Workers of the world, unite!

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Heroes

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Josef Varga drank his coffee and cream, ate two crisp buttered rolls and tipped the chairs at the little marble coffee house table to prevent late comers from intruding upon him.

He ran his eyes over the columns of the paper in his hand. The paper was his favorite. For years he had wanted to take a subscription, but his wife felt that the literary section was poor and would not agree. So it was only on Sunday mornings in the coffee house that he read it—from cover to cover. It was a paper of liberal-monarchist trend. It was also considered pro-Semitic. Unlike most of his colleagues, Josef Varga, post office savings bank Inspector, held that it carried the best home information; he sometimes maintained, that the Jews had rendered invaluable services in the industrial and commercial life of the country and that the present anti-Semitic tendencies, which had become widespread since the proletarain dictatorship—seventeen years ago—were of a passing nature. Besides, the paper stood up for the interests of civil servants and was the confidential organ of the Houseowners' League.

Josef Varga was a houseowner too. During the war he had managed to acquire a lot in one of the Budapest suburbs with the money he had saved at the front. His wife—they had been married barely a year when the war broke out—his wife had not wasted a single heller of the money he sent from the front. The house had been built on credit after the proletarian dictatorship—four rooms, bathroom, kitchen, pantry, a big veranda and a tenth of an acre of garden surrounded with an iron railing. The two of them had laid out the garden like a park. To manage it, they had lived sparingly. It was fifteen years since they had last been away in the summer. In these fifteen years they had been to the theater perhaps five times; no cinemas, no cigarettes, no wine . . . Only the coffee house once a week—for the sake of the papers. The house ruled their lives. For fifteen years the debt and the interest had robbed their lives and the lives of their two children of all glamor. But now it was over: not a single heller was due on the house. For over a month now the wonderful deep blue spring sky had been smiling on a debt-free, tiled red roof and a debt-free garden.

The waiter was changing the water in the glasses on the tray for the second time. Varga almost involuntarily put out his hand for a glass, washed down the dry tobacco smoke in his throat and went on with the news of the Spanish civil war. As a matter of fact he only believed half of it. At any rate only half the atrocities! And if the Communists in Spain did shoot Whites, why, he was sure the Nationalists did not handle the Reds with kid gloves either. It was true the paper only reported Red atrocities, but good heavens, what was to be expected when the government censored the press?

He read the news on the Spanish situation with some annoyance, and his voice expressed more irritation than usual as he said to a man who had grasped one of the tipped chairs and was asking, "May I?"

"Excuse me, no. As you see, it is occupied."

But the man did not move. He kept the chairback in his hand and waited. Varga put down his paper and examined the intruder.

"Do you want anything?"

"I see you don't recognize me, Mr. Varga," the stranger said amiably.

Varga's eyes traveled thoughtfully over his face. Must be about thirty-five, he thought. No, no, I've never seen him before. Looks like a well-to-do, respectable person . . . His hands were the hands of a worker, but his manners, his appearance, and particularly the discreet, well-harmonized color of his suit, his shoes, his shirt, his tie . . . Varga got up and put out his hand.

"Josef Varga, post office savings banks Inspector."

"I know. I have known you . . . for twenty years."

They sat down facing each other. The stranger pulled out a silver cigarette-case and offered it. Varga refused it, so he lit up himself, carelessly waving the waiter away: "I'll order later." Then he went on. "It was soon after your marriage that I came to see you in your office a couple of times with your young brother-in-law, Paul Eszterag—a schoolmate of mine."

"In the savings bank?" Varga reflected. "It's possible. He often came to see me there. His sister—my wife—brought me no portion. What he got out of me would have made up a small portion by itself." He laughed. "Well, of course, I'm exaggerating, but the kid did borrow off me, often enough, God bless his soul."

"Why—is Paul Eszterag dead?" The man's clean-shaven face twitched.

"Oh, yes," said Varga lightly; "fifteen years ago." He looked searchingly into the man's compassionate face. "Excuse me, I didn't quite catch your name."

"Domanovich . . . Georg Domanovich."

They shook hands again, and Varga told him that after graduating from engineering school Eszterag had gone abroad to look for work, was hurt in an automobile accident near Paris, and died. Poor boy. Poor, reckless boy.

"Poor boy," repeated Domanovich. Then he looked up. "Funny, if I hadn't by accident seen you through the window I would have thought Paul is a happy family man somewhere or other. Though I can hardly imagine Paul with a family. He was a good fellow. You don't happen to have a photograph of him?"

"Photograph?" Varga wondered. "No. If I did carry a photograph around with me, it wouldn't be a man's. But anyway there are only pictures of him as a child left."

"I can imagine how precious they must be."

"Yes. His mother's got them." Varga reached out for his paper. He glanced at it, then, as if suddenly aware of his bad manners, put it down demonstratively and smiled apologetically across the table on which the stranger was thoughtfully leaning.

Domanovich rose suddenly and put out his hand.

"Good bye. I hope you'll excuse me for bothering you."

"No trouble at all. Very pleased to have met you."

Varga followed him with his eyes. Who was this man? He was sure he had never seen him before. His memory never deceived him. He might have been a friend of Paul's, but he had never come to see Varga in his office, or anywhere else . . . Funny, nobody had asked about Paul for years. It certainly was funny.

Somebody came up to the table. "Might I take the paper?"

"I'm reading it." And he took it up, to be left alone by these fellows who annoyed people for the papers, to avoid giving the boy a tip.

He turned to the window. Outside stood Michael Nagy von Affra, a fellow-

inspector, in his first lieutenant's uniform. Varga waved him in and took a few steps towards the door.

He looks fine in his uniform! Michael Nagy von Affra is post office savings bank Inspector and chief of the office branch of the Vitez League. A certified first lieutenant! Of course he was certified, being a Vitez . . . Vitez Michael Nagy von Affra—that means everything's in order: reliability, morals, patriotism, a clear reputation—everything. Gives him the right to wear his officer's uniform on Sundays and holidays. Not because he's a Vitez, but a certified first lieutenant.

They sat facing each other in the alcove. Nagy von Affra ordered a cognac, swallowed it at one draught, stroked his silvery moustache and put his saber between his knees.

"Well, my dear boy, I've taken the matter up. We had a general meeting in the district. I spoke about you too. They were all delighted. The district leader said, 'An officer with so many decorations . . . ' He's right, too. It's not every day that you meet an officer of the Reserve who's won all the medals—large gold, large silver, small silver, bronze, and Charles' Cross. And the Signum Laudis on top of it all!" He saw the waiter hanging about and bawled at him: "What are you hanging around here for? Another cognac, a double one, and be quick about it! . . . So you see, my dear boy, everything was splendid. They only wondered that such a hero—that's what they said, hero,—hadn't found occasion . . . to apply . . . a long time ago . . . years ago . . ." He banged on the stone floor with his saber and continued in a loud voice: "You don't know Josef, gentlemen, I told them: why, he's an absolute peach: modest, hard-working . . . " The waiter brought the strong-smelling cognac, and he drained the glass. "Yes," he went on hoarsely, "you were one of the most often decorated officers in the war."

Better than you, at any rate, thought Josef Varga; but he said nothing. He pushed the paper away and waited uneasily. Beads of sweat stood out on the other's forehead where his greying black hair was curled back; his eyes swam in a light mist of alcohol. Varga couldn't stand the smell of the spirits; he pushed back his chair and asked:

"Well . . . and?"

"You'll have to get a few papers!"

"Papers? All the papers about my awards are there."

"You see . . . that's not the point. Your wife . . . your wife was an Eszterag, wasn't she?"

"Yes," Varga replied quietly. "I see. It's to do with her younger brother."

"Yes. Tell me, why did you never tell me about it?" Nagy von Affra spoke reproachfully.

"What should I say about it? Anna and I were married two years before the war. The kid was only twelve then."

"That means nineteen at the time of the dictatorship," the other figured up sympathetically.

"When he took up with the Communists I wouldn't know him any more. That you can be sure of," Varga replied, looking him straight in the eyes.

"Oh, I believe it, sure enough."

"Haven't seen him since the spring of 1919. How can I answer for something I had nothing to do with?"

"You can't." Nagy played thoughtfully with his golden chain.

Then he raised his head. The alcohol was gone out of his eyes. They were cold and calculating. "You don't know where this Paul Eszterag is hanging out?"

"How should I know? He may be dead, for all I know. He hasn't written even to his mother for the last six years. As far as I'm concerned he's dead in any case."

"I'm sure of that."

"What papers do they want?" Varga asked with irritation.

"That you had broken with him at the time of the dictatorship . . . that he hasn't existed for you since then."

"What rot! How can I prove something that never existed? That I had nothing to do with him . . . You can't . . . "

The officer shrugged his shoulders. "As you like."

"So you won't admit me?"

"Not until you get those papers."

"But I've been working in the savings bank for twenty-five years. I have my officer's papers, I've been certified. For fifteen years I've worked in the same department with you, I have a clear past . . . "

"That's so. I can confirm all that. But the district leader is interested in a different point."

"Good heavens, what's the matter?" He brought down his fist on the table. "I haven't got a single Jew in my family!"

"You'll pardon me, but the reports say that you're sympathetic to the Jews."

"Oh, so they have confidential reports about me?"

"Certainly. That one comes from me."

"Oh? I'm very grateful!" Varga looked over the top of the other's head.

"Are you angry? You're wrong to be angry. You couldn't have a better friend than me. In spite of everything I gave them a very favorable portrait of you."

"Ninety-five percent favorable and five negative—and the five outweighs the ninety-five?"

"You simply must quit making what you call your impartial statements—that's all."

"So. I'm not to express any sympathies for the Jews? Perhaps I should also divorce my wife?"

"Look here . . . "

"And disown my children because fifteen years ago, before they were born, their uncle . . . "

"Well, the district chief insists . . ."

"To hell with your district chief!"

The other got up. Varga jumped up too. They stared in each other's eyes. Then Nagy von Affra saluted and turned on his heels. At the door he beckoned to the waiter, paid his bill, kicked his sword out of the way and dragged it clanging through the door. It was only now that Varga sat down. The muscles on his neck were taut. He stroked the back of his head. It's about time I saw a doctor. Something might happen. . . Whenever I get excited . . . Always the same feeling of being fooled, the same fury . . . Hardening of the arteries, or God knows what else . . . He gulped down a glass of water and stared at the sunlit street. A lot of people out walking. Some fine women. Budapest women are the best looking in the world.

He looked through the news, but he wasn't thinking about it. Would Nagy von Affra make trouble for him for insulting the Vitez League? He'd get out of it somehow. "I didn't mean to insult it . . . Please excuse me . . . " Or else, tomorrow, when they happened to be alone: "Look here, old man, I let my-

self go yesterday, so . . . " But hell, what is this lousy spying around? You have to watch every word you say. Jew sympathies! Just because he doesn't take all sorts of rot without questioning! They'll be suspecting him of communist sympathies next! One time when some yellow sheet had printed a full page article about the Russians forcing the daughters of all rich men and landowners to marry workers, he had said before several people, "What nonsense! Do they think all Hungarians have lost their minds and believe this nonsense?" He took up the paper again, looked into the theater section with its spicy gossip about the actors, read an interesting story about modern presentations of the classics. The court accounts had nothing interesting. As for the short police notices, he never read far into the column. The interesting cases get special reports in the main news section. He barely glanced down the column. It carried a photograph today. He ran his eyes absent-mindedly over the caption—a man under arrest. Whoever could identify him should perform his civic duty and report . . .

Strange! If the police don't know whom they've got, what do they keep him for? Or perhaps he's under suspicion. Hell, won't he even tell his name? He must have plenty on his conscience! He looked more closely at the picture. . . . He shrank, for familiar eyes looked at him from it. Where . . . where had he seen them?

He laughed. Why, they were his wife's eyes. He jumped up, then waved his excitement away. You're getting old, my boy. Age is telling . . . Hardening of the arteries. Sentimentality. He sat down again and looked at the picture. Now he saw clearly: the eyes were his wife's, but the rest of the face—mouth, forehead, nose, chin—utterly strange. The face of a stranger. That face has nothing to do with my wife . . . It's a stranger . . . Rot. How could this . . . this face of a man of fifty . . . That Paul Eszterag, Paul?

Keep calm, that's the main thing. It might be he. Of course it might. People change in seventeen years. Out of all recognition. He especially: Sentenced to death in 1920, after being all but tortured to death in a military prison, if what his mother said was true . . . Then two years in jail before the Russians got him in exchange . . . And then—well, he was always ready to go wherever he could fight for his cause. That—that obstinate mouth, that hard, pitiless mouth, that firm chin. What wild plans must be fashioned behind that lined forehead. That cross line proves it! And those bushy, hanging eyebrows. A hard-boiled fellow. But those eyes! How can such a man keep those great wondering eyes? Anna often looks like that, in wonder, like a child.

Eszterag . . . Paul Eszterag . . . Goddam it! . . . Paul Eszterag . . . What the hell is this? What's happening? An absolute stranger starts talking about him. Comes to me and starts talking about him. A friend of his? Often been in my office? A bloody lie, never saw him before . . . A detective . . . secret service man. A secret service man watching Inspector Josef Varga. And that Nagy von Affra and the Vitez League? Clear enough, Affra's a secret service tool too, wants to know about Eszterag. Accident? Nonsense! When there's a plain clothes man at his heels, of course they can't admit him. The Vitez League is for the purest of the pure; its members looked death in the face a hundred times at the front. And never wavered in civil life!

And they didn't play around with unorthodox ideas either. Jew sympathies? They're right, such sympathies are dangerous. From the point of view of Hungary as a whole the Jews are dangerous. Because they get into leading positions. The Jew studies, and people who study get ahead, and so he

pushes the Magyar out . . . Competition . . . The race and not the individual. Yes, indeed! The race is our enemy, although we may like individuals. And weren't they the leaders of the Commune? Of course they were. Nearly all the leaders were Jews. Cut out this sentimentality. They're Jews, and that settles it. But what's it all got to do with him? There's not one Jew among his friends. No Jewish relatives . . .

Yes, it's Paul. But he's supposed to be dead, according to the stories invented for the public. Been dead for fifteen years. A reckless driver . . . Not a chauffeur but a gentleman-driver . . . It's he, however his face may have changed. But how did they recognize him? How do they know that this man with the changed face is Paul Eszterag? They know. The police know everything. They've forced him to confess . . . The police have got the means; they made him confess. But, Jesus Christ, then it's a trap! A trap for Josef Varga—will he report, is he a good enough patriot to report that this supposedly unknown Communist is his brother-in-law? That he's Paul Eszterag . . . A trap . . . clear enough . . . a trap . . . If you fell in, that's the end of you . . .

The elbow he was leaning on hurt. So did his eyes, fixed on the photograph. His back felt stiff. Stiffly he sat up. Staring at the swarming crowd, he beckoned to the boy.

"Here, send off a telegram for me."

"Yes, sir."

"Call the waiter. I'll pay now. I'll write the telegram while you're getting him."

The boy ran off. Varga started writing a telegram to his wife to say that he was delayed on business he couldn't put off; they should have dinner without him.

Dinner without me . . . without me . . . he hadn't missed dining at home on Sunday for years. The waiter seemed to realize something, and the boy too. They stared at him . . . He took a taxi and hurried the driver. He had the money ready, together with 20 hellers for a tip, so as not to waste any time.

In front of the police headquarters he jumped out. He asked for the officer on duty and was taken in to a young officer, who rose from his chair and came to meet him.

"My name is Josef Varga, certified officer of the Reserve . . . I've come about the photograph in today's papers," he brought out stammering.

"Just a moment," the officer replied, disappearing through one of the doors. When he returned a few minutes later, Varga was sitting composed once more.

"Would you be so kind . . . " said the officer, showing the way. A man in plain clothes was waiting in the passage.

"Where are we going?" Varga asked.

"To the political section."

The man was a couple of steps ahead of him. He was glad that all the policemen and plain clothesmen could see that he was not a suspect but . . . what was he, for that matter? Yes, yes, he had come to do his patriotic duty . . . . Of course, nobody can know that. Well, they'll find out.

"Josef Varga, certified officer of the Reserves," he reported.

"Make yourself at home," the Police Chief replied, putting his arm around Varga's shoulders and leading him to an arm-chair. He too sat down, facing Varga. "Pleased to meet you at last. . . . Well, nothing surprising in that:

we know Josef Varga is one of the bravest officers in the Budapest Regiment. Only last night we were talking about you. Michael Nagy von Affra drew an inspiring picture of you."

Varga drank the peach brandy that the officer offered him and took a cigar, although he had not smoked for fifteen years and couldn't remember when he had drunk last. But now he asked for another brandy and took a deep, stunning pull at the heavy cigar.

He faltered as he told about his clash with Michael Nagy von Affra. He regretted it already. Presented in a certain light, meaningless trifles suddenly appeared significant and momentous. No accident that he, knowing a Communist in his family, that he should have such sympathies for the Jews . . . that his favorite paper, the source of his mental food, should not be a positively national organ but one of a liberal trend.

He took another drink. By now he returned the officer's familiarity. Hesitating slightly, he told him that the person in whom the police were interested was Paul Eszterag, the Communist who had been sentenced to death. The Police Chief scribbled something on a bit of paper, rang, and handed the slip to the policeman who answered the ring.

"As far as I'm concerned," said Varga, "he died the moment he joined the Communists. That you can be sure of."

"I have no cause to doubt it," the Police Chief returned

"I've never seen him since 1919."

"Did he write occasionally?"

"Very seldom, and I never read his letters."

"Are there photographs of him at home?"

"I think so. Pictures of him as a child."

The Chief looked thoughtful. The room was very quiet. Varga wiped his forehead; he was tired. He had never been so tired in his life.

"Has he got any friends?" the other asked suddenly.

"Who?" he asked startled, then he understood: "I don't know. . . . I suppose so . . . that is. . . ." He finished up in confusion.

The Police Chief looked at him. He had peculiar eyes. He wore heavy horn-rimmed spectacles with thick lenses, behind which his pupils looked big and blurred. On his thin clean-shaven face the great horn-rimmed frame looked like an ox's yoke on a calf. He leaned forward and put his hand on Varga's knee; the contact restored Varga's composure.

"Then there's something else," he went on. "This morning in the coffee house a man told me he had been a boyhood friend of Paul's, but hadn't seen him since they graduated. . . ." He broke off.

"Please go on."

"He said he had often come to see me at my office together with Paul. That must have been before the war, because after the war came the revolution—the dictatorship—and I broke with him . . . with Paul . . . then. . . ."

"I know that. You've said it before," the officer interrupted with irritation.

Varga was hurt. What way is that to talk? He wasn't a prisoner. What was this person examining him for? He wouldn't say a word more. That other fellow asked about photographs too. . . . They're playing police with him! This one must have been told everything already, he must have sent that fellow to the coffee house himself.

"Go on, please," he heard the officer urge.

"I don't know anything else, except that I'd never seen the fellow before. I only realized that after he was gone, when I began to recall all the old

faces, I remember all the faces I've known for the last thirty or forty years."

"Well, twenty years ago he may have been a child, while now he'd be grown up. You have the war and all sorts of things in between, in addition to the twenty years. . . ."

"I could have recognized him if I'd known him."

"So who was it?"

"A plain-clothes man," Varga replied gaily.

"Plain-clothes man? What for?"

"You sent him."

The Police Chief raised his eyebrows and laughed to himself. Then he said that if he had known that Eszterag was a relative of his, he would not have had his photograph published. The man in the coffee house must have been some pal of Eszterag's who had read in the paper about his arrest.

So the whole thing was just imagination, Varga thought. Nothing will happen if he doesn't give himself away. If he keeps his head and doesn't get scared nobody will ever know that Paul Eszterag and he. . . . He clutched at the table. His chair seemed to be whirling round and round. The Police Chief urged him to give a detailed description of the man in the coffee house, for the investigation.

"I don't know. Don't remember."

"Surely, you remember every face even thirty years back," the other quoted.

What does he mean? Is he laughing at me? How dare he! What does he think I am? I don't have to take part in the investigation. Let them find out as best they can. They have police dogs enough.

"I don't remember," he repeated in a loud voice.

"As you like." The Police Chief shrugged his shoulders. "Plenty of time for you to remember."

"What do you mean, plenty of time for me to remember? I just don't intend to. I'll ask you to know that I refuse. I'm post savings bank Inspector, officer of the Reserve, and not an informer." He rose. "I want to go."

"One moment." The Police Chief rang the bell, and nodded to the policeman who appeared. "We'll be through in a minute."

The door opened once more, to let in, first a guard armed with revolver and saber, who saluted and stepped aside. Then came a clean-shaven man in a creased suit, and again an armed guard. The three stood in a single line before them. The Police Chief turned to Varga.

"So do you recognize your brother-in-law?"

The prisoner stood motionless between his guards, looking at Varga with the gaze of an interested stranger. Then he looked at the Police Chief, who was examining him through his narrow slits of eyes.

"Paul Eszterag, your brother-in-law has asked to see you."

"I do not know this gentleman," the prisoner replied.

Varga took a step forward. He pushed one hand behind his back, and the other into his pocket, in agitation. The voice, face and movement of the man in the creased suit were unfamiliar, but his eyes, his bloodshot eyes . . . Those great wondering eyes . . . his wife's eyes.

"Lead him out," the Police Chief ordered.

When they were alone again, Varga sank wearily into the arm-chair. He filled his glass and drained it. The spirits filled his stomach, his head swam from their unaccustomed fumes.

"So, have you anything to say?"

"Yes, I have. His eyes . . . like my wife's. Perhaps they're not like them at all and it's just my imagination. . . . I remember the eyes. . . ."

"Your wife's eyes? I must warn you that you are speaking before the authorities. . . . Give me a straight answer: is the prisoner identical with Paul Eszterag or not?"

"I think. . . ."

"Yes, or no?"

"Yes," Varga replied in a barely audible voice. His head dropped.

A little typewriter was standing on the table. The officer typed a few lines.

"Signature."

Varga read the paper and put his signature to the statement that the prisoner with whom he had been confronted was identical with the man whose photograph the police had printed in the papers and that he, Varga, had recognized him both in the photograph and in person to be the Paul Eszterag who in 1920 had been sentenced to death by special tribunal.

2

The Political Section men went to the border station where Paul Eszterag had been arrested. They examined all over again the frontier guards who had brought the wounded prisoner to the guard-house. But neither the officer in charge nor his men could add anything new. On their rounds one night in early spring they had come upon smugglers crossing the borderline with great packs on their backs. The guards had ordered them to halt, and had fired when the order was not obeyed. Since it was dark they could not aim properly. When others, wakened by the shots, had come running from the barracks, they found a wounded man unconscious. No papers were found in his pockets. He had been wounded in the thigh, and had lost a lot of blood. It was only in the barracks that he came to. His story was that he was a member of a smuggling gang—that the others had made off with the goods. He gave a name and address that were found to be false. No one by that name had ever lived in the little border village he had named.

Besides, it seemed probable that he was not a smuggler at all. The patrol —who had really shot blindly—all said that the gang could have been at most a hundred steps away from them. When ordered to halt they had dropped on all fours and crawled across the border. This prisoner, on the other hand, had been lying at least five or six hundred yards from the place where the shots had been fired. And he must have collapsed at the spot where he was found, for no traces of blood were found, and the grass and damp sand near the place where he lay were clean. There were no steps to show that anyone had either approached or left him. He must have got his wound some other way. He had lost a lot of blood.

The detectives inquired of the local innkeepers, the village magistrates, the coachmen of the neighborhood. Some recognized the man by his photograph; some said they had known him for years. He would suddenly appear from whence, no one knew, and hire a cart to take him to the nearest railway station. He came fairly often—five or six times perhaps, during the last four years.

Was he a smuggler or a spy? As long as he had been in the prison hospital, they had not pressed him so hard, but afterwards they gave him the works. For days these detectives, experienced in handling Communists, tried

to beat something out of him, but it was they who got tired of it. The prisoner remained dumb.

After Josef Varga had provided a positive point for them to start from, they set to work with renewed energy. They sought out those of Paul Eszterag's schoolmates who lived in Budapest. These thought that they recognized the picture, but only after the officer mentioned Eszterag's name.

"Eszterag? Might be. . . . Haven't seen him for twenty years . . . a long time. . . . I don't know . . . might be . . . yes, yes, now I remember . . . it's him . . . his eyes. . . ." they hesitated.

The military tribunal also took up the investigation. The prisoner was in all probability a spy. He had been arrested near the border, and his behavior proved that he must have played a prominent part in the Communist movement. His past was clear. It was only owing to the intervention of the Russians that he had succeeded in escaping the gallows. But the Hungarian court had declared at that time that it postponed the execution of the sentence only as long as the prisoner remained outside the country; should he re-enter it, the sentence would be carried out. This crime was aggravated—if that were not enough—by the fact that he had been a spy as well. The argument the Communists used—though this one did not attempt to do so—that they only propagated an idea, was ridiculous. This idea is the basis of the state and public institutions of the Soviet Union, and its popularization is against the principles of the Hungarian Constitution. Besides, the Soviet Union is on friendly terms with Hungary's arch enemy. The prisoner must have been spying for that country too.

He was transferred to a military prison. But here difficulties arose in the very first hour, for the regulations required that a card should be kept for every inmate, while the alleged Paul Eszterag denied his identity. But who he was he would not say. They beat the soles of his feet with a horsewhip; they pounded him near his kidneys and his heart with a sand bag; when he lost consciousness they revived him and hung him up by his wrists. Still he remained dumb.

On the third day four warders came into his cell and told him to undress. Then they knocked him down and carried him out limp. In the corridor two more warders were waiting with a thick horse-blanket, dripping wet. They wrapped him unresisting in the icy blanket, strapped it together and took him back to the cell. An armed guard sat down near the plank bed and watched the prisoner's teeth chatter and his lips turn blue. The guard sat there for hours, his rifle between his knees, watching the tortured man. When he was relieved, he said: "That guy sure has guts. You can't get a sound out of him."

Others scream and howl under this torture. The wet blanket shrinks as it dries and the coarse, heavy stuff squeezes the man inside. . . . The guard sat there, occasionally sprinkling water over the writhing man's eyes. A third eight-hour watch set in. The cell was heated with an electric stove to make the blanket dry quicker. A cloud of steam rose over the wet blanket. Foam fringed the unconscious man's compressed lips. . . .

Next morning they took him out of the blanket, which by this time was as hard as bark. They scrubbed his body clean of dirt with a stiff brush. Then they left him alone to dress. When Josef Varga came in, he was lying on the bed, incapable of moving. For several minutes Varga looked at him disconcerted.

"Paul," he said finally, in a frightened voice.

The prisoner opened his eyes, but did not answer.

Varga stood at the foot of the bed. It was a little over a fortnight since he had been confronted with the man in the police headquarters. And in that fortnight he had become a wreck, an old man. They did him properly, Varga thought . . . He remembered his father-in-law—that was the way he had looked on his deathbed . . . What sense was there to it, when both the peasants at the border and his schoolmates had recognized him? It was all useless. What was he counting on? Did he expect to be acquitted through lack of proof? All the lawyers say that in such cases suspicion is enough, proofs are not needed. The principle is—better get rid of ten innocent men than let one criminal go free. For in such cases proofs cannot always be produced, even when the suspicion seems justified. Particularly when you're dealing with such caution and resolution.

For he certainly was resolute. He had been standing in the jaws of death for years. The gallows were waiting for him, why had he not gone to some other country? There he could have started all over again. If he had been caught it would not have been a hanging matter. It would have been his first case. And there if he had got pinched he would have involved nobody else.

Nobody doubts Josef Varga's patriotism now. He's made up with Michael Nagy von Affra. Nagy von Affra appreciates the loyalty he showed in hastening to the police to establish that man's identity. But he's had to pay a price for it too—a great price . . . His home! Anna, poor girl! And his mother-in-law, Michael Eszterag's widow! A plucky old woman—doesn't cry, doesn't complain, doesn't wail; just wanders silently about the house. Hardly opens her mouth. Maybe she's a bit unhinged, and no wonder.

Behind the door somebody cleared his throat. Varga took the hint.

"Paul," he started again, "if you don't care about me any more, at least hear what your mother and Anna asked me to tell you."

The prisoner raised his weary eyes. The great, wondering child's gaze shone in his shrunken face.

"I have already said that I don't know this gentleman," he replied softly.

"But Paul, what sense is there to it? After all, you're a sensible fellow—though I'm beginning to doubt it, now that you've come back here . . . "

The man smiled.

"You're laughing at me? You're right, too. One shouldn't irritate a sick man. Forgive me."

"Do please leave me alone."

"Listen, Paul, just listen to me. I'm a certified officer, I'm valued in my office, many of my fellow-officers are in high positions . . . Even generals . . . In this prison I have friends too. I've talked to them. If you . . . They promised me that if you would tell . . ."

The yellow face lost its ironical smile. The look of wonder disappeared . . . The eyes stared with cold hostility.

"Paul, please don't look at me like that. At home your mother . . . she sits in a corner day after day and never opens her mouth; I only feel that she looks at me as if . . . as if I . . . I can't help it, I took an oath, I'm an official and I have different views. I was asked and I answered. You had to expect that . . . Think what would happen to me if the Russians got hold of me . . . If I were sent there . . . And I'd go, of course I'd go, if I were ordered to. The oath binds you. I'll go where I'm sent, and I know that if I landed in your hands you would sentence me to death. That's clear . . . But our mutual respect . . ."

The prisoner turned to the wall. Varga gave it up. For a while he stood

waiting, not knowing what to do; then he crept silently from the cell . . The prison superintendent was waiting outside.

"Well, did he say anything, the bastard?"

"Not a word. I'm quite dazed. Such strength, such will power, such . . . heroism . . . "

"He's a criminal, that's what he is," the warden interrupted, "him a hero? He's a dog and a coward to behave that way. If he had a spark of honor left he wouldn't act like that."

Varga did not reply. He quickened his steps. At the gate he took off his hat, but did not give the warden his hand. He all but ran past the guards then turned, panting, to look at the locked gate . . . In the street car he reassured himself: yes, when one thinks it over seriously, Paul is a criminal from the point of view of the Hungarian nation. For what does he want, what do his friends want? To drown the country in blood, the way they're doing it in Spain . . . No, something wrong there, for in Spain it was the Rights who started it . . . it's the same thing . . . we're trying to prevent it instead of waiting till we have to cure it. We must take preventive measures, so that national sentiment shouldn't be forced to use such terrible weapons . . . But he's a hero all the same. A regular hero. What they must have done to him, to make him age thirty years in a fortnight! And still he says nothing. Such a brainy fellow too—he must have been some kind of leader over there. They say they have a lot of young generals commanding the army. Paul must have been one. Absolutely! Or else some leader of this Comintern they write about. Or perhaps picked out to be the leader in Hungary . . . A leader revered by hundreds of thousands of secret supporters.

He was still worried by this possibility when he left the street car and walked towards his house along the little street with its two rows of trees. Now and then he stopped, like one in a daydream; he seemed to see Paul Eszterag and his brother-in-law, Josef Varga, walking arm in arm between the rows of the guard of honor in the towered royal castle overlooking the Danube.

From his house his son and daughter—fifteen and eighteen—were coming towards him. The girl was like her mother, the boy was his father's image. They kissed their hands to Varga.

"Where are you going?" he asked them.

"To dancing school," they replied in one breath. They stopped and looked at him. The girl asked:

"Did he say anything, daddy?"

"He? What do you mean, he? Where are your manners? Your own uncle, that you should be proud of, a man anybody might be proud of to have as . . ."

"Daddy!" the girl protested in horror, looking around apprehensively.

"That's enough. You may go."

Varga watched them go off timidly. He was suddenly sorry for his outburst. After all, his daughter wasn't a child any more. She was grown up. And she was right, too. How could he have spoken out so loud in the street about something that must be kept secret, not only for personal and family motives but by order of the authorities? And, what's more, to have spoken with approval!

He entered his carefully tended garden, surrounded by splendid lilac bushes. Both the cherry trees were in bloom, and the freshly watered flowerbeds sparkled in the light of the setting sun.

On the veranda his wife seeing him, put down her embroidery. The old woman sitting at the table raised her head from her book. She did not return

Varga's salutation. She took off her glasses and polished them carefully with her handkerchief while she listened to Varga's gushing praises of Paul Eszterag's heroism, which if used to serve his country and not against it, would have entitled him to the highest honors. His wife looked at him with tears in her eyes, and finally laid her head on his chest and wept. Varga stroked the knot of still unwhitened hair at the back of her head and went on with his story of Paul's obstinacy. He had given no answer, had played the stranger. In spite of the fact that Varga had today seen what had absolutely convinced him of his identity, if he had had any doubts before . . . As he lay on the bed, his face so yellow and shrunken, he had looked exactly like his dear father, Michael Eszterag—might he rest in peace—just before he died. So much had Paul aged in his fortnight of torture.

The old woman suddenly uttered a sob. She sat in the wicker armchair, her round face turned up at the ceiling, and cried softly and disjointedly.

Her daughter ran to her. "Mother, Mother darling!"

Varga reached out his hand to stroke her hair. The old lady's crying might have been cut off with a knife, so suddenly did she shrink back.

"Don't you touch me," she said hoarsely, her face twitching with loathing.

"Mother dear," her daughter coaxed, "don't be angry with Joszi."

Varga drew back offendedly and sat down at the other side of the table. Things had become impossible. He couldn't even call his house his home any more. What sort of home is it if you're screamed at like an animal. And the old woman really has no reason to be rude. Never had a son-in-law respected his mother-in-law the way he had. True, of course, the old lady had been a model mother-in-law too. It had always been mutual. Now it was over. This couldn't last any longer . . . He got up.

'Excuse me, Mother," he said, "I received two summons today to appear before the military judge, one for you and one for me. He asked me . . . He wanted me to let him know if you would go—if you would go to face Paul."

"That's my business," the old lady replied.

"I know that. The law does not bind the next of kin to give incriminating evidence . . . but your duty to your country . . . You should think about that too . . . "

She looked at Varga. He dropped his eyes in embarrassment.

"And, finally, you could be expected to show some consideration for your family," he started again.

"My family?"

"Yes, your family. And me. Yes, for me too. What are you looking at me like that for? Yes, I have the right to expect it. I'm the breadwinner, and whatever's done in this house, by my family and its members, has to be done with my consent, as I decide and order. I can't allow our family life to be upset. I won't permit it, no, I will not permit a memory, nothing but a bitter enough memory, to poison our whole life . . . If even the least advantage could be expected of it . . . But it can't . . . "

"An advantage?"

"I have two children," Varga went on. "I want to give them a secure future. And don't forget that I am making a home secure for you, too, by honest work."

"Oh yes! By your honest work! Your work is nothing if not honest. I'm sure you'll be rewarded for it."

"Mother dear, for my sake, don't annoy Joszi," said his wife.

But her mother paid no attention. She leaned her elbow on the table, never taking her eyes off Varga. Now and again she would toss her head, or shud-

der, her short silver hair fluttering. After a while she got up and walked heavily to the door. Then she turned back, walked past Varga to the glass wall opposite. There she stood looking at the dark garden. Then she turned suddenly and crossed the room again, hurriedly this time, wringing her hands and muttering something unintelligible. She saw and heard no one about her. She wrung her hands, seemed to fight first with one, and then with several invisible enemies . . . Her pace began to drag. She reached out for her chair, sank into it, put her elbows on the table and rested her head in her hands. Suddenly she raised it.

"Did you say something?" She looked long and searchingly at her daughter and son-in-law; then she smiled. "I thought . . . I thought I heard you say something. I've thought everything over. I'll go tomorrow morning to face him. I'll give evidence."

"You'll be doing right, Mother. And you see you needn't have been so nervous," Varga replied with a dry mouth.

"I'll have a look at this prisoner. . . Look at his eyes . . ."

"It'll be Paul," Varga said, "it'll be Paul Eszterag's eyes that you'll see."

"Paul? You know well enough that Paul's in Moscow. He'd be crazy to come here when the prison and gallows are waiting for him."

"Don't joke, Mother. If you do speak, you'll have to speak on your oath."

"On my oath? Don't worry. They won't put me on my oath. You'll have to take the oath—you're the incriminating witness. But these patriotic judges of yours won't put me on my oath—I'm the state witness."

"You surely don't mean to give false evidence?"

"I'll tell the pure truth. That's what I've done up to now."

"Up to now you've said nothing at all."

"That colonel that came to look for photographs—I told him the truth."

"You said that you didn't know anything about any childhood photographs. Was that the truth too?"

"I told the truth. The pictures aren't here. I don't know where they are."

"You've burnt them, or else hidden them away."

"That's not true. I gave them all to somebody."

"Who?" Varga screamed. In his excitement he came right up to her, even raising his hand in the air.

Her daughter began to laugh nervously and babble in a shaking voice that she really must stop joking. . . The mother watched the horrified couple with interest, took a cigarette from the old silver box on the table, twisted it in her fingers and lit it, slowly and deliberately. As a rule she smoked only after meals, but now she blew out the smoke a little awkwardly, with demonstrative hostility.

"What have you done with the pictures? Jesus Christ, I'll go crazy . . . You're going to tell me right now what you've done with those pictures."

She knocked the ash off her cigarette and looked at her son-in-law.

"You'd like to know where they are? So would I. But we'll never find out." She laughed like a naughty child. "They may be in the house next door, or at the Ritz, or in some workman's house in a suburb. Or perhaps they're in Vienna or Paris, or maybe in Moscow . . . A man came and took them away. It was that Sunday you ran off to the police."

"I went because I had to."

"A man stopped me in the market and told me you had sent him. He said he was a Communist leader, whom you knew, and had sent him to take these pictures away from the house, because . . . " she sobbed, "because those pic-

tures could bring Paul Eszterag to the gallows. Paul Eszterag . . . to the gallows . . . "

The two stood without moving, looking doubtfully at each other. Varga waited until the old lady had calmed down; then he asked:

"And you gave them to him?"

"Yes. If you said so . . . You're the head of the family. It's for you to say."

"All right. Now tell me what this man looked like."

"You know what he looked like. It was you that sent him."

"Mother . . . tell me right away, who was this man?"

"You should know who he was."

"I should? To hell with this . . . Listen," Varga shouted passing his palm across his temple in desperation. "I tell you, I'm going crazy . . . You'll land me in prison."

With an ironical smile she watched him squirm. "I'll give true evidence . . . true. And if you intend to recognize the man again tomorrow, if you call him Paul again, then . . . "

"Mother! Mother dear!" her daughter sobbed.

"Then I'll do something too." She pushed her daughter away, and went on mercilessly. "I'll tell them that you"—looking at Varga—"that you sent this man to me to have the pictures hidden away before the house was searched. And I have hidden them. In a safe place, too."

Varga smiled. This unexpected turn of affairs seemed so incredible that he had to laugh in spite of himself. Suddenly an idea occurred to him.

"Was he tall? Clean-shaven?" He thought of the man who had asked him about Eszterag in the coffee house. "Had a grey suit on, didn't he? A respectable looking chap."

"No," the old lady replied, smiling, "you have a poor memory: it was a little fat man with a beard; no moustache—only a beard. A sailor's beard. And he was wearing a black coat, like an Evangelist priest." She winked and laughed like a child.

"Aren't you going to give over joking?"

"I'll swear he was dressed as I said and had a beard like an old seaman. You're trying to mislead the police with a false description. And I'll swear that you sent him. And that then you got scared and went running to the police . . . I'll swear to it."

"Nonsense," Varga said. He turned to his wife: "Come on, let's eat. I'm hungry."

The three of them sat at the table, but only Varga and his wife ate anything. The old lady didn't touch the food. Her face was white and drawn; only the occasional twitching of her upper lip betrayed her suppressed excitement.

Then she went up to her room, taking leave of nobody. As a rule she would sit in her armchair in the evening; first the two grandchildren would kiss her hand and then her forehead; then Anna, and lastly Varga. All alike, they came to pay their respects to the oldest in the house. But today she didn't wait for it. Without saying good night she went up to her room, a few steps above the level of the rest of the house.

Carefully she put out her black Sunday dress. Tomorrow she would wear it when she went to the prison. Then she got undressed, covered herself with a light summer blanket and put out the light. The fresh scent of flowers came in through the window. A train rumbled in the distance . . . For a long time she sat there, thinking nothing. She was tired, sleepy. She folded her hands

over the blanket for the evening prayer that she had not missed for half a century.

She tried to choose a prayer among all those she knew. Tomorrow would be a day of ordeal. She muttered words. Impatient and excited, she swallowed the phrases. None of her prayers satisfied her. Tomorrow would be a hard day, and she had to be hard, callous. These habitual prayers of hers were so different from what she wanted now.

She clasped her hands.... Her thoughts went back to early childhood. Her father's and mother's faces gleamed in the distance. She went back to the time she lived with her grandmother—barely five she was then. One night Grandad and Grandma had a quarrel. Old people were always fighting. That time, after that fight, Grandma had started defiantly, to sing in a barely audible voice... The old lady feverishly fingered her dishevelled hair. She beat time, hummed a few notes, and felt her face grow hot as her ears filled with the long-forgotten scourging tune; but she could not remember the words, the words of the curse, that would resound heavily through the night in place of "Our Father." She fell asleep still trying to get the words of that old curse. For the first time in half a century she had gone to sleep without saying her prayers...

3

The military judge, slightly lame from a wound in the war, rose and came to meet her. He bowed to Frau Eszterag, gave her his hand, and said how happy he was that she had decided to come and had gone to such trouble.

"I thought I shouldn't leave you gentlemen in doubt," she began rather hurriedly.

"Very kind of you," the judge replied, returning to his seat at the desk. "Please take a seat. It really is most obliging of you to come to help us."

"I thought if I did not come, you might really think I'm hesitating merely because I'm his mother."

He smiled. The upper hairs of his thick carefully trimmed moustache got into his nose, and his tiny eyes all but disappeared in the twitching wrinkles of his face. Then his good-nature seemed suddenly to disappear, and he looked coldly at the old woman in front of him.

"You're holding your bag as if you wanted to throw it at my head. What have you got in it? A bomb? Or perhaps those photographs? Hand it over."

Frau Eszterag put her handbag down on the table. The military judge rummaged carefully through it and then handed it back to her.

"You may go."

"What?... Am I not wanted to give evidence?"

"Superfluous. We know everything. Go home and tell your son-in-law to make a better choice of a mother-in-law next time." He bent down over his papers.

The old woman did not move. Everything swam before her eyes. The military judge seemed to be sitting in a huge glass bowl full of water. She put her hand up to her eyes and brushed away the tears that were welling up. She noticed again the searching way this man with the head like a porcupine was smiling at her.

"Why are you crying? My dear, good woman! Perhaps I have offended you? If so, please forgive me. I was only joking. We soldiers have a rough way of speaking, but our hearts...." He jumped up, stood in front of the

table and stroked the smoothly combed silver hair on the top of her head. "I have a mother myself . . . Now, please don't cry, we'll arrange it for you. You shall be brought before your son. How long do you want? Ten minutes? More? Half an hour perhaps? An hour?"

Her sobbing ceased. Her pale, tear-stained face became calmer. The military judge rang the bell. He gave the sergeant, who hurried in, an order as to the room into which the prisoner was to be brought.

"We'll go at once, dear madame." He paced up and down the room. At each step he limped somewhat to the left but his tall slim figure was alert and agile. They waited like this for about five minutes without a word, then the military judge stood still and said: "If you please we may go now."

They passed through corridors and up steps. The military judge again apologized for his rudeness as they went. He was frightfully overworked, he explained, it had been years since he had had any respite and his nerves had got into such a state that it was only with the greatest effort that he could control himself. This often led to regrettable consequences. He was really very sorry about the unpleasant incident that had just occurred, especially as it had concerned the family of someone for whom he had such great respect . . . he was really very sorry indeed about it. His old friend, Herr Varga —it was a secret but he didn't mind telling her confidentially—had great honors awaiting him. In the first place on the strength of a sixty-minute address of recommendation given by the District Captain which had been greeted with unanimous enthusiasm he would, in a few days' time, be granted membership in the Vitez League; at the same time an application was to be made to the War Ministry to promote Vitez Josef von Varga from Oberleutnant of the Reserve to Captain of the Reserve. It was not given to everyone to enjoy such happiness and distinction and one must remember, moreover, that the supreme command of the Vitez League carries with it the right of inheritance of the title of Vitez.

Frau Eszterag listened dumbly to his torrent of words. Her heart was beating irregularly and when the officer stopped speaking and the warder opened an iron door she started suddenly as though waking up from a dream.

"If you please, be so good as to enter," said the military judge, "I shall remain outside."

She stood at the entrance to the dimly lit cell. At the other end of the cell a man in a green frieze suit with knee breeches got up from the table. He came two steps nearer . . . The old woman leaned against the closing door. Her handbag fell to the ground . . .

"Is there anything you want? . . . Is there anything I can do for you?" asked the prisoner.

His voice, his . . . Music that she had not heard for fifteen years. Her son's voice . . . Her son's face. Like his father's. Only his father was then seventy. That day . . . on his death bed. And this man is only thirty-five . . . her son, her good, capable, thirty-five year old son. . . . She just stood there holding her breath while loving, tender words rushed to the tip of her tongue and waves of excitement passed up and down her arms which seemed to be borne down by leaden weight . . . but she merely stood there, her arms hanging down by her side and not a word escaped from her lips.

"Tell me, little woman, can I do anything for you?" The prisoner's voice was soft and affectionate and betrayed embarrassment, but he kept his eyes fixed on the door.

The old woman turned and also looked at the door. Above her head she saw two circles cut in the iron . . . that was the spy hole . . . Behind it someone was listening—probably the military judge himself.

"Sit down . . . little woman."

The prisoner brought a chair forward and taking his mother gently by the shoulders made her sit down. His hands lingered a moment. He began to stroke her lightly, then he walked away. He looked up at the small window just under the ceiling. He gazed there for a long time and when he turned round again his face had regained its calm. He sat down on the bed and from there contemplated his mother. She had aged, poor creature. And during the next few days she would age still more. Or perhaps . . . Perhaps she too had come to identify the corpse, the future corpse. It was all one to him now. His mother's words would decide! If she stood up and declared: This is my son, Paul Eszterag . . . he would not care what happened then. The sentence which had remained suspended for fifteen years would come into force.

He drew up his knees and watched his mother. She sat there motionless. Then she got up, placed the chair in such a way that she sat with her back to the spyhole and looked upon the man hunched up on the bed in front of her with eager, caressing eyes.

Then the door opened and the military judge walked in.

"Well, have you said what you wanted to say?" he asked loudly.

"I have nothing to say. I. . .I do not know this man," said the old woman and swallowed the lump that rose up at these words.

"What? You don't know him?" asked the military judge in astonishment and he laughed and screwed up his moustache against his nose.

"No, I do not know him. . . .I have never seen him before," she almost shouted these words.

"You're a nice mother, to deny your own child."

"Stop that will you, stop that I tell you," said Frau Eszterag in a choking voice.

"Aha! Then tell me, will you, if the accused is not your son why did you get rid of his photographs? And just when your son was arrested?"

"This is not my son."

"I am asking you about the photographs."

"There were never any photographs of him."

"Oh, so there were never any photographs. Very good, then what did you do with the letters? They were also available until the moment your son was arrested. What did you do with the letters?"

"Did you look for the letters?"

"Yes, we looked for them."

"You looked for them? Without my knowing? And they. . . my daughter and my son-in-law allowed my room to be opened while I was away?"

"Yes, they allowed it. Now where did you put them?"

"I tore them up. What would I keep letters from Moscow for?"

"You are lying," said the military judge and looked the old woman straight in the eyes. "You're lying. The letters were all there."

"You ought to be ashamed of yourself," Frau Eszterag jumped up, "a gentleman, an officer . . ."

"You filthy old whore," the military judge seized her by the arm. "You . . . I'll teach you. . . ."

Frau Eszterag shrank as she looked at the officer. . . . What could he be? A beast? A machine?

"Let go of my arm!" cried the old woman indignantly. "How dare you be so coarse and insolent!"

"Quick march!" roared the military judge. He kicked out at Frau Eszterag. As the woman rushed out in terror he turned round as though nothing had happened and said calmly to the prisoner huddled up on the bed:

"The other day I was in a cabaret where they did a parody on the wisdom of Solomon. Have you seen it? No, of course you can't have. A pair of twin brothers come home from the battlefield to find their village deserted and everything in ruins. Their wives are dead, the only person they can find alive in their home is a frightful old hag, one of the brothers' mother-in-law. Neither of the brothers will own that she is his and, as they disputed about it, the king, who happens to be riding past and hears their quarreling voices, comes in and is told what the quarrel is about. 'Let the mother-in-law be cut in half,' he says, 'so that each brother may have his portion.' At this one of them says, 'No, no, let her live. I'll acknowledge her as mine.' The other brother, however, angrily demands that she be cut in half. At this the great king in his wisdom concludes that the bloodthirsty brother is the real son-in-law."

Having finished his story he laughed loudly: "What have you to say to that? Nothing? I believe if you had been one of the twins you would also have refused to speak, wouldn't you? I insulted your mother and you did not even raise an eyebrow. Are you a human being? Are any of you human beings?" He sat down on the bed next to the prisoner. "Look here, why do you go on keeping up the joke. We have established your identity. Both your sister and your brother-in-law have given evidence. Your mother will only make herself guilty of being an accessory to the crime for your sake. Is that what you want? To bring your sixty-year-old mother into prison? Look here, we know that you are Paul Eszterag. But let's consider an alternative now. Suppose you remain obstinate to the end. You do not disclose who you are. We give credit to the statement that you are somebody else and that your two relatives have made a mistake. And it is quite possible that they have made a mistake. You have a different nose, a different chin, your whole face is different. Perhaps in Moscow they have discovered a new kind of surgery which enables one to change people's faces. Very good, granted all this. We've made a mistake, we admit it. How much money do you require as damages for perjury? You get your freedom into the bargain, that of course is understood. Next week the announcement appears in the papers: 'Paul Eszterag has been executed,' while you are really on your way to South America. You still don't answer. Or perhaps you are waiting to hear what are the conditions of the voyage to South America? We must have your *Curriculum vitae,* that's all. I should imagine you have a magnificent biography. The furthest flights of Edgar Wallace's imagination must be nothing in comparison to your life story. The royalties for this biography are high: your life . . . Well, what do you think about it? Of course you don't need to write it yourself. That would be too tedious. All you have to do is to recount it and we will write it down. We shall require biographical dates. Just dates, dates that can be checked. Well, what about it? You can take your mother with you as her relations with her daughter and son-in-law have become a little too strained. Eszterag. . . look here, Communism has never required of a man that he renounce his nation for the sake of the world commonwealth. But that is what you are doing. You have renounced your nation. Of course I know you detest the bourgeoisie. So do I, no less than you. You are laughing? You don't answer? That's a

pity, I thought you would answer. You would be doing your mother a service if you would answer straight out. Tell me now, did you send out any message with your mother? You were alone together with her without a guard. No little slip of paper? . . . I can hardly believe that anyone in such a position can have had a tête-à-tête with his mother for fifteen minutes and not make use of the opportunity. . . .Instructions for someone? Perhaps there was something? Tell me did you send anything?. . .No? Answer me will you!. . . ."

He got up from the bed, limped towards the door, sent in two warders. They put the prisoner between them and brought him slowly along the corridor. The military judge was waiting for him outside a door. He knocked and then went in and ordered the prisoner to follow.

The new room was an entirely empty cell. At the entrance two warders were standing and against the wall, the widow, Frau Michael Eszterag, was crouching. She was naked. All huddled up and pressed close against the wall, she held her hands helplessly in front of her.

"Now mama, how are you feeling?" asked the military judge. "Innocent are you? Has grown up grandchildren and yet is innocent. Did they not find anything? Didn't your son try to smuggle something out? You got the photographs away without our finding them. . . Now mama, what are you staring like that for? Now, now, mama, don't be shy now, we're not interested in you as men We're merely doing our duty."

Frau Eszterag began to cry. She cried like a child. She crouched against the wall, her head buried in her hands . . . The military judge watched her for a while and then said she might dress. The two warders brought her clothes and shoes. They stood for a minute or so in front of the weeping woman, not knowing quite what to do and then, tired of waiting, they laid down their burden on the stone floor and went back to the door.

"Put on your clothes, mama," said the military judge, nudging her with his foot, "Oh yes, of course, how could I be so stupid, you are not able to dress in front of strange men· Let's go; we mustn't disturb madame." In the corridor walking along beside the prisoner he began to speak again: "You mustn't think I get any pleasure from this kind of thing. If I want to look at naked women I prefer to take a young one and undress her. I expect you yourself would have preferred to see a young wench, wouldn't you? Look here, are you a fakir You're pretty well trained I must say, you didn't turn a hair when you saw your mother. Poor old thing! And her son says: "What do I care about her!" But even if it hadn't been my mother, but a woman whom I had never seen in my life before I would have been upset. It would have raised a protest from me even then."

Meanwhile they had come up to the office. The military judge beckoned to the prisoner to follow. In the waiting room Josef Varga was sitting. As they came in he got up but the military judge did not take any notice of him. He sat down at his desk with his back to the window and showed the prisoner to a place beside him. He hunted among his papers, wrote something on one of the sheets, rang for the warder and had Varga brought to him.

"You are Josef Varga? Inspector of the Royal Hungarian Post Office Savings Banks? Am I right? . . . Showed distinguished service at the front: large gold, large silver, small silver, bronze, Army Cross . . ."

"And the Signum Laudis . . ." added Varga.

"Wait until you are asked, if you please, this is not a Casino . . . Let's see,

and you want to be admitted to membership of the Vitez League. And why not?"

"What you say is correct," said Varga, rising to his feet.

The military judge looked up. His small eyes blinked with amusement.

"Capital, such self assurance, such conceit," he turned to the prisoner. "You would think that this young man was not your brother-in-law but your own mother's son. The very same character as yours, it is only the form in which it appears that is different." He got up and came close to Varga, exaggerating his limp:

"What is your name?"

"Josef Varga."

"That is not what I want to know. What used your name to be? Were you Weiss or Weissfeld?"

"My name has always been Varga. My great grandfather was a Varga."

"And your religion?"

"Roman Catholic."

"And your father's?"

"Even my great grandfather was a Roman Catholic."

"And when did you last meet this gentleman?" he pointed to the prisoner.

"Yesterday in the prison cell and the first time three weeks ago at the police station."

"And before that?"

"In the spring of 1919."

"And on no occasion in between?" He came close up to him.

"No," answered Varga and stepped back.

"Don't jump about or I'll have you handcuffed," snorted the military judge. "Stand straight, will you." He limped back to his desk and watched Varga closely as the latter stood there with a pale face and the corners of his mouth twitching. The military judge lit a cigarette and again looked through his papers, again recited the list of Varga's decorations putting ironic emphasis on the Signum Laudis. "True, perfectly true," he said· "At the front you behaved like a hero. But here, here you are behaving like a little guttersnipe," again his eyes flashed towards Varga, "or rather on the contrary, like an unconscious, instinctive tool of the Red bandits. You insult captains of the Vitez League, speak ironically about your heroic conduct at the front, support the Jewish press that is in with the Communists and then in answer to the police inspector's question have the cheek to declare 'I am not a spy' while all the time you are helping to conceal the identity of this Communist who keeps in touch with an arrested head commissar of Moscow."

"Excuse me," put in Varga. "Excuse me, sir. . . ."

"Then he has the further cheek to apply to the Vitez League."

"Allow me, sir, I want once and for all . . ."

"Hold your snout," shouted the military judge and jumped up, struck his fist on the table and bent towards Varga: "If I have any more of your cheek I shall have you tied up and knocked inside out . . . " Then he began speaking again with a calm and even voice: "Now will you please answer the following question: who was the man who asked you about Paul Eszterag and where is he now?" He looked sharply at the prisoner. The prisoner's face remained motionless. Then he turned to scrutinize Varga again: "Speak, will you!"

" don't know . . ."

"You don't know? What don't you know? You don't know where he is?"

"I know nothing about him. I had never seen him before and I haven't seen him since."

"Did he prove his identity to you?"

"If you please, sir. . . ." Varga swayed. He gripped the arm of the chair, otherwise he would have fallen down. "If you please, sir, you have no right, you have no grounds to doubt. . . ."

"Feeling bad are you? . . . Better sit down. . . . It will soon pass. A slight thickening of the arteries. You'll speak now, will you, or shall we have to wait? No? Very good then. . . ."

"I tell you, sir, that if you have received a report it will be written there. . . . I explained both to my colleague Michael Nagy von Affra and also the police inspector that a strange man with fair hair and grey eyes, in a grey suit and of respectable appearance, with large workman's hands, but otherwise to all appearances a gentleman, came up to me in the cafe."

"Why did you not give this description to the police inspector when he asked you?"

"I gave it on the following day."

"Why didn't you give it the same day? Answer me that, will you. One day you consider it dishonorable but the next day you don't. One could have wirelessed to all the frontier stations the same day."

"Why should I have? He said he was a school friend of his. He may have been speaking the truth and I might have brought an innocent man under suspicion," he stammered.

"A school friend may also be a Communist. Such miracles have happened before now."

"He was not a Communist."

"Why did you conceal him for a day then?"

"Sir. . . ." Varga rose with an effort, his face was flushing red and purple.

"I ask you: why did you not report about it the same day? I demand a clear answer."

"I did not want to be an informer."

"And today? And the next day?"

To this Varga made no answer. The chair trembled under his hand.

"But you don't mind informing on your brother-in-law?" said the military judge, smiling at Varga; the latter did not answer.

"You have an uneasy conscience, haven't you? I have been watching you all the time. You have not once looked your brother-in-law in the face. Conscience pricking you, what? However you seem to have left out of account that the Vitez League merely spues out such miserable creatures as you when they try to worm their way in. You haven't included that in your reckoning. Very good." He rang the bell. "Bring this gentleman to the old lady," he said to the police officer who entered, "and tell them in the garage to send a car. The lady is indisposed and it would be difficult for her to go by tram." He nodded good-bye to Varga in a friendly fashion and as the door closed behind him he turned to the prisoner. "He is a weak character, your brother-in-law. A conflict between good and evil is going on inside him. You can never make anything useful out of that type. They are no use either to you or to us. They do not serve either of us wholeheartedly. Our type is quite different. People like you and me can endure violence and can be violent to others. But if I were in the position that you are in and if you sat behind this table and I were the prisoner, I swear to you I shouldn't let

you shout your lungs out, I would interrupt you and say . . . What are you ranting about? That I'm no use to you? That you would not bother about me? That you would despatch me into the beyond by the shortest possible route? Don't worry, you'll find your way there yourself eventually."

He rang the bell and had the prisoner taken away. Then he buckled on his sword, lit a cigarette, gave a friendly acknowledgement to the salute of the officer on duty and in the yard beckoned to the chauffeur who was following him slowly in the car. An open car turned through the gate and in it sat two persons pressed close together. Frau Eszterag was leaning in an exhausted condition against her son-in-law. From time to time Varga stroked the old woman's twitching features and wiped away her tears with his handkerchief. The military judge smiled.

"Good bye, mama! Au revoir!" he called and made a sign to the gateman. The car put on speed, and the military judge made his way along the street.

4

The trial took place with military dispatch. There was no public. No documents were read and the clerk merely jotted down a few notes in a bored fashion. The colonel conducting the proceedings also dispensed with the hearing of witnesses for the most part. The police inspector reported on the investigation carried out by the civil authorities and gave a detailed account of the circumstances under which Josef Varga had made his statement. Josef Varga himself was the only civilian present. He repeated his statement, that he only regarded the prisoner's eyes as identical with those of Paul Eszterag and that in 1919 his other features, his voice and his gait had been quite different. The prosecutor demanded that the supreme penalty should be imposed and the counsel for the defence confined himself to a short explanation. Considering the circumstances and serious nature of the crime he, as a barrister with patriotic convictions, did not see any grounds on which he could plead for a mitigation of the sentence. The members of the court retired several times to confer, that is to say they remained on the platform, put their heads together and whispered.

The prisoner was condemned to be shot. The prosecutor declared that he was satisfied with the sentence. The colonel asked the accused whether he wished to make an appeal.

"No," answered the prisoner.

"That is to say you are satisfied with the sentence?"

"History will condemn you as murderers," answered the accused.

"Dirty swine," shouted the colonel, "bind him!"

The prison warders bound him and he stood there in chains and listened to the remaining formalities. It was announced that if the Head of the State gave no answer within two hours to a telegraphic application for the sentence to be commuted it would be taken to mean that the Commander-in Chief was not disposed to use his right of pardon and the sentence would be carried into effect in two hours' time.

The prisoner was led away. He passed by Josef Varga and looked at him as he passed but Varga turned his eyes away and jumped up. His chair fell back and he groped for support. Whether he found it or not the prisoner did not see. He walked along the passage, a warder on either side of him. and entered his new cell which was to be his last stopping place.

He sat down on a chair. He laid his hands with their handcuffs on his lap

and looked at the closed door in front of which two warders stood like statues with fixed bayonets. They were giants, picked men. He suddenly thought of a story his father had once told him about how thirty years before the Siamese king Chululongkorn visited Budapest, and of all the achievements of the Hungarian nation that most impressed His Oriental Majesty was the giant stature and huge moustaches of the Hungarian police.

The lifeless, watery eyes of the two statues continued to watch impassively.

"What part of the country do you come from? You come from the country, I expect, don't you?"

"Shut your mouth," said one of them and his hand moved towards the tightly drawn strap of his rifle.

"In two hours I am going to die. And do you know what for? Because I did not want you to serve as warders. I wanted you to stay in the country with enough land to be able to live like human beings."

Two pairs of fish-like eyes contemplated him. He rose, took a step in their direction and then sat down again.

"Don't you know any song you could sing to me? Did no one on their last journey ever sing anything to you?" He rested his chained arms on the table and rested his chin in his hands: "Have you ever heard about Dosza? He was a peasant leader who lived some centuries ago. He led a huge peasant army against the masters. They thought that working together with Dosza they would be able to win their bread without the help of their masters and that if the masters wanted to eat they themselves would take to the plough. Dosza was burnt alive and the other ringleaders were hanged. At this time or rather earlier the poor peasants made up a song . . . I'll sing it to you, listen." And very softly, without taking his eyes from the armed guards, he sang, supporting his head in his chained hands:

Oh pinetree, oh why art thou bending?
I bend and I sway in my anguish,
For close in the forest three woodmen
I see, and their axe they are grinding,
And in whispers hold council together
To plan my most cruel destruction.
They will hew me and fell me this evening,
And beams from my wood they will fashion
To bring to the town in the morning,
And erect in the eyes of the people
To serve as a gallows for felons
To the woe and the wail of their mothers,
To the sadness and sorrow of bondmen,
To the gladness and glee of the masters.

The song died away in a whisper. The prisoner watched the faces of his warders, but they did not change their expression. There was complete silence. For a minute there was not a stir. Then the prisoner heard steps. It was the limping gait of the military judge . . . The two armed men stepped aside.

"Outside please," said the military judge and then when they had left the cell called to them: "Tell the head warder to come here."

He removed the prisonr's handcuffs and asked,

"Do you want anything to eat, anything special beyond the ordinary prison fare?"

"Nothing?"

"Or do you want to see anyone?"

"Perhaps you would like to have something to eat?"

The military judge looked with amusement at the condemned man

"I grant you that if I were in your place I would not be in the mood for joking."

The corners of the prisoner's lips twitched ironically.

"Imprisonment is a rare experience," said the military judge.

"To some people it happens quite often."

"Oh yes, of course, it happened to you fifteen years ago."

"No, I am not the same person . . ."

"You might as well admit it now. One way or the other in an hour and a half's time. . . . Oh but of course I understand, the court may have a bad conscience over having willfully brought an innocent man to the wall? I may as well tell you right away we do not suffer spiritual torments. We leave that to sentimentalists. Would you like to see a priest? No? Of course not, you have no religion. It is a pity that you are not a Jew. It always gives me the greatest pleasure to know that there is one Jew less in the world. We always deliver the Jewish corpses so that on the way patriotic Christians may see what a lot of Jews there are in their midst plotting to overthrow society. Christians who serve the Reds are not buried in the public cemetery. People outside must be led to believe that all the traitors are Jews. The Jewish cemetery has now quite a large martyrs' corner," he said laughing, "but we shall bury you quietly; it is all one to you and it is more convenient for us." He looked at his watch: "Forty-five minutes have now passed since sentence was pronounced. You have an hour and a quarter more. Seventy-five minutes. It is a very short span in comparison with a man's life but nevertheless very important things can happen in that time. For instance, you could win fifty years of life in that fifteen minutes if you wanted to. In fifteen minutes you could tell us what we want to know, and what is essential for us to know if your life is to be preserved." He waited. He had money in his pocket and he began to jingle it. He came quite close to the prisoner and the coins began to clink more rapidly and urgently. "Can't you realize, you idiot, that it is a question of saving your life? Don't you see what that means,—your life, man! Do you want me to shout at you, do you want me to try and put fear into your heart? Can't you understand that I mean what I say in dead earnest? I want to save your life, I want to save it, do you hear! For us! What's the matter with you? You idiot, you blasted idiot, you ox . . ." The military judge's face became hideous, his lips went white and his teeth and red gums shone under his moustache: "You filthy bloody coward. . . . you dare not . . . you dare not live. You are afraid of purchasing your life . . ." He gave his chair such a kick that it shot against the wall.

The prisoner sat at the other end of the table. He looked towards the chair and also took in the spyhole in the door. One of the warders who had been sent out was looking through it. The military judge brought out his watch again

"Look here, Paul Eszterag, listen to me for a moment . . ." He seized the prisoner's chin and forced his face upwards. "Sign the declaration that you are Paul Eszterag and we will exchange you. Either with Prague or with Moscow. Whichever you like. Even if you hate *your* life we should like to have some of our people back."

"Go to the devil," answered the prisoner.

The military judge lifted up his hand as though he would knock the prisoner to the ground, but the door opened and the governor of the prison came in. He looked round and shouted at the prisoner:

"Will you please stand to attention when I come in!"

"You should have more concern for your dignity, sir. In the presence of subordinates it is best to give only those orders that you know will be carried out . . ." answered the prisoner without rising from his seat and smiling ironically at the governor's hand which was gripping convulsively at his sword.

There was silence for a moment and then the governor announced that from humanitarian considerations the prisoner was to be allowed to say good bye to his mother. The prisoner leaned against the table. The room seemed to be swimming round him. He closed his eyes . . . His mother! Poor mother, she was probably still trying to save him . . . Or was she coming to say good bye to him? If so they would proceed against her as an accessory to the crime. The law could not force her to make the incriminating statement, but if she made it of her own accord . . . The poor thing might lose her head. He sat up straight again and when he opened his eyes he turned his head aside to avoid meeting the searching glances of the two officers. Uneven steps approached the cell. The door opened and Frau Michael Eszterag appeared, dressed in black. The two officers motioned her to enter, but the woman merely stood there saying nothing. For a minute or so she gazed at her son. The prisoner kept his seat with an air of indifference. Then he turned his head and looked restively at the small barred window lit up by the sun.

"Hurry up," said the military judge, addressing Frau Eszterag. "You only have half an hour."

Frau Eszterag burst out crying but still remained in the doorway. Perhaps she could not move, perhaps her two hands were paralyzed, and her feet and face too, while only her throat had life in it and it was capable only of emitting alternate sobs and whimpers.

The prisoner now turned to her.

"Do you require anything of me, little woman?"

"My son!" she cried and rushed forward. She fell heavily like a sack at her son's feet. Her hands groped in front of her and seized his two feet. And there on the ground before him she pleaded in a suffocated voice: "My son, forgive me . . . I repudiated you. But I love you only . . . you are the only person I have in the world . . . I have no child, no grandchild . . . When you go, take me with you, end your beautiful life with me. . . my son, my dearest son."

The prisoner bent down and took his mother's arms in his hands.

"I am not your son," he said.

"My son," cried the old woman.

"I am, as you yourself said, a stranger. You are now making a mistake. When you said you did not know me you were speaking the truth. You were then acting in accordance with the law. Why are you making yourself guilty of being an accessory to a crime?" He bent down again, lifted the old woman up and placed her in his own chair. He stroked his mother's silver hair. "Little woman, your son lives . . . It is only our eyes that can be alike. The witness himself said that it was only the eyes that he recognized. And our eyes are alike. Many of us have eyes that resemble the eyes of others—and it is because we all look with the same love on the poor and the same hatred on the masters. Your son is good, your son is pure . . . So am I but I am not your son . . ."

The old woman wept no more. Her face began to burn and her eyes glowed tearlessly. She looked at her son. Her son smiled at the military judge. There was the same, perplexed, dog-like grin on the latter's face.

Words of command could be heard from the yard outside. The military judge shouted cheerfully towards the corridor.

"Warder! Bring the handcuffs and chains . . ."

The warder seemed to have been standing ready. He came in with the chains clinking in his hands. The prisoner put out his hands and they were fastened together with the handcuffs. Iron fetters were also put on his feet. Long heavy chains bound his left wrist with his right ankle and his right wrist with his left ankle. Where the chains crossed an iron ball was attached. Iron balls were hung to the handcuffs.

"Quick march," ordered the governer and strode in front with drawn sword.

The two warders walked with the chained man between them.

"Good bye, little woman, good bye," he cried and raised his heavily weighted hands.

In the corridor behind the door Josef Varga was standing. He pressed against the wall to allow the procession to pass. He stood stiff and erect as though at the head of his company during a general inspection. The prisoner looked past him, but Josef Varga turned his head and followed the prisoner with his eyes, his hands all the time pressed close against his thighs. Then when the procession disappeared at the end of the corridor he relaxed as though some invisible superior officer had given the command to dismiss.

He went into the cell, and found the old woman sitting at the table, her hands in her lap.

The military judge stood under the window and observed him as he entered.

"Herr Oberleutnant," he began, importantly, "why are you in mufti? You are lawfully an Oberleutnant, and therefore have the right to wear your uniform on Sundays and public holidays. Also on national holidays. On national holidays, do you understand? Do you understand or do you not? It would seem that you don't understand," he shouted. "This day, and this act that is now being performed is an occasion for national celebration. It is not only a holiday, it is something more important still. It is an everyday event raised to the dignity of a national occasion. A day on which the safeguarding of the national existence is celebrated."

Varga took no notice of him. He bent over the old woman, stroked her tenderly and tried with soft words to persuade her to hurry away. But Frau Eszterag remained sitting. She waited. As though moving in her sleep she lifted up her hand to command silence.

"Herr Oberleutnant," rasped the voice of the military judge.

"Do you want anything?" asked Varga loudly.

"Do I want anything?" he laughed. "Stand to attention, sir. You won't?" he limped up to him: "You were the same height. Your faces were almost identical." The military judge took a step back. "Ah, I like that inflexibility. The large golden medal, the large silver, the small silver, the bronze, the Army Cross, the Signum Laudis, in the past, for courage shown in the face of the enemy. You deserve them all over again, but this time from the Reds. The rascal. And he makes an application for the title of Hero, with such a character. It is not the title of Hero that is deserved by a person who can look like that and keep his silence like that. It is iron, iron chains that he deserves!"

Varga again bent down over his mother-in-law and stroked her cheeks.

"Mother," he said, "dearest Mother."

The old woman relaxed her stiffened muscles. Trembling and with flaming eyes she listened to his affectionate, pleading voice.

"Mother, I will become your son—a better and a truer . . ."

"Paul Eszterag to a T. . ." continued the military judge.

Josef Varga braced himself up. The blood ran to his head. Clenching his two fists he rushed at the military judge. A volley sounded outside. Varga's clenched fists fell to his side as though he himself had been hit. Then he sprang to his mother-in-law, supported her by the shoulders and led her out.

"Au revoir!" the military judge called after them.

The Balladry of the Civil War

At an hour when fascist barbarism sets fire to the world, there is present in the republican camp a renaissance of poetry. Spanish poets, hitherto divided by various literary tendencies, have united in their purpose to sustain and exalt the struggle of the Spanish people. The old mediaeval form of the "Romance," or ballad, a form imitated by the great French romantics of the nineteenth century, is finding a renewal of popularity with the poets and public even in the midst of civil strife. Crowds of 50,000 men and women, for instance, have attended the readings of these ballads by Rafael Alberti. *El Mono Azul,* the magazine which the Alliance of Anti-Fascist Intellectuals (the Spanish section of the International Association of Writers for the Defense of Culture), publishes for the fighting forces at the front, is publishing a collective memorial of Spanish poetry, in which all the republican poets, using the medium of the ballad, are collaborating. Some extracts here reproduced are drawn from that collection.

Herewith is also the *Ballad of the Civil Guard,* by Federico Garcia Lorca, shot at Granada by the rebels. This poet, collector of the Spanish and gypsy folklore, himself a great poet, deserves to be considered the fountain-head of this poetic movement, and his work, *Gypsy Balladry,* which has just been republished, held a place of honor in Madrid's libraries last October.

In addition, there is also a poem, written the day after Lorca's execution, by the Socialist poet, Antonio Machado, one of the highly respected older generation of Spanish writers; another called *Chant For the Mothers of the Dead Militia,* written by one of the greatest poets of the Spanish language, who unfortunately, is compelled for professional reasons to keep his identity concealed. The valor and heroism of the Spanish people is reflected in these songs of the Spanish poets, and in giving space here to this poetry of combat, it is our intention to record our admiration for the defenders of Madrid, for all the fighters of Spain engaged in the struggle for the liberty of the world.

Federico Garcia Lorca

Ballad of the Civil Guard

Black are the black-shod horses.
Circles of darkened beeswax
Gleam on the capes of the men.
Their deadly faces are leaden,
Therefore they never weep.
Hearts of the hardest leather,
They come along the road.
Twisted, crooked, nocturnal,
They sow in the places they haunt
Somber elastic silence,
Fears that trickle like sand.
They pass if they want to pass,
They hide in their muddled heads
An astronomical system,
Handcuffs and pistols for stars.

O CITY OF THE GYPSIES!
Flags at the alley-corners,
Cherry-conserve in the windows,
Pumpkins, round as the moon—
WHO THAT HAS SEEN CAN FORGET?
City of musk and sorrow,
City of cinnamon towers.

Nightfall over the town,
Night that the night will darken;
Gypsies in front of the forges
Striking out arrows of fire.
Wounded, a single rider
Calling at all of the doors,
Bullies in liquor carousing,
And from a sudden corner,
Stir of the naked wind
Returns in a night of silver,
Night that will darken the night.

St. Joseph and Mary the Virgin
Have lost their castanets
And run to look for the gypsies
To see if they know where they are.
The robes of the Virgin are brilliant
Tinsel chocolate-wrapping,
Almonds around her neck.
St. Joseph swinging his arms
Under a silver mantle.
Behind goes Pedro Domecq,
Three Persian sultans attending,
And the half-moon in a trance
Dreams like a stork in a daze.
Standards and torchlights gleam
Bright in their raid on the lawns.
Dancing girls, slim in their cloaks,
Sob as they look in the glass.
Water of shadow, water
And shadow, shadow of water.

O CITY OF THE GYPSIES,
Extinguish your greenish lights!
Desolate, far from the sea,
Let down the uncombed hair.
The Civil Guard is approaching,
WHO THAT HAS SEEN CAN FORGET?
In the city of delicate mirth,
They penetrate two by two.
"Viva, viva!" they cry
Draining the bandoliers.
They penetrate two by two,
Dark and sinister shadows,
Curios cut in half,

Sky over shadowy shoulders
Hung like a peddler's tray.

The city emptied by fear
Trebled its number of doors,
Forty Civil Guardsmen
Thrust and batter them in.
Not to arouse suspicion
Clocks stop! cognac in flasks
Turns to autumnal mist.
Weathercocks whirl at the cries.
Sabers slash at the drapes
Where skulls will presently roll.
Along the shadowy alleys
The gypsy old women steal
Tightly clutching their purses,
Dragging their sleepy nags.
Up the slope of the streets
Climb the sinister cloaks,
Metal and spur in the wind
Clicking like stroke of shears.

The gypsies gather together
Out by Bethlehem gate,
St. Joseph covered with wounds
Leads a girl by the hand.
Sharp and determined, the rifles
Clatter the whole night long.
The Virgin tends to the children
Dressing the wounded bodies
With the lacy fringe of a star.
Forward, the Civil Guard!
Fierce on the innocent sight.
The braziers flame as they go.

Rose from Camborios' quarter,
Hunched in front of her door,
Groans at the sight of her breasts
There on a platter beside her.
Little girls run, pursued
By their own long streaming hair.
Roses of powdery blackness
Bloom in the starry sky.
All the towers of the town
Down in the earth like ploughshares,
Dawn, with a profile of stone,
Wearily rises again.

Past the encircling flames,
Through a tunnel of silence
The Civil Guard departs.
O CITY OF THE GYPSIES,

WHO THAT HAS SEEN CAN FORGET?

. . . . . .

The moon plays with the sand.

From the French translation by G. Benichou into English by Rolfe Humphries

Antonio Machado

The Crime Took Place at Granada

(For Federico Garcia Lorca)

We saw him go, rifles on either side,
Down the long avenue to dawn's cold plain,
Silent beneath the stars.
There, as the light took aim, they shot him down.
The firing squad all shut their eyes and prayed,
Afraid to look him in the face, they prayed:
"Not even God Himself will save you now."
Blood on the brow, lead in the heart, he fell.
THE CRIME TOOK PLACE AT GRANADA,
You know—poor Granada,—his Granada.

II

DEATH AND THE POET

We used to see him walk alone with her,
Unfearful of her sickle.
Sun on the towers, hammer on anvil ringing,
And Federico, in his courteous way,
Would talk with Death, and she would listen:
"Yesterday in my verse, Comrade mine,
The dry rasp of your palms was heard,
You chilled my song and drama, cut them down
With a bright silver sickle.
And so I'll sing the flesh that is not thine,
The eyes that fail thee now, hair that the wind
Would shake, O, long ago, and the red lips
That fellows used to kiss.
To-day as yesterday, my gypsy Death,
How well it is to be alone with thee,
O Spirit of Granada,—my Granada!"

III

We saw them disappear.
Engrave, O friends,
Deep in the stone and dream, for the Alhambra,

Deep in the stone and dream, a poet's tomb,
Beneath a fountain, where the water weeps.
Weeps, and forever says:
THE CRIME TOOK PLACE
AT GRANADA—HIS GRANADA.

From the French translation by G. Pillement
into English by Rolfe Humphries

Pla y Beltran

Ballad of Lina Odena

Past the gates of Granada
Runs a trickle of blood
From whose margins the evening
Drinks of ochre and brown:
Tragedy's livid stain
Burns with the corpse of shadow,
The corpse of a frozen shadow
That falls on the olive trees.

Enemies wait in ambush
Hidden among the branches;
Weeping comes to the eyes,
Harvests go up in flames,
And hysterical Death
Over the puddles of blood
Howls and dances in rage,
Leaps and fastens on flesh.

Lina Odena, a dewy rose,
Like a flower in her green array,
Penetrated the hostile camp,
Showing no fear that she might be slain.
Owls of ill-omen, shadowy black,
Hovered over the country-side,
Danger lurked in the olive-trees,
Dark Death snatched at her green array.

Lina Odena, trapped in the pines.
Twenty Moors were hunting her down,
Twenty Moors, and a cutlass each,
Death in their eyes, and plague in their blood,
Trying hard to take her alive,
Make her sport for their lewd delight.
Lina, courage is not enough,
Run, and be safe from so foul a foe!

Lina Odena, a dewy rose,
Like a flower in her green array,
Figures the windage out, and fires.
Hark! The wild sound rebounds again,
Rolls and echoes from height to height,
Over the valleys beyond the plain,
And the rebellious Moors go down
Stricken like badly wounded bulls.

Now there are seven. Now there are eight,
Now a round dozen hunks of meat,
Lumped on the ground in the afternoon,
Fallen never to rise again.
"Run, and be safe from so foul a foe,
Maybe the shadows can save you yet!"
Again and again the wailing air,
Cries a warning, but cries in vain.

For Lina, never moving,
Motionless in the dusk,
Broken, with eyes still burning,
Cries out her final challenge:
"I am a girl of courage,
Who'd rather die with honor,
Than live and be a coward.
You'll never get me living!"

At the gun's chilling sound
Her slender body falls.
Move no more, ye pines!
Winds, be quiet and still.
Endeavor to yield no more,
Blossom; pause in your flight,
Birds of the air, be still;
Roses, bloom no more.

Lina Odena, our dewy rose,
No one will ever forget you now:
Guadix to Granada, all the way,
Men will remember your green array.

Adapted from the original by Rolfe Humphries

Chant for the Mothers of the Dead Militia

They are not dead! They stand amidst the powder
Like burning match and fuse.

Their shadows mingle with the copper plain,
Unlifting barrier of armored wind,
Of angry color, heaven's invisible breast.

Mothers! They stand among the wheat
Tall as high noon.
They dominate all space, like throbbing bells,
Whose dark voice cries
Over the fallen victims of the steel,
Hammers and clangs, compounding victory.

O stricken hearts, O sisters down in dust,
Have faith in your dead sons!

Not only roots that mine the bloody rock,
Not only bones that work under the ground,
Not only mouths that gnaw the bitter dust,
But luminous, like seas of vibrant steel,
They shimmer in the sun. The lifted fist
Proclaims its challenge in the face of Death.

Out of the fallen bodies, life itself
Rises again, one life, invincible,
One single body, one triumphant birth,
One somber sentinel defends these shades,
His sword is edged with hope for all the earth.

Leave, leave your mourning raiment. Fuse your tears
To molten silver. Day and night, we march,
Spit, stamp, and trample to the last assault
Until hate's portals crack and topple down.

I know your grief as I have known your sons,
Proud of their death and life.
Their laughter used to brighten gloomy shops,
Their footsteps in the subway rang with mine,
At orange grove and fishery, press and store,
I knew their hearts, aflame with force and fire.

Mothers, such grief and death
As dwells with you, dwells also in my heart:
A forest, soaked with blood that slew your smiles,
A wood, in which the angry mists of rage
Swirl with the angry solitude of days.

Rather than hear the wild hyena-laugh,
Howling beasts in battle-cry,
Bitterness, wrath, and scorn,
O mothers, torn by anguish and by death,
A noble day is born.
Know that your dead are smiling on the land,
Their brandished fists vibrant above the wheat,
Mothers, take heart again!

NOTE: The Spanish author of this poem is not known to us. We are told only that he is one, who, for professional reasons, is obliged not to give his name, but that he is one of the greatest poets of the Spanish language.

The French translation was made by Louis Parrot
The English translation by Rolfe Humphries

Antonio Garcia Luque

The Moorish Deserter

Early one pitch-black morning,
A worked-out mine in the background.
Machine-guns rattle and stammer.
Men, like stumps among others,
Climbing, Spaniards and Moors;
And below them, St. Raphael,
Patron, protector. They climb,
Larache's desperate outfit,
Whom they have sent against us,
All of those criminal leaders
Claiming to be devout.
Horrible, they come on.

Busta ben Ali Mohammed,
Beard as black as his eyes,
Black all over, discreetly
Creeps away from his station,
Crawling among the grass,
Then says, suddenly rising,
Fist in the air, alone,
Calm in front of the rifles,
"Comrades, I am a Red;
Don't shoot, I am a Red!"

From the French translation by Roland-Simon
Into English by Rolfe Humphries

Raoul Gonzalez Tunon

Hail the Revolution

The bullfighters are monarchists
And so are many monks:
And the Asturian miners?
HAIL THE REVOLUTION! . . .

The Moors in Oviedo,
Which they never could have taken,
Assassinate the Spaniards,
Ravish and shoot their women. . . .

The Regulars go for a swim
In the waters of Covadonga,

The great lords swim at Majorca,
And the miners go swimming in blood. . .

The calendar for October
Seems to lack special occasions:
October's meaning is simple:
HAIL THE REVOLUTION!

From the French translation by Rolland-Simon
Into English by Rolfe Humphries

Valentin Katayev

"A Lone Sail Gleams White"

Excerpt From a New Novel

Observing that the steamer did not either stop or lower a boat, but kept her course the sailor felt a little calmer and more collected.

First of all he hastily stripped off the clothes that hindered him from swimming.

To get rid of his jacket was easiest of all. Twisting and turning and spitting out the bitter, briny water ,the sailor managed in three successive jerks to peel off the water-weighted jacket.

With outspread sleeves, it drifted after him for a while like a living thing reluctant to part with its owner, striving to wrap itself round his legs.

The sailor pushed it away several times. The jacket was left behind and sank slowly, swaying as it slipped deeper and deeper into the water, till it was sucked down and out of sight.

Furiously he scrubbed one leg against the other; rowing with his arms, he danced in the waters, now diving till they closed over his head, now reappearing head and shoulder above them.

The boots would not give way. Then he gathered as much air as possible into his lungs and took a good grip of the boots. Plunging under a wave, he tore at the slippery heel, mentally swearing and cursing the whole world.

At last he succeeded in pulling off one of the boots. The other was easier work.

When both boots and his trousers had been got rid off, Rodion felt at once relieved and weary. His throat smarted with the seawater, of which, in spite of all his efforts to avoid it, he had swallowed a considerable quantity. Besides, he had struck the water heavily on his leap from the steamer.

For forty-eight hours he had hardly closed an eye; he had tramped forty or fifty miles in great anxiety and agitation. Everything looked rather dark to his eyes. However, that might be because the evening was closing in rapidly.

The water had lost its daylight color and though a clear, smooth heliotrope on the surface, looked frightful, almost black, in its depths.

From the surface of the sea he could not see the shore. The horizon had narrowed down to almost nothing. Just above it the clear sky gleamed a transparent green in the sunset and a faint, scarcely visible star had appeared.

So the shore must be on that side, and that was the direction in which he ought to swim.

The sailor was now wearing nothing but a shirt and drawers. They were scarcely any hindrance to him. But his head was going round, the joints of his arms and legs ached, swimming was becoming more and more of an effort.

Sometimes it seemed to him that he was losing consciousness. Or he would be seized with a momentary panic. Again, his loneliness and the depth of the sea terrified him. This had happened to him before. He felt sick.

His wet hair felt dry and hot and so stiff that it pricked his head.

There was not a soul in sight. Through the empty evening air above him a tern flew by on stout wings, a tern as fat as a cat, with a tiny fish in the curved tip of its long beak.

A fresh attack of terror convulsed the sailor. His heart might burst, and then—down he would go to the bottom of the sea. He wanted to cry out but could not wrench open his tightly-locked teeth.

Suddenly he heard a gentle plash of oars; a few minutes later the almost black silhouette of a wherry hove in sight.

Collecting his waning strength and kicking frantically at the water, he made after the vessel. He overtook it and caught hold of the high stern. Clutching desperately at the side of the boat, he managed to reach the part where it was lower, and pulled himself up over the edge.

"Now then, none of that!" shouted Gavrik in a sepulchral bass when he saw a wet head hanging into the rocking boat.

The appearance of this head did not strike the boy as at all surprising. Odessa was famed for her swimmers.

Some of them would swim out three or even four miles from the shore, returning late in the evening. This man was evidently one of them.

Well, if you were such a crack swimmer you shouldn't hang on to a strange wherry and take a rest, but finish your swim. Folks were tired out as it was, coming back from work, without you hanging on.

"Now then, get off, don't act the fool! I'll give you a whack of the oar that'll get you going!"

For greater effect, the boy made as if to lift an oar from its peg, just as his grandfather did in such cases.

"I-m . . . sick . . ." said the head breathlessly.

A shaking arm in the clinging, wet sleeve of an embroidered shirt stretched over the boat-side.

Then Gavrik grasped the situation at once: this was no swimming champion; they did not swim about at sea in embroidered shirts.

He was asking the man sympathetic questions when he noticed that he had passed out.

His head and arms hung limp inside the wherry, while his legs, clothed in drawers, still dangled in the water.

Gavrik and his grandfather left their oars, and with great difficulty hauled the unresisting but extremely heavy body into the boat.

"Ugh, how hot you are!" Grandfather exclaimed, when he got his breath back.

The sailor, though wet and shivering, was burning with fever.

"Want a drink?" Gavrik asked.

The sailor did not answer. He rolled his filmy eyes in a vacant stare and moved his swollen lips.

The boy offered him the little oaken keg of water but the sailor pushed it aside feebly, gulped back his saliva with a grimace of disgust and then became violently sick.

His head rolled over and struck the seat. After this he reached for the little keg, groped for it in the dark like a blind man, and though his chattering teeth rattled on the wood, managed to get a drink.

The old fisherman shook his head.

"Here's a nice how d'ye-do . . ."

"Where've you come from?" the boy asked.

The sailor gulped down his saliva again and attempted to speak but only stretched out his hand and let it fall helplessly.

"Oh, devil take it!" he muttered indistinctly. "Don't let anyone see me. I'm . . . a sailor . . . Hide me away somewhere . . . else they'll hang me. It's the truth—so help me God! . . . I swear by the holy . . ."

He tried to make the sign of the cross, but could not raise his hand. He wanted to smile at his own weakness, but his eyes filmed over again. He had fallen unconscious again.

The boy and his grandfather exchanged glances but never uttered a word. In times like these it was best to understand all and say nothing.

Carefully they lifted the man on to the trellis in the interestices of which the unbaled water was bubbling, then they placed the little keg under his head and sat down at their oars.

They rowed in a leisurely fashion, reckoning on reaching the shore when darkness had fallen. The darker it was the better. They even rowed about among the familiar rocks before putting in.

Fortunately there was no one about. The warm, impenetrable gloom was full of crickets and stars.

The boy and his grandfather dragged the boat ashore. The pebbles rustled mysteriously underfoot. The grandfather stayed behind to watch the sick man while Gavrik ran to see if there was anyone hanging about.

Soon he returned, silently. By those scarcely audible footsteps his grandfather understood that everything was all right. Cautiously but with great difficulty, they dragged the sailor out of the wherry and set him on his feet, supporting him on both sides.

The sailor put his arm round Gavrik's neck and clasped him to his own now dry and unusually hot body. Hardly realizing what he was doing, he leaned heavily on the boy.

Gavrik took a firmer footing and whispered:

"Can you walk?"

The sailor made no answer, but staggered like a lunatic for a few steps.

"Easy now, go easy," the old man cautioned him, holding the sailor up at the back.

"It's not far . . . only a step or two," added Gavrik.

They were up the hill at last. No one had seen them. And even if they had been seen, little attention would have been attracted by a white staggering figure led by an old man and a boy.

It was a familiar enough sight—a drunken sailor being led home by his relatives. And as for the fact that the drunken man was neither swearing nor roaring out songs—that was simply because he had taken more than his usual share of vodka.

No sooner had they dragged the sailor into the hot, odorous darkness of the hut than he dropped down on the little plank bed.

The old man covered the window with a bit of plywood from a packing case and shut the door tight. Only then did he light the little, chimney-less, kerosene lamp, turning the wick as low as possible.

The lamp stood on a shelf corner. Beside it lay a lump of coarse bread, wrapped in a damp cloth to keep it from drying up, a mug made from an old tin can, a tin bowl with porridge, two wooden spoons, a handful of coarse grey salt in a large blue shell—in short, the meager, but unusually tidy utensils of the household, were displayed on this shelf, on which an old sheet of newspaper served as cover.

An old smoke-darkened ikon of St. Nicholas the Miracle-Worker, the patron-saint of fishermen, was nailed up in the corner above the shelf, from where his awe-inspiring eyes gazed down out of a longish, coffee-colored face painted in the archaic Kiev style.

At this moment the ancient countenance was lighted from below by the smoking lamp, and seemed alive and breathing.

Long ago the old fisherman had given up believing in either God or the devil. Neither good nor evil had they brought into his life. But he believed in Nicholas the Miracle-Worker.

How could one help but believe in a saint who aided a fellow in a difficult and dangerous trade? There was nothing more important in the old man's life than his fishing.

But, if the truth were to be told, the Miracle-Worker had been getting a bit slack lately.

When the old man was younger and had good tackle and sail and plenty of strength the saint had behaved very well and been a help. He was a useful fellow to have in the house in those days.

But the older the fisherman got, the feebler the saint also seemed to grow.

Of course, if a fisherman had no sail, if his strength was daily on the wane, if there was not enough money for meat for bait, no matter what sort of a Miracle-Worker a saint might be—the fish would be small and no good. Clearly enough, even a Miracle-Worker found it hard to contend with age and poverty.

Still, the old fisherman felt bitterly disappointed at times and could hardly bear to look at the austere and now useless saint. True, the saint demanded neither food nor drink, but just hung peacefully in the corner. Well, let him stay there then: who knew, maybe he would come in handy some day!

In the course of time the old fisherman's attitude to the Miracle-Worker became condescending and even rather contemptuous.

On his return from a fishing expedition—the catch nowadays was nearly always a bad one—Grandfather would growl with a side-long glance at the sheepish-looking Miracle-Worker.

"Well, old hake, so we've disgraced ourselves again, have we? Look at the trash I've caught—I'm ashamed to take it to the market. Call that fish—it's more like lice."

And he would add good-naturedly, so as not to humiliate the saint altogether: "But then—you wouldn't expect real big chub to go for shrimps, would you? A real well-fed chub can afford to spit on a shrimp. Meat is what he wants—yes, that's what the real well-fed chub is after. And where would me and you get meat, eh? You'd want more than a miracle to buy meat. . . . That's the way of it!"

Tonight, however, the old man had no time for the saint. He was worried about the sailor. It was not so much the fever and unconsciousness that worried him as the danger that threatened the stranger.

Naturally, Grandfather could put two and two together and make a guess at the truth. But still, he needed to know something more before he could help the man.

And, as if to spite him, the sailor lay there in a daze, tossing feverishly on the patchwork quilt and staring before him with wide open eyes that saw nothing.

One arm hung down at the bedside, the other lay across his chest, and on this one Grandfather could see the tattoo-mark of a blue anchor.

From time to time the sailor made attempts to get up, he groaned and hot sweat spurted from him. He bit the hand with the tattoo-mark. He seemed to be trying to gnaw out the anchor, as if he would feel easier without it.

With an effort, Grandfather laid him down again, wiped his forehead and soothed him.

"Lie down now . . . Lie down, I'm telling you . . . Go to sleep and don't be afraid . . . Go to sleep."

Out in the garden Gavrik was boiling up some water in an iron pot to make the sick man some tea. It would not be real tea but a beverage made from the fragrant grass that Grandfather gathered on the surrounding hills in the month of May and dried to use as tea.

It was a very disturbed night for them all. The sailor tore open the breast of his shirt. He felt stifled.

Grandfather extinguished the little lamp and opened the door to let in the fresh air.

The sailor saw the starry sky but could not understand what it was. The night breeze blew into the hut and cooled his head.

Gavrik lay down in the weeds by the door, listening to every stir. He did not close his eyes till morning. His elbow grew numb. The old man lay on the earthen floor of the hut. He, too, could not sleep, but lay awake listening to the chirping of the crickets, to the waves, and the groans of the sick man who sprang up from time to time, calling out in a clear but feeble voice:

"Fire, gunners! Koshuba! At 'em, gunners! The curse of God on 'em!'

And a lot of other nonsense. Grandfather took a firm hold of his shoulders, shook him carefully and going close up to the man's mouth from which the scorching breath issued, whispered:

"Lie down and stop shouting! For the Lord Almighty's sake—don't kick up such a row! Lie down and shut up. What a bother you are!"

The sailor, grinding his teeth, gradually quieted down.

Who was this strange sick man?

He was Rodion Zhukov, one of the seven hundred sailors.

He was not in any special way different from the other sailors on the mutinous ship.

From the very first moment of the mutiny, that same moment when the commander of the battle-ship had thrown himself on his knees in terror before the crew, when the first rifle-shots had rung out and the corpses of some of the officers had been flung over-board, when the sailor Matyushenko had wrenched off with a loud crack the door of the admiral's state-room, that same door which up till now it had been a terrifying experience to pass, —from that moment Rodion Zhukov had lived, thought and acted like most of the other sailors. They had moved in a kind of daze, carried away by their enthusiasm, they had been as if in a delirium until they had to surrender to the Rumanians and land at Constanza.

Never till that moment had Rodion set foot on foreign soil. And the foreign soil had proved to be like a useless sea-wave—wide and bitter.

The "Potemkin" lay quite close to the wharf.

Among the feluccas and cargo-steamers, the grey battle-ship with its three funnels lay there looking unnecessarily large, beside a seedy Rumanian cruiser, and surrounded by yawls, yachts, and launches.

High above the gun-turrets, the rowing-boats and sail-yards, hung the white flag of St. Andrew, crossed with two light-blue stripes, like a crossed-out address on a letter.

But soon the flag trembled, drooped and was lowered by short stages.

Then, with both hands, Rodion took off his sailor's cap and bowed so low that the ends of its new ribbons lay softly in the dust like the orange-and-black marguerites that grew in country gardens.

"It's a shame . . A downright disgrace! Twelve-inch guns, as many shells as you like, and first-rate gunners. We should have listened to Koshuba. He was right when he said: 'Chuck those dirty swine overboard. Sink the "St.

George." Go to Odessa and land troops there.' We'd have raised the whole of the Odessa garrison, all the workers, the whole of the Black Sea! Ah, Koshuba, if we'd only listened to you . . . What we've come down to now!" . . .

For the last time Rodion bowed farewell to his ship.

"All right!" he said through his teeth. "All right! We won't let you down! We'll rouse all Russia yet."

A few days later, after having spent his last penny on some civilian clothes, he made his way by night across the Danube near Vilkovo and reached Russian soil.

His plan was as follows: he would cross the steppe to Akkerman and from thence, by barge or steamer, make his way to Odessa.

From Odessa to his native village,—Nerubaiskoye—was a stone's-throw. And there—he would see . . .

One thing Rodion knew for certain: that there was no way back for him; that from his former life, from either compulsory service on the Imperial battleship or the hard toil of a peasant at home in the pale-blue-washed clay hut with the little windows shining dark-blue amid the yellow and pink hollyhocks, he was cut off for ever.

Now it was either the gallows or a temporary hiding-place from which he would emerge to raise a rebellion, set fire to the landowners' houses and go in search of the committee in town.

He had begun to feel ill on the way. But to linger was unthinkable. He went on, sick as he was.

And now this—What was happening to him? Where was he lying? Why were those stars swinging in the doorway? And were they really stars?

Night enveloped Rodion like a black sea.

The stars came out more thickly in the sky, they burned and lay down before the eyes like the low lights of quarantine. A tumult arose in the town, the wharf in the port went on fire, people ran out, seemed sputtering coals in the riotous flames. Like long rails the iron rifle-volleys crashed along the pavements.

The night swayed like the deck of a ship. Mirror-bright, the circle of the searchlight swept the undulating coastline, lit the corners of the houses to white-heat, blazed up in the windows, picked out of the darkness the running soldiers, red patches of flags, tumbrils, gun-carriages, horses and carts dragged across the street.

Now he could see himself in the gun-turret.

The gunner had his eye to the range-finder. The turret revolved, the hollow bore with the glittering grooves inside covering the town. Stop! It was now exactly opposite the blue dome of the theater where a portly general was holding a council of war against the rebels.

A thin tinkling telephone-bell sounded in the turret.

But perhaps it was only the crickets chirping in the steppe?

No, it was the telephone. The electric lift with a slow clank lifted a shell out of the hold; it swung in its chains—right into Rodion's hands.

Was it a shell, though, and not but a cool melon? Ah, how good it would be to drink! But no—no! It was a shell after all.

"Gunners, fire!" At that moment there came a roaring in his ears, as if something had struck the armor-plating of the turret from without like a tambourine. There was a flash, and all was drowned in a smell like burnt celluloid.

The shock was felt throughout the roadstead. The boats rocked. A stream of iron joined the battleship and the town.

Missed!

Rodion's hands itched. Then again the crickets like a crystal stream crept through the sickly-crowding stars and the weeds.

But perhaps that was only the telephone complaining?

The second shell slid of its own accord out of the lift into the sailor's hands. Wait a bit, we'll finish off that general.

"Gunners—fire! Gunners—fire!"

"Lie down, stop shouting! . . . Maybe I should give you a drink, eh? Lie down and stay quiet. . ."

A second iron stream was laid across the bay. Missed again. Never mind! Maybe we won't make a mess of it the third time. There are plenty of shells, surely. The hold is full of them.

Lighter than a feather, yet heavier than a whole house—the third shell lay in his hand. If only he could send it off quickly! If only the smoke would burst soon from the blue dome! Then things would start moving! . . .

But somehow the telephone seemed to have stopped grumbling and the crickets had ceased chirruping. Was everything dead up there, devil take it?

Or was it morning coming in so quiet and rosy?

The turret was revolving backwards again as if of its own accord. "Cease firing!" And the shell, slipping out of his hands as they dropped to his sides, descended again to the hold, accompanied by a rattle of the chains of the lift.

No, no! It was only the tin mug that had slipped from his fingers; the water was gently dripping from the bed to the floor. . .

It was quiet, quiet. . . .

"What's happened? Aye, they've sold it, sold their freedom, the traitors! They've turned tail at the last minute! If we're to fight, we should fight to the very end. We should smash them to smitherens! At 'em, gunners, at 'em, wipe 'em out!"

"Oh, Lord, Lord—in the name of St. Nicholas the Miracle-Worker—lie down, have another drink of water. What a nuisance you are to be sure!"

The faint, rose-suffused stillness of the morning laid its tender, soothing hand on Rodion's feversh cheeks.

Far away on the sun-gilt cliff the cocks crew.

The lad and his grandfather discussed the situation and decided that for the present the sick man must not be seen by anyone. On no account could he be sent to the town hospital, where they would be sure to demand his passport.

In Grandfather's opinion, the sailor was suffering from an ordinary and not very severe attack of fever which would soon pass. Then the man would be able to look after himself.

Meanwhile, it was already day-break, time to go out to sea again.

The sick man was not asleep. Enfeebled from sweating all night, he lay on his back, motionless, gazing with eyes that were already conscious, at the ikon of the holy Miracle-Worker. A bunch of fresh cornflowers was thrust behind its dark wood, warped, with age.

"Can you hear?" the old man asked, going over to the bedside.

The sailor moved his lips feebly as if striving to say: "Yes, I hear you."

"Feel easier now?"

The sick man closed his eyes a second in token of assent.

"Maybe you'd like something to eat?"

The grandfather cast a sidelong glance at the bread and porridge on the shelf.

The sailor shook his head weakly.

"Well, as you like. Listen, sonny . . . We've got to go out to sea for chub now. So we'll have to leave you by yourself and lock you in. You can trust us. We're your sort, Black Sea folks. Do you hear? You just lie here quietly and rest yourself. If anybody comes a-knocking at the door, you don't answer, that's all. Me and Gavrik'll get finished as quick as we can and come back. I'm leaving you some water in the mug; if you want it, drink, it won't do you any harm. And don't you get thinking and worrying about anything, you can rely on us. Do you hear?"

The old man talked to the sick one as if he were a foolish child, and repeated "Do you hear?" at every second word.

The sailor looked at him with eyes that strove to smile, blinking them from time to time. His eyes were saying: "I can hear you all right, and thanks very much."

Having locked in the sailor, the two fishers went out to sea and returned home four hours later to find everything all right and the sick man fast asleep.

This time they had had luck. They took out of the net about three hundred-and fifty fine, large chub. Grandfather cast an approving glance at the ikon of the Miracle-Worker and, biting his withered lips, observed:

"Not so bad today. Not so bad at all. Even though we only had shrimps for bait—still the fish are big 'uns. God send you good health, old saint!"

But the Miracle-Worker, well aware of his power, looked down at Grandfather rather sternly and even superciliously, as much as to say:

"You had your doubts about me, had you? Called me an old hake? Hake yourself, that's what I say!"

Grandfather decided to take the fish himself to the market. After all, it was time he cleared up his business affairs with Madam Storojenko. It all looked very funny to him: no matter how much fish he brought her, he was always in debt to her and never saw any real money. There was no point in going out fishing in that case.

Today would be a good opportunity. He was not ashamed to show these fish. They were first-rate.

Gavrik would have liked to have gone to the market today; on the way home he might see his chum Petka and have a glass of kvass at the corner.

But it was risky to leave the sailor alone, for it was Sunday. Very likely a number of people from the town would come down to the shore.

Grandfather set the still wet tub on his shoulder and shuffled away to market. Gavrik changed the water in the mug, covered the sailor's feet to keep the flies from him, and locking the door, went out for a stroll. Not very far away on the shore, there were various places of amusement; a restaurant with a garden and bowling-alleys, a shooting gallery, a merry-go-round, stalls selling mineral waters and Oriental sweetmeats, automatic trial-of-strength machines —in a word, all the fun of the fair. To roam about it, staring at things, was the boy's great delight.

People had not yet dispersed after the early church service. Up above the precipice, soared the ringing notes of the bells.

The wind, which could not be felt down below, sometimes swept a snow-white cloud—rounded and clear as the sound of the bells—across the summer sky.

The Sunday parade had not properly begun, but some smartly-dressed

townsfolk were already lounging near the merry-go-round, waiting for the moment when its tarpaulin shroud would be stripped from it.

From the bowling alleys came the slow leaden growling of the heavy ball as it rolled along the narrow plank. It took a terribly long time to roll, the sound growing fainter and fainter, until suddenly, after a brief silence, the musical click of the falling pins was borne from the laburnum-embowered garden.

Occasionally a shot rang out from the shooting-range, and sometimes after the feeble, spasmodic shot came the clink of a shattered bottle or the whirr of the machinery of the moving targets.

The shooting-gallery possessed a fatal magnetism.

Gavrik went up to it and lingered near the door, greedily drinking in the incomparable and somehow bluish-leaden smell of powder.

The peculiar, acid, suffocating taste of it could be felt even on the tongue.

Oh, those rifles, set out so temptingly on special stands! The small butts that looked moulded, made of special wood as heavy as iron, with a patch of file-like surface in places, to prevent the fingers slipping. The thick, but long, barrel of blue burnished steel, had a little hole in its muzzle as small as a pea. Then the blue steel sight; and the easily-raised frame of the lock.

Even the richest boys dreamed of owning a gun like this. It was known as a "Monte-Cristo"—a word that gave you a thrill as you said it, for it implied incredible wealth, happiness, glory, courage. The possession of a "Monte-Cristo" meant even more than the possession of a bicycle.

Boys who owned Monte-Cristos were known far beyond the bounds of their particular block of houses. These fortunate ones were alluded to as: "You know—that Volodka who lives in Richelieu Street and owns a Monte-Cristo."

Gavrik, of course, never ventured to dream of a Monte-Cristo. He did not even hope ever to fire one; a single shot cost an outrageous price—a whole five kopeks. Only a very well-to-do person could afford to practice shooting.

Gavrik dared only dream of taking aim with the marvelous gun, and this the owner of the shooting-gallery sometimes permitted him to do.

Just now, however, there was a customer in the booth, so there was no hope for Gavrik. Perhaps when the man had gone Gavrik would ask the owner if he might try and then . . .

But the customer was in no hurry to go. He stood there with his powerful feet, encased in sport shoes, planted wide apart. He was not doing much shooting, but mostly talking to the owner of the gallery.

Gavrik watched his opportunity when the owner looked up, then greeted him respectfully with:

"God send you kindly, sir."

The man acknowledged this by a slow and very dignified inclination of the head, as befitted the owner of such an unusual entertainment-stall. This was a hopeful sign. It meant that the man was in a good humor and there was every chance of his allowing Gavrik to handle the gun for a minute or two.

Encouraged, the boy decided that he might go a little nearer and even stand on the threshold of the gallery.

He gazed with admiration at the pistols hanging over the counter, at the branched stand for the rifles, at the mechanical target-toys, one of which he particularly fancied.

It was a Japanese battle-ship complete with cannon and flag, on the vivid green waves of a tin sea. A little round disc on top of a stick stuck up out of

the waves. As soon as this was hit the battleship split noisily in two and sank, while in its place appeared a fan-shaped tin explosion.

Naturally, among the drumming hares, ballet-dancers, anglers with shoes on their fishing-lines, and battles that followed one another in an endless succession, the Japanese battleship headed the list as a brilliant invention, patriotic in sentiment and artistic in execution.

Although it was well-known that in the late war the Japanese had sunk the entire Russian fleet at Tsushima, still, there was always some sportsman who wanted to have his revenge on the Japs.

Then there was a real fountain that played to order. The owner laid a light celluloid ball on the spout of water. The water tossed it up and whirled it round, dropping it suddenly and as unexpectedly raising it again. This was a real marvel, one of Nature's riddles.

To hit it was incredibly difficult. The amateur would send from ten to fifteen bullets into it and fail, more often than not.

But if anyone did happen to hit the ball, then he was entitled to a free shot.

"So nothing out of the ordinary occurred here yesterday evening?" the present customer said, continuing the conversation. He was toying with the beautiful gun, which looked quite small in his big paws.

"No, I don't think there was anything."

"Is that so?"

The customer looked about, wondering which target to choose.

He took off his prince-nez, exposing two coral-red ruts in his fleshy nose, and took aim at the hare with the drum. But almost immediately he changed his mind and lowered the barrel.

"Then the fishermen hereabouts haven't been talking about anything?"

"No, they haven't."

"Hm!"

The man raised the Monte-Cristo to his shoulder and lowered it again.

"I heard that yesterday evening a man fell overboard from the 'Turgeniev,' right opposite the shore here. Did you hear anything about that?"

"No, nothing at all."

Gavrik caught his breath, as if a bucket of icy water had been suddenly dashed over him. His heart contracted till it almost stopped beating. His legs felt weak. He was afraid to move.

"Well, I heard that a man the police are after jumped overboard from the steamer. Right here, opposite the shore. Didn't you know about it?"

"No, this is the first I've heard of it."

It was obvious that the owner of the shooting-gallery was heartily tired of this chatterer with the moustache.

With respectful dignity the owner twiddled a little green box of Belgian cartridges and almost yawned. He thought—and was fully justified in thinking so—that if you came here to shoot, you ought to shoot. If you wanted to talk to a chap, well—why not?—you could do it between shots. But you might at least talk about something interesting, such as, for instance, the bicycle-races at the Cycledrome or the Russo-Japanese war.

His dissipated face, the face of an unsuccessful man tormented by secret passions, expressed weariness and boredom.

Gavrik felt downright sorry for him. He and all the other children were for some reason or other very fond of this man with the crookedly-clipped whiskers, and legs bent like a dachsund's and a hairy chest thickly ornamented with tattoo-marks that could be seen through his cellular vest.

Gavrik knew that in spite of the man's fairly decent earnings, he never had

a penny to bless himself with. He was always in debt to someone, always desperately worried about something. It was said that he had once been a celebrated circus-rider, and that, infuriated by some mean trick of the circus-owner's, he had struck the man across the face with his whip. From that time on his life had undergone a complete change. Deprived of the means of earning his bread, and placed on the black list, he began to bet at the races and this proved his ruin. Now he went in for every form of play and was not above gambling with the boys for kopek stakes.

He was for ever tormented by the gambling fever.

It was well-known that he sometimes gambled away everything he had on. For instance, the boots he wore did not belong to him. He had lost them at the beginning of the summer at "vingt-et-un." When he locked up his booth for the night, he took them off and walked home barefoot, carrying under his arm the case of rifles and pistols which, for fear of losing them at play, he handed over for the night to a porter in Little Arnaut Street.

Once Gavrik had heard him arguing with a gentleman strolling on the beach that he could hit a sparrow in flight from a Monte-Cristo. He bet fifty kopeks on it, and of course, lost.

Gavrik remembered that he had been ready to cry as he watched the gallery-keeper examine the gun for a long time with assumed and shame-faced astonishment, shrug his shoulders and at length fumble about in the lining of his patched jacket. He found a fifty-kopek piece and, very pale, handed it to the stranger. The latter refused, laughing. He said he had only meant it as a joke. But the owner of the shooting-gallery gave him such a glare out of his crazy, pitiful and at the same time menacingly blood-shot eyes that the stranger hastily took the money and in some embarrassment stowed it in the pocket of his shantung silk jacket.

That day the owner of the shooting-gallery did not close for the dinner-hour.

"I'd advise you, sir, to aim at the ballet-girl. You'll see what a smart little kick she'll give," he said in his Polish accent. He was evidently anxious to cut this dull conversation short and bring the customer back to the shooting.

"It's strange, though, that no one knows anything," remarked the visitor. At that moment he noticed Gavrik.

Giving the boy a hasty glance from head to foot, he said:

"Do you belong to these parts, boy?"

"Yes," the boy piped up in an unexpectedly squeaky voice.

"To the fishing-folk?"

"Yes."

"Why, you're shy? Come here, don't be frightened."

Gavrik looked at the stiffly-twisted moustache that looked as if it was done with boot-blacking, at the long strip of sticking-plaster across his cheek and moving automatically approached the stranger with a feeling of terror.

"Have you got a father and a mother?"

"No."

"Who do you live with, then?"

"With my grandad."

"Who's he?"

"An old chap."

"That's easily understood—we know he'd be bound to be old and not young. What does he do?"

"Catches fish."

"So he's a fisherman?"

"Well, yes, a fisherman. Works on the fishing-ground."

"And what are you?"

"A lad."

"Clear enough. I should think I could see you were a lad and not a girl. I'm asking you what do you do?"

"Nothing. Help my grandad."

"So you go out fishing together?"

"M-mn."

"Ah, I see. How do you do your fishing?"

"Just the ordinary way. We cast the net of a night, and go and drag in the chub of a morning."

"You go out in a wherry, I suppose?"

"M-mn."

"Every day?"

"What? I didn't understand what you asked me, sir."

"What a blockhead! I'm asking you: do you go out to sea every day in your wherry?"

"And what do you think?"

"Morning and evening?"

"No."

"What do you mean by 'no'?"

"Only of a morning."

"And what about the evening?"

"Of an evening as well."

"Then why did you say you only went out in the morning when you go out in the evening as well?"

"No—we only cast the nets in the evening. But we draw in the chub in the morning."

"I understand. So it seems you have to go out in the evening as well?"

"No. We only lay the nets in the evening."

"Good God!—but you have to put out to sea, don't you, so as to lay the nets?"

"And what do you think?"

"So you go out in the evening as well?"

"No. We don't draw in the catch of an evening. We only do that of a morning."

"And in the evening you go out to lay the nets?"

"Well, of course."

"So you go out in the evening, too?"

"M-mn."

"Well, now you see what a stupid duffer you are! It's a waste of time talking to blockheads like you! Why are you so stupid?"

"I'm only a little chap."

The man with the moustache looked Gavrik up and down with undisguised contempt and dealt him a light but well-placed flip on the head.

"Pooh, you're a nice sort of a fisherman, you are!"

The boy was by no means so stupid, however.

In the man with the moustache he had recognized an enemy instinctively. This fellow was strolling up and down the beach making inquiries about the sailor. He was just pretending he wanted to shoot. Who knew what he had at the back of his mind? Likely enough, he came from the secret police. He

might even smell out somehow that the sailor was hiding in their hut. Perhaps he had already tracked them down—! God forbid!

Gavrik had decided at once to pretend he was a little soft-headed.

The lad assumed a dull stupid expression—the kind he imagined a little idiot's face would wear—fixed his eyes in a senseless stare and with exaggerated embarrassment shuffled his feet and picked at a scab on his lip.

The man with the moustache, seeing that he had to deal with a complete fool, decided that he would first make friends with him and afterwards pump him.

He supposed—not without reason—that children were an inquisitive and observant crew on the whole and often knew better than grown-ups what was going on around them.

"What do they call you, little boy?"

"Gavrik."

"Is that so? That's the same as Gavrukha, isn't it?"

"M-mn. Gavrukha."

"Well, now, Gavrukha, would you like to have a try at shooting?"

The lad reddened to his very ears. He got himself well in hand again however, and, continuing his rôle of village idiot, squeaked out:

"I haven't got the five kopeks for it, sir."

"Oh, I quite understand you haven't got much cash about you. Never mind! You can have one go and I'll pay."

"You're not making fun of me, are you?"

"Don't you believe me? Well, then—look here!"

With these words the stranger laid a big, brand-new five-kopek piece on the counter.

"Fire away!"

Gavrik, breathless with delight, gave a hesitating glance at the gallery-keeper, who, however, had already assumed a strictly official expression that precluded the faintest possibility of any friendly winks being exchanged.

He looked at the lad as if he were an utter stranger to him, and, leaning respectfully over the counter, asked:

"Which do you prefer, young man—a pistol or a gun?"

Hereupon Gavrik felt in good earnest like a fool, so bewildered was he by this unexpected piece of luck that had fallen to his share.

He grinned foolishly and, almost stammering, lisped out:

"The Monte-Christo."

With professional deftness the man loaded the gun and handed it to the boy.

Snuffling ecstatically, Gavrik leaned on the counter and began to take aim at the bottle. He would, of course, have liked best of all to shoot at the Japanese battleship. But he was afraid to miss, and the bottle was a big one.

He tried to drag out the pleasure of aiming as long as he could.

After aiming at the bottle, he tried the hare, then the ship, then the bottle again. He shifted the sight from one aim to another, gulping his saliva and dreading the moment he would fire and this blissful state would come to an end.

He gave a deep sigh, laid down the gun and, smiling apologetically at the gallery-keeper, said to the stranger:

"You know what: I'd better not shoot, I've aimed with the gun anyhow, and that's something. Better for you to treat me to a glass of soda-and-syrup —it'll come cheaper on you."

The stranger raised no objections and so, avoiding the eye of the owner, whose face had assumed an expression of scorn and indifference, they went off to the soda-water stall.

Here the stranger exhibited such generosity that Gavrik gasped. Instead of the soda-water and syrup, which cost two kopeks, he demanded neither more nor less than a whole big bottle of aerated "Violet" water that cost eight kopeks.

The boy could hardly believe his eyes when the stall-keeper produced the white bottle with the purple label and unwound the fine wire twisted round the cork.

There was a pop as the cork came out, not the loud, coarse pop a bottle of kvass gave, but a thin, delicate, resilient sound. And straight away the transparent water bubbled up and a faint smoke came out of the bottle-neck, giving off a tender fragrance of real violets.

Gavrik carefully took the cold, foaming glass in both hands as if it were a jewel and, blinking in the sunlight, began to drink. The fragrant gas pierced through his throat to his nose.

As he gulped down this magical beverage of the wealthy, it seemed to him that all the world was looking on at his triumph: the sun, the clouds, the sea, the people, the dogs, the cyclists, the wooden hobby-horses in the merry-go-round, the girl in the box-office of the public swimming baths . . . they were all saying: "Look, look! That boy is drinking 'Violet'-Aerated water!"

Even the tiny turquoise lizard that had crept out of the weeds to warm its beady back in the sunshine, hung there clinging with its paws to a stone, staring at the boy with half-closed eyes, as much as to say: "Look at that lucky one: he's drinking 'Violet'-Aerated water."

Gavrik drank and while he drank he thought of how he would equivocate if the stranger with the moustache should start bothering him with questions. A plan was ripening in his head.

"Well, Gavrukha, did you like this water?"

"Oh, yes thanks. I never tasted anything so good in all my born days."

"I don't suppose you did. Now tell me, did you go out to sea yesterday evening?"

"Yes, we did."

"Did you happen to see the steamer 'Turgeniev'?"

" 'Turgeniev'? Didn't we just! Her wheels nearly ruined our net."

The man stared at the boy with his black, heavily-lashed eyes.

"Did anybody jump off the ship?"

Gavrik managed to give a chuckle, and with exaggerated excitement blurted out:

"My goodness, didn't he though! I'm blowed if he didn't. He gave such a ju-u-ump—there was splashes for miles round! And off he swims as quick as lightning."

"Wait a bit! You must be lying? Where'd he swim to?"

"So help me God!—I'm not lying. Cross-my-heart-and-hope-to-die, I'm not!"

Upon this Gavrik crossed himself swiftly four times without stopping, though well aware that it was a sin.

"How he swam, though, how he swam!"

"Where to?"

"Over there!"—he pointed towards the sea.

"And where did he go afterwards?"

"After that some wherry or other picked him up."

"A wherry, eh? What was she like?"

"Oh, you know, a big one, one of those great big Ochakov wherries with sails."

"Belonging hereabouts?"

"No."

"Where from then?"

"From Bolshoi Fontan . . . Or maybe from Lustdorf. All blue—she was—and half red, a great big one. She picked him up without slackening speed and sailed away, away, straight for Lustdorf. Cross my heart."—

"You didn't notice what her name was?"

"Of course I did. The 'Sonia.' "

"The 'Sonia.' Splendid! But, maybe it's all lies you've been telling me?"

"So help me God! May I never have any luck in life if I'm lying! It was either the 'Sonia' or the 'Vera.' "

"The 'Sonia' or the 'Vera'?"

"Yes, either the 'Sonia' or the 'Vera' . . . Or the 'Nadia.' "

"If it isn't true you can look out. . ."

At this point, instead of paying for the aerated water, the stranger whispered something in the stall-keeper's ear that caused that trademan's face to assume a very sour expression. Then, with a nod to the boy, the stranger began to climb hurriedly up to town, where, as Gavrik supposed, he would make for the suburban trains.

That was exactly what Gavrik had been waiting for.

The sailor must be warned without delay. Gavrik, however, was a cautious, sensible lad. Before turning home, he followed the stranger, and kept him in sight until he had convinced himself that the man had really climbed up to the town and disappeared down a side-street.

Only then did the boy run back to the hut.

The sailor was asleep. At the click of the lock, however, he sprang up and sat on the edge of the bed, with his glittering eyes fixed on the door in alarm.

"Don't be frightened, it's only me. Lie down."

The sick man lay down again. The boy fumbled in the corner for some time, pretending to be busy with the hooks of the net which lay in a round willow basket. He did not know how to approach the subject in order not to upset the sick man.

At last he went over to the bed, and stood there a while rubbing one foot on the other.

"Are you a bit better now?"

"Yes."

"Do you know where you are?"

"Yes."

"Would you like something to eat?"

The sick man, wearied by even this short conversation, shook his head and closed his eyes.

The boy gave him time to rest.

"I say," he began very softly, but insistently, after a little while, "was it you who jumped overboard from the 'Turgeniev' last night?"

The sick man opened his eyes and looked up at the boy with a strained attentive glance, but said nothing.

"Listen to what I've got to tell you," Gavrick whispered, sitting down on the bed. "Only don't you go starting up and twitching about, lie still. . ."

With as much caution as he could muster, the boy told the story of his encounter with the stranger.

The sick man sprang up again and sat on the edge of the bed, gripping the planks hard. He never took his fixed, dilated eyes from Gavrik's face. His brow grew damp. He listened in silence.

Only once did he break the silence, and that was when Gavrik mentioned that the stranger had a piece of sticking-plaster on his cheek.

At that point a spark of wild, gay, Ukrainian cunning glowed in his eyes and he muttered hoarsely, through his teeth:

"The cat must have scratched him."

Then he grew fidgety and, holding on to the wall, he got to his shaking legs.

"Come on," he muttered, moving aimlessly about. "Let's go somewhere—for Christ's sake—"

"Lie down, old chap. You're sick."

"Come along—come—give me my clothes—where are my things?"

He had evidently forgotten that he had stripped off his upper garments in the sea and now began to fumble helplessly in the bed with his wasted hands. An unshaven terrifying figure, he looked like a lunatic in his white shirt and drawers.

In fact, he was so pitiful and at the same time so menacing that Gavrik was ready to fly from him in terror.

Overcoming his fears, however, he flung his arms round the man's body and strove to lay him back on the bed. The boy was nearly in tears.

"Have pity on yourself, old fellow, and lie down!"

"Let go! I'm going now."

"Where can you go in your drawers?"

"Give me my things!"

"What are you talking about? What things? Lie down again. You hadn't anything on."

"Let go . . . I've got to clear out . . ."

"Oh, what a lot of trouble you're giving me. Just like a child! Lie down, I'm telling you!" the boy shouted angrily, losing patience. "Do you think I'm going to play about with you as if you were a baby!"

The sick man lay down obediently and Gavrik noticed that his eyes filmed over with fever once more.

The sailor groaned, wincing painfully and stretching himself.

"For the love of Christ. . . Let someone stow me away. . . Let me go to the committee. . . You don't know, by the way, where the Odessa committee is. . . Don't shoot, devil take you, else you'll spoil all the vines."

His mind wandered.

Things looked bad, thought Gavrik. At that moment he heard footsteps outside the door. Someone was coming straight to the hut noisily, trampling down the clumps of weeds and bushes.

The boy cowered, not daring to breathe. Frightful thoughts came crowding into his head.

Then suddenly he heard a familiar cough and a moment later his grandfather entered the hut.

Judging by the way the old man dropped the empty tub on the threshold, blew his nose violently and crossed himself ironically for a long time before the ikon of St. Nicholas the Miracle-Worker, Gavrik guessed that he had had a good drop to drink.

This very rarely happened with the old man; it invariably followed on some untoward occurrence—either of a very cheering or a very depressing nature.

This time, as might be concluded from his attitude towards the Miracle-Worker, the event had been a depressing one.

"Well, Grandad, did you buy the meat for bait?"

"Meat for bait?"

The old man gave Gavrik one clear straight glance and made a derisive gesture.

"There's meat for you. Bait with that. And you can thank that old hake of a holy Miracle-Worker for that. Pray to him, the old fool; may he burst! He can catch big chub, yes, that he can; but he can no more get us a good price for them than he can fly! What do you say to that, gentlemen? Thirty kopeks a hundred for chub like that—did you ever see such a thing in your life?"

"Thirty kopeks?" the boy gasped.

"Thirty—if I was never to move from the spot! I says to her: 'Do you mean to say you'll only give thirty for fish like that! Aren't you afraid God'll punish you, Madam Storojenko?' And she says: 'God's got nothing to do with the market-price of fish that I know of. We've got our prices and God's got his. And if ours don't suit you, then go to the Jews—maybe they'll pay you a kopek or so more, but first of all you pay me eighty kopeks you owe me.' Did you ever see anything like that? Tell me, wouldn't anyone want to spit in her foul eyes after that? Well, and that's exactly what I did, gentlemen. Right before the whole market—I didn't mind—I spat at her. So help me God! Spat full in her eyes."

And the old man began to cross himself with great rapidity.

But he was lying. He had not spat in anyone's eye. White and trembling with fury, he had only tossed the fish feverishly from his tub into Madame Storojenko's basket, mumbling: "Take it, then, and may it choke you! I hope the chub'll make you as sick as a dog!"

Madam Storojenko calmly counted the fish and then handed the old man twelve sticky copper kopeks, remarking briefly:

"We're quits now."

He took the money and, positively choking with helpless rage, went straight into the spirit-shop, where for six kopeks he bought a bluish bottle with a red top. He rubbed off the seal against the special grater nailed to an acacia outside the drinkshop, and with a shaking hand knocked out the tissue-paper-wrapped cork.

He tossed off the vodka at one gulp and dashed the thin bottle to bits on the pavement, although he could have got a kopek for it in the shop.

Then he turned homewards. On the way he spent a kopek on a red toffee cock attached to the end of a pine-wood stick. This was for his grandson, whom he still thought of as a small boy. He also bought two very white and very sour rings of hard dough for the sick sailor.

The rest of the money he spent on a pound-and-a-half of rye-bread.

As he tramped along he felt so indignant that he had to stop at least ten times to spit violently, perfectly certain that he was spitting in the foul eyes of Madam Storojenko.

"I swear it by the holy cross," he cried, breathing a sweetish smell of vodka into Gavrik's face and thrusting the toffee toy into the boy's hand. "Ask any of the folk in the market. They all saw me spit in her foul filthy eyes. Never mind, eat your toffee, child, it'll be nice. It's as good as ginger-bread."

Just then the old man remembered his sick visitor and offered him the hard dough-rings.

"Don't touch him, Grandad. He's only just dropped off. Let him get a bit of rest."

Grandad laid his offerings carefully on the pillow beside the sick sailor's head and whispered:

"Sh-sh! Let him get a bit of rest now. And afterwards, when he wakes up, he'll eat them. He mustn't have rye-bread: his bowels will be terrible weak. But he can eat the hard rings, they're all right for him."

After admiring the hard rings and the sick man for a while, Grandad shook his head and observed pityingly:

"Fast asleep, knows nothing. Ah, sailor, sailor, and things look bad for you."

He spread his jacket in the corner of the hut and lay down to rest.

Gavrik went out of the hut, glanced about, and then shut the door tightly behind him. He had decided to go to Blijny Melnitsa without delay to see his elder brother Terentii.

This resolution had been formed the moment the sick man had uttered in his delirium the word "committee." Gavrik had no very clear idea of what it meant, but once he had heard it spoken by his brother Terentii.

It was growing dusk when the door of the hut opened suddenly and a tall figure entered, momentarily blotting out the stars. The sailor sprang up.

"It's all right, keep still—it's our Terentii," said Gavrik.

The sailor sat down again, peering at the newcomer through the gathering darkness.

"Good evening!" said Terentii. "Who's here—I can't see anyone. Why don't you light the lamp? Have you no kerosene, or what?"

"Yes, there's a drop left yet," Grandfather grunted, and lit the lamp.

"How do you do, Grandad! How are you getting on? I happened to come into town today and I thought to myself—I'll drop in and see my folks. Oh, but I see you've got someone else here. Good-evening!"

Terentii took careful stock of the sailor by the dim light of the little lamp.

"It's our drowned man," Grandad explained with a good-humored chuckle.

"So I heard."

The sailor stared at Terentii with a species of gloomy mistrust and said nothing.

"Rodion Zhukov?" Terentii asked almost gaily.

The sailor started, but got himself in hand immediately. He clenched his fists tighter than ever on the cot and, narrowing his eyes, said with an impudent smile:

"Well, let's suppose it is Zhukov. But who are you that I should answer your questions? Maybe I'm only obliged to answer before the committee."

The smile vanished from Terentii's pockmarked face. Gavrik had never seen his brother look so serious.

"You can count me as the committee," Terentii remarked after a few moments consideration. He sat down on the bed beside the sailor.

"How can you prove it?" demanded the sailor obstinately, taking no notice of the other's friendly tone, and edging further away.

"You'll have to show us your proofs first," Terentii replied.

"I should think mine are plain enough," said the sailor angrily, with a glance at his bare feet and his drawers.

"That's not enough."

Terentii went to the door, opened it a crack and called softly:

"Ilia Borisovich, come here a minute."

There was a rustling in the weeds and then a puny young man entered the hut. He wore pince-nez on a black ribbon that was stuck behind his ear. Under his old jacket, which was unbuttoned, a black sateen blouse belted with

a strap could be seen. A cap such as technical-school students wore was crushed down on his unkempt hair.

It seemed to the sailor that he had seen this "student" somewhere.

The young man stood sideways, straightened his pince-nez and looked at the sailor out of one eye.

"Well?" Terentii demanded.

"I saw this comrade the morning of June the fifteenth on Platonov Mole, standing guard over the body of the sailor Bakulinchuk who suffered a horrible death at the hands of the officers," said the young man rapidly and without pausing for breath. "Were you there, comrade?"

"It's a fact.

"So you see, I wasn't mistaken."

Then, in silence, Terentii drew a bundle out from beneath his jacket and laid it on the sailor's knees.

"Here are a pair of trousers, a belt and a jacket. I couldn't get hold of any boots, unfortunately. You'll have to go about like that for the present and then maybe you'll be able to buy some. Dress yourself, don't lose a minute —we can turn away—we won't look at you," the young man in the glasses ran on without any pauses for punctuation, adding: "It strikes me this house is being watched."

"Now then, Gavrik," said Terentii, with a wink.

The boy understood at once and crept quietly out of the hut into the darkness. There he stood stock still, listening. He fancied he heard the dry potato-leaves crackle in the garden.

Crouching down, he made a few steps forward, and, as his eyes grew accustomed to the darkness, saw quite clearly two figures standing motionless in the garden.

He caught his breath, there was such a roaring in his ears that he could no longer hear the sea. He bit his lip with all his might, and began to creep quietly round to the back of the hut to see if there was anyone on the path.

Yes, there were two more men, one of whom wore a white jacket.

Gavrik crawled to the hillock and saw several police posted on it. He recognized them at once by their white tunics. The hut was surrounded.

The boy was about to rush backwards when all of a sudden he felt a large hot hand descend and seize him firmly by the back of the neck. He tore himself out of the man's grasp, but was immediately tripped up and sent flying face downwards in the weeds.

Powerful hands gripped him. He wriggled free, but to his horror, found himself face to face with his acquaintance of that morning, the man with the moustache. The man's open mouth was close to his and smelt of beef, his policeman's chin looked as hard as a pine-board.

"Please, sir," Gavrik piped in a plaintive voice, not his own.

"Shut up, you little devil!" hissed the man.

"Lemme-go-o-o!"

"You just dare to yelp, my boy!" the man ground out through his teeth, gripping the boy's ear in his iron fingers.

Gavrik cowered and screamed wildly, turning his head towards the hut:

"Run!"

"Hold your tongue or I'll kill you!"

And the man tweaked his ear till it cracked. The boy's head felt as if it would burst. A frightful pain that could be compared with no other in the world, scorched his brain. At the same moment he felt a spasm of loathing and fury that made everything go dark before his eyes.

"Run!" he screamed at the top of his voice, writhing in agony.

The moustached man threw himself on Gavrik, twisting his ear with one hand and holding his mouth closed with the other. But the boy rolled over and over on the ground, biting the sweaty, hairy, hateful hand, and dissolving into tears at last, roared wildly:

"Run! Run! Run!"

The moustached man flung away the boy in a rage and rushed towards the hut. The long, shrill blast of a police-whistle rang out.

Gavrik scrambled to his feet and understood at once that his screams had been heard: three figures—two tall and one short—darted out of the hut and ran stumbling through the garden.

Two white tunics barred their path. The fugitives seemed about to turn back, but saw that they were surrounded.

"Halt!" cried an unfamiliar voice in the darkness.

"Shoot, Ilia Borisovich!" Terentii's despairing cry reached the boy's ears.

There was a flash and three shots rang out one after the other like the cracks of a knout. By the shouting and noise Gavrik understood that a scuffle was going on.

Would they be captured? Unable to collect his thoughts in sheer terror, Gavrik rushed forward, as if he could be of some assistance.

He had hardly run a dozen steps when he saw the same three figures—the two big and one small—tear themselves out of the struggle, dash up the cliffs and disappear into the darkness.

"Stop them! There they are!"

A red sheaf flashed as the heavy police-revolver fired. Above, on the cliffs, police-whistles blew shrill. It looked as though the whole of the shore was picketed.

The boy listened in despair to the sounds of pursuit. He could not for the life of him comprehend why Terentii had chosen to run in that direction. He must be mad to attempt that climb: there was an ambush laid there and they would be certain to be caught. Their best plan would have been to creep along the shore.

Gavrik ran on a little way, fancying he could see the three figures scrambling up the steep, almost vertical cliff. They were going to certain ruin!

"Oh, Terentii, why did you go up there?" the boy whispered despairingly, biting at his hands to keep himself from crying, while the bitter tears tickled his nose and welled up in his throat.

Then, all of a sudden, he grasped the reason why the men had climbed the cliff. He had clean forgotten—but, of course, how simple! The point was that . . .

At this moment the man with the moustache collided with Gavrik, caught him under the arms, tearing his shirt as he did so, and dragged him back again.

He flung the boy violently into the hut, now guarded by two policemen. Gavrik bumped his head hard against the doorpost and tumbled on to his grandfather who was sitting on the floor in the corner with his feet tucked up under him.

"If they get away, I'll wring your necks for you!" shouted the man with the moustache to the police as he dashed away.

Gavrik sat down by his grandfather, tucking up his legs under him like the old man. They sat still without speaking, listening to the whistles and shouts gradually dying away in the distance.

At last the noise was no longer to be heard.

Then Gavrik felt his ear, forgotten until now. It ached terribly and seemed on fire. He dared not even touch it.

"Ugh, that cop, he nearly tore my ear out," said Gavrik, with a great effort forcing back the tears and trying to appear indifferent.

His grandfather gave him a sidelong glance. The old man's eyes wore a fixed look, terrifying in its profound vacancy.

His lips moved as if chewing something, but he was silent for a long while. At last he shook his head and declared in a reproachful tone:

"Tearing children's ears out—! Did you ever see such a thing in your life, gentlemen? Is that right, I'm asking you?"

He gave a heavy sigh and went on mumbling. Suddenly he leaned over to Gavrik and, with a frightened glance at the door to see if anyone was listening, whispered:

"I can't hear anything; have they got away?"

"They climbed up the cliff," replied the boy in a rapid whisper. "Terentii's taking them to the catacombs. If they aren't shot on the way, they'll get clear."

Grandad turned his face towards St. Nicholas the Miracle-Worker, closed his eyes and with slow, sweeping movements, his fingers bunched firmly as if he were taking a pinch of salt, made the sign of the cross on his forehead, stomach and both shoulders.

A tiny, scarcely noticeable tear stole down his cheek and vanished into a wrinkle.

Beneath many cities of the world lie catacombs. There are catacombs in Rome, Naples, Constantinople, Alexandria, Paris and Odessa.

A long time ago—fifty years or so—the catacombs of Odessa were the quarries from which the limestone for building was obtained. They form a labyrinth under the whole town, with several outlets beyond the city's boundaries.

The people of Odessa were aware of the existence of these catacombs, but very few ever went down into them and fewer still had any idea of their disposition. The catacombs were, so to speak, the city mystery, its local legend.

But Terentii had not been a fisherman for nothing. He knew every foot of the Odessa coast and had explored all the outlets from the catacombs to the sea.

There was one such exit not a hundred paces behind the hut, in the middle of the cliff. It was a narrow crack in the rock, entirely overgrown with wild-rose bushes and spindle-tree.

A little stream trickled out of the crack and ran down the cliff face, making the creeping plants and weeds quiver.

When they had beaten off the first heat of the pursuit, Terentii led his comrades straight to the crack in the rock.

Their pursuers had not the faintest idea of its existence. They thought the fugitives intended to make for the town by way of the villas on the cliffs. This would have been playing into the hands of the police. All the villas were surrounded; the three men would inevitably fall into the ambush laid for them.

Therefore, after the first shot, the police were ordered not to shoot any more.

After waiting below for a quarter of an hour, however, the district-inspector in charge of the party sent a police-officer to find out if the criminals had been caught.

The constable went round by the most convenient road and returned a quarter of an hour later to report that the men had not made their appearance on the cliff-top. They were neither up above nor down below. Where were they, then? It seemed highly improbable that they could be sitting somewhere in the bushes on the middle of the cliff, waiting to be caught.

Nevertheless, the district-inspector ordered his braves to climb up and search every bush. Cursing frightfully and slipping every moment in his patent-leather boots on the grass and clay, he clambered up himself, having lost all faith in "those fools."

They groped and searched in the darkness from the foot of the cliff to the top and found nothing. It really began to look like a miracle. Could the earth have opened and swallowed up the fugitives?

"Please, your honor!" came a frightened voice from above. "Come up here, sir."

"What is it?"

"If you please, sir, it's a catacomb!"

The district-inspector clutched at the prickly bushes with white-gloved hands. He was immediately supported by several powerful hands and hauled up on to a little ledge.

The man with the moustache struck match after match, and they managed to discern a dark narrow crack in the rock, overgrown with plants and bushes.

In a flash, the district-inspector understood that they had lost their game. The prey—and what a prey!—had escaped. He trembled with rage, stamped his feet in their tight boots and, hitting out right and left with his white-gloved fists—aiming at faces, skulls or moustaches—bawled in his rolling bass, now a little hoarse with shouting:

"What are you standing there for, you great stupid blockheads! Forward! Search the catacombs! I'll knock your heads off, I'll ss-s-smash your faces to hell and the very devil. Those villains have got to be arrested. Quick—march!"

But he knew himself that nothing would come of it. It would take a fortnight at least to search the whole of the catacombs. And even then it would be useless, since half-an-hour had been lost already and the fugitives were doubtless at the other end of the town by now.

Several of the police, with great reluctance, squeezed through the crack, and, striking innumerable matches, stamped about not far from the entrance, staring at the damp limestone walls of the subterranean corridor that vanished away into a gloom like that of the grave.

The district inspector spat with all his might and ran back down the hill, his spurs clanking. Fury almost choked him. He tore at the stiffly-starched collar of his piqué tunic so viciously that the hooks flew off.

Crossing the patch of weeds with long strides, he reached the hut and pulled the door open furiously. The police sentries drew themselves up at attention in deadly fear.

The inspector entered the hut and stood still, his legs planted wide apart and his convulsively-twitching fingers behind his back. Immediately after him the man with the moustache came in.

"Allow me to report to your honor," he said in a mysterious whisper, with a glance of his round eyes at the old man. "This is the owner of the conspirators' den and that's his boy."

Without looking at the moustached man, the officer stretched his outspread hand and pushed the sweaty face away with violent disgust.

"Nobody asked you, you f-f-fool. I know it myself."

Terror seized Gavrik. He felt that something frightful was about to happen. He sat there, small and pale with his swollen ear, watching with unblinking eyes the well built, broad-shouldered officer in the light blue trousers and the patent-leather sword-belt over his shoulder.

After standing like that for not less than a minute, which seemed an hour to the boy, the inspector sat down sideways on the bed. Without taking his eyes off the old man, he gave a tug to his patent-leather boot, drew a silver cigarette-case out of his pocket and lit a yellow cigarette.

"He smokes 'Asmolov' cigarettes," Gavrik was thinking.

The officer blew the smoke through his nostrils, and together with the smoke drawled the word "We-ll," then suddenly bawled at the top of a voice that made the ears throb:

"Stand up, you old scoundrel, when you're in an officer's presence!"

The old man jumped up nervously. Twisting his dirty bare feet and pulling down the shirt that covered his frail body, he fixed his eyes on the officer with the vacant stare of a soldier in the ranks.

Gavrik could see how his straining neck quivered and how the withered skin with the ancient scar under the chin stretched like reins.

"So you hide outlaws?" said the officer in an icy tone.

"No such thing," whispered Grandad.

"Tell us who you had staying here."

"I don't know."

"Ah, so you don't know?" The officer rose slowly.

Tightening his lips he struck the old man such a blow on the ear that the latter was dashed against the opposite wall.

"Tell me who it was."

"I don't know," the old man repeated firmly, his cheek-muscle working.

The white gloved fist flew out again. Two thin streams of blood trickled out of the old man's nose. He screwed up his eyes, hunched his shoulders up about his ears and sobbed.

"What are you beating me for, your honor?" he said in a quiet, but menacing voice, wiping the blood from his nose with his hand and showing the hand to the officer.

"Silence!" roared the latter, turning pale.

A large, velvety mole stood out on his plaster-white face. He glanced with disgust at his stained glove.

"Say who it was!"

"I don't know . . . "

This time the old man shielded his face with his arms and turned to the wall. He caught the blow on his head. His trousers suddenly went limp at the knees, and he slid slowly to the floor.

"Stop beating him: he's an old man!" cried Gavrik, as bursting into despairing tears, he rushed up to the officer.

But the officer had already turned to leave the hut.

"Arrest this old rascal! Take him away!" he shouted.

The police went for the old man and seized him, twisting his elbows. They dragged him out of the hut like a sack of hay. Gavrik sat down on the floor and gnawed his fists, sobbing with angry, frantic tears.

For some time he sat there without moving, listening with one ear to the sounds and rustlings of the night. He had gone deaf in the other ear.

From time to time he would stop up the good ear. Then a profound,

dumb silence surrounded him on every side. It frightened him; he felt as if some danger was silently waiting for him in the silence.

He took his hand away from his ear hurriedly as if to release the sounds that had been sealed up there. But one ear could not contain all their variety.

Sometimes he could hear the deep, infrequent sighing of the sea and nothing more. Or the crystal-clear music of the crickets would begin and the sound of the sea would cease. Then a warm breeze would stir the weeds, filling the night with a rustling that left no room for the surf or the crickets. Then, nothing would be heard but the crackling of the miserable lamp in which the kerosene was burning down.

Suddenly and clearly the boy felt his own loneliness. Hastily blowing out the lamp, he ran away in search of his grandfather.

A magnificent August night hung over the world. The black and glittering sky showered stars on the boy as he ran. The song of the crickets rose to the stars and streamed out on the Milky Way.

But what was all this calm indifferent beauty to a tormented and ill-treated child: it had no power to make him happy.

Gavrik ran as fast as he could. He overtook his grandfather in the town, just by the police-station in Old Porto-Franco Street.

Two policemen—one sitting and the other standing—were in the cab with the old man. He had slipped down from the seat and was lying across the cab, at the feet of the policeman. His head rolled about helplessly, bumping against the step. The light of the gas-lamps played over his face, stained with dust and blood.

Gavrik ran up to the cab, but it had already drawn up at the gate of the police-station. The policemen began to haul the stumbling old man through the gate.

"Grandad!" the boy screamed. A policeman struck Gavrik a light blow on the neck with his sheathed sabre. The gate closed. The boy was left outside, alone.

Translated by Anthony Wixley

Andrei Platonov

Phro

A Soviet Short Story

He was gone now, for a long time, perhaps forever.

The engine of the express had whistled greetings to the open spaces and plunged with him into the distance. The crowd that had come to speak farewells had melted away. A porter with a mop had appeared and begun cleaning the platform which, with its slight list, now looked like the deck of a ship that had run aground.

"Stand aside, citizeness!" said the porter to a pair of plump lonely legs.

The woman backed to the wall where the post box hung. The listed hours of mail collection caught her attention. They were frequent enough, fortunately. She would be able to write often. She touched the sturdy rim of the iron box. The heaviest of her letters would be safe in it.

She began walking slowly toward her home in the new railway town that had sprung up behind the station. The waving tops of its trees and the still tops of its houses were distinct in the evening sunlight which, to her grieving eyes, looked sad and unnaturally clear, as if it were a transparent vacancy emptied of air and life.

She stood spellbound before this ominous light. She could not remember having seen in all the twenty years of her life space so deserted, silent and radiant. It seemed to her that her heart had begun to beat more feebly, in the lifeless air, emptied of the presence of her beloved.

She walked on. She caught a glimpse of herself in the hairdresser's window, but was too distracted to heed the reflection which presented hair done in old-fashioned and disregarded coquetry and deep grey eyes that had a strained and almost studied tenderness in their gaze.

Her love for the man who had gone away had grown by habit and will. She wanted to be loved by him always and unintermittently; she wanted to feel his love for her as something organic, a function of their lives. And it made her despondent that on her part she could not quite return such a love. Sometimes it became an effort; and she would weep with vexation that her love for him at those times did not seem enough to fill her life.

She lived in a new flat of three rooms, one of them occupied by her widowed father, a locomotive engineer, the others by her husband and herself. Now she would be alone in hollow-sounding rooms. He had gone to the Far East, where some of the mysterious electrical machinery to which he gave so much devotion awaited his transforming touch.

Her father was old. He was rarely given any long runs, except when one of the men fell sick. He took out locomotives from the repair shop on their trial runs; and he also drove light local trains. A year ago they had pensioned him off; he had agreed to it without realizing what he had signed to in the paper. And he had led an abnormal existence until he was given work again.

Four days of freedom had surfeited him. On the fifth day he had gone behind the semaphore, sat down on a little grass mound and wept silently as he watched the engines go by. From that day onward he would take his post there every morning, returning home weary as if from a long trip, wash his hands, sigh, tell a story of how on the nine thousand gradient a brake shoe

had fallen off one of the carriages, or some other made-up anecdote. Then he would shyly ask his daughter for the vaseline to rub on his left palm as if it were actually sore from handling the regulator. Then he had his supper and went off to sleep, to blissful dreams charged with memories. So he spent his day. And at his self-appointed station during the day, if he thought there was something not quite in order on the incoming train or the driver was not running it according to what the old man considered the regulation way, then, from his point of vantage behind the semaphore, he would shout censure and instructions.

"It needs water. Turn on the tap, you fool."

"Don't waste your sand. You'll get stuck on the climb. What are you chucking it away for?"

"Screw up your flanges. You're losing steam. What do you think you've got there, an engine or a Turkish bath?"

If a train happened to be badly assembled with light empty cars in the forepart where they could be crushed if the brakes were jammed on suddenly, the old man would shake his fist at the conductor on the tail end and shout a lecture. When his own old locomotive driven by his ex-assistant Benjamin came in sight he invariably found something wrong, something that had never happened when he had run the engine. And he would advise Benjamin to stir up his careless assistant.

"Give him a smack in the eye, Benjy," he would yell from his observation post.

In bad weather he took an umbrella with him. Then his daughter brought him his dinner because she couldn't bear to see him come home thin, dripping, hungry and irritable from his unsatisfied yearning for work.

Not long ago he had received his liberation from idleness. One day while the old mechanic was bellowing from his post behind the semaphore, Piskunov, the Party organizer from the depot, had come up, taken him by the arm and led him to the depot. There the clerk had signed him on again. The old man had climbed onto the footplate of one of the locomotives in the yard and, exhausted with happiness, had dozed off with his arm flung about the belly of the boiler.

"Phrosia," he said to his daughter when she returned from the station where she had seen her husband off, "Phrosia, give me something out of the stove to chew. They may call me out tonight to go somewhere."

Though he was seldom called, he kept himself in readiness. And that meant ready in every respect, rested, properly fed—an engineer with a bad digestion was a bad engineer. He valued himself as a member of a leading group of skilled workers. Sometimes he would address himself with great dignity: "Citizen worker," and stand attentively as if listening to a distant ovation.

Phrosia took an earthenware jar out of the oven and set it before her father. The evening sunlight shone into the flat. The light penetrated to Phrosia's body, within which her heart, warming itself, gave to her circulating blood a stronger consciousness of life. She went into her own room. On her table lay a photograph of her husband, taken in childhood. He had never been photographed since because he had never been interested in his appearance.

The yellowed card showed a little boy with a large head. His clothes consisted of a shirt and trousers; his feet were bare. Behind him grew magical

trees opening onto a vista of a fountain and a palace. The little boy gazed attentively out into a world as yet little known to him, and did not appear to notice the beautiful life depicted on the canvas behind him. Beautiful life was in himself, in this child with the broad, animated, shy countenance, who held a few blades of grass in his hand instead of a toy and trod the earth with bare and trusting feet.

Night had already fallen. The local cow-herd was driving in the cows from the steppe. The cows lowed, asking for rest in their masters' homes. Housewives appeared and led them into the yards. The long day was cooling into night. Phrosia sat in the dusk, lost in blissful memories and love for the man who had gone. Outside the window pines grew—straight up into the happy spaces of the sky; a few birds uttered lonely last notes of song; those guardians of darkness, the grasshoppers, uttered mild peaceful sounds, signifying that all was well and that they saw all and did not sleep.

Her father asked Phrosia if she did not intend to go to the club—there was to be a new program today, a battle of flowers and a number of turns by amateur variety artists from among the conductors.

"No," said Phrosia, "I'm not going. I shall stay home and think of my husband."

"Fedka?" exclaimed the mechanic. "He'll turn up all right; when a year's gone he'll be here.... Well, pine for him if you want, why shouldn't you! When I used to be away even a couple of days, your mother who's dead would miss me, too. But she was just a homebody."

"Well, I'm not just a homebody and still I miss him!" said Phrosia in surprise. "But I suppose I'm a homebody after all."

Her father retorted:

"Oh no, what kind of a homebody are you? There aren't any more nowadays, they've all died out long ago. You've a long time to live and learn before you'll be like them; they were good women...."

"Papa, do go to your own room," said Phrosia. "I'll give you your supper soon, but just now I want to be by myself."

"It's time for supper now," her father agreed. "The messenger from the depot may be round any moment. Someone may have got sick, or gone on the booze, or be having some trouble in his family, you never know what happens. In that case I'd have to be on the spot at once: traffic mustn't be held up for an instant ... Aye, your Fedka is riding away on the express just now, the green signals are burning for him, the track's being cleared for him for forty kilometers ahead, the mechanic's keeping a lookout far away, it's all lighted up by electricity for him—everything is as it should be..."

The old man lingered, shuffling and muttering to himself.

"Papa, go and have your supper!" his daughter commanded; she wanted to be alone with her thoughts.

"A fat lot you understand about trains, anyhow!" said her father softly, as he went away.

After giving him his supper, Phrosia left the house. Sounds of merriment came from the club. First there was instrumental music, then a chorus of voices. The conductors' glee club was singing: *Oh, the fir tree, what a fir tree! See the fir cones on it! Then Too-too-too-too—here comes the engine, roo-roo-roo: the airplane goes prr-prr-prr! Come and bend your backs with us, come and learn to rise with us, say too-too-roo-roo, stir yourselves. We've got to have more culture, production is our aim!*

Phrosia passed to a deserted spot where the rows of trees, planted as a shield along the main track, began. An express was approaching in the distance from the east, the engine was working at high pressure, the locomotive was devouring space and illuminating the way with dazzling headlights. This train must have passed somewhere or other the express bound for the Far East; these carriages had seen Phrosia's beloved long after she had parted from him. Now she gazed attentively at the train that had been beside her husband. She turned back to the station, but before she got there, the train had had time to stop and start off again. The tail carriage was just vanishing into the darkness.

The station and platform were empty except for two old women who were waiting for a local night train and the porter on duty, who again swept the dust and dirt round her feet. They are always sweeping up when one wants to stand and think.

"Do you happen to know," she asked him, "if the No. 2 courier train is going on well? It left here today. Has anything been heard of it at the station?"

"People are only supposed to come out on the platform when the train comes in," said the sweeper. "There aren't any trains expected just now; go into the station, citizeness.... People are always hanging about here; you'd think they'd lie on their cots at home and read the paper—but no, they can't, seems as if they've just got to come here and make a mess of the place."

Phrosia crossed the line to the opposite side of the station. There stood a round house for freight engines, with a coal chute, slag pits and turn-table. High lamps lighted up a place over which drifted clouds of smoke and steam. Some of the locomotives were getting up steam for their journey, others were discharging steam as they cooled down preparatory to cleaning.

Four women carrying shovels passed Phrosia. After them came a man who was evidently in charge.

"Who've you lost, pretty one?" he inquired of Phrosia. "You won't find him—they don't come back . . . Better come along with us and help our transport."

Phrosia thought for a moment. "Give me a shovel!" she said suddenly.

"Here's mine for you," replied the man, handing it to her. "Hey, girls!" he called out to the others. "Go along to the third pit and I'll be at the first . . ."

He led Phrosia to a slag pit into which the engines emptied their furnaces, ordered her to get to work and then left her. There were two women working down there already, shoveling out the hot slag. Phrosia went down, too, and started work, feeling pleased that she had these unknown friends with her. The smell of the smoldering coal and the gas made it hard to breathe. Flinging up shovelfulls of slag proved wearying and awkward, for the pit was narrow and hot. But still Phrosia felt easier in her mind: here she was taken out of herself, she was living alongside friendly women and she could see the great free night illumined by the stars and electric light. Love slumbered peacefully in her heart, the express was far away now, and on the upper berth of the third class carriage slept her dear man, with Siberia all around him. Let him sleep and be at peace, and let the driver keep a sharp lookout and carry him safe.

Soon Phrosia and the other women climbed out of the pit. Now they had to shovel the slag onto an empty loading platform. As they flung it over the

edge, the women glanced at each other and spoke a few words from time to time, to give themselves a respite and get a breath of fresh air.

Phrosia's companion was about thirty. She felt chilly and kept adjusting and worrying about her thin clothes. She told her story without hesitation. She had just been let out after four days in jail. A criminal had denounced her and got her into prison. Her husband was a watchman who tramped round and round the cooperative all night with a gun and earned sixty rubles a month. While she was in prison, he had wept for her and gone to beg the authorities to release her, although at the time of her arrest she had been living with a criminal who in a weak moment had confessed to her that he was a criminal and then, apparently, had got frightened and wanted to destroy her so as to leave no witnesses against himself. Now, however, he had been caught, let him have a taste of trouble himself while she for her part was going to live decently with her husband and be free. There was work to be got, and bread could be bought by anyone nowadays and between the two of them they would manage to earn enough to live.

Phrosia said she was in trouble too: her husband had gone on a long journey.

"Gone away doesn't mean he's dead, he'll come back all right!" her co-worker comforted Phrosia. "When I was in prison I got really downhearted. I'd never been in before, I wasn't used to it—if I'd ever been in before I wouldn't have minded. But I've always been such an innocent, you know the government never touched me. Well, when I got out, I came home and my husband was that glad he cried. But he was frightened even to put his arms around me, thinking I was a criminal, and somebody dangerous after all. But I'm just the same as ever, not a bit stand-offish or stuck-up or anything. And when he had to go out on duty this evening we both got that downhearted! He takes up his gun and says to me: 'Come on,' he says, 'I'll treat you to a glass of cider; I've got twelve kopeks, it's enough for one glass, we'll have it between us.' But I was feeling that downhearted I couldn't shake it off. I told him to go to the refreshment bar by himself, let him have a glass of sweet water to himself at least and then when we could scrape up enough money and I get rid of this awful downhearted feeling I got in prison, then maybe we'll go and drink a whole bottle of the stuff . . . That's what I said to him and then I came out here on the line to work, thinking, perhaps, they'd be shoring the railway up or changing the rails or something. I think to myself: I'll be with people and my heart'll be light and I'll soon be myself again. And sure enough, I've been talking to you as if you was my own cousin . . . Well, now, let's finish this platform: they'll give us our pay at the office and I'll go and buy some bread in the morning . . . Phrosia!" she called down into the slag pit, where Phrosia's namesake was working, "is there a lot down there still?"

"No," was the reply. "Not much, just scrapings."

"Get out, then, and come here," commanded the watchman's wife. "Let's get done quick and we'll all go for our pay together."

All around them engines were noisily gathering strength before setting out on long journeys, or else cooling down, resting and exhaling steam.

Then the man in charge came along.

"Now, then, girls! Finished that pit? Oh, you have. Well, better go to the office. I'll be along in a minute. You get your pay there and then we'll see

who'll be off to the club to dance and who'll go home to see about getting new kids. You've got plenty to do."

In the office the women signed for their pay: Euphrosinia Eustafyeva, Natalia Bukova and three letters that resembled the word "Eva" with the hammer and sickle on the end. This was the signature of the other Euphrosinia, who had forgotten how to write. They each received three rubles twenty kopeks and went home. Phrosia Eustafyeva and Natalia, the watchman's wife, went together. Phrosia invited her new friend home so that she could have a wash and tidy herself up.

Phrosia's father was asleep on the big trunk in the kitchen, all ready, dressed in his thick winter jacket and the cap with the badge of the engine on it. He was still waiting to be called that night.

The women went quietly about their preparations, powdered themselves a little, smiled and went out. It was already late; very likely the dancing and the battle of flowers had begun at the club. Meanwhile, Phrosia's husband was sleeping far away in the third class carriage and his heart did not feel anything, did not love her—she was alone in the whole wide world, equally free from happiness and care. And she felt inclined to dance a little now, and listen to music and take other people's hands. And in the morning, when he woke up there alone and thought of her, she might cry.

The two women set off running to the club. A local train passed; it was midnight, not too late yet. An amateur jazz band was playing. The mechanic's assistant inmediately invited Phrosia Eustafyeva out for the Rio Rita waltz.

Phrosia's face was radiant; she loved music. It seemed to her that in music sorrow and joy were inseparably united as in real life, as in her own soul. She only faintly remembered herself as she danced, she was in a species of light dream, rapt in astonishment, and her body made the needful movements without effort, for her blood warmed with the melody.

"Have they had the battle of flowers yet?" she asked her partner, her breath coming quickly.

"It's just over; why were you so late?" the mechanic's assistant said in a soulful tone, as if in those words he were declaring eternal love for Phrosia.

"Oh, what a pity," Phrosia exclaimed.

"Do you like this party?" her partner enquired.

"Why, of course," she replied. "It's lovely here." Natasha Bukova could not dance, so she stood by the wall holding her new friend's hat in her hand.

In the interval, while the band was resting, Phrosia and Natasha refreshed themselves with "citrol" of which they drank two bottles. Natasha had only been once in the club, a long time ago. She looked about the clean, gaily decorated room with mild pleasure.

"Phrosia, I say, Phrosia." she whispered. "Will all the rooms be like this when there's socialism?"

"Of course they will," said Phrosia. "Well, perhaps a little better."

"That wouldn't be so bad," Natalia Bukova agreed.

After the interval Phrosia went back to her dancing. Now it was the dispatcher who asked her. The band played a foxtrot—"Yes, sir, she's my baby now." The dispatcher gripped his partner tightly, trying to press his cheek to her hair, but this covert caress had no effect on Phrosia; she loved a man who was far away and her body was numb to caresses.

"What are you called?" her partner whispered in her ear half way through the dance. "I seem to know your face, I've just forgotten who your father is."

"I'm called Phro—" said Phrosia.

"Phro? Then you're not Russian?"

"No, of course not."

The dispatcher pondered a moment.

"How's that?" he asked. "Your father's Russian, isn't he? Eustafyev?"

"It doesn't matter," Phrosia whispered, "I'm called Phro, that's all."

They went on dancing in silence. Only three couples were on the floor. Most of the people, either because they were shy or had not yet learned the new steps, stood against the walls. Phrosia's head drooped upon the dispatcher's chest, he could just see under his eyes her rich fluffy hair done in an old-fashioned style. This trusting weakness was very pleasant and sweet to him. He felt quite proud before all the other people. He even wanted to try and stroke her head cautiously, but he was afraid people might remark on it. Besides, his fiancée was watching in the crowd, and she might make a scene. So the dispatcher recoiled ever so slightly from the woman, for the sake of decency. But Phro let her head droop on his chest once more, her cheek touching his tie. The weight of her head shifted a little to one side, and raised the opening of his shirt, exposing his skin. In terror and discomfort the dispatcher continued the dance, praying for the music to stop. But the music went on. The woman clung close. Now he could feel sliding down his chest, bare under the tie, drops of moisture tickling him in the hairs on his chest.

"Are you crying?" he asked her in alarm.

"A little," Phro whispered. "Take me to the door. I don't want to dance any more."

Her partner, without pausing in the dance, led her towards the exit, and she went straight into the corridor.

Natasha brought her friend her hat, Phrosia went home, while Natasha strolled round to the warehouse of the cooperative where her husband worked. The warehouse stood beside a builder's yard, guarded by a rather comely woman, and Natasha wanted to find out if her husband had anything to do with her.

Next morning Phrosia received a telegram from a station in Siberia beyond the Urals. Her husband wired: "Dear Phro, I love you and dream of you."

Her father was not at home; he had gone out to the depot to sit in the Red Corner and chat and read *The Engine Whistle,* hear how the night had passed in the engine house and then drop in to the buffet for a glass of beer and a chat with one of his old pals.

Phrosia did not bother to clean her teeth; she had a very sketchy wash, merely dabbled a little water on her face and took no further trouble over her appearance. She did not want to waste time over anything except the feeling of love and did not feel any other feminine interest in herself at the moment. From the room above Phrosia's on the third floor, the staccato sounds of a mouth organ could be heard. The music ceased but soon began again. Phrosia had awakened early that morning, while it was still dark—and afterwards dozed off again—and even then she had heard this plaintive melody overhead like the song of a little busy grey bird in a field, a bird that has no breath left for its song because all its strength has gone into its work. Overhead lived a little boy, the son of the turner at the depot. His

father had gone out to work, very likely his mother was washing clothes; the child must be lonely, very lonely. Without having any breakfast Phrosia went out to the class she was attending—on railway communication and signaling.

Euphrosinia Eustafyeva had not been at the school for four days. Her friends there had probably missed her, but she felt no desire to see them. Phrosia was forgiven much in the class, on account of her cleverness, and her unusual aptitude in technical subjects. But she herself did not know very clearly how she managed this; she lived, to a great extent, on an imitation of her husband—a man who had graduated from two technical institutes and who was as sensitive to the mechanism of machinery as if it were his own flesh.

In the beginning she had been very slow at learning. Pupin coils, notching relays or the calculation of resistance of steel wire made no appeal to her. But once it happened that these words were pronounced by her husband's lips, and with the intensity of his imagination, they became alive to her too. Phrosia's husband had the faculty of feeling the voltage of an electric current like a physical spasm. He animated all that came in contact with his touch or thought.

From that time on, coils, resistance units, contactors, light power units became for Phrosia sacred things, as if they had been animate parts of her loved one. She began to comprehend them and care for them with her mind as well as her soul. When in difficulties she would come home and say dolefully: "Feodor, there are these microfarads and stray currents—I do find them so dull." Feodor, waiting to embrace his wife after their long day apart, would turn himself for the time being into a "microfarad" and a "stray current." Phrosia could almost discern with her eyes what she had formerly wanted to understand but could not. These were objects just as simple, as natural, and as attractive as the variegated grasses of the field. Often, of a night, Phrosia would lie awake worrying that she was only a woman and could not feel herself a microfarad, a steam engine, or electricity, while Feodor could. And she would cautiously pass her finger down his hot back; he slept soundly and did not wake. He was always hot, somehow, and strange; he could sleep through any noise, eat any food—good or bad—was never ill, loved to waste his money on trifles, and was intending to go to Southern Soviet China and be a soldier there.

Phrosia's thoughts wandered as she sat down at the lecture and she could not take anything in. She copied from the blackboard into her exercise book the vector diagram of the parallel resonance. Feodor was not here; communications and signaling made no appeal to her and electricity was unfamiliar. Pupin's coils, microfarads, resistance units and iron cores withered in her heart, and she grasped nothing of what the teacher was saying. A monotonous song heard on a child's mouth-organ kept echoing through her brain: *Mother's doing the washing, father's gone to work, he won't come home for a long time, and I'm very lonely, all alone.*

Phrosia's attention wandered; she wrote in her exercise book: "I'm silly, I'm a pitiful little girl, Feodor, come home quick and I'll learn all about these communications and signaling. Otherwise I'll die and you'll bury me and go away to China."

When she got home her father was sitting fully dressed with his cap on. They would be sure to send for him for a trip tonight, he imagined.

"So you've come home?" he said to his daughter. He was glad whenever anyone came in; he sat listening for steps on the stairs exactly as if he were always expecting some unusual guest who would bring him happiness sewn up in his cap.

"Shall I heat up some porridge with butter for you?" he asked. "It wouldn't take a minute."

His daughter refused.

"Well, let me fry you some sausage?"

"No," said Phrosia.

Her father was silent for a few minutes. Then he asked, more timidly this time:

"Maybe you'd like a cup of tea with a dry biscuit? It wouldn't take a second to heat it up . . ."

His daughter said nothing.

"What about yesterday's macaroni. I haven't touched it. I left it for you . . ."

"Oh, leave me alone, can't you!" said Phrosia. "If only you'd been sent to the Far East instead . . . "

"I asked them to send me, but they wouldn't. 'Too old,' they said, 'and your sight's not so good,' " her father explained.

He knew that children have their own lives to live, and he was not angry with her. He was afraid, however, that Phroisa would retire to her room; just now he wanted her to stay and talk to him awhile, so the old fellow sought some excuse to keep her.

"How is it you haven't rouged your lips today?" he asked. "Are you out of lipstick? I can run out and get you some at the chemist's . . ."

Tears appeared in Phrosia's grey eyes and she went into her room. Her father remained behind; he began to tidy up the kitchen.

There was a knock at the door. Phrosia did not come out to open it. The old man went to open the door.

It was a messenger from the depot.

"Sign here, Nefed Stepanovich," he said. "You've got to be at the depot at eight o'clock; you're being sent to take a dead engine to the central repair shop. You'll be attached to train 310. Take your food with you and your overcoat, you won't be back for a week."

Nefed Stepanovich signed the book and the man went away. The old man opened his tin box; it contained a chunk of yesterday's bread, an onion, and a piece of sugar. The mechanic added an eighth of a kilogram of millet and two apples, waited a moment and fastened it with a huge padlock.

Then he knocked cautiously at Phrosia's door.

"Listen my girl, come and lock the door after me. I'm being sent on a trip —for about a fortnight. One of the engines in the 'SH' series; it's dead but that doesn't matter."

Phrosia came out a little while after her father had gone, and locked the door of the flat.

"Play! Why don't you play?" she whispered to the ceiling, over which lived the little boy with the mouth organ. But he must have gone out to play. It was summer, the long summer's day when the wind dies down among the dreamy, blissful pines for the evening. And the musician was very young,

he had not yet chosen an object for his eternal love, his heart beat light and free.

Phrosia opened the window, lay down on the big bed and fell into a doze. There was no sound but the faint creak of the pine trunks, swayed by a breeze in their tops, and the chirrup of a distant grasshopper, in a meadow that resembled darkness to him.

Phrosia awoke; it was still light in the world outside. She must get up and live. She gazed up into the sky which was full of warmth and covered with the living traces of the sinking sun, gazed as if it held happiness formed by nature out of its pure powers, a happiness that could penetrate to the heart of man.

Above on the third floor, the little boy came home and began to play his mouth-organ again—the same tune he had played while it was still dark in the morning but soon the playing stopped. It was time for him to go to bed; he got up early. Or perhaps he was playing with his father who had just come home from work; perhaps he was sitting on his father's knee. His mother might be breaking sugar with a little pair of pincers and saying they would have to buy the boy new underclothes, the old were worn out, and tore when one washed them. And the father said nothing, thinking they would have to manage without new underclothes for the present.

The whole evening Phrosia wandered along the railway track and about the neighboring fields overgrown with rye. She loitered a while near the slag pit where she had worked yesterday. It was almost full of slag again, but there was no one at work. She did not know where Natasha Bukova lived, she had forgotten to ask her. She did not feel inclined to go and see her friends, she felt somehow ashamed. She could not speak to others of her love, and everything else had become uninteresting and dead to her. She passed the cooperative warehouse, where Natalia's husband, a lonely figure, tramped with his gun. Phrosia would have liked to have offered him a few rubles, so that he could have a drink of cider with his wife next day, but she felt shy.

"Move on, citizeness! You can't hang around here, it's a warehouse, a government place," said the watchman when Phrosia halted and fumbled with the money in the recesses of her jacket.

Beyond the warehouse lay waste space, where a kind of short, weedy, evil grass grew. Phrosia reached the place and stood there wearily.

"Ah, Phro, Phro, if only he were here to take you in his arms!" she said to herself.

When she was home again she went to bed at once. The little boy who played the mouth organ was fast asleep; and the grasshoppers had ceased to chirrup. But something kept her from falling asleep. Phrosia glanced about in the dusk and sniffed: what disturbed her was the pillow on which Feodor had slept. The pillow still gave off the same disturbing odor of a warm, familiar body, and the memories made Phrosia's heart ache. She wrapped Feodor's pillow in a sheet and put it away in the cupboard and then fell asleep alone, like an orphan.

She gave up the class on communications and signaling; science was no longer comprehensible to her. She stayed at home and waited for a letter or a telegram from Feodor, fearing that the postman might take the letter back again if he found no one at home. But four days, then six passed, and no word from Feodor after the first telegram.

Her father returned from his trip. He was happy to have had work, to have seen crowds again, and faraway places. Now he would have enough to remember, to think and talk about for a long time. Since Phrosia asked him no questions, her father began of his own accord to give her an account of his adventures; how the engine had gone dead and how he dared not sleep of nights for fear the fitters from the stations on the way would steal the parts from the locomotive. He told her where berries were sold cheaply, and where they had been ruined by the spring frosts. Phrosia made no comment. Even when Nefed Stepanovich spoke to her about voile and artificial silk in Sverdlovsk his daughter showed no sign of interest.

"What a heartless one, she is," thought the old man. "How did I come to beget her!"

The days went by and Phrosia received neither letter nor telegram from Feodor. She went to work as letter carrier. She thought his letters might often go astray, so she resolved to handle them herself. She wanted to get Feodor's letters quicker than any stranger could bring them to her. They would never go astray in her hands. She was at the post office before the others, before the little boy upstairs had begun to play his mouth-organ, she voluntarily helped in the sorting of the incoming mail. She read the addresses on all the envelopes that arrived in the settlement; nothing from Feodor. The envelopes were all addressed to others. Phrosia delivered them regularly twice a day hoping they contained some consolation for the local people. At dawn she strode rapidly along the street with a heavy postbag on her stomach, looking as if she were pregnant. She knocked at doors and delivered letters and packages to men in underpants, half-naked women and small children, wide awake before their elders. The sky over the surrounding country was still deep blue when Phrosia was out at work, hastening to tire her feet so as to outweary her heart.

And so people learned to know Phrosia. Some wanted to treat her to wine and tasty snacks, or confided their troubles to her. Nowhere was life empty and dull.

At parting, Feodor had promised Phrosia to send her immediately the address of the place where he would be working. He had not known himself exactly where he would be. But now, fourteen days had passed and there was no word from him and she did not know where to write. Sometimes it became too hard to endure. Once in the middle of the street, during her afternoon mail, she screamed. She did not notice herself how suddenly her breath contracted in her chest, her heart sank and she uttered a long high-pitched wail. Passers-by looked at her. When she came to herself, she ran out into the fields with her postbag, because it was getting too difficult for her to bear this breathlessness; there in the fields she threw herself down on the ground and screamed until her heart grew easier.

Phrosia sat up, settled her clothes and smiled. She felt all right again now, there was no need to scream any more.

After delivering the letters, Phrosia went into the telegraph office. They handed her a telegram from Feodor with his new address and a kiss. As soon as she got home she sat down without waiting to eat anything and wrote a letter to her husband. She did not notice how the daylight faded outside the window, did not hear the little boy upstairs playing his mouth-organ before he went to sleep. Her father knocked at her door and brought her a glass of

tea and a buttered roll, and turned on the light so that she should not spoil her eyes in the twilight.

That night Nefed Stepanovich dozed on the big trunk in the kitchen. It was six days ago that he had been summoned to the depot; tonight, he imagined, tonight he was certain to be sent on a trip; so he lay, straining his ears for the steps of the depot messenger on the staircase.

At one o'clock Phrosia came into the kitchen with a folded sheet of paper in her hand.

"Papa!"

"What is it, my girl?" The old man's sleep was light.

"Send off this telegram for me, will you, I'm so tired."

"But supposing the messenger should come while I'm out?" the old man protested in alarm.

"He'll wait," said Phrosia. "You won't be so very long, surely ... Only don't you read the telegram, hand it straight in at the window."

"I won't read it," the old man promised. "But you wrote a letter as well, didn't you. I might as well take that at the same time."

"It's nothing to do with you what I wrote ... Have you any money?"

Yes, he had money; he took the telegram and set off.

In the telegraph office he read the telegram; after all, he thought, you never knew what she might be up to, better have a look at it.

The telegram was addressed to Feodor away in the Far East and said: "Come at once next train. Your wife—my daughter Phrosia dying. Lung complications. Nefed Stepanovich Eustafyev."

"They're young yet!" thought Nefed Stepanovich as he handed in the telegram.

"Why, I saw Phrosia only today," said the woman who received it. "Can she be ill?"

"Looks like it," was all the explanation the old man vouchsafed.

Next morning Phrosia sent her father to the post office again to hand in her resignation, explaining that she was forced to give up her work on account of ill health.

Phrosia took to mending the linen, darning socks, washing floors and tidying the flat, and never left the house.

Two days later an urgent telegram arrived: "Coming, anxious, tormented, don't bury her till I come, Feodor."

Phrosia counted the days till his arrival and on the seventh day after she received the telegram, went to the station. She was gay and trembling with excitement. The Trans-Siberian Express arrived from the east on time. Phrosia's father was on the platform, too, but kept at some distance from her so as not to spoil her mood.

The train drew up on the station with luxurious quietness and smoothness, slowed down elegantly and stopped. Nefed Stepanovich, observing this, was touched almost to tears and forgot why he had come here.

Only one passenger alighted from the train at this station. He wore a hat, and a long blue waterproof, and his sunken eyes gleamed with tension. A woman ran up to him.

"Phro!" exclaimed the passenger, dropping his suitcase.

Her father picked up the suitcase and followed them.

Halfway home Phrosia stopped and turned to her father.

"Papa, go on to the depot and ask them to send you on a trip. It's dull for you sitting at home always."

"That's true," said her father. "I'll go right now. Take this case from me."

His son-in-law looked at the old man.

"How do you do, Nefed Stepanovich?"

"How do you do, Feodor? Welcome home!"

"Thanks, Nefed Stepanovich."

The young man was about to say something else, but the old man handed the suitcase to Phrosia and went off to the depot.

"I've done up the whole flat, dear," said Phrosia. "I wasn't dying."

"I guessed that in the train, that you weren't dying," her husband replied. "I didn't believe in your telegram for very long."

"Why did you come, then?" asked Phrosia, surprised.

"Because I love you, I missed you so much," said Feodor sadly.

Phrosia grew sad too.

"I'm afraid you'll stop loving me sometime and then I'll really die."

Feodor kissed her cheek from the side. "If you die, you'll forget everything then, and me as well," he said.

Phrosia cast off her sadness.

When they got home they lay down to rest and fell asleep. Three hours later her father knocked at the door. Phrosia opened it and waited while the old man put some food in his tin box and went out again. He must have been sent out on a trip again, she thought. She locked the door after him and went to bed again.

It was night when they awoke. They talked a while, then Feodor embraced Phro and they were silent until morning.

Next day Phrosia got the dinner very quickly, and ate it with her husband. She did everything just anyway at present, it was carelessly and not daintily prepared, but neither of them cared what they ate or drank as long as they need not waste on material, external wants, time that could be devoted to their love.

Phrosia told Feodor that now she intended to study well and apply herself to acquiring a great deal of knowledge; she was going to work hard in order that everyone in the country would be able to live better.

Feodor listened to Phro, then explained his own thoughts and aims in detail; he told her about the transmission of power without wires, simply through ionized air, about increasing the endurance of all metals by treating them with ultra-sound waves, about the stratosphere—at the altitude of a hundred kilometers where special lighting, heating and electrical conditions existed that would guarantee a human being eternal life, so that the dreams of the ancient world regarding heaven could now be fulfilled; all this and much more did Feodor promise to think out and do, for Phrosia's sake and simultaneously for the sake of everyone else.

Phrosia sat blissfully listening to her husband, her weary mouth a little open. After they had talked their fill, they embraced each other. They wanted to be happy immediately, now, before their future efforts had time to yield results for their personal happiness and that of the world in general. Not a single heart can bear postponement, it aches, it cannot believe in anything.

They fell asleep worn out with thinking, conversation and enjoyment; they awoke again refreshed, ready for a continuation of life. Phrosia wanted to

have children, and to bring them up, so that when they grew big they would finish their father's work, the work of communism and science. Feodor in the passion of his imagination whispered to Phrosia about the secret powers that gave wealth to humanity, about radical changes in the pitiful soul of man . . . Then they kissed, fondled each other and their lofty dreams turned into enjoyment, as if brought by their love to realization.

In the evening Phrosia went out for a short time and bought provisions for her husband and herself; their appetite kept increasing now. They had lived four days together without being parted a moment. Her father had not yet returned; very likely he had been sent on a long trip.

Two days later Phrosia told Feodor that they would spend a little more time together like this and then they must start work and life seriously.

"Tomorrow or perhaps the day after tomorrow we'll start our life together, properly!" said Feodor, embracing Phro.

"The day after tomorrow!" Phro agreed in a whisper. On the eighth morning Feodor woke up in a depressed mood.

"Phro! Let's go and work; let's start living as we should . . . You ought to start the course on communication again."

"Tomorrow!" whispered Phro, taking her husband's head in her hands. He smiled at her and agreed meekly.

"When, then, Phro?" Feodor asked next day.

"Soon, quite soon," replied the mild, sleepy Phro; her hands held his, he kissed her on the brow.

One day Phro woke up late; day was already far advanced out of doors. She was alone in the room; it must have been the tenth or twelfth day that she and her husband had been together. Phrosia jumped out of bed, flung open the window and suddenly heard the sounds of the mouth-organ she had quite forgotten. It was not overhead that it was being played. She looked out of the window. Near the shed lay a log and on it sat a barefoot boy with a large round head; he was playing a mouth-organ.

The flat was quiet and strange, Feodor had gone out somewhere. Phrosia went into the kitchen. Her father was sitting on a stool, dozing, and with his cap on, resting his head on the kitchen table. Phrosia roused him.

"When did you come back?"

"Eh?" cried the old man, starting up. "This morning, early."

"Who opened the door to you? Feodor?"

"Nobody," said her father. "It was open . . . Feodor found me on the station. I was asleep on a bench there."

"Why did you go to sleep on the station? Haven't you got a place to come to?" Phrosia demanded angrily.

"What about it? I'm used to it there," said her father. "I thought—I might be in your way here."

"Oh, all right, stop preaching! But where's Feodor? When is he coming back?"

Her father seemed to be in a difficulty.

"He's not coming back," he said at last. "He's gone away."

Phro stood speechless before her father. The old man stared attentively at a dish cloth and went on:

"There was an express this morning and he got on it and left for the Far East. He said perhaps he'd make his way to China afterwards . . . he didn't know."

"What else did he say?" Phrosia asked.

"Nothing else," her father replied. "Just told me to go home and take care of you. As soon as he's done all the business he's got to do there, he said, he'll either come back or send for you."

"What business?" Phrosia demanded.

"I don't know," declared the old man. "He said you knew all about it.

Phro left her father, went into the bedroom and leaned far out of the window to watch the small boy playing the mouth-organ.

"Little boy!" she called out. "Come up here and pay me a visit."

"In just a minute," replied the musician.

He got up from the log, wiped the mouth-organ on the hem of his long blouse and went into the house.

Phro stood there alone, in her night dress, in the middle of the big room. She smiled in anticipation of her visitor.

"Farewell, Feodor!"

Perhaps she was silly, perhaps her life was worth no more than two kopeks, and there was no need to love and take care of her, but still she alone knew how to turn those two kopeks into two rubles.

"Farewell, Feodor! You'll come back to me and I'll wait for you."

Her tiny visitor tapped at the outer door. Phrosia let him in, sat down before him on the floor, took the child's hands in hers and began to applaud the musician; he was part of that humanity of which Feodor had spoken such sweet words.

Translated from the Russian by Anthony Wixley

Friedrich Wolf

Fascist Drama

I. The Theses Underlying "Death at Langemark"

Fascism is carrying on not only material preparations but also moral and ideological preparations for the coming war. Tanks, airplanes and gas grenades are not the only war materials. Still more important are the soldiers. A great honor falls to the lot of the fascist soldier, that of being a direct instrument of war, in other words, cannon fodder. Death should therefore appear as something desirable and honorable to all young people capable of bearing arms.

Above the parade ground at the Murnau camp where thousands of the Hitler youth gathered in 1935, a huge slogan was displayed: "We have been born to die for Germany." On the caps of the storm troopers of the guard and on the banners and flags of ten-year-old Hitler children the skull on a black background figures as symbol and crest.

The storm troopers of the Berlin guard have composed the following characteristic quatrain about themselves:

As black as death
In trial true,
An SS man dead
Is a brave man too.

The slogan "Born to die for Germany" on the flags of ten-year-old children, sculls sewn onto banners, the lines "an SA man dead is a brave man too"—all this is intended to show that death is not only inevitable, but a desirable goal of fascist youth. But what kind of death is it that these young people should strive towards? Baldur von Schirach—the leader of the Hitler youth—writes in his semi-official book *The Idea and Organization of Hitler Youth:*

"The Hitler youth organization took over from the former youth movement various outward forms, but it acquired its spiritual content from the world war through the medium of Adolf Hitler. The whole organization of the Hitler youth is based on anticipation of the great war to come and its bearing is a military one, just as it was in the case of those nurslings of previous youth movements who died in grey khaki on the fields of Flanders."

A number of dramas and sound films such as *Langemark* by Zerkaulen make it their aim to eulogize that "heroic sacrifice" on the field of Langemark at the end of October 1914, where thousands of young lads who had joined the now famous 215th, 245th and 246th reserve infantry regiments as volunteers, aimlessly lost their lives to satisfy the senile vanity of a doltish divisional commander, who sent them, in broad daylight, in a mad attack upon entrenched troops. This piece of unbelievable madness, known as the "heroic death on the field of Langemark," has become the subject of a number of fascist plays.

In order to understand these plays, of which the significantly named *The German Miracle Play* and the *Düsseldorf Miracle Play* are typical, one has first of all to be familiar with all these thematic premises, for such utterly futile mass slaughter among youth can only be reproduced in a mystic form (*i.e.,* as a miracle play). Ten and twelve-year-old German boys are foreover having it dinned into them that their future is to be killed at the front.

"The Hitler youth organization is based upon the army that fought in the

world war. This army produced a new type, the twelve-year-old boy who is ready to die for an idea, side by side with hardened soldiers who have served their apprenticeship at the front." (*Der Angriff*, April 11, 1933.)

Werner Deibel, former Frankfurt theater critic, writes at the end of his book entitled the *German Approach to the Tragedy:*

"To die heroically, in the fullest and widest sense of the word, is the highest thing that can be achieved by a German."

For the contemporary "German," death on the field of battle is the inevitable—it is his "fate," "the mute granite of destiny"—so fascist penpushers present the matter. It is significant that fascist war drama, in spite of all its hurrah-patriotism, is in the last resort based on the gloomiest fatalism, the inevitable sacrifice of life.

In the classical tragedy, man, in his stubborn struggle, pits his will against fate. His tragic end "exalts him at the moment when he is annihilated by fate." We note the same thing in Schiller's *Wallenstein.* Wallenstein is a man marked out by fate, and this is expressed in the magnificent words "The star of thy fate burns in thine own breast." In contrast to this in fascist ideology there is no heroic protest on the part of the human will against fate. Fascist ideology is full of the deepest pessimism, and from this point of view, it is devoid of the heroic element. Klages—one of the few fascist theoreticians—says that "destiny nearly always means 'fate.'" The world of Langemark, whither German fascism is leading its youth, is black as night and soaked in blood. That is why the Hitler youth bear the emblem of the skull on their cap-bands and flags.

The rainy day, the dim uncertain light,
Hoary superstitions, the bitter tang of death
Tell me hast thou seen the land of evening?
Tell me hast thou seen that land, or hast thou not?

That is the message of Gottfried Benn, rasping weather-cock that he is, wheezing like a melodeon out of tune. The fascist ideology of death, doom and human sacrifice is constantly wavering between primeval mysticism of "ice" and "wolf" ages, between unheroic capitulation to a destiny "which is nearly always the same thing as fate" and the semi-christian, "heroic" idea of self sacrifice. Euringer's verses from the *German Miracle Play* for which he was given the national prize for the best work of the year by Herr Reichminister Goebbels, are extremely typical. We give here an extract from the end of the first part about a fallen soldier.

Damn it! He even puts to use
All kinds of offal and refuse,
And resurrects before the clown
Upon his head a thorny crown.
I swear I'm ready at a word
To bear the sufferings of our Lord.

II. About "National Unity," "The Heroic Death" and "The Third Empire"

Fascism did not, of course, introduce the slogan "The masses must go to meet an heroic death" precipitately. Before Hitler came into power one heard endless cries about "national unity," to reign when the Third Empire ruled The plays typical of this period were Hintze-Graff's *The Endless Road, His Excellency the Crank* by Harold Bradt and *All Against One* by Forster Burggraf.

The Endless Road is worked out with great technical and ideological finesse. It is a play of life at the front in the naturalistic style of the well known English play *Journey's End* by Sheriff. The author in an outwardly naturalistic and businesslike fashion portrays the dirty, lousy, starving, bullet-riddled victim of the trenches. Trench "romanticism" again shouts and blusters in this play. What is presented as a true picture of life in the trenches is given in the "national spirit": On the one hand the brave simple fighter in the front lines, the unknown soldier in grey khaki, with all his weaknesses and lice and with his unfailing humor under fire and in the slime of the trenches; and then, "for the sake of justice," the "man-eating" staff officers at the base, the "transport hounds" in their most revolting aspects. Not a word about the third front, the starving nation behind the lines where the people live through the winter on beets, and where rickety children stumble on "interlaced legs." The aim of the play is to show that "national unity" exists in the trenches. There, in the trenches, one is told, there are no class antagonisms—soldiers and officers, factory owners and workers have joined together like brothers in the mud which is the same for all and under the hail of shells which menace all alike.

Where bursting shells make heavy weather
We all are veterans together;
When death we face and each may fall
Rich or poor we're equal all.

This "national" play, this large dose of eyewash, served as a model for a whole group of similar war plays.

A slightly less warlike variation on the "national unity" theme is given in Harold Bradt's play *His Excellency the Crank*. Its theme is Count Zeppelin and his pioneer airships, the first of which came down in flames. The "somewhat eccentric" count in 1911 approaches Kaiser Wilhelm and the German high command about his invention and they contemptuously shrug their shoulders. There is no money to spare for such fantastic amusements. The count then appeals to "the nation." Let each person, be he rich or poor, "give his mite towards it." And so in H. Bradt's misrepresentation, "the nation" took up the challenge, voluntarily contributed its money and started to build with its own resources, the second Zeppelin.

The demagogues of "national unity" had got hold of a good subject. Here we have another "national play" though this time it is the people at home who are criticized, and what is more, the emperor himself (!) and his generals. Hans Jost pulls out this stop still further in his *Schlageter*. In this play a single champion of the people, Schlageter, is pitted against a war office general of the Schleicher type and the Social-Democratic Regierungspresident.

The next group of fascist dramatic works are of quite a different kind. Here the figures of Napoleon, of Bismarck, of the bloodstained ghosts of heroes dominate; or the trumpet-sound for an attack is openly given and the death of young people on the battlefield is eulogized as the supreme patriotic goal. Napoleon and Bismarck are depicted as tragic heroes, the victims of the narrow-mindedness of their day, which they are supposed to have striven to overcome.

The play entitled *The Hundred Days* by Mussolini-Forzano, which had a run at the Berlin State Theater with Bernard Kraus in the lead, and later in the Vienna Burgtheater, is a fascist explanation of the final failure of Napoleon. This Napoleon is not an emperor (leader), not a pan-European. During

the hundred days which decide his fate he is nothing more than a democratic Hamlet wavering between parliamentarianism and military dictatorship, and he comes to grief through lack of faith in himself, in his own powers as a leader. It is in this that his tragedy and his failure lie. The purport of the play is clear—the nation, when in danger, cannot be saved by parliamentarianism with a hundred people at its head, but only by the mailed fist of a *"Führer."*

A Bismarck play called *Der Minister-Präsident* by Wolfgang Hetz, the author of a play called *Gneisenau* published some years ago, is now running at the Berlin Reichstheater. The play provoked heated discussion even in the "unified" German press, meeting with criticism from Bismarck's old biographers. Who was to blame for the fact that this man became a "monumental living corpse," the "old man" of Sachsenwald.[1]

Was it the young emperor, the working class, the annihilating law concerning socialists or the feudal *Junker* von Bismarck? Answer: The double rule, or rather the triple rule was to blame (Emperor—Bismarck—Parliament). Conclusion: Only the totalitarian leader, only absolute fascist dictatorship can save the people in the hour of danger. It is here quite clear how fascism tries, by every means, to provide a foundation for its thesis even on the stage.

We shall now turn to war plays proper. The first plays were based on such slogans as "Down with Versailles," "Forward to Potsdam," "Defend the West against Bolshevism," "Liberate our German Brothers in the Ukraine, on the Volga, and in the Baltic States."

The chief works of this series are the plays *Schlageter* by Jost, *The Düsseldorf Miracle Play* by Bayer, *The Battle of the Marne* and *The French on the Rhine* by Joseph Kremer, *Langemark* and *Submarine No. 116* by Zerkaulen, and the films *Dawn, Black Roses, The Sufferings of the Friesians, Fugitives* and their forerunners—the plays *Gneisenau* by Wolfgang Hetz and *The Eighteenth of October* by Schehrer (dealing with the battle of Leipzig, 1813).

As regards plays about the Führer and "national unity" we have already mentioned *Schlageter.* This play contains the whole essence of National-Socialist philosophy. In the first place it gives a picture of the embittered struggle against Germany's traditional enemy, France. This *Schlageter* is undoubtedly Jost's best play. It is not only an indictment of the "November criminals," not only a dying shout of savage grief over the death of the hero Schlageter, who was shot by French court-martial on the Rhine for an unsuccessful act of destruction and sabotage near Düsseldorf; it is at the same time a cry of revenge. On the cover of the first edition the words "Dedicated to the Führer" were written in large letters, and after Hitler came into power this principal play of fascist Germany was put on at all the theaters and ran until the middle of October 1933. Then when Hitler, with the most unexpected theatrical effect, banged the door of the Geneva conference behind him, he immediately prohibited (as was extremely characteristic of him) further productions of this aggressive anti-French play and ordered the rehearsals of Kremer's play *The French on the Rhine* to be discontinued. The mortified Jost had the courage to retire, and set off on a journey round the world.

The Düsseldorf Miracle Play, originally written by Paul Bayer as a "national film" to be shown in the open air and in the choral style, also deals with the heroic self sacrifice of Schlageter who, incidentally, met his fate through the treachery of his fellow fascists. When a certain journalist dared mildly to

[1] Bismarck's estate in the North of Germany.

criticize this piece of dramatic rubbish, "first dramatist" Bayer published the following amicable letter addressed to him in answer.

"If you continue to deny that *The Düsseldorf Miracle Play* is not aflame with Kleist's love of liberty, I recommend that you should watch the audience at the next performance instead of the actors! The feeling of which you will then become conscious should help even you to become imbued with Kleist's spirit. I advise you, good sir, to attune yourself as quickly as possible to the new ways. Heil Hitler!"

National-Socialism has tried in vain to create a celebrational festival play for the masses in choral form. The much praised and prize-winning *German Miracle Play* by Euringer is both in composition and in its details a pitiable plagiarism of *Faust*. The remarks made by the author in the foreword are convulsively grotesque.

"The shouting scene must be produced with a tremendous din like in the garden of a lunatic asylum. Acoustic devices must predominate and shatter everything to fragments in their path. The tempo should increase to a frenzied pitch. Just before the delirious *fermato* the shouting of the masses should suddenly subside and become less strident.

"At the most critical moment let the agonizing spirit of time be called forth by its own acoustics! The whole should sound not chaotic but infernal!"

This is a small specimen from the much praised *German Miracle Play*, which has been crowned by Goebbels. The following verse shows how profoundly the problem of unemployment is linked up in this play with the Nazi theme of the "blood enemy."

Unemployed Worker!
We are the grey wolves of a vast leaden sea,
We harbinger storms and misfortune's decree.
Germany perishes! They do not fear
That the hour of destruction is hovering near,
They pat their soft pillows and lovingly feel
The well sharpened edge of their bayonets' steel;
Their concrete forts they fill up well
And all the rest may go to hell.
The swaggering Frenchy twists his whiskers tight,
His teeth like a nigger's, shining white.

That is how the French should appear to the German unemployed in the opinion of the author. These Frenchmen are lying on soft pillows and building frontier fortresses. The Frenchman is a scarecrow in the form of a grinning "nigger" who is at the same time an enemy and a member of a lower race. Such imagery is used with deliberate intention.

If only this crazy demagogy had not its tragic results one might take this versified rubbish as mere beer-house swagger on a large scale. For the rest of it, this talking film is a vapid and shameless plagiarism of *Faust* ("the good and evil spirits" and the "chorus of fallen warriors"). At times it becomes almost a parody:

MOTHER (moved but manfully):

Blest those who sleep—past are burdens and fears
Blest those who live—life's dominion is theirs

(Sobbing mothers. The sobbing changes into the notes of a military march)

In Joseph Kremer's play *The French on the Rhine* the theme of the French occupation and the heroic death of young people rings on a different note. The idea of the play is that the war was lost by generals and bureaucrats. The "people" would have won it, and in the unity of the "people" the Germans will come out of the next war victorious. The same theme of the national war won in spite of the policy of kings or lost as a result of the treachery of the Austrian Emperor, is dealt with in the patriotic plays *Gneisenau, The Eighteenth of October* and *Fly, the Red Eagle of the Tyrol.*

In all cases the *Leitmotif* is clearly defined: when we achieve "national unity" in the "national war" under the leadership of the Führer, we shall undoubtedly knock France into a cocked hat and liberate our German brothers in the East and South (in the Ukraine, Austria and the Tyrol).

The earlier film *Jork* also belongs to this type of production. Here the hero, Jork, moved by national instinct, acts against the orders of his King, against the "scrap of paper" represented by a treaty with the French.

Mention should also be made of the latest films such as *Fugitives* and the *Sufferings of the Friesians* which play upon the Nazi thesis propounded by Rosenberg that "where the German tongue is heard—there is Germany" and demagogically preach "liberation of German brothers in the Soviet Union."

In the same way the recently released Ufa films *Henchmen, Women Soldiers* (a Baltic film) and *Black Roses* (dealing with the White Army in Finland in 1918) are openly directed against the Soviet Union.

We thus see that even on the dramatic front German fascism is attempting, and not without shrewdness and determination, to propagate its theses about "national unity," the "totalitarian leader" and the "third (German) World Empire."

However, it has not yet succeeded in turning out a single genuinely artistic production. Goebbels and also the Prussian Minister for Education, Rust, have frequently complained of the impoverishment of the new German literature. The awarding of the Schiller prize had to be put off from year to year until recently Jost was stumbled upon, a person who can be given any name one chooses but certainly not that of genius.

In looking through the program of the Berlin theaters for 1936, one is simply amazed at the number of "exceptionally," "young," "Nazi" (!?!) dramatists. In the Reichstheater: Goethe—*Egmont* and Loreto—*Donna Diana*; in the Deutsches Theater: Bernard Shaw—*Candida*; in the Theater der Saarlandstrasse: Gerhardt Hauptmann—*Michael Kramer*; in the Renaissance Theater: Sudermann—*The Battle of the Butterflies*; in the Schiller Theater: farce—*Let Him Be Damned;* in the Komödienhaus Jacques Deval—*Comrade;* etc. Not a single Nazi play in the largest German theaters, and this during the third year of the "Glorious Third Empire"! The drama of the Swastika is sinking more and more into the limbo of silence. And yet Germany is literally full of the most magnificent subjects for plays: the shooting of Roehm on June 30, 1934, the cellars and conspiracies of the Gestapo, the heroes of the trials in Berlin, Wuppertal and Hamburg, the heroes of the concentration camps, the tragi-comedy of the religious struggle, the nurseries for the zoological purification of the race and northernization (!) of seventy-five per cent Aryans, to say nothing of the Reichstag fire, the Dimitrov trial and the Jewish pogroms. These truly tragic dramatic subjects are indeed actually being utilized in the places whither the true, intellectual life of Germany has become transplanted; that is to say, in the emigrant colonies abroad. And we shall not be guilty of any lack of delicacy if we say that to-day we German emigrants are assiduously forging new truthful dramatic works on Hitlerite

subjects in readiness for the day when we shall be able again to show the toilers of Germany their country in its true colors.

The fascist dramatist is neither able nor permitted to show the great and tragic processes and events that are taking place in his country. He is condemned to silence and falsehood, to empty phraseology and sterility amid great upheavals. He is not permitted to fight. He is only allowed to make his "sacrifice" under the emblem of the skull. Such willess, unresisting fatalism excludes the possibility of a tragic or genuinely heroic conception. It is now clear why Nazi drama has been gradually flickering out during the last few years; since the fascists came into power it has not been able to create a single truly dramatic production.

But the time will come when true drama will appear again on the German stage. Before it comes, however,—in the words written by Heine a hundred years ago—"Such a play will be acted out in Germany before which the French revolution will appear as nothing but a modest idyll."

When we, German proletarian writers, have taken part in that play, we shall show our own productions and we shall show them in that Germany about which Heine wrote a hundred years ago.

Translated by N. Goold-Verschoyle

Vera Nadezhdina

Vulgar Sociology in Criticism: Summary of a Discussion

Upon the basic teachings of the Marxist-Leninist classics, and on the specific references contained in them to literary and general esthetic questions, the Soviet writers on literature are erecting a useful body of knowledge inquiring into and interpreting the complex phenomena of the world of art.

Now, as in the past, this study has proceeded by continuous critical evaluation of, and attack upon, anti-Marxist and pseudo-Marxist oversimplifications and vulgarizations; and by analysis of individual works and of the interrelationship of master writers.

The recent literary discussion was mainly an attack upon those who considered their critical task accomplished when, in analyzing a book, they identified the class, or segment of a class, whose ideology it expressed. It was pointed out, in this discussion, that great artists of the past of whom it might be said that they expressed the ideology of an exploiting class, nevertheless retain values important to our time; and not only for societies not yet liberated from class exploitation, but for the peoples of the U.S.S.R. as well, where class exploitation has vanished.

The discussion definitely established the insufficiency of such criticism, and the need for going beyond the identification of the class basis of a writer's work to the establishment of its connection with the broader interests and the significant social phenomena of its period. At the same time it repudiated such criticism as attempted to explain the work of great writers as outside or above classes.

The discussion proved to be of great value. In the pros and cons of the interchange, many current problems of literary criticism were clarified; the connection of the classics with the life of the masses in their time was illuminated; and valuable suggestions were offered which are being applied in the teaching of literature.

In presenting the following survey of the chief contributions to this discussion, we believe that it will be of equal interest to those beyond the borders of the Soviet Union who are also concerned with the development of literary criticism into a science.

The unprecedented popular interest in, and demand for, the classics of Russian and of foreign literature in the Soviet Union reflects the phenomenal cultural advance of the Soviet masses. Commenting editorially, the newspaper "Pravda" wrote: "The great artists of the past belong to the working people as part of their inheritance from former classes. It is not in our interest to keep these values under lock and key; or to tear them to pieces and turn them into historical rags as the vulgar sociologists are attempting to do. The works of the classic writers were not isolated. The best of their productions stimulated people's minds and helped them to drive forward and thereby find the road to emancipation. The classics, warm and vibrant with the breath and heart-beat of human life, can help our youth to understand the present as well as the past."

Soviet contemporary criticism and Soviet historical considerations of literature, in their development, cast off encumbrances to understanding, everything that coarsens or oversimplifies literary phenomena, or obscures the permanent values of individual works of art.

Some months ago a widespread discussion of literature took as its theme the harmful effects of vulgarized sociology in literary criticism. Not only journals specializing in literature and art, but *Pravda,* the newspaper with the largest circulation in the Soviet Union, participated. *Pravda* printed a series of articles on the teaching of literature in the schools.

What prompted this discussion? Primarily it was the desire, by this whetting on the grindstone of open discussion, to sharpen an important literary tool. But the impulse to do so was undoubtedly set in motion by the demands of the ever developing Soviet reading public for a criticism that will have the reliability of a science.

In the discussion the predominant and generally accepted viewpoint was a condemnation of vulgarity, over-simplification and schematization which were comprehended under the general epithet "vulgar sociology" which, it was pointed out, is alien to Marxist-Leninist principles of investigation.

The question of cultural heritage was ably dealt with by one of the participants in the discussion, the critic Levin.

This question had been raised by Marx in his introduction to the *Critique of Political Economy:* ". . . the difficulty," Marx wrote, "is not in understanding that Greek art and the epic are connected with definite social forms of development. The difficulty is in understanding why they still afford us artistic delight, and to a considerable degree retain their importance as norms and unrivaled models."

In his article Levin writes: "We inherit classics of literature and art created centuries ago, based on ideas long ago outgrown. Why do these works produced by representatives of classes we have swept into the dust bin of history contain values for the enlightenment of the masses and the training of our youth—valuable to the Komsomol, the workers and collective farmers of the Soviet Union? Why do these works give pleasure to the reader, spectator and listener living in the period of Socialism?"

Vulgar sociology, Levin asserts in an opinion concurred in by the majority of the participants, "cannot answer these questions."

"Great harm has been and is being done by these vulgar sociologists who ignore this question of Marx. They give all their attention, instead, to explaining the connection of the work of art under consideration with a specific form of social development, with a specific class or class group.

"The most glaring expression of this theory was given by critics of the Pereverzev school (named after Professor Pereverzev), a group exposed and condemned as anti-Marxist. In their criticism social classes were considered as rigidly isolated from each other, and the artist was reduced to the position of a mere mouthpiece of his class group. That the artist could understand and portray other classes and hence influence other classes was denied in this formulation.

Such concepts project an impoverished image of the great writers of the past. Such concepts avoid the living realities of art, circumvent the contradictions of historical reality; such concepts are deadening to the teaching of literature. The interpretation of classics as nothing more than expressions of the ideology of vanished classes can only be calculated to destroy in the young any interest in the classics.

"The theories of vulgar sociology are prevalent among teachers," *Pravda* pointed out. "Such teachers seek to reduce complex works to the most elementary class definitions. The main thing they discover, say, in the work of

Gogol, is that the author of *Dead Souls* is the typical representative of the petty or middle landlord nobility. This prevents them from explaining or even understanding Gogol's works . . . "

Pravda continued: "It is the obligation of the critic who considers himself a Marxist, certainly, to indicate the class basis of a writer's work. But it is a far cry from this Marxist thesis to the position of those critics who regard the classics as no more than an expression of class ideologies. Can such a schematizer as Professor Piskanov, for example, who defines Griboyedov's famous comedy, *Woe to Wit,* as the most aristocratic play in the Russian repertoire, its author the most artistocratic playwright, its principal character the most aristocratic hero,' and so on, can he by this instill love for the classic or account for the study of Griboyedov in the schools or the production of his play on the Soviet stage?"

Also in the pages of *Pravda* the critic Yermilov quotes excerpts from the textbooks on Russian literature which leave the impression that the great Russian writers were madmen obsessed with the material interests of their class group. Here is a typical comment on the playwright Ostrovsky. "Industrial capitalism as it developed required a rapid transformation of the merchant class. The old forms and methods of trade had to be altered. Ostrovsky meets these changes in the social and economic organization of life."

Vulgar sociology is equally shallow when it treats of literary technique or the appreciation of literature. The critic Feodor Levin, mentioned above, deals with this question in a polemic against Professor Nusinov.

Levin quotes Nusinov as saying that "the degree of the artistry of image-types depends upon the extent to which they provide a typified expression of a class ideology, and that thus they completely serve the self-assertion of the class that created them." "If one carries Nusinov's notion to its conclusion," Levin points out, "then the third-rate work of a fascist writer who gives full expression to the barbarous ideology of fascism can be regarded as artistic perfection. Nusinov has thus replaced the Marxist theory of the reflection of objective reality in class ideology with the pseudo-Marxist theory of the self-expression of class ideology. His criterion is not the clarity and depth of the reflection of objective reality contained in the images but in the degree at which 'the psychology' of one's class is expressed. This distortion of Marxist principle obstructs the understanding of the history of literature, beclouds the great victories of realism in literature, victories sometimes achieved in spite of the contradictions in the political opinions of the writers themselves, Balzac and Gogol, for example."

This thought is emphasized by another participant in the discussion, Michael Lifschitz, who differing on other grounds, agrees with Levin in this matter. Lifshitz writes: "They (the vulgar sociologists) drop into a confused prattle when confronted with the task of explaining the artistic and social values of a Shakespeare or a Pushkin for Socialist culture." This failure of the 'sociologizers' intelligibly to account for the social values of the great classics was repeatedly called attention to in the discussion. *Pravda* commenting on Pushkin, wrote: "He was the son of his class and of his time, yet no one before him or after him reflected the life of the whole country in such artistic imagery, such great poetry . . . "

In two comprehensive articles on Marxist-Leninist criticism and social analysis, the Soviet critic, Rosenthal, shows in careful detail how sociological analysis, by squeezing diverse and contradictory phenomena into the *a priori* concept of class, divorces them from the specific conditions of class struggle.

restricts their function, denies their permanent values and thereby cheats the masses of their cultural inheritance.

"For the vulgar sociologist," writes Rosenthal, "class is an a *priori* concept, a Kantian category which introduces into living reality the continuity and order that it presumably lacks, a category which, regardless of the real state of affairs, dictates its laws to reality. This type of student of literature as a rule approaches literature and the writer with an absolute yardstick, with a ready-made class definition, and he does not derive his class definition from reality but, on the contrary, derives life and reality from his ready-made class yard-stick.

"The horizon of such a student of literature," Rosenthal says, "is at best limited to the frame of the class in which, in his opinion, the destiny of the writer is enclosed. More often, however, it is limited to the frame of some section of a class or even the 'class position' of the writer himself. Limited by a readymade concept regarding the writer's class involvement, the student of literature does not go beyond the bounds of analysis required for his preconception. He applies this limiting method to details; he traces the corresponding 'political curves,' 'political moods,' and so on. And with this he considers his 'social analysis' complete. But our investigator does not even suspect that he has bound himself hand and foot, deprived himself of all possibility of understanding the actual class essence of the writer's work."

Mark Rosenthal, as an example of a broad and subtle approach to the writer's work, to its many conflicting elements, refers to Lenin's characterization of Tolstoy, and Engels' characterization of Balzac.

"We are often surprised," writes Rosenthal, contrasting the vulgar sociologists with the classics of Marxism, "by the boldness and breadth with which Lenin approached Tolstoy, relating Tolstoy's work to the Russian Revolution and the peasantry, with deeply penetrating perceptions.

"The work of a great writer always expresses definite social trends and is always connected with contemporary historical phenomena. But how is one to define the social role of his work, the place he occupies in the system of social relations, the force which he supports, often without realizing it? In Lenin's analysis of Tolstoy, we find an answer to this question; a precise summary of the historic conditions in the country; a clear presentation of the fundamental and decisive social questions placed on the order of the day by history; a concrete analysis of the relations of all classes in the country to these questions, and finally, an analysis of the objective interrelation with them of the writer's work.

"The reader probably remembers how some students of literature took fright when Engel's words about Balzac were published, words to the effect that Balzac, in spite of his political sympathies, gave a profoundly understanding portrayal of reality. They could not reconcile themselves to this presentation of Engel's thought, which they characterized as the destruction of the 'class approach' to Balzac. Such a reaction was natural to this school of literary criticism which, having tethered Balzac to a class post, could not see how his work reflected the interrelations of all classes, and illuminated the fundamental problems of that period.

"Thus, invariably limiting their outlook, attaching the writer to this or that class, on the basis of externals, our literary investigators not only coarsen and oversimplify social analysis but actually destroy it. Where the writer does not fit into the limits of the class position ascribed to him *a priori,* they manipulate, they discover class 'shadings;' thus having placed Shakespeare in a minor

group of the nobility, one touched by a taint of trade, they have sat back satisfied that they have given an example of 'Marxist' penetration."

The vulgarizer with his class measurements is unable to comprehend the real stature of great writers; he smothers the living breath of art; he lists the classics in "sociological" columns. Class analysis which should serve as an instrument for the most subtle and most flexible investigation, is transformed in the hands of the vulgar sociologist into a club that stuns genuine Marxist criticism.

Mark Rosenthal analyzing an article by a well-known Soviet critic, Dmitri Mirsky, uses it as an example of how the cultural inheritance, by an alienating type of criticism, can be sealed from its heir, the proletariat.

In Mirsky's interpretation, Pushkin's character Eugene Onegin, generally regarded as an embodiment of Russian life at that time, is reduced to a sort of graph of the poet's political view. And "Tatyana is not a living portrayal of the Russia of the nobility (the classic Russian critic's estimate) but the victim of the poet's ego-centrism, of his 'cooperative' view of tsarist autocracy, a view that rapidly changed—in short, the unfortunate victim of Pushkin's personal material interests, of his servile adaptibility."

"We know of course," Rosenthal continues, "that after the Decembrist uprising, Pushkin wavered. And this fact alone is enough for our vulgarizers to forget everything. Obsessed with it, they force it into the writer's work. The lines:

The pangs of love pursue Tatyana
To the park she goes to brood. . . .

in their interpretation become an expression of the revolutionary inclinations of the nobility. The later lines:

I love you still (wherefore conceal it?)
But to another I am pledged
And ever shall be true to him

become, accordingly, not only an evidence of Pushkin's political servility, but an expression of the satisfaction of the landholding nobility over the rise in the price of grain."

Polemicizing against both vulgar sociology and the interpretation through personal psychology of Mirsky's method, Rosenthal asserts: "The portrait of Tatyana has true revolutionary significance, not however because it expresses 'the spring of the advanced nobility,' but because Pushkin mirrored in it the ugliness of a society of serfdom and exploitation in which even sincere natures were deformed."

What is the meaning of the assertion that the change in Tatyana was dictated by personal motives of Pushkin? This would justify the scrapping of one of the greatest works of Russian literature. For if its main purpose is to project a personally motivated "moral image of a faithful wife," why should it interest the proletariat today or in future generations?

A similar tendency to vulgarize has been exhibited in critical considerations of classics of world literature. Smirnov's book on Shakespeare evoked much adverse criticism, for its schematism and oversimplification.

One commentator on Smirnov's book said: "Alexander Smirnov shows little interest in the philosophic depths and artistry of Shakespeare's dramas. For him what is of interest are those passages in which he can be presented in the

role of spokesman of the rising bourgeoisie. Shakespeare is thus connected here with the ruling merchants, there with the adventurer merchants, with one group or another of traders or pirates. . . . In his report to the Writers' Congress, Gorky observed that in many historical and literary works, 'the role of the bourgeoisie in the process of cultural creation is strongly exaggerated. This reproof fully applies to Smirnov's book which, in emphasizing Shakespeare's struggle against Mediaevalism, would transform the great writer into an apologist of capitalism . . .' "

From what has been reported here, it will be seen that the prevailing trend in the general critical discussion was against schematism and over-simplification. But there was by no means blanket agreement or unreserved acceptance of any critical view. In their own way, some of the critics attacking vulgar sociology, went to extremes which drew sharp counter attacks. Lifschitz's article in *Literaturnaya Gazeta* was answered by Levin who pointed out two propositions in it that he considered anti-Marxist: "Pushkin, though of the nobility, was an artist but the nobility and the bourgeoisie, no matter how you divide them up or in what proportions you mix them with each other, nevertheless remain two parasitic sections of society." And further on: "Pushkin's, Gogol's and Tolstoy's works are derived (by the vulgar sociologists) from the domestic affairs of Russian nobility; its 'bourgeoisification,' its 'impoverishment,' etc."

"From the above quotations it is evident," Levin objects, "that according to Lifschitz, Pushkin being a great artist, is not the spokesman of the nobility, for the nobility is nothing but a parasitic section of society. If we say that Pushkin is the spokesman of the nobility, this means, according to Lifschitz, that we have made him the apologist for the interests of the exploiters, *i.e.,* the apologist for exploitation; *i.e.,* a supporter of serfdom, etc. For Lifschitz, Pushkin, the people's writer, and Pushkin the spokesman of the nobility are, like virtue and crime, 'two incompatible things.' "

To be sure, Lifschitz believes that "the artist aristocrat" can "reflect the popular movement in his country." He thinks that "individual geniuses from the nobility and the bourgeoisie often become genuine people's writers. . . ." "In other words, Lifschitz admits that people from other classes, from the parasitic classes, can become people's writers. The words 'artist aristocrat,' as Lifschitz uses them, mean that the artist belongs to the aristocracy from the standpoint of his origin and education."

But this in Levin's opinion does not place the question on the plane where Marxist literary criticism places it, when speaking of the folk spirit of this or that noble or bourgeois writer. This places the question on the plane of biography. Levin asks Lifschitz, "Do you think that when Lenin called the Decembrists 'revolutionaries belonging to the nobility,' that he had in mind their social origin, and not a definition of the ideological limitations beyond whose bounds their revolutionary character could not go?"

Lifschitz's disciple, Kemenov, in an article on Shakespeare, says expressly that "one cannot declare Shakespeare to be the great people's poet of England and at the same time the spokesman of the 'bourgeoisified nobility. . . .' "

Lifschitz on the theoretical plane, develops this thought a bit further: "The class character of psychological phenomena is determined not by their subjective coloring but by the depth and correctness of the understanding of objective reality they contain. Indeed, it is from the objective world that the very subjecitve coloring of any class ideology is derived: the latter is a result, not a premise. He who is capable of rising to hatred of any form of exploitation

and falsehood in his society, becomes willy-nilly the spokesman of the *revolutionary* class. On the contrary, he who is absorbed in his private, separate existence, in the native limitations of his own ego, is bound always to remain under the sway of reactionary ideology. As opposed to dogmatic Marxism, Lenin shows that class consciousness does not arise automatically. The spokesman of a specific class is not born but *made.*"

These propositions aroused protests.

"The subjective coloring of class ideology," Levin objects, "is already contained in the very division of society into 'classes'. . . ." Without denying that there may be a contradiction between the "conclusion" and "premise," of which Lifschitz writes, Levin accuses Lifschitz of ignoring precisely this "premise." "By concerning himself only with the conclusion he evades the problem of class roots, of the class definition of the writer's work. More than that, Michael Lifschitz regards such a definition as an 'expression of the middle bourgeoisie,' as the definition of a 'psychological type.' Levin cites Lenin's famous characterization of Tolstoy as an example of precise and at the same time broad definition of Tolstoy's class nature.

Lenin wrote: "By birth and education Tolstoy belonged to the highest strata of the landlords in Russia. He broke with all the habitual views of this environment and in his later work subjected to passionate criticism all contemporary state, church, social and economic orders, based on the enslavement of the masses, on the pauperization of the peasant and small owners in general, on violence and hypocrisy, with which all contemporary life is imbued from top to bottom." (Lenin, *Collected Works,* Vol. XIV.)

"Doesn't it seem to Lifschitz," Levin argues, "that this definition of Tolstoy's class nature is too precise? Wouldn't it be simpler to declare Tolstoy to be a great people's writer, without going in for circumlocution and 'sociology'?"

"Michael Lifschitz and his disciples," Levin continues, "consider it impossible to combine the definitions 'bourgeois, aristocratic and people's writer.' "

"Lifschitz substitutes the 'ideology of exploitation' for the 'ideology of exploiting classes.' However, this is not one and the same thing. . . . The struggle of the bourgeoisie and the nobility was not merely a struggle for spoils, it was also the form in which the progressive movement of mankind proceeded. Now both the nobility and the bourgeoisie have long since lost their progressive significance. But when Lifschitz, Kemenov and others, having incredibly simplified the historic past, refuse to see anything but parasitism and exploitation in the nobility and bourgeoisie of past centuries. . . is it not tantamount to a rejection of objective history?. . . Without an analysis of the class nature of Pushkin, Gogol and Shakespeare, they will understand neither their greatness nor their limitations, they will not understand what part of them belongs to the past and what is immortal!"

Two extremely important problems, directly connected with each other—the problem of folk influences upon great writers of the past and the problem of progress in bourgeois society—were among the most actively mooted subjects of the discussion. In the editorial in *Pravda* where Pushkin was called "the son of his class," it is said that "the people, its language, its character and folklore constitute the soil where the roots of Pushkin's genius grew."

The problem of progress in bourgeois society, in other words the problem of the extent to which the bourgeois writers and the writers of the nobility are people's writers, and how the permanent value of their work is to be ascertained, was the core of Lifschitz's answer to Levin's article.

"As distinguished from the ordinary sociologist," he wrote, "the Marxist is obliged to trace the general perspective of the movement towards the prole-

tarian revolution and socialist ideology through the entire history of world culture, and to single out the main progressive social ideas of each period, the ideas that reflected the living conditions of the oppressed masses." Lifschitz analyzes different historic periods and the character of bourgeois progress:

"The period of the renaissance, provided the possibility for the development of a profound people's art, while the reaction of the seventeenth century everywhere isolated art from popular life, made the artist a court servitor, the pensioner of the princely and kingly power . . ." "The nobility and the bourgeoisie are progressive classes only when their actions directly or indirectly correspond to the people's interest. In all other cases the struggle between them is a surface clash over the division of the spoils and they themselves are no more than two parasitic classes."

"The great and truly progressive achievements of literature could only be the work of those writers who know how to defend the interests of the 'progressive development of mankind' in those forms that were the most progressive at the time, and who defended the interests of their own class only to the extent that these interests coincide with the indicated development."

One of the critics, examining a text book on Russian literature where information is rendered valueless and the images of the classics are distorted by vulgar analysis, wrote:

"Is a great work of art no more than a reflection of class views, and not a reflection of objective reality through the prism of class views? Are class views tantamount to blindness and not to sight? In class society there can be no artist who is free from class interests, who is outside of classes and above classes. But class interests are not a transgression, are not near-sighted, but a reality and a fact. The process of knowing the objective world takes place within historic and class limitations. This is what one must be able to discern, and discerning, refrain from reproaching the giants of the past for failing to do the impossible, for failing to have socialist views."

Lifschitz, returning to the question of this "sight" and "blindness," develops his thought further:

"Bourgeois society progressed along roads that were cruel enough. But from this it by no means follows that the Marxist historian should stand beyond good and evil, that the historical standpoint sets aside the distinction between the foremost ideals of the best representatives of an old culture and the defense of property interests, between 'sight' and 'blindness' *in every given* period."

Rosenthal objects to Lifschitz's proposition that the ideology of exploiting classes could not serve as the source of works of great talent as a proposition which "simplifies and fails to express the entire complexity and contradictory nature of literary development."

He also objects, however, to Levin's formula regarding progress in bourgeois society. And since this problem is organically bound up with the problem of critical realism, it is impossible to avoid the latter. And critical realism is precisely the remarkable fact in literary history which preserves, across the centuries, the names of writers who lived in other periods, under other social conditions.

Rosenthal points out that vulgar concepts of progress fail to explain certain concrete facts in literary history, relating to the great critical realists of the past, facts, "which cannot be made to fit the Procrustean bed of vulgar sociological formulae."

"Speaking of progress," Rosenthal writes, "the vulgar sociologists do not

see and do not understand the contradiction of progress in exploiting societies. They do not perceive that Marx and Engels in the *Communist Manifesto*, emphasizing the great role of the bourgeoisie, also emphasize the other aspect of that role; the transformation in capitalist society of a man's personal attribute into exchange value, the transformation of exploitation concealed in illusions into 'direct,' open and unashamed exploitation, etc.' "

Is it at all surprising that vulgar sociologists understand nothing of the history of literary development, which is full of contradictions?

Pushkin was undoubtedly a writer of the nobility. But why did the feudal state hate the poet and persecute him?

Gogol, like Pushkin, in the final analysis did not revolt against the rule of the landlords. But how are we to explain the tragedy of Gogol's work, how are we to explain the extremely important circumstance that Lenin spoke of the *ideas of Gogol and Belinsky*?

Why were the great realists—Balzac, Flaubert, Griboyedov, Gogol, Ostrovsky and others, *critical realists*, who often arrived at conclusions in opposition to their premises?

How are we to explain the fact that Gogol predicted the ruin of art with the arrival of the capitalist era and said that "our time" (that is, the time of capitalism), is unfavorable to art?

How, finally, are we to explain Marx's words to the effect that capitalist production is hostile to art and to poetry?

These questions could be elaborated indefinitely.

They show that the history of the development of literature, like the whole process of social development, by no means follows the ruled line that the vugar sociologists draw. They also show that neither the sacramental formula of vulgar sociology: that the writer is a genius who represents reality only as his class sees and understands it; nor Feodor Levin's formula on progress, will help the understanding of literary development.

While emphasizing the class character of literary phenomena and the decisive importance of the class struggle in literature, Rosenthal asserts that the self-imposed limitations of the vulgar sociologists incapacitate them from applying, dialectically, the theory of the class struggle in their literary investigations. He outlines, further, several propositions which in his opinion are fundamental to genuine Marxist dialectical criticism.

"Every ideology is a reflection and an explanation of reality, but a reflection that is dead and indirect. Religion is also a reflection of reality, but a fantastic and distorting reflection. Idealism, like religion, is also a distorting reflection. From this there follows the conclusion: the peculiarity, specific nature, and roots of a given ideology, may be ascertained by comparing it with reality.

"A comparison of actual social reality, including all classes, their interests, etc., with the ideological reflection of this reality, provides the method for accurately ascertaining the many-sided significance and class role of a given ideology.

"The theory of the class struggle requires that in analyzing the work of this or that writer, we take precise account of the historical circumstances and conditions under which the writer lived and worked, that we clearly understand the fundamental and decisive social problems that stood on the order of the day, that we analyze the positions of all classes towards these problems, and finally, that we analyze the objective relations and objective attitude in the writer's works, to the fundamental problems of the class struggle."

Thus we see that in that part of the discussion on vulgar sociology which dealt with theory and method, the majority of the critics and students of literature were opposed to the narrow schematisms and vulgarizations which are still frequently encountered in Soviet criticism, against the rubber stamping of the works of world geniuses, against stuffing the tremendous and varied wealth of world literature into class pigeonholes. The discussion also served as a reappraisal and revaluation of critical theories. It became clear that certain works of the past had been undervalued, for example, certain brilliant critical writings of Lunacharsky's. In the course of the discussion, questions have been raised that require further research and discussion, particularly the problem of the folk in art, which had been discussed previously but now becomes an urgent issue. There were two main points of disagreement: on the significance of class definitions of a writer, and on the criteria of artistry.

In addition to the general agreement on the inadequacies and dangers of vulgar sociology, the participants in the discussion also generally agreed upon the importance of assimilating the cultural heritage, and on the magnitude of the tasks awaiting the victorious socialist culture and the working class in science and the arts.

"Our students of literature," writes Rosenthal, "are faced with the task of revealing the full greatness of the writer of the past who, though fettered by the class society of exploitation, nevertheless succeeded in creating monumental masterpieces and leaving so vivid a record of mankind's past. But at the same time we are faced with the task of revealing their tragedy, the fate of these chained Prometheuses of the ruling classes. We must explain the distinction between our culture and the culture of the world of private property, between the lot of our artists and that of the artists of the past. All this can only be accomplished by bearing in mind that the whole past history of culture is inseparably bound up with the history of the class struggle." (*Literaturny Leningrad.*)

"To communicate the greatness of the classic writers, a text book on literature must show how each of their works constituted a step forward. It must show the victories of realism scored in these works, often in spite of the historically limited outlook of the writers themselves. It must disclose the artistic force, the vividness and beauty, the fullness and depth of imagery by virtue of which the classics continue to excite, educate and esthetically fulfill people in our times." *(Literaturnaya Gazeta.)*

"Before our eyes the greatest works of the artist and thinker of past centuries come to life, become elements of everyday life.

"In our country Shakespeare, Balzac, Goethe, Pushkin, Tolstoy and Gogol become people's writers; for the first time in history their works receive a worthy response, are appreciated by millions of people.

"After centuries, after periods of intense struggle, wars and revolutions, these works of the human mind and genius have found a wholesome environment, a creative audience. It is therefore not hard to understand the significance and timeliness of the problem of the classic heritage in our country." *(Literaturny Kritik.)*

Eugenia Galperina

The Struggle for Marxism in France

Ideology has its own geography, often of a very fantastic kind. For many highly cultured members of the Parisian intelligentsia the path from their writing tables to the workers' quarters in Saint Antoine *banlieue* or Belleville has lain through Moscow. In the same way their path to Marxism has lain through the U.S.S.R. Their eagerness to understand the new socialist culture, socialist "humanism," "the new human being," has led them to the theoretical problems of Marxism.

Even enemies cannot deny that Marxism has recently spread to a surprising extent among the French intelligentsia. This is an important and significant fact. It is significant because the relations between French intellectuals and Marxism have a somewhat strange history.

In pre-war times most of these intellectuals had a pretty crude idea of Marxism. They looked upon it as a fatalist conception of society, a monstrous form of determinism. The chief idea of Marxism consisted, according to this view, in the unlimited power of economics over man, and more than this, in an endorsement of this power. How did this preposterous idea arise? Partly because the study of Marxism was under the influence of the Second International. Marx himself was little known and the people got to know of him through the Kautskies and the Bernsteins. On the other hand the intelligentsia itself was too infected with bourgeois idealist philosophy to understand the true meaning of Marxism, its aims and the profoundly human import of its conception of life. The minds of the intelligentsia were dominated by Nietzsche and Bergson and the whole pleiade of irrationalists of the twentieth century. Marxism of necessity appeared in the highest degree foreign to intellectuals moving within the circle of their pet ideas—idealist voluntarism, "the independence of the spirit," and so forth. And this was not the case with the bourgeois intelligentsia alone. One has only to remember the best and most advanced and most lucid minds of the day, like the young Romain Rolland, and the moving characters he then created, rebelling against the bourgeoisie in isolation, to understand why Marxism, and especially Marxism in fatalistic guise, could not have any appeal for them in those days.

During recent years, under the direct influence of the U.S.S.R., a process of "discovery" of Marxism, as it were, by French intellectuals, has been taking place.

Here are some facts:

In 1932 a committee of scientists, to organize the study of Marxism, was formed under the guidance of Prof. Vallon. It included some of the foremost French scholars. Today a widespread and systematic fight for Marxism is being waged by certain scholars, among them considerable numbers of university professors both of the older and younger generation.

Courses in Marxism given by Vallon, Maublanc, Duclos, Babi and others have been so popular that the last lectures were given in the Palais de Mutualité. The Marxist University had to be given auditoriums in the Sorbonne, a fact quite without precedent, and an impossibility in the France of a few years ago. The E.Z.I. Publishing House is bringing out a series entitled *Problems;* in this series a number of scientific works have been issued applying Marxism in the

field of the natural and humane sciences: *The Origin of the Worlds* by R. Laberen, *The Origin of Religion* by L. Henri, and *Biology and Marxism* by M. Prenan. In the same series a symposium recently appeared, which made a great stir, entitled *In the Light of Marxism.* In it Professors Langevin, Prenan, Vallon and Laberen struck out at idealism on all fronts of the physical, natural and humane sciences. The subject of the second volume is *Marx and Modern Thought.* A third is planned devoted to the position of science in the fascist countries and in the U.S.S.R. The sensational success of the symposium *In the Light of Marxism* among the working class and the intelligentsia showed to what extent the attitude towards Marxism in France has changed. For the first time people have begun to speak of the "Marxist school" in French science.

The opponents of Marxism in France have always eagerly seized on the thesis that Marxism is alien and opposed to Western civilization, that Marxism makes a break with the best traditions of Western culture. This view was upheld at the Paris Congress for the Defense of Culture by Julien Benda while Paul Nizan and others spoke in rebuttal. But of particular significance is the concrete answer to these objections given by the series *Socialism and Culture* edited by J. Friedman, which is being brought out by the E.Z.I. publishers mentioned above, the aim of which is to show that socialism absorbs all that is best in the world culture of the past while giving it a new evaluation. Revolutionary writers are taking part in this series. The volumes which have already been published include *Materialists of Antiquity* by Nizan and a most interesting book on Cervantes by Jean Cassou. A book on Pushkin edited by J. E. Pouterman, and the work of the great Russian critics from Belinsky on, are planned in the same series.

Marxism is waging effective war on idealism in the humane sciences, philosophy and the history of literature where, until recently, in France, all shades of idealism, relativism and eclecticism held the field. Mention should be made of two works of great importance by J. Friedman, *Problems of Machinism* and *The Crisis of Progress,* in which the author attacks bourgeois theories of progress and bourgeois technicism and equally the modern bourgeois anti-machinists. Of great interest is a monograph on A. Rimbaud by Etiemble and Gauclair published by a house so very far removed from Marxism as *La Nouvelle Revue Française.* This book is very close to our point of view in many respects and is offered by the authors in opposition to the mystical, catholic or merely eclectical interpretations of Rimbaud.

For Marxism to be a success in these fields in France it has to be shown that the essence of Marxism is not the victory of economics over man, but the very opposite, namely, the formation of a society which will provide the conditions necessary for the victory of man over nature and facilitate man's all round development.

All the attacks of French idealists on Marxism insisted on the complete incompatibility of the conceptions of humanism and Marxism. That is why it is particularly important in France to show that humanism in its genuinely revolutionary sense not only does not conflict with Marxism but has on the contrary organic connections with it.

That is why in order to ensure the victory of Marxism in France, in humanist circles, it is particularly important to remove all vulgarized sociological conceptions which crudely emphasize the power of the "economic factor" and greatly discredit Marxism in the eyes of writers and scholars. This applies particularly to literary criticism. Consequently the recent publication of a number

of texts of Marxist classics dealing with literature and art, edited by J. Freville, is of the greatest importance. They include works by Marx and Engels, and Lafargue's literary criticism. A number of texts including Marx's and Engels' correspondence with Lassalle, Engels' letter to P. Ernst, Engels' work on Beck, Goethe and Carlyle have appeared for the first time in French along with Lassalle's *Darwinism in the Theater* and Zola's *Money*. Freville states in his prefaces that he was greatly assisted by the work of Soviet literary scholars such as Schiller, Lukacs, Hoffenschefer and Lifschitz.

J. Freville has taken great pains to arrange his material, which has been drawn from various works of Marx and Engels, in such a way as to emphasize its contemporary significance in the development of revolutionary, antifascist literature. Following a general section dealing with superstructures and the relation between art and society, come sections *Against Petty-Bourgeois Idealism, Against Romanticism, The Need for Realism, The Need for Revolutionary Literature.* One can only say in criticism that very much more stress might have been laid on the problem of the literary heritage, especially as the passages given in the book provide valuable material for this. In a long introductory article entitled *Marxism and Literature,* Freville makes a most successful attempt to go beyond crude sociological interpretations and to attack vulgarizations of Marxism. In particular Freville's emphasis on the idea of the unequal development of society and art is very much in place, as the fact that the rise and fall of society and art do not coincide has always been one of the favorite arguments of the opponents of Marxism. A very important point stressed by Freville is the contradiction between the political platform of the classicists, their philosophy of idealism and their achievements as realists. Of great importance for modern France is the very decided way he brings Balzac to the fore and popularizes Lenin's analysis of Tolstoy and Marx's remarks on Balzac. This has a great significance in view of the fact that intellectuals of fascist sympathies are still attracted by the "super-refinements" and artificialities of a later literature which already shows symptoms of decadence. The return to realism in France is associated chiefly with the name of Zola, rather than with the high traditions of Balzac and Stendahl's classical realism.

Admitting the great service rendered by Freville in propagating Marxism in the field of literature, one is compelled to make certain critical comments on this article. A number of his ideas seem to us now rather primitive, and out of date. Historical works seem to Freville to be always direct projections into the past of men and manners of the present, that is to say to be a kind of "dressing up." Literary influences based on a superficial understanding of Marx's well known views that the dominating ideas of an epoch are the ideas of the ruling class led Freville to the conclusion that the novel in bourgeois society is a projection of the ruling classes used by them to protect their interests and perpetuate their social system. The whole development of the French novel in the nineteenth century from this point of view is a chain of the ideas of the ruling classes. It is difficult to see how Freville reconciles this conception with his views of the significance of Balzac. In France more than anywhere else it is important to bring out the idea that nearly all that was best in the literature of bourgeois society had in it a strong anti-bourgeois tendency. An idea that should be very widely popularized in France is that brought forward by Maxim Gorky that the great pleiades of critical realists in the past were the "black sheep" of the bourgeoisie and it was just they who created great literature while the bourgeoisie, in the proper meaning of the term, had no capacity for creating more than third rate fiction.

The publication by J. Freville of the works of Lafargue is undoubtedly also of great importance. The greatest French Marxist critic, brilliant, temperamental, militant—he is undoubtedly able to exert on the young critics of contemporary France that "tonic" effect about which Freville writes so feelingly. Many of Lafargue's literary ideas are of great importance at the present day—for instance his exposure of the naturalistic method and his mockery of bourgeois liberal prejudices, to say nothing of his admirable linguistic works. However it seems to us that Freville should have laid much more stress on the fact that Lafargue was "carried away" by his criticism of bourgeois art and as a consequence often ended by rejecting altogether our inheritance from the bourgeoisie. It is hardly correct nowadays to print Lafargue's brilliant lampoon against Victor Hugo without explaining in a foreword the attitude towards the writer held by modern French Marxist critics who, it is to be hoped, do not intend to surrender Hugo entirely to the bourgeoisie. Freville was also not quite correct in his essay on the *Texts of Marx and Engels* in collecting a number of judgments given in Marxist classics on romanticism without explaining our present attitude to the problem of romanticism. Such selection of Marxist texts gives the impression on the face of it that Marxists entirely reject romanticism. He had only to give Marx's estimate of Chateaubriand in conjunction with his estimate of Shelley in order to present this question in a clearer light. These may appear to be mere details but such details count since they give a misleading idea of our approach to the heritage of the past and play into the hands of our enemies who insist that Marxism involves "a complete break with the traditions of western culture."

In spite of all these faults the texts published by J. Freville will undoubtedly play an important part in the development of Marxist criticism in France. The E.Z.I. must further be congratulated on the fact that they do not intend to stop here but plan to follow up this publication with collected texts from Lenin and Stalin on literature and art.

The work of ousting crude sociologism now begun in France, has, we repeat, great literary-political importance. This is realized both by the Lefts and the Rights. The latter are greatly concerned by the drift of the French intelligentsia towards Marxism. Last summer Jean Grenier wrote a very malicious article in *La Nouvelle Revue Française* entitled *The Age of Orthodoxy*. In it he tried to dismiss the rise of French Marxism as an unimportant phenomenon, accounting for it by the fact that the age of skepticism and denial having passed, the intellectuals again feel need of a faith and Marxism is the new faith which satisfies that need. The struggle for the new culture Grenier has attempted to depict as a lowering of intellectual standard.

The Rights naturally cannot reconcile themselves to the victories of Marxism. But in their public utterances there are two interesting features. The first is their admission that there are victories and the second is their uneasiness in the face of the fact that Marxism is losing its crude fatalistic hue and is appearing in its true light. That Marxism should be seen as a form of fatalism, and be considered as involving a complete break with the cultural traditions of the past is just what the fascists want. Our French comrades have noted the interesting fact that when they attack vulgar sociologism, the Rights accuse them of deviating from Marxism and call them neo-Marxists, clearly wishing to retain the name of Marxists for the vulgarizers.

This is another proof of the great international significance of the fight against crude sociologism which is being carried on in the U.S.S.R. A really profound solution of the questions raised in discussions in the U.S.S.R. would play a very important part in the international struggle for Marxism.

*

Nikolai Tikhonov

Tribute to Orjonikidze

The death of Gregory Constantinovich, Commissar of Heavy Industry, affectionately known throughout the country by his *nom de revolution,* Sergo, was mourned by the whole nation.

In the Soviet Union, the separation between politics, work, personal life, and culture, common elsewhere, does not exist. Just as Stalin and other important figures have shown a personal as well as official interest in culture, so those active in the vigorous and expanding cultural life of the country take a live interest in its political life. Writers were well represented among other cultural groups in the ceremonies attending Orjonikidze's funeral. Below we print the tribute to him paid by the noted Soviet poet, Nikolai Tikhonov.

Editor's Note

A black border of grief has darkened our joyful Soviet banners. Sergo is dead. The noble heart of a great Bolshevik has ceased to beat.

Fearlessly and with a clear conscience this impassioned man went through life. The career of this hero of the people rings out like an epic song.

A faithful comrade-in-arms of the great Stalin, his whole life is an example of the heights to which a Bolshevik can rise in serving humanity. That is why the whole country, eyes brimming with tears, today honors his sacred remains.

On the snow covered cliffs, in the narrow ravines, in Ingush, in the villages of Ossetia and Kabardino-Balkaria, old partisans will scowl grimly, women will weep quietly, as they stand at the threshold of their homes and look to the North, to Moscow; and the old men will chew the ends of their moustaches, recalling the time, when, led by Sergo, they fought in the Soviet Caucasus for Soviet power.

In the remote and peaceful village of Goresh where he was born —among the perennial plants of the Georgian gardens—the inhabitants will meet today to mourn his death.

At the throbbing giants of industry created by him—the mighty commander of heavy industry—the hearts of the skilled steel workers, of blacksmiths, engineers and brigade leaders, of the puddlers and carpenters, the hearts of all whom he taught the hard science of victory, will contract with pain; their eyes will dim.

On our days of joy, the armed people—our Red Army—marches through the squares of our fine cities.

Then we see the arms, invincible, modern, produced in Soviet

plants by Soviet workers, arming its people—heavy tanks and light automobiles, the black radiance of the sound detectors, the motorcycles, cannons, machine guns, projectors—they are the work of his hands, they are his achievement.

When overhead we hear the roar and see the wing of countless airplanes in the sky, in the free Soviet sky, we know them to have been created by his will, his love and knowledge.

Working as a Stalinite, he rejoiced in the victory of each craftsman, of each new inventor, each new Stakhanovite. He loved man and understood him deeply, in all his complexity. He was good and just, exacting and firm. He terrified the enemy. He was brave in battle. He feared nothing.

In the days of extreme danger he wrote to Lenin:

"We may perish in an unequal battle but we shall not dishonor our cause by flight."

Therefore he came out victorious in unequal battles.

The people of our country have been taught by the Party of Lenin and Stalin to conquer nature and to destroy the enemy. More and more the character of an entirely new man—the man of the epoch of Socialism—is being outlined.

The character of this man towers above the world. His example teaches us a new understanding of the idea of life on earth. Sergo was such an advanced character, the ideal of a man and worker great in his modesty and his iron will.

It seemed to us that he would never die, that death could not claim people like him.

And he does not die. . . .

The great life which he created and organized with his good hands will pass on his name to the hands of future generations and again and again, in songs, in stories, in legends he will be with us in our struggles, in our victories, in all the languages of the world.

SOVIET CHRONICLE

The Festival of Georgian Art in Moscow

Informed people know, of course, that the Soviet Union includes a great variety of peoples, and that the national culture of these peoples is respected and encouraged. In some cases, especially those of the nomadic peoples of Central Asia, culture was rudimentary and had to be helped to maturity by the provision, for the first time, of a written language and other cultural instruments. In other cases old cultures that had been smothered by tsarist imperialism were given freedom and stimulus to vigorous new growth, by the revolution. An example is the culture of the Georgian people, a ten day festival of which was given in Moscow during the winter, and electrified the audiences of the capital. Theater music, especially the unique polyphonic choir singing of Georgia, and the dance were represented. The artists of other Soviet peoples attended the performances and took away a multitude of impressions. The festival thus became an occasion for the mutual artistic enrichment of the many national cultures united under the Soviet flag.

The Georgian Opera and Ballet Theater presented four of its best national operas: the musical legend *Daisi* (Twilight) and the lyrical poem *Absalom and Eteri* composed by Zakhary Daliashvili, who is often called the Glinka of Georgia, as the initiator of the Georgian national opera; *Darejin Tsbieri* (the Crafty Darejin) composed by M. Balanchivodze, and the comic opera *Keto and Kote* by the tireless collector of folk songs, V. Dolidze.

The choice of plots bears witness to the very rigorous attitude of Georgian composers to the themes of their operas. The librettos are taken from the best works of Georgian classical literature (A. Tseretelli, Avks, Tsagarelli), which have won recognition throughout the country, or directly from folklore, as was the case with the opera *Absalom and Eteri,* which is built on a cycle of popular legends.

Below we quote the opinions of noted Soviet artists:

"The charm of the melodies of Georgia, the arrangement of voices, the pliancy of the Georgian dance (and it should be noted that here the men are not outdone by the women) and the beauty of the costuming, all this is captivating," said Peoples Artist of the U.S.S.R., V. I. Nemirovich-Danchenko.

"....The Georgian Opera and Ballet Theater rendered an ancient national legend of love, self-sacrifice, separation, heroism and death, and the audience was deeply moved by the emotional truth and crystal harmony of this poem which ranks with such world famous legends as *Tristan and Isolde, Paolo and Francesca,* and *Romeo and Juliet,*" wrote Izvestia's reviewer, P. Markov.

"The undoubted freshness of the melodies which are based on genuine Georgian traditional airs, warmth and sincerity of the music as a whole the absence of any studied effects, and a certain remarkable

A scene from the folk opera "Daisi"

A duet from the opera "Absalom and Eteri."

simplicity made a very great impression upon me," wrote Professor Igumnov.

". . . You have broken an ancient tradition. It is not only not boring, listening to your classical opera, but it is constantly exciting. I have been bored listening to classical opera, for the latter has, as a rule, very little action—everything depends upon the music and singing. . . . On the stage two solemn soulless beings walk like empty cases, like gramophones on two legs: this struck one particularly in the case of German performances, in which, as a rule, the actors sing in throaty, trumpeting notes. . . .

"With you it is quite different. Your singers are fullblooded living people and not beautiful voices in clumsy frames. One can believe that real blood flows in their veins, their eyes are full of ardent feelings and intelligence; there is vital, human contact between the actors." So wrote the great actor, Moskvin.

The choirs and choreographic *ensembles* of Georgian national song and dance gave original performances. There were lullabies, drinking songs, work songs, war songs and love songs; songs of Kartalinia, of Kakhetia, Magrelia, Abkhazia, Svanetia; solos, duets, trios, choruses and singing to the accompaniment of the chongura and pandura and other national instruments.

Many *lekuri* dances were given; that is to say, dances in which a young man and a girl vie with one another, and bodily pliancy reaches its utmost limits. There were also *perkhuli* or dances to song, and children's dances.

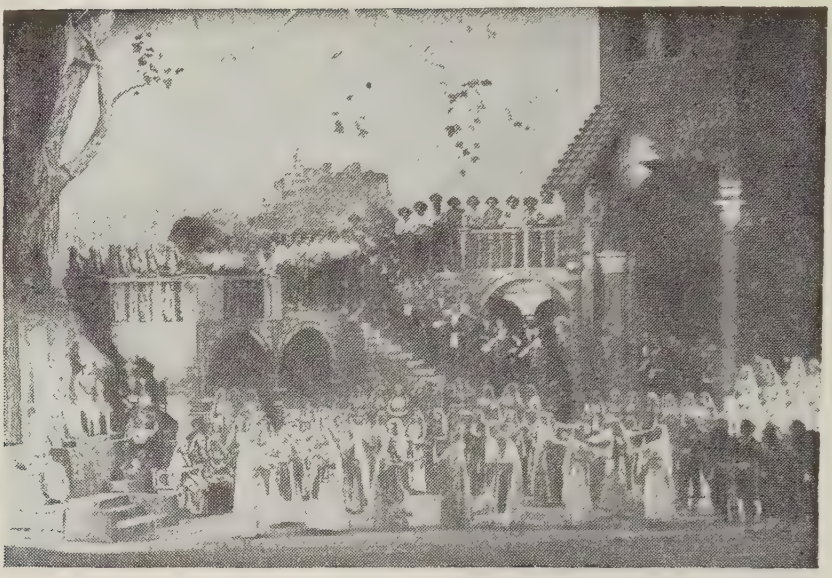
The following appreciation of the Georgian dances was expressed by Victorina Kriger the famous ballet dancer and connoisseur of the classical ballet: "The martial *khoruli* dance and the gentle flower-like woman's dance, the *davluri,* and the others, has each its own individuality although they are linked to a single soul and the single genius of the people that gave birth to this marvelously vivid and luxuriant art."

The Honored Worker in Art of the Georgian ballet, D. Javrishvili, describes as follows the whole gamut of gentle and courteous feelings which are expressed in this dance.

". . . This dance is a romance. It is opened by a young man who moves smoothly round and round in a circle. He holds himself aloof in a dignified fashion. His upper body remains motionless while he moves his legs with dexterous rapidity. His glance is fixed on the girls who stand around him, seeking the one to whom his heart is drawn. At last he sees her, but neither stops nor quickens his pace. Then he moves in the direction of the musicians and turning around to face them slides his feet in front of them and indicates the Gasma tempo (a sliding movement without moving forwards or backwards). Finally he approaches his sweetheart.

He asks her to come out to him.

The girl responds; she likes the youth—but lets him show his strength, agility and resourcefulness. With a graceful movement of her arms, she calls her partner after her. Perfectly calm and at her ease she does



Ballet from opera "Daridjan Tzbieri"

not move but glides. The youth follows her, nearly touches her, but remembers that even the hem of his garment must not come in contact with her. Suddenly the girl changes her step and moves backwards. She almost runs into her partner, but he is quick and agile, turns to face her for a moment, then, courteously as before, follows after her. The first danger has been passed. He might have missed the moment to go forward and the romance would have come to a sad end. The girl would have left him and called for another partner."

The ballet master of the Grand Academic Theater, N. Moiseyev, made this comment: "In the dances of Georgia a brilliant choreographic embroidery is woven into a magnificent dramatic canvas. In ancient times *Ammon* called this highest form of dance 'mute poetry.' "

In conclusion we may mention one of the results of these ten days of the Georgian Theater, namely that the Grand Academic Theater of the U.S.S.R. in Moscow has decided to produce the two operas *Daisi* and *Absalom and Eteri*, which were so well received by the audiences during the festival. Thus the treasure-house of dramatic art, accessible to all the people of the Union, has become enriched by two striking works of national art.

Exhibition of Soviet Child Art and Invention

Notable among the art exhibits current in Moscow during the winter was a showing of children's creative work. The exhibit was the outcome of a visit to the pioneer camp, Artek, by the President of the Council of People's Commissars, Comrade Molotov. Speaking to Molotov, the children expressed a desire to send some of their work as a gift to the Eighth (Extraordinary) Congress of Soviets which had convened to pass upon the new Constitution of the U.S.S.R. In the exhibition, this gift to the Congress is brought to the whole people.

The year signalized by this gift has been a significant one for Soviet children. Child welfare work was enormously extended. New parks, schools, theaters, cinemas, clubs, camps, new facilities for physical and cultural development on a scale realized nowhere else in the world, were opened. The happiness of children became, as it were, an immutable law of Soviet life. It is scarcely to be wondered at, that the idea, broached at Artek to Molotov, was taken up with enthusiasm by Soviet children. Three thousand gifts were sent, including paintings, drawings, sculptures, fabric designs, engineering plans, inventors' models, specimens of every variety of creative effort. As notable as the works themselves was the enthusiasm of the Moscow children who visited the exhibition on their holidays.

The exhibition is extraordinary in its variety. In addition to more familiar art objects, drawings, paintings, sculptures, etc., and the more familiar types of technical design, there was an abundance of objects indicating the extraordinary range of interest

of Soviet children. The exhibits included a model shoe, a fishing rod with electric lighting attachment for fishing at night, a jellyfish made of melon seeds, a model village encased in a glass bottle, a model for an interplanetary rocket, political posters, illustrations to fairy tales by Pushkin, etc.

One of the exhibits that attracted special attention was a Lilliputian power plant. In its glass case it looked like a collection of insects, so finely worked that they seemed to belong to the realm of art rather than of science. There was a motor that was fitted on to a bronze two kopek piece, a coin about the size of an American dime or an English sixpence. Another motor engine was set going by a watch. The designer of this Lilliputian motor put its capacity at "one midge power," and Academician Komarov who tested it was forced to admit that science could make no more accurate determination of its capacity, leaving it the only motor in the world of registered "one midge power."

Alongside, in a glass case, the size of two matchboxes joined together, is another exhibit significant of the awareness on the part of children of the war dangers confronting the U.S.S.R. It is a wax model of an armored motorcycle. It has a streamlined form, bent handlebars, metal lamp, leather saddle; its engine and tank are protected by steel shields; the wheels are barely visible beneath armor plating. The most interesting feature of this toy is its machine gun equipment which is so arranged as "to fire on the enemy both while attacking and retreating," to use its designer's words.

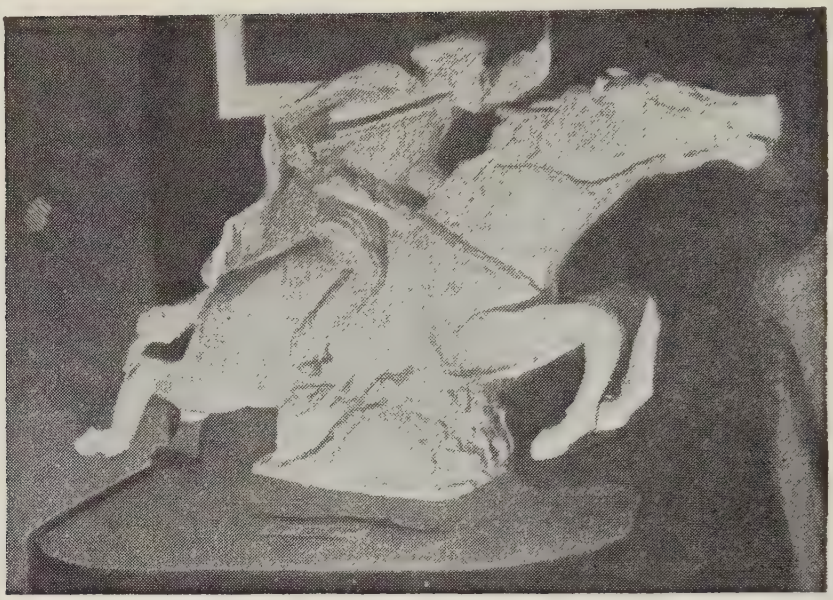
Further on we see a patchwork carpet representing a "scene from life," the subject of which is given as follows by the child-artist: "When we were at camp, we went for a walk in the woods and I ran after a frog and fell down and we all thought it very funny."

A wooden carving: A lifelike boy's head has raised itself from a block of wood. In the clear cut features, evidently carved from life, an unusual eagerness and concentration of mind are depicted. One feels the joy of the artist in overcoming his material as though he himself in this work had wrestled for his very life with inanimate matter, had come out victorious and now surveyed the world in his new embodiment. It is a self-portrait by sixteen-year-old Shura Goshadze.

"Three Little Leninite Girls from Baku" sent a model of the Moscow Kremlin which they have never seen and the real historic Kremlin has become a fairy tale in the hands of these children of Azerbaijan. The house in which Stalin spent his childhood, on the other hand, has been accurately reproduced by pioneers from Gori. These little Gori boys have shown, down to the smallest detail, the dark basement where the great man whom all Soviet children look upon as their best friend, began his life.

The work of many of the children bears witness to the widespread interest in the story of Comrade Stalin's life. There is an exact model, faithful in every detail, of the illegal printery in Tbilisi (Tiflis) and fifteen-year old Aram Aramyan from the town of Yerevan has contributed a carved bas-relief representing a striking scene: from behind

Ensemble from opera "Absalom and Eteri"



"Chapayev," sculpture by M. Brusov, 15 years, a student in Kharkov

prison bars Comrade Stalin is saying to the chained workers of Baku, "Keep your chains safe, we shall want them for the tsarist government."

Chapayev has become a legendary hero to Soviet children. His dynamic personality has caught their imagination and he lives again in the minds of young artists. His temperamental figure is the subject of many paintings and sculptures, and is always shown in action, on horseback, on a gun carriage, or on foot leading an attack. Among them, a large plaster of Paris cast by fifteen-year-old Misha Brusov was singled out for comment. Some of the work, in fact, was placed on a level with the work of mature artists, and *A Portrait of Lenin* by children from a Yaroslavl children's home was sent straight from the Congress hall of the Kremlin to the Lenin museum, as work of permanent value. The work of the youngest exhibitor, seven-year-old Natasha Novoselskaya is called *Rambling in the Woods* and shows children as mushrooms against giant trees. The freshness of perception shown in it is extraordinary.

Every section of the U.S.S.R. was represented. Work by Georgian, Ukrainian and Armenian children has already been commented upon. One of the outstanding exhibits was a Turkmenian rug woven by a thirteen-year-old school girl from the Khalmamed Kizi Rug Weaving School of Ashkabad. A portrait of Stalin is worked into the design but the other elements, especially the masterly garland work in the border, give it a distinctly national touch.

Interest in international events was also reflected in the exhibits. Next to the corner dealing with the Arctic, the conquest of which is an inspiring motif that runs all through Soviet life, there are stands devoted to a sunny and colorful land for which Soviet children feel a warm sympathy—namely Spain. The best of this work is a sculptured group showing marching Spanish workers.

The engineering section aroused excited comment. In this section "it really works" is the rule. You have only to turn on the switch and all these mechanisms and structures are set in motion. Here one finds attempts to tackle problems of engineering on which scientists and inventors are working, improvements in industrial equipment and the results of keenly followed lessons in the elements of engineering.

Mayakovsky once said, speaking to Soviet youth: "Look upon life without spectacles or blinkers and snatch with greedy eyes upon everything in our country that is good and everything in the West that is good." Soviet children are carrying these words into effect with "wings for flying," express trains, rockets, turbines, radio gramophones, aero-sledges, measuring instruments, armored vehicles, controlled by wireless, and devices brought into action by contact of a shadow upon a sensitive photoelectric cell. One exhibitor while working on a transmis-

sion shaft had no cog wheels so he replaced them with an ingenious arrangement of angle pieces.

Here besides a home-made flying boat developing a speed of 79 km. per hour, there is a "miracle" of inventor's ingenuity in the form of a bicycle made entirely of wood by a boy named Danilov from Stalingrad. This is not only a working model, but has seen a good deal of hard use in the hands of its inventor. When the latter was asked to part with his beloved machine so that it could be shown at the exhibition, he was not left empty handed, but was given a real bicycle.

This exhibition is being made the foundation for a permanent Museum of Child Art and Invention which will bear witness to the harmonious and many-sided development of Soviet children.

Boris Lunin

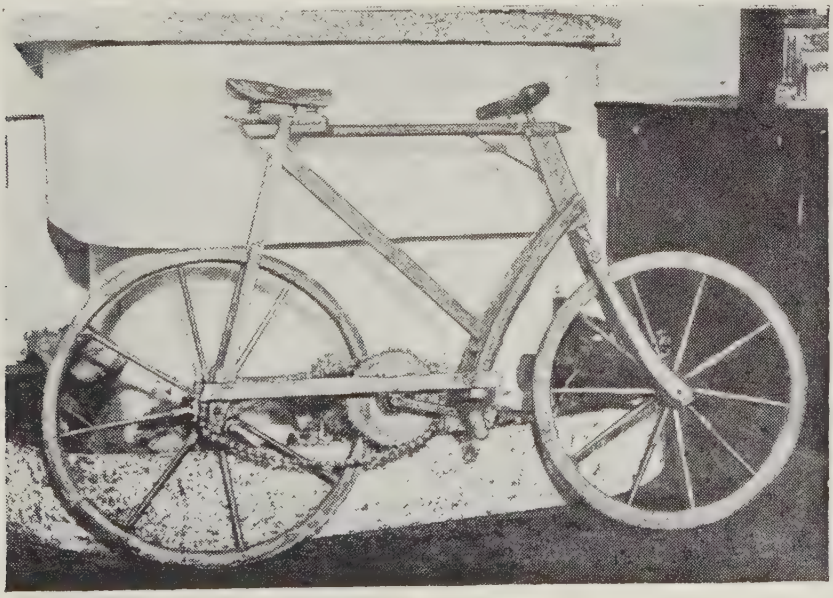
The Pushkin Centennial in Moscow

In one of his poems *(A Monument),* Pushkin prophesied that someday he would become the favorite poet of all the peoples inhabiting his vast country. That prophecy has been fulfilled, and the hundredth anniversary of his tragic death has turned into a magnificent demonstration of the love and esteem the Soviet masses have for this great poet. Throughout the country, in every city and hamlet, in every factory and collective farm, the centennial was marked by lectures, readings, discussions, concerts and theatrical performances in his honor. It can be asserted without fear of exaggeration that never in the history of world literature has a poet's work received so universal and profound a tribute as that of Pushkin in the U.S.S.R. during the last month.

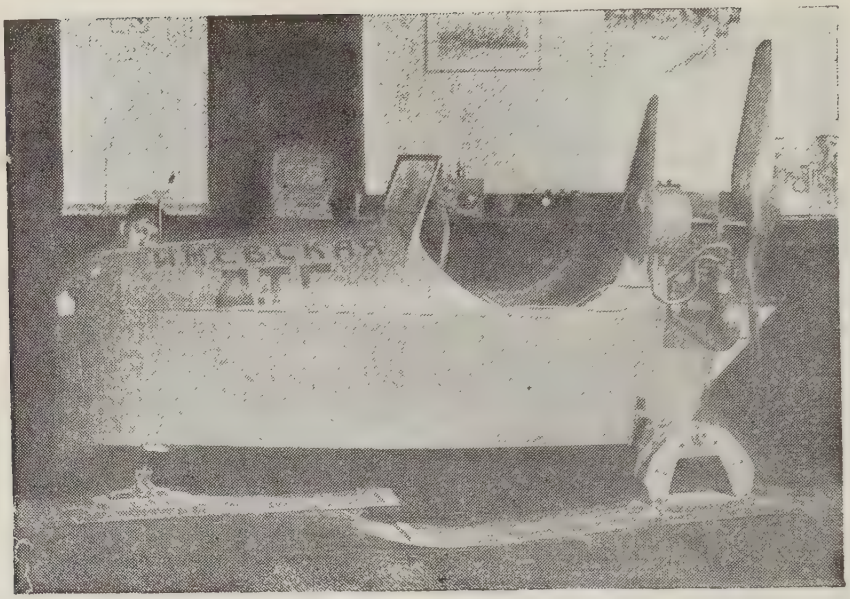
The center of all these activities was, of course, Moscow. One cannot begin to give a full account of them in the space of one article. We will note only a few major events.

The exact hour when, one hundred years before, Pushkin forever closed his eyes, was marked in the Red Capital by a mammoth meeting on the main square which bears the poet's name and is distinguished by a beautiful Pushkin statue. The meeting was dedicated to the restoration on the statue, of the original text of the above mentioned poem, *A Monument.* When the Pushkin statue had been erected in 1880, the engraved lines on the pedestal had been falsified at the behest of the tsarist censor—instead of the lines in which Pushkin foretold that he would for long be dear to the people because in a cruel age he dared stir noble feelings and extol freedom, an innocuous line about sweet sounds had been substituted. Now, the original lines are restored.

On the evening of the same day, there gathered in the Bolshoi Theater to honor the poet, leaders of the Communist Party and the Soviet government—Stalin, Molotov, Voroshilov, Bubnov, and others—famous writers, artists, critics, scholars, Stakhanovites



Wooden bicycle made by 7th class student, V. Danykow, Stalingrad



Hydro-sled, a model made collectively by pupils of a children's laboratory in Izhevsk, in the Ural district

Red Army men, students, pioneers, distinguished representatives from various Pushkin Committees throughout the country—the Ukraine, Georgia, White Russia, etc. Speeches on Pushkin's work and its significance to world culture were delivered. Poetry—Pushkin's and that dedicated to Pushkin—was recited, and songs, parts of operas and ballets, composed by Glinka, Rimsky-Korsakov, Chaikovsky, Moussorgsky, on Pushkin themes or to Pushkin's words, were performed—a richly variegated program.

The memory of the poet and his tremendous contribution to the cultural development of the peoples of the U.S.S.R. were also marked by numerous special Pushkin Conferences arranged by various literary, scientific and other organizations. The most important conferences were held under the auspices of the Academy of Sciences, the Institute of Literature, the Institute of Red Professors, etc.

The Historical Museum has arranged a splendid Pushkin exhibition occupying seventeen spacious rooms, dedicated to (1) the life and work of the poet, (2) the Pushkin heritage, (3) Pushkin and Soviet culture.

By a government decree, various streets and squares, museums and theaters in Moscow and Leningrad were named after Pushkin. Also Tsarskoye Selo (more recently Dyetskoye Selo), where once the residence of the tsar and the Lycée in which Pushkin studied, were located, now is to bear the poet's name.

In tsarist Russia, during the nineteen years before the Revolution, including the year 1899 when the hundredth anniversary of Pushkin's birth was celebrated, about 9,000,000 copies of various works of the poet had been published. In the nineteen years of Soviet power, 21,000,000—and in 1936 alone 10,800,000—copies of various works of Pushkin appeared in 52 different Soviet languages.

It is interesting to compare the restricted 1899 Pushkin Centennial in tsarist Russia with the vast sweep of the present Centennial under the Soviets. In 1899 when the employees of the Ekaterina Railroad proposed to arrange a Pushkin Centennial celebration, the railroad administration stopped the gathering on the grounds that "Mr. Pushkin never served in the Ministry of Railroads; celebrations in his honor are the business of writers and not of railroad employees." Similarly, when in the city of Serpukhova the director of the local High School petitioned the municipal administration to name the school after Pushkin, the official decision was: "In view of the fact that Pushkin did nothing in particular for our city, the petition of the Director of the High School is denied."

One might cite many more such instances. Only under the Soviet power has there been a full appreciation of Pushkin's significance for all the peoples of the U.S.S.R., who all together, in unison, now honor the memory of the great poet who one hundred

years ago fell victim to the houndings of a tyrannical regime in a country where every attempt at free thought was crushed.

An American Impression of the Pushkin Centennial

To an American in Moscow the Pushkin Centennial seemed a fantasy.

In America there are no publicly recognized great men. We find it hard, in our day, to believe in human greatness. We have no enduring examples before us. A noble act disappears in the amalgam of ignobility like a snowflake in a sewer. Consider the case of Lindberg. The upper world and the underworld raced to exploit him, one turned his fame into airplane bonds, the other destroyed his family happiness. A hero appeared and American life exiled him.

For generations we have not had men comparable to Lenin or Stalin. We have known no heroic generations—only lost generations. There has not, for a long time, been among us any sense of great social achievement.

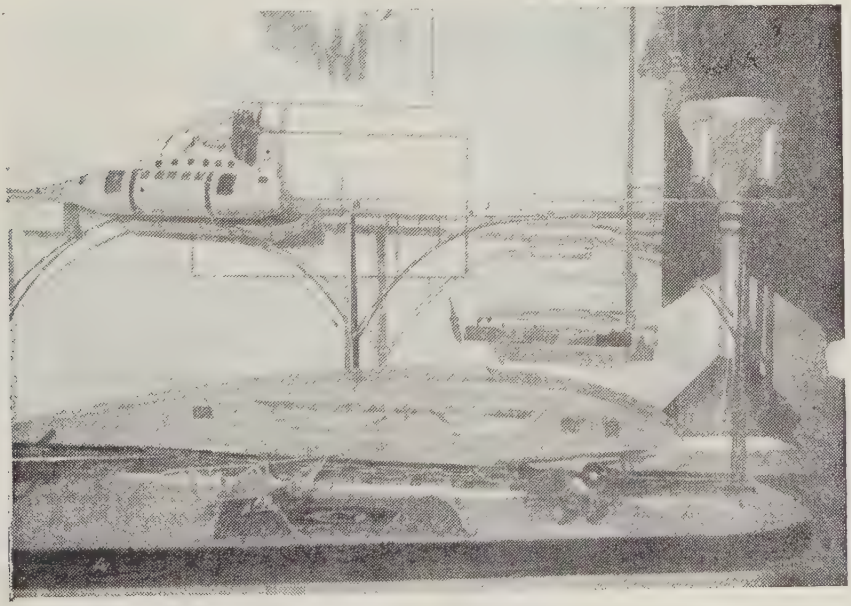
The important people, the millionaires, the political bosses, the heads of large institutions are either known to be grafters or voluptuaries, or are suspected of being so. That has come to be regarded as the course of nature. At one time, in America, humanity was regarded as possessed by a striving for progress; today Americans utter the phrase "human nature," with a shrug of the shoulders, as a self-evident explanation of stagnation and corruption.

Even the past is seen in these same dirty colors. Since human nature is unchanging, our traditional "great men" are only little men magnified in the lens of time. For many years now biographies have not sought to do reverence to, but to "debunk," that is, to strip their subjects of majesty and heroism. A way has been found to explain away undeniable greatness by resort to pathological terms. If a great figure has been praised, it has usually been for his vices.

Moreover, if America were to celebrate one of its great men, he might be a general or a president or an inventor like Edison—not a poet. Art is not understood as a social value but as a social ornament, pretty but superfluous.

And if a fuss were to be made about somebody's centennial, nothing could make it national or popular. Congress might pass a resolution which would be buried in the unread pages of the congressional record. It might even appropriate money for a monument which in due time would be unveiled before three school superintendants, a newsreel camera man and a half-dozen vagrants. The public would stay away, would pay no attention to it, considering it somebody's special graft. Let those stand around with their hats off, who got something out of the business.

Here, however, you feel the reverence everywhere for human greatness, now and in



Technique of the future: 1. Streamlined railway coach. 2. Elevated railway for aero-trains. 3. Device for inter-planetary communication

the past. You feel it in everything—a reverence for every sort and condition of human greatness whether it is found in an engineer, a statesman, a worker (the language has become enriched with new terms of honor for greatness in work—udarnik, Stakhanovite, etc.), an inventor, a poet. The words *bolshoi chelovek* (great man) are frequently on people's lips.

Capitalism, in its extremity, that is to say, *fascism,* borrows forms from Communism, attempts to create similar foundations of strength. It too attempts to raise heroes and so—while renouncing Heine and Lessing and Schiller—it sanctifies the pimp Horst Wessel for a lyric that belongs to the annals of pathology.

Here the people and their government both pay respect. Here when the government passes a resolution, it puts it into effect. Consider the resolution on Pushkin. It was not passed and forgotten on the same day, in the meeting room. A committee received ample appropriation. Newspaper space, time on the air, great auditoriums, the best talents of the country were turned over to it. The gesture was not a formality.

Let us go on with the fantasy.

The average citizen joined in, not merely as parader, but as a participant. I met a worker in the park. We talked chiefly by grins, nods of our heads, gestures with our hands. With immense labor and equal pride, he managed to communicate to me the fact that he was a machinist. I admitted, shamefacedly, that I was a writer. His eyes glowed with friendliness. He knew American writers —he named "Mar-r-k Twen." I said "Khorosho pisatyel" (good writer). He nodded, "Ochin khorosho!" (very good). "Pushkin, Russky pisatyel, ochin khorosho." (Pushkin, Russian writer, very good). I nodded again. And he pointed to a portrait of Pushkin on the park gate, one of the thousands with which Moscow was placarded. There was no mistaking his pride in the great poet.

Later there was a garlanding of Pushkin's statue in one of the public squares. It took place on a freezing day, yet an immense crowd assembled. The crowd listened to recitations and speeches; it sang, was festive for hours in a temperature that fringed moustaches with icicles.

The climax of the celebration was a program at the Bolshoi Theater, an immense structure resembling the New York Metropolitan Opera House indoors. The program was three hours of speeches and three and a half hours of drama, music, recitation, and dance. The program was broadcast. High above the street corners, loud speakers issued it to knots of people underneath. The weather was bitterly cold. People stamped their feet and dug their hands into their sleeves for warmth. But they stood there, listening.

It was considered a great honor to get a ticket to the performance. As a foreign writer, I was accorded the honor, but I did not realize until later how real and significant the honor was. The fact that tickets were difficult to get had stirred an old fear in me. Possibly there was an unequal distribution of privileges. It was with some trepidation that I went to see who was honored with the privilege of giving honor, publicly, to a great writer. Would it be chiefly Party officials, or writers, or intellectuals?

When I came in, the speeches were nearing their end. I noticed that, as the writers, who were the chief speakers, came forward on the stage, the eyes of the people around me lit up with pleasurable recognition and they murmured their names. No one examined the program to make the identification. Russia is full of the portraits of the people whom it is proud of. In Russia, writers are accorded recognition in every sense of the word.

Not being able to follow the speeches, I could give undivided attention to the audience. I had never before seen such an audience. It was so far as I could see, actually representative of the Russian people. There have been occasions in New York when pretty much the whole population was represented in a gathering, but in a compartmented way—one class in the boxes, another class in the orchestra, and the balconies,— the lower classes in the gallery. Here they were all together; and along with the disappearances of class distinctions, there was an obliteration of race differences. I saw Negroes, Chinese, Caucasians, not in separate and self-conscious groups but in complete and fraternal commingling with the others. To an outsider, it was an even more effective *tableau vivant* than the one later staged, of the unity of the many Soviet peoples, one of the loftiest tenets of Lenin's program realized in the life. What was later shown on the stage—members of different races, beautifully costumed, reciting verses of a Pushkin poem describing the different peoples of Russia—was like an epitome of the racial drama, unconsciously performed in the audience. Still more important to my mind was the mingling of worker types. There were manual workers, professionals, students, Red Army men— the latter indistinguishable from the masses except for their uniforms—and children. They had received tickets from their factory, their student circles, their pioneer troop, etc., by election and as an appreciative acknowledgement of their activities. They were the chosen of Moscow—within the lim-

"Girl with a Cat." Painted by Vera Fomenko, a girl in a children's Home in Ukraine

its of human judgement, the best of her citizens. They were, in fact, the first genuine aristocracy I have ever been among. It was an experience more heartening than any I had foreseen.

About the program. It too was representative—not only of all the fine arts, but of the folk arts as well. There was a child on the program, a little girl as unaffected, as certain of the world's love, as happy to give pleasure as Shirley Temple at her most natural moments, but with a quality beyond the reach of any commercial art. There was a band, a chorus and a dancing troupe from the Red Army rendering folk music and folk dances—a folk army preserving the folk arts.

As I have mentioned, most of the arts that can be rendered in a stage presentation were given on the program. I have heard it said of the Russian people that they have an intuitive feeling for literature; I have heard it said also that they are born actors, born musicians, born dancers. There was certainly example—and proof—of each on the program. I have never heard voice ensembles so vigorous and yet so beautifully organized and sensitively controlled as I heard that night. No aversion to banality could keep me from the banal image—the orchestra played like one "instrument," because it was literally true of the orchestra that performed that night. There was an act from Boris Godunov, with Ivan Moskvin in the leading role, that was wonderfully effective acting and crossed the barrier of language for me. I return to the Red Army dances. By comparison, the earlier perform-

ed ballet to an Oriental poem by Pushkin seemed artificial despite the exquisite posturing of the dancers. The virility of these dances and of the music that accompanied it, the lyric-like simplicity of their themes, were inspiring. Pushkin's chief literary source, more important than Byron, was his peasant nurse from whom he heard the stories that he later turned into verse that in turn fertilized the music of Russia. He drew from the folk, and it was particularly fitting—and the audience by its response indicated that sentiment—that at his centennial so large a part of the program should be devoted to folk arts.

Pushkin was a man too great for the effete nobility that produced him. They did all they could to kill him. There is evidence that his death had been plotted. Even if it had not been plotted deliberately, the petty malice that drove him, with the nudges of gossip, to the duel that brought him to his death, stands against them—accusing them of a base form of murder. He was too great for his class and his society. Now a class and society has come into being suited to his proportions.

Isidor Schneider

Lion Feuchtwanger Address to Soviet Teachers

It may be said that in no sphere of life is the contrast between Socialism and fascism so apparent as in the sphere of education. Here the notorious barbarous fascist saying: "When I hear the word 'civilization' I release the safety catch of my revolvers!" especially applies.

The present training of the German youth clouds their minds with the nationalist megalomania. It strives at all costs to keep the youth from the slightest contact with true Socialist humanism; the outlook on life which it presents to youth has no touch with reality; it attempts to reduce the mentality of youth to automatic and involuntary responses to robber warfare.

I cannot sleep at night when I think of the enormous difference between this and the training I received in a pre-war German high school.

Of course, my teachers also lacked much essential knowledge, but they honestly tried to imbue the youth with the spirit of ancient humanism as this was understood by Goethe and Schiller. What an inner conflict must be endured by the teachers of that generation and those trained in the spirit of that generation!

They are compelled daily, even hourly, to lie, and to spread ideas which they themselves do not believe in or, at best, only half believe. They are compelled to look on while their best friends, excellent people whom they respect, are beaten up, swindled, spat upon and driven from the country. They are compelled to reconcile themselves to the fact that the best people of the country are silenced, while half-idiots and whole rogues are honored as "heroes" and "leaders of German civilization."

In other respects also the situation of teachers in Germany is far from enviable. Whereas formerly they enjoyed great respect —it was once said that the German teachers won the battle of Sadova—nowadays they are everywhere ranked lower than non-commissioned officers. Youth receives its instruction from vulgar corporals and sergeants who look with suspicion upon everybody who reads and speaks German correctly, and who well fulfill the fascist task of frustrating rather than fostering the aspirations of youth.

Compare this with education in the Soviet Union! The teachers live in the most favorable spiritual and material conditions. They have the elating consciousness that everything they do, all that they teach, serves the cause of construction and not destruction. More, they realize that their activity is the most important factor of this construction. They have been trusted with the task of sowing the seeds of a new world. They have at their disposal absolutely new material, which any pedagogue abroad may envy them. The material with which they work consists of young, healthy, receptive, eager minds. To these minds they bring new wealth, sparkling with youth and freshness, not outworn but gushing with life. I can imagine what a joy it must be to teach children in the Soviet Union. I congratulate the Soviet teachers.

Translated by A. E. Manning

Lion Feuchtwanger on the Soviet Films

The express speeds towards the border. In a few hours Lion Feuchtwanger will be back in the capitalist world.

We chat with him about his plans.

"I am leaving the Soviet Union," says Feuchtwanger, "but keep in my mind and heart ties that bind me to it. In my work I shall live a long time on what I have received from this trip. And when I have completed the work I am engaged upon, I shall return."

Discussing his experiences while preparing the film scenario of his book, *The Oppenheim Family,* Feuchtwanger gave his impressions of the Soviet cinema.

"I was much moved by the remarkable defense films," he said. "I have in mind, particularly, the film based on the recent maneuvers of the Red Army. Those who desire they victory of the Land of Socialism over its enemies, on seeing this picture, will realize that they can anticipate the outcome of the coming struggle with optimism.

"I was also deeply stirred by the picture *We From Kronstadt*. From my boyhood on, I have enjoyed reading Kipling. I have often thought that it is important in left-wing literature to develop a master who could communicate and inspire youthful heroism as Kipling did for his class. *We From Kronstadt* made me feel that we have arrived at such mastery. It is a heroic presentation of heroic people.

"Another powerful film was *The Last Night*. It has unusual dramatic tension, although it seems to me that the dialogue is excessive. Cutting the dialogue would greatly strengthen its impact.

"*Paris Dawns* is a masterly handling of the eternally fresh subject of the Commune, and distinguished for the heroic pitch to which its romantic treatment rises.

Lion Feuchtwanger Farewell Message

On leaving the Soviet Union I would again like to say through *Pravda* what a joy it was to convince myself that the Soviet public and especially the Soviet youth read my books with friendly understanding. An entirely new stratum of readers was revealed to me. These readers did not approach me with stereotyped praise and censure which I often have to listen to in other countries. Soviet readers measured me with an entirely new, often unexpected measure—I learned a lot from them.

I think that there is no need for me again to say what a profound influence on my concept of the world was exerted by living and direct contact with the Soviet people and how this concept was altered under their influence. In a thousand large and small phenomena of daily life I was able to observe and to comprehend what Socialism is. I saw with what strength and wisdom the people of the Soviet Union, their leaders and especially the man who embodies this new world, have armed themselves with every means for the defense of their great cause.

I saw the inspiring and heroic picture of how one-sixth of the earth's surface at one and the same time arms itself against rabid and cruel adversarie and create a gigantic edifice of the triumph of reason. This unparalleled heroic picture was the most valuable gift that I take with me from the Soviet Union into my further life. I thank all those people who presented me with this stirring gift.

Lion Feuchtwanger

Negoreloye, February 6, 1937
(Transmitted by telephone)

Lion Feuchtwanger's telegram to the Union of Soviet Writers

Leaving the borders of the Soviet Union I would like to convey to you, dear colleagues, my heartfelt gratitude for the generous hospitality you accorded me.

This trip to the Soviet Union was for me a big and serious experience which will doubtless leave profound traces on my future work.

After this trip, dear colleagues, I feel doubly conected with you.

Yours,

Lion Feuchtwanger

(Transmitted from Negoreloye by telephone)

Maxim Gorky

On Fenimore Cooper

In 1923 Gorky edited a number of works by Fenimore Cooper, published in Berlin by Z. Grzhebin. The preface by Gorky which we reprint appeared in the first volume issued, *The Pathfinder*, translated by J. Voedensky.

The five books, *The Deerslayer, Pathfinder, The Last of the Mohicans, Leather Stockings* and *The Prairie*, are rightly considered the best works of Fenimore Cooper's heart and mind. Written nearly a century ago, they aroused universal admiration in America and Europe. Our famous critic Vessarion Belinsky read them with absorption and many great men of Russia in the first half of the nineteenth century were delighted by them.

Cooper's novels retain their interest to the present day for their life-like and beautifully drawn illustrations of the history of the settlement of the North American states —a history which instructively shows us how in the course of one hundred and fifty years, energetic people organized a powerful state in a land of dense forests and empty plains, among wandering tribes of Indians.

All five books are interconnected by the character of the hunter Nathaniel Bumppo. Beginning with the novel *The Deerslayer* before the reader there lives and acts a strange man—illiterate, half-civilized, but endowed with the best traits of a truly cultured man: scrupulous honesty in his dealings with people, an indomitable love for them and a constant innate desire to help his fellow men, to lighten their existence without sparing his efforts.

In the preface to his books Cooper more than once indicated that Nat Bumppo was a real person—but for his reader this is a matter of indifference, for imaginary, idealized phenomena and things, cultivate the truly human in man no less successfully than real phenomena and things. Life proceeds towards perfection, led by the ideal—by what does not yet exist but is conceived and imagined as capable of realization.

Reality is always the incarnation of the ideal, and in denying and changing it—we do this because the ideal which we have thus attained no longer satisfies us—we possess—we have created and imagined—another and better one. I therefore say that it is of no importance whether Nathaniel Bumppo really existed in America as a living man of flesh and bone—what is important is that five books have been written in which he lives as the ideal fulfillment of the best attributes of the human spirit.

Whether he appears as the "Deerslayer" in the first book, as the "Pathfinder" or "scout" in the second, the faithfull friend of the Indian chief, the "Last" of the tribe of the Mohicans in the third, "Leather Stockings" in the fourth and finally as the one-legged, feeble-bodied wandering trapper in the fifth, Nat Bumppo always arouses the reader's sympathy by the honest simplicity of his thoughts and the courage of his actions.

An explorer of the woods and plains of the "New World," he blazes trails there for men who later condemn him as a criminal because he violated their mercenary laws that were incomprehensible to his sense of liberty. All his life he had unconsciously served the great cause of geographical diffusion of material civilization in a country of savages—and he turned out to be unsuited for living under the conditions of that civilization for which he had blazed the first trails.

Such is often the fate of many pioneers —people who, in studying life, go far beyond their contemporaries; and from this standpoint the illiterate Bumppo is almost an allegorical figure standing in the ranks of those true friends of mankind, whose sufferings and exploits so enrich our life.

The educational importance of Cooper's books is beyond debate. For nearly a hundred years they have been the favorite reading of the young in every land, and in reading the memoirs of Russian revolutionaries we frequently encounter assertions that Cooper's books served them as good training in feelings of honor, courage and a desire for action.

A. Gurstein

Katayev's New Book

Valentin Katayev has written a new book, taking as his title the famous verse of the great Russian poet Lermontov:

"A Lone Sail Gleams White"

Every writer was once a child, every writer has his childhood memories. And Valentin Katayev has traveled a well-tried road: he has invoked the aid of his memory and written a book about childhood.

Of all the characters in Katayev's new novel, the one dearest to the writer—on the autobiographical plane—is, of course, Petya, the son of a liberal professor. A danger for the author lurked in this: It would have been easy to transform the account of one's childhood into the usual story with the traditional grammar school characters and —worst of all with a "grammar school" outlook on life. But Valentin Katayev has written a book with a true artistic ring, a book that earns its Lermontov title.

Lermontov's splendid poem which he memorized back in grammar school, has not lost its genuine social lyricism. The book outgrew the confines of grammar school recollections. A boy of the workers' suburbs, the future proletarian Gavrik, became the hero of the story.

The time of Katayev's childhood is 1905—the year of the first Russian revolution which, according to Lenin's remarkable definition, was the "dress rehearsal" for the great October Socialist Revolution of 1917. The setting is the picturesque seaport of Odessa, immortalized in 1905 by the heroic and tragic mutiny on the cruiser Potemkin.

The chief heroes of Katayev's novel are children. They plunge into the world that opens before them. The two inseparable friends, the teacher's son Petya, eight and a half years old, and the ten year old Gavrik, the offspring of a "Black Sea-er," a fisherman's grandson, grew up in different sections of the big city, in a different milieu and have a different approach to life.

Before Petya's childish eyes like the fabulous flying Dutchman, the "light green silhouette of a three stacked cruiser with a red flag on its mast" appears in the empty sea. Later the mutiny ship was compelled to surrender. The Black Sea squadron had brought it in tow from the Rumanian port of Constanza where it had sought to escape pursuit, to Sevastopol. "Empty, crewless, its engines water-logged and its flag of revolt hauled down, the Potemkin moved ahead, plunging heavily in the swell, surrounded by a thick convoy of smoke." From the high shores "workers, soldiers of the border guard, fishermen and farm laborers regarded it in silence. . . ." The revolution entered Petya's childish consciousness in the mystery of the mutiny ship.

Returning to the city from the country, Petya is the chance witness of a bewhiskered spy tracking down a runaway Potemkin sailor. The boy observes that both are disguised. The revolutionary struggle again enters his consciousness as something exceptional and mysterious

Petya's friend Gavrik, who grew up in a different social environment, who early made the acquaintance of poverty and hunger, is far more realistic in his feelings and reactions. Gavrik is also a child, but his life was as "full of difficulties and cares as that of an adult." Gavrik, in spite of his nine years, was already the active fellow-worker of his old grandfather. The world of exploitation and oppression had already become a reality for the boy. One of the images of that world is the market woman, Storojenko, who "sat on her tiny bench, huge, unapproachable and stony."

Gavrik's childish face was already blemished by the wheedling smile of moral submissiveness. But the hard reality of a beggarly existence also nourished his feeling of hatred. The revolution entered Gavrik's childish consciousness not in fabulous contours, as in his friend's case. Gavrik's meeting with the revolution possessed the attributes of reality.

The children were drawn into the events of the revolutionary year. Gavrik helped hide a Potemkin sailor from the police. He and Petya procured cartridges for the fighters. The children came into direct contact with the people and acts of the revolution.

The portrayal of the people and of revolutionary activities is the weakest side of the book. The revolutionaries are conventionally depicted—both the Potemkin sailor Rodion Zhukov and the car foundry worker—Gavrik's elder brother Terentii.

Katayev presents social conflict with the same conventional primitiveness. "Here was a small heap of grain while over there the choicest wheat poured in, heaping into mountains."

This coating of primitiveness which appears here and there finds its justification in its approach from the viewpoint of the child characters. But the unnecessary light-

ness in the portrayal of separate aspects that require profounder treatment troubles the reader at times. What if this has its source not in the children's viewpoint but the author's?

And this is true despite the fact that Valentin Katayev often resorts to conventional, consciously literary "methods."

The experienced eye easily detects them. Literary association, quotation; traditional elements in the composition of the subjects are often present in the pages of Katayev's novel. Metaphor and simile play an excessive role.

"It seemed as though they (thick vines) were doubled up by rheumatism."

"A grass green lather drooled from the black rubber-like lips (of a horse)."

"Beyond the steamer, a well-swept road stretched into the distance, ever widening and dissolving."

At times these over-frequent figures threaten to transform the real world of phenomena into an illusory world.

Katayev's literary method has "ornamental" value at times but often it is like a habitual gesture from which it is hard for the writer to free himself.

But the sense of life breaks through. And this artistic sincerity and verisimilitude constitutes the chief merit of Katayev's new book. It is full of memorable passages—the return of Petya's family from the country, the description of the fish market, description of the pogrom, etc. Page after page gives genuine reading delight.

The writer is at his best in the portrayal of Gavrik. The world of childish impressions is close to Katayev who has a remarkable understanding of child feelings, action and speech.

Of the adults, Gavrik's grandfather is drawn with the greatest fullness. It is hard to forget the image of this old man whose southern Ukrainian joy of living helps him to bear his poverty almost gaily. But this good-natured old man proves to have sufficient strength to hold his own before the class enemy. One is amused by his naive cunning in his dealings with the "old grouch" Nikolai; and sometimes we see this cunning giving way to hatred. The sentimental notes which sound here and there do not break down the impression of genuine warmth which permeates Katayev's story.

"The Bessarabian landlord invariably wore a canvas duster and a white traveling cap with a visor which he held with his fingers. He also had a corn silk moustache and carried a small braided basket with a padlock dangling from it. It invariably contained a box of smoked mackerel, tomatoes, cheese and two or three quarts of new white wine in green bottles."

Things play a tremendous part in the characterization, but "still life," which threatens to become transformed into an inflexible "method," does not conceal living nature from the writer, does not conceal man.

Katayev captures the picturesqueness of the peculiar seaport city which has stood at the cross roads of man's cultures. Even today in Odessa, one may encounter an old bootblack who can speak of the roofs of Naples. In Odessa they used to call the old Jewish cab drivers "Ovidiopolians," recalling the name of the Roman poet. Katayev well remembers that the sidewalks of Odessa are paved with the blue slabs of Italian lava. But the writer also knows another Odessa—the Odessa of tall cliffs, where the fishing smack of Gavrik's grandfather was moored, the Odessa of the catacombs and stone-quarries, the Odessa of the suburbs and workers' settlements. Katayev's whole story is charged with memories. But memories of the past do not in this instance overlay reality.

Thirty years have passed since the time of the events described; eighteen of these years were the years of the great Socialist Revolution. The revolution helped Katayev to see old things in a new light. Our time gave the writer perspective. The name of Kotovsky [1] is shouted by the farm laborer who assails his employer; and this is not merely an external detail:

"If only Grishka Kotovsky were here, you worm!"

Katayev has written a book that is good, fresh, sincere and transparent (this adjective is often used by Katayev). It is without pretense and without affectation. It will be read with interest and eagerness both by children and adults.

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[1] Kotovsky—a hero of the Civil War in Ukraine (1919)

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