growing broader and includes writers who till recently no one suspected of hostility to ruling fascism, such writers, for instance, as the prominent poet Emil Zegodlowicz, a mystic who refrained from political activity, and others.

In conclusion we can say that through none of its efforts, hand-outs, or repressions has Polish fascism succeeded in creating a literature in praise of its achievements.

The fascist reaction ruling in Poland has reduced many highly gifted writers to a position of extreme pessimism, mysticism and sometimes unhealthy eroticism.

In spite of all persecution and trials fascism has failed to suppress Polish proletarian literature. The latter not only has not grown silent, but has developed into a broad and mighty trend of anti-fascist literature, which has joined the anti-fascist united people's front.

Wanda Wasilewska

The Congress of Cultural Workers at Lwow

The two days spent at the congress of cultural workers at Lwow will remain with the participants as something unforgettable.

In our difficult contemporary life, which bristles with bayonets, which surrounds a person with prohibitions and decrees, which smothers him with terror and villainy, the two days of the congress were a kind of island of brotherhood, of the highest enthusiasm, of the deepest solidarity, of joy in the unfolding struggle.

At the congress there met and grew friendly people from distant parts of Poland who had hitherto only heard of each other. We felt the strength of the masses, the joy of the masses, such a tension of will and emotion as is possible only in a great community of idea, a great community of struggle. The petty small manifestations of authorly ambitiousness, envy and resentment of which there are usually so many among people of the pen, brush or chisel disappeared somewhere or other. There disappeared, too, trifling disagreements on various questions—there remained only the common goal.

Perhaps the congress did not reach any special results in the theoretical sphere; the place and time of the congress lent it a doubly political color. But resolutions were adopted which began and strengthened the union of members of the anti-fascist front, defined their tasks and defined their common platform. And this was sufficient for the time being. The congress, you see, took place in Lwow, a city with wounds which had not yet healed, in Lwow where 25,000 workers were in the firing line of a strike movement. And it was the inhabitants of this Lwow who made up the great majority of the guests of the congress. For the first time probably the working masses took an interest in questions which would seem not to concern them directly. A considerable part of the congress hall was filled with representatives of trade unions, of the strike workers, of amnestied political prisoners. Crowds of Polish and Ukrainian workers were present at the writers' evening, which had to be repeated and for which on the second occasion the hall could not hold anything but an insignificant number of those wishing to be present, and at the celebration meeting in the theater, where three thousand people were present. The streets of Lwow reacted in lively fashion to the congress. In front of the congress building there stood crowds of people expressing their warm sympathy with the members of the congress.

All sorts of people took part in the congress: old members of the workers' and peasants' movement and those who have only recently joined up with that movement. The congress vividly demonstrated that the place of the writer and the artist is today in the ranks of the proletariat of city and country in its fight for liberty; there is someone for whom to write and create, there are people to whom the writer brings weal, who need him. The woman representative of the striking building workers who greeted the members of the congress at the celebration meeting spoke clearly of this; the crowds gathered at the entrance to the theater spoke of this, the audience during the celebration meeting and the writers' evenings spoke of this. The vital connection with the working class displayed itself in the fact that many members of the congress in the intervals between sessions spoke at meetings of the strikers and at meetings of the young people, of whom there is a tremendous number in Lwow.

All the best, independent young writers are now in the ranks of the anti-fascist movement, take part in the workers' and peasants' movement. We know that the enthusiasm with which we were surrounded is evidence of the fact that we wish to serve a genuinely great cause. And this lays upon us a tremendous responsibility. It is impossible that we should deceive Lwow, Lwow which so warmly, so sincerely and unreservedly welcomed with outstretched arms all the participants of the congress who showed their sympathy for the toilers and took even the smallest part in the struggle which is developing.

Our place is on this side of the barricades. On this side of the barricades is the place of those writers who understand what a responsibility they bear. It is impossible to be a rock against the feet of the masses as they stride forward to the majestic future.

When Bronewski at the celebration meeting read his poem "The Dombrowski Basin" and uttered the words: "Kindle the flame! Ready!" the hall of three thousand people answered like a thunder clap: "Ready!"

Yes, we also: egoists, intellectuals, dwellers in ivory towers must be ready. The Lwow congress was our first meeting, forged by deep experiences, in which there was expressed our readiness to stand in the ranks of the fighters.

Boris Olyenin

Contemporary Letters

All the letters quoted here are genuine. The work of the compiler of these letters therefore partly consisted in collecting human documents, partly in literary montage. All these letters will be included in his book which will be called ORDINARY REPORTAGE.

From Parachutist-Order Holder Nina Kamneva to Astronomer Belyavsky.
Director Astronomical Observatory
Prof. Belyavsky.
Simeiz, Crimea.
ASSR.

Dear Professor:

Greetings. Don't be surprised that a completely unknown person is writing to you. I only knew yesterday, from the newspapers, about the two new planets you discovered. I find it difficult to express in a letter all the depth of my gratitude to you for having named the newly discovered planets after Luba and Tamara, my marvelous friends in study and parachutism, who so unexpectedly and tragicly were killed. If you only knew Professor what wonderful girls they were, full of the zest of life! How well they studied, how splendidly they made parachute jumps! You can understand how touched we were by your action. And so I decided to write you this short but simple letter. That is all I wished to say to you, to express my Komsomol thanks to you for having in such a way immortalized the honored names of Luba and Tamara, our beloved, never-to-be-forgotten friends.

Once more accept our thanks.

Nina Kamneva

From Astronomer Belyavsky to the Parachutist Nina Kamneva

. . . I was afraid, that in the International Register of Planets, alongside the names of our fine Komsomols, there would be other planets with doubtful names. But it turned out that planet No. 1061, discovered before the planet 'Luba,' was named by its discoverer 'Peony' (a red flower).

Planet No. 1063, immediately following, was named by its discoverer 'Aquilarius' (Flower); similarly the planet I discovered and named 'Tamara' is encircled by the planets 'Salvia' and 'Amariliss,' both flowers . . .

A Distinguished Milkmaid of the USSR

The collective-farm milkmaid Tasya Prokopieva recently visited the Kremlin and was in conference with members of the Government. She was awarded the Order of Lenin. Since then she has received over 300 letters from all over the country. She receives letters from suptropical Abkhazia, from the Arctic stations of the Chukotsky shores, from Kazakstan, from the mercantile school of Kronstadt, from the frontier guards of the Far East. Aviators write to her, engineers, miners from Donbas, collective farmers from Kuban, workers of Magnitogorsk. Here are several of these letters:

To the Eminent Milkmaid, Tasya Prokopieva, Northern Region, Russia, from a Stakhanovite of agriculture. N. Shakgova. Armenia.

Dear Tasya Prokopieva!

Although nearly seven thousand kilometers separate us, I decided to write you a letter. I work in Armenia, on the borders of Turkey. I read your speech at the Moscow conference with great excitement. I am also a Stakhanovite of agriculture and therefore am happy at your success. Why—to milk 6291 liters from every cow is something astounding! That means from seven cows you get 44,037 liters of milk!

Our cows are not well-bred, and give little milk. When I translated your speech to our kolkhozniki, they didn't believe me and thought I was pulling their leg. They said it was 'kamp'—which means a fraud. And one old woman said: if such a milkmaid exists, show us her portrait. I showed them

your photo in the newspaper. The old woman thought a moment and then said: "Nice girl! Surely she hasn't enough time for her cows and her husband!" As so many persist in doubting such a yield of milk from one cow, I ask you very much to write them a letter and explain your methods and how you attained such a record. At present I am on holiday. I work in a kolkhoz that in 1935 made half-a-million rubles profit. For every work-day in money alone we got 20 rubles. I have set up here a motor for an electric station. So please write to our kolkhozniki a long letter about your work Although we are not acquainted and have never seen each other, yet we have a common job, we are both Stakhanovites! So I hope you will write. I grip your heroic hand. And if we meet someday—I'll grip it even tighter! With greetings.

N. Shagova

Milkmaid Tasya Prokopieva, Decorated with the Order of Lenin

I saw your portrait in the newspaper and read about your work. And now I have only one dream: to draw a portrait of you at work. And to achieve this I've decided to work without a break. In the summer I've determined to come to you in the Northern Region as a guest, and work on your portrait. You absolutely must write me everything about yourself.—

Student of the Rostov Art Technicum:

A. Gridin

Milkmaid Tasya Prokopieva, Decorated with the Order of Lenin. From a Foreign Tourist

I am an American tourist traveling through the USSR—and of course quite unknown to you. My guide showed me your photo and translated the article about you in the newspaper. I consider it my duty to shake you by the hand—in writing, as I haven't the possibility of doing that personnally. All my life I have had great respect for heroes, and read much about them. I've read about explorers, airmen, scientists, generals, and now to that gallery of heroes is added—a milkmaid. That is a symbol of the times; and this is a tribute of my admiration for you. I grip you tightly by the hand as only a genuine Yankee can. Greetings.

Harry N. . . .

From a foreman of the factory 'Red Vibourg,' Leningrad, to the Factory Committee

Comrades: Several times in the boilermaking shop I have heard one of our women-workers, Tanya Bokova, sing at her work. In my opinion she has an extraordinary voice. As foreman I was forced to forbid her singing in the shop, as it took the attention of herself and her workmates away from their work. I myself have stood listening to her—with my mouth agape. She must learn singing. And it would be a crime if the Factory Committee didn't get her a place in the Music Conservatorium, where she could study in the evenings, without giving up her job. If Paganini hadn't practiced every day on the violin, he would have been only an ordinary violinist. You must bear this in mind, it is your duty. Awaiting your immediate reply to my letter, I am,

N. Dyargel, Foreman

From Housewife Nina Marchenko to Natalie Khromovo, School Teacher

Dear Natasha:

I am writing to you in desperation. Once more I am without a maid. It's simply terrible! I ask you please find in your village some nice girl who would be willing to come to Moscow as our maid. Our conditions, you know, are very good, and besides I'll give her regularly tickets to the theater and cinema. I had a fine maid, Frosya, I was very satisfied with her, but then she began to study evening classes, finished an agronomical technicum, and left to work in a kolkhoz. Then I found another good girl, Klava, she was more than a maid, she was pure gold, in a wink everything would be done, room cleaned and dusted, everything clean, clothes washed. But she also began to study, finished a School for Chauffeurs, and now drives a lorry—and again I'm without a maid. Maybe you'll ask why I don't do the housework myself? Thats the point! You see the thing was this, my last maid, that's Klava, knocked me completely off my usual path, got me to study together with her. And now I'm a chauffeur too, driving a post office car!

I implore you to find a respectable girl from the village. My husband sends you his greetings, he is full of his new work in the auto-factory. Waiting for your speedy reply, yours,

Nina

Translated by Bert Marshall

CHRONICLE

JAPAN

From Japanese Prisons

Through the iron bars the hot rays of the sun strike the concrete walls. Stuffy odors of the prison come into the cell together with the distant throb of life. This is Ota's first summer in a single cell. Time drags. His only consolation is to hear a human voice—the voice of a comrade. Twice a day he has this consolation—mornings and evenings. Right after the morning ablutions there is the roll call. Awaiting the inspector he sits Japanese fashion, his sharp knees close together. A feeling of profound, outraged humiliation takes possession of him. As if to conquer it, Ota calls out loudly the number imprinted upon his prison clothes. The voice is that of a man who can barely restrain his growing indignation.

Before long he learns that this, like all other prisons, is overcrowded with revolutionaries. He begins to distinguish the voices of the various prisoners. Then a voice is no longer heard, and when he hears it again in a few days, from a remote corner of the third floor, he smiles involuntarily. But if it happens that the voice is not heard again, Ota wonders—what has happened?

Thus twice a day, mornings and evenings, one feeling, the feeling of class-brotherhood, unites all the occupants of the prison.

Prison has no terrors for Ota; he remains stolid. And then, when the days become shorter, when tiny grasshoppers stray into the cell more frequently, and autumn is approaching, misfortune comes—he falls sick. Like many of his comrades, he falls victim to tuberculosis. Blood gushes from his throat. His condition is such that the prison officials are compelled to transfer him to the prison hospital. Here he no longer hears his comrades' voices. The sick are not attended in the "hospital." It is a completely isolated part of the prison, a prison within a prison. Perfect silence reigns here, interrupted only by the groans of the sick. And to his horror, Ota discovers he has been put in the lepers' ward. For it is "dangerous" to put Communists, even though hopelessly ill, in the same ward.

Winter comes. New year . . . Spring . . . Summer again . . . The sufferings of many in the tuberculosis and leprosy wards are ended; they are dead. Illness and loneliness prey upon Ota. He falls into a state bordering on madness. Perspectives become distorted; he loses his certainty of the future. After a long, painful struggle within himself Ota becomes completely broken and devastated.

Then one day, even though the neighboring ward is empty, a new patient comes to the lepers' ward. This one differs from the others by his unusual fortitude and composure.

"Who is he?" Ota wonders. "Perhaps a comrade?"

He wishes, and yet does not wish, the newcomer to be a comrade. From his neighbor, an ordinary criminal, Ota learns the name of the new arrival. It is his leader, his comrade Okada.

Eagerly Ota awaits the time of the daily walk, during which the guard, afraid of being infected, wanders off. He speaks to Okada. And no wonder Ota failed to recognize him. Okada's hair and eyebrows are gone; his face is swollen, shining and purple; the eyelids turned out, and teeth surprisingly beautiful and white—all the symptoms of the so-called lion-face of the leper. Ota learns many things: that Okada has been sentenced to seven years of imprisonment; he had not yielded; the symptoms of leprosy had already appeared during the trial; but neither the terrible disease nor the inquisitional tortures had bent his will. What force, what firmness and what an unshakable certitude of his being right!

At night Ota recalls every word of his conversation with Okada. He recalls Okada's reminder that this is no place to let one's nerves play; remembers his advice to hold himself in check. He recalls every detail of their everyday life, when they lived together in one small room. Okada has a keen mind and has mastered revolutionary theory. How ably he analyzed his mistakes and marked out the tasks ahead. Ota gets new strength from the sick man. He is ashamed of his temporary weakness. All his vacillations vanish.

Another year passes. Rumors spread that the prison administration wants to separate the two revolutionists. But it proves a useless precaution. Ota's illness becomes acute. His body refuses all food. He is laid on a

stretcher and carried out. As the stretcher is carried through the yard Ota sees the lion-face of the unshakable Okada at the grating of the tiny window.

This is the gist of the story *Leprosy* by the promising young writer Kensaku Simagi.

"Broken is the staff of the flag of revolutionary literature," was the despairing cry of some proletarian writers at the grave of Takidsi Kobayasi, who was murdered by the Tokyo police in the beginning of 1933. In fact, within a year the Japanese Union of Proletarian Writers dissolved. The cause, in addition to the repressive measures of the police, was the disgraceful defeatist attitude of the hopeless group which headed the Union at the time. Within a few months, however, a new standard-bearer of revolutionary literature in Japan, K. Simagi, appeared; and, as if to confute the defeatist alarms, published the collection of stories, *Prison.* There were five stories: *Leprosy, Suffering, Blindness, The Fall* and *The Enemy,* all stories of political prisoners.

The life and struggles of political prisoners, though not new, is a favorite theme of Japanese revolutionary writers. During the past eight years six thousand Communists and sympathizers have been arrested, but if one takes into account all those arrested in connection with the revolutionary movement, the figure exceeds thirty thousand. Every year this number rises in direct proportion as the influence of the Party on the toiling masses of Japan spreads and deepens. It is not surprising to find that the revolutionary writers cannot remain indifferent to this.

What is the particular merit, then, of K. Simagi? It is that he, first of all, helped raise the militant spirits of the revolutionary writers of Japan at a time when it was particularly hard to do so. The year 1934 was the darkest year in the history of Japanese revolutionary literature. It was marked by a sharp, though temporary decline. Reactionary circles, utilizing the dissolution of the Proletarian Writers' Union, began a series of attacks, gleefully asserting that it was the end of revolutionary literature. A few traitors from among the writers who had previously belonged to the Union, succumbed and began to write, as if in justification of their fall, about their "accursed" past, going into details about "their struggles" and their endless psychological experiences. These "confessions" they called a new trend of psychological realism in literature. At the same time, a veritable flood of cheap fascist-military "literature" was let loose all over Japan.

Under such circumstances the collection of stories *Prison* appeared.

It is also to Simagi's credit that he succeeded in creating some extraordinarily live characters. His work is not at all schematic. Schematic writing was the bane of Japanese revolutionary literature before. True, some critics justly claim that the stories *Suffering* and *Blindness* are altogether too somber. But there is no revolutionist in any of these stories pronouncing bare slogans. Instead, Simagi portrays full-blooded, real men. His heroes weep in moments of profound misery, suffer agonies because they vacillate, undergo fearful inner struggles.

Simagi's stories are also distinguished for his attempts to uncover the schemes and machinations of the enemy from within instead of externally. As a result, he achieves a more powerful and vivid effect. The author did not spend his four years in prison in vain.

In his work, K. Simagi avoids both sentimentalism and pessimism. *Dawn, After the Holocaust, Demand, The Herring Catch,* the novel, *Reconstruction,* upon which he is still working, remain profoundly and keenly realistic. It is not surprising that the Society for Literary Intercourse, whose membership consists of the most prominent bourgeois writers, decided to grant second prize to Kensaku Simagi for his collection of stories *Prison.* The decision was annulled by Matsumato, the ex-chief of police and organizer of the society, who declared, "it is inconvenient to award a premium to a writer who is struggling against the present social order." But the book has had twenty editions.

The position of revolutionary literature in Japan is by no means an easy one now. But, "by struggle a way out can be found. We are suffering, but there are prospects ahead, we can see a light," says Simagi, the young standard-bearer of revolutionary literature in Japan.

SEKI SANO
Translated by S. D. Kogan

SPAIN

Fortitude

A gang of fascist mutineers are trying to force upon the Spanish people the basest form of government—a fascist dictatorship. Faced by the heroic resistance of the people, the mutineers resort to wholesale slaughter, killing everyone even suspected of favoring the People's United Front Government.

In Grenada they have shot the eminant poet and dramatist, F. Garcia Lorca. All Spain mourns this talented man and the entire civilized world was incensed at the murder. The menials of Generals Franco and Mala vented their spite on F. Garcia Lorca because he dared devote his talent and sympathies to the republic; they shot him because he conceived the future of Spain not

in terms of the concentration camps and the general destructiveness of fascism, but as a free democratic republic whose government firmly enforces the will of the people

They murdered F. Garcia Lorca—and hundreds of Spanish writers, dramatists, poets and critics have laid aside their manuscripts and gone to the fronts of Saragosso, Oviedo, to the mountain passes of Guadarrama, to fight side by side with worker and peasant for the freedom of their country.

The fascists have a special grudge against the revolutionary poet Rafael Alberti and his wife, Maria Teresa Leon. When the mutiny broke out Alberti and his wife were on the island of Ibisa, which was among the first to be taken by the rebels. In spite of mortal danger, for the enemies of the people well knew that Alberti and Leon were fiery tribunes and agitators for the people's United Front—this brave pair did not lose courage, but refused to submit to the "tender mercies of the conqueror." They had good friends among the local fisher-folk who helped them hide in one of the island's caves. Hungry, thirsty, without sufficient sleep, in constant tension, Alberti and Maria Teresa worked incessantly. They erected a radio receiver in an old abandoned well and received all the announcements of the Madrid government. These were spread over the island, refuting the lies of the fascists. Alberti and his wife composed leaflets and manifestos calling upon the fishermen to organize a general strike.

All this was done under constant threat of death. In the dark of night the fisher-folk brought them meager supplies of food and water and took their leaflets and the transcribed communications from Madrid to pass among the natives.

After three weeks loyal government troops occupied the island and liberated Alberti and his wife. Now they have returned to Madrid, where they are continuing their ardent efforts to consolidate the entire Spanish intelligentsia in opposition to the fascists.

AUSTRALIA

Gavin Greenlees, vice-president of the Victoria District of the Australian Journalists' Association, Melbourne, is one of the most active workers in the struggle to improve working and cultural conditions of newspaper men. Greenless while still well under age enlisted with the Australian Imperial Forces and fought through the Great War, but has since been active in spreading an anti-militarist consciousness among journalists, on the grounds that the surest way of making Australia safe for democracy is to maintain and strengthen its democracy at home. Greenlees, who has done pioneer work in spreading knowledge of Soviet literature in Melbourne, is active in amateur theatrical work and is president of the Victorian branch of the Australian Writers League.

BELGIUM

Combat—Organ of the Belgian People's Front

A new weekly, organ of the Belgian People's Front, *Combat,* has been appearing since July 1, 1936. The magazine was founded by a group of young anti-fascist writers who joined the People's Front. Jean Stefan, ex-editor of *Decoman* and one of the founders of the Belgian Association for Revolutionary Culture, is editor of the weekly.

In the leading editorial, which announced the program of the weekly, it is pointed out that the main problem of *Combat* is to effect the quickest possible unification of the working-class intelligentsia. Speaking of the problem of a united front of the intelligentsia and the workers, the magazine asks: "Against whom and what is a united front necessary?" "Fascism—that is our enemy," answers the article.

The first issue of the weekly was put together rather hurriedly, as it had not been planned to start the periodical until several months later. Circumstances, however, compelled *Combat* to hasten its appearance, to join forces for a united people's front. Calling upon youth and all those who find that the principles of the weekly are similar to their own ideas, the program editorial of *Combat* ends with the hope that the weekly will become the "tribune of the intelligentsia in union with the workers."

Josef Prestel: German Literature (Heritage and Realization) 1935 Freiburg

Prestel's *German Literature* is the first attempt systematically to interpret German literature according to Hitler-Germany requirements. The theoretical basis for a national-socialist history of literature had been laid down years ago in an endless number of essays and monographs. But fascist teacherdom needs a condensed guide, a standard handbook for practical purposes. Prestel's pot-boiler is the typical product of this situation.

As was to be expected all German literature is judged by the idea of its being "German"—a quality which, entirely in accord with Rosenberg's theory, is eternal, no matter whether it appears in an Old German bard, the shoemaker poet Hans Sachs, in Schiller or Goethe. The "timeless basic forces of German essence" are substituted for the historical process. This also serves to shatter the

manifold connections of the poet with his class and his era. But this shattering of concrete interrelations does not yet produce the desired picture of the past; for this purpose a complete revaluation of literary trends is necessary, and Prestel proceeds to do so, adhering to well-established models: everything that bears any traces of humanism, social criticism, progress or, God forbid, revolution is un-German and is either ignored altogether or branded as "incursions of the French race soul." On the other hand, everything reactionary is given most benevolent approval.

The literary history of the past century and a half suffers particular distortion. When the author waxes wroth over the Period of Enlightenment and seeks to minimize the influence it exerted he employs the usual methods. The moribund bourgeoisie has long thrown away all revolutionary tradition as most dangerous ballast, the historical picture has long been defaced.

So Prestel only crosses the "t" when he makes Lessing, that European embodiment of German Enlightenment, as well as Kant, appear as "vanquishers" of Enlightenment. Lessing's magnificent conception of realistic tragedy is "antiquated now," just like the "exact construction of Emilia Galotti and the historically wrong attempt at a religion of humanity in Nathan the Wise." With these rough-hewn assertions Prestel pays tribute to Goebbels' anti-realistic art policies. In order to turn Lessing's world fame to the uses of fascist propaganda, however, Prestel declares the comedy *Minna von Barnhelm,* that superb satire of Frederickian despotism, a very paradigm of Hitlerian "folklore" *(Volksgemeinschaft):* "a patriotic drama, adumbrating the reconciliation of family differences and prejudices of rank." The fact that the once progressive national tendencies of the poet are twisted into the reactionary chauvinism of the present day bourgeoisie is only one more trick used to perfect the fascist Lessing myth.

According to Prestel, Schiller and Goethe are "two basic types of German essence" and are of course stripped of all their magnificent progressive traits. In the main, however, the author simply has copied out individual passages (as for instance, on Wilhelm Meister's ideal of education) from older nationalistic histories of literature.

So much more novel therefore is the depiction of the nineteenth century. For the first time we see a history of literature in which there is not a word about Borne, Heine or Buchner. Prestel flatly declines to mention them. "Literary history, as a mirror of cultural development, must also show the forces that worked for estrangement from God and the people after the death of Goethe," says Prestel, but since he has no intention of giving such literary history, he keeps mum. Only "a look backward and poetry of a folk nature" are of value to the Third Empire. So he disposes of Young Germany with the short term of opprobrium "the emancipated literary Jewry." Pigmies, however, like L. Drewes (!) and Kopisch are fondly relished, not to speak of Jeremiah Gotthelf and Adalbert Stifter who are raised to leading figures of German literature of the ninteenth century. Here one for the first time learns of the undying merit of pious Gotthelf which consisted of "the refutation of the just rising communist ideas."

The place cleared by the revolutionary poetry of the forties is now given to its bitterest opponent: "Count Strachwitz introduced the North-German age of heroism into the ballad." And is therefore given praise without stint. In order to obliterate all trace of any connection of literary history with the social history of the nineteenth century, Prestel does not treat this period as a whole but divides it into three isolated sections entitled: Lyrics, Epic, Drama. This purely formal subdivision disintegrates the work of Hebbel, Keller and many other poets.

The dispute against realism is reserved for the novel (also an old dodge of bourgeois literary investigation) and is based on the formula: "Not analysis and even disintegration of reality, but its approval is the object." Such cynical frankness recalls Spengler's direct defense of the interests of heavy industry. Thus the weakness of German writers of the second half of the nineteenth century, their flight into provincial isolation, their reconciliation to the miserable life of the Hohenzollern regime becomes a high virtue. Such "poetic realism" Prestel appreciates. The full ludicrousness of this literary interpretation is revealed in his explanation of Naturalism: "All that was of value in Naturalism had already been indicated in German realism; but the movement wanted to appear revolutionary at all cost and so was bound not to see whatever there was that was good"—a turn of thought truly worthy of a Nazi brain! We find nothing about Arno Holz and his lyrics of youth, but for that we get ample examples of Johannes Schlaf's landscape descriptions. The idea is simple: once the social motif is gotten rid of, the reactionary native art of prewar days can be "organically" tied up with Naturalism. Another line runs somewhere close by from Nietzsche to George and Rilke.

The world is shown as the father of today's literature. First place is given the fallen writers of chauvinistic war enthusiasm; then come pointedly "worker-poets" like Lersh and Max Barthel—as the note of demagogy must not be forgotten altogether,—

then come the war books of Dwinger, Beumelburg, and others, and finally, after the village tales of Griese, the lyric poets of the SA with Dietrich Eckhart at the head of the list. Not a word to betray the fact that there also was and is another German literature.

The pitiful fear of the truth which dictated the whole of this miserable pot boiler is particularly evidenced by this: the triumph over the opponent is lacking. The thing is: this anti-fascist, revolutionary German literature is alive. Prestel knows it. That is why he dare not speak of it.

Editor-in-chief SERGEI DINAMOV

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