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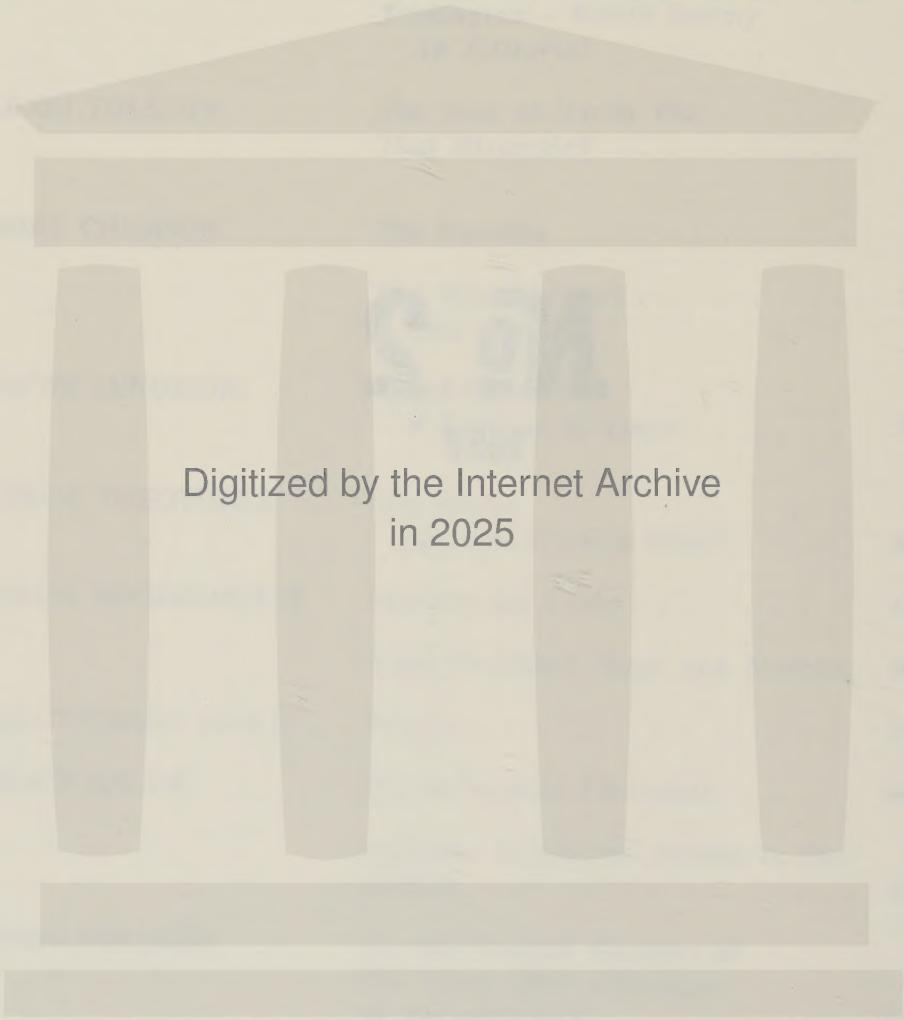

Trotskyism—
World Enemy

A CRIME AGAINST CIVILIZATION

An Editorial

In all history there is no instance of treason so foul as that revealed at the January trial of the Trotskyite conspirators.

It was more than a treachery to persons, to a government, even to an entire people. It was a treachery to the whole of humanity. It was an attempt to betray human advancement to the agents of human degradation, the brightest future to the darkest past, world peace to universal chaos and war, Socialism to fascism, the world revolution to capitalist imperialism, civilization to the burners of books and the gaolers of science and art, all that is noble and free to all that is enslaving and base.

That was the new Trotskyite "line." It was as inevitable a development of the lifelong Trotskyite opposition to Leninism as fascism was the inevitable development of capitalist reaction. What this "parallel" center, along with the whole of Trotskyism was truly parallel to, was fascism. And the parallels met in the filthy underground that has become characteristic of fascism and counter-revolution alike—in treason, espionage, murder, and wreckage.

For long it had been an inspiration to the progressives of the world that a sixth of the world's surface had been won for Socialism. Trotskyism would surrender the best portions of this foundation site of world Socialism, to capitalist imperialism.

For long the workers of the world have rejoiced in the victory of the Russian proletariat. Trotskyism would return to subjection the one people freed from the chains of capitalism, would capitulate to capitalism abroad, and revive capitalism in the home of Socialism.

For long the oppressed races of the world have seen in the Soviet Union the one part of the world where the Socialist promise to them of freedom, equality, and boundless opportunity had been fulfilled. The Trotskyites, who have long sneered at the self-determination of subject nationalities as a political fantasy, would reimpose colonial serfdom upon the peoples of the Soviet and break the aspirations of all the oppressed peoples of the world.

For long Socialist culture has been the hope of Occidental civilization strangled by the philistinism and corruptions of what Upton Sinclair has aptly named Mammonart. Trotskyism would obliterate this flowering culture by precipitating a civilization-destroying war and a surrender to the blood cult of fascism.

But alongside these intentions of Trotskyism there were the acts of Trotskyism—the sabotage and wrecking with their toll of human lives. Retrospectively we can now examine the history of Socialist construction, wherever a lag had been recorded we can now almost invaliably see the Trotskyite's, the fascist agent's hand!

That the progress of the Soviet Union, of Socialist industry and Socialist culture has been so rapid and so steady in spite of these treacheries and arsons, is an inspiring witness to the power and capacity of a people, made happy and free by Socialism; it is a further tribute to the farsighted and inde-

fatigable leadership of Stalin and his associates, and the all-penetrating, all-invigorating influence of the Communist Party.

With the January trials Trotskyism in the Soviet Union has received its death blow. Patiently the infection has been traced and cauterized.

In other countries Trotskyism is not dealt with by the whole people as the public enemy. It is therefore necessary for sincere revolutionists and sympathizers of the world revolution in other countries to proclaim Trotskyism not as the enemy of one man, one government, or even of the one Socialist nation—but as the enemy of the world revolution. It is necessary for them to fight Trotskyism discredited before the world as an enemy of culture standing "parallel" to, and in fact, in, the ranks of fascism.

Alexei Tolstoy

THE PLAN OF WORLD WAR THAT MISCARRIED

Citizens of the Soviet Union, and citizens of other countries, great and small —you, in whom lives the noble feeling of love for your fatherland, you who desire the sun to shine on peaceful labor and not float like a bloody globe over the embers of war—look into this history of broadly conceived treachery which has miscarried, and you will understand how the crime whose preparations in the Soviet Union were exposed is being prepared throughout the world.

The U.S.S.R. was marked first to suffer devastation and conquest; it was to become for fascism a base of raw materials and foodstuffs in world war, to fulfill the bloody frenzy of National-Socialist ideology which is being driven into the heads of the bourgeoisie, stupefied by every kind of disaster.

We are at the trial. At a large table on a dais in the Hall of the House of Trade Unions sit three judges from the Military Collegium of the Supreme Court. Under green-shaded lamps and on the baize cloth are volumes containing the records of the preliminary examinations of the defendants. On the left, at a separate table, sits the grey-haired State Prosecutor. With every question he puts to the defendants he rises, and in his black suit looks like a professor examining students. Opposite the State Prosecutor, to the right of the judge's table, sit the seventeen defendants, barred off from the public by a railing and four stony guards in Budyonny caps.

Ordinary surroundings, outwardly unmoved judges. Defendants who double like hares and wriggle like centipedes with their answers of "You see—how can I explain—psychologically I was, actually I was not." When the attentively polite State Prosecutor gets a definite answer of "yes" or "no" out of them, when he pulls the defendants down from the flying carpet to the pages of the stenogram, he says with a relieved air, "There, you see . . ." exactly like a professor examining students. Yet in these surroundings there arises an insufferable, nauseous horror. While we lived and toiled, making sacrifices to build up a free, abundant life on earth . . . these seventeen at the right have lived only with the object of attaining their selfish ends, lived in the hope of ruling over towns consumed by war, over a depopulated land, over remnants of a people thrown into poverty, slavery and despair. This they call the program of Trotskyism.

Have no illusions, citizens of the other countries great and small; in the Hall of the House of Trade Unions the trial of this crime that threatens the world reveals what happened here; but you also will have to face the task of

tracking down similar conspiracies; you will have to face the same chief aggressors.

Unremitting vigilance is essential. Not an hour must be lost. Do not deceive yourselves with the idea that the various, openly existing fascist leagues, which look so hideous and perhaps cause alarm, are an inevitable phenomenon in the present-day system of bourgeois government. . . . Open fascist organizations are but one side of fascism (and often but a camouflage); what is worse is the illegal fascist work: the organization of wrecking and terror, preparations for the destruction of an entire government organism prior to the opening of war—the work of Trotsky and the Trotskyites.

Fortunately for European peace, one of these monstrous blows has been averted. At the trial of the seventeen Trotsky agents, one of the vital parts of the strategical plan of fascism—the plan of world massacre—has been disrupted.

According to this plan the preparatory work in the U.S.S.R. for the ruin of our fatherland was to include the assassination of the leaders of the Party and the government; the destruction of plants vital to the defense of our country the poisoning and infection of our food resources, *i.e.,* releasing poisons and bacteria in our meat combines, canned goods factories, water mains, etc.; in the organization of so-called "overburdening" and "sewing up" (to use the words of the defendant Serebryakov) of railway junctions, *i.e.,* bringing about traffic jams and general chaos; by bacterial infection to spread epidemics in our military echelons; to arrange explosions with enormous loss of human life in the factories and mines, in order to incite ill-feeling among the workers against the government, and so on and so forth. . . .

As is evident, this was part of a universal plan, it was not intended for the U.S.S.R. alone.

Such a broadly conceived plan was possible only with the existence of numerous agents, experienced, devoted, skilled in conspiracy and having one more attribute: the absence of any national sentiment whatsoever, in other words, the absence of love for their fatherland. . . . The absence of this sentiment is an important and decisive quality for such underground agents, since, if love for Russia, the Ukraine, Georgia, France, Czechoslovakia, Belgium, etc., begins to disturb and harass their souls (as the poets say), such people will be useless to their fascist masters.

. . . Such people must be "without sentimentality," universal "citizens of the world," something like Stavrogin, or to speak more plainly—rogues and conscienceless political adventurers.

I have no doubt that the leaders of fascism had far to seek for such people —they are not to be found on every street. And suddenly, as in a fairy tale, all they needed—ane more—appeared as it were on their doorsteps. For Trotsky had long been fluttering around the gloomy staff of the Gestapo, examining the ground, and sniffing about. The moment when the contact was actually made is not yet known to us. . . .

One thing is beyond doubt: from the statements made by the defendants Pyatakov and Radek it has become perfectly clear that in 1935 Trotsky had already formally, "for the U.S.S.R.," come to an agreement with the German General Staff—had pledged himself to undertake the above-mentioned terrorist acts and destruction of the state before and after the war, *i.e.,* after Germany's victory to give up the Ukraine to be administered by a German Governor-General, to place the factories and mineral wealth of the U.S.S.R. at the disposal of German capital, to dissolve the collective farms; he likewise

promised to provide Germany with food products and hand over to Japan the gold mines, oil wells, lumber, etc., in the Far East.

In return for these blessings, Germany was pledged to let Trotsky form a government on the ruins of the Soviet Union. Since the U.S.S.R. did not belong to Trotsky, he quite easily agreed to such an exchange of favors, but he demanded a guarantee that he would not be fooled and thrown overboard after the destruction of the U.S.S.R.

To this the German General Staff answered with all German frankness that one must earn the right to be a little tsar, that Trotsky must prove not by words but by deeds his devotion to fascism, his efficiency and strength. . . . And this strength he would prove if he would immediately set to work on the mass murder of the leaders of the Soviet government, and the destruction of the might of the U.S.S.R. . . .

Trotsky, as we understand, answered to this effect: "You, Gentlemen, are right, and I will show my strength. . . ."

Such was the prelude to the work which was thereupon developed by Trotsky and his agents on the territory of the U.S.S.R. . . . From the trial we know whence the threads lead: Trotsky had not too much faith in the counter-revolutionary Zinoviev-Kamenev center: they, too, had a great desire to attain power by wading to their necks in blood. . . . With Zinoviev-Kamenev it would have been necessary to share power. So Trotsky got into contact with Karl Radek and Pyatakov and created a parallel center, a pure Trotskyite center.

However, all this is known from the trial. We are here interested in a practical question: who and what are these people who one after the other come to the microphone and answer the questions of the State Prosecutor? We want to fathom them and to tell about them, so that here as well as all over the world it will be easier "to recognize a bird by its flight," so that when among apparently honest people and friends we can more easily recognize the enemy by the mark of Cain. . . .

Translated from the Russian by Ploschanskaya and Manning

Two Stories by André Chamson

THE ENEMIES

When I reached the water's edge, I caught sight of a boy in the pool between the rocks. Naked, except for a large handkerchief about his loins, he was swimming on his stomach with leisurely strokes and blowing the little waves that retreated before him at the level of his mouth. The close-cropped hair on his bent head glittered with drops of water. He swam in my direction, his eyes fixed on the depths of the pool. As soon as he reached the river-bank, he stood up in the water, leaned against the cliff and looked up. It was Maubert. He saw me the moment I recognized him. Taking a deep breath, he raised his hands to clutch at the rock.

While he was trying to clamber ashore, I collected stones. In a few seconds I had four in my left hand, while in my right I gripped a rounded, oval pebble as heavy as a lump of precious metal. Raising and curving my right arm I shouted to the boy, who was scrambling up the rocks worn smooth by the spring floods:

"Stay where you are!"

He took in the situation and his chances at a glance. He was naked, standing up to the waist in water, unsteady and unable to defend himself. He looked about him, as if seeking a way out. My arm was still raised above his head. He knew well that I would not miss my aim. Then he flung himself down on his back where the water was deepest and stared up at me as he lay there.

It was Maubert, my enemy. I was trembling with rage and joy as I watched him. My heart throbbed; its heavy, prolonged throbs passed into my raised hand. I thought to myself: "I have him now." Thus, one becomes conscious of a difficulty at the same moment as one overcomes it

He did not look very proud just now as he floated there in the twelve-foot pool enclosed by slippery rocks. He gazed at me attentively through tear-filled eyes. I felt incapable of mercy. Our childish hatred was of too old a standing. Twenty battles had we fought already, and so far neither of us had known defeat. I thought of the evening when he and two of his friends had attacked me. They had been pushing a wheelbarrow down a dark side-street by the bridge. I only just caught my name, pronounced in the local manner "Tchamsoun," and the thud of the wheelbarrow-legs being set down. Then they were on me, their blows blinded me and made me dizzy, but I fought with hands, feet and head, biting anything that came within my reach. They let go of me; I retreated, fighting as I went, like a furious cat pursued by dogs. I had nothing against the other two; all my hatred was directed at Maubert. When our respective schools fought on Saturdays under the chestnuts on the fair-ground, it was at Maubert that I aimed the stones with which we armed ourselves. We always first spat a magic spell on these stones to ensure their reaching their target. Maubert, on the other hand, always singled me out in these battles. Today, I had him at my mercy; we were alone and I had the advantage. I thought of him as an enemy-band trapped in a narrow, rocky defile.

I sat down on the bank. He was directly opposite me, and whenever he attempted to swim with the current, I raised my arm. Then he would come

back obediently to his place, rowing, as it were, with his hands and keeping an eye on the stone in my hand.

I stared at him with all my might, as if my glance alone had the power to strike him down. My anger mounted every moment. This was my mortal enemy. We did not go to the same school. Our parents would not speak to each other. Mine said, "Those people are capable of anything." And I had inherited this ancient enmity. Maubert's grandfather had denounced the Republicans at the time of the Empire; my grandfather had been brought before the "mixed commission." [1]

By the time we were six years old, we hated each other. Everything about him seemed to me abominable. He lived in a little house with a vineyard attached to it, outside the town, on the road to Elze. I always thought of it as an accursed spot in our valley, a damp, unwholesome place where the sun refused to shine and everything was ruined by insects and mildew. I never went down the street where his house stood; there always seemed to me to be something repellent and mysterious about the way his parents lived. These were people of another race. They thought only of how to do us harm, while we had all the more reason to hate them because we felt ready to forgive them and to forget all our ancient wrongs. The enmity between the two families sprang up afresh with every child that was born, and, as soon as we reached eight years of age, we fought each other, each side being supported by a gang of youngsters who shared our hostility.

I held him at my mercy. He was a good swimmer, but he was beginning to show signs of fatigue. From time to time he dipped until the water covered his head, and took a mouthful, letting it squirt out in a fountain afterwards. I watched him in fury. I had never seen him so closely before; I would hardly have been able to recognize his face. He was fourteen, the same age as myself. He was not good-looking; his short hair stuck out in all directions like ears of wheat after a storm. When he spat out water, the very movement of his lips turned me sick. They were too full and puffy. "Anyone would say they were a girl's lips," I thought as I looked at them. The handkerchief around his loins filled and floated out like the leaves of some aquatic plant; in the crystal-clear water his small, lean, swarthy body was foreshortened.

Holding my stone ready in my hand I watched him. If it had been he who had caught me in this pool. I would long since have felt a stone on my head. I read the thought in his sly glance. Oh, if he only could! But—let him just try to swim away with the current! If I let fly, I would aim at his head: so much the worse for him! And suppose I killed him? One blow of a stone would not kill anyone. He would be well able to scramble clear of the water even with a hole in his head and his face covered with blood. They had nearly killed me that evening when they were running with the wheelbarrow; they had been three to one.

"Stay where you are, I'm telling you . . . Don't let the current carry you away." I got up and raised my arm. He came back to his place, swimming on his back. He looked thoroughly chilled and as though he was at the end of his strength. His teeth chattered and rattled like a machine. I sat down again on the rock and looked closely at his face . . . The dirty sly fellow! If one were to let these sort of people have their way, they would soon

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[1] "Mixed Commissions" consisting of military and civil judges, were formed to try Napoleon III's enemies who resisted the *coup-d'etat* that placed him on the throne (1851).

show you . . . But now I had him in my hands. Let us see if he would dare to stir now.

The sun was sinking, the shadows in the pool were lengthening. The water was turning black. Maubert still spat out mouthfuls of water from time to time, but now I could look at him without disgust. I was thinking: "Funny that I should find him here. So he comes to bathe in the mountains as I do? And he knows my swimming hole? No. He must have found the place by accident, liked it and dived in. He has no drawers on, even . . . How queer that he should have come here and hit on this spot for his bath. What if it had been he who had found me here . . ."

Maubert must have been shivering by now. It was the end of June and the water was still cold. One could catch one's death of cold staying too long in our mountain streams. He kept his eye on me and seemed to be waiting for something. "Aha, you're waiting, are you? I'll give you something. A stone on your head or your arm; or perhaps I'll throw it so close to you that the splash will choke you."

I got to my feet and turned the pebble over between my fingers to get a good grip of it. I knew how to fling it so that it would land straight on his head. It was a nice, water-worn pebble. I could have hit a bird on the wing with it at ten yards. One powerful swing, a sharp swing of the bent arm, and it would become a taut string of flying, whistling pebbles linking my hand with his brow. People of his sort should be stamped out like adders before they had time to sting. He had not even the courage to resist. He was stunned with fear. If I had been in his place, I would have dived down, swum the inlet under water and, once on the other side, collected plenty of pebbles for myself . . . But he was not thinking of anything. He only watched me with his girl's face. I knew now whom he resembled: his sister. She was grown-up, seventeen years old. He had lips like hers!

Maubert waited for my blow without moving, keeping himself on the surface simply by the slight stirring of his forearms. Lying there on his back, he looked as though he were already dead, struck on the brow with my stone. I stood for a moment staring at him, imagining him lifeless. Suddenly I let the stones fall out of my left hand. Then I flung the stone in my right high over his head to the opposite bank and called out, "Get out of the water . . . come here."

I had hardly finished speaking when he clutched at a rock and uttered a loud "brrrrr!" He clambered up the rocks, and, covering himself below his belly with both hands, ran to the tree beneath which he had left his clothes. I remained standing with my face turned towards the pool while he was dressing. A minute or so later, I glanced over my shoulder and saw that he was coming towards me with short steps, buckling his belt. He seemed thoughtful. I turned my gaze to the water again, saying to myself: "He will start throwing stones at me now. They're right under his feet now, much handier for him than for me."

When I made up my mind to look around again, he was very near me. He had turned up his collar, and the color was coming into his cheeks as if they felt the sting of the mountain wind.

"Aren't you cold?" I asked him then.

"No, I have a flannel shirt on, fortunately."

Again I experienced the feeling of disgust that only Maubert could arouse in me. The thought of that flannel shirt made me quite sick. Did they all wear flannel in that family?

He sat down near me. I stretched myself out on the rock, facing him.

"Why have you come here? Who gave you permission to come to this pool?"

"Who gave me permission? I often come here. It's my pool."

"Your pool?"

I started up. "Your pool, indeed?" I thought. "We'll see about that." Then I said sharply, "Your pool? I have been coming here for a year. I discovered it one day as I was returning from Tessonne—in May."

I could see by his eyes that his hatred of me had increased. He clenched his teeth and he stared at me. But we were equals in size and strength. Whatever it was prevented me from seizing him by the throat, prevented him also. We were not afraid of each other; we respected each other.

"I found it by myself," he said, "it was last year, too. I often come here. I like it better than the Chaussee or the Pradet. No one muddies it, and when you're swimming you can see right to the bottom of the water everywhere."

"There's nowhere to dive. If it wasn't for that, it would be the best swimming-hole in these parts. I tried once to make a swallow-dive but that jutting rock gets in the way. You can brain yourself if you hit it."

Maubert smiled. He looked down at the submerged rock with an air of recognition and agreed.

"No," he said, "there's not much room here. But that doesn't matter, it's a pool. The water's nice here. You can feel how it's freshened by the waterfalls."

So Maubert could feel the difference between this pool and others? He noticed the lightness of the waters? He loved them? And I could talk to him about the secrets of our rivers?

"At Pradet, the water already has no air in it; it is as heavy as earth."

He nodded an affirmative and looked at me suspiciously. It appeared that I had penetrated to his secrets, too. We said nothing, but gazed into the water, in which we could see the reflection of the clouds high over our heads; they were moving steadily, like a flock of sheep, towards the mountain, to slip over the pass.

Suddenly Maubert spoke. "Why didn't you throw that stone at me?"

"You were all alone . . ."

"Perhaps you think I am afraid of you?"

"Perhaps you think I am, too? You can come for me, all three of you, and your wheelbarrow into the bargain, if you like."

He flushed slightly. I did not stir, but I was on the alert

Although I was lying down, I could spring to my feet in an instant. "Let him only move," I thought, "I shall hit him with my head full in the face." But he did not move.

"Why do you detest me?" he said at last.

"It's you . . ." My indignation choked me and cut my sentence short. Then I blurted out in one breath: "You are the worst—who ever touches you?"

He replied simply, as if stating an obvious fact, "Oh, it's all your lot . . ."

"All our lot?"

"You're different from us."

Again the feeling of disgust came over me. I detested Maubert, with his thick lips, his short hair, his flannel shirt. Everything he touched became polluted. I imagined the way he would eat fruit. An apple between his lips—then inside him! Now he was afraid. I could see it plainly. He raised himself a little on his elbows. I was in a more advantageous position.

"Why I did not throw that stone at you was because I wanted you to know what I was like. . . If I had wanted to, I could have smashed you to bits, you

know. But it suited me better to have a talk with you. You'll see what I'm like. . . We are different from you, are we? Thank goodness! We—we aren't sly pigs, or liars either. And at our school we learn more things than you do at yours. I can ask you a few questions that will soon show you—Take the history of France, for instance. Answer this question: who ruled the country between the Romans and the Franks? Aha, now you're trying to remember what you never knew."

Maubert did not know. He was ready to cry with vexation. Suddenly a brilliant idea occurred to him and he said:

"Divide 375 by 25! In your head, in your head! You mustn't count on your fingers! So, you see you don't know anything!"

Vainly I sought the answer. The figures danced before my eyes. I was not good at mental arithmetic. But I said, "Take the Visigoths: you have never heard of the Visigoths, have you?"

"The answer is 15. I say 15 and then prove it in my head. . . 15 times 25."

So we shamed each other. But instead of our hatred increasing, it weakened. I looked up at the sky and, after observing the direction of the wind, I said:

"Should the sun in sea-wind set . . ."

"The next day surely will be wet." Maubert concluded for me.

"When the cape puts on his hood . . ."

"The shepherd is glad of his cloak so good."

Maubert laughed, delighted that he could conclude my sentences for me and that he knew the sayings that contained the wisdom of the countryside.

"You say you found this pool on your way back from Tessonne?"

"I had been there looking for tulips."

"On the cliffs?"

"Where else would you find them? Perhaps you know of some other spot? Well... The Tessonne is not very high. You can get there in an afternoon. I like that side best."

He gave a wink, and started to trace with his finger the road to Prat-Coustal. I followed it in every detail. He made no mistakes. Above the village he climbed straight to the meadows, went along the fringe of a fir-wood and came out on the road to the pass. "There you are," he said.

"Do you go there often?"

He nodded. I liked him this way. For the first time he seemed a decent, decided sort of fellow. Of course, he was not a comrade like Jean or Maurice. But still, I might go for a tramp with him. At a pinch, I would have to drink from the same mug, share the bread and some tinned stuff. We would have to sleep under the same blanket. . .

"I know you go there often," he added. "My sister always says, 'What does he understand about mountains, that weedy little fellow?' "

My cheeks burned. I no longer thought of attacking Maubert; I would like to have had a fight with that big sister of his, whom he resembled so closely.

"And she understands something, does she? Has she ever seen them, I wonder?"

"Oh, yes, I should just think she has! I always go with her. Wait though, listen: once when we were up on Luzette, we saw you climbing the Cap de Coste. You were with Jean and Maurice. My sister said: 'Let's hide among the trees.'—you know, among those dead firs. Well, we watched you pass. My sister said: 'They walk quite well, these thin little fellows. And just hear

how they sing.' And you in particular,—she said, 'What a singer! You would think he owned the mountains!' "

Now I no longer knew whether I was Maubert's enemy or not. It seemed to me that we had climbed the mountains together and were now talking over our memories together.

"Oh yes, we were going to Aigonal. It was in the morning, wasn't it? Were you coming down from the top, then? You can tell your sister that I'll give her an hour's start of me walking over the Cap de Cost. Then we'll see who's the owner of the mountains. No girl, anyhow."

Maubert was of the same opinion. He felt that together we would be more than a match for all the girls in the valley, including even his sister. A feeling of masculine solidarity suddenly united us.

"I'd like to come with you others sometime. You'd see—I wouldn't lag behind! But my father won't let me. . ."

"Has he forbidden you to speak to us?"

Maubert gave an almost imperceptible nod. He seemed ashamed that he was forbidden. He added, as if in self-justification, "He says you'll come to no good. . . ." Then, all in one breath, "Because of your lack of religion."

"And what is it then that your father lacks? What is it prevents him from coming to some good? No lack of priests at any rate."

"We belong to this part of the country," Maubert replied. "We are not very well off. And there's no call for you to speak ill of my father."

"Nor he of us! Don't we belong to this part of the country too? Are we supposed to be rich? And he thinks we have no religion, does he?"

"Yes, but not the true. . ."

"A lot you know about it, whether it's the true religion or not. You say the Protestants have black throats and sealed ears. . . Wait, look here. . . A-a-a-h. . . Is my throat black? And as for your ear? Hm! You think it's a beautiful ear, do you? We'll have something to say about that ear of yours yet!"

The old hatred raised its head again. But we could find no justification for it as we talked to each other. There was something mysterious about Maubert that made him my enemy. It was a kind of secret that turned him against me. We were living side by side, in the same God-forsaken place and we detested each other because we did not know each other.

"They make boys into fools in your church schools," I said to Maubert.

"And in the government schools they make them into bandits!" he retorted.

"We'll see about that. . . What are you going to be when you grow up? You don't even know. Well, I shall do something. You come and look at me when I am thirty. Then we'll see who are the bandits."

Maubert got to his feet. I did not stir. I saw clearly that he did not think of attacking me. He did not seem to have heard my last words, or at least he was pretending that he saw no offense in them. Instead of trying to crush me with a glance, he was gazing meditatively at the huge stairway worn by the mountain torrent as it poured down into the valley. With his eye he was measuring the cliffs and the long slabs of granite which rose obliquely above our heads.

"We'd have just time to climb up there," he said at last. "Don't you want to come up with me? We won't go round, but straight up by the rocks. I don't suppose anyone has done that yet. Are you afraid? You wouldn't dare to climb that cliff-wall."

I was already on my feet. I threw back my head to look up at the steep wall, broken here and there by narrow, grassy platforms.

"It's you who will not dare to climb after me. The cliff is steeper than it seems. Enough to make a mountain goat dizzy. We'd have to get to that platform first, work around that wall—that passage there, and turn to the left along the ledge."

We had discovered a way to fight each other. I started to clamber up the boulders, followed by Maubert when he had hitched up his trousers and tightened his belt. I was saying to myself: "He will ask me to help him. And more than onec, too, while we're climbing up there. . . .I've been there with Jean ten times, but we were always beaten when we got to the last wall. I shall get past it this time, though. And he will stop at the ledge twenty meters below me. We could not win past that wall at first. But now I know the knack of it. There is something to catch hold of, just at the turn, where you have to balance on one leg. . . It was really Jean who found that out. For five minutes he hung in space, not daring to go either backwards or forwards."

We had already passed the grassy platform. The plaited soles of our canvas shoes clung to the rocks. The first of the granite crags was not very steep. I went on ahead without looking round at Maubert. I fixed my attention on the stones that kept rolling from under my feet; just now I was not thinking of killing him with stones. He must follow me to the ledge. There we would see.

The narrow passage was three or four meters long. I bent forward, leaning on my elbow, stretched out the other hand and crawled on my stomach to a small platform. It slanted up towards the narrow ledge that hung a good twenty meters above the torrent. Lying on the grass, I saw Maubert emerge from the passage. It was clear that he did not know these cliffs. He kept looking about, seeking something to hold on to. The ascent alarmed him; he had not expected it to be so steep. He looked down, his hands trembling slightly. Then he looked up at me and, with an agile movement, reached the spot where I was lying. There was perspiration on his thick lip under his nose. But his face wore a resolute expression.

"Can't you go on any farther?" he asked. "I'm going to climb up the slope."

He started to crawl on all fours. I got to my feet but I did not feel sure of myself on the damp grass.

"Let me pass. The climb up the meadow is nothing. We have to pass around the ledge yet."

"Are you crazy?"

We were standing before the pass. A wall of granite rose from the green meadow, which merged into a narrow, slippery rock that stretched as far as the turning. Beyond that there was nothing to be seen but empty space. I knew the ledge ran along the other side, too. At shoulder height, there was a crack one could hold on to. What one had to do was to flatten oneself against the cliff and raise one's arm at right angles.

"We can't get any farther. . . . We've got to the farthest point, both at the same time," said Maubert.

"Well, then you go back to your sister." I moved along the ledge. Clinging with my whole body to the rock, I crept towards a kind of protuberance in the wall. I strove not to think of the abyss that yawned behind me. My knees trembled a little. I took deep breaths in order not to lose control of my limbs. I stretched my hand into empty space. . . At shoulder-height, a little farther along; I am not there yet. I must stretch a trifle more, keeping my feet close together. Is my arm still too high? I lower my hand. Here is the crack. My

fingers get a good grip of the rock. It reminds me of the rings in gymnastics. I turn my head ever so slightly and see Maubert two meters away. He is standing upright. The abyss no longer terrifies him. He is watching me and trying not to scream. Wait awhile. . . When I get to the other side. . . Now I must stretch my left leg into space. I grope for a moment; the ledge is a little higher on that side. I had forgotten that. So much the better. I try to draw myself up by the muscles of my arms. I have got a firm grip with one hand, and a firm foothold; I tear myself away from the side where Maubert is, and with a spring find myself on the other side of the wall.

Fortunately, the ledge is wider here. I take deep breaths in order to stop the shaking of my knees, and then I call out at the top of my voice, a voice which no longer trembles:

"I am waiting for you . . . You can only climb on your mamma's knees."

I see nothing beyond the unbroken line of granite. Maubert does not come. I begin to sing at the top of my voice and when I cease singing, the roar of the waters reaches me from the labyrinth of waterfalls.

All at once, I saw a hand groping in the air. My enemy had crept to the edge of the rocky cornice and was searching for something to hold on to. I moved closer and observed this hand in silence. It was no longer Maubert; it was a small hand, nervous and strong, giving the impression of courage. It slid along the rock, catching at the slightest projection, and now I could feel how, on the other side of the wall, the convulsively straining arm strove to test the support. But the hand slid and again groped in space for something to hold on to. There was a good spot rather close to it, but it slipped past without noticing. Vainly it felt the rock, the veins on it grew taut, and suddenly, I saw a slight quiver pass through it.

"Maubert? You won't be able to get round. . . Stay where you are—on that side."

The hand went on groping. It appeared to be seized with dizziness and shook like a body about to fall. Then I took hold of it and placed the fingers in the crack. They felt the support and dug into the crack like pincers. . . . Almost at the same moment, I saw Maubert's left foot place itself on the ledge and, with a spring, the boy was over on my side.

"Here I am," said Maubert.

"Wait, the worst is yet to come."

We were standing side by side on the ledge, with our backs to the cliff. Below, the waters of our pool swirled softly between the sheer walls of rock. Necklaces of white bubbles formed by the boiling waterfalls stretched slowly and broke on the banks. Lower still, the torrent plunged into the valley; the rocks and woods at the mouth bounded the whole of our district, with its meadows, apple-orchards, farms and villages.

"You've been here before," said Maubert, "so it doesn't count. I have favorite places, too."

"I've been as far as this spot before, it's true, but from here on I know the way no better than you do. I have never been able to get any farther. See, we have to climb up there. And as for what is waiting for us there . . . I have never been there.

In the middle of the granite wall, there was an almost vertical fissure about ten meters high. It was overgrown with green moss swollen out by ooze from the rocks. Out of a deeper fissure a little tree grew.

"If you have never been there before, you won't get there today. Let's go down again."

I had already started the ascent, and was scrambling quickly up to the

middle of the crack. There, placing my back and feet more firmly, I looked up at the tree drooping over me. This was the point where we had always had to give up the ascent. Even when I stretched myself to my full height, I could not reach the gnarled tree-trunk. I lacked nearly a meter, and I could see nothing to catch hold of. The trunk once reached, I could climb to the highest ridge. But I would have to risk scrambling like a chimney-sweep up a flue. I could not summon courage to look at Maubert. I was afraid of discovering an abyss below me. I was thinking about him all the time. The last time I came here with Jean, we climbed down again, defeated by the inaccessible cliff, yet proud of ourselves. Today, if I gave up any further attempt, I would be degrading myself in the eyes of Maubert.

Both my feet tore themselves away from the last foothold. My legs went taut as springs and held me with my back to the wall. I slackened the tension. But the more ease I gave my legs, the unsteadier I felt. I did not dare to move my feet any more. Stretching one arm above my head, I groped in the air and, all of a sudden, touched the tree-trunk with the tips of my fingers, then with both hands. I pulled myself up and here found something more to hold on to. The last few meters presented no difficulty. I climbed out on the wall.

My hands were torn and bleeding. Two nails were broken. Jean would be furious today when he heard I had climbed this cliff. He would want to come here again, to climb it himself. He could go to the devil if he liked; never again would I attempt this.

Maubert was climbing up after me, watching every movement of mine. Now, with his body straining convulsively, he was doing exactly as I had done. I felt he would sooner agree to roll headlong down to the torrent than turn back. Lying on my stomach, I watched him climb; I was terrified that I might see him tumble down into the abyss. I encouraged him, straining the muscles of my own body as he did. I bent my back as I watched him scrambling up the flue, as it were. I spread my fingers as if to seize the tree-trunk when he reached that point.

"Come on, Maubert. It's not risky any more . . ." When he was just above the tree, he got into an awkward spot and could not manage to get a grip on the rock. I seized his wrist in both hands and nearly tore him away from the support to which he was clinging with the other hand. But the next moment he was at my side, very pale, stunned and dizzy.

Then I said, "We're equal now."

He moved away from the edge. I was glad to think I had conquered that wall. I would never have done it with Jean. I had scaled it because Maubert was my enemy and I would rather have killed myself than have said, as I would have to a comrade, "This is sheer madness . . . We can never do it."

Nor would Maubert ever have got there if it had not been for me. We had carried our agility and our boyish daring to limits they would never have attained if they had lacked the stimulus of our enmity. And so it would be all our lives. I would go ahead, in order not to lag behind Maubert, my enemy.

As for the rest, we were friends now. Friends because we had discovered that the same things attracted us both, that we had the same delight in measuring our strength with the things that were an inseparable part of our country. We talked the local dialect, took the same rambles in the mountains, climbed the same heights. We lay on the grass beneath the last puny chestnut trees, at the dividing-line beyond which only beeches and firs grew. We were proud of having vanquished the same steep crag together, we shared our memories as only those can who have been comrades from childhood.

"After the mountains I love our vineyard best."

"Your vineyard at Elze?"

"We have only the one. We share it with an old man. The things, the stories he knows!" . . . Elze is a good place. There is no sun except in the morning, but that does not matter."

"We get the sun all day."

"In Goulsou?"

"Do you know our vineyard then? But you have never been there?"

"There is a magnolia and a cypress in front of the house. . . . And fig-trees against the upper walls."

"You know everything about it?"

"I looked at it from the turning in the new road . . . Once I even climbed the wall, just under the plum-tree. I know all your favorite spots."

Thus we chatted of things and people. Each of us explored the other's domain and each understood that they had the same hedges, were washed by the same waters, shaded by the same kind of trees, rich in the same fruits. As we talked we dived into the same past, peopled by lean peasants—muscular and taciturn—by the men of the highlands with faces in which pitiless time and toil had wrought a likeness to one another. We looked at each other and discovered unmistakable signs of blood-relationship. Maubert was shorter than I was, but broad and sturdy, with a round skull and blue eyes under a fringe of stiff hair. He resembled my grandfather on my mother's side; we had a portrait of the old man. I was thin and lanky, with a prominent chin and a narrow face, exactly like the local shepherds and graziers—if one were to seek the pattern of my looks among the men of these parts. We belonged to one race, united by marriage, and in the descendants of each family a type would be born in which all the characteristics were mingled: it was impossible to wipe out the resemblance of skin, skeleton, deep pigmentation and the hidden tremors of the entire being.

Who could make us enemies now? We had no secrets from each other. All that we loved we could love together. There was no need to divide the mountains between us.

But now evening was drawing in from the north, from beyond the passes. It spread out its shadows to meet the clouds that strove to rise from sea to sky. It was time to think of going home. Through field and wood, over rocks and boulders we ran down towards the town. On the way we met two children going home from the fields of the farm. They turned and stared, astonished to see us together. An old man who was sitting on a stone wall surveyed us with a sneer, or so it seemed to us. We felt shy of being seen side by side and as we slowed down to a walk to get our breath, Maubert said, without looking at me, "Leave me before we come to Rochebelle."

"So you're ashamed to be seen with me? I can tell everybody we're not really together, if you like?"

"I'm not with you, anyhow," said Maubert, frowning.

He started running again, but when he was about a hundred yards ahead of me, dropped into a walk, looking about, nonchalantly, as if going for a stroll by himself. I followed, paying no attention to him, but not troubling to keep the distance between us. I was gradually getting nearer to him. After having glanced round several times, Maubert turned and I saw that his face was distorted with rage. He shouted something to me, but I could not catch the words. I picked up a few stones and ran after him.

"Ah! So you want to walk on ahead? All right, I'll help you . . ."

To cover his flight, Maubert threw a couple of stones that whizzed by close

to my head. I stopped to take aim, and flung a stone with such force that I almost doubled up. Before the stone had time to hit the ground, I shouted threateningly—and perhaps a little regretfully:

"I'll catch you yet . . . Yes, I'll catch you some day."

Translated by Anthony Wixley

THE WHITE ANIMAL

"It's alive!"

This cry was enough to rally us. It was the most compelling of any we might have heard. When one of us uttered it with anguish in his voice, we all ran over to him.

"Look, look . . . it breathes, it moves!"

If the animal attempted to run away we tried our hardest to kill it on the spot. We hit it with sticks and threw stones after it. And even though it was agile and cunning, it rarely escaped our blows. How many dead animals that I had killed have I held in my hands! This cruelty, this passion to kill everything that moves is the price of a country childhood. The hunter awakens in a little human being when he is still in short trousers. A cry in a thicket, the flash of something running across the leaves or the rocks was enough to evoke a train of reflexes—we stood stock still, then we suddenly rushed forward, all our faculties centered on this goal, on this objective that was no more than a morsel of life in motion, like a white ball on a water spout.

If the dead animal was edible, we bore it home in triumph. We felt like men, like real hunters and we boasted the way they did.

"It's as good as a woodcock," we would say, exhibiting a blood-stained warbler. "If we had ten of them they'd make a good dish."

But if the animal was too weak or too small to get away from us we would watch it a long time before we put it to death. We would crouch on the ground and look at it. If we continued to stare at it long enough, it seemed to become no more than a shiny speck, a gram of quartz or a bit of foliage. Huddled in a circle, around it, taking care not to let our shadows fall upon it, we enjoyed its efforts to escape.

"Look, it's going to make a run for it."

We tried to make ourselves as small as our prisoner. We tried to see objects the way they must look to it. This game could last for hours. The stones became mountains, and we identified them with the mountains that we knew; according to their shape, a few twigs became forests and the tiniest drop of water was a river or even the sea, which none of us had seen.

"Look out! It's in the bottom of the valley of Arphy, beyond the torrent. Here is Cap de Coste and Luzette."

"And Puèchagut . . . with its sawed-off head."

"It's going towards Luzette. I'll wager it'll pass by Cap de Coste."

"By Puèchagut . . . I'll take your wager."

We waited to see what the insect, dazed by the presence of so many huge creatures, would do. Sometimes, in order to force the hand of destiny, we poked it with the end of a twig, taking care to leave it completely at liberty. We wanted to see it move without forcing it to choose its course.

"It's going by Puèchagut, I win."

"Look, it's resting. It looks just like the tip of a stone."

We loved to watch these living creatures which looked exactly like inert matter that had suddenly come to life. Sometimes we stared a long time at a

speck of stone or a wisp of pollen in the hope of seeing it come to life before our eyes:

"I tell you, it's alive. Keep a close watch on it."

But when we actually did have something alive in front of us and when we had had our fill of fun playing with it, we weren't particular about letting it live. We might forget about it, but one of us might just as well squash it with a stone.

"It has no feelings . . . it isn't like us . . . and besides even you wouldn't feel much if the Agouinal suddenly fell on your head!"

"Supposing it were bigger?"

"You think size makes you feel things? Animals die without even thinking about it."

Nothing attracted us more than life. And nothing seemed cheaper to us. We searched for its secret, killing animals as though we were pulling apart toys.

We became almost callous at this game. The common animals of the grass and walls—the snakes, rats, spiders and scorpions—seemed to justify our hardness. In killing them we felt we were vindicators, who righted the wrongs that nature was unable to prevent.

"I could kill anything," said Maurice, "with stones and sticks, or even with my bare hands."

"How about me? Do you think I'm afraid of anything?"

In my vineyard of Goulsou there was a long wall overgrown with vines. The clusters ripened towards the middle of August, but from spring till autumn, as long as the foliage lasted, huge red-bellied hairy spiders spun their circular webs that alternately caught the dew and the sunlight in a shower of dazzling sparks. Sometimes flies and grasshoppers were caught in full flight and were held suspended by a wing or a leg. We waited for such moments. The spider came out of his hole, and, winding around the captive, it repaired the mesh of its web, torn by the shock. It came close and rapidly wove a sort of white chrysalis around the creature. When nothing moved beneath this silken skein, it rolled its victim between its hind legs, and, still emitting its thread, encased it in an oblong envelope. Then it calmly spread its legs, opened its hooked jaws to sink them in its victim. This was our opportunity. The spider had done enough to deserve death. We knocked it to the ground with a pole and subjected it to refinements of torture which I cannot even recall.

"We aren't cruel," said Maurice, getting up. "If it weren't for us, nothing would kill it. It would eat up all the katydids without being called to pay."

"If it weren't so messy, I'd prefer squashing it at one blow, but it would spatter too much."

"We must kill off all the spiders."

Sometimes my uncle strolled along the arbor; he would look at us and say good-naturedly, "Don't make animals suffer. Aren't you ashamed of this sort of play?"

"Don't you go fishing? The hook must hurt the fish. . . . And trout aren't as bad as spiders. . . . Besides, we don't kill them. They're condemned to death."

Our parents ended by leaving us to our instincts. They well knew that one cannot grow up in the fields without wanting to kill. Sometimes they even asked us to kill some creature, as if it were one of those little errands for which we received two sous. I would hear my grandmother's voice:

"André, there's a scorpion under the pump. . . ."

I would come on the scene full of courage, frowning with the sudden sense of responsibility. The life of the entire household hinged upon my deeds. As long as the scorpion was there, no one would venture to come for water. With the end of a stick, I cleared away all the stones under which the scorpion might find shelter. I made a clearing around him. These scorpions of the Languedoc were small and their range of action was very limited. But they had their reputation, and this reputation was enough to make them seem dangerous. People were afraid their sting might prove fatal. In the houses in our valleys, those who did not range the woods and rocks regarded them as vipers. The very sight of them, when they were aroused, their pincers distended and their tails up, was enough to freeze my grandmother's blood.

I cut off the brute's every possible means of retreat. If I was in a hurry, I squashed it with my heel. But occasionally, when Maurice or Laurent were along, we trapped it on a piece of board and carried it off in search of an anthill.

"Red ones," said Laurent, "the little red ones. . . . It can get away from the black ones."

"We'll make it go back three times. The fourth time it won't get away."

"Right."

It did not take us long to find one of those mounds of fine earth and debris with a small crater rising in the middle. One or two red ants were crawling along its sides. We let the scorpion fall in the very center. Stunned by the fall, it first started to dig into the dune, then, prompted by a mysterious instinct, it tried to run away. We led it back to the center of the anthill and the game began all over again. But the ants came streaming out of their tunnels on all sides, they attacked the scorpion and nipped it in the joints.

"Ten of them have a good hold," said Laurent.

"Fourteen, sixteen. . . . and two on its neck."

"He's a goner. . . ."

I have never seen scorpions escape from red ants. But the death of these venomous creatures seemed to give us a right to all other animals. Except for those which came at our call, I don't remember a single animal whose life we would have thought of respecting.

One evening we were descending towards the valley after having loitered on the crest. I was walking ahead, a little in front of Maurice. It was misty and the visible world seemed to keep pace with us like a moving circle of which we were constantly the center. Within this clear circle there were never more than one or two trees that appeared without entirely detaching themselves from the mist. They seemed glued to it and drawn towards it by their branches. Sometimes a group of rocks also emerged on the sloping pasture, glistening with moisture. In this restricted sphere of visibility all things acquired a special value as though they had been placed in a frame.

Suddenly, I saw something stir on the close cropped grass ten paces ahead of me—a small, alert white mass, a surprised animal. It was on the farthest limit of my range of vision. Beyond began that grey wall where everything was swallowed and lost. I stopped. The animal turned its pointed black muzzle, sharp as a needle, towards me. I saw the movements of its red eyes. It was looking to see in what direction to take flight. I also hesitated but an irresistible impulse raised my right hand, which held my cane.

Before I had even recognized what kind of an animal it was, I prepared to attack it. This imperceptible sign of life glimpsed in the mist was enough to arouse my hunter's instincts.

The white animal obeyed the instinct of a tracked beast. It crouched and turned slowly, without taking its eyes off me for an instant. By now I held my cane aloft and I was prepared to hurl it forward like a weapon. I gauged the effort this would require. Suddenly, quicker than I, the animal leaped and seemed to dive into the mist. I screamed as though I had been struck by a rock and started after the animal as fast as my legs would carry me. The slope quickened my pace. I leaped over the close-cropped grass and I was sometimes compelled to brake myself, leaning backwards with my whole body, to keep from being carried away by the momentum. The visible world now seemed to advance in front of me like a funnel. The trees flashed into sight as though they were running towards me.

I was still running but had about lost hope of finding further trace of the animal when I suddenly noticed it again, scurrying in front of me. Before it, there emerged from the mist a mass of rocks—a pile of granite blocks, cleaved by broad fissures. The animal reached it in three bounds and scuttled down a hole.

My shouting had also brought Maurice on the run. He reached my level, his face flushed with moisture. As he moved he tugged with one hand at the buckle of his knapsack, which had become unfastened.

"Did you shout?"

"I've chased an animal into this hole. . . . I don't think it can get out. The hole doesn't go through to the other side."

"What kind of an animal?"

"I don't know what kind. . . . A white animal, the size of a cat. It has a long head, with a black muzzle and red eyes. . . . No, it isn't a squirrel."

"Are you sure it's in there? Did you see it go in? Stick your cane down the hole a bit."

"Let me alone. . . . It's my animal. I saw it first. It's mine. If I miss, then you'll have the right to make a try. Each in his turn, I go first."

I did not yet know what kind of an animal was hidden a few steps from me in the narrow fissure, but I knew that it was a living creature, and the mere fact that it was alive was enough to make me go after it. While I tried to catch a glimpse of it in the darkness, Maurice circled round the rocks.

"It couldn't have got out," he shouted to me, "the hole doesn't go through." We were both of us standing in front of the rock. Nothing else was visible around us. We were tracking the only living thing in the center of this world that was everywhere encompassed by mysterious shadows. It would have been impossible for us to have gone our way and left the unknown animal, whose retreat we had discovered, in peace.

"Get away. . . . It's mine, I tell you. If I miss, you can chase after it."

I poked my cane into the depths of the hole. Sometimes, instead of the surface of the rock, which grated like a file, I thought I felt a wriggling body that wriggled off hurriedly.

"It's there! I can feel it; I want to catch it alive."

I moved my iron-pointed stick about carefully, trying to locate the animal's body, but I was afraid of wounding it with the point, and I did not want to kill it before having seen it alive again and knowing what it was.

"I won't catch it that way. . . . Wait a bit."

I had a box of sulphur matches in my pocket. I pulled it out without leaving the opening. The box was damp and I scratched a long time before I succeeded in striking a match. I then set fire to the whole box at once, having torn off the top. It flared like a torch and I shoved it as far as I could down the hole. It burned, producing a cloud of sulphur. The acrid

smoke soon filled the whole crevasse. It curled up the rock and billowed back like wads of wet cotton. My eyes were watering and I was coughing violently when I saw the animal's muzzle pointed in my direction.

"It's coming out.... Get back.... If I miss."

The choking in my throat no longer pained me. I gripped my stick and stepped back. The black muzzle was poked forward and withdrawn two or three times with rapid jerks. The creature seemed to hesitate before my shadow, before the dark form which the reflections of the mist cast on the ground in front of me. New clouds of smoke rose from the charred box. Then the animal bounded out of the hole and free of the rocks, and, without any attempt at flight, it stopped in front of me and stood up on its hind legs like a dog.

"It's a kind of weasel," shouted Maurice.

I had retreated several yards, and everything disappeared in front of me up to the rocks, which rose like a dark patch in the surrounding mist. I no longer saw anything save this brave little beast which confronted me, baring its fangs and its claws. Standing up like this it seemed large, almost as large as I, and capable of biting my shoulder, arm or face. Its position gave it a human look. It prevented me from seeing it in its true proportions and I imagined that its size had suddenly increased to the point where it had become my equal. I drew back slightly, shouting:

"I'm not afraid.... Leave me alone. I'll catch it."

Maurice observed the rules of the game and kept behind me as though refereeing the curious fight. I made a motion with my stick, but instead of recoiling, the animal made a whistling sound and raised its claws as though to ward off the blow. It was I who yielded. I did not strike but assumed the defensive. The animal had not moved.

"It's mean. Look at it. If I left it alone...."

"Look out.... It'll bite you."

I planned my blow so as not to miss my aim. I was facing an adversary who proved to be my equal and who evinced no fear. The white beast—its black nose was almost on a level with my eyes—held itself erect with a certain human dignity. But I had already fought other little men. I stretched my arm. My cane described a quarter of a circle. A dull thud seemed to halt it, as though the noise itself was endowed with resistance, I had struck the animal full on the head over the left ear.

Leaning forward, holding the pose, I watched it slump over as though it were made of a light moss that a current of air could dissolve. Its small body crumpled up and its ruffled fur subsided as though it had been forced into a transparent sheath. Its whole body seemed to shrink. It was now no more than a little lump of white ermine which I might have held in the hollow of my hand. I saw the black point of its nose, that still moved slightly while short twitches, like tiny waves, coursed through the area around the ear where my blow had landed. Two drops of blood beaded in the nostrils. The black muzzle slumped against the white fur without soiling it, without leaving the least red stain, and the little white lump seemed to grow still smaller. I realized that the animal was dead.

It was actually no more than a limp ball, like those tufts of wool that sheep leave on thorny trees, only slightly larger than my fist. I stood there leaning forward, balancing as though on the edge of a precipice. How could I have imagined that this beast was nearly as big as I? How could it have seemed so large? All that had faced me was a tiny creature, as frail as a bird and as

easy to kill. All that remained of it was a white tuft that seemed ready to dissolve.

Maurice came forward.

"You didn't miss it. It no longer moves."

He looked at it without even touching it with the point of his stick.

"It's done for," he added.

I made no reply. A strong urge to cry contracted my cheek muscles. For the first time in my life I experienced a feeling of despair in the presence of an animal slain by my hand. The more I looked at the shapeless mass which retained nothing but its color, the smaller it seemed to become.

"Maurice? Didn't you also get the impression that it was large? As large . . . as large as a shepherd dog? Like a big cat? You had a good look at it."

"Yes, it did seem large, but it's no bigger than a chipmunk. It won't make much of a fur-skin."

He stretched out his hand to pick the animal up, but I shouted at him with broken syllables that welled from my throat.

"It belongs to me."

"Very well," he said, looking at me, "pick it up, then."

It was not my property rights that I was trying to defend. I did not want to see the true shape of the animal. The way it had crumpled up had deprived it of all form and I did not want to be reminded of the way it had looked when it was alive.

"You had a good look at it when it faced me, didn't you? I tell you it was big, and more beautiful than any other animal."

"It seemed big, but animals can fool you. . . . It was strong enough in any case, I thought it was going to pounce upon you. Feel its claws under the fur and you'll see whether they're small or not! It must have sharp teeth. . . . I hate to think what would have happened if you'd missed it!"

"Don't touch it. . . . No, it has neither big teeth nor big claws. There's no point in looking at them."

"You make quite a fuss over having killed that animal. One would think you'd killed a man."

I no longer talked for Maurice's benefit, I was thinking aloud, gazing at the dead animal.

"You said that animals can fool you? Who is it that does the fooling? Why did it seem so large and strong? Because it was brave. Isn't that the way things are in life?"

"Are you going to weep over spiders and scorpions now?" Maurice asked me.

All I answered was: "Imbecile," gritting my teeth, and I suddenly f relieved of the urge to cry for which he was trying to shame me.

E. Lundberg

A. Chamson—A Critical Estimate

Not one of Chamson's works is fraught with such intensity of thought as his *Crime of the Righteous*. The title, despite his dislike of abstractions, contains two abstractions—crime and righteousness, but Chamson constructs the text of his story in such a way that there seems to be no room left in it for the abstract. A superb stylist, he makes his heroes tongue-tied to keep them from reasoning. In their remarks, one often feels a gesture or a grimace, but there is no place in their exceedingly simplified phrases for a conclusive and definite thought. And the deliberately naive words with which Chamson begins his story, pretending that thought may be replaced by "admiration," and a philosophic system by a "legend," are the following:

" 'If you will live the way they do,' my grandmother told me, 'if you will follow the example of their families, everyone will respect you,' and almost daily I heard of *their honesty which had become legendary.*[1] While I was still a child I respected it (the legend of honesty—E. L.), just like shepherds and wood-cutters, and, when the stories ended, my admiration was equal to that of the small people of the valley."

However, when you read the story through, you become firmly convinced that the grandmother's simple heroes are not at all simple.

One of the worst of abstractions for Chamson is any formulation of the laws that govern the lives of nations and of humanity as a whole. To the history of mankind, the writer prefers the life of a modest agricultural community—at any rate within the limits of artistic creation.

"The events that were borne away in succession by the years, and the conditions in which the life of the community flowed on," Chamson wrote in 1927, "were closely intertwined with memories of the works or deeds of the Arnales (the peasant family with whose prosperity and fall the story deals) and formed history. With the flow of time, like the tedious work of the seasons, stories that were repeated a thousandfold were strung together, till little by little they formed a complete image, the incarnation of honesty and justice."

This "incarnation of honesty and justice" is, nevertheless, an abstraction—in spite of Chamson's intentions that it should not "contain anything heroic or supernatural." This image of truth and of its servitor "the genuinely honest man" was compiled from a succession of simple deeds and a number of practical examples of how *ordinary people* should perform the duties imposed on them or solve a number of unusual complications, which are, however, of an invariably routine and non-historical character. Chamson tries to exalt routine life as a genuine epic of mankind, and he discredits the epic as being a matter of the most commonplace routine. "A few recollections of remarkable events—of the heroism of the Arnales during the last cholera epidemic, of the departure of all the healthy bachelors of Mobert to serve in the 'gardes mobiles' in 1871—acquired a routine character of their own accord and *paled before the obligations connected with the land, families and good neighborly relations.*"

The old man Arnale, with the help of mature men of his clan, killed the child born to his deaf and dumb daughter Clemence; he killed it

[1] The italics everywhere mine.—E. L.

because the child's father was Clemence's own brother, Maurice. This would appear on the face of it to provide a splendid subject for abstract reasoning. "Nature," which the Arnales believed in so firmly, turned out to be a far more reliable friend. "The might" of the clan—its indomitable literary might—hangs by a hair. The harmony of "righteous" existence is violated; the patriarch finds himself in a *cul-de-sac*. According to his principles, to refrain from killing threatens disaster no less than killing. What do the Arnales think, what does the author think?

We find a number of contradictory assertions, much gold and silver but not one complete, distinct thought with a definite exchange value.

The love of Maurice and Clemence is a splendid thing—there is nothing false, cowardly or ambiguous about it. "All bonds of kinship, the habit of brotherly respect and instinct itself which shielded Maurice from himself in the presence of sisters and cousins were swallowed by the depth of the unbroken silence, the unutterable smile of the full lips . . ."

The fruit of this love was also splendid in spite of the fact that it filled the elder Arnale with insurmountable loathing. "Clemence turned her head. Her eyes met those of Maurice, a smile parted her lips, her mouth opened and a kiss formed beneath her white teeth. It seemed as though his answer was already prepared, a gift in return for his gift—the eyes of the dumb spoke, continuing the caress in the sight of all men and women."

What is the righteous Arnale's reply to that free happiness? Baseness. Fear of what "people will say." "Such dishonor in a family like ours!" "All those who feared us as the incarnation of justice will laugh." The fate of the new-born is decided. They kill it. They send Maurice abroad. All that remains are the pangs of conscience. The penalty of the law threatens. The Arnales cut themselves off from people—not in order to renounce the "power" of public righteousness, but in order to retain it. "It seemed as though the desperate heart-beats would never cease, and in order to keep track of them, in order to hear them more and more distinctly the councillor stooped down, crouching to the earth, like a wounded man bending over his wounds in order to staunch the blood."

Is life over? No, it is merely quiescent. Spring comes—the spring which a year ago had lured Clemence and Maurice from the hallowed path of centuries—and the old Arnale gazed at the blue void, framed in the tall, shutterless window opposite his bed. "Then a strong tremor coursed through his body, he leaned forward, clutching the low back of the bedstead with his hands, lifted his head to the new sky, and realized that the winter was over."

Four years elapse, the historical routine becomes less and less of a routine, the old "honesty" of small towns is crowded out by the dishonesty and unscrupulousness of big business irresistible temptations that destroy the grandmother's tale of historic events. André Chamson writes his *Inheritance*.

For *Inheritance* he takes material that is less timeless than that which he used in the *Crime of the Righteous*. The characters of *Inheritance* know what the crisis is, they learn their lessons from big capital. They even organize, not, indeed, on the platform of enthusiasm over the legendary honesty of plain people, but in the name of the struggle against an artificial silk factory which threatens the limpid prosperity of those who guard the ancient occupation of silk worm raising. This would seem like the

end of routine; history stands on the threshold of tiny Saint-André in all its menacing greatness. Capital defeats the artisans, and long columns of motor trucks cross the quiet streets of the town to deposit building materials for a factory somewhere between Condamine and the meadows of Molière. Saint André has lost its fight—but Chamson does not give in. He reduces the significance of the process accomplished at Saint André to two mutually supplementary formulae. "They explained to you why you have to perish and yet you are satisfied?" That is one of the formulae. "And tomorrow they'll tell him what people do to keep from perishing"—that is the second. Thus, once again in his life Chamson has avoided dangerous abstraction.

The year 1933 arrives—*The Year of the Vanquished.* Fascism reigns in Germany; a charred smell hangs over Europe. Chamson's heroes, those same dwellers in small towns and villages, recall with alarm the sufferings of trench life in the days of the imperialist war. Is that not history? However, the writer still tries to avoid what he considers an abstraction. What should he do as an honest realist, a master of psychological and living detail, laconic, sparing in his colors, with a liking for the graphic manner of the artist? He shields himself from the sight of big historic events—but, as distinguished from *The Crime of the Righteous* and, to some extent, from *Inheritance,* all his characters are either directly or indirectly linked with these events. Chamson tries to catch the waterfall of history in the modest cups of intimate experiences and personal destinies. And in this he succeeds—he succeeds far better than in the legendary completeness of his pseudo-righteous criminals, the Arnales, who escaped from history.

Why does Chamson so persistently avoid broad historic pictures? Perhaps he is a miniaturist and they are beyond his capacity? No, the unlighted backgrounds of his canvases, lost in shadow, testify to a keen sense of reality, to the sharp eye and deft hand of an artist. He does not care for the abstract because it leads away from the earth, from the particular, from the meat of events.

He is suspicious of the abstract, not like the French writer of the epoch of the imperialist war and the post-war revolutions, but like the ancient masters of Dutch still-life, with the one difference that the latter truly succeeded in hiding from history and retain the remarkable equanimity of "hermits of good living" whereas Chamson set up his writing desk in the direct draught of history, and tremendous effort was required—we felt it in *The Crime of the Righteous*—to keep the pages of his manuscript from being suddenly caught in its swish.

Here is an excerpt taken at random from his book. It is one of hundreds, including many that are even stronger.

" . . . The valley became broader and broader. Sometimes, above the topmost branches of the apple trees you could see the city roofs, the plane trees by the City Hall, the spires of the churches. From the summit of the last slope, a panorama suddenly opened on the whole city, on two long streets running parallel to the winding river banks, squares on the sunny sides of the mountains with fountains in the center." Accurate and concentrated. The flawless work of a vivid imagination, somewhat formalistic, indeed,—for the picture is frequently top-heavy—in the given excerpt and throughout the book, because it is not organically connected with the general trend of the story. Such miniatures, not only of a descriptive type, but also psychological, sensual and living, abound in his other novels and stories. However, it must be admitted that in *The Year of the Vanquished* almost nothing remains of pictures

for the sake of pictures, and the cups into which he pours the foaming water of history are no longer as varied in capacity and as miniature as they formerly were.

The "year of the vanquished" is past. The fearful forebodings have fully materialized. Reality has even surpassed them with the help of Hitler and his inventive lieutenants. Everything that is honest in European literature gathered in Paris at the Congress in Defense of Culture. André Chamson was among those who attended the Congress and subsequently he became active in the United Front. What should happen now to the routine earthiness of history and the legendary grandeur of routine? Apparently, Chamson had had his fill of this antithesis at the time he wrote *The Crime of the Righteous.* However, when at the Congress he pronounced the words "nationalism is the enemy of what is truly national," or "nationalism is a monstrous abstraction which in a fatal manner destroys the very thing it claims to defend," he was motivated not only by disgust for the theory and practice of bestial fascist race ideology, but also by the organic trend of his work—avoidance of the abstract.

Chamson has always displayed a tremendous interest in the "national." He is almost "regional" in his writing. Intensive observation of every phenomenon in all of its originality, in the fullness of its vibration—this is one of the fundamental dogmas of his poetic mood. He values "national" shadings not within national, but within provincial or regional boundaries. It would appear that he possessed the attributes necessary to become a nationalist, not, of course, in the aggressive fascist way, but in the conservative bourgeois manner. No, André Chamson is against all finality of style. Neither nationalism nor internationalism as doctrines, although it would seem that precisely internationalism is capable of combining various national and provincial features in a broad and free unity. Chamson agrees with nationalism. He also agrees with internationalism. They are elements, forces. But the artist within him refuses to go further. But the citizen within the writer, the son of his times, does not wish to cut himself off from the masses who are already illumined by the morrow that is dawning over Europe. Chamson the artist turned out to be more conservative than the man of action. Perhaps that is why Chamson, from time to time, must retire and amuse himself with his craft. Following *The Crime of the Righteous* there appeared *Histories of Tabusse,* which the author himself called the fruit of "hours of rest and forgetfulness." *The Year of the Vanquished* was followed by *The Four Elements,* stories splendidly written, which sparkle like the crystal pendants of an unlit chandelier—those brief philosophical abstractions which are so lightened and simplified that they cease to be abstractions and merely testify to the fact that the writer has as splendid a command of this material as he has of landscape painting, of the transmission of "miniature" feelings and of pleasantly soluble miniature conflicts.

It is good to hear what is going on in the world, still better to see it, but best of all to touch it. Chamson is powerful and successful in conveying visual impressions. His world of sounds is poorer than his visual and tangible world. His love scenes are constructed from touch. The hands convey thoughts and emotions and they help feelings to express themselves and thoughts to penetrate the consciousness of another. In a moment of great intensity the visual becomes tactile. Most characteristic of him in this connection is to my mind the following phrase from *The Year of the Vanquished:*

"Whistling, he (Carrière) began to gather speed. *The visible world was confined to the strip illumined by the headlights.* The changing horizon and

the sudden appearance of villages and cities were now transformed into something tangible. He felt their proximity, their *touch* . . . And he felt how those areas which he blindly crossed, which were by turns inhabited and deserted, touched him . . ." He felt this invisible world *like a living body.*

In *The Year of the Vanquished* whether he is describing the everyday life of a French mining settlement or a Stuttgart factory, Chamson penetratingly shows that in contemporary Europe there does not remain a single plot of land where daily life retains its former immobility. The breath of history is to be felt as keenly among the Sevanne Mountains in the so-called "Negro village" of white slaves as in huge Stuttgart or on the battle fields of the imperialist war. The country school, the tavern, the workers' barracks and even the marriage bed are shrouded in that heavy atmosphere. When German experts come to the mining settlement to install Diesel engines, the "national" immediately awakens in both the Germans and the French.

"Fifteen years ago they—the Germans—hurled hand grenades in our faces. Should we let ourselves be angered by such trifles?" rages the French nationalist, Nandou.

"Those foreigners are the same sort of poor folk that we are," counters the healthy and honest worker, Carrière, parrying the blow.

By a slight change in tone the old man Martin modifies his intermediate position in relation to "nationalism":

"They are the same as Frenchmen. There are bad ones and there are good ones . . . people are the same everywhere, of course . . . *But Germans are, all the same, more alien to us than others . . .*"

The Germans move into the "Negro village," into the barracks where the French workers live. From that moment, every rifle in their neighborly relations becomes a test of the strength of the internationalism awakened by the workday routine. Here Chamson displays great tact and subtlety. He is searching and lyrical like his hero Carrière. It hurts him just as it does Carrière when harmony is disturbed, and he is glad when friendly relations with the foreigners improve.

The Germans eat olives for the first time in their lives. "Is it good?" old Martin asks, blushing—he wants them to like his French olives.

The postman brings a letter for a man with a strange name, the very sound of which arouses antagonism. But then he sees the man's face, the face of one of his friends. "Excellent! Now we'll know," he is reassured and he wishes the Germans good night as though they were his own people.

During an evening at the tavern, Carrière is slightly embarrassed by the local dancers. "A little wild," he says to the Germans as though apologizing. But they are attracted by the music and the friendly shuffling. The Germans smile and recall their homes: "They dance that way in Bavaria, too . . . Take a look at Joachim and Franz, they're from the South, they're itching to hop to that music . . ."

Renata, the sister of "Red" Ludwig, likes Carrière—the witty homespun wisdom of his speech is near and dear to the German girl.

Strand by strand, strong ties are spun. It seems as if everything were settled. The small international of workers triumphs in spite of the past. But here something goes wrong; the results of an internationalism which has not been carried through to its logical conclusion by either the author or his hero Carrière. This internationalism has already come into being, it determines emotion but not deeds. It remoulds life, but Chamson's workers do not yet undertake to remould relations throughout the country and throughout the world. Both the German and the French feel that "we depend on the factory."

"No one has any confidence in anything. They lead us around on a leash," Carrière says. And Chamson develops his thoughts. Both of them—the German and the Frenchman—"realized that they were led and managed by some dark powers." This was the moment when it was necessary to take one more step, make one more effort. Chamson did not take this step in his novel *The Year of the Vanquished.*

Carrière comes to Stuttgart. He is in a factory, and throughout the city and the shops there are Nazi spies, Nazi agitators, Nazi murderers. And the remaining people? "Pale faces gazed out from under dirty caps. Poverty and hunger showed in their huge eyes."

In Stuttgart, Carrière goes through almost all the trials which the German underwent in Sevanne at the beginning of this story. Again we see the "national" in action—in the form of strange cooking, strange customs, strange women. But not everything in "national" Germany is as innocent as it seems from a distance. The fascist detachments in the streets—the unconcealed threat to neighboring countries. Despite all of Chamson's stubbornness, Carrière is compelled to glance behind the scenes of history and he shudders. His healthy proletarian equanimity is disturbed. Against his own will and consciousness, a dislike of the foreigners is aroused within him. "What luck I have in this country!" he mutters. "At the café, ran into a halfwit and in the street I am plagued by girls! To be sure, when you're traveling it is hard to see anything better. *However, that does not mean anything!"*

Carrière returns home half poisoned. Not that nationalism has been awakened within him. Not at all. But he sees others devoured by that mental and emotional poison. He is haunted by his Stuttgart impressions. This is the most powerfully written part of the novel. Carrière is silent for weeks; he does not want to share his impressions with the workers in order not to arouse within them the very agitation that he suppresses in himself with such difficulty.

One of the best pages of *The Year of the Vanquished* from the standpoint of tenseness and depth is provided by Carrière's conversation with Renata. He proposes to her. "Why should we get married," she answers. "I shall remain with you as long as possible. If I should ever have to return to Germany, if war began . . ."

Carrière felt Renata's hand resting on his chest like a dead weight. *"He experienced a kind of giddiness, which bore him beyond the limits of his own life."* Huddling still closer to Renata he whispered in her ear: "You won't desert me?" "No, I want to stay with you."

And so, besides clear proletarian class consciousness, personal love also proved stronger than national differences.

This is another moment when Renata, Carrière and Chamson should have taken the same decisive step—freed themselves from the clutches of emotion and come to a clear understanding of relations, to action and a "program." We wait for this step it does not occur. Some unforeseen brakes impede the movement of the hero. Not only "Renata's hand," but Carrière's hand as well lies motionless, not reaching for the gun.

When you read *The Crime of the Righteous* you are reminded of Zola's *Fertility*. The problem is the same: a self-contained clan and its virtues. To be sure, there are also many differences. Zola, feeling that he cannot cope with his incredible conception, tries to stun both himself and the reader with the number of successful births in the Froman family and the splendor of their prosperity. Chamson half a century later does not venture to demonstrate either the fertility or the prosperity of his favorite clan. His Arnales are less enterprising than the Fromans, their power in the district is more spiritual

than temporal, in character. To be sure, Chamson often speaks of the broad fields, vineyards and mountain terraces cultivated by the Arnales. But the main thing is not their wealth but the fact the Arnales have a "powerful reputation." They "rule over people." They become a "model for the people of the city and the valley," because "their virtues were not detached from everyday requirements." "In the regular performance of the simple obligations of patriarchal virtues, their superiority did not antagonize people but made them submissive."

How indeed was this superiority expressed? You turn the pages of the novel over and over, and you completely feel the ground slipping beneath your feet. Honesty? Industry? It must be assumed that both in the town and in the valley near the Arnales there lived a good many honest and industrious peasants. Perhaps the "mighty reputation" was the result of the worldly experience of the eldest of the Arnales, a municipal official who now and then gives good advice to those who want it?

To be sure, living experience is an excellent attribute, but our grandmother's tale is not built on that. The Arnales are a strong, disciplined, patriarchal peasant family—and that is all, and try as you will to find other virtues you will not find them. What is the source of their power over their neighbors, what is the source of the legend? Where is Chamson's realism? And his dislike of the abstract? The riddle is very simple: the legend of the Arnales is Chamson's own creation, without the least participation of local woodcutters and shepherds. The realist modestly steps aside so as not to interfere with Chamson in his glorification of an abstraction—not, indeed, one of those abstractions which are so unpleasant for the writer, but one dear to his heart, one summoned by himself from non-existence in a difficult moment of life—an abstraction which in the days and months of his writing helps him to hide from turbulent reality and to create a mirage of the eternal equilibrium of the outworn and outgoing patriarchy.

And what does realism think regarding this? Chamson's realism suffered from the Arnales' virtues just as Zola's naturalism did from the fertility of the Fromans. Under very close inspection, the fabric of *The Crime of the Righteous* appears to be extremely heterogeneous and flimsy. Along with a splendid realistic letter, we find scenes which are of a definite declamatory character. Probably it was not easy for the realist Chamson to combine these uncombinable elements—not for nothing after finishing the novel did he have to rest up with the *Stories of Tabusse*.

He hoped to find a secure support in the peasantry. He went to the peasantry and to nature in order to "save from destruction all the values that had existed before the war—eternal values, necessary values." Chamson admits that after the war "in the world that emerged from the catastrophe" "he found no other enjoyment save the re-creation of scenes from peasant life, alien to the wrath of history and stronger than the latter." Such is the accursed and false abstraction that envelops Chamson's healthy realism like a spider's web! He had to assert that peasant life is stronger than history. He tried to substantiate this assertion in his novel and for this reason the novel required an unhealthy and heavy effort on the part of the artist. Consequently, splendid scenes and descriptions are mingled with hypnotic seances. The writer hypnotizes the reader, surrounding the Arnales with a false glamor, but whatever his intentions, the artist and the realist within him gain the upper hand. We read the scene of the subduing of the insane old Arnale or the scene of the criminals' trial or that of Arnale's arrest, when the whole town is thrown into an uproar, with utter indifference or mistrust. Women tear their hair, children burst

into tears. How could Chamson with his taste stoop to such elementary methods of suggestion? But we are far from indifferent to the description of the town, to the love of the deaf and dumb Clemence and her brother Maurice, to the scene of the smothering of the new-born "mongrel" and even to the inordinately long speech of the municipal councillor—it is unlikely that any other writer could produce such a lame philistine defence of murder made by a "positive" hero! Why does Chamson do this? Is he so sure of himself and of the Arnales?

The artist Chamson won out in this novel against Chamson the philosopher. The artist compelled the young Arnales to flee from the stifling atmosphere of their paternal home, to leave their virtuous father and his property to the mercy of fate. He dictated to Chamson the scenes of Maubert's bankruptcy, and the touching vision when human remorse over the lives of his son, daughter and grandson, ruined for the sake of prestige, returns for an instant to the pseudo-righteous, hypocritically hardened killer of human warmth.

The elder Arnale, who never for an instant forgot the murder he had committed, was called to the Town Hall to try others. This test was beyond his powers. He left the courtroom, climbed to the upper floor of the Town Hall and gazed gloomily at the broad slopes overgrown with grass and fir groves. "It seemed to him that the mountain was very close and that before the Gorge of Mellet Clemence had appeared in the misty twilight, in the powdery spray of the rushing torrents. In her folded arms she held a new-born lamb and she talked to it, bending over, listening to its breathing. Her voice was like the tinkle of sleigh bells, and passing the councillor, she saw him from a distance and turned her head. Suddenly she disappeared and the mountain receded in the distance. He continued to think of her; ever since winter she had lived outside the family more alone and wild than ever.

" 'Now,' he thought, 'she talks to the animals and walks past her own kin without even glancing at them.' "

Such is the reverse side of Arnale's virtuous life. This did not help Chamson to rescue his "permanent values, necessary values." Is that not the reason why the novel reaches no conclusion?

A half word or a respite in literature or full-fledged words in action, in the cause of the United Front. It is hard to say whether Chamson regards the United Front as one of the "permanent values," but it has in any case become a "necessary value" for the writer. Chamson is one of the most energetic workers of the United Front. He is editor of *Vendredi*, a paper which enlists the best creative forces of France. Having embarked on that road, Chamson is attempting to broaden his scope. He now not only speaks and writes in defence of the United Front—he has also become a practical worker. The struggle with fascism in Spain served as the proof of his steadiness and consistency. We recall the sermon on individual destinies and causes with which *The Year of the Vanquished* ended. The vanquished have evidently reorganized their ranks and drawn to them all individuals. The Chamson of today is not a lone individual, and it is not the doom of individual that worries him in Spain.

The Spanish fighters need support. "*Vendredi* has not much money," Chamson told Soviet writers, "But the paper mobilized all its financial reserves and sent them to Spain—in the name of its readers."

"The defence of culture" is drawing Chamson into action. And there is every reason to believe that this time he cannot escape one of the "abstractions" which so frightened him from a distance.

George Theotokas

The Argus

George Theotokas was born in 1905 in Constantinople and has been living in Athens since 1922. He is a lawyer by profession. His literary activity began in 1929 when he published an essay entitled *Free Spirit*. The only fiction which Theotokas has written so far is a collection of short stories entitled *Hours of Leisure* (1931) and his novel *The Argus*. One of the most eminent Greek literary critics, the academician S. Melas hailed the appearance of *The Argus* as the "first novel of the younger post-war generation of Greece."

The Argus draws a masterly picture of the disintegration of bourgeois Greece and its governing structure.

The excerpt in the present translation records an imaginery uprising which is described as taking place at the present time and which portrays imaginary statesmen; but it is written with such literary power that the reader gains a vivid picture of political manners and the general political situation in contemporary Greece.

Theotokas belongs to a group of left intellectuals who founded the anti-fascist "League for the Defense of Human and Civil Rights" in 1936.

At the time we describe, Greece was in the throes of that economic, social and political turmoil which is called a crisis. Things were going from bad to worse, merchants going bankrupt with increasing frequency, stockbrokers committing suicide. Ships rode idly at anchor in the silent harbors, alongside empty piers. Unemployment had reached threatening proportions. The index of the cost of living rose slowly but steadily. Every morning intellectuals prophesied the collapse of civilization within the next month. A gloomy atmosphere of general nervousness and uneasiness pervaded the capital. The public voiced its discontent, muttered and swore. Saloon keepers, barbers, waiters and chauffeurs accused the government of incompetence and corruption and called for trials and executions.

The Prime Minister at the time was a certain Armodios Zuganelis, a native of the Island of Zirigo which the poets call Kifera. Zuganelis had studied law in Athens and because of his unusual diligence had made a fine showing in the University. Later he had practiced law with great success and exemplary honesty. He had written an extremely conscientious dissertation "On Direct Taxation." His public and personal life was as clear as spring water.

He was not a great man but it would have been unfair also to belittle him. He was the ideal type of a middle-class politician and therefore enjoyed tremendous popularity among the ward bosses, because behind the shield of his prestige they could do as they liked. He was a respectable man who was always smooth and well-balanced, was incapable of the least deviation from the fundamental principles of bourgeois morality and bourgeois logic. Whatever he knew, he knew thoroughly, but he was uninterested in theoretical speculation which was of no direct practical use. His knowledge was for the most part empirical.

He was a pleasant, affable fellow. He had neither wife nor relatives, and he lived in a humble apartment on Alexandra Boulevard together with an elderly housemaid who told the neighbors that he was a saint. He worked a great deal and he worked constantly. In his rare moments of leisure he played the piano, rendering Schumann, Schubert and Mozart with great expression. He doubtlessly would have done splendidly as the head of

any well-balanced state, in a period of peace, prosperity and welfare; as Prime Minister of Switzerland he might have accomplished miracles; but in the Political Bureau of the Greek republic this reasonable and lovable man made a complete muddle of everything.

He had a profound faith in the importance of universal suffrage and the sovereign power of the people's government and of public opinion. He recognized the existence of a certain metaphysical "national conscience" (never suspecting incidentally that he thereby lapsed into metaphysics, just as Molière's hero never suspected that he was speaking prose), a sort of general conscience that embraces and subordinates all the individual consciences of the separate citizens of the republic and is the source of all power, all will and action, of the state. The national conscience in his opinion predetermined the whole trend of national developments, and public men were under an obligation to carry out its wishes as carefully as possible. The least deviation from this principle he considered dangerous to the nation and especially to the statesman.

"Our duty is to lead the people, showing them their mistakes, and set them on the right road," Pavlos Skinas [1] was fond of saying in conversations with the Prime Minister.

But Zuganelis shook his head pensively and answered:

"Count Capo D'Istria, my dear fellow, tried to lead the Greeks and they killed him like a dog. The Hellenic neck will not endure the yoke, my friend. Therefore it is better for the people to settle important questions, and for us to carry out their wishes. With that we wash our hands and free ourselves from any historic responsibility."

"Gunaris also subscribed to that theory," said Pavlos Skinas. "However, they shot him on the field of Hudi [2] with his whole gang."

"He didn't wash his hands with clean soap, my friend," Zuganelis whispered in a confidential manner, and promptly changed the subject, since he didn't in the least enjoy discussing how Greece had a habit of shooting her Prime Ministers.

Zuganelis' greatest misfortune was that he headed the government in a period so difficult that even a Bonaparte would have had a hard time finding a way out. Newspapers, organizations, meetings, chambers—all the organs that express the "national conscience"—in one voice clamored for economy and more economy. Zuganelis, faithful to his theory, sought to carry out this popular wish. He ceaselessly cut down the state budget, reducing the Ministries' departments and offices, simplifying the courts and schools, curtailing productive and military expenditures. He even sold the ministerial automobiles and rode to the Political Bureau on the bus. But every Greek citizen demanded such economy as would affect everybody but himself. Therefore Zuganelis' policy soon aroused general discontent. Every morning the newspapers ran large colored cartoons, picturing him with a huge pair of scissors lopping off hands, feet, noses and ears, along with the hems of women's skirts and the beards of preachers. Finally, with a horrible sadistic grin he would cut off the head of Greece with his scissors and the country lay prostrate on the ground. "Down with the atheist," howled twenty of the capital's newspapers in huge headlines. "Zuganelis, we spit in your face,"

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[1] The Minister of Home Affairs, the chief character in the novel.

[2] A field outside Athens, where six ministers and generals, headed by the Prime Minister Gunaris, whom the Supreme Court held responsible for the defeat of the Greek army in Asia Minor, were shot in the autumn of 1922.

"We'll undress you and flog you on Constitution Square." "Resign before the tempest of popular opinion sweeps you aside," etc. etc.

Armodios Zuganelis grew angry when he read all this.

"They want to get rid of me," he said, "of me, who served the state faithfully and honestly for thirty whole years! They want to get rid of me because I conscientiously carry out their demands! The ingratitude of the Greek people is an example of the inadequacy of moral education, an inadequacy that can only be remedied in the course of several generations, when the nation's moral fibre shall have grown sufficiently strong."

But Pavlos Skinas approached the question entirely differently.

"We must change the press laws and then legally put all those scoundrels in jail," he said.

"I am not one of those who violate the liberties of the Greek people," Zuganelis answered, resolutely.

"Liberty has nothing to do with the case, Mr. Prime Minister," Skinas replied. "We're dealing with contemptible scoundrels who poison public opinion in order to fill their own pockets. Real freedom of thought can exist only in an atmosphere purified of their pollution."

"However, my dear friend," Zuganelis objected, "if we place those contemptible scoundrels, as you call them, on trial by jury, the jurors will formally acquit them to the deafening applause of the public. That means that the national conscience demands complete freedom of the press."

"I propose that you issue a new law whereby they shall be answerable before a bench of five real judges. Let those judges express the national conscience. They, too, are Greeks, excellent lawyers and honest people."

"I am not one of those who . . ."

Meanwhile in this heated atmosphere certain restless elements in political and army circles entered upon suspicious activities, which clearly disgregarded both the national conscience and its wishes. Clandestine "protocols of honor" began to circulate among the officers of the capital and of provincial cities. A certain military league was organized to conduct underground activity for the purpose of "saving the nation." No one had precise information at to just what this illegal organization was up to but everybody was talking about it. The newspapers unceasingly referred to it, first in hints, then directly and openly. It was plain that a military dictatorship was in preparation. Indeed, the forthcoming uprising was anticipated with as much certainty as though it were a theatrical opening.

The newspapers refrained from mentioning names but all Athens knew that the leader of the league and candidate for the post of dictator was General Dzaveyas, the commander of the First Army Corps. This general was a Spartan, by birth and character, brave, cruel, morose and silent, who gave his whole soul to military science and was a born leader. He had begun his career in the Macedonian uprising and received most of his education on the battlefield. Both his cheeks were gashed with saber scars, his hair was like a horse's and his eye was sharp and piercing like a bayonet. The soldiers trembled before him, swore at him, and worshipped him. In his presence even staff officers and generals lost all personality and again became privates. Endowed with such a character and such authority, Dzaveyas could not endure a peaceful existence. The happiest moments of his life he had experienced in the heat of battle, when he held in his hand the lives of hundreds of those men and made such use of them as he saw fit, and destroyed enemies for the sake of his country; he honestly loved war, and when he walked through the streets of Athens unaccompanied he was like

a caged animal in the zoo, pining for the jungle. He was profoundly contemptuous of statesmen, newspapers, and women.

General Dzaveyas, like the Prime Minister, Zuganelis, suffered from a metaphysical obsession, without realizing that he was a metaphysician; but he belonged to another school. He did not subscribe to the theory of the national conscience and its wishes. He believed in history, in historical necessity and historical laws. He could clearly and convincingly set forth how the mechanism of these laws worked; he loved to read historical works; his head was full of famous names and dates; and by such dates he explained the present and foretold the future, which he regarded as predetermined by all previous history. "England," he would say, "now occupies the place of Rome. America, that of Carthage. And if America tries to tread on England, she'll lose out just as Hannibal lost out. That's what history teaches us and nobody can go against history." And this syllogism was irrefutable. Or he compared the rivalry of France and Germany with that of Athens and Sparta. "France is Athens," he would say, "and Germany Sparta. History shows that sooner or later Germany will swallow France, but the Gallic spirit will endure and achieve glory. The Russians have not decided what role to play. History gives them two alternatives, placing a dilemma before them. They can play the part of either the Macedonians or the Huns. We'll see which path they choose!"

Evidently he regarded history as a sort of fate, something preordained, and peoples who did not bow to the forecasts of history broke their necks. A classic example of this was furnished by the elections of November 1, 1920.[1]

Therefore the true leader of the people was the man who acknowledged his historical mission, who understood the prescriptions of history and in obedience to them, led the people without asking their opinion; for the people are completely ignorant. On the basis of these principles, General Dzaveyas championed a number of grandiose projects which the Greek people were to carry out in the future. At the present time he held that his historic mission was to oust Zuganelis and take his place and administer a good spanking to newspapermen of all trends and shades.

Pavlos Skinas went to the Prime Minister and showed him newspapers which stated that the uprising would take place in the near future.

"Do you mean to say you believe the papers, my dear fellow?" Armodios Zuganelis asked.

"As I see it, this time, by way of exception, they're telling the truth," the Minister of Home Affairs replied. "We can't leave the nation to the mercy of fate."

"But my dear fellow," Zuganelis objected, "we are guiding the state to the best of our strength and ability. What more can we do?"

"I consider it necessary to remove the leaders of the League from their posts," Skinas replied.

Zuganelis shook his head.

"But I can't ruin the careers of those officers and throw them into the street on the basis of irresponsible hearsay," he cried. "I must have incontestable proofs of the existence of the League and the illegality of its aims."

"The day you receive those uncontestable proofs it will be too late, Mr. Prime Minister," Skinas told him. "Those gentlemen will already have seized

[1] The parliamentary elections in which Venizelos was completely defeated and the supporters of King Constantine received a majority.

the post and telegraph and the Ministries, and will have set up machine-guns on all the squares."

"Very well, I shall order a legal investigation."

"The investigation will drag out for weeks, while the uprising is scheduled for next week."

"Our duty, my dear friend," said the Prime Minister clearly, "demands our observance of the existing laws, which in this instance forbid me to take any decision before the legal investigation and the presentation of definite proofs as to the guilt of these officers. I have no right to judge anyone."

"Our duty, Mr. Prime Minister, demands that we safeguard the Constitution, and we are therefore obliged to put those scoundrels, who wish to trample on it, in their place."

"Very well," Zuganelis finally agreed, "we shall safeguard the Constitution. But we shall not begin by violating it ourselves, thereby giving a bad example to those scoundrels, as you term them."

And Armodios Zuganelis locked himself in his humble apartment and sat down at the piano with a heavy heart; for he knew that the newspaper reports were by no means unfounded, and that a group of officers had, in fact, organized a conspiracy against him. He simply lacked the strength of character to take the initiative in clearing the atmosphere. He was one of those peaceable, sensitive people who, when confronted with violence and injustice lose all will-power, and lapse into fatalism. To hell with everything! The wickedness and stupidity which ruled the world oppressed him and tormented him, enervating him, crushing all his desires, and even paralyzing his love of life. His soul was reconciled to what must take place and he only hoped that it would happen as quickly as possible, in order to end his torment. But as he was an honest man and aware of the responsibility placed upon him by his position, he did not even admit his true feelings to himself. He did everything he could to maintain order and peace in the country and felt that the state of the nation should be good since his conscience was clear.

Meanwhile, Pavlos Skinas, who had entirely different views of his historic mission, came to an understanding with several of the higher officers who were faithful to the Constitution, and ordered all machine-guns in the army stores secretly concentrated in a safe place in the center of the city. In addition he stationed a large company of gendarmes, well armed and led by reliable officers, in the post and telegraph building. He gave them orders to fire on any one who tried to occupy the building without a personal order signed by himself. He was fully aware that whoever controlled the post and telegraph building and a sufficient quantity of machine-guns could control all of Greece if only he showed sufficient courage and determination in the moment of danger.

General Dzaveyas, having learned of these measures taken by the Minister of Home Affairs, decided to speed the course of events. On the night of May 23-24 the uprising began in the barracks of the First Infantery Regiment in the suburb of Ambelokipa, almost without preparation. At 5 o'clock in the morning the general sent the government an ultimatum, demanding, in the name of the army, that it hand over the reins of power to him. "Otherwise," he wrote, "I refuse to accept any responsiblity for the consequences and for the possibility of the army's enforcing its wishes." Somewhat later two airplanes flew over the city and dropped leaflets containing the following historic manifesto.

Summons to the Greek People

Citizens:

Greece, bleeding from the unhealed wounds of ten years of war, victim of hunger and chaos, has suffered one catastrophe after another, one humiliation after another, at the hands of stupid and unworthy rulers who violate every principle of politics, of society, religion and economics.

Party squabbles and party graft, the unbridled demagogy of the press, and flagrant, subversive propaganda have seriously undermined the foundations of our national existence. Everything is tottering and collapsing. Our horizon is overcast with clouds.

In this critical hour the entire national army, fully aware of its lofty historic mission and its genuine duty to the Nation and to History, has unanimously chosen me as its leader and as dictator of Greece.

I feel I have no right to refuse this call. The country is in danger. I shall save the country!

Relying on the iron will of the army and the loyalty of the people, I shall strengthen public safety, restore the country's wealth, balance the budget, and reform the whole system of taxation, so that it will be fair to the people and profitable to the public treasury. I shall defend religion, the mother-tongue, and the family. I shall embark on a program of road building and further education, science, and art. I shall fight against corrupting influences, I shall relentlessly prosecute all grafters, I shall maintain the strictest economy and shall see to it that the youth is imbued with the national spirit. I shall put an end, once and for all, to Communism and to the farce of the so-called democratic parties. And in accomplishing all this I demand the fullest disciplined obedience of all officers, petty officers, soldiers, officials and citizens.

Signed,

Dzaveyas

By 8 o'clock in the morning the situation was still uncertain. General Dzaveyas pretended that he was waiting for a reply to his ultimatum and meanwhile concentrated his forces around the supurb of Ambelokipa, drawing them up in fighting formation. At the time of the uprising the President of the Republic was at the Tatoi Palace. He tried to reach Athens, but the rebels would not let him through and forced him to return to the palace, from whence he made one telephone call after another in a futile effort to get precise information as to what was happening. The cabinet hastily met at the Political Bureau. The members were extremely nervous and continually called for ice water.

Besides the Prime Minister, there were the Minister of Justice Katsavos, the Minister of the Navy Sakelaridis, the Minister of War General Yalarakis, the Minister of Public Welfare Dr. Tsausoglu, Minister of Public Education Professor Vretos, the Minister of Home Affairs Pavlos Skinas, and several other ministers of less importance. Great uneasiness prevailed in the cabinet, for at the same time as General Dzaveyas' uprising, Communist uprisings had broken out unexpectedly at various points in Piraeus and in the suburbs of Athens. Armed groups with red flags were already fighting with the police, and here and there in the workers' districts barricades had been thrown up. There were reliable reports that the Communists were fully informed of the actual position of the government and had decided to take advan-

tage of the confusion to show their strength. The government was thus between two fires.

As soon as he examined his colleagues, Skinas realized that not one of them was capable of coping with the situation and taking decisive steps. They were preparing to surrender to the mercy of the victor. Not one of them had any desire to offer the least resistance. All wanted to get out as soon as possible, and hand over all responsibility to whoever proved stronger. None of them, however, wanted to admit this; each waited for his neighbor to propose that they go home, and the meeting dragged on listlessly without ariving at any result.

"*C'est enoui!*" The Minister of the Navy said. He was a very fastidious gentleman of middle height, dressed with great elegance, and speaking with the well-bred air and slight accent of one who in childhood learns to speak a foreign language before he learns his native tongue. "Whoever heard of such a thing! I have ceased understanding anything of Greek politics. Don't those army officers and their instigators realize what critical times we're living in and what danger threatens our whole social order? How can they fool around with ultimatums and other childish tricks at a time when the Communists are at the very gate? *Hélas, ce n'est plus une revolte; c'est une revolution*"

"They want to cause general chaos in order to make it easier to satisfy their personal interests," said the Minister of Justice, with stoical sang-froid. He was a provincial from Karpenision. "Such, alas, is the general spirit of our time. A spirit of injustice, unhealthy individualism, the decay of all discipline and order. No force can stay the development of this evil and any man with a clear conscience can only look there for consolation."

"Yes, that's right," sadly concurred Vretos, a professor of education at the University of Athens. "Unfortunately, that's right, my dear colleagues. Our times are lacking in objective moral values, and precisely as a result of this there are no objective moral standards."

"But that's not the question," suddenly shouted the Minister of Public Welfare, a former lecturer at a Berlin University, a stocky man, red as a boiled lobster. He perspired freely, and constantly dabbed his bald pate with a large colored handkerchief. "An uprising is going on. Civil war, Communism, a military rebellion, a dictatorship, and the devil knows what; everything's gone topsy-turvy. Are we the government, or have we already ceased to be the government? We are the representatives of the people, we are the expression of legality, history will hold us responsible. We must stop theorizing and seriously consider what position we will adopt."

"It certainly is time to consider our position," readily agreed Vretos.

"Finally, can we or can't we offer resistance?" modestly asked Sakelaridis. "That is the question!"

"That is precisely the question," said the Minister of Public Education.

"And so we ask you, our respected colleague," said the Minister of Justice, with a serious look at his naval colleague. "You, as head of one of the military ministries, must know better than us, whether the lawful government can offer resistance to this hold-up, and if so to what extent?"

"And in fact, who can answer that question if not our military colleagues," added Vretos.

"*Ma foi!* I'm in no position to tell you anything." answered Sakelaridis, fitting a monocle to his eye. "So far the navy has observed strict neutrality, awaiting the results of the negotiations and deliberations. If there's a conflict, it will take place on the streets of Athens between army units."

"We ask you," continued Katsavos, "can the state rely on the navy in the suppression of the uprising, and if so to what extent?"

"*Mais enfin,* what do you expect of the navy?" Sakelaridis asked in the greatest surprise. "Do you want us to bombard Athens?"

Vretos got up and resolutely protested.

"It would be impermissible to bombard Athens," he shouted. "It is far preferable for the naval and air forces to remain neutral to the end. Besides the harm this would do the city and the population, there is a danger that a number of valuable archeological relics might be damaged by the bombardment, and that would alienate international public opinion. You remember how when the idea was broached of building the courthouse near the Acropolis, indignant articles appeared in a number of European papers, and the French Academy of Fine Arts in a protest. Imagine what would happen if a shell landed on the Parthenon, or say, on the Temple of Theseus, or the columns of the Temple of the Olympic Zeus. I therefore consider. . . ."

Dr. Tsausoglu burst forth.

"Stop, my friend, stop! What are we talking about? Archaeology or an uprising organized by scoundrels who threaten to cut the throats of every one of us? Here we are with our necks in the noose, and you theorize and even talk about the courthouse!"

Sakalaridis again adjusted his monocle.

"Let us hear what our military colleague has to say," he remarked.

Everyone turned towards General Yalarakis, who sat looking sleepy and morose, engrossed in deep thought.

He was an old member of the Cretan national guerilla detachments, blackened by powder smoke. He had received his first wound at Periso in 1905, his second in Macedonia in 1908, his third at Bijan, his fourth at Kilkis; and after that he stopped counting his wounds. They said he had been wounded twenty times. He was one of those officers who in 1916 refused to surrender to the German-Bulgarian troops in spite of Constantine's orders, and at his peril he renewed the war in Macedonia. He did not place much of a price on his own life or on the lives of others.

"I, gentlemen, have waged war all my life," he began slowly and deliberately. "I'm not afraid of losing my head, the devil take it. If you want to fight, very well, we'll fight."

It must be said that Yalarakis, though he had not, of course, lost his former courage, had put on weight. He had grown a bit lazy with the years. The truth was, he would have preferred right now to go to Zappion and sun himself, instead of fighting in the streets of Athens against his old friend Dzaveyas, with whom he had once fought side by side, sharing a last crust of bread on more than one occasion.

"We ask you, our respected colleague," said Katsavos, "are we in a position to fight, and if so to what extent?"

"What has that got to do with it?" angrily answered the Cretan general. "The question is, do you want to fight? Have you the guts to fight? Those who have the guts to fight are always prepared to fight."

"Forget psychology," snorted the stout doctor. "Forget about it, please. Each of us has only one head to lose and it happens to be in danger. Did you read the ultimatum? 'I refuse to accept responsibility for consequences.' That means: I don't give a damn for your lives and I wash my hands like Pontius Pilate if your enemies try to get even with you. And we have plenty of enemies. They are only waiting for the chance. We must decide what to do, how to protect our wives and children."

Those words of the Minister of Public Welfare further increased everybody's nervousness. Each of them remembered his house, his wife, his children, his personal affairs. All of them turned to the Prime Minister, with fear and apprehension.

"Yes, gentlemen, we've got to think of our families," they chorused.

It was evident they would have a thousand times preferred being anywhere else save here, around this table, where they felt bound by such a heavy responsibility.

"Another glass of water, please," Vretos asked.

"The Prime Minister has said nothing," said the Minister of Public Welfare.

But Armodios Zuganelis hadn't the least desire either to say or to do anything. He seemed to have lost his strength and will-power, he was in the throes of fatigue and despondancy. He felt that whatever the outcome of events, his career was done for, his life was at an end. He lacked the strength to go on living. He would have to leave his post, hand over the power to a stronger and bolder hand. He could no longer endure the weight of responsibility placed upon him by his duties and the madness of the Greek people. He felt complete repugnance toward everything, and first of all toward any struggle.

Pavlos Skinas summed up the situation in his mind. The government was completely bewildered. It had virtually ceased to exist. Legality, freedom, democracy, everything had collapsed. The country was the plaything of the elements. The ship of state leaked in every seam, and was sinking.

Suddenly he felt quite definitely that he was capable of mastering the situation; like a man, who, in the open sea, in the teeth of an angry storm, grips the helm with one hand and with the other reefs in the sail, and the ship obeys him; even as it rises like a nutshell on the crest of the wave, or dives downwards into the foamy froth, the ship nevertheless submits to the man, to his indomitable will and his intelligence; and he feels that he controls the elements, conquers the winds, and rules the raging waters. All Skinas' muscles taughtened, his senses sharpened. A tremendous enthusiasm seized him. He rose.

"Gentlemen," he said in a dry and commanding voice, "our duty calls us to respect the law, regardless of sacrifice."

Deathly silence reigned after these words. Nobody seemed to breathe.

"The general has just told you," Pavlos Skinas continued, "that war is mainly a question of spiritual preparedness. I ask you, are you prepared to fight, or not?"

No one answered. And all again turned to the Prime Minister, expecting that he would at last pronounce the word which would define their position. But Armodios Zuganelis sat speechless and immobile, almost unconscious. He was convinced of only one thing at the moment: he definitely didn't want to fight with anyone. And not because he was afraid—he wasn't a coward, he was even prepared to risk his life provided his duty required it—but because he felt utterly bewildered and disappointed, and because he regarded the struggle as entirely senseless. He realized that whatever happened, the situation would be neither better nor worse, everyone would still be dissatisfied, and the people would again threaten all rulers with the gallows. What was the point of sacrificing the life of even a single soldier?

Meanwhile the old Cretan, as though aroused by Skinas' words, stirred in his armchair and muttered something threateningly through his teeth. He was like a big dog which has suddenly been let off the leash, not yet quite

knowing what to make of his freedom, but ready to fling himself on the first person who happened along.

"I already told you, gentlemen," he declared in a loud voice, "that if you want to fight I'll fight." And he banged his fist on the table with such force that all the glasses jumped. "But I warn you that there's going to be bloodshed. I know Dzaveyas; we were together in the militia and in all the revolutions."

The Minister of Public Welfare, however, was doubtful.

"Here's what I would like to know," he said, also hitting the table with his fist, "before we make a definite decision. Who is stronger, the traitors or we? If we have more forces than they have, then everything will go smoothly of course. If not. . ."

"*Ma foi,* I must admit that I'm inclined to be a bit skeptical," whispered the Minister of the Navy to his neighbor.

Armodios Zuganelis decided to make an effort to recapture the appearance of a Prime Minister, which he had completely lost.

"We must finish, gentlemen," he said with a deep sigh of hopelessness. "We must finish! I shall give you my opinion without reservation, in order not to waste time. I'm not one of those who are ready lightheartedly to shed the blood of the Greek people only because some swashbuckler decides to engineer an uprising. No, I am not one of those who. . ."

"Mr. Prime Minister," sharply interrupted Pavlos Skinas. "At a moment when the Republic is in jeopardy and the foundation of the state is tottering, I have definitely decided to listen to nothing save my own conscience."

"What do you wish to imply by that," the Prime Minister asked him with a bewildered look. His hand was trembling.

"Since the government is disinclined to do its duty," continued Pavlos Skinas, "I take upon myself the initiative and all the responsibility."

No one uttered a word. The Ministers stared at him as though turned to stone, incapable either of following his example or of opposing him. The Prime Minister again lapsed into his fatalism. Any man who would have spoken to him in a commanding voice could have ordered him about.

"Come on, General," Pavlos Skinas called, heading for the door. Right now none of the others could be of the least use to him.

Yalarakis slowly rose and muttering something through his teeth, submissively followed his colleague whom he already regarded as his leader.

Somewhat later, when General Dzaveyas finally decided to move along Kefissia Boulevard in the direction of Constitution Square, Pavlos Skinas' machine-guns were awaiting him under the pines by the Evangelical Hospital. The insurrectionary officers hesitated before the prospect of shedding fraternal blood.

"Give it to them, you bastards," General Dzaveyas shouted. "Give it to them! It's historical necessity."

"Fire!" commanded General Yalarakis.

A heavy cross-fire started. Neither general, Spartan nor Cretan, was in the habit of economizing bullets.

At the moment when Pavlos Skinas left the Political Bureau on his way to his own Ministry to take command of all the government forces, a division sent by General Dzaveyas was approaching the post and telegraph building. It rode on trucks through Alexandria Boulevard and Patissia Street without meeting resistance anywhere along the line. But when the division reached the post office square and disclosed its intentions of seizing the building, the gendarmes opened a heavy rifle fire from the windows. The

division retreated in disorder up the neighboring streets. The second attack conducted with the aid of two armored cars also met with failure. The insurgents, who had to cross an open square, were at a disadvantage. At a given moment the gendarmes took advantage of their confusion, sallied forth and seized one of the armored cars. The other retreated to Concord Square and had to stop in a nearby narrow street, as the driver was wounded. A crowd immediately surrounded the car and disarmed the occupants. The armed citizens who had gathered on the square were shouting, "Long live the revolution!" But it was unclear whether they were cheering the revolution staged by General Dzaveyas or another, real, revolution.

Manolis was walking along Homer Street towards Academy Street where he saw a crowd of students gathered between the University and the law school. At the sound of the first shots they all ran to the main entrance of the University and out onto University Square, as though by prearrangement. But the gendarmes guarding University Boulevard chased them back and forced them to cross over to Academy Street. Here the students could make all the noise they wanted and in case the fire hoses were turned on them, it was much easier for them to beat a retreat up New City Street. Manolis ran into many friends and acquaintances among the crowd of young people, members of the "Club of the Argonauts" and others, who clustered round him as though they were awaiting some word of command from him.

Several people were inciting the students to take action against their hereditary enemies, the police, saying they would have an exciting scrap and "We'll show what stuff we're made of," "We the youth." But the majority of the youth had no desire to get into a scrap that day, for they sensed the seriousness and danger of the events that were taking place. Still they were extremely excited, aroused by the rumors and the atmosphere of struggle. They wanted to discuss serious matters and in some way distinguish themselves, to show that they had a share in deciding the country's fate—they the younger generation of Greece, the future nation. True, they did not exactly know what was going on or what it was they ought to demand. But just the same, they shouted "Make way for the youth!" They couldn't stay on the sidelines!

Several students, the more daring souls, locked hands and moved along Academy Street towards Canning Square (that was the only direction that was not blocked). They were followed by an additional twenty men who were singing the national anthem.

From the bones of famous fighters
Who overthrew the ancient world
You were born to win the victory
Of liberty—our ideal.

This action supplied an outlet to the general nervousness. Everybody sang, some the strains of the anthem others, snatches of cafe tunes. Still others laughed and shouted. Manolis and his friends, without realizing it, found themselves caught up in the demonstration. From time to time the students were joined by curious onlookers and the street urchins who always turn up whenever something is happening. In our times, if a small human nucleus forms, it immediately attracts the restless elements like a magnet. If the compact nucleus walks along looking as though it has some definite goal, many people join it and go along without any idea of where they are going, simply

because they feel the necessity of following someone and going somewhere.

When the group reached Canning Square, it had already swelled to impressive proportions. It moved along with an air of great determination and gave the impression that the demonstrators knew where they were going. The demonstrators went straight on without stopping; they passed through Beranger Sreet, crossed Patissia Street and Third of September Street.

They avoided Concord Square as though sensing that some danger threatened them from that quarter.

Near the Laurian Station, Manolis suddenly distinguished a familiar voice amid the general hubbub. He turned around and recognized Linos Notaras, the younger brother of his friend Alexis. Hatless, red in the face and out of breath the young man kept shouting:

"Long live the revolution!"

He was apparently completely beside himself and oblivious of everyone around him. How did Linos come to be here?

Try as he would Manolis couldn't reach him. The crowd swept him forward, magnetizing and infecting him and everyone else; the crowd became the synthesis of desires of those who composed it, a higher force, independent of their individual wills; and it impelled them with unswerving determination somewhere or other, no one knew where.

Several demonstrators in the front ranks held their canes aloft. From behind, these canes, raised above their heads, seemed like huge needles sticking out of the human mass which surged forward irresistibly, enveloped in a cloud of dust. The canes, waving above the crowd, drew everyone after them; and the crowd that followed, in its turn, pushed the front ranks forward and compelled them to quicken their pace. Thus, automatically, the mass of demonstrators rolled forward.

"Long live the revolution!"

The national anthem, songs and laughter died away now. The only sound in the crowd was a menacing rumble which was impossible to make out, but clear to everyone as the warning note of impending catastrophe: "Down with everything, to hell with everything!" Certain instincts came to the surface which recognized no logic; and everywhere in the dazzling light of the Athenian day, rifles crackled.

Almost unconsciously, carried by its own momentum, the demonstration surged along the empty and quiet Beranger and Marna Streets and through a narrow cross street; it flowed out on to St. Constantine Street. Here it delayed for a moment as though uncertain whether to proceed or go back.

At the same time another demonstration was moving toward Constitution Square. But this demonstration was totally different in appearance. Its participants evidently knew what they wanted.

This new crowd of demonstrators moved slowly, almost silently, but in closer ranks and with a more determined stride. The faces of the people were tense, angry and determined. In the vanguard marched several women dressed in black. All were young, thin and sickly looking, with eyes that stared intently ahead as though hypnotized. Among them loomed the tall figure of Damianos Frandzis, and at his side, Dimitros Matiopulos, a student from Kalaurita. They were accompanied by an armored car, the one which had lately been seized by the people off Concord Square and had now fallen into the hands of Communists. The red flag in the midst of that crowd combined with the atmosphere of struggle and the incessant firing caused the greatest tenseness, as though suddenly all jokes and pretense, all carefree easy living, were over. All the laws consecrated by tradition and common-

place gave way. It was as if some indomitable reality had awakened which embraced everything under the sun, a reality which had always existed everywhere, but which everyone had tried to forget, and which now at last had spoken its word, drowning out all other voices.

"Long live the revolution!"

The red color dominated the whole city, causing all other colors to turn pale; vivid, victorious, and dazzling, the color of blood. Dimitros Matiopulos carried the red flag, clasping it with both hands, and his whole frame seemed afire.

After a few moments' hesitation, the crowd of student demonstrators suddenly dispersed. At the sight of the red flag the majority took to their heels and retreated as though the specter of revolution had risen before them. Only a few rushed forward to join the Communists. Manolis, who had regained his own will power, ran along with them in the hope of averting the catastrophe which he sensed was impending. His eyes sought Linos, but were suddenly caught by the sight of Damianos Frandzis. He seized him by the shoulders.

"Where are you going?" he asked, recognizing several comrades, members of the "Club of the Argonauts," among the group.

"Let me alone," Frandzis answered him shortly, shaking off the hand Manolis had laid on his shoulder.

A surge of the crowd separated them. Linos was in the front ranks. The Communist demonstration, having received reinforcements, moved towards Concord Square swiftly and determinedly. From the throats of the women swelled a simple, stirring song which overwhelmed all other sounds—the anthem of hatred and hope.

Arise ye prisoners of starvation,
Arise ye wretched of the earth
For justice thunders condemnation,
A better world's in birth.

This lasted for a few seconds. Manolis, at that moment, saw a fairly large detachment of sailors approaching from the direction of Concord Square with fixed bayonets pointed directly at the demonstrators. The detachment filled the entire breadth of the street; it halted ten meters in front of the crowd. The sailors stared fixedly at the demonstrators, and the demonstrators stared back at them. Part of the detachment moved a little nearer. A young naval officer, neat and swaggering, in a dazzling white cap and with white gloves in his hand, walked to the middle between the two fronts. Facing the crowd, he said, jerkily and imperiously:

"I order you to disperse immediately. Otherwise I shall resort to arms!"

For an instant a deathly silence settled on St. Constantine Street. Then a single shot was echoed from the crowd. Having fired, Damianos stood white as a corpse, biting his lips till they bled. And thus it was that he provoked ahead of time what was inevitably bound to happen; for events had reached the boiling point and no one was in a position to restrain the crowd.

The naval officer crumpled to the dusty pavement, still clutching his white gloves. The sailors, without waiting for orders, fired.

A terrific encounter began between the two sides. Like a wounded animal, the crowd of demonstrators rushed into the adjoining streets. The bolder ones—and there were plenty of them—replied to the marines with a volley of pistol shots. It was impossible to budge the armored car from its place, and the revolutionaries couldn't make use of it. The driver had been wounded

in the first volley and slouched on the steering wheel; he had not had time to close the shield when a bullet struck him. The remaining members of the crew of the armored car apparently did not know how to run it; before they succeeded in getting out of the car, the sailors were on them, and finished them off with their bayonets; after which they took possession of the car and placed the machine-guns commanding all directions.

The fray did not last more than five minutes. The streets were cleared of demonstrators; the shooting died away completely. The only thing audible were the groans of the wounded who crawled in the dust here and there, and the officers' words of command.

In the center of the street, midway between the national theater and the Church of St. Constantine, Dimitros Matiopulos lay dead. Blood flowed freely from his powerful frame. A few steps from him lay Linos Nataras, hunched over, with a bullet hole between his eyebrows.

At two o'clock in the afternoon, General Dzaveyas began an ordered retreat to Ambelkipa. But before he reached his headquarters he had shot a good number of his supporters. In such civil clashes between troops, the more persistent side always wins, because soldiers fight their comrades with extreme reluctance, and abandon the fight on the slightest pretext. Whoever begins retreating first may as well throw up the sponge, for he will be unable to rally his forces again. The person who evinced the greatest persistance in battle on May 24, the most determined and the most prepared to fight to the end, was the former Galatian teacher, Pavlos Skinas.

Thus General Dzaveyas lost the game. He barely succeeded in jumping in an automobile and speeding along the road to Kefissia. Later he gave himself up to the guard of the presidential palace at Tatoi, fully aware that here, at any rate, his life was not in danger.

N. Bogoslovsky

Pushkin the Critic

The diversity of Pushkin's work, and the range of his intellectual interests are extraordinary. Throughout his work there is evidence of his encyclopedic reading to which he brought a penetrating understanding and a retentive memory. He read several languages; he could refer to world geography like a travelled man although he never fulfilled his desire to visit foreign lands; his historical interests were both broad and deep; he was a passable mathematician; his political interests were lively, lively enough to keep him in almost continuous strained relations with governmental authorities, and detailed enough to include specifically economic questions; and all this coincident with a continuous concern with all the arts, but particularly with criticism and literary theory.

In Pushkin's library were volumes on statistics, philosophy, ethnography, the natural sciences, law, medicine, and other subjects alongside of hundreds of volumes on literature and history. This diversity found reflection in his work. "A cursory glance through Pushkin's works is sufficient," writes V. Brussov, "to reveal that his poems, tales, and plays reflected virtually all epochs and countries, at least those continued in or connected to modern culture."

"One immediately thinks of Goethe as a comparison; but Goethe enjoyed eighty years of life and nearly seventy years of work whereas the whole of Pushkin's life as a writer was squeezed into less than twenty-five years, including his first efforts at school." [1]

As a further reflection of this intellectual range we may note that Pushkin's literary career incorporated, one might say, several literary careers—he was a poet, novelist, playwright, historian, translator, critic and editor—and in both his poetry and his prose, he attempted, with outstanding success, an astonishing variety of forms.

What is the social significance of this diversity of Pushkin's work? It lies in the fact that it was both the most perfect expression of the culture of the nobility, and the best evidence of its dissolution. He broke the barriers of caste reserve. In his work are clear manifestations of his understanding that the process of the declassing of the nobility had begun. Pushkin, standing on the frontier of two cultures, witnessed the collapse of the Russian classical style created by the feudal nobility. Before his eyes the sentimentality in vogue at the end of the eighteenth century ripened and decayed. Early in the 1820's he became one of the founders of the Romantic style, to which the impending collapse of feudal economics supplied the social overtones. Finally, in the 1830's when the disintegration of feudal relations was visibly defined, Pushkin laid the foundation of realism in literature.

These were the main stages in early nineteenth century literature and Pushkin's importance, at each stage, was signal.

In Pushkin's work newly created forms worked into rich combinations with inherited forms. These did not, of course, come into being spontaneously. They were the product of Pushkin's strenuous and deliberate self development. His reading proceeded parallel with his writing—"Pushkin's friends

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[1] V. Brussov, *My Pushkin,* Moscow, 1929, p. 269.

are unanimous in stating that except during the first years after he left school no one devoted himself as intensely to his further education as Pushkin."

The history of nineteenth century Russian literature presents no other example of so thorough and creative an assimilation of world literature as his. Dante, Shakespeare, Voltaire, Goethe, Byron and other great creators are to be found transmuted in his work, along with writers now forgotten. His *Angelo,* considered by him his finest piece of writing, was derived from Shakespeare's *Measure for Measure;* while one of his earlier works was founded on the theme of *La Gastromie* by Joseph Berchou, a now forgotten French writer.

But, in addition to his purely creative writing Pushkin gave considerable attention to criticism and literary theory. This facet of Pushkin's many-sided genius has gone almost entirely unnoticed although, in its penetration and range, it is by no means of secondary importance in the catalog of his achievements.

Before proceeding to examine Pushkin's purely critical articles and notes we should like to draw attention to one feature of his work. No other Russian classical poet of the nineteenth century has commented so exhaustively on every aspect of literature, from the most abstract elements of literary theory to the most sordid realities of a literature pursued under the shadows of the tsarist police.

We find comments on the conflict of literary styles, an exposition of the principles of his own poetry, apt estimates of individual works of his own, even fragments of, and notes for, a history of world literature. We find opinions on an extraordinary number of writers ranging from classical authors to the magazine hacks of his own time. Through that he was instrumental in revising the literary reputations of most of his predecessors. All through his poems and narratives, imbedded in the text, are vivid, witty, concise and frequently profound commentaries upon books and writers. His correspondence, also, is filled with literary comment to such an extent, that excerpted and arranged into a continuity it can stand as a crystallization of his opinions on art, language, the sources of literature, and on the literature of the past and of the contemporary world.

However, Pushkin could not function directly as a critic within the limits of incidental comments in his creative writing and in his correspondence with his friends. He had a taste for critical writing but to satisfy it he needed a journal of his own since his literary estimates were in conflict with those of the majority of Russian magazines of the time. Censorship, his exile, and other causes stood in the way, and only for two brief periods could he write criticism freely. Both these opportunities he utilized to the full. It was in 1830 and 1836, when Pushkin controlled *The Literary Gazette* and *The Contemporary,* that he wrote the majority of his critical articles. For other periodicals Pushkin contributed only occasional criticism.

If one examines only the material printed during Pushkin's lifetime one would receive an incomplete impression of Pushkin as a critic. It is necessary to fill out the picture from the rich material left in unpublished or unfinished articles and in the notes and outlines left by him.

In 1823 during his exile in the South, he discussed a unique project with his friends—the publication of a *Revue des Revues* (or the Blunder Review). This would expose the innumerable blunders of the contemporary press and shame the Russian intelligentsia into attempts to raise its cultural standards. But Pushkin had to drop the idea. Conditions were too unfavorable.

The main hindrance was his exile the conditions of which prevented active

and continuous work. But there were other difficulties. Pushkin was not fully at one with his literary friends, some of whom did not share his tolerance and would have made the *Revue* an organ of literary sectarianism. Further, there were no active journalists in Pushkin's circle.

In 1826 he returned from his Southern exile and, the chief obstacle having been removed, took up again with his friends the publication of a magazine of their own. He urged them to break with other journals. "The point is that we must take hold of one magazine and rule absolutely and undividedly," he wrote. But he was soon compelled to admit: "We are too lazy to translate, copy, etc."

When in 1830 his friends received permission to publish *The Literary Gazette* Pushkin encouraged them in every way although he was disappointed in it when it appeared, disliking its pretentiousness and disapproving its failure to include political comment. *The Literary Gazette* had a short life. It was soon banned by the government, and though it was later resumed its second lease on life was equally brief. The ban only spurred Pushkin to other publication plans. He received permission to issue a new journal to be called *The Diary,* but he did not carry out the plan when he found that its political section would be subjected to official direction.

It was only during the last and most difficult year of his life that Pushkin finally obtained undivided control of a magazine. This was *The Contemporary* which patterned itself on the English *Reviews.*

What was it that drove Pushkin so persistently to acquire a literary journal of his own? His articles and letters contain the answer. He wanted passionately to raise Russian journalism and criticism to its highest potential level. He could publish his poems in any magazine; but to give effect to his literary ideas he needed an organ of his own.

"We have a literature but no criticism," he wrote, "our journalists throw the words *classic* and *romantic* at each others' heads, like old ladies calling rakes Voltaireans and Freemasons without having the slightest notion of Voltaire or Freemasonry."

The chaos in literary criticism he attributed to the fact that "literature in this country is not a need of the *people.* Writers become famous for other causes than their writing. The public takes little interest in them as writers. Readers form a limited *class,* moulded by the magazines which judge literature as they judge political economy, and political economy as they judge music—any old way, at second hand, without sufficient information and mainly from personal considerations."

Another factor, detrimental to Russian criticism, he pointed out, was the growing commercialism in Russian letters. He considered it one of the primary tasks of his literary circle to free literature from the influence of the commercial publishers. He wanted public opinion to be led not by the hucksters of the press but by writers meriting the respect and confidence of the public. Comparing the Russian press with that of Western Europe he pounted out that in Europe magazines were in the hands of first-rate writers, while in Russia, the press was monopolized by Bulgarin, an agent of the Secret police.

Still another factor was the class prejudice active in Russian literature, and one of Pushkin's motives in establishing a magazine of his own was to set an example to other writers whom he censored for their "aristocratic pride" which prevented them from engaging in controversy with journalists. He himself was above such class pride, and wrote: "What do we, in the peaceful republic of science, care for coats of arms? Before the laws of criticism representatives of all sections of society are equal."

Only for a single year did Pushkin have a publication of his own and even then he was hindered from a complete and systematic fulfillment of his program. Much of his critical work, therefore, reaches us rough and unfinished, and this must be borne in mind in considering his critical work as a whole.

Pushkin defined criticism in the following terms: "The science of revealing the achievements and shortcomings of works of art. It is based: 1) on a perfect comprehension of the rules guiding the creator and 2) on a profound study of models and a continuous observation of significant contemporary events." Further, he considered impartiality and love of art indispensable to criticism.

From this it will be noted that purely esthetic considerations played a predominating role in Pushkin's criticism. This however at no time shrank into narrow formalism. On the contrary many of his articles take issue with writers who were too exclusively concerned with esthetics. Commenting on the French Romantic School which cultivated form to excess, and made fetishes of meter, rhyme, the caesura, the use of archaisms and other literary accessories, Pushkin wrote: "This is all very well, but it brings to mind diapers and infants' playthings."

In fact the special value of Pushkin's criticism is its freedom from narrow estheticism. Referring to the comparative oblivion into which Malherbe and Ronsard had fallen Pushkin wrote: "These two talents exhausted their forces in a struggle to perfect their verse. Such is the fate which awaits writers who are more concerned with the mechanism of language, the external forms of words, than with ideas—the true life source of language . . ." In an article entitled "Dramatic Art" (1830) Pushkin used sociological data as a basis for literary conclusions. Comparing the freedom of the folk dramatist with the subservience of the court playwright he attributed to that the decline of dramatic language into bombast and the emptiness of ideas that characterized courtly drama.

Pushkin did not build up a complete system of criticism; he did not follow any one theory or school.[1] But, possessed of uncanny insight and supported by his wealth of literary experience, he was the first and best interpreter of many things in Russian and West European literature. It was with good reason that many contemporary professional critics pointed to his "brilliant understanding of Shakespeare." Many of Belinsky's literary judgments were anticipated by Pushkin.

When Pushkin's judgments of literature are examined, it must be reemphasized that they were not in any way systematized, but were scattered in outlines, rough notes and letters. But their general trend and final conclusions are, nevertheless, quite clear.

While not reprinting here Pushkin's numerous pronouncements on Russian literature, we will try to give a general idea of Pushkin's opinions of this literature, since he himself regarded it as closely connected with West European, especially with French and English literature.

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[1] Finding no models in contemporary Russian criticism, Pushkin often cited examples from Western Europe. In his articles and letters he refers to A. Schlegel, La Harpe, Lessing. His understanding of criticism took shape under the influence of Winkelmann. In his opinions of Shakespeare and of drama in general, Pushkin followed Schlegel and Guizot. Criticisms published in *Le Globe*, a French magazine, and the *Edinburgh Review* also influenced him to some extent. His criterion in judging articles of criticism was their degree of similarity to West European models.

Though he found the state of Russian literature to be a sorry one, he believed in its future, in its latent possibilities, and thought that "its time of maturity is not far distant."

In 1824, Pushkin wrote: "As yet we have neither literature nor books; all our knowledge, all our ideas from babyhood have been culled from foreign books; we are used to thinking in foreign languages (metaphysical terms are generally non-existent in Russian)."

While he noted the relatively high level of poetry in Russia during the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, Pushkin maintained that "science, philosophy and politics have not spoken Russian yet." Therefore, he called on the writers "to create metaphysical language," or "the language of thought."

One of the main causes of the distressing condition of Russian literature lay, in Pushkin's opinion, in its lack of traditions. "In entering upon the study of our literature," he said, "we should like to turn around and glance with mingled curiosity and awe at its ancient monuments. But, unfortunately, we have no old literature. . . . A few ballads and tales constantly renewed by verbal tradition have retained the half-effaced features of folklore. Beyond them lies dark dreariness, in the midst of which a solemn monument—*The Tale of Igor's Campaign*—rears its head. Our literature, like the Russian nobility, appeared suddenly in the eighteenth century without ancestors or pedigree."

Born in this sudden manner, literature was divorced from the thinking of the people and developed in an atmosphere of artificiality and imitation of West European literature.

Pushkin gave the foremost contemporary Russian poets their due, and watched with sympathy the first achievements of Russian prose. And yet in 1834 he planned a long article on *The Insignificance of Russian Literature*. Analyzing the causes which had brought it to this condition, Pushkin attributed it mainly to the practice of imitation, from which Russian literature was for a long time unable to free itself, and the traces of which were still visible in the 1830's. The imitation of French poetry he classed as particularly detrimental.

In the plan of this article, Pushkin outlined the stages of this influence as follows:

". . . The eighteenth century *allait son train*. Voltaire and the giants had not a single follower in Russia, but the futile pygmies, the mushrooms at the foot of oaks—Dorat, Florian, Guichard, Marmontel, Mme. Genlis—came to rule Russian literature. . . ." Pushkin also regretted that Sterne remained alien to Russian literature, "with the exception of Karamzin."[1] Shallow French literature *envahit tout*." Such, in Pushkin's opinion, was the main cause of the general insignificance of Russian literature.

In a cursory glance through Pushkin's comments on French literature, it may seem at first glance that he dealt only with the negative sides of its influence on Russia. But this is far from the case. His "Francophobia" can be understood only if the conditions both of his personal development and of contemporary Russian literature are taken into account.

Pushkin was educated in French. He was so accustomed to the language that sometimes he found it easier to express his ideas in French than in Russian.[2] At the age of eight, he began to write in French, comedies and

[1] One of the earliest Russian historians.

[2] At school he was nicknamed "The Frenchman" for his perfect knowledge of French.

epigrams about his teachers. In his father's library he read Molière, Voltaire, Parny, La Fontaine, and many others. His first published poem was an imitation of Boileau. All foreign writers he read in French translations. But by the 'twenties, Pushkin had already rid himself of his school ideas of French classical literature, and the traditional assimilation of French poetry after La Harpe was replaced by an attitude of rigorous criticism. Pushkin began to read extensively English, German and other literatures, in the original, and strove to introduce into Russian literature all that was valuable.

As founder of the new Russian literature, he realized very soon that only if it followed its independent road could Russian literature create genuine values. In the 'twenties Pushkin wrote: "I can't make up my mind to what literature to give my preference, but we have our own language; more courage!—Customs, history, songs, fairy tales, and so on." This was the basis for his insistent demand for the folk spirit in literature, which later developed and assumed quite definite forms.

But Pushkin by no means desired national seclusion, and did not plan to surround Russian literature with a Chinese wall. On the contrary, he was the first to forward the development of Russian literature in the spirit of Western Europe, and more than any other Russian writer assimilated the treasures of world literature, transplanting them to Russian soil. It was no accident that Pushkin in jest called himself "The Foreign Minister of the Russian Parnassus." Nor was French literature excluded; he popularized and assimilated for Russia the works of Voltaire, Parny, Mme. de Staël, Chateaubriand, A. Chenier, Musset, Sainte Beuve, Merimée, and many others. His close contact with French literature is well known, nor is there any need to prove how much he was attached to it to the end of his days.

But to overcome the absolute, one-sided influence of what were not the best but often even the worst representatives of French literature appeared to Pushkin a most important step in the struggle for the Russian language and Russian literature. Hence, a certain sharpness in his judgments upon certain things in French literature.

In 1832, Pushkin wrote: "English literature is beginning to exercise influence over ours. I think that it will be more beneficial than that of the timid and coquettish French poetry."

In his later development, Pushkin further abandoned French literature and its influence. In 1823, he openly called on Vyasemsky to "follow the Germans and the English—destroy these marquises of classical poetry." "The French disease," he remarked, "will kill our young literature."

In 1827, disappointed by the cold reception accorded *Boris Godunov* by the reading public, and convinced that his hopes of the triumph of genuinely free and sincere romanticism had not been realized, Pushkin ascribed this failure to the influence of French literature.

What did Pushkin consider the "French disease," and to what did he ascribe the strength of its influence on Russian literature? Replies to these questions may be found in an article entitled *On Russian Literature, With an Outline of the French,* in which he says: "The influence exercised on society by the French writers should be ascribed to their striving to adapt themselves to the tastes and opinions dominant among the public. . . . Not one of the French poets dared to be original, not one of them, like Milton, renounced contemporary fame. Racine ceased writing when he met with

failure in his *Phedre*. The public (about which Chamfort asked so amusingly: how many fools go to make up the public?), the frivolous, ignorant public was the only guide and educator of the writers. When the writers ceased to crowd the antechambers of nobles, they solicited the attention of the people, pandering to fashionable opinions or playing at independence and eccentricity, but with the sole purpose of winning money or reputation! They have not, nor did they ever have, a disinterested love of the beautiful. Wretched people!"

What was the result of subordination to the dominant tastes during the time of Louis XIV, when "writers were called to court and showered with pensions like nobles"? Racine, whom Pushkin considered a true poet, whose poetry was full of "harmony and precision"—Racine, as Pushkin put it, "was afraid of offending the haughty in his audience. Hence the bashful priggishness, the ridiculous inflation which has become proverbial, the habit of regarding people of superior circumstances with a certain servility and endowing them with a strange, inhuman manner of speaking. In Racine (for example) Nero does not say simply: '*Je serai caché dans ce cabinet,* but: *caché près de ces lieux je vous verrai, madame*' . . . We are used to it, it seems the natural thing to us. But one must admit that one does not find it in Shakespeare."

"Hence a polite, fine literature—brilliant, aristocratic, slightly coquettish, but all the more comprehensible at all the courts of Europe."

Even "Voltaire, the giant of his time," Pushkin thought, sought to ingratiate himself with the "crowd," filling the theaters with tragedies in which, not concerned with making the characters true to life nor with the legitimacy of the means used, he made his heroes express the rules of his philosophy, idle in the court of Frederick the Great, where his "laurels" were "spattered with mud." But "a writer's real place is his study. Independence and self-respect alone can raise us above the trifles of life and the storms of fate."

After the death of Voltaire, the "worn-out poetry became a plaything of wit." The poetry of drawing rooms and salons—petty, sickly sweet in its sentimentality—the French poetry of imitation, naturally found no sympathy in Pushkin's heart. The same applied to many contemporary French writers whom Pushkin regarded similarly as devotees of momentary success.

What nearly all the French poets of the younger generation lacked, in Pushkin's opinion, was a quality without which, Pushkin said, "no true poetry is possible. It is sincerity, inspiration. The French poet nowadays systematically says to himself: *Soyons religieux, soyons politiques,* and sometimes even *soyons extravagants;* and cold, routine outline, stiffness, constraint fill every work of his, which never sees the play of free feeling for a moment."

Pushkin's favorites among the new French writers were Chenier, Sainte-Beuve, Merimée and Musset.

In Pushkin's articles, notes and letters, most attention is devoted to French literature. It was natural that for him the literature of France should be the measure of comparison for the literatures of other countries. Especially characteristic are his opinions on English literature. He contrasted the profundity of Byron with the superficiality of Racine; he compared the plays of Shakespeare with the dramatic works of Racine, Voltaire and Molière; he held up the simplicity of the historical novels of Scott as an example to the "pedantic" de Vigny and the French tragedians; he compared Words-

worth and Coleridge—the "Lake Poets"—with Vade, the founder of the *poissard* genre, much to the advantage of the two former.

It will be noted in all this that, next to French literature, Pushkin was most influenced in his own development by the literature of England. At first, Pushkin read English poetry and prose in French translations. Some notes for a translation of Byron's *Giaour* into French, dated 1820 and 1821, have been preserved. Pushkin evidently planned to use them for a verse translation.

Although it was not until 1827-28 that Pushkin acquired a fluent knowledge of English, he followed English literature, in the meanwhile, in French translations. Most of the books in his library were in foreign languages, and many works of English writers, both in the original English and in French translations, have been preserved. These include works by Byron, Bowles, Bulwer, Wordsworth, Keats, Coleridge, Cornwall, Crabbe, Milman, Milton, Moore, Richardson, Scott, Southey, Sterne, Shakespeare, Shelley, Fielding and many others. A complete enumeration would take up too much space, but it must be stated that the library shows Pushkin's remarkable knowledge of English literature and there is concrete evidence in his writing that it was of great importance in the development of Pushkin's literary opinions, in his emancipation from the influence of French literature and his evolution to realism.

Pushkin also attentively followed the English periodicals, subscribing to the *Edinburgh Review* and the *Quarterly Review*. In 1855, a certain critic pointed out that Pushkin's minor articles and notes showed the traces of his acquaintance with the critical articles of Jeffrey, the sarcastic reviews of Smith and the tirades of Coleridge.

The first poet to draw Pushkin away from the schemes and rules of the French classical school was Byron. In 1822, when Pushkin wrote that English literature was beginning to influence the literature of Russia, he was deeply affected by Byron's poetry.

His first acquaintance with it was made in 1820, when his knowledge of English was poor and when he evidently read the English text parallel with the French translation.

At the time of writing his earlier narrative poems, Pushkin, as he himself confessed, "was crazy about Byron." He thought Byron's poetry "titanic and dark," and went into raptures over the *Prisoner of Chillon*. Comparing Racine's *Phedre* with Byron's *Parisina*, he expressed preference for the latter. He himself pointed out the dependence of Chapter I of his *Eugene Onegin* on Byron's *Beppo*. But the "Byronic" period in Pushkin's work passed fairly soon. Beginning in 1824, Pushkin's attitude towards Byron entered the stage of sober analysis and discussion of the merits and shortcomings of the latter's poetry. "Byron's genius declined with his youth. In his tragedies, including even *Cain*, he is no longer the flaming 'Demon' who created *Giaour* and *Childe Harold*. . . .

"His poetry changed visibly. He was created wrong side out; there was no gradualness about him. He suddenly matured and raised his voice—sang and became silent, and his first notes never returned." Pushkin's passion for Byron was intense but short-lived. In the middle of the 'twenties, Byron receded in his consciousness to make place for Shakespeare. Comparing the two, Pushkin at this time already found unnatural the laconicism and "unceasing fury" of Byron's heroes. He carefully analyzed Byron's methods, showing an extraordinarily sensitive understanding of the defective nature of Byron's dramatic characterization. He reached the conclusion that Byron never planned his works. "A few interconnected scenes . . . sufficed for his swarm

of ideas, feelings and pictures. From the dramatic point of view his poems were worthless." The reason, in his opinion, was that Byron had understood only a single character. "He cast a one-sided glance at the world and human nature, then turned away from them and descended into himself."

That was how the mature Pushkin regarded the poetry of Byron.

Nevertheless, his interest in Byron's poetry and personality never ceased. In 1835, he even began a biography of Byron, which, however, he did not finish.

Before starting on his historical tragedy *Boris Godunov* in 1824, Pushkin read large quantities of West European literature on dramatic art. At the same time he engaged in a systematic and comprehensive study of Shakespeare. It was during this preparatory period that he wrote his comments on the drama.

Boris Gudunov was planned as a contrast to the aristocratic drama. What were the characteristics of the aristocratic tragedies presented by the court theaters, of what Pushkin called the "drama ot palaces"? Coquetry, refinement, conventionality of language, avoidance of verisimilitude in character and situation, absence of simplicity and realism. The structure of this drama was subject to the obsolete "classical" unities. A profound study of the great models of world playwriting, especially of the works of Shakespeare, showed Pushkin genuine drama. In the struggle against the aristocratic theater, Pushkin found Shakespeare's methods the most effective weapon. With their help he attained freedom from "rules" and "unities."

In his letters and articles, written at that time, Pushkin repeatedly pointed out where he followed Shakespeare in writing *Boris Godunov*. "Firmly convinced that the obsolete forms of our theater are in need of reform, I arranged my tragedy according to the system of our father Shakespeare, and sacrificed two of the classic unities upon his altar and barely retained the third. Besides these three, there is another unity, which the French critics do not even mention, (it probably never occurs to them that its necessity might be contested); unity of style, is the fourth essential condition of French tragedy, from which the Spanish, German and English theaters have been delivered. You see that I also have followed this tempting example."

In another outline of a preface for *Boris Godunov,* Pushkin writes:

"A study of Shakespeare, Karamzin and our old chronicles gave me the idea of presenting for the theater one of the most dramatic epochs in recent history. Unhampered by any other influences, I imitated Shakespeare in his broad and free delineation of character, in his simple and careless portrayal of types . . . " In other articles Pushkin also contrasts the broad and free form of Shakespeare's histories and tragedies to the timid pedantry and pomposity of the court theater pandering to the tastes of its "arrogant spectators." The study of Shakespeare led Pushkin to the idea that the essence and content of drama are: "Man and the people. The fate of man and the fate of the people. . . . What does a dramatic writer require? Philosophy, dispassionateness, the historian's conception of the state, intuition, vividness of imagination, freedom from prejudice. Freedom."

The study of Shakespeare finally confirmed his conviction that the "unities," which were still considered the basic elements of dramatic art, were unnecessary and incompatible with the very nature of drama. "Verisimilitude of situation and truth of dialogue—those are the real laws of tragedy. . . . Read Shakespeare! (that is my refrain!) . . . Every man loves, hates, sorrows,

rejoices, but each in his own manner. . . . Read Shakespeare! . . . What a minor tragedian Byron is compared to him! Byron, who achieved only one character all in all—(his own), and has divided it among his heroes, endowing one with his pride, another with his hate, a third with his melancholy, and in this fashion out of a single complete gloomy and vigorous character he created several insignificant characters. That is not tragedy."

As Shakespeare in drama, so Scott in prose was studied by Pushkin and helped in his development to realism. Pushkin thought "the effect of Scott's work was felt in all branches of contemporary literature," and himself made every use of the "Scotch wizard's" experience in the sphere of the historical novel and of tales of contemporary life ("portrayal of the prosaic details of life," "simplicity of language and absence of all solemnity and theatrical language even under the most moving circumstances").

This strong urge for realism and simplicity in language, and for poetry unencumbered by conventional versification, turned Pushkin during the 'thirties towards the poets of the English "Lake School"—Wordsworth, Coleridge and Southey, whose works "are full of profound feeling and poetic images expressed in the language of the honest common people."

He made a free translation of a Wordsworth sonnet and a prose translation of *The Excursion.*

Special note should be made of Pushkin's interest in Barry Cornwall. Students of Pushkin sometimes call Cornwall "Pushkin's last literary interlocutor," for on the day of his fatal duel Pushkin sent A. Ishimova, a translator, a book of poems by Milman, Bowles, Wilson and Barry Cornwall, marking five dramatic scenes by Cornwall—*The Falcon, Lodovico Sforza, Love Cured by Kindness, The Way to Conquer,* and *Amelia Wentworth*—which he wanted to print in *The Contemporary.* The scenes were translated by Ishimova after Pushkin's death.

Pushkin's own dramatic scenes *(Mozart and Salieri, The Miser Knight, The Stone Guest* and others) are in many respects similar to those of Cornwall.

In this book of poems, Pushkin also found Wilson's play *The City of the Plague*, which formed the basis of his *Feast During the Plague.*

It is not possible or necessary here to give a complete enumeration of Pushkin's ties with English literature. Our purpose is to show how numerous and how strong they were and how beneficial to his development, a fact constantly acknowledged in his letters and articles.

Pushkin's notes on Chaucer, Fielding and Sterne, though cursory and brief, show that he appreciated all these authors. The only representative of English literature who provoked his unconditional disapproval was Thomas Moore, whom he styled "An awkward imitator of hideous Oriental imagination."

Few other West European, and few ancient writers are mentioned in Pushkin's articles and letters. With ancient literature he had made a thorough acquaintance at school.[1] Pushkin's lyrics show vivid traces of the influence of the "majestic ancients." Though his critical prose contains but few mentions of ancient writers, his poetry abounds in interesting opinions of Anacreon, Virgil, Ovid and others.

Among the German poets, Pushkin most highly regarded Goethe, "that

[1] As a matter of fact, he might have had some previous idea of it owing to his acquaintance with the French literature of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. The study of Latin at school extended his knowledge of it.

titan of romantic poetry." He considered *Faust* "the Iliad of modern times."

The bucolic Gessner with his mannerisms and the heavy, pompous Klopstock he rejected. But Hebel and Bürger, who strove "to bring the style of poetry to a noble simplicity," attracted him.

As regards Italian and Spanish literature, Pushkin viewed them against the background of French literature. He noted that "during the Middle Ages, when poetry in France was in its infancy," "certain branches of romantic poetry were in full bloom in Italy and Spain. Italy adopted the epic, while semi-African Spain took possession of the tragedy and the novel." In this literature of the two countries, Pushkin saw the borderline between ancient and modern poetry. He saw mediaeval ("Gothic") romanticism as the beginning of the new European literature independent of the influence of ancient, classical models. One of the earliest representatives of this new European "romantic" literature was Dante, followed by M. Baiardo and Ariosto, the sources of whose poetry lay in folk songs and legends.

The question of romanticism and "folk literature" (partly interconnected at the time) were the chief theoretical questions engaging the attention of contemporary critics. Pushkin, who had no leaning towards abstract theoretical discussions, considered that "only a very vague idea of romanticism exists in our country."

He himself at first understood the word "romanticism" as having a very broad meaning, believing that "the romantic school means the absence of all rules." The romantic "accepts only inspiration as his rule." He classed as romantic whatever he regarded as the opposite of dead forms and the elaborate schemes and canons of the "orthodoxy of Parnassus," *i.e.*, classicism. Though Pushkin never renounced genuine classicism ("the immortal creations of the majestic ancients"), he perfectly understood that every age needs its own literature and that the "regularity and perfection" of classical poetry, and, first and foremost, "the pale lists of its imitators," were bound to become boring, that "the weary appetite needs new and strong sensations and seeks them in the turbid but seething sources of new folk poetry."

Such was Pushkin's vague and hazy idea of romanticism in 1825 when he was writing *Boris Godunov*. Nowadays, the term is used to describe Pushkin's early narrative poems, written during the years when he by his own admission, "was crazy about Byron." But Pushkin himself repeatedly and persistently describes as a "genuinely romantic tragedy" his *Boris Godunov,* written during the period when he had definitely broken with Byron.

He considered *Boris Godunov* a genuinely romantic tragedy, understanding by that "the destruction of the unities, the introduction of prose into drama, and the application of the folk-laws of Shakespeare's drama," "as distinct from the romanticism by which is meant Lamartine" (*i.e.*, in other words, "by which are meant works bearing the stamp of dreaminess or despondency"). *Boris Godunov,* modelled "on the system of Shakespeare" with "broad and free delineation of character"—a delineation most complex and profound—bears within itself the seeds of genuine artistic realism. Thus, Pushkin's conception of "genuine romanticism" rather characterizes, both externally and essentially what was later named realism, although that is a term met in none of his writings.

Opposed to all dogma and representing broad literary views, Pushkin classed himself neither with the "classicists" nor with the "romantics": "I confess that I am a skeptic in literature (to say the least) and that all sects of Parnassus are the same to me, for each has its advantages and disadvantages. Is it then possible to be a true poet without being either a prejudiced

classicist or a fanatic romantic? Must forms and customs inevitably enslave the literary conscience?"

But Pushkin's quest of "genuine romanticism" and his striving for the "beliefs and legends of the people" confronted him with the question of the "folk spirit in literature." Rejecting a number of naive and primitive definitions of the folk spirit as the choice of subjects from the country's history or the use of "folk" words, Pushkin pointed out that such definitions would deprive the works of Shapespeare, Lope de Vega, and Calderon of the folk spirit, for "those of Shakespeare's tragedies most imbued with this spirit were borrowed by him from Italian stories," while Calderon and Lope de Vega set the action of their tragedies in all parts of the world. What, then, was true folk spirit in poetry? "There is a way of thinking and feeling, a multitude of customs, beliefs and habits belonging only to some one people." Poetry that reflects the specific features of the spirit of a people formed under the influence of "climate, political institutions and faith" has captured, in Pushkin's opinion, the folk spirit.

It is very easy now to introduce corrections into these reflections and point to the genuine and basic causes of the "specific physiognomy" of every people. But it should not be forgotten that for that time Pushkin's definition of the folk spirit was an enormous step forward, and that it coincides almost exactly with the definition given by Belinsky many years later, when he wrote that "literature must be a symbol of the inner life of the people." It was from this point of view that Pushkin, on the one hand, recognized the presence of "a great folk spirit" in the works of Racine, though he took "the subjects of his tragedies from Roman, Greek and European history," and on the other, refused to admit its presence in the writings of Ozerov, who imagined that in order to create a folk tragedy it was enough to choose a subject from the history of the country.

It is very interesting to note that Pushkin regarded everything "including the most charming poetry," in *Yermak,* the tragedy by A. S. Khomyakov, later the leader of the Slavophiles, as "alien to our spirit and customs."

In his splendid article on dramatic art, Pushkin wrote that until radical changes take place in social conditions, no genuine folk drama could come into being: "Can our tragedies, modeled on the tragedies of Racine, abandon their aristocratic habits (their dialogue—slow, pompous and decorous)? How are they to portray the crude candor of popular passions and the free judgments of the people—how are they suddenly to abandon servility, how are they to do without the rules to which they are accustomed—where are they to learn a language that the people can understand, where to search out the passions of these people, the strings of their hearts—where will they find response—in a word, where is the public, the spectators? Instead of a public they will be caught in the same narrow, limited circle, and will offend its haughty customs; instead of response, echo and applause they will hear petty cavilling criticism. They will be faced with insuperable obstacles. That they might set up their stage, the customs, habits and ideas of whole centuries would have to be overthrown and changed. . . ."

Thus Pushkin saw far ahead. The demand for genuine folk spirit runs like a thread through all the comments on world literature written by Pushkin in his maturity. It was this striving toward the folk spirit that caused him to turn to the "living source of popular speech." Compensating the shortcomings of his "cursed education," he himself studied and called upon young writers to study folk tales, sayings and legends, which conceal so much true poetry. He considered that "the language of the common people (who do not read

foreign books and, thank God, do not express their ideas in French) deserves profound investigation." In this matter, Pushkin had to engage in tilts with the critics, who were more concerned with "parquet ladies," "society poetry," and "good manners," and feared "common" and "crude" expressions like the plague. He strove to simplify not only language and style, but also the genres of writing. In this respect, Pushkin's defence of light-hearted poetry, beginning with Boccacio's *Decameron* and Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales* and ending with Voltaire's *Virgin* and Maikov's *Yelissei* is particularly characteristic. Pushkin regarded poetry as "an ideal," and not "a moral admonition," or "a pedagogic occupation." All things pretentious, affected, artificial—so characteristic of drawing-room poetry—were passionately and violently attacked by Pushkin.

"Not every judge of art is a genius, but every genius is a born judge. The proof of his rules is in himself," said Lessing. Pushkin's opinions of literature and his theoretical strivings are especially interesting because they are indissolubly bound up with his creative work. They form the basis of his poesy. The demands which he made on poetry, prose and drama he himself strove to fulfill. If we reflect on the lines in the rough notes made by Pushkin in 1826 in reply to an article by Küchelbäcker entitled *The Direction of Our Poetry,* we shall see that they, as it were, contained a program of his subsequent development: "the critic (Küchelbäcker) confuses inspiration with rapture. Inspiration is the mood in which the soul can most readily receive impressions, form ideas, and therefore explain them. Inspiration is necessary in geometry as much as in poetry. Rapture excludes calm—an essential condition for the creation of all that is beautiful. Rapture does not assume the strength of a mind which looks at parts in their relation to the whole. Rapture is short-lived and inconstant, and is, therefore, incapable of producing great, genuine perfection. Homer is immeasurably above Pindar. The place of the ode is on the lower steps of art, for it excludes constant labor, without which nothing can be truly great. Tragedy, comedy, satire all call for more creative work, fantasy, imagination, more knowledge of nature than the ode. Nor can the ode have a plan. The plan of Dante's *Inferno* alone is a fruit of high genius! What plan is there in the odes of Pindar? What plan in *The Waterfall,* Derzhavin's finest work?"

Sober reflection and calm—the conditon of all that is beautiful—persistent creative work, the proportion of the parts to the whole, a strict plan at the basis of every work of importance—all these marked Pushkin's mature works.

Let us recall what Pushkin said of prose when Russia had as yet no genuine prose: "What shall we say of our writers who, in stating the most ordinary things, think to enliven their childish prose with decorations and flabby metaphors? These people will never say 'friendship' without adding 'the sacred feeling, whose noble flame,' etc. Brevity and precision—such are the foremost merits of prose. It needs ideas and more ideas—without them fine expressions are nothing" (1822). Need we add that the distinctive features of Pushkin's prose, which came into being later, were precison, brevity and lucidity?

Pushkin was the first to put forward as a condition for historical drama "the broad and free delineation of character" and the utmost objectivity, to which all striving for momentary success or the approval of the readers was foreign. A dramatic poet, Pushkin said, must be "as impartial as fate." "It is not he, nor his political way of thinking, nor his secret or obvious partiality that must speak in the tragedy, but the people of the past, their minds and

prejudices. It is not for him to excuse, accuse or prompt. His work is to revive the past in its true form."

Defending poetry against the hackneyed morals of the time, he rejected the idea, put forward by the "heavy pedants," that "the beautiful is the imitation of what is fine in nature, and the chief merit of art is utility." "In its free, higher sense poetry must have no other aim than itself," Pushkin said in condemning the attempts of the contemporary French poets to subordinate poetry to religion or politics.

However, it would be altogether false to think that Pushkin did not realize the need for a living connection between the artist and reality. In the statement quoted above, he only put forward more pointedly his views on art as against the demands for naked moralizing. Finding the purpose of poetry to lie within itself, he wrote: "It would do no harm for our poets to have a scope of ideas much wider than they are usually possessed of. Our literature will not get very far on reminiscences of past youth." "The enlightenment of our age demands serious objects of contemplation, food for the mind, which can no longer be satisfied with the brilliant play of harmony and imagination." This is far indeed from the miserable theory of "art for art's sake"—as far, for instance, as the idea of Romain Rolland that "poetry must be free in the sphere of pure thought and rich fancy" (*Pravda* 1934, No. 156) "The Creative Work of a Writer." "In the works of the greatest poets," says Romain Rolland, "there are two parts: one connected with the evolution of their time, and the other, much more profound, that is above the needs and desires of their age. This source continues to feed new ages. It has perpetuated their fame and the fame of their peoples." It is as care for this source that we must regard Pushkin's words about the free and higher sense of poetry.

One characteristic of Pushkin as a critic immediately attracts attention: he remained a poet even in the sphere of the "dreary duties of a bibliographer." In 1830, I. Kirovsky wrote his father concerning *The Literary Gazette:* "The majority of articles will be written by Pushkin, who has found how to be as extraordinary, as much a poet in criticism and in simple notices of books as in his poetry." As proof of this we may take articles such *as The Last Kinsman of Joan of Arc, The Notes of Samson, On Russian Literature With an Outline of the French.* And, indeed, in his articles Pushkin frequently replaced a detailed description of a whole epoch and a literary movement by a few live images: "Society is ripe for a great destruction. All is yet calm. But the voice of young Mirabeau already roars dully like a distant storm from the deep dungeons in which he roams. Voltaire's death does not quell the torrent. Beaumarchais drags on to the stage, unclothes and tortures whatever is thought untouched as yet . . . ." "In the palace, drama changed, it lowered its voice. There was no longer any need for it to shout. It discarded the mark of exaggeration which was necessary in the market place, but an encumbrance indoors. It became simpler and more natural." Many more similar examples could be quoted.

Again, we recognize the artist in the critic in the unexcelled brevity of Pushkin's opinions. In setting down some thought he never piles up proofs. It sounds like an aphorism; where other critics would need whole pages, for Pushkin a few lines suffice: "The contrast of characters is not art at all, but the hackneyed spring of French tragedies. . . ." "Young writers generally do not know how to describe physical passion; their heroes always 'shudder,' 'roar with laughter,' 'gnash their teeth in fury.' This is all as funny as melo-

drama." "Genuine good taste consists not in unreserved rejection of a certain word or phrase, but in a feeling of propriety and suitability." "There are two kinds of nonsense: one arises when there are not enough thoughts and feelings, which are then replaced by words, and the other when there is much thought and feeling and not enough words to express them."

Even Pushkin's characterizations of individual writers usually consisted of two or three touches, with hardly any argument: "Derzhavin's idol was one-quarter gold and three-quarters lead." "Batyushkov did the same for the Russian language as Petrarch for the Italian." "Lavine struggles in the old nets of Aristotle. He is a pupil of the tragedian Voltaire and not of nature."

One more feature reveals the artist in Pushkin the critic: his attention to all the details of the work, the mechanism of the verse, the epithets, the metaphors, the sound of the line, the descriptions, the characters of the heroes, the outline of the plot, the knotting of the intrigue—in a word, to all that goes to make up the quality of the work. His letter commenting upon *Woe to the Wise,* his analysis of Vyasemsky's *Narva Waterfall,* his notes on Batyushkov's *Efforts* are enough to show the fine and exacting procession of the craftsman skilled in all the secrets of his trade with which Pushkin judged literature. That is why Pushkin's contemporaries so highly valued his gift of criticism. In his *Biographical and Literary Note on Pushkin* (*Le Globe,* 1837, No. 35) A. Mickiewicz wrote that Pushkin "was gifted with an extraordinary memory, a sure judgement, and fine and excellent taste." Vyasemsky described him as a keen, strict and lucid critic, whose approval was the best reward, adding: "For me his judgement was most significant and valuable." The poet Zhukovsky made it a habit to correct every line that Pushkin had not remembered, for he considered that enough to brand the line as poor. In 1837 Gogol confessed that he "did not write a single line without trying to imagine what Pushkin would say, what he would notice, what he would laugh at, what he would give his indestructible and eternal approval to. That was the only thing that occupied and inspired me."

But Pushkin's ability as a critic did not fully develop; it enjoyed no extensive influence. The failures of Pushkin the critic were closely connected with those of Pushkin the journalist, and as journalist and publisher Pushkin met obstacles everywhere and at all times.

From Pushkin's Notes and Articles

1822

From a letter to Vyasemsky, January 2

.... Zhukovsky infuriates me—what did he like about Moore? He is an awkward imitator of a hideous Oriental imagination. The whole of *Lalla Rookh* is not worth ten lines of *Tristram Shandy*.

From a letter to N. I. Gnedich, June 27

.... English literature is beginning to have an influence on Russian. I believe it will be more beneficial than the influence of French poetry, which is prim and finicky.

1823

From a letter to P. A. Vyasemsky, August 19

.... chide the Russians and the Russian public—follow the Germans and the English—destroy those marquises of classical poetry....

From a letter to P. A. Vyasemsky, end of June

.... you were sad about Byron, but I rejoice in his death as a lofty subject for poetry. Byron's genius declined with his youth. In his tragedies, including even *Cain*, he is no longer the flaming demon who created *Giaour* and *Childe Harold*. The first two cantos of *Don Juan* are above the rest. His poetry changed visibly. He was created wrong side out; there was no gradualness about him. He suddenly matured and raised his voice—sang and became silent, and his first notes never returned. After the fourth canto of *Childe Harold*, we no longer hear Byron; some other poet with great human talent wrote in his stead.

From a letter to L. S. Pushkin, first half of November

.... Verses, verses, verses. Conversations of Byron! Walter Scott! That is spiritual food....

From a letter to L. S. Pushkin, middle of November

.... I am reading *Clarissa*, what an impossibly dull and stupid woman.

1825

From the article "On Mr. Lamonte's Preface to The Translation of I. A. Krylov's Fables"

... Who diverted French poetry from the forms of classical antiquity? Who powdered and rouged Racine's Melpomene and even the severe muse of old Corneille? The courtiers of Louis XIV. Who put a cold layer of politeness and wit over all the works of seventeenth century writers? The society of Mesdames du Deffand, Boufflers and d'Epinay, very charming and cultured women. But Milton and Dante did not write for the *benevolent smile of the fair sex*.

From a letter to A. A. Bestuzhev, March 24

.... You compare the first chapter (of *Eugene Onegin, ed.*) with Don Juan. No one has more respect than I have for *Don Juan* (the first five cantos —I haven't read the others), but it has nothing in common with Onegin.

Portrait of Byron—Drawing by Pushkin

From a letter to P. A. Vyasemsky, middle of April

. . . . Do you know why I don't like Moore? Because he is excessively oriental. He gives a childish and distorted imitation of the childishness and distortion of Saadi, Hafiz and Mahomed. A European must retain a European's taste and outlook even when singing of oriental luxury. That's why Byron is so splendid in *Giaour,* in *The Bride of Abydos,* etc. . . .

To N. N. Rayevsky, (from rough notes) translation from the French, end of July

. . . . At present I am completely alone: the only neighbor with whom I visited has gone to Riga and I literally have no other company but my old nurse and my tragedy; the latter is progressing and I am satisfied with it. In writing it I thought about tragedy in general (and if I undertook to write a preface, it would be interesting). This is, perhaps, the form of poetry which is the least properly understood. The classics and the romantics all of them based their rules upon verisimilitude, but this verisimilitude is precisely incompatible with the very nature of drama. Not to speak of time, etc., what verisimilitude can there possibly be in a hall divided into two halves, one half of which is occupied by two thousand people who are presumably invisible

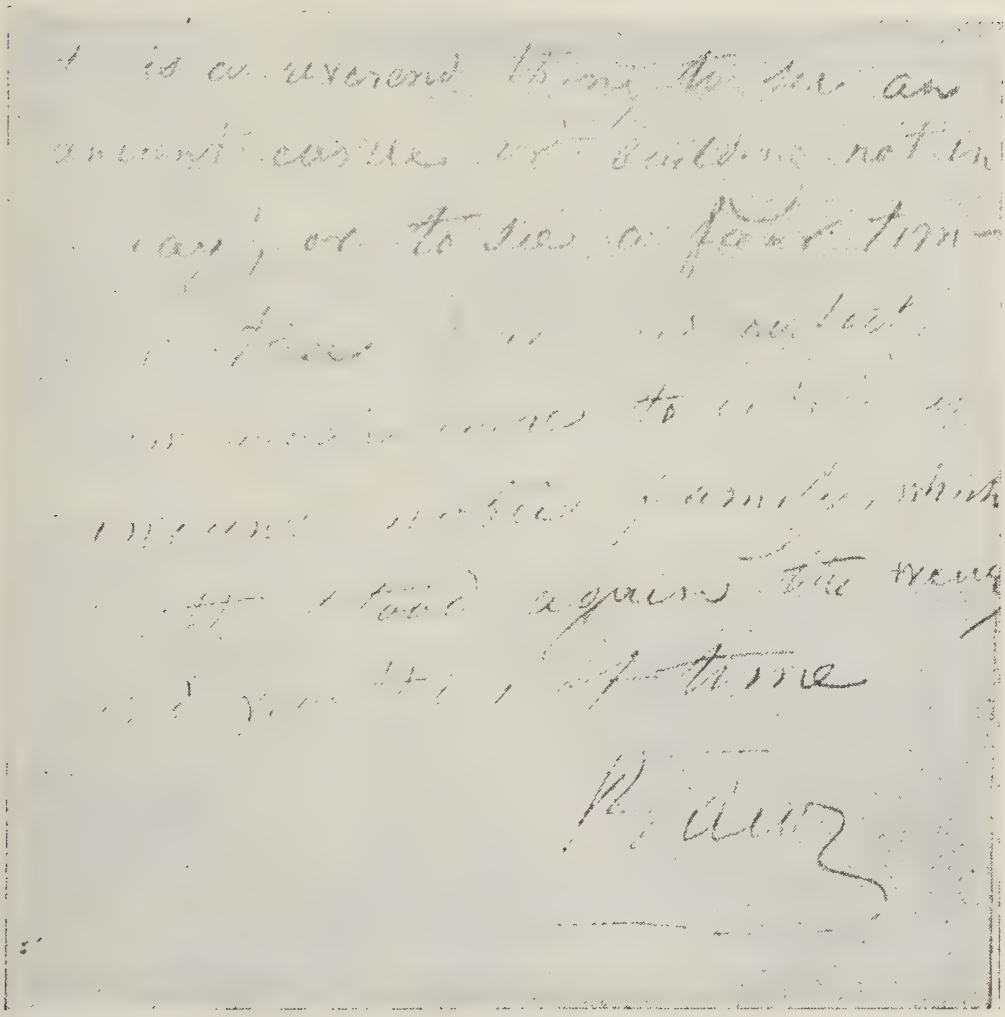
to those who are on the stage. 2) Language, for instance, Laharpe's Philoctetus, having heard Pirra's tirade, says in the purest French: "Behold, I hear the melodious sounds of the Greek speech," etc. Remember the ancients, their tragic masks, their double faces—is not all of this (incidentally) conventional unrealty? 3) Time, place, etc., etc. The real geniuses of tragedy (Shakespeare, Corneille) never worried about verisimilitude. See how boldly Corneille drew (adapted) the *Cid*. But do you agree with the observance of the rule of twenty-four hours? Excuse me, he encumbered it with the events of four whole months. But there is nothing I consider (sillier) more useless than minor corrections to the accepted rules. Alfieri fully understood how silly "asides" are; he destroys them, but as opposed to this, lengthens the monologues and thinks that has wrought a whole revolution in the system of tragedy (as if a monologue is more real than "asides"). What childishness! Verisimilitude of situation and truth in dialogue—these are the real laws of tragedy (Shakespeare took in passions, Goethe morals). I have read neither Calderon nor Vega, but, what a man—this Shakespeare! Overwhelming! What a minor tragedian Byron is compared to him! Byron, who achieved only one character all in all—(namely his own) (the women have no character—they have passion and youth—that is why it is so easy to draw them), and thus, Byron (in tragedy) distributed various traits of his own character among his heroes: he endowed one with his pride, another with his hatred, a third with his melancholy, etc. And in this fashion out of a single complete, gloomy and vigorous character he created several insignificant characters—that is not tragedy.

(Every man loves, hates, sorrows, rejoices, but each in his own manner —read Shakespeare). There exists one other tendency (a tendency worthy of the novel of A. Lafontaine): having created some character out of his imagination, the writer tries to place the imprint of that character on everything which he puts into his mouth, even where it would be intrusive. (It can even become pedantry as in the case of the sailors in Fielding's old novel.) The conspirator says "give me a drink," like a conspirator—and this is simply ludicrous. Remember the "furious" Byron (ha pagato![1]). The monotony, the exaggerated laconism, the perpetual fury—is all that natural? (Look at Shakespeare.) Hence, the awkwardness and diffidence of the dialogue. Read Shapespeare (this is my refrain)! He is never afraid of compromising his character—he makes him talk with complete living spontaneity. For he is confident that at the proper time and in the right place he will make that character find the language in keeping with his personality.

From a letter to P. A. Vyasemsky, around September 12

What a miracle *Don Juan* is! I only know the first five cantos. After I read the first two, I promptly told Rayevsky that this was Byron's *chef de œuvre*, and I was very glad later when I saw that Walter Scott shared my opinion. I need English—and this is one of the disadvantages of my exile: I have no means of studying, it is high time, however. Shame on my persecutors! And I, like A. Chenier, can strike my head and say: *il y avait quelque chose la* . . . excuse this poetic boasting and prosy spleen. . . . Why do you regret the loss of Byron's memoirs? To hell with them! Thank God, they are lost. He confessed in his verses involuntarily, swept away by his delight with poetry. In cold-blooded prose he would have lied and schemed, trying now to shine

[1] He has paid!



Extract from Bacon, jotted down by Pushkin

with sincerity and now to besmirch his enemies. They would have exposed him the way they exposed Rousseau—and then anger and slander would again have triumphed. Leave curiosity to the crowd and side with genius. Moore's deed [1] is better than his *Lalla Rookh* (from the poetic standpoint). We know Byron enough. We saw him on the throne of glory, we saw him in the torments of a great soul. We saw him in his grave amid renascent Greece. Why should you wish to see him exposed to public justice? The mob reads confessions, memoirs, etc., with avidity because in its vulgarity it rejoices in the debasement of the exalted, the weaknesses of the mighty. It is delighted by the discovery of all foulness. *He is as mean as we are; he is as foul as we are!* You lie, you swine, he is both mean and foul, but not the way you are—no, differently! It is interesting and pleasant to write one's memoirs. You don't love anyone and don't know anyone as well as you do

[1] Reference is made to Moore's destruction of Byron's *Memoirs*.

yourself. An inexhaustible subject. But a difficult one. It is possible to keep from lying; to be sincere is physically impossible. The pen sometimes stops—as though at a run before a precipice—on what an outsider would read with indifference. To defy people's condemnation is not difficult; to defy self-condemnation is impossible.

1826

From the article: "On Nationality in Literature"

.... It is difficult to deny Shakespeare in his *Othello, Hamlet, Measure for Measure,* etc., the merits of genuine folk quality; Vega and Calderon are continually shifting to all corners of the globe, borrow the subjects of their tragedies from Italian legends and from French, etc.; Ariosto sings of Charlemagne, the French knights and Chinese beauty; Racine's tragedies were taken by him from ancient history. It is difficult, however, to deny any of these writers the merits of a great folk character.

From the article, "Excerpts from Letters, Thoughts and Comments"

Byron said that he would never undertake to describe a land that he had not seen with his own eyes. However, in *Don Juan* he describes Russia, and several transgressions against the locality are to be found. For instance, he speaks of the mud of the streets of Izmail, Don Juan travels to Petersburg in a covered sleigh, an uncomfortable conveyance without springs over a bad rocky road. Izmail was taken in winter in a bitter frost. The enemy corpses on the streets were covered with snow and the victor rode over them surprised at the neatness of the city: "For god's sake, how clean it is." A winter sleigh is not bumpy, and a winter road is not rocky. There are other mistakes that are more important. Byron read a lot and asked a lot about Russia. He apparently liked Russia and was familiar with her recent history. In his poems he often speaks of Russia and our customs. Sardanapalus' dream recalls the well-known political cartoon published in Warsaw during the Suvorov wars. It pictured Peter the Great in the guise of Nimrod. In 1813 Byron intended to go to the Caucasus through Persia.

From the material used in the "Excerpts from Letters, Thoughts and Comments"

Sterne says that the most vivid of our enjoyments ends in an almost painful shudder. Too unbearably observant! If he had kept it to himself, many would never have noticed it.

From the article "There is a Boldness of Distinction"

There is a boldness of distinction.... Calderon calls lightning the fiery tongues of the heavens addressing the earth. Milton says that the infernal flames only made it possible to distinguish eternal darkness....

We find these expressions bold because they give us a clear idea and a poetic image in a forceful and unusual manner. The French to this very day are still amazed by Racine's boldness in using the word *pave*, pavement: *Et baiser avec respect le pave de tes temples.*

And Delille is proud of the fact that he used the word *vache*. How contemptible is the literature that stoops to such trivial and wilful criticism—how pitiful is the face of poets (whatever their merits may be), if they are forced to brag over such victories against the prejudices of taste!

There is a loftier boldness, the boldness of invention, creation, where an

extensive plan is contained by the creative thought. This is the boldness of Shakespeare, Dante, Milton, Goethe in *Faust,* Molière in *Tartuffe,* Byron in *Childe Harold.*

About Walter Scott's novels

The most delightful thing about Walter Scott's novels is the fact that we become acquainted with the past not with the embellishment of the French tragedies, not with the priggishness of sentimental novels, not with the *dignité* of history, but contemporarily, in a domestic form—*Ce qui me degoute c'est ce que* ....[1] Here on the contrary; *ce qui nous charme dans le roman historique—c'est absolutment ce que nous voyons*[2]—Shakespeare, Goethe, Walter Scott have no servile predilection for kings and heroes. They do not (like the French heroes) resemble henchmen, mimicking *la dignité et la noblesse—ils sont familiers dans les circonstances ordinaires de la vie, leur parole n'a rien d'affecté, de théâtral même dans les circonstances solennelles—car les grandes circonstances leur sont familières.*

On voit que Walter Scott est de la petite société des Rois d'Angleterre.[3]

From notes on Byron

1) Not one of Lord Byron's works made such a strong impression in England as his poem *Corsair,* in spite of the fact that in merit it is inferior to many others:

Giaour in the flaming portrayal of passion; the *Siege of Corinth,* the *Prisoner of Chillon,* in the touching development of the emotions, *Parisina* in its tragic strength, finally the third and fourth cantos of *Childe Harold* in the depth of meaning and lyrical strength and *Don Juan* with its amazing Shakespearean variety. *Corsair* owed its disproportionate success to the character of the main person, who secretly reminded us of the man whose tragic will ruled one part of Europe at the time, while threatening the other.

At any rate, English critics attributed this intention to Byron, but it is more likely that the poet brought on the scene the same person who appears in all his works, and whom he finally took upon himself in *Childe Harold.* In any case the poet never explained his intention: the approximation to Napoleon pleased his vanity.

Byron paid little heed to the plans of his works or even did not think of them at all: a few scenes weakly connected with each other constitute (illegible) (and) sufficed him for depth of thought, feeling and description. The critics disputed his dramatic genius and Byron was infuriated by that—the fact is that he achieved and loved only one character—etc.

This is why in spite of great poetic beauty his tragedies in general do not come up to his genius and the dramatic sections of his poems (except for *Parisina* alone) lack merit.

What are we to think of a writer who from the poem *Corsair* takes only the plan, worthy of a silly and vulgar (?) story—and by this same childish plan composes a dramatic trilogy, replacing Byron's charming and profound poetry with long winded and ugly prose, worthy of our unfortunate imitators

[1] What disgusts me is....

[2] What we like in the historic novel, is, that what is historical is exactly what we see.

[3] Dignity and nobility—they are familiar in the ordinary circumstances of life, there is nothing about their speech that is affected or theatrical, even under the most solemn circumstances—for great circumstances are familiar to them.

It is evident that Walter Scott belongs to the intimate society of the kings of England.

of the late Kotzebue? That is what M. Olin did when he wrote his romantic tragedy *Corsair*—an imitation (of Byron). The question arises: what was it that struck him in Byron's poem—was it really the plan? Oh, *miratores*.[1] . . .

2) The English critics disputed Lord Byron's dramatic talent; they were right, it seems—Byron who is so original in *Childe Harold, Giaour* and in *Don Juan* becomes an imitator as soon as he sets foot on a dramatic stage; in *Manfred* he imitated *Faust,* replacing the folk scenes and sabbaths with others which in his opinion were nobler. But Faust is the greatest creation of the poetic spirit; he serves as the representative of the latest poetry just as the *Iliad* serves as the monument of classical antiquity.

In other tragedies Alfieri was apparently Byron's model. *Cain* is a drama in form only, but in the disconnectedness of its scenes and abstract dissertations it really belongs to the same type of skeptical poetry as *Childe Harold.* Byron cast a one-sided glance at the world and human nature and then turned away from them and descended into himself. In *Cain* he attained, created and described a single character (his own) and he imputed everything, with the exception of (?) to this gloomy, powerful personality which is so mysteriously enthralling. When he began to compose his tragedy he distributed one of the component parts of this complex and strong personality to each of the characters and thereby broke up his magnificent creation into several small and insignificant characters.

Byron realized his mistake and subsequently again applied himse'f to Faust, imitating him in his *The Deformed Transformed* (thinking thereby to correct his *chef-d'oeuvre*).

Draft of the foreword to "Boris Godunov"

Firmly convinced that the obsolete forms of our theater are in need of reform, I arranged my tragedy according to the system of our father Shakespeare and sacrificed two of the classic unities upon his altar and barely retained the third. Besides these three, there is another unity which the French critics do not even mention (it probably never occurs to them that its necessity might be contested); unity of style is the fourth essential condition of French tragedy, from which the Spanish, English and German theaters have been delivered. You see that I also have followed this tempting example.

1828

In Mature Literature There Comes a Time . . .

In mature literature there comes a time when minds, bored by monotonous works of art and the limited radius of a conventional and selected language, turn to fresh popular invention and to a novel simplicity of language that was scorned at first. Thus, formerly in France people of fashion were delighted by the muse of Vade, just as at present Wordsworth and Coleridge have attracted a large following. But Vade had neither imagination nor poetic feeling, his witty writings breathe nothing but a gaiety, expressed in the street language of peddlars and porters. The works of the English writers, on the contrary, are replete with depth of feeling expressed in the language of honest, simple folk. This time has not yet reached us, thank heaven; the so-called language of the gods is still so new to us that we call any one who can write a dozen iambic verses with rhymes a poet. We do not yet understand the

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1 Hero worshippers.

Illustration to an old French edition (Paris 1826) of "The Fountain of Bakhchisarai"

delight of bare simplicity (which is so utterly beyond our comprehension that even in prose we require tawdry embellishments), of poetry freed from the conventional ornaments of versification.

Not only has it never occurred to us to make poetic style approach noble simplicity, we even try to make our prose bombastic. The efforts of Zhukovsky and Katenin were unsuccessful not in themselves, but in the effect they had. Very few people indeed appreciated the quality of the translations from Hebel and still fewer appreciated the force and originality of *Murderers,* a ballad which is fully on a par with the best works of Burger and Southey. The murderer's words to the moon, the sole witness of his evil-doing:

"Look, look, you baldhead!"

a verse imbued with genuine tragic force, seemed merely ludicrous to light-minded people who did not realize that horror is sometimes increased when it is expressed in laughter. The ghost scene in *Hamlet* is written in a joking, almost base style, but the jokes in *Hamlet* make your hair stand on end.

1829

From drafts of the foreword to "Boris Godunov"

3) The study of Shakespeare, Karamzin and our old chronicles gave me the idea of presenting for the theater one of the most dramatic epochs of recent history. Unhampered by any other influences—I imitated Shakespeare in his free and broad delineation of character, in his simple and careless portrayal of types. I followed Karamzin in the lucid development of incidents and from the chronicles I tried to guess the thought, form and language of the times—rich sources! I do not know whether I succeeded in taking advantage of them. . . .

. . . But I frankly admit that the failure of my drama would distress me, for I am firmly convinced that the popular laws of Shakespearean drama are appropriate to our stage and not the court manners of Racine's tragedies, and that every unsuccessful experiment may hinder the reformation of our stage. . . .

. . . From among all my imitations of Byron, the haughtiness of the nobility was the funniest. . . .

Note on Shakespeare's "Romeo and Juliet"

Many of the tragedies attributed to Shakespeare do not belong to him but were simply revised by him. Although the tragedy *Romeo and Juliet* is so completely distinguished by its style from his known methods, it is nevertheless so obviously a part of his dramatic system, and bears so many traces of his free and broad brush, that it must be regarded as the work of Shakespeare. It portrays the Italy of the poet's time, with its climate, passions, festivals, and voluptuousness, with its rich language full of sparkle and *concetti*.[1] That is how Shakespeare conceived the locality of the drama. After *Romeo and Juliet*, those two delightful creations of Shakespearean grace, Mercutio, the type of a young cavalier of the times—elegant, affectionate and noble Mercutio—is the most remarkable character in the entire tragedy. The poet chose him as the representative of the Italians, at that time the fashionable people of Europe, the Frenchmen of the sixteenth century.

1 Conceits

Illustration by E. Viralte to a French edition (1928) of "Gavriliada"

From a letter to P. A. Pletnyev, October

Our critics, in analyzing *Poltava,* referred to Byron's *Mazeppa.* They do not understand it. . . .

. . . They remark that the name of my poem is inappropriate and that I probably had not entitled it Mazeppa to keep from recalling Byron. This is partially true. Byron knew Mazeppa only from Voltaire's history of Charles XII. Byron was merely struck by the picture of a man tied to a wild horse and borne across the steppes. The picture is, to be sure, a poetic one, and look what Byron did with it! But do not seek here for Mazeppa or Charles, or for the gloomy, detestable and painful character who appears in almost all of Byron's works, but who (unfortunately for my critics) is missing in Mazeppa. Byron never even thought of him. He presented a series of pictures, one more striking than the next. That is all. But what a brilliant creation, what a masterful hand! If the story of the daughter who was seduced and the father who was executed had reached his pen then probably no one after him would have ventured to touch the subject.

1830

From the second article on "The History of the Russian People" by N. Polevoi

The activity of Walter Scott is to be felt in all branches of contemporary literature. The new school of the French historians was formed under the influence of the Scotch novelist. He showed them utterly new sources which had never even been suspected in spite of the existence of the historical drama, created by Shakespeare and Goethe.

From the article "Yuri Miloslavsky, or the Russians in 1612"

In our time we use the word *novel* to designate the product of the historic epoch of the development of the fiction narrative. Walter Scott drew a whole crowd of imitators in his wake. But how distant they all are from the Scotch wizard! . . . They, like Agrippa's pupil, having summoned the demon of antiquity, were unable to control him and fell victims to their own audacity.

Dramatic Art Was Born in the Market Place

Dramatic art was born in the market place—to amuse the people. What does the people like, what impresses it? What language does it understand?

Racine transfers it from the market place, from the fair-grounds (the freedom of the miracle play), to the court.

(Corneille, Spanish poet)

Sumarokov, Ozerov—(Katenin)

Shakespeare, Goethe—their influence on the present French theater, on us. The blissful ignorance of the critics, ridiculed by Vyasemsky; in words they hailed, they recognized romanticism, but actually they not only failed to comprehend it but childishly attacked (it).

What develops in tragedy? What is its purpose? Man and the people. Human destiny, the people's destiny. That is why Racine is great despite the narrow form of his tragedy. That is why Shakespeare is great, despite the unevenness, carelessness and ugliness of the trimming.

What does the dramatic writer require? Philosophy, dispassionateness, the historian's conception of the state, intuition, vividness of imagination, freedom from prejudice. Freedom.

Although aesthetics since the time of Kant and Lessing has developed with such clarity and breadth, we are still subject to the concepts of the heavy pedant Gottsched. We still repeat that the *beautiful* is the imitation of what is fine in nature, and the chief merit of art is utility. Why do we like ornate statues less than plain marble or bronze ones? Why does the poet prefer to express thoughts in his verses? And what is the usefulness of Titan's Venus and the Apollo Belvedere?

Verisimilitude is still assumed to be the main condition and foundation of the dramatic art. What if it is proved to us that the very essence of dramatic art precludes verisimilitude.

In reading a poem or a novel we can often lose ourselves in it and fancy that the incident described is not fictitious but real. In an ode or elegy we may fancy that the poet expressed his true feelings, under true conditions. But can this illusion exist in a building divided into two parts, one of which is filled with spectators, etc. etc.

If we assume verisimilitude in the strict observance of dress, the colors of time and place, here too we shall see that the greatest dramatic authors did not abide by this rule. In Shakespeare the Roman lictors have the manners of London aldermen. In Calderon the brave Coriolanus challenges the consul to a duel and flings him the gauntlet. In Racine the half-Scythian Hippolyte picks it up and speaks the language of a well-bred young marquis, while Corneille's Clytemnestra is escorted by a Swiss guard. Corneille's Romans, if they are not Spanish knights, are Gascon barons. For all that, Calderon, Shakespeare and Racine stand on unattainable heights—and their works comprise an endless subject for our study and delight.

What verisimilitude should we require of the dramatic author? To solve this problem let us first see what drama is and what is its purpose.

Drama was born on the market place and was a popular amusement. The people, like children, demand entertainment, action. Drama presents them with an unusual, genuine event. The people demand strong sensations—for them even an execution is a spectacle. Tragedy set before them mainly the consequences of evildoing, supernatural torments, even physical ones (for instance Philoctetus, Oedipus, Lear). But habit dulls the senses—the imagination gets accustomed to murders and executions; it looks upon them with indifference. But the portrayal of the passions and outpourings of the human soul are always new, always interesting, great and instructive. Drama began to direct the passions and the human soul.

Laughter, pity and terror are the three strings of our imagination that are struck by dramatic sorcery. But laughter soon weakens and it is impossible to base full dramatic action on it alone. The ancient tragedians neglected this spring. Only popular satire possessed it and assumed a dramatic form that was more like a parody. This was how comedy, which was perfected with time, originated. Let us observe that high comedy is not based on laughter alone, but on the development of characters, and that (it) often approaches tragedy.

Genuineness of passion, of feelings in the imagined circumstances—this is what our mind requires of the dramatist.

Drama left the market place and was transferred to the palace at the demand of educated and select society. The poets moved to the court. Meanwhile drama remains faithful to its original purpose—to influence the crowd, to appease its curiosity. But nothing attracts the attention of the educated and enlightened spectator more than the portrayal of great national events. Hence history is transplanted to the theater and peoples and tsars

are brought before us by the poet. In the palace, drama changed, it lowered its voice. There was no longer any need for it to shout. It discarded the mask of exaggeration which was necessary in the market place, but burdensome indoors. It became simpler and more natural. More refined feelings required less severe shocks. It ceased to portray repulsive sufferings; it was weaned away from horror, little by little it became decorous and dignified.

(Hence an important difference.) The creator of popular tragedy was better educated than his audience, he was aware of this and gave them his free productions with a confidence in his own superiority—and the public gave its obedient acknowledgement, sensing (its) weakness. At the court, on the contrary, the poet felt inferior to his public. The audience was better educated than he. So he thought, at any rate, and so did they. He did not abandon himself freely and boldly to his concepts. He sought to divine the requirements of the refined taste of people who were alien to him by virtue of their position. He was afraid of offending some haughty members of his audience.

Hence the bashful priggishness, the ridiculous inflation which has become proverbial *(un heros, un roi de comedie),* the habit of regarding people of superior circumstance with a certain servility and endowing them with a strange, inhuman manner of speaking. In Racine (for example) Nero does not say simply: *je serai caché dans se cabinet,* but: *caché près de ces lieux je vous verrai, madame.* Agamemnon wakens his confidant and tells him pompously: *"Oui c'est Agamemnon."*

We are used to this, it seems natural to us. But it must be admitted this is not to be observed in Shakespeare. And if (sometimes) the hero in his tragedies expresses himself like a stableman, it does not seem strange to us, for we feel that even distinguished people should express simple concepts like simple people.

Drama has forsaken the language of general usage and adopted a fashionable, select and refined parlance.

I do not propose and I do not venture to set forth the advantages and disadvantages of the two types of tragedy—to develop the essential differences between the systems of Racine and Shakespeare, Calderon and Goethe. I am anxious to survey the history of the dramatic art in Russia. . . .

From notes on early poems

The Fountain of Bakhchisarai is weaker than *Captive,* and like the latter is the result of reading Byron, over whom I went crazy. . . .

England is the home of caricature and parody. . .

England is the home of caricature. Every remarkable event serves as the topic for a satirical sketch; every work that is marked by success becomes the subject of parody. In England the art of counterfeiting the style of well-known writers has been developed to perfection. Once someone showed Walter Scott verses which had supposedly been written by him. "The verses seem like mine," he said with a smile, "I've been writing so long and have written so much that I don't venture to repudiate even this nonsense."

1833-35

From the article "Thoughts on the Road"

. . . Many readers will agree with me that *Clarissa* is very dull, but for all that Richardson's novel has unusual merit. . . .

Patronage has been retained in English literature to this day. The honorable Crabbe, who died last year, offered all his splendid poems to his Grace the Duke, etc. In his humble dedications he deferentially recalls the favors and high patronage which he has been accorded, etc. In Russia you will find nothing of the sort. Here, as Mme. de Staël observed, literature was for the most part the occupation of noblemen (*En Russie quelques gentilhommes se sont occupés de littérature*). Regardless of that, I repeat that forms are of no importance. Lomonosov and Crabbe deserve the respect of all honest men despite their humiliating dedications.

1834

From "Table Talk"

The characters created by Shakespeare are not, as with Molière, the personification of some passion or vice, but living beings endowed with many passions and many vices; circumstances develop their varied and many-sided characters before the spectators. Molière's Miser is miserly and nothing more; Shakespeare's Shylock is miserly, resourceful, vengeful, a fond parent and clever. Molière's Hypocrite courts his benefactor's wife like a hypocrite; he asks for a glass of water like a hypocrite. Shakespeare's hypocrite pronounces a court sentence with conceited severity, but justly; he justifies his cruelty with the profound reasoning of a statesman; he beguiles innocence with strong and captivating sophistry, a mixture of piety and philandery. Angelo is a hypocrite because his surface actions contradict his secret passions! And what depth this character possesses! But nowhere, perhaps, is Shakespeare's many-sided genius reflected in such a wealth of forms as in Falstaff, whose vices, linked with each other, constitute an entertaining and ugly chain, like an ancient Bacchanalia. In analyzing Falstaff's character, we see that his chief attribute is lust; in his youth his main interest was probably in coarse and cheap philandery, but now he is already fifty, he has grown fat and senile. Gluttony and wine have perceptibly gained the upper hand over Venus. In the second place he is a coward, but since he spends his life with young scapegraces and is continually the butt of their jibes and pranks, he conceals his cowardice with an evasive and scoffing impudence. He is boastful by habit and purpose.

Falstaff is not in the least stupid, quite the contrary. He also possesses some of the habits of a man who has moved in good society. He has no principles. He is as weak as a woman. He needs strong Spanish wine, a rich dinner, and money for his mistresses; to secure them he is ready to do anything, provided it is not really dangerous.

Othello is not jealous by nature, on the contrary, he is very trusting. Voltaire realized this, and developing his imitation of Shakespeare's work, he placed in the mouth of his Orosmane the following line: "*Je ne suis point jaloux. . . . Si je l'étais jamais.*"

Man by nature is more inclined to censure than to praise (says that great connoisseur of human nature Machiavelli). Stupidity in censure is less obvious than stupidity in praise; a stupid person sees no merit in Shakespeare, and this is attributed to quarrelsome tastes, eccentricity, etc. When the same stupid person goes into raptures over a novel by Ducray-Duminic or Mr. Polevoi's history, he is regarded with contempt, although in the first instance his stupidity was more obvious to a thinking man.

Goethe had a big influence on Byron. Faust haunted the imagination of *Childe Harold*. Twice did Byron try to cope with the giant of romanticism and he remained lame like Jacob.

Not one of the French poets dared to be original, not one of them, like Milton, renounced contemporary fame.

England (in the eighteenth century) followed France in the pursuit of philosophy. In the homeland of Shakespeare and Milton poetry became as dry and paltry as it was in France. Richardson, Fielding and Sterne defend the fame of the prose novel. Italy renounced the genius of Dante; Metastasio imitated Racine.

Jean-Richard Bloch

Madrid

Excerpt from a new book "Spain, Spain!"

We arrived in Madrid as the sun was setting in the clouds of dust that arose from the road. I have witnessed many a moving scene in my life, but none, I believe, has ever filled me with such an unassailable conviction and absolute certitude as that which I saw that day. A whole people had risen in arms. They are the gravest and most resolute people in the world. They could be destroyed, but subjugated—never!

We know from the accounts of even the enemies of the Madrid government that Estremadura, most of Andalusia (which has been Communist for a long time now), the whole of Huelva, Malaga, Granada, Murcia, the Levant, Biscay, the Basque provinces, Asturias, all of Catalonia and part of Aragon, the greater part of the Balearic Islands—are filled with the same will and nourished by the same faith.

During my recent trip through Old Castile (today occupied by the fascists), the peasants, upon recognizing the French car, smiled at us and greeted us with the customary gesture.

My sojourn in Madrid was too crowded with political interviews and official conversations with the leaders of the Republic, of parties and of various organizations, to allow of my writing, at this early date, an unreserved account of it. But I can vouch for the fact that what predominated in the minds of all observers was gratitude, admiration and respect for the heroism, ardor, energy and determination of the Spanish people, for their will to conquer and their stoical contempt of adversity.

The President of the Republic said to us: "I have never felt any confidence in the intellectuals, technicians or officials; I believed in none but the people. Today I see that I was right."

It is evening in Madrid. We drive through the city, which seems peaceful, though full of light and animation. Our friends take us to the editorial office of the *Claridad,* where Largo Caballero awaits me. Although we have corresponded I have never met him. I recall this correspondence with emotion: five days after the beginning of the rebellion, during the disorder of the initial difficulties, when the French press announced that no correspondence could arrive from Spain, I received an envelope with a Madrid postmark. It was dated the 17th and, in addition to the Madrid postmark, bore a smudged one from Valencia. It contained a few words written by the leader of the Socialist Party on the eve of the catastrophe[1]. . . .

An ordinary house, resembling thousands of others. At the entrance, several comrades look us over carefully. We go upstairs and ring the door-bell, just as one would in a bourgeois flat. The door is opened a crack; the innocent paint covers heavy armor-plates; there is some talk, and then we are admitted. The editorial staff of the Left Socialists has not followed the example of the others and moved into a sumptuous office; it has remained in the same old house.

I am not announced at once to Caballero; he is extremely busy, they do

[1] Largo Caballero is now Prime Minister of Spain.

not want to disturb him. I insist, however; then I am asked to wait in the hall. A few minutes later we are admitted to Caballero. Here is the man I wanted to see.

He is sixty-seven years of age: a robust old man, but of slighter build than I expected from his photographs. He was at work when we came in; he wore neither jacket nor waistcoat; the collar of his shirt was open, exposing the strong, withered neck; the rolled-up sleeves of his shirt showed very white and muscular arms. The bald head looked square, the face was massive, with an obstinate forehead and a bitter mouth. The modeling of the face, though forceful, was delicate and beautiful, the clear eyes very weary.

He neither spoke nor understood French. It must not be forgotten that this great leader was a worker, self-taught. I introduced my two companions to him—Andrée Viollis and Jean Cassou, and greeted him warmly through the medium of an interpreter. He bowed his acknowledgment a little coldly and awkwardly, invited us to sit down, but remained standing himself. He replied through the interpreter that he was touched by our greetings but that he was working under great pressure.

I perceived that our coming as delegates of the Committee of the United Front of France did not arouse particularly friendly feelings in the famous agitator. Was it our United Front or our nationality that displeased him? I decided to clear up this point at once.

I explained rapidly, realistically, and baldly, the object of our visit to Spain and the special motive that actuated our visit to him. I noted that the stern fighter, who had at first looked irritated and absent, now began to listen, and at last nodded his head approvingly.

He kept looking not at me but at the interpreter, as one sees people turn instinctively towards a wireless receiver. But while his reply was being translated to me (I had already understood him, but wanted to make quite certain), it was upon me that his grey eyes were fixed with a sustained attention that missed nothing and assimilated everything.

Then he began to ask questions. The ice was broken. What did I wish to know? I told him of the conversation I had held that morning with the President of the Republic, and of the grave words spoken by the latter.

Caballero expressed his approbation of them. He brightened and spoke with more animation. His gaze grew more attentive; it pierced me. Then suddenly I noted that the depths of those shrewd, reserved eyes were lighted by the spark of confidence for which I had been waiting ever since we had entered the room.

He expressed the same ideas that I had already heard from President Azaña. "You, the French, are hated by the fascists; do you imagine that with their accession to power your influence would increase in our country? On the contrary, it would disappear. You had friends, true and reliable allies—the Left, the Republicans, the People's Front. What are you doing for them? What have you done for them? Practically the whole of your press calumniates them, desires their downfall, rouses public opinion against them. [1] What practical assistance has your People's Front given

[1] This statement was made at the end of the second week of the Civil War. What Frenchman can recall without a blush of shame the general tone of the national dailies and the passivity of public opinion? Fortunately, a great change has since taken place, at least in the independent press and the masses.

the Spanish People's Front? Do you think that if we succumb, you will be able to carry on for long, or that even France herself will?... But if we win, as we hope to, do you think the Spanish People's Front will forget that you abandoned it?... You can do a great deal to change the atmosphere in France."... (An expression of bitterness and weariness flitted over his face, pale with toil and care.) "Tell the truth: tell them that all our people have arisen, that they are determined to win, that they are fighting heroically, that the fascists will never break through, though they have almost all the arms and munitions, while we have only our bare hands; say that we will die, if need be, but that fewer of us would have to die if we had the arms and airplanes which we lack."

We talked of the situation. I told him of the enthusiasm we had felt at the sight of a people risen, in town and village, to defend their liberty and honor, not ostentatiously, but with stern and terrible resolution. He nodded in agreement, he was moved, he recognized the pictures I evoked. He was perfectly confident. It was obviously not a pose, not a mere show of optimism.

He asked me to give his regards to his comrades in the French General Confederation of Labor, whom he would like to see here, and sent a message to the proletariat of our country. Out of respect for his work, and the innumerable duties that devolve on the leaders of great organizations in this stubborn struggle, I cut the interview short. He was touched and took me in his arms. And although I knew that this was a peculiarly Spanish gesture, still it contained something personal, some warm feeling that, coming from this old, indomitable warrior, shook me to the core.

Julio Alvarez del Vayo, Madrid deputy, is one of the most popular leaders of the Socialist Party and one of the editors of *Claridad*. We agreed to meet in a little restaurant far from the heart of the city. It was past midnight when I arrived there and he was just finishing his dinner. His brother-in-law, Araquistain, and a German Socialist were with him. [1]

We embraced (I have known him for a long time). I was delighted to see again his penetrating, near-sighted eyes, his large lively countenance, his high forehead. His powerful body showed through his flannel shirt.

In a sing-song, hollow and rather monotonous voice that betrayed his Navarre origin, he said to me with the shy smile of a schoolboy who is intending to play truant: "I am leaving at four o'clock; at six we are attacking the Sierra. I'm going in the front line of the attacking forces. It will be a difficult business, but it's been very well prepared. We're going to attack from both flanks. We want to gain the crest. I wanted to see you, in case I shouldn't come back. On your return to France, write to my wife; she went there before all this started."

Since I am an ex-soldier myself, I did not resort to futile encouragement in order to cheer this man who might, perhaps, soon be an ex-soldier himself, if fate did not decide otherwise. I had a vivid recollection of my own feelings just before an attack. I understood what he must be feeling now; I knew the Sierra: it would be a stiff bit of work.

As if by common assent, we changed the subject. "I was in Guipuzcoa a few days ago," he said. "We called for three volunteers for a dangerous

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[1] Julio Alvarez del Vayo is now Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Spanish Republic. It will be remembered with what authority he spoke at the last conference of the League of Nations in Geneva. Louis Araquistain is now ambassador to France.

job. Fifty offered. They were to go to. . ." (here he mentioned the name of a northern town, which I must omit) "to carry a message and obtain certain information. And this is what we learned: a general strike had been declared. The White generals issued an order for all to return to work, and threatened to shoot the secretaries of the trade unions. No one went back to work. The secretaries of the trade unions were shot. The strike went on. The trade unions elected secret committees. Every time one was discovered, all its members were shot. The workers elected new committees and the strike went on.

"Not a single rebel, not a single officer can venture out alone in the streets of that town. Even the detachments convoying labor-gangs, go about fully armed, and the only communication between the barracks is by armored cars mounted with machine-guns. This is what their occupation of Spain means.

"With the exception of Navarre and a few backward reactionary districts, with the exception of the 'gilded youth' from whose numbers the phalanxes are recruited, all the people are against them—from Andalusia to the Basque provinces, from Galicia to the Levant. They cannot win; it is absolutely impossible. But they can kill. Wherever they have the upper hand, they shoot and kill, they execute our fighting-men, the Republicans and the Socialists, they bring ruin and devastation everywhere, for in such acts lies their last hope.[1]

"If theirs was to be the victory, they would have won it at the first blow, when they took us by surprise, unarmed, while they had the whole army in their hands. At this moment our greatest danger lies in the airplanes, the Italian and German aviators who are coming to their aid. If we had an air force of equal strength with which to fight them, we could be certain of winning, for on land—what could they do against *the entire population?*"

"So it is a question of airplanes and aviators?"

The little restaurant was emptying, time was passing, the hour of parting approached. Alvarez del Vayo thought of others. His extreme good nature would not permit him to be idle; he rose several times to show some trifling but kind service to a foreign journalist.

My heart was heavy when I took leave of him. I should like to have gone with him to the Sierra, over which the bloody rays of that August sunrise were soon to burst. But my car was waiting for me at four o'clock, and my way lay in a different direction. . . .

The square in front of the restaurant reminded me, because of its lighting and smell, of the Rue des Écoles directly before daylight. Phantoms of adolescence rose around me . . . I was bidding farewell to a friend . . . he was seventeen . . . and so was I . . . Our ways lay straight before us . . . Yet, for all that, we felt a romantic melancholy about the future, we clung to each other as if we were standing on the brink of an abyss . . . The sensation lasted no longer than a moment. I am fifty now, del Vayo is going to the front, it is war, a terrible war, the most decisive of all wars—the kind that is called civil war. The fate of Spain, of France, of all mankind is at stake at this moment; we take a last embrace—on the brink of an abyss.

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[1] On the 1st of November the number of Republicans and Socialists killed in battle and mass executions by the rebels was estimated at one hundred thousand.

When I am a little way off, I turn and we call out the Castillian salutation which rings and echoes through the deserted morning air like a shephard's call in the mountains:

"*Salud!* And *buena suerte,* my friend!"

No sooner had I arrived than I received a message from the President of the Republic, stating that he would see me the next morning.

No word of this conversation has been published by me, for the President requested me not to do so. The substance of it was transmitted at once to those for whom it was intended.

France was at that time, strangely enough, without an accredited diplomatic representative in Madrid. When the fascist rebellion broke out, the whole French embassy was in its summer quarters in San Sebastian. A fortnight later it was still there. Possibly for excellent reasons. But the government of Madrid, which for a long time had not had its own representative in Paris, owing to the treachery of the embassy staff, was deprived of all reliable means of communication with the government in Paris.

It is not surprising then, that the Spanish government, finding it necessary to let certain things be known where they ought to be known, had recourse to one of the few travelers who visited the Spanish capital at that time, one who, though he had no credentials, could offer, nevertheless, the necessary guarantees of moral credit and authority.

Translated by Anthony Wixley

F. V. Kelyin

Recent Spanish Literature

The civil war in Spain has brought the young revolutionary writers and artists and the best representatives of the older generation of Spanish intellectuals closer together. The process of rapprochement began long ago, and the civil war merely served to make it fully apparent. In his splendid article on the peculiarities of the Spanish revolution, Ercoli characterizes this process as follows:

"As regards the petty bourgeoisie, it stands in an overwhelming majority (in Spain at present) on the side of democracy and revolution against fascism. Here the decisive factors are the desire for freedom and the hatred for a past that was shrouded in obscurantism and poverty. Spanish fascism is, therefore, deprived of the means to create a mass basis for itself in the ranks of the petty bourgeoisie, which fascism has done and is doing in other countries. Its social demagogy is foiled by the fact that the small townspeople — artisans, intellectuals, men of science and art—see that in the ranks of the fascist leaders there are to be found the big landowners—"caciques," whom they detest, bishops who fatten on the people's poverty, unscrupulous politicians of the type of Lerroux, corrupt bankers such as Juan March. Of course, the political representatives of the Spanish petty bourgeoisie did not immediately adopt their present Jacobin positions. They wavered... but the cruel and treacherous attack of the fascists on the legal government evoked an explosion of anger in the ranks of the small urban bourgeoisie and put a stop to much of its wavering...."

This process of transition of the Spanish petty bourgeoisie from wavering to action was best reflected in contemporary Spanish art, particularly in literature. In May and July, 1931, that is to say on the morrow of the fall of the monarchy and the establishment of the bourgeois-landlord republic of Alcala Zamora, a considerable number of the Spanish writers of that generation which stands between the generations of 1898 and 1930 and may be conventionally termed the "generation of the World War of 1914," adopted a definitely negative attitude towards the new order. Eloquent testimony of this fact is provided by a questionnaire on the subject, "Why is there no social novel and social literature in Spain?" conducted by the radical Madrid paper *La Libertad* in the summer of 1931.

Although they did not conceal their disapproval of the bourgeois-landlord system, the writers and artists of the World War generation—who comprised the bulk of the representatives of Spanish art—wavered. They preferred to adopt a policy of waiting, refraining for the time being from any action whatsoever.

The further course of revolutionary events, which destroyed any illusions still existing among writers, compelled them to adopt more definite class positions, to define their attitude towards the bitter struggle which the two principle active forces of the time were conducting on the ideological front. The "generation of the catastrophe of 1898" almost in its entirety sided with the bourgeois-landowning forces; the "generation of 1930" we are now fully justified in calling the generation of the Spanish revolution. In this connection, we must recall the great role played in the work of winning that main mass of Spanish writers and artists by Rafael Alberti, Maria Teresa Leon, Cesar M. Arconada, Ramon J. Sender, Pla-y-Beltran and others as well as the Madrid collectives—"Octubre" (1933-34), "El Tiempo Presente" (1935), "Tensor" (1935)—and the Valencian "Nueva Cultura" (1935-36). The work of clarification, carried on not only among the World War generation but also among the representatives of the older generation, resulted in the coming over of two remarkable old masters to the revolutionary wing of Spanish art; We have in mind Ramon Valle Inclan, who died in January 1936, and the poet Antonio Machado. The approximate date of this rapprochement was 1933-34. To this period belong Valle Inclan's letter to the International Association of Revolutionary Writers in Moscow, and Antonio Machado's declaration in No. 6 of the magazine *Octubre*, published by the Association of Revolutionary Writers and Artists in Madrid. Before his death Valle Inclan expressed regret that he had not visited the Soviet Union and had not been able to shake hands with Maxim Gorky; and Antonio Machado in his remarks on *Communist lyricism* speaks of the gigantic figure of Lenin, "great in his simplicity," and of the fact that "Russia is striving to liberate man from slavery." "That alone," Machado explains, "deserves to be sung about in our days and, indeed, only that can be sung."

The Asturian events of 1934, the "two black years," the home-made fascism of Lerroux and Gil Robles, who acted on orders from Berlin and Rome, could only serve to hasten the process of curing the Spanish petty bourgeoisie, including writers, artists and scientists, of their wavering. Although outstanding individual representatives of the generation of 1898 such as Unamuno and Bajora adhered essentially to their earlier stand, lining up with Spanish

reaction, for the majority of writers the question "with whom and against whom" is already definitely decided. This fact found expression in the statement made at the Paris Congress in Defense of World Culture by the head of the Spanish delegation, Julio Alvarez del Vayo.[1] The victory of the People's Front on February 16, 1936, opened up tremendous possibilities to Spanish writers; it further consolidated their ranks and inspired them with confidence in victory.

Is it surprising that the cruel and treacherous attack made by the fascists on the legal government caused a burst of indignation among the Spanish intellectuals and petty bourgeoisie? Under a declaration made by the Spanish intellectuals in support of the People's Government in its struggle against the fascist barbarians, we find the signatures of the greatest philologist and literary scholar of Spain, Ramon Menendez Pidal; the poets Antonio Machado and Juan Ramon Jiminez; Luis Detapia; the philosopher José Ortega y Gasset; the writers Ramon Perez Deayala and Ramon Gomez de la Serna; the doctors Gregorio Marañon, Pio del Rio Ortega and others. The majority of the signatories belong to the older and middle generation of Spanish intellectuals. Their slogan of unity defended Spanish national culture from the attacks made upon it by the fascist barbarians. In the name of this foremost and progressive section of the Spanish intellectuals, Antonio Machado signed the appeal adopted in Madrid on October 7, 1936, at a meeting of the International Writers' Association.

By their work in defense of national culture, these writers did an undoubted service to the forces of the People's Front which new revolutionary Spain fully appreciated. It knew how to surround them with sympathy and love. When bombs from Junkers and Capronis began to fall on Madrid, killing old men, women and children, and destroying the Prado Museum, of which the People's Government had made the famous artist Picasso director; when the same bombs destroyed the national library and the Alba Palace, a storehouse of world treasures of art and culture, and turned pictures and manuscripts to ashes, the first persons whom revolutionary Spain looked after were her "great old men." The Communist Party and the 5th Regiment, at a special meeting, persuaded the most noted representatives of the Madrid intellectuals—famous scientists, writers, men of art—to leave Madrid for the time being in order to continue their work in more peaceful surroundings.

Antonio Machado spoke in the name of these intellectuals. Here is what he said:

"I do not want to leave. I am old and ill. But I want to fight in your ranks; I want to end my life honorably and die honorably, while continuing my work. This conviction alone impels me to agree with you. I shall fight together with you for our common cause."

Ilya Ehrenburg in one of his dispatches to *Izvestia* tells of the remarkable exploit of Gabriel Hernandez Ranson, a fighter in the people's army, who rescued the manuscripts and scientific instruments of the rector of the Madrid medical school, Manuel Marques. When scientists and writers were forced to move to Valencia, the local trade union of the water supply and electrical workers tried to give their guests a fitting welcome. One of the best hotels in the city (the Palace) was set aside for them; there they moved in with their families, and also were given space for their libraries and laboratories.

We quote below a few statements made by members of the Spanish intelligentsia. The first is that of a famous physician, Pio del Rio Ortega, who said the following:

"The inhabitants of Madrid are bearing their sufferings with remarkable bravery. Few cities would be capable of exhibiting such incredible heroism as Madrid. Destruction caused by fires and explosions, the death of old people, women and children—all this arouses indignation but does not frighten anyone. Doubtless the fascists expected that a few hours of intensive bombardment would be sufficient to frighten the population and force it to acknowledge defeat. They were mistaken. The shooting and bombardment are characterized by the fact that the insurgents generally choose either hospitals or cultural centers as targets for their shells. Here, for instance, is what occured at the Institute for Cancer Diseases. From the very beginning of the uprising, we used the institute for the treatment of wounded infected with gangrene, and we achieved splendid results; we managed to save 80 per cent of the patients. But then they began to bombard us, and after that, when the fighting came close to the University Settlement, the bullets forced us to evacuate.

"At the very beginning of the war, it was said that the fascists had decided not to spare hospitals. I did not believe it; it seemed to me too cruel. However, I was forced to change my mind in the face of what I saw."

Here is another declaration, made by the poet Antonio Machado of whom I have already spoken. Referring to the destruction of centers of culture and art in Madrid by the fascists, Antonio Machado remarked:

"This is by no means an accident, but a consistent policy. Eighteen bombs were thrown on the Palace of Libraries and

[1] The delegation was nominally headed by Valle Inclan, who could not go to Paris because of illness.

Museum in the course of a few minutes, and caused several fires. Fortunately, they were extinguished before they could cause irreparable damage. Many bombs were thrown around the Prado Museum, most of them incendiary. What happened in the Liria Palace is a matter of common knowledge. I asked, what is the meaning of the constant attack by the fascists on centers of science and buildings containing our richest art treasures? Undoubtedly, the fascists wish to prove that they do not respect anything, that they are utterly indifferent to everything that is noble."

On November 27, Antonio Machado made a declaration to representatives of the press in which he branded the barbarism of the Spanish insurgents who destroyed monuments of culture. Remarking on the fact that the prominent Spanish sculptor, Emiliano Barral, had been killed in battle on the Madrid front, Machado declared:

"We representatives of the intelligentsia are now fighters for culture in the service of the people."

Here is the declaration of another remarkable representative of the older generation, the artist Gutierrez Solano, who also moved from Madrid to Valencia. Solano declared:

"I am not a politician, and never have taken part in politics. I was always completely wrapped up in the art of painting. But now I cannot remain inactive. . . . I witnessed the horrible sight of Madrid's streets covered with the bodies of women and children. When the bombardment of Madrid became especially severe, when thirty-three airplanes threw their death-dealing cargo on the city, I wandered through the streets and talked to passers-by. I can testify that the majority of the people of Madrid did not want to evacuate Madrid, despite the cold and the danger."

In conclusion Solano emphasized:

"Our people want to be free, and their wish must be respected. There is no possible justification for the savagery of tyrants who want to enslave them."

How deeply this process has penetrated is shown by the fact that even writers whose sympathies were hardly to be hoped for took the side of the People's Government. This applies to the greatest playwright of the generation of 1898, Jacinto Benavente. The reactionary press of the whole world, especially the German and Italian, for a long time spread rumors of the shooting of Benavente and of the noted artist Sulsagi by the People's Tribunal in Madrid. However, they are both alive and well. Benavente is at present in Valencia. He openly voiced indignation over fascist cruelties and the shooting by the bloody executioners of General Franco and Quiepo de Illiano of the greatest contemporary Spanish poet, Federico Garcia Lorca.

When children were brought to Valencia from burning Madrid, Benavente proposed to the Executive Committee of Public Spectacles of Valencia and the Province that it present the most famous of his works, the comedy *Play of Interests,* at the theater Principal for their benefit. And it is very significant that Benavente himself played the leading role of the servant Crispin. The receipts from the performance were given to the Social Aid Society, and the performance, in which the best artists of Valencia took part—Irene Barros, Rafael Rivel, Pako Pierrá, Enrique Rambal and others—ended with the singing of the Internationale. Thus Benavente, of whose fascization much was written in both the reactionary press and the revolutionary press, has now returned to the family of the foremost Spanish writers.

The reader will ask us what international fascism, including Spanish fascism, can oppose to these great victories of the People's Front in the sphere of art, to the burning enthusiasm of the writers and fighters who combine pen with rifle? The bombardment of Madrid? The destruction of museums and schools? The burning of the Liria Palace? Executions, repressions, the killing of women and children? The shooting of Federico Garcia Lorca and the bonfire of his books on the Carmen Square in Granada? The sufferings of the greatest composer of Spain, Manuel de Falla, who went insane at the sight of the bloody horrors of the fascist regime in Andalusia? Or, finally, the speeches of the former "life rector" of the fascist university of Salamanca, Miguel de Unamuno, news of whose death was recently printed in the French press? But it is precisely the tragic fate of the latter that should convince fascist writers in Spain how insignificant is their specific gravity, and consequently the specific gravity of their writings, in the eyes of the Spanish generals and their international masters.

Beginning in February, 1936, that is to say, with the moment of victory of the People's Front in Spain, Unamuno published approximately forty articles, which he combined under the general heading of *Comments,* in the conservative Madrid paper, *Ahora (Now).* In these articles he came forward as the bitter enemy of the Spanish revolution, the Soviet Union and progress in general, as the "spiritual aristocrat," standing above events and people. His native land, Spain, seemed to him a "lunatic asylum let loose."

Reality, however, showed that the "spiritual aristocrat" Unamuno, "gazing," according to his own expression, "from a high tower at the surging ocean of history," was a mere toy in the hands of the Spanish generals.

An excellent idea of his attitude in the first three months of the insurrection may

be gleaned from his interview with a correspondent of the French literary paper *La Nouvelle Litteraire,* Marie Bromberge (October 10, 1936). We herewith reprint the most eloquent passages of that interview.

"People sometimes ask me," Unamuno said, "whether I belong to the right or to the left, whether I belonged to the left and shifted to the right. It is sheer childishness to ask such questions when there is such calamity on all sides. To answer in detail would take as long as to answer the question: Do you believe in the existence of god? First one would have to define the meaning of belief, what existence is and what god is! . . ." Unamuno continues "What idea is at the basis of this conflict? None. There is no idea, utter emptiness! . . .

"This war will continue a long time, very long. The country will come out of it exhausted, blood-stained and bankrupt for many years. The future seems appalling to me. In Spain there is no other stable force on which one can rely besides the army. I used to say that one priest is better than one more lieutenant-colonel. Now I am of another opinion. In the sphere of politics, Mola and Franco have exhibited much agility—they did not praise the future and they did not come out against the republic. It would be a big mistake on their part to declare that they are on the side of this or that party—they must simply be opposed to barbarism. If only their victory is not accompanied by religious reaction, or rather the reaction of fanaticism, which is not religion. Such reaction might bring disastrous consequences. There is no turning back. . . ."

Further on in the interview, the Basque Unamuno came out against autonomy for both the Basques and the Catalans; he considered that such self-determination is in no way justified. "The Basques never wrote or did anything original without the help of the Spanish or the French," Unamuno asserted.

We have deliberately presented the views of Unamuno in detail, in the form in which he expressed them in his September interview. From the same source, incidentally, we learn a number of interesting facts about the Salamanca University under the fascist system. For example, Unamuno was ordered by the national Junta to "remove from the list of literature to be studied all works hostile to religion and patriotism. . . ." "The crucifix, removed by order of the Republican Government, was formally restored to the university auditoriums." The University of Salamanca was formally "dedicated to Christ the King."

But we would not be doing Unamuno justice if we failed to point out that even in that September declaration there were suggestions that his relations with the fascist authorities were far from being entirely satisfactory.

"If life here becomes unbearable for such an old man as I am," said Unamuno, "perhaps even I, at the age of seventy-two, will in the near future be forced to go into exile . . . the victors? I shall never be on their side. . . ."

A comparison of this remark by Unamuno with his declaration published in the Catholic magazine *Namur* in December, 1936, that is, approximately two months after his conversation with Marie Bromberge, convinces one that during this time he took an undeniable step forward on the road to understanding the significance of the generals' insurrection. Here he already openly admits the cruelties of the insurgents in Valladolid and other cities on Spanish territory.

Subsequently, the report of Unamuno's death appeared in the press. In connection with it, a foreign journalist "who recently visited the territory occupied by the insurgents," published extremely interesting information on the last months of Unamuno's life. It appeared the latter was removed from the post of honorary rector, and even expelled from a local club of which he was a charter member. The reason for this action was an incident which took place at a meeting held in the University of Salamanca on October 1, 1936. The reactionary professor of literature, Maldonado, delivered a speech sharply attacking the national liberation movement of the Basques and Catalans. Unamuno, a Basque, began to talk of the general cruelty of fascism and the intolerable repressions. Among other things, he expressed indignation against women who decorated their breasts with fascist medals and ran to gloat at the shootings and tortures."

Unamuno's speech caused a furore among the assembled fascist notables; "Death to the intellectuals," shouted General Asteri.

This incident probably convinced the writer that there was no difference between General Martinez Nido (who declared in 1924 that if he had had his way Unamuno would never have reached the island of Fuente-Ventuza—the place of his exile under Primo de Rivera—alive, and the Generals Mola and Franco. But Unamuno's tragic fate is significant in another respect. If the fascists can treat the greatest intellectual in their camp in such a fashion, they must also regard culture, philosophy and literature with tremendous contempt. And in this respect they are right, from their own standpoint, since Spanish fascism has not created any philosophy, literature or culture, as is evident from the course of events within the country.

An equally cruel lesson was received by another theorist of Spanish fascism and

active member of the "Spanish Phalanx,"—the philosopher, publicist, student of literature, critic, member of the Cortes, Ernesto Jiminez Caballero. As distinguished from Unamuno, he belongs to the "generation of 1930." During the dictatorship of Primo de Rivera, Jiminez Caballero was editor of the official Madrid *Literary Gazette,* published with funds supplied by the Bauer Bank and which discontinued publication after the bank failed. The paper rather unsuccessfully performed the task set before it by the dictatorship of Primo de Rivera and Berenguer to win over the young generation for the purposes of the reactionary powers. Later, Jiminez Caballero became known for his books *The New Catholic World* and *The Genius of Spain.* The latter work was long recognized in the reactionary Spanish circles that created and supported the notorious "Spanish Phalanx" as the "gospel of Spanish fascism."

The "genius of Christianity," in the opinion of Jiminez Caballero, is the "Christian-Catholic genius." The World War produced this genius in the form of Italian fascism. It was no accident that fascism was born in Rome. Fascism will also save Spain. But fascism in Spain means Catholicism. The symbol of Spanish fascism is a bundle of arrows, of Italian fascism a bundle of lictoral rods. Catholic Spain is destined to restore the holy Roman empire.

In his third book *(The Artist and the State),* Jiminez Caballero broaches the question of the relation between the individual and the collective, the masses and the spiritual minority. He reached the following conclusion:

"Art is at all times only the discovery of the ideals of any state, regardless of the form with which it is endowed. It is also the discovery of its potentialities and its propagation."

In December 1936, Jiminez Caballero was able to attest personally to the significance of the "discovery of the state idea in art" and also fully to enjoy the contemplation of the world and the image of god in the Salamanca prison, where he was placed by German officers for his "active propaganda of the ideas of the Vatican" and for being a supporter of Italian imperialism. He is subjected to beatings in prison.

We repeat, the military fascist insurrection has only proved once more the impotence in Spain of native fascist literature.

The reader may ask: "So the literature of the Spanish revolution, the literature of the Peoples Front, has definitely won out?" Such an assertion would be incorrect, however, and let us add on our own behalf that it would be a dangerous exaggeration. In the fire of class struggle the literature of the Spanish People's Front has now proved its fighting capacity, its true power, its living connection with the masses, its organized role, but it is still far from victory. There are many obstacles in the way; it must still fight and win a number of cruel battles.

Besides the foul work of the Trotskyites, who have their filthy agents on the Spanish literary front and whose activities the Spanish revolutionary writers must constantly fight, there is another source of danger in the person of fairly influential representatives of art who have emigrated to Paris and assumed a neutral position which is actually a reactionary one. These are writers who presume to be so greatly devoted to their country that they refuse to take part in the civil strife. They are, presumably, waiting for the end of the struggle in order to begin "work for the restoration of Spanish culture," which "they alone are now guarding in its inviolate form." The writers of this group call for the formation of a "third party"—"the party of civil peace and prosperity."

It is possible that this group is not homogeneous in its composition, that it contains people who are truly hesitant and who try to see their way clear in the course of events, but it also includes, of course, a good many representatives of the so-called "double insurers."

A striking exponent of this group is a writer of such world renown as Pio Baroja.

Arrested in the little town of Vera by an officer who was passing with a column of insurgent troops as a harmful, skeptical and atheistic person, he was taken to the Pamplona jail, where he spent three days and which he did not want to leave on the fourth. Pio Baroja is a prey to hopeless pessimism. He does not believe that the struggle will end soon, and in his sentiments he does not belong to either camp. An interview with him printed in the October issue of the French magazine *Commune* offers splendid proof of his definitely pessimistic attitude. Is there any need to speak of the indignation which the group of writers and artists who have entrenched themselves in Paris have aroused among the revolutionary intellectuals of Madrid, among the cultural fighters who have dedicated themselves to the service of the people?

In No. 11 of the *Mono Azul* (November 6, 1936) we find a note on a radio broadcast of Vincente Salas-Viu on the subject, *Writers and the People in the Civil War* Here is how he referred to the representatives of "pure art" entrenched in Paris: "They have not understood that if ever there was a time that demanded that we in our country come out of our houses, it is the present. They, on the contrary, in their cowardice, have preferred to betray us once and again instead of bravely facing our grim reality."

The literature of the People's Front will, doubtless, be able to cope with this danger. It will either assimilate the group by breaking away the most honest of its representatives, or will ignore it, leaving these "incorrigible pessimists" to end their days in "porcelain palaces" and "ivory towers." Such is the death sentence of history: "Who is not with the Spanish people is against them."

Pushkin Centennial Jubilee in the U.S.S.R.

It can be stated with assurance that 1936 was a year of preparation for the hundredth anniversary of the death of one of the greatest geniuses of the Russian people, the founder of contemporary Russian literature—Alexander Sergeyevich Pushkin.

At no time have the oft-quoted lines from Pushkin's famous poem *The Monument* resounded with such force and truthfulness as now:

"Tales of me will spread over the whole of great Russia,
Each will name me in his own tongue.
The proud grandson of the Slav, the Finn,
The still savage Tungus, and the Kalmyk, friend of the steppe."

This poem has proved to be a prophecy in the real sense of the word. Pushkin occupies a special place among the best Russian writers as one of the most splendid interpreters of the national creative spirit, as a poet of the people in the fullest and loftiest significance of this term. In the Land of the Soviets, where vital and realistic art is growing, Pushkin is the most powerful support, the most faithful ally of all who work in the realm of literature and art.

That is why a spontaneous urge towards Pushkin's inspiring poetry may be observed in the Soviet Union, that is why his poems are beginning to be heard in the languages of the peoples who acquired a written alphabet only after the Revolution, that is why on the hundredth anniversary of his death, Pushkin dominates the thoughts of our country's youth and makes an unprecedented and triumphant procession across the boundless Land of the Soviets.

The Publication of the Works of Pushkin

There is not a single publishing house in the Soviet Union, whatever the language in which it prints its books, that did not give enormous attention in its 1936-37 publishing plans to the works of the great poet. The publication of an eighteen-volume collection of Pushkin's works, undertaken by the Academy of Science, is the most outstanding event in this respect. The greatest Soviet scholars and bibliographers of Pushkin are participating in the publication of this work.

The largest publishing house in the Soviet Union, the State Publishers of Literature, has issued the works of Pushkin in very large printings. Three six-volume editions were sold out in an incredibly short time without satisfying even an insignificant part of the demand. The first three volumes of the fourth printing, and selected works of Pushkin issued in inxpensive editions, were sold out just as rapidly.

Nine and six-volume editions of the collected works of Pushkin published by "The Academia" are distinguished by their high quality. In addition to the above, the works of Pushkin are being published by the "Soviet Writer," the "Magazine-Newspaper Association" and the "Children's Publishers," not to mention publishers in other Soviet Republics. The total number of copies to be printed by all the publishing houses for Pushkin's anniversary (in fifty-two languages of the Soviet peoples) has been estimated at 13,400,000.

It is important to note here the exceptionally high literary level of the majority of the translations of Pushkin into the languages of the various nationalities of the U.S.S.R. The most talented poets, whose names are widely known in the Soviet Union, participated in these translations. There are admirable translations of Pushkin's works into Georgian by the poets Yashvili, Leonidze and Tabidze; into Armenian by Nairi Zaryan, recently awarded the Order of Lenin for important work in developing Armenian poetry; into Ukrainian by Rilsky and Tichina. Godstein, Galkin and other poets have made excellent translations of Pushkin's dramas into Jewish.

Literature on Pushkin

In addition to the publication of Pushkin's works, books on Pushkin have, of course, an important place in the plans of the publishing houses. In 1936, a large number of research works, biographies, whole volumes of recently discovered material, a large number of memoirs which could not have been published in full before the Revolution because of the censorship, collections of critical articles and similar works were issued. Among the books which have already been published or which are planned to appear in time for the anniversary celebration the following are worthy of special attention: *Pushkin and French Literature* by Tomashevsky; *The Vocabulary of Eugene Onegin* by Vinocur; *How Pushkin Worked* by Bondy; *The Language of Pushkin* by Vinogradov, and others. The monthly magazine, *Pushkin's Times,* publication of which was recently begun, analyzes in detail all material published on Pushkin and discusses controversial topics in connection with the study of Pushkin. *A Description of Push-*

Illustration by Golikov to an old edition of "The Tale of Tsar Sultan"

kin's Manuscripts prepared by the Academy of Sciences, an edition of photographs of these manuscripts to be published by "Academia" for the anniversary, as well as a two-volume edition on Pushkin's contemporaries which includes opinions of both Russian and West European classical writers on the poet, deserve special mention.

On the basis of an objective, historical investigation of the life and work of Pushkin, which became possible only after the Revolution, Soviet scholars will create a mighty biography of Pushkin. An analysis of his creative works will reveal the full significance of Pushkin as the founder of the new Russian literature.

The attempts made to recreate the figure of Pushkin in Soviet literature are extremely interesting. The recently published novel by I. Novikov, *Pushkin in Mikhailovskoye,* and a tragedy in verse by Globa *Pushkin,* have evoked lively discussion in literary circles. These writers do not attempt to embrace the whole life of the great Russian poet, but confine their attention to certain dramatic stages of his life, which give sufficient material to draw general conclusions on the whole tragic fate of Pushkin.

The writer Yuri Tinyanov has written an unusual novel about Pushkin. Tinyanov, it is true, has not yet completed his novel, but judging from the parts which already have been published, the author is planning to unfold a monumental canvas which will encompass Pushkin's whole life and present a panorama of the whole epoch of the poet, especially the literary world of his time. The Soviet public is waiting with great interest and impatience for the completion of this novel by a man who has the reputation of being not only a writer of polished style, but also one of the leading authorities on the epoch described by him, as evidenced by his earlier works on Pushkin's contemporaries—the Decembrist Küchelbäcker *(Kukhlya)* and Griboyedov *(The Death of Vasir Mukhtar).*

Artists About Pushkin

The "Art" publishers and the Moscow Association of Soviet Artists are also actively participating in the Pushkin celebration. They are preparing for the anniversary nearly one million prints made from eight portraits of Pushkin, an album of reproductions based on Pushkin themes, a series of special post cards, 100,000 posters for schools, an album *Dates From the Life and Work of Pushkin,* etc. The Association of Artists has announced for publication *Pushkin in Fine Arts* in two volumes, and five albums with drawings by Soviet artists describing the places where Pushkin lived. *Pushkin in the Drawings of Soviet Child-*

ren, which will be published in color by "Art," is of undeniable interest. The same publishing house is preparing a series of post cards *Pushkin in the Illustrations of Soviet Artists;* a book about the artists who painted portraits of Pushkin, illustrated with forty-eight reproductions; an enlarged and amplified edition of the book by the art critic Abram Efros about the drawings of the poet himself; and a large number of reproductions and portraits of Pushkin painted by great masters.

Pushkin In the World of Music

The Music Publishing House has issued a large collection of Pushkin's poems set to music, and has collected the most valuable compositions of classic and Soviet composers inspired by Pushkin's works. Among these are songs which were composed during the poet's lifetime, but were then either neglected or forgotten. *The Life and Work of Pushkin in Music* by Eiges is an analysis of compositions which were inspired by Pushkin's life and work.

Pushkin and the Theater

It is impossible to overestimate the part which the anniversary of Pushkin is destined to play in the life of the Soviet theater. Soviet theaters have disproved any ideas current to the effect that Pushkin's dramas are not adapted to the stage and do not conform to the laws of dramatic art.

Russian theaters as well as those of other nationalities of the Soviet Union are working with unprecedented interest and enthusiasm on the productions of Pushkin's plays, which fascinate with their lucidity and harmony of language and are full of deep philosophical content. The Moscow Art Theater, under the direction of Nemirovich-Danchenko, and the State Jewish Theater, directed by Michoels, are rehearsing Pushkin's tragedies, those great masterpieces which fully reveal the genius of the Russian poet. The historical tragedy, *Boris Godunov,* will be performed during the celebration by theaters as dissimilar as the Meyerhold and the Vakhtangov; a number of Moscow theaters are completing productions of the *Stone Guest.* Information is coming in from other cities of similar productions, and from a number of Union Republics and national areas—the Turkmenian, Kazakh, Ukrainian, Georgian, White Russian, Armenian, and Kirghizian Union Republics, the Tatar Autonomous Republic, the Jewish Autonomous Province, and many others. The powerful verses of Pushkin will be heard on the many stages of the Union, where his splendid characters will come to life. Many theaters are even now turning to Pushkin's prose and poems. For example, the White Russian State Theater has dramatized the stories *Dubrovsky* and *The Captain's Daughter;* the Griboyedov Theater of Tbilisi (Tiflis) has dramatized the fairy tale *The Golden Cock,* and the Moscow Realistic Theater has dramatized *Eugene Onegin.*

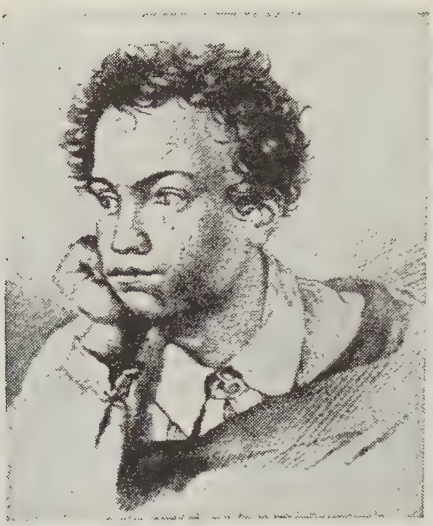
The Mass Study of Pushkin

Gatherings, series of lectures, special courses, discussions and collective readings are being organized throughout the Soviet Union. In the majority of cases, they are being organized at the initiative of the workers themselves. It can be truly stated that the Pushkin anniversary celebration as well as the preparations in connection with it are a very serious test of the maturity of the peoples of the U.S.S.R., a very serious examination of their cultural level. Even a cursory examination of the information which appears daily in the Soviet press will show that the test has been passed creditably. From January 1 to November 1, 1936, nearly 5,000 articles and news items were published in Russian papers alone on the creative works and biography of Pushkin and on the preparations for the anniversary; and 240 special literary supplements devoted to Pushkin were published.

Perhaps the most interesting testimony is the information which illuminates the state of affairs in the Soviet countryside. The Soviet peasantry, to whom for the first time the Revolution opened the doors to knowledge and art, now joyfully honor the memory of the great poet, study his poems and prose with delight and recite his poems at meetings.

Methods of studying Pushkin in the Soviet countryside are many. Occasionally the study is conducted in special olympiads, and festivals, sometimes in collective readings and discussions in clubs, sometimes in special family gatherings. For example, the press announced meetings of Komsomols in the Zavet Ilyicha Collective Farm (Kalinin Region), at which Veresayev's biographical articles about Pushkin, and such works of the poet as *Eugene Onegin, The Captain's Daughter,* and *The Village* were read and discussed. Two hundred amateur actors from collective farms participated in a theater olympiad which was recently held in the Pushkin Hills. A dramatization of the poem *Gypsies,* passages from *Boris Godunov* and 120 poems and songs were performed. It is interesting to note that a 64-year-old collective farmer, Antonov, was awarded the prize for the best reading of Pushkin's poetry. The newspaper Bolshe-

Illustration to an old Italian edition (Naples 1834) of "The Prisoner of Caucasus"



Pushkin as a boy

vitskaya Smena announced that a collective farmer named Alferov (in the Pokrovsk District of the Orenburg Region) organized a Pushkin corner in his home and arranged for the youth of the collective farm three discussions of Pushkin's works, particularly of his *History of the Pugachev Rebellion.* A successful meeting was held at the collective farm club in the village of Krutinsk (Omsk Region). The village population was notified about this meeting by radio and the club was unable to accommodate all who came. After a report on Pushkin, a scene from the *Stone Guest* was performed by a group of collective farmers and workers from the Blinova Machine and Tractor Station. The 56-year-old mother of a dairy worker very effectively contributed to the program recitations of Pushkin's poems *To Chaadayev* and *The Village.* The young people sang an interesting song, the refrain of which is as follows:

Hurrah for our youth, the Komsomol eagles,
Who rise in the stratosphere, scaling the heights,
Walk through life with a merry ditty,
Yearn for Pushkin's song of delight.

One might mention any number of similar events which bear eloquent witness to the fact that the countryside in the U.S.S.R. has been completely transformed, that in the land where everything serves the interests of the people, cultural progress is being achieved every day, that Pushkin, who was isolated from the people by a society of injustice, poverty and illiteracy, has at last become the property of the people.

An enormous number of minor local newspapers daily publish the reactions of the workers reading Pushkin, and letters requesting assistance in studying the creative works and life of the poet. Notwithstanding the publication of his works in editions reaching millions of copies, the requirements of the readers are far from satisfied. Therefore, in issue after issue, Pushkin's best works are published in a number of newspapers, in particular, factory newspapers. Special "literary pages" on Pushkin are also published.

At the recent All-Union Conference of Workers' Librairies, interesting data reflected a growing demand for Pushkin's books. At no time, declared the librarians at the Conference, was the name of Pushkin surrounded with such glory as it is today. There is not a concert given in workers' clubs, not a comradely evening, not a family celebration at which Pushkin's poems are not read, at which his poems, set to music by some of the greatest Russian composers—Borodin, Rimsky-Korsakov, Glazunov and others—are not sung. No matter how many copies of the works of Pushkin are obtained by the libraries, everyone is signed out as a rule.

The workers and Komsomols have shown much initiative in seeking methods of studying Pushkin. In Makhach-Kala (Daghestan), for example, the newspaper *Daghestan Pravda* reports that a moving picture festival was held at the suggestion of the local Komsomols. At the festival, a film about Pushkin, *The Poet and the Tsar,* and films based on Pushkin's works *The Captain's Daughter, Dubrovsky, The Station Master* and others were shown. A Pushkin exhibition was organized in the lobby of the theater. A number of Pushkin discussions were conducted at the quarries of the Proletari Cement Plant in Novorossisk, and the workers decided to open a Pushkin circulating library on the quarry. Kharitonov, a craftsman of the Taldomsk Chinaware Factory (Moscow Province) made a tea service with drawings based on the *Tale of the Fisherman and the Fish,* devoting an entire month to this work. His service was accepted by the committee which is selecting exhibits for the Paris International Exposition.

Aside from the schools, an extensive study of Pushkin is being conducted in the Red Army. In all Red Army clubs, famous literary critics and Pushkin scholars lecture on the work of the poet; exhibitions (one of the most interesting of which was held at the Red Army House in Kharkov), concerts, performances and collective readings are organized.

In a number of military divisions, including all those of the Transcaucasian military districts, Pushkin committees are conducting important educational activity. In Tbilisi, the Pushkin committees recently organized a number of conferences for Red Army readers to discuss the topic: How We Study Pushkin's Creative Works. These very successful conferences give valuable insight into the psychology of the Soviet reader, in particular, for determining the methods of cultural education employed in the Red Army. Among the mass of information appearing in the newspapers in connection with the hundredth anniversary of the death of Pushkin there is, however, one very unusual phenomenon which deserves special attention.

In collective farms, factories and plants, in the Red Army, those lecturing on Pushkin are not only professional critics and literary workers, but also factory workers, collective farmers and Red Army men themselves, among them many who were given an opportunity to study only after the Revolution. Not long ago the Soviet press described an interesting report made by a worker-student of Pushkin in Leningrad at the Pushkin Session of the Academy of Science. The Pushkin authorities participating in the discussion disputed a number of the propositions of the speaker but unanimously applauded his conscientious work in studying an enormous amount of the most varied material of pre-revolutionary and Soviet scholars on the great poet.

This is far from being an isolated case; other localities of the U.S.S.R. cite similar ones. These reports are always pervaded with a deep love for Pushkin and bear witness to intensive mental activity based on a desire to comprehend the content of his poetry. This desire gives a sincerity and simplicity to the reports of the workers, collective farmers and Red Army men which attract the audience and create in it a real interest not only in Pushkin but for all literature.

With the formation of the All-Union Committee on Pushkin early last year, the Soviet government expressed the feelings and mood of the masses, for whom the hundredth anniversary of the death of Pushkin is not simply a calendar date. For them this celebration is a confirmation of the cultural hegemony of their country, confirmation of the cultural hegemony of confirmation of the fact that they are masters of the great treasures of the past. That is why the people have responded and are continuing to respond to all the measures taken by the Committee on Pushkin. The people wish to honor Pushkin with new museums, new monuments, careful restoration of the places associated with his name, with larger and larger editions of his works and of literature about him. The All-Union Committee on Pushkin is carrying out all these measures.

Translated by S. Schwartz

Romain Rolland

To the Foreign Workers of the Stalin Steel Combinat of Magnitogorsk

I appreciate your indignation over André Gide's book. It is, indeed, a bad book—mediocre, astonishingly poor, superficial, childish and contradictory. The furore it has caused is not due to its own worth, which is negligible; it is due to the noise made over Gide and the exploitation of his name by the enemies of the U.S.S.R. who are always on the lookout and ready to use against it any weapons that offer themselves to their malice.

I reacted the way Ostrovsky did. I am angry with Gide less on account of his criticism, which he might have made openly when he was in the Soviet Union, than because of the double game he played; in the U.S.S.R. he was lavish with his avowals of love and admiration but as soon as he returned to France he stabbed the U.S.S.R. in the back, professing his "sincerity" the whole time!

I have heard it said that Gide did not mean any harm to the U.S.S.R. and the revolution and that he complains that the entire press hostile to the U.S.S.R. is using his book against the latter! It was not, however, for lack of warning! I know that friends of his had warned him of the harm he would do and urged him to think it over. He disregarded this and hastened to publish his book in a large cheap edition. As for his present protests against the humiliating congratulations and panegyrics of the reaction—including even the *Voelkischer Beobachter*—I can quite believe he feels worried. These are acts of accusation against him. But it is rather late for him to realize it! The damage is done. Will he have the strength to undo it? I doubt it. . . . If only he had a mind to! The coming months will show us.

But once more, like Ostrovsky, *"I no longer want to talk of him."* Neither he nor anyone else nor anything can ever stop the march of history and the development of the U.S.S.R. The U.S.S.R. has seen plenty of others like him!

But it is necessary, dear comrades, that every one of us who works and fights for the revolution, whatever his post (the humblest is as necessary as the highest) make sure to the best of his ability that the work for which he is responsible shall be accomplished as well as possible. Each of us fully realizes that there are still plenty of difficulties and obstacles, plenty of forces of inertia, of malice, of unscrupulous greed and of sheer stupidity, to be overcome on our way. Each of us knows that nothing is finished as yet, that alongside the palaces which have been built, there still exist hovels, that alongside men who are already conscious and worthy of the Soviet fatherland there still exist many who are not worthy and will not be for a long time yet. Life is a constant fight for progress, to advance, Let us all fight, then, let us never be satisfied with the goals attained, let us be constantly striving after higher ones! After every failure let us repeat the words of Ostrovsky regarding Voroshilov and Budyonny when they were before—I forget what city—which was occupied by the Whites: "They attacked seventeen times.... Where would we be if they had given up after the first failure?"

And let us also repeat the recent words of Voroshilov himself to the wives of Red Army commanders:

"We have already accomplished much, but we still have tremendous work ahead of us.... We must never for a single moment imagine that we have already done everything or nearly everything. This would be presumptuous and boastful. And you surely know that this is not in the Bolshevik spirit. Comrade Stalin is the sworn enemy of all presumption and boastfulness."

And Stalin himself (there is no need for my saying "the master of the peoples," as Gide claims one is *compelled* to say—that one cannot call Stalin "comrade" in the U.S.S.R. or simply address him as "you"!—as I nevertheless did continually in our conversations, both in the Kremlin and at Gorky's house, and in the *Pravda* of July 23, 1935)—Stalin himself wrote a long time ago in his *Problems of Leninism* that "modesty is the ornament of the true Bolshevik."

Let us therefore be true and modest, but steadfast in our struggles, in our constant efforts to enrich and embellish the great universal fatherland of the toilers, that was founded by the Revolution!

And we shall not allow ourselves to be affected by the howling hatred of enemies or by the shortcomings of friends who are too weak and cannot follow us! Let us rejoice in the fruitful pains (they are joyous) of our present glorious and difficult labors and in the joyous future they are building. My fraternal handshake to all.

Romain Rolland

P.S. I quoted the words of Ostrovsky and Voroshilov from memory. But I vouch for their exact meaning.

Editor-in-chief SERGEI DINAMOV

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