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**Heinrich Mann**

# The Fulfillment of King Henry IV

## *THE FORTUNES OF WAR*

### *Rumor*

The king has won a battle. For once he has repulsed and demoralized the enemy. He has neither demolished the overlordship nor decisively warded it off. As before, the kingdom is in mortal danger, it is not yet by any means his. It still belongs to the "League," for the people's lack of discipline and their opposition to order and good sense, during the years of internal strife, have grown to something like madness. Or worse still than unconcealed madness, their laxity and unreasonableness have stagnated into a habit, and men have resigned themselves miserably to their shame.

This one victory gained by the king cannot alter this. In an isolated, frustrated success of this kind how much is due to chance and how much to foresight? It will not convince a majority that they are wrong. What? This Protestant from the South is no robber baron but a real king? What then must all the great leaders of the League be, each of whom rules over a province or a district, and is actually on the spot with full authority! Almost the only place where the king is obeyed is where his army stands. He has the idea of the kingdom on his side: many recognize this, not without painful misgivings. An idea is less than real power and at the same time it is more. A kingdom is more than mere territory, it is the same as freedom and it is one with right.

If eternal Justice were to look down upon us she would see how terribly low we have fallen, and worse still, that we are rotten and a whited sepulchre. Under the pressure of our daily needs we have submitted to the basest treacheries, and for this we must come under the world dominion of Spain. From the simple human emotion of fear we endure slavery and spiritual degradation in our country and renounce the greatest of all possessions, freedom of conscience. We, poor noblemen, who serve in the armies of the League, or have state appointments, and we honest merchant folk who supply them with goods, and we lower orders who work for them; we are not always stupid and often we are not faithless. But what should we do? A whisper among confederates, a secret prayer to God, and after the unhoped-for victory of the king at Arques for a while the hope rises up in our minds that the day is near!

Strangely enough, for people at a distance the events loom larger than for those who are near. The king's victory was gained on the North Sea coast. Within two or three days' journey astonishment should have been aroused. In Paris especially they should have taken stock of themselves and begun to amend their obstinate ways. But it is not so. There in the North many saw with their own eyes how the defeated giant army of the League broke up into isolated bands and became the dread of the countryside, but it did not sink into their minds. The League remained for them invincible: the king had gained the advantage owing to the thick fog over the sea, and had, thanks to the luck being in other ways on his side, gained command over an inconsiderable piece of land, that was all.

[1] Extract from the second part of *The Youth of Henry IV.*

In the more inland parts of the kingdom, however, the decisive news that was hoped for was actually brought. On the Loire and in Tours people believed, on the strength of past experience, that the king would at last appear among them again in person. He had so often been with them as a fugitive, but now he would come at last as their lord. And how was it with the outlying provinces of the West and South? Here people saw the battle of Arques as though it had been fought out in front of their eyes, and was a message from heaven. The stormy Protestants of La Rochelle fortress, on the ocean, sang: "O God, but show Thyself"—the psalm with which the king had won the day. From Bordeaux southwards the people in their unbounded enthusiasm anticipated what was far from having yet occurred, the submission of the capital, the punishment of important traitors and the glorious assertion of kingly authority over the whole realm by their Henry, who had been born among them and had now became so great!

Did his fellow countrymen really go further than all the others? One is most inclined to call a man great when one has never seen him face to face. His countrymen in the South know from having met him personally that he is only of medium height, that he wears a felt hat and threadbare cloak and that he never has any money. They remember his soft eyes: do they reveal a happy disposition or much past suffering? Anyway he is resourceful and understands the mentality of the common man—understands still better the ways of women. Many of them, it would be impossible to count how many, could betray his secrets. But though they are usually so talkative they keep their silence now. Enough, the people here know his face and it only so happens that they were not with him during his last exploit over there in the North where the mist hung, where our psalms were sung as they made their attack and defeated the immense army. That was a very great exploit and while it was being done heaven and earth held their breath.

Now even very distant lands have learnt the news. Nothing has yet been reported about his person. From great distances such new fame seems unearthly and unsullied. And he seems greater still for his sudden appearance. The world has been waiting for him. It is heartily tired of having Philip of Spain as its lord and master, the everlasting and hopeless Philip. The downtrodden world has long prayed for a deliverer: Now look, he is here at last! His victory: a small battle, not any sudden and imposing turn of the scales, and yet more portentous than the recent sinking of the Armada. Here a man has put out his strength and made the throne of the overlord shake. And the rumbling will be heard, however faintly, over the mountains and across the sea. It is said that in a famous town across the sea a procession has marched through the streets carrying his picture. Was it really a picture of him? It had been covered with dust where they found it in a second-hand shop. But they washed it and cried: "The King of France" and formed their procession; even the priests marched with them. Rumour is omniscient, and it has wings.

*Fact*

He himself held no celebration in honor of the victory. One piece of work performed brings the next in its train, and a person who has come by success honestly and not by deceit knows nothing of victory and certainly nothing of the intoxication of victory. The king thought only of how he could take his capital, Paris, unawares, before the Duke of Mayenne could reach it with the defeated army of the League. The king was the quicker of the two; more-

over, Paris allowed itself to be persuaded that he had been defeated by Mayenne and had been put completely to flight, and this gave him the advantage. Before he arrived, however, Paris had realized the situation and had got ready for its defence—but its preparations were badly organized. Instead of manning only the walls and ramparts around the center of the city they resolved to hold also the suburbs. This just suited the king whose plan was to overrun the outskirts and then press in at the gates with the fugitives.

He stormed the outer fortifications with ease, but the defenders succeeded in closing the gates in time. And so it came about that his troops, his Swiss and German land laborers, four companies of adventurers, four thousand English and sixteen French regiments—all of them together stormed and butchered and plundered. Nothing more came of it. The king was received with loud shouts, but in the midst of plundering and butchering. He ordered his men to fire over the walls but he knew that this time Paris would not be his. He now goes off to rest in a palace that was named after his family; it is called the Little Bourbon; Henry had to force his way in like a stranger but when he did get in there was little enough to live on, only fresh straw. He had only three hours for sleep and part of this time he spent dwelling on comparisons in his mind.

In the city is the Louvre Castle. I spent several years there as a prisoner, years that made me wiser, and of which I still bear the mark. Shall I never see Paris as a free man and a king? One St. Bartholomew's Eve nearly all my friends fell at court and I lost most of my faith. Now eighteen years later I have been avenged! At a single crossroads my soldiers slew eight hundred of the enemy calling out as they did so: "Saint Bartholemew!" It is terrible how everything returns, and nothing can ever be driven out of the world. I should have liked to forget and forgive, I should have preferred humanity. What is the truth about our cause? What do I know? Certain it is that we are killing, outside and inside. But if I had entered the gates before they were closed! I could have shown them the lenient conqueror and the real king. The kingdom would have had a capital and men a goal towards which they could strive worthily. But no! Only vengeance somewhat appeased, and the usual killing and the fortunes of war.

Henry, a young man of thirty-six, who has seen many horrors and endured many trials, but has also experienced joys without number thanks to his happy temperament, lies here on fresh straw at the foot of a large dining table. He rises once more: the king commands that the churches shall be spared—"and the people also!" he calls after his captain. Then he falls sound asleep, for he has learnt to keep command of himself, in times of failure and trial no less than when astonishing good fortune is his. Sleep is a loyal friend to him. It comes promptly and brings him as a rule what he needs, not anxieties but visions of good omen. In his dreams this night Henry saw ships sail past. They loomed up at first out of the misty horizon and then grew larger and sailed out into the sunlit sea, creatures of great majesty and brightness: they sailed closer, they were seeking him out. His heart thumped, he suddenly became conscious of the meaning of this visitation. He had really been promised this soon after his victory. He had not listened because there had been other extremely urgent work and much to worry about. There had been no time to listen to fairy tales. When he awakened from his three-hour sleep no trace remained in his memory of the ships he had seen in his dream.

All Saints' Day came; the royal navy, all of it that was Catholic, went into the churches in the suburbs. Behind the walls people had not the spirit to

celebrate the feast but mourned their dead and feared for their own safety Towards evening, however, they were saved, for the troops of the League arrived and the king could not prevent them from occupying the city from the other side. His chance was gone. He allowed his men to take another monastery and kill three hundred Parisians. That was his farewell, and an ugly enough farewell as he himself knew better than any. He took the opportunity to climb a church tower and have a look at the city, taking a monk to show him the way. Alone with the monk at the top of the narrow staircase Henry was seized with a great feeling of wretchedness, as he thought of the last king. He had been murdered by a monk. He too had often seen a knife peeping out of the sleeve of a cowl. He slipped quickly behind his guide and held both his arms firmly. The friar did not move, although he was large and strong. Henry did not gaze down into his capital for long; in descending he let his guide go on ahead and waited until he had descended a few steps. Down below he met his marshal Biron. "Sire," said Biron, "your monk came running down and has escaped."

At this moment the Parisians' shouts of exultation rang out. Their general, Mayenne, had arrived in person and they were offering his men their hospitality in the streets. The next day the king marshalled his troops in order of battle and left the enemy three hours to come out and meet him. But in vain, Mayenne was being cautious, so the king retired. On the way he took fortified places, but some of his regiments disbanded as there was nothing left to pay them with. With the remainder the king rode to Tours to receive the ambassadors from Venice. The old republic had sent its ships from afar, the rumor was now confirmed. The ambassadors had landed and now, while the king was subjugating small towns, were journeying northwards to acknowledge him.

*Fairy Tale*

He received news daily of their approach and was disturbed by it, and so he joked: "It is raining, the wise men from the East will have their incense soaked." What he feared was that the League would capture them and spirit them away before they arrived with the great honor and renown that they were bringing him. When they were still several days' journey from the Loire he sent a large body of troops to meet them, ostensibly as a guard of honor, but in reality in case of need. And he waited in his castle at Tours what seemed an age. On the way one of the Venetian gentlemen of advanced years fell ill. "It is a very old republic indeed," said Henry to one of his diplomats, Philip de Plessis-Mornay.

"Sire, the oldest in Europe. It was one of the most powerful, and now it is one of the most experienced. When people talk about experience they do not usually realize that this means decay. But those that are coming to visit us know it. Now judge the situation! It is the wisest of governments, it is only concerned to bear the infirmity of old age with dignity and put off the day of its death. It has the best observers in every court and carefully studies their reports; suddenly it bestirs itself and decides to act. Venice challenges the overlord, she acknowledges you after your victory over the overlord. How great your victory must be!"

"I have begun to think about my victory—the victory, de Mornay," Henry began, then hesitated and paced up and down in the stone paved hall of the castle of Tours. The friend of his young days watched him. As often before he felt that he had chosen the right prince. He attributes all the honor

of his victory to God! The staunch Protestant took off his hat at this thought. There he stood, a man of forty in dark clothes, his wide collar turned down in the simple fashion followed by his fellow-believers, a Socratic look about the lower part of his face, a high brow, very smooth and reflecting the light from all directions.

"Mornay!" Henry stood in front of him. "Victory is not what it was. You and I have known it as something different."

"Sire!" answered the ambassador, in a clear steady voice. "In your former office, as King of Navarre, you brought to reason many misguided towns which offered you resistance. Ten years of work and effort and a notable battle, then your fame had become so great that you became heir to the crown. The King of France, which is what you now are, will fight with less effort and will gain greater victories, and fame will spread her wings still more for his sake."

"If that were the only difference! Mornay, since the victory on the strength of which the Venetians are on the way to me I have besieged Paris and have retreated without having achieved anything. Are the Venetians unaware of that?"

"It is a long way to Venice and they had already started on their journey."

"They could have turned back. They are sensible people, aren't they? People like them know what it means when a king has to besiege his own capital, and unsuccessfully into the bargain. I had to massacre and plunder and then retire after I had viewed the city from a tower and blenched from a monk."

"Sire, the fortunes of war."

"That is what we call it. But what does that mean? While I am guarding one gate Mayenne enters through the other. He has passed over a bridge. I had ordered it to be destroyed, but it was not done. That is what the fortunes of war amount to. I very much suspect that is what it amounts to when I win."

"Sire, the ways of men."

"That is just it but I must have generals—" Henry broke off: he was thinking of a general, Parma by name, who from all reports about his military skill did not rely on the fortunes of war and did not talk about the ways of men.

"Mornay!" shouted Henry, and he shook his adviser. "One word! Can I conquer? It is my mission to save this realm, but I would feel easier in my mind if no one were to visit me to acknowledge me prematurely."

"Venice wants you to have won, Sire. She would not call back her emissaries even if your army were falling to pieces."

Henry said: "Then I understand that my fame is a misunderstanding. I deserve it and yet I enjoy it without deserving it."

His expression then changed, he rocked to and fro on his heels and with a perfectly easy manner received the persons who had just come in. They were some of his most trusted followers, all looking very fine in new clothes. "Well, well, de la Noue, my good fellow," called Henry. "An iron arm and yet you swam across the river! Bravo, Rosny! Your jewels are from noble houses, though not from your own, how much money did you find in the suburbs of Paris? What if I were to make you my lord of the exchequer instead of the fat d'O?"

He looked round him; they were not laughing heartily enough. "There is nothing I am so afraid of as doleful people; I don't trust them."

No one answered. He looked from one to the other until he had guessed what was in their minds. Then he beckoned his old friend d'Aubigné towards

him, once a fellow prisoner, and after that a fellow fighter, always brave and always pious, in verse as well as in deed. He nodded in a friendly fashion and said: "Sire! The fact is this. A messenger has arrived, soaked through, and we were getting ready for the reception."

Fear suddenly seized Henry. He waited until the feeling had passed, and then when he again had full command of his voice, answered his old friend cheerfully: "There you are, Agrippa, the fortunes of war. The ambassadors have turned back. It will not be long before they change their minds again, however, for I shall fight another battle."

There was a great disturbance behind the door. Suddenly it was flung open. Between two guards there appeared a soaked messenger who was out of breath and unable to speak. He was made to sit down and given water to drink. "It is another," observed Agrippa d'Aubigné.

At last the man spoke: "In half an hour's time the ambassadors will be here."

Henry listened, put his hand to his heart and said: "We shall now let them wait till tomorrow," then he went quickly off.

During the night a miracle took place and November changed into May. A balmy air was wafted from the South. The sky stretched bright and far over the park of the castle of Tours, over the river which slowly wound its broad ribbon through the fields in the middle of the kingdom. The poplars stood high and all leafless; from the castle the people watched the landing of the ship in which the emissaries had crossed the river. They were staying in the country houses opposite. Under windows reaching to the ground the court waited, men and women dressed as splendidly as they could or thought fitting. Roquelaure was dressed with the best taste. Agrippa had the largest feathers, Frontenac vied with Rosny. The latter had more finery in his hat and at his collar than was sown onto the dresses of the women. His young, sleek face had its usual serious and thoughtful expression. The king's sister, when she arrived, immediately showed herself to be the most beautiful of the women. Her refined fair head reclined against the high ruff with its points and diamonds. Her face in spite of a look of sternness befitting a lady at court betrayed an innate childishness that would never fade.

She kept her veil over her face until she was in the doorway. Was it her club foot that made her feel embarrassed? The whole court was crowding to see her. At this moment she sees her brother the king coming through the door opposite. She makes a small exclamation of joy, she is no longer conscious of herself, runs a few steps forward, and suddenly is quite at her ease: "Henry!"

They met one another in the center of the room. Catherine de Bourbon bent her knee before her brother—they had played together at the beginning of their lives, they had traveled through the country with their mother Jeanne in heavy old carriages. Our dear mother was in bad health and restless, but how strong she was in the faith which she taught us! She proved right in the end, although she had to die first from the poison given her by the wicked old queen, and we too had many terrors and anxieties to face. But now we are really standing in a hall in the middle of the kingdom, we are ourselves the king and his sister, and are going to receive the Venetian ambassadors. "Catherine," cried her brother, with tears in his eyes, and he raised her up from her knees and kissed her. The court applauded enthusiastically.

The king, in white silk with a blue sash and red mantle, led the princess forward with an unsteady hand. The court made way for them, but then closed in again after they had passed. They stopped under the highest

window and all crowded round. Those who were foremost were not of the best. The sister whispered in her brother's ear:

"I do not like your chancellor, Villeroy. I like your lord of the exchequer, d'O, still less. And you have worse followers still. Henry, my dear brother, I wish that all the people who serve you could be of our faith!"

"I wish so too," he whispered in his sister's ear, and then he nodded to the two courtiers whom his sister had mentioned. They turned back unwillingly; the further away they were the more amiable they looked. By the wall Catherine met quite a number of old friends, men who had fought with her brother, cavaliers of the old court of Navarre, most of whom had worn coarse leather collars in those days. "You've made yourselves look very fine, good sirs! Baron Rosny, in the days when I taught you to dance you had no diamonds. Monsieur de la Noue, your hand!" she took the Huguenot by his iron hand—not by his living hand, and said so that only he, Agrippa d'Aubigné and the tall du Bartas could hear:

"If God had let a single grain of sand fall down the hill otherwise than it did we would not be here. Are you aware of that?"

They nodded. The tall du Bartas' gloomy features moved and he was about to recite some appropriate verses when the trumpets sounded outside. They are coming. We must hold ourselves with dignity and give the appearance of a powerful court. Nearly all the faces at once assumed a look of magnificent solemnity, tempered with curiosity. Everyone drew themselves up, even the Princess de Bourbon. She searched among the ladies, but there were very few women folk in this half court, half encampment. She quickly made up her mind, held out a hand and went up to Charlotte Arbaleste, the Protestant Mornay's wife. Suddenly there was a pause.

There was a slight hitch in the procession of the ambassadors. The trumpets had sounded too soon. The path to the embankment went downhill, were the gentlemen from Venice too old to climb it? The king, it seemed, was amused at something. At all events the people near him were laughing. The princess led her companion to another window; she was disturbed, for beside her brother stood her cousin Soissons whom she loved. "If only I had not this very moral Protestant on my arm!" thought Catherine as though she were not one herself. Yes, she had forgotten herself, always did forget herself, at the unexpected sight of her beloved. Her heart beat loudly, her breath came faster, and to hide her confusion she looked as haughty as she could, but hardly knew what it was she was saying to her neighbor: "Palpitations," she said, "Madame de Mornay, wasn't that what you used to suffer from, in the old days at Navarre, when you were brought up before the *consistoire* on account of your beautiful hair?"

Charlotte Arbaleste had her head concealed in a hood; this reached almost to her eyes which shone liquidly and were quite devoid of shyness. The virtuous wife of Mornay the Protestant calmly explained: "I was accused of immodesty, as I wore false locks, and the pastor excluded me from Holy Communion. Even Monsieur de Mornay was excluded. It was such a shock to me that even now, so many years after, my heart is very easily affected."

"To think that our church should be so unjust to us," the princess put in hastily. "After all, you had suffered exile and poverty for our religion

after you had escaped St. Bartholomew's Eve. All of us here who are waiting for the ambassadors were once prisoners or exiles for the sake of our faith. You yourself and Monsieur de Mornay, my brother the king and I also."

"And you also," Charlotte repeated, and with her bright liquid gaze she looked straight into her eyes, so that Catherine felt uneasy and trembled. She saw that it was no good making conversation. The woman saw through her.

"You kept your long hair for quite a time in spite of the pastor," the unfortunate Catherine persisted, "and you were quite right, I think. Persecution and exile and then home again. Could your sacrifice not be accepted merely on account of your hair?"

"I was wrong all the same," said the Protestant's wife. "It was immodest," thereby condemning her own fault but at the same time reminding the princess of herself and her much worse sin. She made this quite clear. "My immodesty was not merely a pardonable offence, it was deliberate and I persisted in it in spite of all warnings. But light came to me in prayer so that eventually I gave up what was wrong and ever since I have modestly worn a hood."

"And have palpitations," said Catherine, glancing angrily at the other's face, long, pale and pious as it now was. In the old days, when she was so pretty, we used to go to balls together. This thought allayed her anger. Then she felt sympathy for her, which in its turn gave place to a sense of guilt. I look the same as I did then—and so do my sins. I know myself, I have had lessons, but I cannot reform myself. I shall never be forgiven, she thought remorsefully. "Lord help me so that I too may today put on a hood for ever!" she prayed quietly and earnestly, although she had no real hope that her prayer would be heard.

The Count of Soissons was standing in front of them; he said: "My ladies, His Majesty wishes to see you." Both bowed their heads obediently, and each was as impassive as the other. He took them by the fingertips and led the ladies with lifted hands. He tried gently to press his cousin's hand, but she did not respond, and kept her head averted. He courteously presented her to her royal brother.

Between the poplars there was a glitter of metal. Everyone thought at first that it was arms or ordnance. No, said the ladies, we know the glitter of gems when we see it. At the least it is some kind of embroidery. It was, however, all this and more. Everyone was astonished to see a ship of silver, sailing through the air, as it seemed, in front of the procession which was only just coming into sight. The silver ship was large enough for men to get inside it, and indeed, look! hands are setting the sails, but they are the hands of children. The ship is manned by young boys, who are pretending to be sailors and are singing. A slight tinkling and clanging sound accompanies them, but nobody knows where it comes from. And what is it that moves this magic ship?

It stopped twenty paces from the front of the castle, or was rather laid down there after which dwarfs jumped out from under the magnificent cloths which hung from its bows. It was they who had been carrying it. Small hunchbacks all in red who then took to their heels like little devils while the court laughed. Meanwhile a sedan chair has been brought up. It is a throne. It has been carried along close to the ground but now it begins to rise up into the air. Only the very best machinery could raise it up so noiselessly and convert it into a throne. The sky is blue

and a gentle breeze caresses the fair locks of the maiden on the throne. Her head is held high and she has large pearls in her hair. The throne is purple, and the queen is a proud damsel in golden robes, like those in Paolo Veronese's pictures. Who is it? She has a black satin mask over her eyes, who is it?

Complete silence came over the court. The king bared his head and all followed his example.

Beside the high throne imposing looking figures were marching, with black armor and clothing of dark colors, their uncovered heads showing bushy black or reddish hair. They were recognized by their fearsome rows of teeth as Sclavonians, the conquered subjects of Venice. These were followed by fishermen, real sons of the city of the sea, unadorned, in their knitted jerseys and with their well-chafed oars in their hands, just as though they had been fetched as they were from a canal barge. These men sang with clear voices, and there was little mystery about their song, except for the language, which was not familiar to all present. It was a solemn though merry scene. The court thought of a church even if it did not actually see a church, far away and with twinkling lights across the sea.

The singers broke off in the middle of a stirring chord as the figure upon the throne put out her hand. It was a remarkable hand, plump and with pointed fingers turning up slightly. It was unadorned, the color of a roseleaf, and it beckoned majestically but alluringly as though to a lover that the great lady was pleased to admit. The ambassador had arrived! The King of France stepped out alone to the platform to receive him.

The fishermen then moved away from the throne and knelt down. The warlike Sclavonians also moved away and knelt down. The children knelt down on the ship and the red dwarfs in the distant shrubbery. A passage was left free beside the throne, and through it walked a thin man in a black gown and beret. A scholar, thought the courtiers. Why a scholar? Does the republic send a scholar as their highest representative? The two grey-bearded generals made way for him.

Agrippa d'Aubigné and du Bartas, two classical scholars who bore many scars from battles old and new, exchanged a few hurried words as the ambassador slowly approached the king. It was Messer Mocenigo, a relation of the Doge and himself quite an old man. He had fought in the battle of Lepanto, the famous sea victory over the Turks, but now taught Latin in Padua. That was how Christendom first heard of him. "What a great honor!" rejoiced Agrippa, the poet. "Messer Mocenigo is doing obeisance to our king: out of sheer joy I could describe the battle of Lepanto in verse as though I had been there myself!"

"Much better describe our next battle," suggested the tall du Bartas gloomily. "I myself shall be struck dumb," he said to himself, forebodings in his heart.

The king was again wearing his feathered hat with turned up brim, and underneath his eyes were wide open so as to miss nothing. He was greatly moved, however, and perhaps tears had come to his eyes and that was why he kept them so wide open and moved his eyelids as little as he moved hand or foot. The ambassador bowed down his head over his breast in greeting. Then he raised his head, and his face could be seen for the first time. It could be seen how one eye was shut and there was a red scar across it.

He began speaking, in an extraordinarily melodious Latin—smooth but hard. It reminded the court of marble. All recognized now the kind of face

he had—bony outlines, a sharp nose, sunken mouth, just like a bust of Dante. The courtiers did not follow everything he said for the familiar language was coming from unfamiliar lips. They could see from his face that great homage was being paid to their king. He was being compared to the Roman generals and was judged worthy of them.

Henry was the only one present who understood every word, and he understood not only what was said on the surface, he penetrated still deeper. His cause was being discussed. Who are you? That you will learn from this speech or make guesses about it as it proceeds. The one-eyed old philosopher seems to be comparing you with the first conqueror of this realm, with the Roman, Caesar, your predecessor. In reality he is warning you that you should remain as hitherto a fighting man and a brave cavalier. You have been great in small things but in great deeds you are still unproved. I know whom he thinks better than I. It is his countryman, Farnese, Duke of Parma, the most famous strategist of the age. I am nothing of that sort. I am just a fighting man with not great skill.

His head began to swim. He opened his eyes still wider. The emissary who had suddenly spoken the truth to him, looked keenly, for the first time really keenly, into his face, and he found it narrower than any he had even seen; and it was just this thinnness that told of the fervor and resolution that was within him. It was not at all the man that the emissary had expected to find. He stopped speaking and folded his hands.

When he began again, his voice sounded muffled, it was no longer smooth and hard; and he only said a few more words, the most important of which was "charity." And if a man was skillful and victorious, but had not charity.... The New Testament instead of Caesar; people were not prepared for this, everyone was astonished, the speaker more than anyone. He broke off abruptly. Henry also did something unexpected. Instead of stretching out his hand, as had been previously arranged, to help the amoassador onto the platform, he himself jumped down and gave him the ceremonial greeting—embrace and a kiss on both cheeks. The court watched and loudly expressed its approval. The children in the silver ship saw it, the enthroned damsel in her golden robes saw it, and as she was the daughter of one of the fishermen in knitted jerseys, she forgot all about royal dignity and clapped her hands. The warlike Sclavonians also clapped and so did the fisher folk and the grey-bearded generals.

Henry looked round and laughed happily, although an unwonted shiver passed over his shoulders. It was not the kind of feeling you might have with a murderer standing behind you—no, it was as though a wing had been spread. Fame, world-wide fame has touched you for the first time, for you have come near to the Forty. It is like a fairy tale form the East that will soon fly away, and it gives you an uncanny feeling.

"Your excellency, if the ceremony is at an end I should like to have a word with you alone," said the king.

"What about, Sire?"

"About the Duke of Parma."

*The Coat of Arms*

I must have my battle, thought Henry, as soon as the ambassadors from Venice had left, and this is what he had said to himself at their famous coming. It was just his uncanny fame that made his position clear

to him. He was still a king without a throne and deprived of his capital. A general of his sort has no money and if his army is not to dribble away he must capture a town as often as possible. The town will pay for him! These are the towns of his realm. It is hard to be the father of your fatherland and remain truly popular when you have to ride around subjugating the enemy and demanding taxes. A week had not passed since the fairy tale at Tours and he was again in the midst of stern realities.

He cleared Touraine and the neighboring provinces of the enemy and then proceeded to Normandy, where, indeed, he had already been when he won his victory at Arques. What had become of this victory? The places he had taken and left behind him had fallen back again in the meantime. His enemy is not a man like himself, it is a many-headed hydra. You cut off seven, and eight new ones grow. That is the way it is with the League. The streets are full of devoted subjects when I am master in their nest. They wish they had never raised arms against me, but it would only be necessary to dig up their gardens and I would find their muskets. This kind of thing is most exciting, they say; I was made to lead this sort of life. And if I am really not made for it, but am made for better things, then the best thing I can do is to say as little about it as possible.

"My health is as good as it ever was," he told everyone that winter with its frequent snowfalls and nights spent on the frozen ground. "My army too is free from illness, and it is getting steadily larger, for this nest alone is giving me six thousand thalers. The odds are that the next town *en route* will surrender by Thursday!"

He had actually bargained with the town of Honfleur that if Mayenne or his son Nemours had not arrived by Thursday the gates would be opened to him, and that is what happened. Mayenne let his League be a League and rested in Paris "as I also will rest comfortably one day," said Henry confidently. But he thought: "I must have my battle." He kept weighing this over and over in his mind, first as a pleasant escapade and then as the critical event of his life.

He included a curious object in his baggage—an alarm clock which he carefully set every night. He spent less time sleeping than the fat Mayenne spent at table. Nowadays, what was something new for a person of his regular habits, he sometimes missed even the few hours he allowed himself for sleep. He sat up in bed thinking. I must have my battle, and not a battle that I may lose or win! I must not lose it, I must not lose this battle. If I did it would be all over with me. Too many eyes are upon me. The whole world is watching me—my allies who have acknowledged me prematurely and still more the King of Spain who covets this realm. He would have it too, if I were not here. Who would prevent him? The people are at strife with one another about their religion. If they all had the true faith then even Don Philip could do nothing against them. But what do I know? Each man has his own religion, I am a Huguenot and sleep on the hard frozen ground. If Don Philip comes, if he advances with a large force it is all one whether my religion is the right one or not, what matters here is the knowledge that the kingdom is at stake, and *that* at all events comes from God. It is a matter between me and God —this suddenly flashed upon the king one dark night, while a torch fizzled and went out in the tent.

The alarm clock sounded, the king got up and called after his officers. There was much to do that day and a long distance to be ridden. A moat

had to be drained so that the besiegers could come right up to the wall of the fortifications. When this had been done shots were fired on either side until towards the evening Henry had already taken to his horse as there was other work to be done over a large area. Very hungry, he reached the town of Alençon about supper time and went to the house of a loyal captain, who, however, was away from home. He did not know his wife but the latter, taking him for one of the royal generals, received him as was fitting, though not without a certain embarrassment.

"Have I come inopportunely, my lady? Speak freely, I do not wish to cause you any inconvenience."

"My lord, I will tell you quite frankly how matters stand. Today is Thursday: I have searched the whole town but there is nothing to be procured. I am in despair. Only a certain artisan who lives nearby tells me that he has a fat turkey in the larder but he refuses to let me have it unless he is permitted to share the meal."

"Is he good company?"

"Yes, my lord, there is no one in this part of the town who has so many witty stories to tell. And he is a man of the right sort, on fire with loyalty to the king, and his business is in a good way."

"Then let him come, my good lady. I have really an excellent appetite and even if he is extremely dull I should prefer to eat with him rather than not at all."

The artisan was then fetched and appeared in his Sunday clothes, holding his turkey. While the bird was being roasted he entertained the king, but he did not seem to know who he was, or he would hardly have spoken so freely. He poured out his local gossip, anecdotes and witty sayings so entertainingly that the king forgot his hunger for a while. The king soon caught the mood of his companion, quite unintentionally and without noticing it himself. It is no difficult matter to be the father of your fatherland and remain truly popular even when you are subjugating the enemy and demanding taxes. The whole secret is to have a good conscience and to believe in the honorable mission you have to perform. How to bring his people to reason without strategem or fraud and save the kingdom—that was the thought that was continually in his mind, during his sleep and even when he was engaged in lively conversation. The respectable artisan continues his story but all the time he too has his workshop at the back of his mind.

The king reflects: I must have my battle. It is not far off now. I have taken enough fortified places now to make the enemy uneasy. My cousin Marshall Biron is making things very uncomfortable and I am keeping the King of England informed of all our successes. Now we must besiege the town of Dreux. Mayenne will not take that lying down, he will have to come out and give battle. The Spaniards in any case would insist upon it. Otherwise what had he their auxiliary troops for, the first with which Philip had supplied the League? They came from the Netherlands, from the governor, Farnese, I should like to have a sight of this great strategist and famous war expert. I should like to know his opinion of me.

At the thought of Farnese, Henry involuntarily rose from his seat. The artisan gaped. Henry, however, was able to repeat correctly what his companion had been saying. "When the glovemaker found the burly blacksmith with his wife he put out his hand propitiatingly and said:

'I can't believe it of you, my friend.'" Henry laughed. "That's good one, my brave fellow."

"Yes, a good one, isn't it?" repeated the man, greatly gratified by his companion's hearty reception of the anecdote. At this moment the hostess called her guests to their meal. They devoured the large bird between the three of them, but the hostess and the artisan left the larger share to the guest, who laughed more and more heartily over his companion's jokes the more he ate, so that the latter's spirits rose accordingly. It was therefore astonishing to see how, after his last glass, as they were just about to leave the table, the man made a long face and shut his eyes tight. The king would have regarded this also as a joke if the man had not thrown himself suddenly at his feet and cried: "Forgive, O Sire, forgive me! This has been the greatest day of my life. I knew Your Majesty. I have served under arms and fought for my king at Arques and now I have realized my dream, and sat down to table with Your Majesty. Forgive me once more, Sire. I had to be a bit of a fool to make you laugh a little at my jokes. And now the great misfortune has happened, a common man like myself has dined with the king."

"Well, what's to be done about it?" asked the king.

"I can see only one way out!"

"And what is that?"

"You must raise me to the rank of a noble."

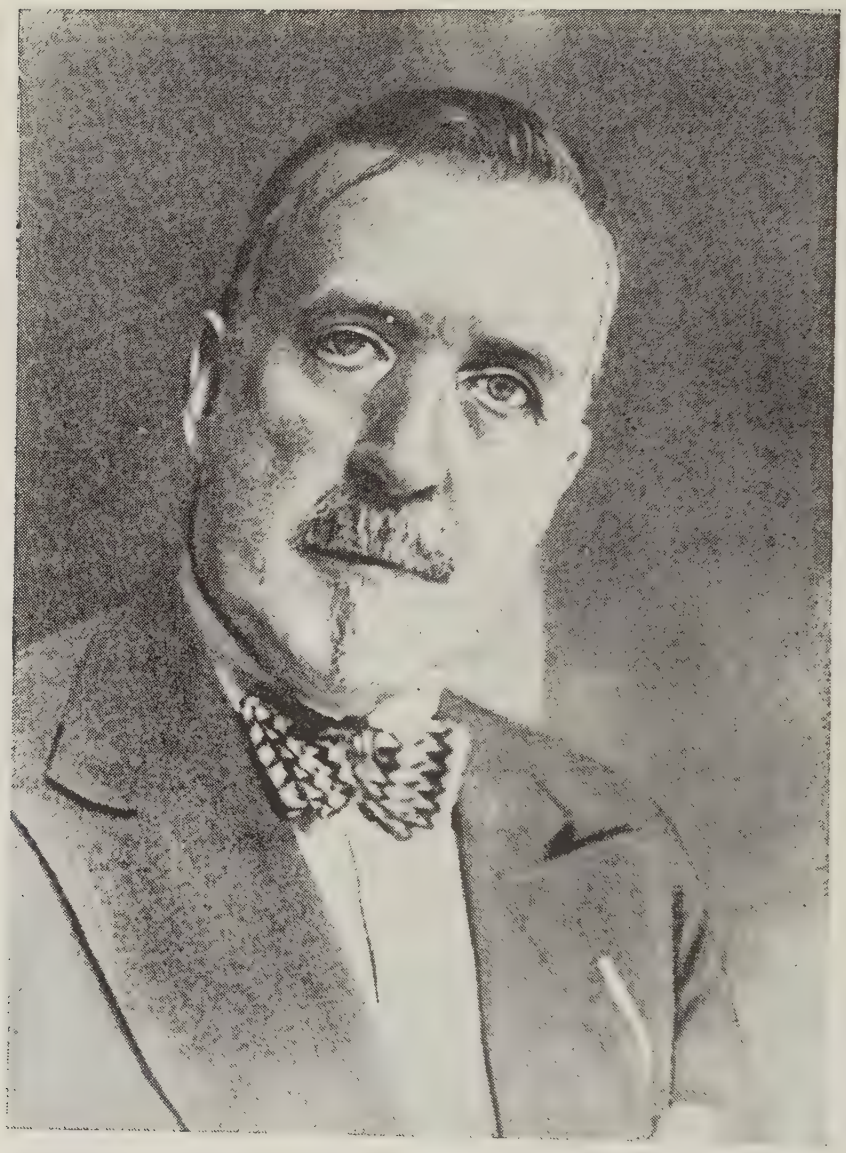
"You?"

"Why not, Sire? I work with my hands, carry my principles in my head, and my king in my heart."

"Excellent, my friend, and what would you like as your coat of arms?"

"My turkey, if it please Your Majesty."

"The best of all your jokes. Arise, Knight of the Turkey."



*Heinrich Mann*

J. Motyleva

# Heinrich Mann, Anti-Fascist

*The Way of the German Workers*—one of Heinrich Mann's latest articles—is a very remarkable work. The logic of the anti-fascist struggle leads a writer who has never in his whole life comprehended the force capable of triumphing over capitalism to an understanding of the historical role of the proletariat. The experience of recent years leads a writer, who has never believed in the capacity of the masses to act reasonably, to the profound conviction that victory can be achieved only through "mass battles for freedom." For thirty-five years Heindich Mann's attitude to all forms of armed struggle was one of dislike and distrust; now he considers where the German people will obtain arms when the moment of the decisive conflict arrives. Formerly his attitude to the German workers' movement was either negative or skeptical; now he bows down before the moral greatness of the fighters and martyrs of the German Communist Party and plans in a business-like way, down to the smallest details, practical collaboration between the advanced intellectuals and the Communists.

In the light of Heinrich Mann's recent position, a special interest attaches to the whole course of development of his ideas and creative work

In order to arrive at a proper understanding of the way of thinking and the distinguishing characteristics of the creative work of a humanist and anti-fascist writer it is necessary to form a clear idea of the details of his life. That this is necessary is confirmed by something that occurred recently and evoked a good deal of discussion. Not long ago a number of our critics found themselves obliged to revise the opinions expressed by them regarding André Gide. Let us suppose that Gide's treachery could not have been foreseen; even so, was it not possible to arrive at a more correct and more sober estimate of Gide's outlook, to determine more accurately the nature and quality of his opposition to capitalism, the nature and quality of his "humanism"?

Amid the humanist literature of the twentieth century—the literature that advanced the conception of man, and fought for the free development of the individual, one finds an immense variety of tendencies and tones, a variety that is treated with by no means the respect it deserves by our critics.

Many a time, in speaking of the advanced humanists, Gide and Romain Rolland were placed in the same category; the fact that they were poles apart went unnoticed. The starting point of Romain Rolland's opposition to capitalism has always been love and sympathy for oppressed and suffering humanity; in the case of Gide it was the fastidious contempt of an egocentric and aesthetic nature for the vulgarity and prose of capitalism. To capitalism Romain Rolland opposed the Titanesque, creative individuality, the heroic actions and at times, the moral soundness of a man of the people—Colas Breugnon; Gide opposed to capitalism the "purposeless activity" and Hedonistic cult of the individuality of a subtle intellectual.

Romain Rolland and André Gide are the expression of two extreme, opposing tendencies in the development of those twentieth century writers, who have declined either direct or indirect defence of the capitalist system. In Romain Rolland's work the best humanistic tendencies are preserved of the era of the great bourgeois revolutions and at the same time the traditions of

nineteenth century French Realism. That is the reason why he proved to have so many points of contact with Socialist humanism and why he merged with the revolutionary struggle of the proletariat.

Gide's writings, in spite of his anti-bourgeois attitude, were always, to a considerable extent, determined by the influence of the reactionary bourgeois ideology of the end of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth centuries—Nietzschean individualism, irrationalism—and, consequently, bore an emphatically anti-realistic character.

In the work of Heinrich Mann various humanistic currents of the twentieth century are blended.

Heinrich Mann, or, to be more exact, both the brothers Mann, occupy a peculiar position in the history of German literature.

"The misfortune of the German bourgeoisie," Engels wrote, "is that, after the beloved German fashion, it is always late. The period of its flowering occurs just when the bourgeoisie of the other countries of Western Europe is already approaching in a political sense, its decline." (*The Peasant War in Germany.*) The course of the development of capitalism in Germany—a peculiar enough course and one full of compromise—the fact that the country was for centuries split up, the notorious timidity of the German bourgeoisie, its fear of the proletariat which prevented it from completing a bourgeois-democratic revolution—all this exercised a harmful influence on German nineteenth century literature. Germany not only missed the flowering of the realistic novel, but failed to produce, during the second half of the nineteenth century following the abortive revolution of 1848, one writer of world fame.

The brothers Mann were the first in German literature to raise the art of the realistic novel to a great height. At the same time, they were the first German writers after Heine to treat big problems and big ideas advanced in the era of the bourgeois democratic revolutions. But the late flowering of German bourgeois realism in the work of the Manns could not escape the forceful influence of the reactionary ideology and anti-realistic artistic currents of the epoch of imperialism; just as, on the other hand, the great social upheavals of the twentieth century could not but color their humanist ideas.

Heinrich Mann consciously traces his genealogy not from German but from French nineteenth century literature. The German Naturalism of the 'nineties could not but seem to him niggling, trifling and vulgar.

From the very first Heinrich Mann sensed that the class from which he himself had sprung was doomed. From the very first he cut himself off from the world of Buddenbrooks. But he could not join the German Naturalists, who felt drawn politically to Social-Democracy. It was not only that he was divided from them by the aristocratism of a young Lübeck patrician, who from his earliest years had been nourished upon the cream of the world's culture, but also by the fact that the Naturalists with their *Elendsmalerei* were not up to the level of the large problems that agitated him.

In an episode in his first novel, *Society People* (1900), Mann gives a merciless parody of Hauptmann's *Weavers* showing up a naturalistic play of working class life as a primitive, inartistic affair aimed not so much at the foundations of the capitalist system as at impressing a blasé bourgeois audience.

Mann wanted to criticize society in a broader, deeper way. From this came his study of the great French nineteenth century writers, a study connected with his sympathy for France as the classic land of bourgeois democracy. His interpretation of Zola is very interesting. (True, Mann's well-known work on Zola did not appear at the beginning of his writing career,

but during the war. However, similar opinions on French literature had been expressed in his earlier articles.) It is not as the founder of Naturalism and not as an innovator and an experimenter in artistic method that Mann values Zola. It is not for the points in which Zola differs from Balzac and Stendhal that Mann values him, but for those in which he resembles them. Mann respects Zola as a great plebeian in literature, as the man who fought for Dreyfus' release, as the untiring toiler who accumulated the vast empiric material for the *Rougon-Macquart* series in his youth, when want drove him hither and thither in search of employment. In Zola Mann sees the successor to the democratic tradition of the encyclopaedists. He sees the direct connection between the profound, generalizing Realism of French literature and the freedom-loving traditions of the French people.

Heinrich Mann wanted to apply the principles of French Realism in his criticism of the German bourgeoisie. When he took Balzac, Zola, and Maupassant for his models, he wrote the best pages of exposure in *Society People*. Still, *Society People* will not bear comparison with either the *Comedie Humaine* or *Rougon-Macquart* or even with *Bel-Ami*. With great satiric force Heinrich Mann showed the scum of capitalist society—the machinations of the predatory bankers, the venality of the press and art, the corruptions in its friendship and love. The picture was realistic, inasmuch as "froth is also an expression of actuality."[1] But this was a limited and incomplete realism. The mechanism of capitalist exploitation was not yet clear to Mann at that time. Discerning in the proletariat only caricatures like the unprincipled Matzke—who belongs simply to the *Lumpenproletariat*—he could not see where the world of trickster-financiers and venal bohemians was heading.

It was not accidental, then, that after *Society People,* which was, in spite of its success in the reading world, a creative failure, Mann retired from Realism for several years. Since he could not find a positive hero and a positive ideal in life, he sought them in his imagination. He embodied his dream of a complete man, of the manifold expression of a human personality, in fantastic and exotic creatures. A longing for the humanist ideals of the bourgeois-democratic revolutions—ideals unrealized in Germany—appears in Mann's writings in the first years of the twentieth century, in stories like *Goddesses, The Pursuit of Love, Between the Races of Mankind*—but in a vague, mystifying form, stained with the surrounding decadence. Still, these books of Mann's stand out amid the muddy stream of decadent literature of those years. He dreamed of a sound, healthy man, of the triumph of liberty, art and love. For the sake of a fuller realization of their personalities his heroes challenge all the established rules of moral conduct. But Mann cannot lie, either to himself or to his readers. Even when he transports himself to exotic countries—the Balkans or Italy—even there, among romantic beauties of nature, he sees the swinish faces of the bankers of Berlin, the smug burgers of Lübeck, the artistic bohemians of Munich. And he endeavored to barricade himself, to retire from the dirt of everyday life; in *Minerva* the Duchess Assi declares: "Oh, I shall take the utmost care of it, of the serene vase of my life, so that not a single blemish, not a single spot, not a clinging breath of that tarnished world shall darken its radiant purity." But the ivory tower was too stuffy for Mann. He could not console himself with ideals of his own invention; he pulls down his heroes—be they aesthetic, immoral or egocentric—from their pedestals and leads them unrelentingly to complete bankruptcy. Instead of

[1] Lenin, *Philosophical Notebooks.*

being engaged in the struggle for freedom, they are deep in a petty game of politics, instead of assisting in the triumph of art, they produce imitative works of the "hysterical renaissance" type, in place of the triumph of love they indulge in orgies of unnatural passions.

The fate of art in a capitalistic society is particularly tragic. Though the artist sacrifices life, honor, personal interests and everything human to art, he still cannot, from Mann's point of view, put strength and beauty into his work, because they do not exist in his environment. Jacubus Halm the artist, the friend of the Duchess Assi, fails to create a Venus worthy of the antique. His Venus is hysterical and lean, like those rich and blasé ladies who give him commissions and to whose taste he is obliged to adapt himself. The actress Uta Ende in *The Pursuit of Love* sacrifices her personal life to a stage career, drives away the youth who loves her and sells herself to producers for profitable engagements. She wins fame and the principal parts at the theater in the capital, but arrives at the mournful conclusion that: "The possessor of millions has much more weight among people than the most brilliant—more weight, indeed, than a genius."

The conscience of a writer and a humanist does not permit Mann to forget social problems. In his most aesthetic works, works far removed from Realism, words that might have been taken from a Socialist leaflet burst through.

In the novel *Between the Races of Mankind* the heroine, who is a variation of the Duchess Assi type, happens to see a workers' demonstration. "Lola breathed deeply of that air, freshened by the vivifying strength of democracy with its capacity for awakening dignity, spreading humanity and fostering peace. She felt as if a hand was searching out to free her—yes, even her."

The unfortunate young Claude, the hero of *The Pursuit of Love,* suddenly pulls himself up: "I simply cannot bear to look on quietly at social injustices. . . . Why, after all, do these lands belong to me and not to the next man?"

Heinrich Mann was never a pure decadent or a pure æsthete. An amoral attitude, contempt for people, and retreat from the prose of life into a pure art or eroticism could never have fully satisfied him. Even amid his æsthetic searchings he could never forget the sharp contradictions of social life.

Mann returned to Realism. After dethroning Italian Romanticism in *Small Town*, he laid once again a firm grip upon his hated native German ground, around which the ever-tightening noose of the militarist dictatorship of Wilhelm II was being drawn.

One of the defects of *Society People* was that only a few of the most general features of finance capital had been caught. Now Mann discovered a concrete target for his criticism of German capitalism—Wilhelm's Empire.

In *Professor Unrat* Mann was already re-examining his position. And whereas, in his writings of the "decadence" period, the characters who denied morals, though they came to ruin, were nevertheless enemies of capitalist society, and its outcasts, the amoral Unrat, on the contrary, is one of the pillars of this same society. At first a school teacher, he becomes an adventurer and a divekeeper. He continues to cripple the souls and destinies of his former pupils, as he crippled them at school, and thus carries out the threat: "I'll spoil your career for you!"—with which he had worried the lives out of the pupils of liberal families. Mann understood that extreme individualism and misanthropy are characteristic not so much of the prodigal sons of the dying bourgeoisie as of the bourgeoisie itself and its faithful servants.

Notwithstanding all his pretensions, Unrat is only a servant. In *The Faithful Subject*, however, Mann showed us the image of the master. Here he is,

"the blond beast" of German imperialism, the bulwark of the throne of Wilhelm II, a purposeful, predatory individual, unscrupulous as to the means he employs: he is the manufacturer Diedrich Hessling, a hypocrite whose speech drips with the bourgeois morality which his actions violate. In *The Faithful Subject* Mann succeeded in giving a generalized portrait, which is remarkable for its penetration, of the German bourgeois, too timid to join the struggle for democracy, accustomed to combining in himself the characteristic of slave owner and slave and, with the greed of a wild beast, pursuing the share he has missed in the partition of the world. In a realistic satire Mann reached the very foundations, the very pith of things: his Diedrich is a shameless exploiter who treats his workers with the same barbarous cruelty and oppresses them as much as the Kaiser his subjects.

No less realistic and convincing is the portrait of Napoleon Fischer, the Social-Democratic leader, a capable worker who allows himself to be bought, makes a career and becomes a traitor. Hessling and Fischer supplement one another; looking at them, the close connection between imperialism and opportunism in the workers' movement becomes clear. But what is astonishing is that Mann, who then stood a long way off the German workers' movement, could distinguish in it its Napoleon Fischers. Moreover, in *The Faithful Subject* he showed remarkable discernment, foretelling not only the World War, but also the treachery of Social-Democracy during the war. Three years before the outbreak of that war, Mann, in one of his political articles, aptly stigmatized the Social-Democratic deputies in the Reichstag. "They are moderate petty bourgeois," he said, "who want merely to secure the comfortable philistine welfare of their children and grandchildren. Their attitude to the general strike resembles that of the Young Turk Party to a Holy War, *viz.,* they dread it more than anything on earth."

Are there, nevertheless, in the German working class genuinely revolutionary reserves? This question remained unanswered in *The Faithful Subject,* but Mann, having shown in the person of the barrister Buck the insolvency of bourgeois liberalism, felt that the opposite of Hessling must be sought in the working class and nowhere else. In *The Poor,* the sequel to *The Faithful Subject,* he set himself the task not only, and not so much, of showing the destructive action of capitalist exploitation as of finding a living fighting force in the proletariat.

He embodied his dream of a revolt against the foundations of capitalism in the person of Balrich the worker. With regard to Balrich, our critics have more than once expressed the opinion that he, in no way, reflects the characteristics of the revolutionary proletariat, that he is not fighting for the liberation of the workers but for his own enrichment. This is not quite the case. It is true that the failure of the novel is conditioned by the speciousness of its general conception, which is based on a situation that is accidental and not typical, *viz.,* a capitalist keeps for himself an inheritance left to a worker. Still, in the figure of Balrich, Heinrich Mann embodied, with great power, his hatred of capitalism and his own trust, indefinite though it may be, in the proletariat. The manufacturer, disturbed by Balrich's influence over the workers, makes persistent attempts to strike a bargain with him, offers, in fact, a hundred thousand marks if he will withdraw his claim to the inheritance. But Balrich will not agree: it is not alms that he wants but justice, not to accept money from a capitalist but to deprive him of it. Mann loves his Balrich for this extremism and implacable refusal to compromise. But he does not see by what means the proletariat can free itself and therefore, in spite of his sympathy for Balrich, he dooms the man to loneliness and defeat.

The opportunism of pre-war Social-Democracy turned Mann away from the workers' movement. That was why both before and during the war, though he was hoping for the downfall of Wilhelm II's empire, he could not tell from which side that downfall was to come. He did not believe in the possibility of organized action by the masses; that was precisely why he had to motivate Balrich's individual revolt so artificially. In somewhat the same spirit he decided the question of the relations between the individual exploit and the action of the masses in *Madame Legros*—a play of the French Revolution, written by Mann before the war. A woman of the Third Estate performs a deed of personal heroism, inspired by private reasons. By her bold and daring mediation before the queen she saves an innocent prisoner in the Bastille, but she refuses point blank to assist in the storming of the Bastille to free the rest of the prisoners. Her job is done: one innocent prisoner has been saved.

Better the exploit of an individual than the action of the masses—was the opinion to which Mann was inclined both before and during the war. He himself endeavored to carry on as an isolated warrior. Even before the war he took an active part in political life as a journalist. When he gave the signal, warning people of a possible war, he was in favor of the political and cultural rapprochement of backward Germany with advanced France; he demanded that the intelligentsia should unite with the people and opposed to official chauvinism his dream of democracy and higher humanism.

Though he did not find his way to the revolutionary German proletariat, to Liebknecht and Rosa Luxemburg, he was definitely against the war; this is shown clearly enough in his work on Zola, to take one instance. This triumphal hymn to the democratic spirit of the French people was published when the war was at its height.

At the moment of the downfall of the German Empire Mann was not a Socialist. But he was very far from thinking that the revolution in Germany could limit itself to mere democratic reforms.

"Think fairly, bourgeois leaders!" Mann said a month after the November Revolution, when he addressed the members of the "Political Council of Intellectual Workers" in Munich. "If you ever gain a majority in any legislative assembly, do not give way to the fatal illusion that you can get rid of the just demands of the Socialists by voting against them. But you, Socialists, must think fairly too! If you want to win socialization by force and not by the reasoning and conscience of the majority—it will profit you nothing!"

Mann feared and did not understand Bolshevism. He regarded it as "the deadly enemy of the whole of European civilization." Together with a considerable section of the German intelligentsia of that time he hoped that the German people would be able to rid themselves of social injustice without resorting to a dictatorship of the proletariat. Yet, of all the active politicians of revolutionary Germany he had most sympathy with the Bavarian Left "Independent"—Kurt Eisner. "The Hundred Days of Eisner's government bore more ideas, more joys of reason, a greater revival of the spirit than had been produced for fifty years before," he said in his speech after Eisner's death. "Revolution should be the common possession of all the friends of truth, because mankind must tread the path of truth. But see that this war is not followed by another—a civil war!"

During the first post-war years Heinrich Mann was close to the Expressionists, with whom he was linked by certain modes of writing—an inclination to the grotesque, to rationalistically built, schematic imagery—and by similarity of ideas: abstract pacifism, revulsion from a soulless, capitalist

outlook, and at the same time, hopes for the peaceful solution of social contradictions. He was attracted by the revolutionary impulses—abstract and diffuse as they might be—of the Expressionists. In one of his articles, written in 1921, he describes the young generation of writers sympathetically: "An explosive desire for action, a desire not to compromise with the present, but to fight for something better, is common to them all. They call themselves Expressionists, they invented this title before the war, very likely. But the revolution has filled it with a fiery meaning."

Denying the feasibility of revolutionary reconstruction of the world by the force of the proletariat and believing in the historic mission of the intelligentsia, Mann hoped that through the efforts of enlightened people the Weimar Republic would in time turn into something human and just.

During the first years of the Republic's existence Mann saw the ruin of all his hopes. The year 1923 brought the German people the tragedy of inflation. That year Mann saw with terrible clearness that the real victors in the war were the capitalist magnates on both sides. "You see, we are doing a double amount of work. In the first place, we are working for the victors; well, so be it, they sacrificed and suffered a great deal too. But in the second place, we are working to enrich several of our own native army contractors, expropriators and clever business men. And what have they sacrified? What have they suffered? Over whom have they triumphed? Ah, yes, over us! *They* have defeated us!" Mann's disillusionment in the Republic is reflected in *The Head,* the novel he intended as a sequel to *The Faithful Subject* and *The Poor,* completing the trilogy *The Empire.*

*The Head* is remarkable for its extremely complicated plot, a curious intertwining of probable and improbable situations. These features are to be found in *The Poor* and are reproduced in Mann's later works on the Weimar Republic. In all these books the muddled form bears witness to confusion of ideas, to the writer's helplessness and inability to cope with the tide of social problems that burst in upon him.

*The Head* is a pessimistic problem novel. Criticism of the Empire is considerably deeper here by comparison with *The Faithful Subject.* It suffices to observe, for instance, how much more complex in *The Head* is the figure of the Kaiser who, in *The Faithful Subject,* was shown as a primitive provincial bourgeois like Hessling. And whereas in the latter novel Mann helplessly exposes not only the Empire but the capitalist exploiters as well, in *The Head* the target of his criticism is the entire capitalist state. It occurs to the reader to ask: was, then the dependence of government officials—right up to the head of the state—on the coal and iron kings, were the interestedness of the biggest industrialists in the war and the international intermingling of the interests of the armament manufacturers who were ready for the sake of their profits to supply arms to the enemy—were these things peculiar only to the Empire? Did not the principle: "Both nations may be destroyed, but the two firms will flourish"—remain in force even after the Treaty of Versailles? In articles written about the time that he was working on *The Head* Mann admitted ruefully that things were no better in the Weimar Republic. Simultaneously with *The Head* Mann published a story called Kobes, the central figure of which was the multi-millionaire Kobes, the financial genius of the Republic, who made his money out of the war and inflation. This figure reminds one a good deal of one of the chief characters in *The Head* —Knack the armaments magnate. The only difference between them is that Knack subordinates the apparatus of monarchy to his own purposes,

employing doubtful machinations, while Kobes manoeuvres his own election to the highest positions in the Republic, working on the masses by means of radio advertising on a grand scale and exploiting the democratic feelings of the people. "My ideas are simple and my aims are simple. I am not a nobleman and I understand nothing of politics. I am a business-like merchant, the symbol of German democracy."

How can the rule of the Knacks and of the Kobeses be brought low? This is not known. The hero of *The Head,* Terra, democrat and pacifist, comes to defeat and ruin, for he is alone. A novel about the Empire, written several years after the November Revolution, concludes not with the downfall of the Empire but with the victory of the dark forces of capitalist dictators over the solitary champion of peace. This ending in itself proves that the Empire in *The Head* is, to a considerable extent, another name for the Republic.

Still more gloomy is the conclusion of *Kobes,* in which the working masses are reduced to a herd incapable of resistance.

During the years of the capitalist stabilization Mann recovered a little from his bitter disillusionment. The articles written in 1925 and 1926 express once more his confidence in the favorable prospects of the republic. "Now the Republic is threatened by none: neither the general, the revolutionary, nor the Kaiser."

Mann's attitude to the Republic remained contradictory. He overcame the despair expressed in *Kobes.* But he continued, slowly though inconsistently, to criticize the Weimar Republic.

He was extremely agitated about the fate of the post-war youth. To this subject he devoted several articles full of anxiety. In one of these he indicated that the characters in his comedy, *Bibi,* seemed to him typical of the whole post-war generation.

These characters are young adventurers and climbers who have no scruples about the means by which they strive for success and a place in the sun. Here is the song of the post-war generation which Mann makes the hero, Bibi, sing:

"We were dispossessed before we were born, our fathers having wasted our substance. Our entrance into the world as unblessed beggars got nobody's welcome. We neither laugh much nor weep having no occasion for great emotions. We're sharp in little things but great deeds are beyond us. We'll make no demands for anything we have to put up a fight for; we merely look around for what we can lay our hands on safely."

No less typical is the song of the film star:

"The whole lot swarms after money, lust and power. They are all related. They hate each other and hinder each other but they hold on. A slip, a stumble and down they'll go. The whole Republic's after money, lust and power."

Youth, unabashed, feeling its spiritual devastation, possessing no traditions and no principles whatsoever, represents in its own person the Weimar Republic, where each jostles and tries to push his rival from the path, and crawls after "money, power, victory." This practical, cynical youth despises the old, liberal, cowardly generation. In a story called *The Debtor,* published, like *Bibi,* in the collection called *They Are Young,* two generations, two kinds of morality, clash. A young man—a speculator and a cynic—flings out to his guardian, an elderly, respectable bourgeois, the challenge: "We are less hypocritical than you. . . . Everything we do we

call by its rightful name." In *Big Business* a whole group of enterprising young people take part. In order to patent an invention of the father of one of them these young people readily resort to fraud, forgery and blackmail. There is no other way of attaining success in the Republic. Even the all-powerful Karl Schattich, the former *Reichskanzler* and the head of a big firm, admits that: "One must be constantly fighting for success simply in order to keep one's place. One must bring profits to the firm, otherwise one is dismissed like any small employee." Uncertainty about the morrow worries everybody, from the director down to the smallest of his subordinates. The thirst for success, the brutal force of competition, subjugates family ties, friendship, and love. To the boxer who wants to refuse an engagement for her sake, a girl says: "Do you mean to say that you would miss a chance because of a woman? I myself am a woman who goes out to work and there is not a man who could keep me from it. We must think in a businesslike way, and no other. Otherwise the next person will come up and push us out of our places."

In the Weimar Republic all personal feelings are trampled upon and humiliated. This is the *leitmotiv* of *Big Business, Mother Maria* and *The Serious Life*. The subject of the two latter is the tragic fate of a loving woman, a mother who suffers because "the whole question is one of money," as the heroine of *Mother Maria* says.

All of these novels contain two types of hero. One is that of the shameless, efficient young people, who elbow their way ahead to success. The other is the passive, weak-willed type, incapable of adapting itself to the desperate struggle for existence. Mann sympathizes with the latter, but cannot help acknowledging the worldly superiority of the former. A third type that might combine high moral qualities with the will for action did not exist for Mann. He did not see people of that sort around him.

It appears then that the Weimar Republic did not justify the hopes placed in it by the democratic intelligentsia? It appears that the barbarity of Wilhelm II's Empire was replaced by a new barbarity—the heartless reign of "*Sachlichkeit*"—bourgeois efficiency?

It suffices to read any of Heinrich Mann's Weimar novels to become convinced that this is precisely so. But this conclusion is too terrifying for a writer who clings so hard to a bourgeois-democratic philosophy. One must be reconciled to the Republic, no matter what comes or goes!

And now in the name of this reconciliation the spear of Mann's satirical novels grows blunted. Their realistic validity is dimmed, a veil of irrationality, of studied adventure to make plot, is thrown over them. Mann motivates the actions of his heroes by the influence of dark, sub-conscious forces. He creates fantastic, non-typical situations. Mother Maria, for example, he endows with an unnatural passion for her own son whom she had deserted in childhood. By this Mann gives an unpleasant touch of improbability to a tragic tale of humiliated motherhood. *The Serious Life* begins with beautiful realistic pictures of the life of poor fishermen in the North of Germany, but later on is marred by far-fetched episodes in which the chief part is taken by a pathological type of "vampire-woman."

In his Weimar novels Mann passed easily from indignation to a smile, from a serious tone to a light one, from the real to the unreal—since this freed him from the necessity of finally determining his attitude to actuality. He preferred to show the repelling dirt and prose of the Weimar Republic without open indignation because he had nothing to oppose to it. Avoiding too pessimistic conclusions, Mann invariably provided his novels of this period with false, unjustified, happy endings. He endeavored to teach the reader resigna-

tion and reconciliation to the unpleasantness of life. "Learn to endure!" says the hero of *Eugen,* who has become reconciled to misfortune.

This resignation did not come easy to Mann. In his journalistic work he continued to take an active share in the events of social and political life. He came to the defence of the Viennese workers who rose on June 15, 1927. He demanded an amnesty for those who took part in the Bavarian Commune, protested against the execution of Sacco and Vanzetti and spoke several times with profound respect and sympathy of the Soviet Union and of Lenin.

During the life of the Weimar Republic Mann undoubtedly lived through a critical period as regards ideas and methods of writing. He felt as forlorn a champion of good as he had during Wilhelm's Empire. He remained just as isolated in his literary life: he had never gathered a group or a school round him. To work with revolutionary writers had not then appeared possible to him, and he was scarcely to blame for this; one has but to remember how the members of the Union of Proletarian Writers of Germany brushed aside his novel *Big Business*, giving it a crushing half-page review in the *Linkscurve*—the organ of the union.

It was only when he emigrated as an anti-fascist that Mann succeeded in overcoming his tragic loneliness.

"Misfortune may unexpectedly present a good opportunity for getting to know life," someone says in Mann's novel *The Youth of Henry IV*. These words are applicable to many anti-fascist writers, including Heinrich Mann. The fascist axe, descending on the German people, forced Mann to see many things in a new light. The first traces of the vast inward process are to be seen in his brilliant collection of anti-fascist articles and pamphlets called *Hatred,* written during the first few months of forced separation from his native land and published in the first half of 1933.

If in the opening years of the century Mann as an artist condemned and dethroned the decadent influence in ideas, now he finally understood that irrationalism, which had exercised so much influence on the literature of the twentieth century, was politically very closely linked with extreme reaction. He understood and stated clearly in *Hatred* that the irrational artist and pure æsthete are sometimes not so very far removed from the fascist barbarian. This conclusion could not but oblige him to re-examine his own position as a creative artist, and strengthen the realistic features of his work.

In *Hatred* Mann said farewell for ever to his illusions about the Weimar Republic. He saw how little there was of the genuinely republican in this belated republic, which retained in its apparatus of government the murderers of the German revolution, and was yielding step by step all its positions to fascism, thus preparing its own ruin. In *Hatred* Mann wound up his account with the past and, with tremendous force and passion, branded the fascist obscurantists and murderers.

It is not accidental that Mann immediately became an active opponent of the fascist dictatorship. His hatred of fascism is not merely that of a great and cultured writer for the barbarians who burned down the Reichstag and made bonfires of books. His anti-fascism is deeply rooted in all his work—not only in *The Faithful Subject* and *Professor Unrat.* The penetration of a great realist enabled Mann to discern the future traits of fascist dictatorship not in the Empire only, but in the Republic as well. Let us recall the capitalist Kobes, who in his election campaign appeals to the democratic feelings of the people he has robbed; *Kobes* anticipates one of the most mocking and lying slogans of fascism: "The general good is higher than that of the individual."

But if the capitalist or the fascist is only lightly sketched in (in *Kobes, The Head* and *Big Business)* the repulsive figure of the German philistine capable of becoming a basis for fascism is drawn by him extraordinarily vividly in a whole series of books. Mann's anxiety about the fate of the post-war generation proved prophetic. Out of the petty-bourgeois youth, the unprincipled Bibis of the Weimar Republic who were rendered desperate by the crisis, emerged the Horst Wessels of fascism. In the person of the fascist leaders, satirical portraits of whom are given in *Hatred,* Mann branded the German reactionary bourgeois he had hated and exposed all his life. He does not, however, regard the fascists as philistines and nothing more. In a book written in the first year of the fascist dictatorship when some of the most muddled and harmful theories regarding the class essence of fascism were current among some German emigrants, he emphasized—though not, perhaps, sufficiently—the point that the ideology and practice of fascism were closely connected with the interests of monopolistic capitalism. But the much quoted words from *Hatred*—"the arms that disappeared without a trace when the Storm Troops were disbanded will be found in the hands of the Communists," and "advancing Communism will cleave its way through the fraud of Hitlerism"—did not denote, as yet, Mann's confidence in the German Communist Party. In the first months after his emigration Mann acknowledged the strength of the Communist Party, saw that it was the only party that had not lost its head or its man-power under the conditions of a fascist dictatorship. But he could not imagine the practical possibility of a working union between Communists and intelligentsia. To him Communists were strange, incomprehensible and rather terrifying. The alliance between the intellectual, the thinker and the revolutionary movement of the masses would naturally seem to Mann the most insurmountable obstacle. He had always been able to hate, even before the fascist *coup d'état.* Now in exile he began for the first time to love, trust, and hope. Throughout the whole of his career as a writer, he had created the characters of either successful barbarians, Diedrich Hessling, and young people of the Bibi type belonging to the Weimar period, or the forlorn friends of good and liberty, like the Duchess Assi, Balrich and Terra, doomed to disillusionment and defeat or lastly, passive victims of cruelty like Unrat's pupils and Mother Maria. The problem of the synthesis of good intentions and good will, thought and action had remained for him unsolved.

Mann solved it for the first time in *The Youth of Henry IV* which was published two years after *Hatred. Henry IV* was Mann's first important work on a historical subject. Was it accidental that in his exile, Heinrich Mann, like a number of other important writers, turned to history for a subject? It does not seem so. It seems that the general appeal of historical subjects to German anti-fascist writers is not to be explained merely by a need to ponder on the destinies of mankind, to survey in a new light the cardinal questions of its history. It may also be attributed to the fact that the writers for whom "the time is out of joint" after the upheaval they have lived through, find it easier to make the new estimate of values demanded of them by the epoch on the basis not of contemporary life but of historical material which is

In contrast to other anti-fascist writers Heinrich Mann is against the free
further removed and presents a clearer picture.
it is true, but this is explained by the general humanistic setting of the novel.
treatment of historical truth. He gives a highly idealized portrait of Henry IV,
The main tendency, the basic significance of the clash between the Huguenots,
headed by Henri Quatre, and the Catholic reaction of the Guises and the
Valois-Medici family is given a historically correct interpretation. Mann pen-

etrates much deeper into the real meaning of events than many bourgeois historians, who treat the civil war of the second half of the sixteenth century in France as the epoch of "religious war." In Mann's book, Henry IV is not a defender of the faith, but the champion of the ideas of a united France, of bourgeois progress and national independence. The novel unfolds all the time on two planes—the historical and the actual. It contains a number of astonishingly apt analogies, coincidences and allusions.

The base treachery of St. Bartholomew's Night, thought out on such a grand scale, and particularly the episode of the attack on Admiral Coligny, which was calculated to provoke armed resistance on the part of the Huguenots and justify the massacre, evokes the liveliest associations with the burning of the Reichstag. The leaders of the Catholic reaction remind one of the German fascist leaders in their general political similarity; there is the same combination of hypocrisy with debauchery, of fiendish cruelty with cowardliness, of religious sanctimoniousness with moral devastation, the same absence of principles, the same nationalistic bluster and the same fear of "what will be said abroad?" . . . The scenes of the massacre into which the petty bourgeois population of Paris is drawn by demagogical agitation, the scenes at the meeting of the Catholic League—at which the fanatics of the Guise party hypnotize and mislead the masses, playing on their religious feeling—these disclose to us the methods employed in the ideological enslavement of the masses in fascist Germany. The power of the house of Valois, based on the fiendish cruelty of executioners and the lies of preachers, reveals itself to be, like fascism, a violent but not a long-lived power. When he makes the Huguenots and Henry IV himself repent of their unforgivable softness and trustfulness which gave the enemy an opportunity of taking them unawares, Mann is criticizing bitterly himself and the rest of the German liberal intellectuals. When he shows how the Huguenots, n spite of innumerable sacfifices in blood, kept up their courage and prepared for new battles, Mann makes the reader think hopefully of the prospects before the German anti-fascists. Mann's Henri Quatre is a king who is by nature "nearer to the poor than to the rich," a king who played and fought in childhood with village lads, and when he grew up, felt more at home in the peasant's cabin than at the brilliant court of the Valois. And in this native, healthy, plebeian streak in Henry's nature lies the reason for his ultimate victory. It is true that even in *Henry IV* Mann does not quite trust the masses. He is, perhaps, too persistent in showing their impressionability and readiness to respond to any agitator, any prophet—including the demagogic and harmful; furthermore, some of the street scenes on St. Bartholomew's night remind one of the savagery of the *sans-culottes* in Dickens' *Tale of Two Cities*. But the masses, though capable of making a mistake, and capable of giving way to both good and evil feelings, still prove to be on the side of the good and the wise—that is, on the side of Henry.

In the person of the king, Mann not only gives us for the first time in his life the figure of a militant and victorious humanist, and achieves a synthesis of will and action, but for the first time attempts to create a character linked with the people. Balrich and Terra were defeated because they were alone. Henry IV is victorious because he has the people behind him. This is the great piece of wisdom that Heinrich Mann has attained to during his exile. This wisdom exercised a very beneficial influence on the artistic qualites of the novel. *Henry IV*, alongside *The Faithful Subject*, is Mann's second creative peak. But the strength of *The Faithful Subject* lay only in the strength of hatred, whereas *Henri Quatre* is strong both in hatred and love. It is Mann's first book where the peculiar coldness of the author is not felt, and where the

usual distance between the author and his heroes is not kept. As regards its literary merit it differs considerably from anything Mann has ever written. The heroes of his earlier works were often either romantically idealized or, on the contrary, caricatured. Even the most realistic of his heroes, Diedrich Hessling, not to mention Unrat or the heroes in *Society People,* is a purely satirical and grotesque figure, almost a mask. While Mann was in close touch with the Expressionists a tendency to extreme generalization, bordering on the schematic, was felt in his books. Lastly, those about the Weimar Republic were always extremely overloaded, the narrative was muddled and sometimes even split up into two planes—the actual and the half imaginery.

Mann was always consciously drawn to the social-realistic novel, but his realism was to a greater or lesser extent weakened by his one-sided and negative outlook on life. With tormenting clearness he saw barbarity, oppression, social injustice, but he never believed that his dream of the triumph of genuine humanitarianism would be realized. Therefore he was much stronger at criticizing than at asserting; therefore he created a whole gallery of vivid negative types, and satirical caricatures, without a single great positive type, for all his positive heroes met with defeat. Both the hopelessly pessimistic conclusions of the novels about the Empire and the forced happy endings of the novels about the Republic bear witness to this basic contradiction in Mann's philosophy, to the fact that he, though indignant and protesting, did not know with what to oppose the object of his hatred—the capitalist world.

The most important changes for the better that occurred in Mann's philosophy in recent years are determined above all by his discovery of the force that is destined to rescue and free mankind. He found the embodiment of his old dreams of "the man grown upright," of a humanist capable of victory, he found it in the "new German formation"—the German Communists. This gave his work for the first time the traits of heroic, life-asserting realism.

In *Henri Quatre,* written when Mann was approaching the solution of the problems that had tormented him all his life, he freed himself from the unnecessary, intentional complexity common to his earlier works. The construction and character drawing of the novel are of that sound realistic simplicity and clearness which always shows depth of content. Parts of *Henri Quatre* remind one of the best examples of the classic historical novel.

The characters here are taken in all their richness and variety. Even such negative types as Catherine de Medici, Charles and Henri Valois and Henri de Guise are endowed with individual, human features that render them convincing; their evil-doing is comprehensible. Henry IV, in spite of the fascination of this figure, is not only a militant humanist but also a man to whom nothing human, including many common failings, can be foreign. And—what is particularly new in Mann—his Henry IV is shown as growing and becoming stronger under the blows life deals him. Henry IV is Mann's best hero, whom the author loves and for whom one has no occasion to feel pity.

"A revolutionary philosophy makes it possible to think more cheerfully and more mercifully of people than their behavior seems to call for," Mann wrote not long ago regarding a book by Becher. He thought of his own Henry IV cheerfully and mercifully. Only when he became an anti-fascist did Mann discover a positive type of hero.

*The Youth of Henry IV* is Mann's first work with a genuine and not a forced happy ending, his first work that emanates a bracing atmosphere of faith in victory. The hard trial of life in exile has made Mann an optimist.

*The Youth of Henry IV* is an important turning point in Mann's develop-

ment as a writer. A no less important turning point in the development of his ideas is his journalistic book: *The Day Will Come (Es kommt der Tag),* which was published last year. Along with mordant satirical sketches of fascist everyday life, writing that is reminiscent of the most bitter pages of *Hatred,* there is a great deal that is new in the recently published book.

On the first page we read the name Rudolf Claus—a Communist who with head held high and serene brow, mounted the scaffold. Mann has begun to see the Communists in a new light.

Two events that occurred in the summer of 1935 exercised a great deal of influence over honest intellectuals throughout the world: they were the Paris Congress and soon afterwards Comrade Dimitrov's appeal at the Seventh Congress of the Communist International to form a united People's Front.

Heinrich Mann ceased to feel lonely. Before him a wide field of activity opened. Around him gathered a circle of friends, fellow workers, fellow fighters. And in his book, *The Day Will Come,* he signalizes as an event of the greatest importance, the first attempts to establish a People's Front among the German anti-fascist emigrants. He devotes lines full of genuine enthusiasm to the services of the Communists, the initiators of the United People's Front "The Communists have been more active than anyone else, — which is easily explained—in overcoming the schism. . . . They are conquered but not quelled. The Communists comprise the younger ranks of German Socialism They do not need to delve into the depths of the history of the proletariat for their inspiration; living actuality endows them with strength. They know a country that is their justification and a witness to their rightness. There rises the might of the Soviet Union—the might of a whole continent that towers above the very limited and very doubtful power of an average country which, being in a state of decay, assumes an air of importance and attempts to rescue world capitalism. The outlook of the German Communists is hardly what one would expect to find in the conquered." In another passage in the book he says: "We shall not forget that someone else had to appeal to us to form a People's Front: it was done by the Communist International, Stalin and the *Front Populaire* of France. They are all anxious about our fate as well as their own. Either there will be a German union of all the elements that comprise the people, or there will be a still greater decline in our country and in others that used to form, together with her, one circle of culture; and, lastly and inevitably, a war. We have been told this and we shall not forget what we have been told. Let us now, outside Germany, prepare our own people's state with the help of our heads, our wills and our unity."

All must unite—"believers and thinkers, democrats and Socialists, workers and intellectuals," in the struggle for a German people's state. Common hatred of the fascist barbarians and love for their humiliated and suffering country should rally them all.

"The interests of the class struggle of the proletariat against its native exploiters and oppressors are in no contradiction whatever to the interests of a free and happy future of the nation. On the contrary, the Socialist revolution will signify the *saving of the nation* and will open up to it the road to loftier heights. By *the very fact* of building at the present time its class organizations and consolidating its positions, by the very fact of fighting for the overthrow of capitalism, the working class is fighting for the future of the nation."

These words uttered by Dimitrov at the Seventh Congress of the Communist International, produced a powerful impression on the allies of the proletariat —the anti-fascist intellectuals.

Heinrich Mann, who, during the imperial regime, sneered at official patriotism and always, out of a feeling of contrariness when confronted with the chauvinism of the bourgeoisie, emphasized the fact that he was a cosmopolitan and a Francophile, has now, while an emigrant, come to the conclusion that one may be an internationalist and still love one's country deeply. In *The Day Will Come* he turns for the first time to the German cultural tradition. The book bears the sub-title: "A German Anthology." It includes a number of extracts selected from the classics of German thought—Schiller, Humboldt and Kant—that sound as though written about the present day. Even some of Neitzsche's opinions are used by Mann against the fascists.

Mann ponders deeply on problems of German history. True, the historical part of his book contains, along with many extremely profound and apt thoughts, some very controversial assertions. His estimate of Bismarck, in contradiction to history, is that he was an entirely progressive character. Then Mann very unjustly accuses the German people of having no revolutionary traditions whatsoever, in his opinion the Germans are "a people inexperienced in the matter of liberty." This idea is repeated in *The Way of the German Workers*; the struggle of the German people for freedom began, in Mann's opinion, only with the underground anti-fascist organizations, not in the great peasant wars, nor with Marx and Engels, but only with Fiete Schulz and Edgar André. This denial of a revolutionary tradition to the German people can be traced to Mann's earlier outlook, his former lack of confidence in the strength of the toilers of his country. During the war he paid no attention to Karl Liebknecht and Rosa Luxemburg and he does not wish to recall them. He never saw Thälmann in the Weimar years. In his evaluation of the historic past of his people Mann still clings to his old, purely negative and pessimistic views. That is why he forgets about the struggle of the German proletariat against the war, about the Bavarian Commune, about the revolutionary battles of 1920-21. He forgets that it was due to the self-sacrificing struggle of the German working class that the Kaiser was overthrown; he even forgets that the heroism of Edgar André and Fiete Schulz was possible because they had absorbed the best revolutionary traditions of the German working class.

Still, no matter how pessimistically Mann estimated the history of the German people, he looks cheerfully into the future. And—what is most important of all—he does not doubt that the place of the intellectuals is alongside the fighting folk. "The more the intellectuals learn, the stronger will they be in action and the more unity will there be among them. A passion for argument and a love of aloofness—these are the sins of unreliable intellects. This species of intellect was always easily broken by the powers that be and easily gave up originality if it seemed dangerous. A strong head does not yield so easily. Genuine individuality is not afraid of being lost in a collective."

On the other hand, the remains of intellectual aristocratism can still be glimpsed occasionally in Mann. He thinks, for instance, that "in a Socialist state even the right to vote should be granted only to those who have studied and passed a test." Mann urges that the intellectuals should study, too, but forgets that in the state of the future not every toiler will be able to shed at once the ignorance to which he had been doomed in the gloomy kingdom of exploiters. Even in the Soviet Union where, by Mann's own account, "the raising of law and its renaissance has been achieved where democracy and seriously thought out humanism reign"—even here millions of people freed by the revolution have first acquired the rights of man, and afterwards knowledge; the acquiring of culture by the masses is achieved on the basis of their sharing in the government of the country. But Mann agrees that the question of how

the new people's Socialist state that is coming in place of the fascist dictatorship will look is not the most important just now. It is much more important to know what to do at the moment. And to this he keeps constantly reverting, particularly in his latest articles published in *Neue Weltbühne*.

In one of these he makes an insistent appeal to the bourgeois democrats to put an end to their "fear of Bolshevism" and join the People's Front. He analyzes carefully the various forms of resistance to the fascist dictatorship on the part of the German population and arrives at the conclusion that the anti-fascist movement may be assisted by various means and from various positions, even by defending the property of peasant smallholders or the positions of the Christian religion from fascist aggression. Mann acknowledges the indissoluble tie between the anti-fascist struggle and the fight for peace. "Now it has become clear that peace is the greatest weapon of revolution," he wrote soon after the Brussels Peace Conference, emphasizing that all those who do something to prevent the outbreak of another world war are fulfilling a revolutionary, anti-fascist task of vast importance.

The clear realization of the fact that the welfare of all nations will be won in the common struggle of the forces of peace and progress against the forces of war and reaction has raised Heinrich Mann a head above many European intellectuals in his estimate of the August trial of the Trotsky-Zinoviev terrorist group. "Since these conspirators were intending harm to the Revolution they should, in the interests of the Revolution, be removed quickly and none of them should be spared." Such was the retort of Heinrich Mann, a genuine democrat and humanist, to all who attempted in the name of "justice" or "mercy" to defend the Trotskyite bandits.

Heinrich Mann knows how to distinguish real humanism from false, real love of mankind from hypocrisy. It is no accident that just at the time when not a few of the intellectuals of Western Europe who regard themselves as advanced calmly contemplate the savage deeds of German and Italian fascism in Spain, Mann uttered a sharp protest against this bloody crime. Not long ago he addressed to the young Germans in Franco's army a burning appeal to refrain from dishonoring the German people, and to refuse to fight against Republican Spain. "Germans, put an end to this! Rise, it is high time! Even if no one else rightly knows the state the country is in, you know it yourselves. Your commonplace contemporaries are accustomed to think that the internal strength of a nation corresponds to the state of its armaments. But you know better, you know it is not so. You know that a nation morally crushed can never triumph. Acknowledge this and save Germany!"

Dwelling outside the borders of his own country, Mann now lives the life of his countrymen. He was chairman of the anti-fascist conference for the establishment of a German People's Front. In his opening speech he spoke of the growth of opposition in Germany and its tasks. His voice rings out across the fascist cordons, over the whole of Germany: "Arise—it is high time!"

After long years of unbearable lonelines, after a long drawn out inward crisis that hindered him from thinking and creating, Heinrich Mann has found himself as an artist and fighter.

**Jean Cassou**

# Cervantes

## *BLACK SPAIN*

The "black legend" of Spain is both over simplified and crude. Voltaire, in particular, and the Voltaireans, crystallized in Spain of the Inquisition all that in their eyes and in their language represented what was most infamous. It even frequently happened that, in associating themselves with the national quarrels or other quarrels whose meaning, through the metamorphoses and disguises of history, they no longer understood, they forgot that it was France that was the champion of superstition, fanaticism and reaction while Spain represented daring and subversive ideas. The same is true of the polemics of *Les Provinciales* where it is the Frenchman, Pascal, who stands for strict morals and religious passion and the casuists who are for the spirit of contest, psychological curiosity and human indulgence—that is to say for life. But the casuists were Spaniards, that is, hereditary enemies, and they were jesuits into the bargain, so that they were, by definition, representatives of the past.

It is the same with *Les Provinciales* as with the majority of celebrated old books. One admires them by faith and enjoys them by passing over what he finds unpleasing.

This is what Remy de Gourmont says and in this matter he has hit the nail on the head. The discussion, however, did not end here. On June 8, 1610, P. Mariana's book on the monarchy was burnt by the executioner. This work, *de regis institutione*, declared that " . . . the title of king has its origin in the will of the republic," and examined the question as to what was the best method of killing tyrants and gave particular preference to poisoning. This was enough to make monarchist France see in the assassination of Henry IV what we would call today the hand of Spain, or the eye of Madrid, and to lead to the condemnation of the book of this jesuit by the Parliament of Paris. One of his companions fell back into apostasy a few years later and was condemned in the same way; this was the learned and saintly Suarez, who was so unfairly ridiculed by Pascal and whose *Defensio fidei* violently opposed the theory of the divine right of kings brought forward by the arch-heretic James I of England. Suarez held, like Mariana, that civil authority could only be derived from God through the intermediary of the people. Such an opinion could not fail to appear scandalous to the tribe which, during the same century, was to invent the theory of the divine right and to identify its chief with the Sun God (Louis XIV). But even by the beginning of the sixteenth century Fr. Alonso de Castrillo, a trinitarian, had written in his *Tratado de Republica* that:

> " . . . all men are born equal and free, that no one has the right to command another, that all things in the world are, by natural right, common property and that the institution of private patrimony is the origin of all evils."
>
> "See to it," said Juan de Valdès at this time, in his *Dialogue Between Mercury and Charon*, "that there be a pact between the prince and the people and remember that if you do not do as you should to your subjects they are no longer obliged to do their duty towards you."

The Sevillean humanist Morcillo wrote that

"... of all forms of government the most civilized peoples prefer the democratic form."

And if the Neapolitans were impatient of the Spanish yoke this was largely due to the democratic spirit in which the Spaniards administered justice. An Italian ambassador wrote indignantly:

"Justice is administered in this realm without any distinction being made between nobles and commoners ... In political life distributive justice should be regulated in geometrical proportion, that is to say according to the quality of individuals, otherwise it is no longer justice.... But these ministers have but one weight and one measure for the merits and demerits, favors and disfavors of nobles and commoners, without any regard for the differences which nature and fortune have made between the former and the latter and which one could not more alter than one could alter the nature and customs of the whole world."

It is not without good grounds that the Spaniards and in particular the historian and sociologist Julian Juderias [1] have protested against the reproach of obscurantism which has so often been made against Spanish culture. To be quite just, however, it must be added that this "black legend" has been to a certain extent the work of liberal Spaniards. One must interpret it as a myth created for polemical purposes which is bound up with the centrifugal movements of dephilippization [2] which, according to the Portuguese essayist Fidelino de Figueirodo,[3] follow the centralizing, philippizing reactions in Spain, thus forming a complete, alternating picture of its history.

Keeping to the facts, however, and avoiding any violent or controversial views, it must be said that Spain—and this is little known abroad—has taken an important part since the beginning of the Renaissance in the movement of emancipation and humanism. This is a fact on which we must insist and which erudite Spaniards on their side have not ceased to study and put in evidence ever since the monumental work which the illustrious reactionary and traditionalist scholar of the nineteenth century, Don Marcelino Menendez y Pelayo, wrote on the history of the Spanish heterodoxes.

## *THE LIFE OF CERVANTES*

Miguel de Cervantes was born in 1547 and died in 1616. He was eight years old when Charles V abdicated his imperial throne, he endured the reign of Philip II and half the reign of Philip III. Sprung from the Renaissance, he saw the best part of the "golden century" in which he places chronologically, a little after Saint Therese and Saint Jean de la Croix who both belong wholly to the sixteenth century, but is the exact contemporary of El Greco and of Lope de Vega, and is succeeded by Quevedo, Gracian, Velasquez, Calderon and Murillo, who mark the period of decadence, the exasperation of conceits, of realism, of sarcasm and sometimes even of a reactionary rigidifying of sentiment and formulas.

In that new universe, in that enlarged field where the inelastic system of the Middle Ages broke up, Cervantes had the decentralized, wavering and atomized existence which was common to so many strong personalities of

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[1] *La Leyenda Negra,* 2nd. Ed., Barcelona, 1917.

[2] The term is derived from the name Philip common to so many Spanish kings who were, almost all, complete reactionaries.

[3] *As duas Hespanhas,* Lisbon, ed. da Academia das Sciencias, 1932.

that dawn of modern times: Columbus, Camoens,[1] Lope de Vega,[2] El Greco. Similarly the humanists of the Renaissance had been travelers incapable of considering their sojourn anywhere, except as a provisional asylum. "Knight errant of theology" had been the characterization Menendez y Paleyo made of Michel Servet. And Bonilla y San Martin called "Knights errant of letters"[3] those wandering stars Erasmus, Vives, Thomas Moore, the Cretan, Demetrius Ducas who, retracing the steps of El Greco, had left at Venice the platonic academy of Alde Manutius,[4] then in Spain, had been summoned by Cardinal Ximenes to teach at the University of Alcala de Henarés and to collaborate on the famous Polyglot Bible with Nébrija, Herman Nuñez the Toledan, him called El Pinciano,[5] Hellenists and converted Jewish scholars. Those diverse strayings, those interchanges, are a first step—and the European pacifist Juan Vives in all his works testifies to it—towards the formation of a Euopean intellectual who can exist above princes and peoples, an ideal figure that has not ceased, even in our day, to intrigue the imagination of liberal minds.

It is from the center of central and centralizing Castille that the odyssey of Cervantes starts: October 9, 1547, he was baptized in the Church of Santa Maria, the larger, of the Alcala de Henarés. He was the fourth of the seven children of a surgeon, himself the son of an official in the judiciary who had held office in several provincial towns. A petty, mediocre origin. The family moved to Valladolid, then to Madrid, then to Seville and then back to Madrid. It is in Madrid, finally, that we know him to have had some education. He studied with a man of the name of Juan Lopez de Hoyos under whose tutoring he composed some verses, in particular on the occasion of the funeral of Isabel of Valois. At the end of 1567 he is attached to the household of Cardinal Acquaviva, at Rome. This contact with humanist Italy authorizes certain conclusions regarding his spirit and his culture. Then he goes soldiering and on October 7, 1571, in the detachment of Diego de Urbina, of the regiment of Moncadia, takes part in the naval battle of Lepanto,[6] where he lost his left hand "for glory and justice." That was his great day as it was the great day of Christendom and of Christian Spain. Memorable and singuliar day for Christianity as for Spain, as for Cervantes: resounding victory, pompous and glowing victory, which marked the union of the Christian powers of the Mediterranean reconciled in a holy cause, and in which the figure of the Paladin Don John of Austria is exalted. But to little effect. For the Christian nations, in reality, seek only to devour each other. Politics prevails over the epic. And the cross continues to gleam in the heraldic blue of the sky. Cervantes, glorious but a cripple, spends the winter in the hospital of Messina, resumes his military service, takes part in new battles. Returning to Spain, to sue for the rank of captain, carrying with him flattering testimonials from Don

[1] Portuguese poet. His epic poem, the *Lusiads*, celebrated the enterprising Portuguese imperialism of the sixteenth and early seventeenth century. He had an adventurous career.

[2] Spanish poet and dramatist noted for his literary fecundity.

[3] Luis Vives y la Filosofia del Renacimiento, Madrid, 1903.

[4] Noted also as a printer. Invented Italic type. The famous Aldine editions of the classics which became classic models of fine printing were done under his direction and named after him.

[5] Spanish scholar of the sixteenth century famous for his promotion of Greek studies.

[6] The battle in which the Turkish navy was so signally defeated by a league of the Christian powers on the Mediterranean that the Decadence of the Turkish Empire is sometimes dated from that event.

John of Austria and the viceroy of Sicily, the Duke of Sessa, his galley was attacked by Barbary pirates. And for five years he was a captive in Algiers. Anew, his memory took the print of heroic and romantic images. The letters which he carried with him pointed him out as one chosen by princes; and that was what he was, no matter how miserable his condition. And this ironic misunderstanding intensified his misfortune, but inspired him to bear himself nobly and to show his courageous spirit. A slave of the Greek renegade Ali-Mami, he spun plots, failed to make his escape, and was bought by Hassan-Pasha, Dey of Algiers, only to be put in a dungeon. He addressed to the minister Mateo Vasquez a letter in verse wherein he preached a crusade. He called his country to his aid. And numerous plots, frustrated by the treachery of a priest, but aided, if we are to believe certain comedies and romances, by the agitation and secret sympathy of some Moorish beauties, kept him poised for struggle and deliverance, animating his comrades by his unshakable confidence and refusing to denounce them when his designs were discovered, taking on himself the whole responsibility. In the meanwhile, in Spain, the poor people in his family were pressing for help to him. Finally they collected the heavy ransom demanded. The Trinitarian fathers conducted the negotiations and, thanks to their devotion, on September 19, 1580, Cervantes was restored to his country. There terminated the epic period of his career. He was now merely a ransomed soldier, conquered, maimed and a petitioner. He reentered the king's service, produced some plays, published his *La Galatea,* and married, in the village of d'Esquivias, near Madrid, Catalina de Palacios Salazar y Vozmediana, who brought him a small dowry, in spite of the fact that, in the same year, another woman, Anna Franca de Rojas, bore him a daughter, Isabel de Saavedra. In 1585 he is in Seville subsisting by vague livelihoods.

A new grand folly then distracted Spain; the fitting out of the Invincible Armada. However, for the shrewd and the enterprising it was a wonderful opportunity for profits. Cervantes secured a commission for provisioning the fleet and rode through the cities of Andalusia requisitioning oil and corn. This undertaking was not without its scandals and mishaps; thus he became involved with the Inquisition which excommunicated him for having taken the produce of some church lands. He lives chiefly in Seville where he draws his salary and tries to improve his position, resorting to petty expedients. In 1590 he seeks service in the Indies, "common refuge of the poor of heart," but without success. Meanwhile he carries on his functions from which he derives as much evil as good, and when some irregularities are discovered in his accounts he is imprisoned at Castro del Rio. In 1594 he is given the job of collecting delinquent contributions, still in Andalusia. It is an unpopular assignment, which the public holds in contempt; he himself recounts it in his short stories. Discovered in new shortages he is sentenced in Seville to three months' imprisonment, recommences his wrestling with the revenues which directs his nose back into the ledgers, and pushes him further back into the shadows. Then he is ordered to Valladolid for the final auditing of his accounts. There, at that time, the court was in session. It was there, in an outlying street, that Cervantes installed himself and his family, to lead a sordid, needy and miserable existence; with him were his two sisters Andrea and Magdalena, his natural daughter Isabel, his niece Constanza, daughter of Andrea. Apparently his wife remained at Esquivias. His brother, the officer Rodrigo, who had shared his African captivity, had been killed in Flanders.

In September 1604, Cervantes had obtained license to print the first part

of *Don Quixote*. The book appeared in Madrid in 1605. Cervantes was then fifty-five.

Some months later a young gentleman was killed near the house of Cervantes in circumstances as mysterious as those so often to be found within his works. All the inhabitants of the house, which is today No. 14 Rastro Street, were in a panic; and the prosecutor entertained the suspicion that the cause of the murder might be one of the women in the house, perhaps Cervantes' sister Magdalena, perhaps his daughter Isabel. Eleven tenants, including the Cervantes family, were thrown into prison. Finally the Cervantes were declared non-suspect and were freed.

The court returned to Madrid in 1606. There Cervantes finished his account with life. He had finally married off his daughter Isabel but the husband died almost immediately. Isabel remarried, but with a complicated contract especially in respect of the dowry which Cervantes guaranteed and which involved him in new embarrassments. He entered some pious brotherhoods, took interest in a literary academy, published some last works; *The Exemplary Novels* in 1614, the *Eight Comedies and Eight New Interludes* and the second part of *Don Quixote* in 1615. On April 19, 1616, the year of Shakespeare's death, he signed the dedication, to the Count of Lemos, of his *Persiles and Sigismonda:*

"That old chanson, celebrated long ago, which began:

*Foot poised in the stirrup,*

I would not want it to be so much in time, in this letter of mine. Because I could very well start with the same words:

*Foot poised in the stirrup,*
*Anguish of death in my heart,*
*Great lord, I raise this cry to thee.*

Yesterday I was given the Extreme Unction, and today I utter my cry to you. The time is short, anguish grows, hope vanishes . . . ."

He died on April 23 and was buried in the Convent of the Trinity, just beyond Cantarranas Street, today Lope de Vega Street.

What had he known of literary acclaim? The theater which he obstinately followed did not yield him any success. If one puts together the comments upon him, that have survived, of the writers of his time, he appears on the whole to have been little esteemed. And, finally, at the close of his life when he published his masterpieces, he gained no real satisfaction from them. Nevertheless, his renown spread, crossed the frontiers, especially into France during a craze for Spanish culture. One recalls the anecdote of the councillor Marquez Torres in approbation of the second part of *Don Quixote;* he had met a gentleman in the retinue of the French Ambassador who pressed him with questions concerning Cervantes. Who is that man? How old is he? What is his profession? What is his condition? Before that fervent curiosity the Spaniard bowed his head.

"I was forced to answer that he was an old man, a soldier, a gentleman and poor . . . ."

## *TALES OF CHIVALRY*

A society which is crumbling and disintegrating assumes a legendary aspect in one's mind. Thus feudalism becomes a fable and in the heart of those who undergo the change a poignant regret is awakened.

The soldier Cervantes, the hero of Lepanto, the prisoner of Algiers, hankers after a time when noble exploits appear as something gratuitous, fantastic,

supreme. He himself comes into collision with a monstrous reality and there is no sorcerer to liberate him from the prisons into which he is cast for absurd and petty offences.

The dialectics of history would explain that it is just an invention of the new age which serves to fix and illustrate this fanciful picture of the dim past. Printing! It gives the modern spirit wings, but at the same time it crystallizes the past in a seductive form, vibrant with regrets and appeals.

How do the men who go about overturning human thought employ their leisure? By reading novels about chivalry. Listen to this fragment from the Dialogue of Language by the heretic Juan de Valdès.

"*Marcio:* Have you head them?

"*Valdès:* I have indeed.

"*Marcio:* All of them?

"*Valdès:* Yes, all of them.

"*Marcio:* How can that be?

"*Valdès:* During the ten years, the best years of my life, which I spent in palaces and courts, I did not find any more virtuous manner of employing my time than reading these falsehoods, and I found them so delicious that I could have eaten my hands, with them."

I translate this current Spanish idiom literally in order to preserve the passionate emphasis of Valdès' admission. It is a most singular thing, this striking alliance between a sudden invention which seems destined to effect great changes and a retrograde sentiment directed towards an illusory past. The art of printing, before applying itself to reality and transforming it, creates above reality an ideal zone where all the chimeras which are dear to mankind are given free play. And there magical fancies are woven in great numbers, all carrying within them their potentialities, their mutual connections, their consequences, an internal logic, a necessity and a pleasure of their own. The eyes of the heart follow this hallucination and cannot tear themselves away from it. When the hallucination is at an end they claim another and the deception begins again. The will is lulled to sleep. We have here a regular case of fascination resembling the fascination which that other prodigious invention, that no less revolutionizing form of expression, the cinema, exercises in our day.

The tale of chivalry is formed from a combination of very ancient lore, Milesian fables and Byzantine romances, with the remnants of the Arthurian legends which have become more and more fragmentary and reduced to lays, and the remnants, similarly degenerated into romances or transformed into prose and chronicles, of the great Carolingian epics. But it is a fact worth observing, and one that was observed by the historians of Spanish literature, especially by Menendez y Pelayo,[1] that of these two great currents of thought it was to the second, that is, the Carolingian cycle, that Spain chiefly turned. She resisted the Breton tradition except in Galicia and Portugal, Celtic countries whose similarities with Brittany have often been pointed out. There the messianism of Arthur merged in the myth about King Sebastian and his return in the future. It would seem most probable that it was from the Celtic and Atlantic part of the peninsula that Amadis came. The Portuguese origin of this story is almost certain.

Bonilla y San Martin, confirming the observation made by Menendez y Pelayo, observes that in Don Quixote's library of chivalry it is the Carolingian element that predominates over the Breton. That is, as we should say, the

[1] *Origenes de la novela.*

vulgar over the mysterious, the artificial over the living, the simple over the complex. No doubt the *Baladro del Sabio Merlin*, which is called in French *Brait de Merlin*, was well known to Don Quixote, who quotes from it. The famous magician even appears among the more or less burlesque fantasmagoria for which the duke's castle and park offer so good a setting. But there are in the Merlin legend some strange and living inconsistencies which defy the simplifications which the spellbound imagination seeks in tales of chivalry. To satisfy the automatism of the mind a narrative is required which, while being well constructed, is very elementary in its general outline and is founded in the last resort on the puerile and clear cut opposition between good and evil. It was for good against evil, for the cross against the crescent that Miguel de Cervantes fought at Lepanto. The living complexity of politics of course refutes this rigid manichæism and in the tempest of real causes and effects the minute figure of Cervantes, however much he wishes to be a hero of chivalry, counts for very little. But his imagination takes its revenge with the puerile, unfathomable, enchanting and magic fantasy in which the good, pure and innocent knight triumphs over the forces of evil.

This manichæism appears right at the beginning of the *Baladra de Merlin* of which the *Primera Parte de la Demando del Sancto Grail* opens with a council of demons who are leaguing together against the good and create Merlin to oppose Jesus Christ. But then everything becomes muddled and ambiguous. This Breton tradition contains hidden elements just as profound in their own way as the simple notion of good and evil. Beyond this dualism we have an inkling of the idea of unity which seems to underlie the subterranean doctrines. Merlin is not as at the first glance he might appear to be, a simple incarnation of evil, but is an indeterminate force, capable, under its many disguises, of a strange beneficence. I would not even be surprised if the symbolic tradition which is called alchemy and which on many planes, material and moral, deals with conflicts and struggles just as complex as the hieratical conception of good and evil, were what is expressed in certain passages of the Baladro.[1] But it is not these forbidden secrets which readers of romances crave for. The imagination wants to remain in the midst of the elemental struggle of angels and demons, of forces which are given miraculous assistance and forces which are gloriously defeated: the two hosts of which Ignatius Loyola dreamed when, wounded and stretched out in his chair, he read romances and dreamed of future exploits. I find the same figure of jesuitic polemics in the prologue of *Palmarin of England:*

> "And although certain people attack and depreciate these tales of chivalry, saying that they are a bad example for those who read them, they must learn as the sage says, that there are in the world two kinds of hosts. . . ."

Deprived of their profound elements the romances which will be popular will be compilations abundant in matter and meagre in spirit, which will satisfy a view of the world which is very simple and very puerile: such will be the novels which compose the sequel of *Palmerin* and of *Amadis* or the lucubrations of a man like Feliciano de Silva "the great literary industrialist" whom Menendez y Pelayo compares with Alexander Dumas *père*. They will provide food for dreams which is easily assimilated and a stage backgroud which no longer conceals any mythical significance. Their style will be

[1] For instance in Chapter XLVI and the following chapters where we encounter the tower, the battle of the dragons and other symbols of alchemy. "Know," it is said further on (Chap. XLVIII), "that white reveres vermilion and know that there will be great labor and that there is great significance in this."

pompous and formal as suits a mechanical form of literature, it will be like the style of a newspaper serial or of a melodrama, in short, of any conventional form of literature, standardized and designed for mass production and vulgarization. And the picture of life which these novels have to offer us is that of a workaday solemnity, if these words do not clash with one another: each day becomes a gala day and is lifted out of the ordinary course of events: there is nothing but tourneys, masses, feasts, rites and ceremonies.

Between this vulgarized type of romance and the romance with a mythical origin, heavy with confused organic secrets, at the apex of the two slants, religion and mechanization, between obscure collective mystery and facile collective convention, art is situated. There is a *chef d'oeuvre* among novels of chivalry, an artistic *chef d'oeuvre,* that is to say a living creation where the myth which has been taken and experienced is effaced, with its cortège of ancient enigmas, and where on the other hand the mind does not abandon itself to passive dreams common to all, but where a personal and strong-willed genius models the matter that is given to him, shapes it, circumscribes it, adorns it and gives it an order and a harmony of his own. The crowd, the community of men will, to their great satisfaction, find their way in this order and harmony but to do so they will have to take the course followed by the artist's individual imagination. This book is *Amadis.*[1] *Amadis* is one of the great events of history of world literature, being a synthesis in an artistic, and no longer mechanical and vulgarized form, of all the aspects under which a new age dreams the preceding age. We shall not concern ourselves here with the problem of origins, whose solution, as we have already pointed out, would seem to be in favor of Portugal. For our purposes we shall take the 1508 edition, the *Amadis* of Montalvo which is the earliest we possess and we shall consider the nature of its artistic perfection, its style, its conception of the world, its brilliance and its significance as a cultural phenomenon. In particular we shall note the apotheosis of *Amadis* which is represented in Book IV by the prophecy of Urgando, which reveals to us that the idealism of the tale of chivalry reaches the same delirious heights as the idealism of the neoplatonic humanists. And it may be here mentioned that it was Menendez y Pelayo who evoked Vives and Erasmus, the knights errant of humanism and the moral life. We shall hear later the reverberation of this discourse in Don Quixote's brain. Don Quixote, the son of the Middle Ages, is also a product of the Renaissance. He wishes to revive the former. But at the same time he aspires to a new existence and one of which he himself is to be the architect. He knows that during the times in which he lives the paths to glory are many. Although he gives the preference to arms rather than to letters, contemporary

[1] "It can be claimed," writes Menendez y Pelayo, "that chronologically this is the first modern novel, the first example of a long prose narrative conceived and executed as such, since the narrations of the Breton cycle are poems put into prose, amplified and corrupted. They are consequently a first hand derivation, a corruption of the epic story of which they preserve the objectivity and the traditional groundwork: that is why they do not appear isolated but group themselves into vast cycles, interweave and mutually support one another and together form a poetic world which is not the creation of any person but has arisen from the contact of two races, the French and the Celt. The case of *Amadis* is quite different. In spite of the immense number of adventures and characters, which frequently form a most confusing labyrinth, its organic unity is evident, not in the cyclic sense, but in the sense of the internal principle or law which rules all the accidental elements in a well constructed fable." (*Origenes de la novela,* tome 1, pp. CCXXIII and CCXXIV)

life shows him that the latter may also constitute a royal road. And the pastoral life, also, is heroic and beautiful. How many times have not he and Sancho dreamed of abandoning dragons and combats to settle down as shepherds and sing love songs! In this yearning for past chivalry, what is really important is to show the potency of an idea and the way man achieves his own renown. It is this theme of renown, with its theological and metaphysical background of the after life, that Unamuno has made the guiding thread of his commentary. But let us turn to Urgando's prophecy:

> "Begin a new life then, and take care to govern rather than to fight battles as you have done heretofore. . . . Leave arms to those for whom the supreme judge decrees great victories. For your feats of arms, so famed throughout the world, will remain dead amongst their own; and the ignorant will say that the son killed the father, but I say that it was by no means that natural death to which we are all due, but rather to that one which, passing through all other worse dangers and all other worse torments, wins such glory that the glory of men of the past is forgotten and if anything remains of it it is neither glory nor renown but only their shadow." [1]

With *Amadis* and its idealism the romance of chivalry reaches its zenith. In it a synthesis crystallizes out in which the themes of the past are reborn in the ambitions of the present. After this poets get down to work and take it as material for their art. Irony or melancholy are infused into it, according to the temperament of the artist: Ariosto or Tasso. And according to the humor of the age: the jubilation of the Renaissance or the contradictory and decadent lyricism of the Baroque. The artist no longer believes in fables: he utilizes them, either amusing himself or consoling himself with them.

But in the case of Don Quixote art is not sufficient for his appetite. He is not a dreamer, a playboy or a dilettante. He is a man and a man who is torn asunder. Furthermore it is not works of art and poems, not misty oracles and first sources that he loves in his heart, so much as puerile and invented stories. He wants to intoxicate himself and drown his senses with them. He needs this pageant of dream shapes, this luscious reality of the world of fable, which lulls his critical faculty to sleep and provides a browsing ground for his somnambulent fancy. And his creator Cervantes will have lived a whole existence—and what an eventful and stormy existence!—dreaming of being able to write one day, in his turn, a romance of chivalry equal to all these. But what am I saying, equal? Better than all these! More fantastic, more extravagant. For it is true that in writing Don Quixote Cervantes was satirizing tales of chivalry. But at the bottom of his heart he was after all a writer of tales of chivalry himself. He only lacked the courage to write one. And the time perhaps. For one finds the time to write a satire of what one loves, that is to say to adapt oneself to life. But he who admits what he loves is lost. He is accepting the fact that he no longer dare face men's ridicule. He is giving his secret away and breaking his own heart. Thus Cervantes did not write his real book until the eve of his death and he died before it was published. "With his foot in the stirrup and the anguish of death in his heart. . . ." he wrote *Los trabajos de Persiles y Sigismunda* and gave his secret away.

Much has been talked in our day about automatic writing. It is perhaps in this fascinating, intoxicating literature of chivalry that automatic writing has been given freest rein. Its flights of imagination, as the canon says in Don Quixote:

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[1] *Amadis de Guala* IV, Part LII.

". . . . offer a wide and spacious field where the pen can wander without the slightest constraint."

And as he lets his pen run recklessly on Cervantes lives his adventures. Not those which he could expect to encounter at this stage of his real existence, and not even the exploits of Lepanto and the convict prison at Algiers. For they were followed by the imprisonments of La Manche and so many ridiculous misfortunes. But adventures of fabulous times which are now over and done with. Over and done with? Now it is Don Quixote that becomes irritated and exasperated. What! Yes, over and done with, for the giants are windmills and the castle is an inn whose landlord demands payment in hard cash. Impossible! Don Quixote will revive the times that have passed, will make them live again in flesh and blood, will accomplish the miracle which in our days another somnambulist, vacillating in the same way on the verge of two epochs, will attempt and call *La recherche du temps perdu.*

A seventeenth century writer tells the following anecdote which shows the ardor with which people read about knights errant and the adventures of olden times:

"A gentleman, on returning home, found his wife, his daughters and his servants in tears. He was greatly surprised and asked them in much distress whether some child or relation had died. They replied through their sobs that they had not. His puzzlement increased and he cried: Then what are you crying about? They answered: Amadis is dead." [1]

We find it a bitter-sweet experience reading stories which witness the transition from one epoch to another entirely different one. We call to mind in this connection the enigmatic statement of that sailor of antiquity who heard it announced that the Great Pan was dead. Don Quixote armed himself to the teeth with the idea of recommencing exploits whose insubstantial shades beckoned to him from the depths of the ages. But it was a new age that he came up against. Amadis is dead, just as the Great Pan died. Those days are lost for ever.

## *DESTINY*

The hierarchical order of society represented by feudalism and the corporations was succeeded by an enlarged world, without fixed forms, in which the rise of capitalism enabled very various individualities to flourish. As a result, henceforward each person has his prospects, each has his destiny. Each has his intellectual view of the world and each also discovers his methods of attacking this world or of enduring it. The knights errant who set off for the wars only encountered adventures according to a pre-arranged ritual. Don Quixote in Chapter XXI of Part I makes the following statement to the astonished Sancho with his eyes shut:

"Do not doubt it, Sancho, it is in this manner and by the means I have recounted that knights errant attain the ranks of kings and emperors. . . ."

Thus the characters of medieval literature are not individuals, they are types. Their course is also marked out for them. There is the monk, the merchant, the hermit and the saint. Tristan—again a Celt—is perhaps the only

[1] Francisco de Portugal: *Arte de galanteria,* 1670, quoted by Menendez y Pelayo in *Origenes de la novela* t. 1. CCXXXVI.

one who escapes from the ready-made windmills and whose passion, which is fatal to order, is revolutionary. (On the subject of the meaning of Tristan there is a curious book by Adrienne Sahnque, *les Dogmes sexuels,* Paris, Alcan, 1932.)

Henceforth men, flung violently out of their framework by centrifugal forces, traverse a planet which they have discovered is vast and know to be mobile, and find themselves face to face with reality. Cervantes' yearning for the shadows of the past revives the automatic adventures. But his personal experience, on the other hand, makes him produce the kind of story in which the most varied and contradictory fortunes play their part for and against reality.

For this new philosophy, this realist philosophy, which has to be constructed, Cervantes borrows maxims of the Stoics, taken up again by the moralists of his time, for whom it is one of the questions of the day as to how far we are architects of our fate. This theme frequently occurs with Cervantes, and Cervantes' emphasis, and what we know of his personal adventures, and also what we know from other sources of how strongly he was lured by the past, all lend to his declarations a value which could not be attributed to what, in another, would be merely commonplace. It is here that the real heroism of Cervantes shines forth, his *amor fati* and at the same time his faith in man.

When a moralist affirms that man is the architect of his fate—*"artifice de su ventura,"* in Don Quixote's words, this is a truism which has meaning only according to the character of the person who pronounces it. When this person is Cervantes, an essentially dialectic genius, this expression acquires its full driving power, its full value and efficacy. Cervantes had dreamed of abandoning himself to the soothing caresses of the past. But he had also suffered, he had been buffeted by fortune and he had remained patient and firm. That is why we must pay very respectful attention when in Persiles he says:

> "We forge our own destiny and there is not a soul who is not capable of coming into his own."

And in the *Voyage to Parnassus,* which is his own confession and the place where he has spoken about himself with the greatest freedom, he tells his story and avows himself a poet with all the passive resignation that this term involves. After Apollo has addressed him Poetry appears, glittering with the colors of spring, and offers the poor poet the laurels of consolation. But poetry is not only consolation, illusory consolation. It is expression. Expression of an experience that has been lived, expression that is sublime and shared, that reasons with other men's hearts and in which these latter also discover their own adventure. Cervantes projected his desires beyond himself, but he also faced them with the reality of which he had gained intimate knowledge by getting thoroughly embroiled in life. His work is that of a man who is under constraint but is yet a vagabond and it is made up of this constraint and this vagabondage. The old social order has broken up and as a result the religious order, that link uniting the whole system of men and things, has snapped. The new man thus finds himself obliged to question himself. "To be or not to be?" he asked through the lips of Hamlet. When he was part of a system he had no occasion to ask himself this question. But now he is, on his own merits. Unless, being unable to replace himself in the system he falls into the abyss and is no more. However, let them be. He is,

but what is he? *He is alone.* The new man is alone.[1] Alone with his destiny, alone with the particular qualification which orientates him in a world that is worn out and on the brink of change. Alone and poor. For no sooner does man come to put the metaphysical question as to his being than he leaves metaphysics and adds an attribute to his verb to be. An attribute that is physical, real, economic. What is this new man, this modern man? Poor and alone. As soon as Don Quixote parts with Sancho and finds himself in the guest chamber with dukes he feels poorer and lonelier than ever.

Unamuno here exclaims at this point in his commentary:

> "What a magnificent bond the narrator has here established between Don Quixote's solitude and his poverty! Poor and alone! One could endure poverty in company or loneliness with riches, but poor and alone! . . ."[2]

It is from his poverty and loneliness, this terrible reality experienced, lived and fought against, that Cervantes derives the substance of his work. Realism, yes, but it is not sufficient to understand by this word the artistic formula which consists in observing reality from the outside. Realism which implies a constant participation of the poet in reality, lyrical realism. If he had not been so far involved in this reality he would not strive so eagerly to evade it. He refuses it, he offers instead of it his fantasies, the return to the past, the sorceries of the imagination. But at the same time he plunges into it, for the Spanish police are there, the archers of the Holy Brotherhood and the tax collectors and the judges, the bachelor Samson Carrasco with his good sense, the pastor with his good faith, and the niece who has to be maintained and the old armor and the worn hose of the poor hidalgo alone in the castle of the rich men. "O Poverty! Poverty!" he cries and his fortunes become linked with the fortunes of other men each of whom has a character of his own: Sancho, the honest, good, adorable Sancho and Maritorne who was really also as kindhearted as he was lighthearted, and who else? The men who pass in chains. . . . Who are these men? What is their destiny? Are not they also constrained, obliged, forced? Yes, they are convicts. *Gente forzada del rey.* "What! People who are forced by the king?" cries Don Quixote. "Is it possible that the king should apply force to anyone?"

Although neither his contemplation of the conditions which constrain him, nor his naturalist urge lead Cervantes as far as a conception of justice, his work is nevertheless the first in the history of modern culture in which one feels a breath of universal sympathy. And this is just because of the perpetual sense of the immanence of man to his own destiny. Even if this destiny does not succeed in triumphing over circumstance, even if it is a destiny that has

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[1] I have observed elsewhere (*Les Nocturnes de Cervantes*, Revue de Paris, March 15, 1935) that this feeling of solitude, which came with modern times, has been expressed in various places by the night theme, a theme which is to appear later, at another phase of intellectual crisis, namely, romanticism. Night plays a dominant part in Cervantes' work. He has chosen it as the background for the most agonizing and most romantic moments in his hero's fortunes. Of all the "nocturnes" scattered throughout Cervantes' work I would like to repeat here that the most beautiful, the most moving and the most musical is undoubtedly that at the beginning of Chapter IX of Part Two of *Don Quixote*, which tells us of the hero's entry into Toboso where he expects to find Dulcinia's palace, the scene, that is to say, where he stakes all to gain all and confronts his remotest dream with the most present reality.

[2] *Vida de Don Quijote y Sancho*, Madrid, 1905, 2nd Ed. Madrid, Renacimiento, 1914, p. 344.

gone under, it is always the destiny of a man, perhaps a miserable destiny, but never servile, a destiny in which man recognizes himself and which is full of defiance and dignity. If we take up, with Americo Castro, the gamut of ideas with which Cervantes shows himself to be a man of the new age, we see in his theory of error applied no longer to the intellectual plane but to the moral and practical plane, the plane of what the Marxists call *praxis,* that error is itself a manifestation of man, an integral part of man and that pain is immanent to him. The same applies to the notion of honor; this notion, which is so firmly anchored in the primitive social and religious system of Spain, we find with Cervantes loses its ritualistic and transcendental rigidity. This rigidity will be revived again fifty years later in the plays of Calderon, which are the works of a retrograde, reactionary and decadent genius and which are like revivals of the sacred tragedy in all its barbaric and priestly splendor. But Cervantes, setting aside all the reserves that his caution demands of him and without making him out to be an audacious thinker, a philosopher whose anticipations are ahead of his time, but leaving him instead in the rank of a man of his day, who nevertheless expressed his worldly experience with tremendous power, cannot be said to submit to any transcendental authority.

He recognizes only the conflict in which man is involved, influenced by, and himself influencing, the real. Thus in the notion of honor, which is a mystical notion, he sees simply the sense that a man has of his personal dignity and the merits of his own actions. Everywhere Cervantes, freed from superstitions and this without any blowing of trumpets or outward show, without even any theoretical explanation to speak of, shows himself, merely by his manner of communicating his experience, to be the first of the moderns.

## *THE PICARO*

He does not talk about justice or mercy or rebellion, his maxims are borrowed from moralists who were fairly widely read at the time. But there is this breath of universal sympathy in his characters, this marvelous vitality, this fresh virgin sense of existence, an incurable affection for independence, a leaning towards the happy life which is led by gitanos and gitanas, lovers, shepherds, madmen, adventurers, robbers and black sheep.

The frail and dancing silhouette of Précieuse, the little Bohemian girl, rises up as she taps her tambourine and casts the notes of her delightful song to the four winds of freedom. A few years later another vagabond, Jacques Callot,[1] an artist in the Cervantine mould, will in his turn seek in this love of the Bohemian life, refuge from the sadness of the times and the horrors of war. This is the starting point of a whole romantic tradition; the Bohemian myth with which I am also inclined to associate the names of Lenau and Liszt and which, in Spain, found its classical expression in the famous, and perhaps even too famous flamenquism.[2]

Caprice, unpredictable eccentricity of expression, improvization, the art of having an answer for everything, indomitable imagination, diabolic intractability, the deep song—*canto jondo*—the free song, the ecstatic song with all its trills, all its vibrations, all the excesses to which the inalienable tempera-

[1] French designer and engraver of the early seventeenth century.

[2] A style of Andalusian singing influenced by the gipsies.

ment of an individual may abandon itself, and the march towards the sun and the eye perpetually intoxicated by a perpetually receding horizon, the wandering course, the halt by a stream, the refusal, flight and flight again and the negation and the rejoinder and the divine indifference—it is in Cervantes that we find the sources of all these themes. It is here that we discover the first strains of all this music.

Cervantes' love of nature, his opposition to social constraint have two sides to them as is the case with all the other sentiments of this ambiguous genius. On the one hand, on the intellectual plane, there breaks out the joy of knowledge, the discovery of empirical reality, of sharing in the urge which penetrates the hidden forces of matter and is subject to its laws. But also on the ideal plane there appears this need to evade the social reality which has been put out of joint and is cruel and mean, the need for evasion which turned Cervantes' imagination before towards regrets for the past and tales of chivalry, and now towards the pastoral novel.

Nature is a new form of knowledge and a new form of action. But she is also a refuge. And that is what she is to Don Quixote and to so many lovers in the book who have been driven out of their minds. The only two personages of the Middle Ages who, as we have seen, had broken with the categories and norms of this system, Merlin and Tristan, knew this state of savage delirium, of anarchic rebellion, of exasperated solitude and the madness that seizes the soul when, far from human conflicts, it feels the contact of rocks and springs and green leaves. These men had been mad in the heart of the forest; and now, under the opulent Renaissance, the same was true of *Orlando furioso,* Jacques the melancholy of *As You Like It* and Don Quixote himself, who, in the same place, poured forth those extravagant confessions which so troubled *Sancho.* Here the naturalism of the Renaissance manifests itself in literary themes: madness in the forest, the age of gold, the lyricism of the countryside. And Montemayor's Diana, which is also of Portuguese origin, has the same role here as Amadis: it is the supreme artistic expression of these themes.

But Cervantes was aware of the new reality in a more profound and integral manner. His life and the most full-blooded and worldly parts of his work communicate to us an experience which is the great experience of Spain at that epoch, Spain's own original experience, the experience of the picaresque.

Here there is no longer any repetition, no longer any transposition to a spiritual plane. We have only man embroiled in reality, and a reality which is harsh and terrible; man buffeted and defending himself and in so doing deriving from the struggle and its living anguish a living philosophy, an expression of life. He no longer escapes. He no longer dreams. He is caught.

Miguel de Cervantes Saavedra was not a picaro, but he came more or less to the condition of a picaro during his lamentable career. He was familiar with the wisdom of rogues. He lived among them. The mysteries of Seville had no secrets for him. He knew the slang used by these people and all their tricks and artifices. He lived for long hours in the cavern of Monipodio.

Here again in order to understand Cervantes' genius as a "rare inventor" one must look around one and take into account that though he invented a great deal he was also a remarkably sensitive mirror of his epoch. The picaresque, just as the chivalrous and the Baroque, is a style of life, a manner of thinking and feeling, appropriate to the epoch and whose signs and tokens are to be sought outside Cervantes. What is so admirable in Cervantes is that he has united all these different styles in his work without omitting a single one, and has thus produced a symphony of extraordinary originality with

an emphasis which is all his own. Cervantes was a rare inventor and also a figure representing a whole century in its totality.

The picaresque morality, this morality made up, as Bonilla y San Martin has remarked, of a mixture of stoicism and cynicism, we shall look for in a large book of the time, *Guzman de Alfarache* by Mateo Aleman, of which the first part was published in 1599.

"I, Sir . . ." Guzman begins, and it is with these words that all picaresque novels begin. A man speaks and recounts his experiences. And what experiences! In what a world he finds himself involved! He has no illusions about this society.

"All rob, all lie—you will not find a single one who is a man to a man. . . ."

No literature has been more brutally lucid or more deliberately pessimistic than the picaresque.

"This is the way of the world. . . . Let no one hope for better times or imagine the past was better. . . . The first father was disloyal. . . ."

We think of Breughel; the Picaro comes back to him when he says of fish: "the big ones eat the little ones."

In the midst of this hell one can only follow one's star, fend for oneself as best one can, imitate others, and learn to enjoy the "usufruct of one's life" to use the Picaro's magnificent expression. This is the lesson which reality, that new and formidable power, teaches to man. "Enjoy the usufruct of your life," it says, for it is subject to no transcendental providence, to no providence whose ways are directed to any discoverable end. Your life depends only on circumstances. Wrest it from circumstances or come to terms with them. Collaborate with them. The real and you. The world and you. You are alone.

"You and I," says the rogue. It is the cry which is to break later from the lips of Rastignac, another romantic hero, sprung from the bosom of a society in a similar state of disruption. But the rogue of the sixteenth century does not strive for success. He is content to get something to eat. His chief concern is to escape the gallows. If he can do that he is quite happy. He does not work, he sings seguedillas, he performs here and there certain operations which are *non sanctas*.

" 'Monsieur,' Rinconete politely asks of the carrier whose acquaintance he makes at the Seville market, 'would you be a thief?'—'Yes, to serve God and good people. . . .' the carrier answers."[1]

It is with a kind of pious resignation that one must accept all the exigencies of this hazardous existence which is also a marvelous existence for it makes great happiness possible. "To enjoy liberty, to live in gladness. . . ." These are the opening words of a contemporary sonnet about the life of a poor *Picaro*.[2]

"Oh, Picaros of the kitchen, dirty, fat and sleek, feigning poverty, sham cripples, misers of Zocodover and of the square of Madrid, who pray to be seen praying, carriers of baskets at Seville, panders to the bully, with all

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[1] Cervantes, Rinconete and Cortadillo, Exemplary Novels.

[2] Damon de Henares, *Testamento del Picaro pobre.*

And how well Cervantes in his story entitled the *Illustrious Kitchen Maid* understands those two students who instead of going to study in Salamanca as their fathers had ordered them, gave their preceptor the slip en route and turning their horses' heads, took the road leading into that enchanting world which at that time spreads its meshes across the whole of Spain and whose map has been drawn for us by Cervantes.

the interminable crowd which is massed together under the name of Picaro, lower your ostentation, abate your swagger, do not call yourself Picaros if you have not attended two courses in the academy at the tunny fishery. There there is at its height labor combined with indolence; there are unadulterated nastiness, plump corpulence, hunger imminent, abundant satiety, vice without disguise, constant gambling, quarrels every instant, death at any moment, foul language at every step, dances as at weddings, scraps of song as in print, inflated ballads, poetry without action. In this spot there is quarreling, this way there is gaming, everywhere there is thieving. Here liberty is conspicuous and labor shines out. Here come or send many fathers of quality to seek their sons, and they find them and the latter feel as much their removal from this life as if their fathers were carrying them off to put them to death."[1]

Under Cervantes' pen the hell into which Guzman d'Alfarache was plunged became a paradise. There, at the bottom of raw reality, where society displays its most voracious and pitiless practices, a new refuge appears. The Golden Age which Cervantes projected into the pastoral ideal, the chivalrous dream, the heroic illusions, all this is found again, but this time with its possibility and true freedom assured in the picaresque life. Here at last order and harmony and just and humane law rule. From the cavern of Montesino we pass to the cavern of Monipodio and we attain happiness. Is Cervantes laughing up his sleeve? Is it all sarcasm? A new form of irony and equivocation? But how lovely everything is in the cavern of Monipodio. How gentle are the manners, though some of their appearances are a little violent. But everything turns out well. Even the policeman comes to an agreement with the robbers. And, after all, the principles, the codes, the points of honor, the superstitions, everything of which one takes stock among this band of thieves are worth more than the maxims and the morals on which the society of honest men is founded. Again there is nothing relative here: we recognize the theme, it is one of the most famous among those engendered by the critical irony of the Renaissance, but in Miguel de Cervantes' mouth of gold it gains a relish and a vigor that are truly extraordinary.

Here we come to the end of the dialectical experiment on which we embarked with regard to this unfailing companion. The ideal, the illusion, the somnambulent dream, the waking dream, the pastoral romance are rejected and abolished. Shadows and vapors. Cervantes is a poor man, poor, very poor and very lonely, in the face of a terrible reality which drags him from prison to prison, with his family, his petty worries, his bigger cares, the eternal questions of ducats and maravedis, his miserable lodgings, his unsuccessful plays, his unanswered petitions, his shameful existence. A sorry world it was indeed, this new world which others had greeted with such joy and which promised knowledge of the globe, of the human body, of matter, of life and the emanation of thought, the reign of nature and of reason. A sorry world which one probes still deeper when one descends into the lower strata of society among those whose resourcefulness and lack of scruple are their sole possession. Yes, the illusions are dead all right. What could Amadis do in the ill-famed cavern of Monipodio? And yet at the heart of this very real reality, the imagination is aroused once more and, with a smile, starts dreaming again; very good, the ideal of chivalry is no more, but the picaresque ideal remains, the golden age of adventurers and tatterdemalions.

[1] The Complete Works of Miguel de Cervantes Saavedra in English, Gowan and Gray, Glasgow, 1902, Vol. VIII (Exemplary Novels), p. 85.

## *THE GENIUS OF CERVANTES*

I open Don Quixote at random, I hit upon some passage of a dialogue between Don Quixote and Sancho, I hear their voices, I perceive their gestures and their faces. The book is not merely alive, stimulating and suggestive. I myself am aware that I have known Don Quixote and Sancho all my life and that I shall know them to the day of my death. It seems to me that none of my contemporaries have ever whispered into my ear discourses so endearing and so full of humanity as they.

The objects which Cervantes conjures up are no less true and beautiful than his knight errant and his squire. The roads, the walls, the leaves, the sun and the night, Spain itself, when Cervantes names them or paints them arrest all our senses and keep them captive. The animals too have their especial character and one feels their presence. It is because of this that one can say that Cervantes was an artist of extraordinary power, the greatest artist, with Velasquez, that his country has ever produced. Not a thinker, a philosopher, a mystic, with only one side of his character developed, not a man in the grip of his own ideas and unbalanced by them, stretching out into the distance to construct strange things outside of himself. No, but an artist. He was undoubtedly, as he himself boasted, a rare inventor who, in his imaginings, surpassed all his comrades in art. But this imagination caught up again by the real, then began to put true form together, to place solid objects in a vast blue airy space, like the one that the great Andalusian painter was to depict later in Madrid, and finally to make human beings talk with human beings. And all this according to the rules of the surest and most learned trade, as a poet who is aware of all the fine points of language, the suitability of terms, the elegance of rhythms and word order, the mass and relief of a word well placed, the words that give light and shade, that caress the reader's sense of touch, that ring at his ear, that repeat themselves on his lips, that get entangled and fixed in his memory.

Cervantes has thorough command of this science and employs it with unfailing confidence. He never has anything superfluous. He expresses himself with gravity, solemnity and redundance, in the Spanish manner. But never—and there are many Spanish writers of whom this cannot be said—does his redundance offend. A mystery of word economy prevents it from appearing useless. Nothing, I repeat it, is gratuitous or superfluous in Cervantes, not even his richness. For the richness of his phrase is an element of contrast and therefore of the comical. There is always this admirable, intimate and organic duality of his mind. Thus the language of Cervantes is always beautiful, sometimes even too beautiful. And it is in this very excess that the secret intention lies: one must therefore watch and attentively follow the flow of his phrase and finally listen, as it were, with all one's attention for the organ voice.

It is this demand for constant vigilance that reveals the great artist. With a great artist one must always pay attention. For if he has used a word it is because that is just the word he wanted. And if he has used this turn of phrase it is because he found it beautiful. And if he talks about a certain thing it is because this thing is necessary and significant. There is nothing more delightful than the number, the harmony and the fulness of a Cervantine phrase. To read aloud in Spanish the description of the armies which Don Quixote sees from the top of a hill martialling in the plain below when there are really only flocks of sheep, is to derive one of the greatest elocutionary and musical pleasures that it is possible to enjoy.

I am now speaking of the musical pleasure which Cervantes gives. It should indeed be emphasized that this plastic artist, this evoker of concrete objects, of figures and landscapes, this elder brother of Velasquez, is also a musician and that his work presents an entirely musical construction, with its long sentences whose tempo swells out majestically or suddenly precipitates itself according to circumstances. And when in the pastoral interludes the lyrical flow unites with all kinds of symmetries of the ballet and opera, the characters introduce themselves first of all by their voices as they sing some musical romance. Here Cervantes comes back to Shakespeare and is not Sancho's remark entirely Shakespearean when he says to the duchess who is astonished to hear the unwonted sounds of an orchestra in the forest:

"Madame, where there is music there could be nothing bad."

As there is always music in Cervantes nothing bad could be discovered in his work. Even when the poor man complains of life it is without bitterness and without malice. His smile is an intelligent smile which never broadens into a grimace. It stops short at the borderline of sarcasm which later, in the domain of the picaresque, will be crossed by the grinning and terrible Quevedo. The vomitings, the offal, all this magnificent color of bile and excrements which satirical Spain uses in its paintings, finds room in him but it is subject to moderation and never shocks. He is comic, it is true, he is familiar, he is daring, he is a master of irony and even of cynicism: and at the same time he covers his universe with a veil of exquisite modesty. I regard him as a man of better breeding than Rabelais, Montaigne or Shakespeare, more of a gentleman, yes, more of a gentleman, more refined, noble and discreet in the sense that the Spanish word *discreto* was used in those days—involving as it does all the finer discriminations of the heart and the judgment. And this gentlemanliness enables him to show himself as good without bringing any ridicule upon himself. Good to perfection. Cervantes' goodness is the most striking of all his traits. It is a fraternal, evangelic goodness which shines through every one of his characters. Maritorne is good when she brings the unfortunate Sancho a jug of water. And Sancho is divinely good when he mourns the loss of his ass. Behind the egoisms, self interest and passions, charitable potentialities are continually coming to light. It is not that Cervantes is duped. He knows there are villains and ungrateful people. As soon as Don Quixote turns his back the bad laborer, in spite of his sworn promise, continues to whip his victim and the freed galley-slaves stone their savior. But Cervantes preserves his even tone. He is not in the least disillusioned but is full of confidence in the power of universal sympathy and the triumph of the heart. Don Quixote resumes his untiring pilgrimage offering once more to all who wish to hear it, the lesson of his sweet and crazy wisdom. In an age that was an age of gold but also an age of blood it is astonishing how unknown to Cervantes were violence and vengeance and the pleasures of domination and cruelty.

# Writers and History

Over two years have passed since the first International Congress of Writers for the Defence of Culture, in Paris. There Lion Feuchtwanger, famous himself as a historical novelist, spoke of the problems of the historical novel as a "side issue" for the Congress. Conditions have changed sharply since then. The number of works by anti-fascist writers that take their themes from the history of humanity is increasing daily.

Heinrich Mann is now completing the second volume of his Henry IV. Bruno Frank has published a novel about Cervantes, Gustav Regler in his novel *Sowing* gives the heroic image of Joss Fritz, the leader of the peasant uprising against the feudal lords in the fifteenth century. But the German anti-fascist writers are not alone in turning to the historical past. Writers of other countries in increasing numbers do the same. In France, Cassou has written a remarkable novel dealing with the Paris Commune. Alfred Gernou devotes his novel *Carrier the Damned* to the days of the great French bourgeois revolution. The Spanish writer Ramon Sender has published a novel, *Mister Witt in Canton,* in which he describes the struggle of the Spanish people for liberty in 1873. A series of works devoted to the Civil War between the North and the South has appeared in the United States. In England Sylvia Townsend-Warner among others has turned to historical themes; and the list could be lengthened.

Soviet writers also manifest an exceptional interest in the historical novel. We might mention *Peter I* by A. Tolstoy and *Stepan Razin* by Chapigin, Tinyanov's novels about Pushkin and Griboyedov, etc.[1]

The revolutionary writers and those close to them are not the only ones to turn to history for their subjects. The most varied types of writers, representing ideologically the most varied groups of the bourgeoisie, including the fascists, are attracted by historical themes. The fascist particularly do everything possible to exploit for their own interests national historical traditions. The fascists calculate on exciting the chauvinistic and nationalistic feelings of the masses by falsifying and distorting to suit their own purposes historical figures beloved by the broad masses. Fascism in thus exploiting history attempts to justify the vileness and misery it has wrought.

The anti-fascist writers stand in no need whatsoever of violating historical facts, of distorting the principal features of the national heroes loved by the people. The heroes of the people are always those who fought for the liberty and welfare of their fatherland, for the happiness and well-being of their people. Such names as Garibaldi, Lincoln, Wat Tyler, Joan of Arc, and many others have lived in the memory of grateful nations and will remain living memories.

Thus it may be asserted that a real class struggle is being waged for the national heroes, and around the most significant events of the historical past.

Dimitrov in his report to the Seventh World Congress of the Communist International spoke of the fact that the fascists "are rummaging through the entire history of every nation."

He attacked those Communists "who do nothing to enlighten the masses on the past of their own people, in a historically correct fashion, in a

[1] One of the following issues of this magazine will contain material characterizing the Soviet historical novel.

genuinely Marxist, a Leninist-Marxist, a Leninist-Stalinist spirit, who do nothing to line up their present struggle with its revolutionary traditions and past." Dimitrov emphasized that "these Communists voluntarily relinquish to the fascist falsifiers all that is valuable in the historical past of the nation, that the fascists may bamboozle the masses."

These words of Dimitrov s may be addressed with full justification also to all anti-fascist writers. For there must be no differences between the Communists as the political leaders of the masses and the anti-fascist writers as "the engineers of human souls" in their approach to history. Neither the Communists nor the anti-fascist writers have any need to juggle history like the fascists. Both the Communists and the anti-fascist writers, in turning to history, must describe historic events and historical figures in a scientifically correct manner.

Unfortunately, there is still much confusion on the question. Many anti-fascist writers, and among them some splendid writers, have not as yet found the correct approach to historical events and heroes.

Taking these considerations into account, the editors consider it timely to take up in this magazine problems connected with the reflection of historical events in *belles-lettres*. The article by Knipovich throws light on the differences in attitude among the anti-fascist historical writers. The article by Startsev analyzes works by American writers, devoted to the Civil War between the Northern and Southern States in the middle of the last century. We publish the beginning of Heinrich Mann's as yet unfinished novel, *Henry IV,* and passages from Cassou's work on Cervantes.

To throw more light on the question of how to approach history in the spirit in which Dimitrov spoke in his report at the Seventh World Congress of the Communist International, we publish the remarks of Stalin, Kirov and Zhdanov on the synopsis of a certain textbook on modern history. We also publish a chapter from Gorokhov's book *Lenin and Historical Materialism.* This is devoted to a critical analysis of the views of M. N. Pokrovsky, and we publish it together with a foreword, discussing other characteristics of Pokrovsky's work.

A correct, historically true description of past events is impossible without a careful and detailed study of historical facts, without an understanding of the general interrelation of events and progressive tendencies of the epoch. Armed with this knowledge the anti-fascist writers, turning in their novels to the heroic pages of the past struggles of the people, may and do contribute greatly to the cause of the struggle of progressive humanity against fascist barbarism.

The famous contemporary writer Romain Rolland, in summing up bourgeois history and bourgeois historical novels, remarked: "History must be rewritten entirely, for it was composed by conquerors for the conquerors."

This work has already been started in the works of revolutionary historians, in the novels of anti-fascist writers. But little has been accomplished so far. To reshape in real images in the hearts and minds of the people the glorious past of struggle against oppressors and exploiters, to show in full stature the images of the leaders of popular uprisings, to show their spiritual strength, the beauty of their souls and their courage—what a gratifying task! It must and will be accomplished in the struggle against fascist falsifiers who are attempting to exploit the national traditions of the people for their own selfish class interests.

# Remarks on the Conspectus of the Textbook "Modern History"

In view of the fact that modern history, which is richest in content, is saturated with events, and also in view of the fact that the principal element in modern history of bourgeois countries, if we are to bear in mind the period up to the October Revolution in Russia, is the victory of the French Revolution and the consolidation of capitalism in Europe and America, we believe that it would have been better for the textbook of modern history to start with a chapter on the French Revolution. To establish a link with the preceding events it might be possible to have a brief introduction with a short outline of the basic events of the Netherlands and English revolutions, giving a detailed description of the events of the Netherlands and English revolutions at the end of the textbook of medieval history.

This means that we are proposing to delete from the synopsis part I (six chapters), that is, the whole of the first section, replacing it by a brief introduction.

The chief defect of the synopsis we believe to be the fact that it does not emphasize sufficiently sharply the entire depth of the difference and contrast between the French Revolution (the bourgeois revolution) and the October Revolution in Russia (the Socialist Revolution). The main axis of the textbook on modern history must be precisely the idea of this contrast between a bourgeois revolution and a Socialist one. To show that the French (and any other) bourgeois revolution, while liberating the people from the chains of feudalism and absolutism, placed them in new chains, chains of capitalism and bourgeois democracy, while the Socialist revolution in Russia has smashed all and every chain and has liberated the people from all forms of exploitation—such must be the line throughout the textbook on modern history.

It is therefore impermissible to call the French Revolution simply "great"—it must be called and treated as a *bourgeois* revolution.

It is equally wrong to call our Socialist Revolution in Russia simply the October Revolution—it must be called and treated as a *Socialist* revolution, as a *Soviet* revolution.

The synopsis of the textbook on modern history should be revised accordingly with a selection of proper definitions and terms.

The division of modern history in the synopsis into two parts we believe to be little justified and accidental, and without an understandable basis for it. We would consider it advisable to divide modern history into three parts:

Part one—from the French bourgeois revolution to the Franco-Prussian War and the Paris Commune (exclusive). This will be the period of the victory and consolidation of capitalism in the advanced countries.

Part two—from the Franco-Prussian War and Paris Commune to the victory of the October Revolution in Russia and conclusion of the imperialist war (inclusive). This will be the period of the initial decline of capitalism, the first blow at capitalism from the Paris Commune, the overgrowing of the old "free" capitalism into imperialism and the overthrow of capitalism in the U.S.S.R. by the forces of the October Revolution which opened a new era in the history of humanity.

Part three—from the end of 1918 (the year the war ended) to the end of 1934. This will be the period of post-war imperialism in the capitalist countries, of the economic and political crisis in these countries, the period of fascism and strengthening of the struggle for colonies and spheres of influ-

ence on one side, and on the other, the period of the Civil War and intervention in the U.S.S.R., the period of the First and beginning of the Second Five-Year Plans in the U.S.S.R., the period of the victorious construction of Socialism in our country, the period of the uprooting of the last remnants of capitalism, the period of the victory and development in the U.S.S.R. of Socialist industry, of the victory of Socialism in the village, of the victory of collective and state farms. We consider it a serious mistake that the authors of the synopsis are cutting their history short in 1923. This mistake should be corrected by bringing the history up to the end of 1934. Accordingly, the material, parts and chapters will have to be revised and redistributed.

It would be good to free the synopsis of the old hackneyed expressions such as "the old order," "the new order," and so on. It would be better to replace them by the words "pre-capitalist order," or, better still "absolutist-feudal order," and in place of "new order," to say "the order of capitalism and bourgeois democracy." When this change is made the so-called "new order," that is, the capitalist system will appear as an *old* order compared with the Soviet system in the U.S.S.R., which represents a higher type of organization of human society.

It would also be good to free the synopsis of the superfluity of "epochs." The "epoch of the Consulate," "the epoch of Napoleon," "the epoch of the Directory"; are there not too many epochs?

It seems wrong to us also that the colonial question is given in the synopsis a disproportionately small space. While the George Sands, Spenglers, Kiplings and others are given a sufficiently large amount of attention, the colonial question and the situation in a state such as China, for instance, receive little attention.

It would also be good to replace the formula "unification of Germany and Italy" by the formula "reunification of Germany and Italy into independent states." Otherwise the impression may be produced that it is not a question of a struggle for the reunification of formerly divided states such as Germany and Italy, but of the unification of these states into a single state.

On the whole, the synopsis of modern history is drawn up, in our opinion, more competently than the synopsis of the history of the U.S.S.R., but there is still a sufficient amount of confusion in this synopsis too.

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# Problems of the Contemporary Historical Novel

*I*

In speaking of the historical novel in the West I do not refer to the majority of the books that have appeared in this popular genre.

Relish in the "good old times," talented or untalented elaborations of historical settings, refined and insinuating gossip about great historical figures, all of this has existed and goes on. The type of historical novel of which Aragon aptly remarked that it had become "a paying trade," the average historical novel which has lost connection even with bourgeois conceptions of history, lacks any saturation in ideas, lacks thematic point, literary skill and perceptive value, and cannot play a part in determining the true nature of the historical novel in the West.

The above applies even more to the fascist historical novel which "even on the other side" falls below any minimum of content and artistic value, and is merely one of the minor variations of the whole system of falsifying history which fascist "scientists" are engaged in. Therefore it shares all the "specific" lying and falsification in a motivated retouching of human history.

The "methodology" of the fascist historical novel combines the glorification of all that was reactionary in the past with open and concealed slander, lying and falsification in a motivated retouching of human history.

The problem of the Western historical novel is raised by the appearance of a few books, whose meaning and ties to tradition and literary destiny distinguish them from the general stream of historical fiction in the West. Major Western historical fiction is simply one variety of the "novel of summations" which at present sets the tone of major literature of the West.

A sense of history, of the significance of events, a consciousness of the writer's historical responsibility in his own creative course, and the awareness that social upheavals become facts in his own individual fate are characteristics that mark the "novel of summations" of the contemporary West.

The sense of history in these works is often coupled with an unacknowledged presentiment of the end of "human pre-history." This explains the persistent desire to square accounts with the past, with the entire past of humanity; this explains the troubled revision of all established values of human culture. Furthermore, although this sense of the termination of definite historic processes often assumes the decadent and cryptic guise of "the end of time," nowhere do we encounter the perverse concept of an eternal recapitulation of history caught in a whirlpool, so typical of the symbolist period. Even the most inoffensive form of this idea—the concept that historical development proceeds in circles—finds but faint reflection in these works.

It is now evident that even for those masters of the West whose creative traditions are most closely linked with the art of decadence, the issue has become clear cut; it is the final issue. "The new social world, organized, unified, planned, where mankind will for the first time be freed from everything that is unworthy of man and causes him unnecessary suffering. This world will come. It will come because a high rational order must be established, corresponding to the level the human mind has reached." [1]

[1] Thomas Mann. *The Sufferings and Greatness of the Masters.*

These are the words of Thomas Mann. And they are especially indicative because it is in the writings of Thomas Mann that the clash between the necessary and legitimate attempt to settle accounts with history and the means with which the writer seeks to accomplish it come into sharpest conflict.

As heir to the humanist traditions, as a writer whose works are joined at their source to bourgeois realism, Thomas Mann could not fail to notice many of the existing contradictions of bourgeois society. But in his writings these contradictions, both large and small, are treated as static and absolute, as extra-historical dilemmas. This is precisely how in his art he poses the problem of the unachieved aspirations and the terrifying present of the bourgeois world—the problem of life and art.

It is inevitable that the bourgeois artist should regard contradiction as a dilemma. But the realists of the past were aided by their fearless historical sense which is inseparably linked with great critical realism. The great realists of the past not only felt the historic contours of their own time but understood what was specific to it, the particular contradictions and forms of social and personal relations that belonged to it. Therefore, the dilemmas they encountered were not outside the bounds of history for them and were neither eternal nor absolute. The great realists of the past did not flee those contradictions which they could not reduce to some unity. Therefore, by their incomplete and fragmentary picture of bourgeois society, that is, by the appearance of defeat, they actually scored a victory, since the contradictory world they created spoke the truth about bourgeois society.

It is this fearless and practical historic sense that the majority of contemporary Western writers lack. Fear of the historical process, of its contradictoriness and insolubility prompts them to seek ways to attain an illusion of outward unity. The same fear of contradictions in social development prevents them from seeing and understanding the class causes of the end of the old world which is inseparably bound up with the birth of the new world. And this blocks the way to a genuine and complete comprehension of the historical process. And since "fear makes gods" so in the concept of these writers some of the features of the "divine" appear. Hence the quest for imaginery values in the interpretation of human history, peculiar to many of the prominent writers of the West.

This is why, for example, Thomas Mann in the name of a new social order squares his accounts with humanity's past by placing it in a mythological sphere; and to achieve an appearance of unity resorts to a Freudian code. Naturally this tendency diverts him from struggle against the order of things which reduces man to a "creature tortured by hatred and fear."

In Thomas Mann's creative writings these tendencies were most strikingly projected in the trilogy *Joseph and His Brethren*. In his creative theory, as expressed in his *Sufferings and Greatness of the Masters*, it led to an exaltation of the Freudian historical myth. Of course Thomas Mann's myths have nothing in common with the fascist myths of history. In fact one may say that they take issue with fascist mythology. It is equally true that the deep loyalty to humanist traditions could not but be reflected even in that coded survey of the history of human culture which is contained in Thomas Mann's latest trilogy. But the point is that to substitute myth-making for the objective sense of history is defective in itself. A good myth differs from a bad myth no more than a "yellow devil differs from a blue devil." The very tradition of myth-making, which was common in Germany in the second half of the nineteenth century (Goebbel, Wagner, Nietzsche) is a reactionary tradition

and even the most perfect myth is a worthless weapon in the struggle with world reaction.

A real summation, a real revaluation of the human past begins at the point where the artist faces historical reality unflinchingly—as shown by Romain Rolland's *Enchanted Soul.*

The anti-historical tendency which in Thomas Mann led to myth-making is undoubtedly present in the other Western historical "novels of summation."

Is it not fear that dictates Feuchtwanger's words about "remoteness in time," "the uncorked flask," "the evanescent aroma of events that did not take place," fear, which if it does not make gods at any rate leaves hundreds of loopholes for the concept of gods? Does not the assertion of the superiority of good legends, of good fiction over historical fact, which is contained in *The Sense and Nonsense of the Historical Novel,* open the way to all sorts of gods? And does not this testify once more to the virtual denial of the objective existence of history which was implied in Feuchtwanger's speech? For the meaning expressed by Feuchtwanger more or less coincides with the meaning of the Russian proverb that the law can be twisted to suit any purpose. For if history is a "heap of facts devoid of meaning," which the historian or the novelist (Feuchtwanger identifies the two) organizes in conformity with his subjective whims, then the question of what he does to history depends on him alone. The reference to Nietzsche by no means saves the situation. If the past is unknowable and if at the same time "healthy life gives history a form" that fits in with the requirements of the present and future, in the long run this can only mean that we must struggle against bad fascist myths by creating good humanist ones. And given this denial of the objective existence of history the transfer to the past of contemporary problems and conflicts would appear quite legitimate. A heap of facts here, a heap of facts there —what difference does it make on whose "temporal" territory we build what we need? But the point is that for Feuchtwanger contemporaneity is not a mere heap of facts. According to his own theory it exists as a process, as a still uncompleted movement. It is precisely this contradiction in Feuchtwanger's theory that becomes profoundly fruitful for his practice.

The outlook of the realist artist is sharpened by the hatred of the humanist and democrat for the present-day forces of reaction and this enables Feuchtwanger to give a dynamic and lifelike presentation of that same history whose objective existence he denies in theory. The best example of this is *Success,* a historical novel on material of the present which gives a keen and typical presentation of many aspects of contemporary German fascism.

The subjective theory of the historical novel which Feuchtwanger expounded at the Paris Conference in Defence of Culture doubtless contains a wholesome kernel of protest against bourgeois historical writing, against the class limitations of its views, against its inevitably distorted presentation of the historic process. But instead of making a subjectivist "leap backwards" to personal arbitrariness (which will in any case be class-determined), Feuchtwanger at this point should have raised other problems, regarding the relationship of the class and the objective, regarding the class "subjective" standpoint of proletarian ideology which alone can create the full objective reality of history. Feuchtwanger's practice does not always get the better of his theory. Traces of the fear of history still remain in his writings. They may be found in other historical novels by Western humanists, in Bruno Frank's *Cervantes* and in Stefan Zweig's *Triumph and Tragedy of Erasmus of Rotterdam.* In these works the historical process becomes an endless struggle be-

tween two forces—the force of creation and the force of destruction, the force of progress and the force of reaction.

The whole of history is no more than a chain of events, a chain of episodes in the struggle of these eternal and extra-historical forces. The form of the conflict changes with the times but the essence remains unaltered. One and the same "evil" force was active at the dawn of the Renaissance in the fourteenth century Tyrol *(The Ugly Duchess)* and in eighteenth century Germany *(Jew Süss),* in Rome at the beginning of our era (the trilogy *Josephus*) and during the Reformation in Germany (*Erasmus of Rotterdam*). For these authors too fascism is the reincarnation of the same force, the recrudescence of ancient barbarism. Therefore it is legitimate to settle accounts with fascism with material of the past, to portray Roman "Storm Troops" at the beginning of our era or "whiteguards" in the period of the religious wars.

This concept is the result of that same quest for a facile but deceptive unity, that same flinching from the contradictions of the historical process which created the myths of Thomas Mann.

If this tendency were the only tendency, if it alone determined the path of the Western historical novel, the latter would never have become the significant cultural phenomenon which it is.

But in the historical novels of humanist writers of the West we encounter one profoundly correct and extremely fruitful tendency. They all fight the forces of contemporary reaction, with the "old but formidable weapon" of the humanist traditions of the past; they all resurrect the "old gods" of Europe who fought for human reason against obscurantism and fanaticism.

This militant, active championship of the greatest traditions of mankind is what makes the modern Western historical novel so important.

*II*

The feeling that the "old gods of Europe" must take part and do take part in the great modern battle against the united forces of reaction is a correct and healthy feeling. And it is also natural that the contemporary bourgeois humanists of Europe seek their heroes, traditions and ancestors in the great past of their class. The eyes of the modern writers of the West are focussed on these former merits, on the history of the struggle between the feudal Middle Ages and the new-born capitalist relations. The Renaissance, the Reformation, the Cinquecento—the time when modern science was born, when art reached the highest level since antiquity, when the power of reason, liberty and the harmony of human personality were affirmed with passion and daring—this brilliant prologue to modern history is worth recalling now.

"In the manuscripts rescued from the fall of Byzantium, in the ancient statues dug from the ruins of Rome a new world—Greek antiquity—rose before the amazed West. Its radiant images dispelled the specters of the Middle Ages. In Italy art soared to unheard of heights which were the reflection of classical antiquity and which have never been equaled since. In Italy, France and Germany a new literature, the first modern literature, developed. England and Spain experienced their classical literary age soon afterwards. This was the greatest progressive upheaval that humanity had ever experienced, a period which needed Titans and which produced men who were Titans in caliber of thought and character, in versatility and learning. The men who founded the contemporary rule of the bourgeoisie were anything you may care to call them but they were not subject to bourgeois limitations."[1]

[1] Engels, from Marx and Engels, *Collected Works,* Vol. XIV.

Should we condemn these people merely because their activity was inevitably transitory and subject to historical limitations? Of course not. And the contemporary humanists of the West are right when they invoke the past of bourgeois society, when they compare its wretched and degenerate dwarfs with the former "Titans," when they contrast greed, chauvinism and abrogation of the rights of human reason with the "splendid ideals of political morals, justice, freedom and civic virtue," (Heine) [1] which were created at the dawn of bourgeois society.

But even Heinrich Heine, who bitterly mourned the destruction of these ideals, knew that they were only "'rosy dreams," a lovely historical illusion.

The fanciful reign of reason, man's sovereignity in the universe, came down to the commonplace bourgeois world. Men as citizens lost their fullness, their strength and completeness of character, they became slaves, crushed and maimed by the division of labor. The theoretical "task" of the bourgeois world, which, as Engels points out, went beyond the immediate practical interests of bourgeois society, remained an unredeemed promissory note issued to history. This is why the modern writers' new oath of allegiance to the principles of humanism, to the traditions of enlightenment, is profoundly productive for their writing. It implies a wish for the immediate realization of "rosy dreams," it implies a daring demand for payment on the promissary note issued by their forefathers at the dawn of bourgeois society. This oath of allegiance implies the desire to reconquer the great heritage of the past, and it gives rise to that living hatred of all reactionary forces of history, a hatred which opens the writers' eyes to the true historical nature of these forces. And if, subjectively, the contemporary humanists of the West regard this hatred as their own private affair, objectively it coincides with the will and wishes of millions and with their hatred of modern barbarism, fanaticism and obscurantism. Thus the contemporary historical novel becomes an anti-fascist novel not merely because Lion Feuchtwanger, Heinrich Mann and Bruno Frank embody in their presentation of the reactionary forces of the past all their hatred of modern fascism. We must remember that all the historic conceptions of modern writers and humanists—even though they be wrong in many things—are mainly directed against the fascist myths of history. The hands of liars and falsifiers seek to desecrate the greatest and most precious names of human history. The European masters of culture reply by vigorous counter-attacks, defending from desecration the great heritage of the past, inalienable birthright of all fighters of the united anti-fascist front.

This militant, propagandist attitude towards human history explodes from within the non-historical character of the main concepts of the Western writers. The evil force assumes the real features of a specific movement and a specific era. The closer the subjective standpoint of Heinrich Mann or Feuchtwanger approaches the objective meaning of the events they describe, the clearer the real features of a particular period in the class struggle emerge in the conflict (posed by them) of the two extra-historic forces (the force of creation and the force of destruction) and the more strongly these writers display the features of a genuine realism, a realism which overcomes the abstract treatment of the material.

Feuchtwanger himself remarked that *Jew Süss* is based on the idea of man's transfer from action to inaction, from activity to contemplation and that this idea had been suggested by the fate of a contemporary, Walter Rathenau. Indeed the basis of the novel is the fate of a strong and predatory man

[1] Heinrich Heine, *Briefwechsel,* herausg. v. F. Hirth, Bd. III, Berlin, 1920.

of bourgeois society whose "spiritual" essence gradually overcomes "the flesh," "the rude shell" of man. Action for the sake of personal gain proves false, an "artificial dye" spread over the man's real face. But action in the name of just retribution against a ravisher and a monster is also "artificial dye." And before the body of his fallen foe, Count Karl Alexander, Süss is convinced of the fact that every road of action is a false road. And then in order to become "himself" at last, this favorite of an eighteenth century Count of Wurtemberg—Joseph Süss Oppenheimer—voluntarily surrenders to his enemies and dies a shameful death. It would be wrong to suppose that Feuchtwanger comes forth here as an advocate of "non-resistance to evil." No, Joseph Süss was not resigned. He was not prompted by remorse but by a profound contempt for life and a disappointment with all worldly matters—good and evil, just and unjust. The basic idea in *Süss* is not an "evangelical" idea. Like the Ecclesiastes Feuchtwanger wished to say in his novel that "all is "vanity" and that nothing in the real world should serve as the goal of human aspirations. And yet, the novel includes plenty of history, which breaks down this biblical invention. Regardless of the novel's philosophic implications, Feuchtwanger interferes actively and eagerly in the "vain" and "transient" affairs of the world. The little tyrant of the German feudal backwoods, Karl Alexander, the militarist clique strivng for power by all means fair or foul, the parliamentary bourgeoisie, ready for any compromise, all this was part of eighteenth century Germany, all this was the product of "German paltriness," the specific historical paltriness of one small portion of the enormous "manure pile," which was the Holy Roman Empire.

The play *Kerosene Islands* shows that *The Ugly Duchess* is also based on one of the timeless episodes in the struggle of the creative and destructive principles.

Not only the subjects of these two works coincide but also the plot and the main characters. In *Kerosene Islands* Duchess Margherita of Thuringia becomes Deborah Gray, the lady president of the oil company. Agnes von Flawon becomes the beauty, Charmian Peruchacha.

Heinrich Mann is wrong in supposing in *The Youth of Henry IV* that the entire feudal clique of the French court was simply a special "race of people," instinctively hostile to reason, justice and free thought; while these representatives of the destructive principle acquire the lifelike features of historical defenders of feudalism.

Thus, the present tendency in the reconstruction of the past charges the writing of contemporary humanists of the West with critical realism and a genuine historical outlook. But this tendency, so fruitful in disclosing the true nature of "the destructive principle," is far less effective when it comes to presenting the creative principle. How are we to explain the fact that in Bruno Frank's novel the portrayal of Spanish absolutism is more historically correct than the figure of Cervantes? How are we to explain the fact that in Feuchtwanger's novel the struggle of forces in the period of the late Renaissance is presented more historically than the figure of Margherita of Thuringia? It is because the real source of the "rosy dreams" at the dawn of bourgeois society remains a riddle to modern humanist artists. The connection between bourgeois humanism and the bourgeois revolution is for them purely a connection of ideas. They do not know that "the third estate" went beyond the immediate interests of bourgeois society under the pressure of the peasant and plebeian masses, who participated because of the "great, unforgettable" element that inheres in the theoretical and practical struggle for the emancipation of mankind. The contemporary humanists of the West are conscious of

the "principles of the Reformation," they are aware of Luther and Erasmus. But most of them overlook Thomas Munzer and the rebel peasants with whom the "forerunners of the modern proletariat with the red banner in their hands and demands for communal property on their lips" (Engels) first appeared on the arena of world history.

Beyond the abstract principles of the French Revolution, which for Feuchtwanger and not for him alone underlie all human civilization, stands the great shade of the "shoemaker, the good-natured sans-culotte," the people's fighter against the feudal interventionists, the hero of one of the most remarkable songs of the epoch of the first bourgeois revolution.

Modern humanist writers are sometimes taken in by the legend which the bourgeoisie has invented about itself. They are therefore muddled on the question that was perfectly clear to the revolutionary democrats of the nineteenth century. When Heine, for instance, wrote about the history of religion and philosophy in Germany he not only thoroughly understood the connection between bourgeois humanism and the bourgeois revolution, he also realized who would inherit these principles, who would demand payment of the promissory note issued by the "Titans" of bourgeois society. For contemporary humanist writers these principles were created by solitary "Titans" who lived before their time, and payment, the actual fulfillment of "rosy dreams," is demanded by solitary grandchildren who also live before their time. Contemporary historical novels thus produce the figure of the tragic bearer of the creative principle, the figure of the humanist solitary.

*III*

An old one-armed man sits in the debtors' prison in Seville. He has been through much and seen much. He lived at the Papal Court in Rome, he fought at Lepanto under the leadership of Don John of Austria. He spent long years in the captivity of pirates; he made three attempts to escape. Freed by the whim of the pirate king, humiliated and shorn of all hope, he returned home "through the back door." There new trials awaited him, failures in the theatrical business, humiliating love, humiliating matrimony, a long period of captivity in the village of Mancha more terrible than captivity among pirates. Finally he received a government post, stifled his conscience and joined the ranks of those who plundered and oppressed his kindred people.

The one-armed man forfeited everything—success and love, fame and fatherhood, even honor itself, the very right to be called a real man. However, failures did not break him. And in his declining years, in the debtors' prison, the time came to fulfill his life's mission. Before the lonely old man there rose the figure of a knight wandering over the roads of Spain. And his adventures were to reflect the entire life experience of his creator, were to become the book of a cause, the book of the people, whose spirit rose against the stagnant and dead world of King Philip II. The creation of Don Quixote was the meaning and justification of the life of Miguel Cervantes. This is the real work that contrasts with his life's dreams. But a work does not exist for itself. Its value must be determined by real life. A test therefore occurs. In prison Cervantes reads to his prison-mates how Don Quixote freed the convicts and tried to re-educate them with good words, and how the convicts laughed at him, threw stones at him and ran away: "a shriek of delight drowned out his last word. The candle flames flickered from the bursts of laughter. They screamed and slapped their thighs. The women were utterly beside themselves. Shrieking with animation they embraced and kissed their neighbors. Yes, it was a success, not quite the kind of success Cervantes had expected.

How was it possible? They saw their own lot, and a man in frail armor who ventured to defend them. But all they could find for him were shrieks of laughter. By laughing they justified their comrades in misfortune, who stoned their benefactors. Cervantes had not exaggerated: they proved it to him. And the proof chilled him."

The road of Josephus which Feuchtwanger has not yet traced to the finish is no easier. But this preacher, warrior and great writer, Jew and Roman nobleman, also sacrificed everything for the sake of his dream, his mission, Josephus too renounced fame, love, fatherhood and human honor that he might by his work help the merging of two worlds, two cultures, that he might become a citizen of the world, the first citizen of the kingdom of reason.

But each time Josephus takes a step towards fulfilling his mission, each time he makes tremendous sacrifices in the name of humanity, he sees nothing around him but roaring and laughing mouths, only savage mockery, the dull misunderstanding of the "senseless rabble."

The humanist solitary on the flimsy bridge between the barbarism of the reactionary force of history and the "barbarism" of popular spontaneity, defenceless, lacking roots of real life, linked only with the eternal principles of good and justice—such is the image of the champion of the "creative principle" in the majority of the historical novels by modern Western writers. This hero did not make his appearance in modern Western literature accidentally. Besides the reasons we have already mentioned there is another reason connected with the social biography and social destiny of the creators of these images.

If we glance at the pre-war work of the greatest masters of Western culture we immediately encounter the tragic sense of the futility of their work, the realization of the powerlessness of a word that has ceased to be action. The writer whose voice "sounded like a bell in the days of popular triumphs and sorrows," was a thing of the past. Those who "take the side of this or that party and fight, some by word and pen, others by sword and others by all these means" (Engels)[1] had ceased to exist. The will and capacity for action of the best representatives of bourgeois culture languished in the loneliness of individualism, in barren rebelliousness. In the face of the imperialist war, in the face of triumphant fascism, the battle-cries of the past seemed to them abstract academic truths. A few like Romain Rolland understood at the time that the old gods of Europe had left their historic stamping ground, that the legitimate heirs to all the indestructible, non-illusory values of the past, were now not solitary individuals, but masses—the revolutionary proletariat. And only for these writers did the old treasures acquire a new and real value, for the concrete historical comprehension of the theme of a new world in birth spells the end of the theme of the best people of the old world living in isolation.

For this only correct and possible approach to the problem of the humanist solitary, many writers have substituted laboratory experiments in educating their onlooker hero for action. But how is this onlooker to be transformed into a man of action within the bounds of the fatal solitude in which he is imprisoned? This, approximately, is the approach to the problem which we find in Feuchtwanger and Bruno Frank.

In Feuchtwanger's work this problem is especially sharp because the writer himself possesses the qualities of a good publicist, political alertness, a desire to participate in the action of life. In quest of a strong active hero capable

[1] Friedrich Engels, *The Dialectics of Nature*.

of remaking the world, bringing into being the "rosy dreams" of the young bourgeoisie, Feuchtwanger has literally explored all the strata of the capitalist world. Even in his earlier books, Feuchtwanger prefers to look for his strong heroes in the past of bourgeois society. This gave rise to his historical dramas *Calcutta* and *Dutch Merchant.* However, in spite of remoteness in time, in spite of the fact that Feuchtwanger did everything to dress up the colonizing mission of Lord Hastings *(Calcutta)* and Daniel Raule's dream of the commercial conquest of Africa (*Dutch Merchant),* his heroes remained major plunderers, capable of defending the practical interests of bourgeois society but far removed from the lofty "principles of the French Revolution."

In his subsequent novels Feuchtwanger transformed this proof of the unsatisfactory relations existing between the theory and practice of the bourgeois world into an eternal and extra-historical contradiction. "Those who act are always without a conscience. Only the onlooker is possessed of one." These words of Goethe are the epigraph to the chapter on the revolutionary activity of Thomas Wendt, hero of *1918,* Feuchtwanger's dramatic novel about the Bavarian revolution.

The entire novel deals in the main with one topic, how the loftiest idea can be realized only at the cost of such compromises as deprive it of all meaning and content and transform it into its own opposite. For this reason Feuchtwanger ends the account of the Bavarian revolution at the point where it really begins. He shuts his eyes to the fact that 1918 was followed by 1919 and that the republic of bourgeois neurasthenics of the type of Thomas Wendt was followed by the Bavarian Soviet Republic.

The historical inaccuracy with which the novel ends is also not accidental. According to Feuchtwanger the bourgeois reaction sets in immediately after the fall of Thomas Wendt. The Minister of Finance and the coalition ministry, Herr Schultz, the incarnation of all the depravity of the old world, becomes the head of the new government to the delight of everyone.

In reality bourgeois reaction came to Bavaria on the bayonets of General Hoffmann and the people were by no means "delighted," and defended the Soviet republic with their lives. The error in history in *1918,* becomes a literary error. The pessimism and intellectual bewilderment in the face of events that characterize *1918* castrate the book and make it the prelude to that exaltation of the contemplative man, which permeates the concept of *Jew Süss.*

Though efforts to find a hero capable of practically remaking the world on the basis of reason and justice within the limits of bourgeois society ended in failure in Feuchtwanger's writings, he resumed the attempt on another basis. The practical man was replaced by the thinker. According to Feuchtwanger's new conception, a man who can explain the world thereby transforms it. However, even in the sphere of ideology Feuchtwanger does not succeed in simply and painlessly solving the problem of the relations between humanist conscience and action. According to Feuchtwanger a book that inspires action can only be written at the cost of a compromise with one's conscience. Only by a compromise, only by a dose of conscious falsehood is Feuchtwanger's latest and favorite hero, the Jewish historian, Josephus, able to accomplish his mission. Josephus also stands alone between the "majority that is incapable of thinking" and the reactionary forces of history. And the road of Josephus is the road of external adaptation, the road of conscious submission to violence, the road of endless and humiliating compromise.

"Reason," as a subject, Reason, "eldest son of God," in the name of which one not only should not avow one's convictions, but even deny them if necessary, made its appearance in Feuchtwanger's works long ago. The words that

"everything contrary to reason is ugly" were first said by the wise Kugan, one of the heroes in the remarkable play *Will Hill Be Pardoned* (1925).

If the whole matter merely consists in denying that the activity of the thinker has any practical propaganda value, if he works for the future ignoring the interests of the present, this means that he will always be condemned to solitude, to life in a vacuum.

The fact is that the future does not fall from the sky. Its seed is contained in the present. "The humanist principle" which forever recedes into the future, derided, unrecognized and misunderstood, will in all likelihood remain a permanent specter, never substantiated. If Feuchtwanger's writings already contain strong elements of controversy, rebellion and struggle against such a concept of humanism, and in *The Oppenheim Family* he directly approaches the subject of squaring accounts with solitude and of the end of solitude, Bruno Frank holds this the necessary, the only possible and worthy course.

After the experiments with the "majority incapable of thinking," which gave Miguel Cervantes the chills, "he began to smile. He was surprised at himself. Why did he censure them? For their laughter? A Don Quixote deserved to be laughed at. Why should he be angry? But sometime—so he thought—truth would nevertheless emerge from his book, removing its mask, clear to everyone.... On the back doorstep of the building he decided to place the tiny key of his most treasured secret. Don Quixote's end is approaching. His friends surround him. Sancho, gasping, talks to him of new campaigns, of new exploits. But the blindfold of dream falls from his eyes and he says: 'Not so loud, gentlemen, not so loud. Last year's nests are not for the birds of the present. I am no longer Don Quixote de la Manche. I am again Alonzo Kixano whom they used to call "Alonzo the Good." ' Thus, after long years, he ended his book with the plain, all-revealing word, 'Good.' "

If in the eyes of Bruno Frank the great realist novel of Cervantes which equally exposes the ugliness of two worlds—the outgoing feudal and the incoming bourgeois, is no more than the "veil of Maya" in which the key to the external extra-historical humanism is wrapped, one can find the key to his own lofty dream in his recent public utterances. "Humanism is not an empty word! Do not let the loud mouths of our base age mislead you with cries of the devil and shrieking dervishes of some creed or other. Be truthful, be simple, remain gay of heart, jolly and calm through suffering and danger, love life and do not fear death, serve the spirit, yet not believe in the spirit—man has learned nothing better than this since the world began."

Such abstract service to the future becomes a misunderstanding of the present.

The unclarity of the conceptions of the great humanist writers of the contemporary West is largely compensated by their hatred for fascist barbarism and by the elements of a new critical realism. But among the books about the humanist solitary there is one where the treatment makes one demur.

In *Erasmus of Rotterdam,* Stefan Zweig carries to absurdity all the deductions that can be made from the proposition of the humanist solitary.

The humanist must first of all be far removed from every party. He is an evolutionist because the "spirit of humanism is opposed to the spirit of revolution." His task is to hold himself aloof between two camps, always remaining above the battle. He cannot do otherwise for "there is exaggeration to the right and exaggeration to the left, fanaticism to the right and fanaticism to the left." Revolutionaries and humanists are two "different races of men." The distinguishing traits of the former are "fanaticism, blind passion, impulse, nationalism," the distinguishing traits of the latter are "patience, reason,

culture, cosmopolitanism." The humanists are called on to defend the torch of culture which both tribes of "barbarians" on the left and on the right are equally anxious to extinguish. The mission of the humanist is that of mediation, to smooth the contradictions, to "serve the golden mean."

In performing this lofty function the humanist must by no means become the active champion of his truth. The symbol of the humanist is the "flexible reed," he bends beneath the storm of the right and the left.

Naturally, given such a historical interpretation of humanism, Zweig's general picture of the epoch of the Reformation is rather sinister. Against a background of burning villages, mutilated corpses, "blind fanatics"—Huss and Savonarola, Calvin, Thomas Munzer and Luther" dash across the stage each of them consumed with the fatal flame of "religious madness," proving to his opponents "that he is the one who correctly understands Christ." And towering over all of them, receding slightly in the shadow, stands the true incarnation of the Renaissance—Erasmus of Rotterdam, whose slender hand was not armed with the sword, whose brilliant blue eyes gazed contemptuously at all manifestations of human stupidity. According to Stefan Zweig, Erasmus spent his whole life bending to the right and to the left, defending the humanist ideals from the barbarian forces of medievalism and the ravages of the "revolutionary" Luther, ideals which, it turns out in the last chapter, were never realized in practice and never could be realized.

Stefan Zweig also carries the subject of humanism receding into the future to the point of farce. For according to his book, the dream of humanism of solving contradictions in the spirit of justice, and the hoped for unification of nations under the sign of united culture are utopian and unlikely to be fulfilled. But it turns out that the value of a utopia lies in the very fact that it is incapable of fulfillment. Unsullied by the dirt of actual realization it remains an eternal ferment not allowing mankind to rest content in the affairs of today.

It is interesting to note that this arbitrary concept of the history of the past, a concept not even veiled in a myth, nevertheless contains very real echoes of present history. Stefan Zweig suddenly admits that the weakness of humanism lies in the fact that it is divorced from life, that its dream of a unified culture takes shape not by the unification of peoples but by the unification of chosen minds, that even in them in their severe isolation there was already discernible "a grain of the ludicrous"; and that ever since their ideas have become the property of more solitary and enfeebled heirs. Thus in Zweig's book there suddenly appears the reverse side of the figure of the humanist, the man "who let slip the historic moment," after which all that remains for him is "to retire to his den and draw the curtain." This aspect of the humanist solitary likewise bears little reference to the problems of the fifteenth century. However, it reflects with undoubted accuracy the self-critical mood of certain twentieth century humanists. And in any case it is more historical than the "unarmed" humanist whom Zweig so lovingly depicts in the first chapters of his book.

Books about people of the past who, in the words of Chernyshevsky, "did not trifle with ideas," and paid with their lives for the right to a word that was capable of becoming a cause, are being written in the West for the edification of the writers themselves and of others. The subject of the education of a humanist solitary, the desire by every means to knock half-heartedness, weakness, and inertia out of him arises from the lack of confidence in themselves and in their comrades displayed by the writers of the West, lack of confidence in their will-power, in the muscles of the fighter who is no longer capable of wielding his grandfather's sword. With the subject of the

humanist solitary they likewise seek to confirm their right to the great heritage of the past.

In the whole of Western humanism's treatment of history there is only one example of an utterly different attitude towards this heritage. Heinrich Mann brings the past up to the border of the new world, as a rightful heir, as a master. In *The Youth of Henry IV* Western humanism soars to new heights. The book confirms the great and indestructible unity of the revolutionary and the humanist tradition. Heinrich Mann leads a new contingent; today he no longer belongs to the society of the humanist solitaries. He leads an army of humanists who in no way resemble the other heroes of Western novels. These humanists not only "know how to think but can also hold themselves in the saddle and use the sword." It matters little that his Henry of Navarre is not the historic Henry IV—the great master of compromise who cleared the way for French absolutism; to make up for it Mann makes him the "Titan" whose figure Engels draws in *The Dialectics of Nature*. He is a partisan who fights for his cause, armed not only with the sword but with the philosophy of Montaigne and a volume of Plutarch.

It matters little that Heinrich Mann adheres to the school that views the historic process as eternal strife between the forces of good and evil, the reactionary and progressive. But his historic concept leaves no room for a "third force." The troops of the Huguenots not only fight for the sacred rights of reason and freedom, but also for the "oppressed and disinherited," defending the rights of the whole people, oppressed by feudalism. It matters little that Heinrich Mann who shares the illusions of the "Third Estate," comes in conflict at times with real objective historic facts, with the true relation of class forces in the period of the religious wars in France. However, his entire book is imbued with militant hatred for "whiteguardists" of all times and peoples, to be crushed by every means and without any compromise.

It is interesting how Heinrich Mann presents the question of the education of the humanist in his book. The short morals at the end of each book of the novel are actually a chronicle of the past stages, of what has already been attained. And a single thought runs like a red thread through all the morals and the entire novel—equilibrium between the humanist conscience and the possibility of fulfilling its dictates is only attained through action.

To the principle of reason, in whose name one must refrain from action, Heinrich Mann opposes the daring words of Montaigne, to the effect that all great events take place "headlong."

*The Youth of Henry IV* is not yet a revolutionary historical novel in our sense of the word. But Heinrich Mann stands on the threshold of a new concept of the historical tradition.

## *IV*

The humanist writers of the West are right a thousand times when in the struggle with fascism they turn to the great cultural traditions of the past. But how much more effective their weapon would be if they recalled the true creators of these traditions, if the struggle of destructive and constructive forces were portrayed in their works in its true aspect, that is, as the struggle of the oppressors and the oppressed popular masses.

The proletariat is the only class that did not wade to power through crime, whose victory was won with clean hands. In the history of its struggle there is not one grain of falsehood, compromise or deceit. Unlike its predecessors

on the stage of history, it really fought for the happiness and freedom of the whole of mankind. It has nothing to keep silent about, it has nothing to conceal in its past. This is why the true history of the proletarian Socialist revolution is objective history, this is why for us the past is not a "series of facts," but a logical process and in portraying this past the artist must combine the passion of the fighter with the objectivity of the historian.

That is why the remarks of Stalin, Kirov and Zhdanov which played such a tremendous part not only in developing the Soviet science of history but in determining the course of the Soviet historical novel, should help us and our Western friends to mark the course of the revolutionary and anti-fascist historical novel in the West. We have a right to expect our Western comrades to employ all the great traditions of their peoples in the struggle with fascism, just as Cassou did in restoring the lineage of the France of the United Front, as Regler did in reviving the revolutionary traditions of the German people—of anti-fascist Germany.

These books of the Western humanists contain much mature craftsmanship, subjective sincerity and the tartness of age-ripened skepticism and philosophical penetration. Their heroes, like the heretics in *The Temptation of St. Anthony,* successively unroll the sequence of their proofs. But these books lack youth; they lack joyousness; they lack wonder in the face of a world revealed to fresh eyes that open for the first time. Here again the only exception is *The Youth of Henry IV.*

Even sharper and even clearer sounds the voice of youth in the books that are devoted not to the fate of an individual, but to the fate of people, not to the history of human illusion, but to the history of the genuine struggle for the happiness and freedom of all the working people. Regler's book *Sowing* and Cassou's *Lacerated Paris* are not yet epics. They convey the heroism of mass struggle through youthful amazement, through the bewildered lyrical delight over the world that lies ahead and that must be won.

In creating the figure of the fifteenth century peasant leader Joss Fritz, Gustav Regler doubtless recalled the deathless spirit of Flanders, the legend of Tyl Eulenspiegel. Joss is more real and more historical than his literary prototype. He is the leader whom *The Peasant War in Germany* tells us about; he is the plebeian revolutionary who develops with the movement, becoming more and more versed in the "earthly reality" of the demands that are disguised with a religious covering.

He is a capable organizer and a tireless propagandist. But at the same time he embodies the revolutionary aspirations of the woodcutters, fishermen, ploughmen, townsmen, tramps and *Landsknechten.* He, like Eulenspiegel, spends his whole life roaming the roads of his native land and the blood of Weltin—his teacher and leader, executed by the princes—pulses constantly through his veins. And his career ends like that of his famous prototype. Joss did not die. After the destruction of the second alliance of the "Wooden Shoe" he goes off into obscurity, the symbol of the ever new, ever youthful, deathless struggle of the working people for their liberation. Joss is not an "educator," he is not one who "feels sorry" for a man or for humanity. Joss is the bearer of that genuine revolutionary courage wherein readiness to die is combined with the will to struggle, to win, to live.

He chose the side of the people, not "as a book in the library" (Cassou). He is not one of those who, in order to serve mankind, fences off his own road from the road of mankind. In fighting for the cause of the risen peasants and plebeians he at the same time fights for himself; because his own destiny is identical with that of the class. Hence his struggle for the future is the strug-

gle for the present. By the same token his defeat in the present is merely a stage in the general struggle, merely a step toward the future victory.

Why does Regler transfer the problems and conflicts of today to the period of the peasant wars? For him as for all of us, the way to the present was prepared in the past, the manner in which the will and activity of the masses matured in the past is sufficiently contemporary and important. Yes, this novel, like all historical novels, bears the stamp of its author's contemporary attitude to history. But the author's own standpoint coincides with the standpoint of the many-millioned masses of working people the world over, with the class "subjective" standpoint of revolutionary proletarian ideology that is the only objective standpoint.

Likewise the modern nature of the author's views by no means implies the modernization of history. The fight of the working people for their rights, their happiness and freedom is for Regler one uninterrupted tradition, and in this sense the struggle of the Bruchrhein peasants is modern.

"Joss Fritz will cease to exist but in his stead will come Conrad the Poor to rally the peasants. Eight thousand armed peasants will appear at the gates of Schorndorf. They will hold a dagger over the most insolent of the counts. Years will pass and first columns, to the sound of fife and drum, will file past the stream, like the one that flows past your feet, Joss, and fling their chains in the sewage ditch. And you will be with them, Joss Fritz, you will hear them talk of your Schletstadt, Bruchrhein peasants and you will be glad, although they shall not recognize you. And after more years new ranks of peasants will move across this plain and train their cannon on Bruchsam. Their cannon balls will strike the walls and you will again be there. And again the flag shall be unfurled and again the lords shall cringe in fear before the 'Wooden Shoe.' Your cause shall not die, Joss Fritz, and come what may the traces of the 'Wooden Shoe' shall remain forever along all the roads of our land which you trod."

Thus ends the heroic book about two defeats of the revolution, a book that is young, inspired and optimistic.

Cassou's book contains the same genuine, living sense of the revolutionary traditions of humanity. It is a splendid historical novel and at the same time a contemporary novel. To be sure, the historian could reproach the author on many points. The heroic struggle of the Communards sweeps through the book like a fiery whirlwind. Cassou's book does not give a clear portrayal of events, of the day to day life of the Commune, of those elements of the first workers' state which it contained. However, it contains a profoundly historical and contemporary understanding of the meaning of the struggle of the Communards. For this reason this book of death, suffering and defeat also becomes a book of joy and youth that summons to life.

Cassou's book is also interesting because it is essentially an "intellectual" book. The problem of the individual and the mass, of action and contemplation appears in it undisguised, as the problem of the intellectual and the revolution. And the solution of this problem which Cassou provides is the only correct solution. The declassed bourgeois—the solitary dreamer Theodore Kisch—does not come to the ranks of the Communards because of intellectual sympathy for the people, or a desire to "educate," or to sacrifice himself. "I want to tell you this and repeat it again and again: if I am here it is not for the sake of death. No, no. I am not defeated and I do not despair. I did not seek death, I only did what I should have done, and not from a sense of duty. I came here, I found my way among the innumerable streets that wind through Paris, in the capital that burns. And I too am burning but I do not die!"

For Theodore Kisch death was to remain in captivity in the bourgeois world which he left.

Why did he come to the revolution? The subject of the revolutionary struggle, the subject of faith in the revolution and allegiance to the cause of the working people is closely intertwined in Cassou's novel with the subject of love, with the subject of a lofty, tense and lyrical passion. The subject of the revolution is inseparable in the novel from the subject of Marie Rose, the Parisian working woman, the embodiment of the heroic Parisian people, of revolutionary popular France. Therefore, when Theodore Kisch speaks of the meaning of their brief and tragic love, he expresses the most valued essence of his attitude towards the revolution, his path to it. Here too the struggle for a genuine youthful delight over what has been discovered and attained developed into the conviction that a man who has organically merged his destiny with the revolution will never be alone and defeated: "I know what was, Marie Rose, it was unusual and splendid. Theodore and Marie Rose met each other and fell in love. They did this in defiance of the whole world. Yes, they did this of their own will. Because they wanted to. That is what matters now. This is what is remarkable. And this is what I did. I love you. Because of this I had to travel a long endless road. And now behind us the whole of Paris is in flames. I have broken with everything that tied me to the other world, a wall of fire stands between it and us. We walk in step clasped together. What more do you want?"

This heroic struggle for life and this conviction marks the end of the subject of solitude. Together with it fear of the present which is transformed into fear of the past also vanishes.

A genuine historical attitude and a genuine folk character, a search for heroes not among humanist solitaries but in mass movements, an eagerness to arouse the great heroic popular tradition that unites the entire struggle of mankind for liberation, a unity of pathos and of knowledge—these are the features of the truly revolutionary historical novel in the West. These are the features which denote its kinship with the developing Soviet historical novel.

Here humanism and revolution, humanist dreams of an emancipated mankind and revolutionary action are united on a new foundation.

The political task that was set in all its magnitude by Georgi Dimitrov, the task of lifting the fighting traditions of the popular movement and transforming them into a mighty contemporary weapon compels us to await a great truly revolutionary historical novel. The revolution will demand much of it.

In the discussion on the Soviet historical novel, a number of writers correctly pointed out that we are now dealing not merely with the "truth" of the novels but with the need for big conceptions, that the writer must take stock of the entire political experience of the present and must possess a "state mind," so as to properly appreciate the experience of the past. This is how the question stands for the West too. We are awaiting a historical novel in which the writer, synthesizing the entire vast experience of the contemporary struggle of two worlds, from the height of this experience shall interpret the past centuries with the wisdom of a Marxist and the enthusiasm of a fighter.

All the roads of our Western friends—including the older masters of culture—must lead to this genuine, historical "novel of summations." The road of Heinrich Mann shows that the way is open from the writings of the modern humanists to this novel, a road that lies through the acquisition of that revolutionary wisdom which is just as essential to a great historical novel as it is for every great work.

**A. Startsev**

# The Civil War and the Contemporary American Historical Novel

Margaret Mitchell's book *Gone With the Wind,* written on one of the most burning themes of American history, the Civil War between the North and the South, recently enjoyed a tremendous success in the United States, which may be regarded also as a success of historical fiction. Unfortunately Margaret Mitchell's book is an example of bad fiction and reactionary history.

The author, a Georgia school teacher, does not hide her Southern sympathies. She regards the Civil War an "a Yankee invasion" and describes the "invasion" and the events that follow with the pettiness and mean hatred of an expropriated plantation mistress. As for the literary quality of the writing, the style is that of the cheapest "thriller." The reader is kept in constant suspense and must either gasp or sigh with relief at least once in twenty pages.

Nevertheless, we believe that the book's popularity is largely due to its historical subject. Certain American critics were at a loss to explain the novel's tremendous success. Margaret Mitchell's talents in melodrama apparently did not exceed the general level of other "thrillers." Why then was the reader so eagerly attracted by her historical panorama? Because, we believe, the contemporary reader in Europe and America is avid to know how people lived and died in periods of great historical upheavals. Standing face to face with the coming social revolution, feeling the daily shock of approaching cataclysms, he wants to find in the examples of the past lessons which he may profit from at the present time. Margaret Mitchell's book provides such lessons. The reader does not immediately recognize its reactionary implications because the author skillfully holds his interest by exploiting the adventurous nature of the subject. For all the cheapness of its literary and political level the book has a very definite thought content. It is an "historical novel" that is directed against history. The author definitely asserts that the destruction and suffering of the Civil War were in vain and that general history, when it interferes in people's private lives, causes untold hardship since it is a brute force and therefore an evil one.

Margaret Mitchell is barking up the wrong tree. Seventy years ago history handled the planter slaveowners rather roughly. The American people, who were incidentally that self-same history, scored their remarkable victory. But now it appears, if we take Margaret Mitchell's word for it, the war was not worth the sacrifices it involved, the victor was brute history and not worth the price of one drop of human blood or one throb of human happiness.

In his famous *Letter to the American Workers,* Lenin wrote:

"If we are to take only into consideration the 'destruction' of some branches of industry and national economy, America in 1870 was in some respects *behind* 1860. But what a pedant, what an idiot is he who denies on such grounds the greatest, world-hisotric, progressive and revolutionary significance of the American Civil War of 1861-1865!

"Representatives of the bourgeois understand that it was worth letting the country go through long years of civil war, the abysmal ruin, destruction and terror which are connected with every war for the sake of the overthrow of Negro slavery and the overthow of the rule of the slaveowners. But now, when

we are confronted with the vastly greater task of the overthrow of capitalist *wage* slavery, the overthrow of the rule of the bourgeoisie—now the representatives and defenders of the bourgeoisie, as well as the socialist-reformists, frightened by the burgeoisie and shunning the revolution, cannot understand and do not want to understand the necessity and the legality of the civil war." (Lenin, *Collected Works,* Russ. ed., Vol. XXIII.)

The vulgar pacifism of Margaret Mitchell's book which takes advantage of the anti-war sentiment widespread among the masses, is harmful and profoundly reactionary. In an imperialist war the people, indeed, do not win regardless of whether they belong to the vanquished or the victorious nation. But when fighting for liberation from the exploiter's yoke, and thereby accomplishing its historical mission, the people always wins, whatever the sacrifice involved; and by its victory humanity forges ahead.

In the above quoted *Letter to the American Workers* Lenin speaks of *the revolutionary tradition of the American people,* which he traces from the War of Independence, waged against the British in the eighteenth century, down to the Civil War of the nineteenth century, and the contemporary revolutionary workers' movement. There can be no doubt that the true heir of this great tradition in modern America is the working class, which heads the revolutionary movement of the working people. The bourgeoisie allows illiterate epigones of the plantation South to slander its own revolutionary past with impunity. The bourgeoisie itself is in fact not averse to taking part in the slander. It is discomforted by its own revolutionary past, would rather forget about the time when it defended the "necessity and legitimacy of the Civil War."

We believe that a well-written historically accurate book about the Civil War between the North and the South, by a revolutionary author, would prove invaluable to the American reader.

In this connection it is interesting to mention two recent books by American authors, devoted to John Brown's rebellion, a prelude to the Civil War. These two books are the novel *God's Angry Man* by Leonard Ehrlich and the play *John Brown* by Michael Blankfort and Michael Gold. While both books closely adhere to their source material they are quite distinct. John Brown, a ruined small farmer and an ardent abolitionist, after observing the terrorist methods of the slaveowners in Kansas, decided that free people should counter the violence of the Southerners with armed violence. He made his famous raid on Ossawatomie, captured five adherents of the slaveowners and killed them. After that he carried on guerilla warfare with the slaveowners and the government troops protecting them, ending with the rebellion at Harper's Ferry in Virginia, where he was defeated and executed. Brown's death aroused America and the echo resounded throughout the world. In January 1860 Karl Marx wrote to Engels:

"In my opinion, the biggest things that are happening in the world today are on the one hand the movement of the slaves in America, started by the death of John Brown, and on the other the movement of the serfs in Russia." When the Civil War broke out, a few years later, the most popular song of the Northern army was the song John Brown's Body:

*"John Brown's body lies a mouldering in the grave*
*But his soul goes marching on!"*

John Brown's soul marching before the battalions of the Northern army, this was the tradition of devoted struggle for freedom, the revolutionary struggle of the American people.

Comparing the two books about John Brown we find that Ehrlich's novel has the greater claim as a literary work The play by Blankfort and Gold is more of a vivid historical sketch in which the characters are little developed. The novel is a broad historical canvas that seeks to portray the living and social conditions of the time. Ehrlich uses much documentary material. The novel is carefully and conscientiously written although it falls short of mastery.

And yet, in comparing the two books as works of historical fiction, we do not hesitate to give Blankfort and Gold's dramatic sketch preference over Ehrlich's solid work. We mentioned that the two books are quite distinct. The distinction lies in the fact that the play is inspired by a historical concept while the novel lacks such a concept. In the play the scene of the suppression of the uprising at Harper's Ferry concludes with an epilog where the cries of defeat give way to the mighty song of John Brown. In the novel the last picture which the author suggests to the reader is the windblown grave of John Brown. "John Brown's body lies a-mouldering in the grave . . ." Ehrlich seems to recall only the one line from the song of the Sumner regiment.

In Ehrlich's novel the movement of ideas is illusory; actually the novel is utterly static. The author's attention is centered on the problem of violence. This is legitimate; for John Brown's uprising is, in fact, one of the arguments of the "party of force" against the "party of reform" in the Northern camp. However, on the historic plane the question was not one of force "in general" but of revolutionary force employed against the oppressors. Ehrlich seizes every opportunity to place the question on an abstract plane. Needless to say, the question remains unanswered in the book. John Brown was a religious man and regarded himself as a weapon in the hand of God. Because of this he often attributed his actions to the wrong motives. However, the war between the North and the South was not a religious war and the actions of John Brown were justified by subsequent historical events. Consequently to place the main emphasis on incidents of a personal nature, regardless of their importance in describing the man, is to sin against historic truth in the portrayal of events. The talk is confined to "John Brown's body."

It is of course necessary to transfer the theme from an abstract moral plane to a historical one. The armed suppression of the slaveowners' rebellion was an act of world-historical significance. John Brown fought and died at the forepost of this great encounter. He displayed tremendous courage, will power and devotion and deservedly achieved immortal fame. Today the working class hallows his memory: "His soul goes marching on. . . . "

Ehrlich's novel is written about an old man who died in 1859. The play by Blankfort and Gold is written about a deathless revolutionary hero.

The reactionaries of every stripe, headed by the fascists, are now intent on the systematic falsification of the historical past. They try to discredit the great tradition of the people's struggle for freedom to "justify" the need for the terrorist dictatorship of the bourgeoisie. Revolutionary writers must create a historical novel that is true to life and will show the workers that in their struggle for freedom they are heirs of everything good that humanity has accomplished.

**F. Gorochov**

# An Anti-Marxist Theory of History

The name of M. N. Pokrovsky is usually associated with his well known works in the field of Marxist analysis of history. Many have forgotten, however, that M. N. Pokrovsky began his work as a historian in the very beginning of the twentieth century. In those days Marxism in Russia was quite widespread not only among the working class but also among petty bourgeois and even bourgeois circles of the intelligentsia.

In those days there was established, as one of the varieties of frank opportunism, a group of so-called "Legal Marxists," in connection with which Lenin remarked that "the wide spread of Marxism was attended by some lowering in the theoretical level." (Lenin, *Collected Works,* Russian edition, Vol. IV.) M. N. Pokrovsky was closely connected for some time with this group of "Legal Marxists." Later on he admitted that "one who has passed through the stage of 'Legal Marxism' usually carried within him for a long time traces of such views, a certain survival of this undialectical, though materialistic, interpretation." He further characterized the remnants of the influence of "Legal Marxism" which he had not yet overcome as "unventilated corners of his world conception."

The particular attention paid by the leadership of the Communist Party and of the government in the U.S.S.R. to the problems of history the general development of Soviet sciences and of historical science in particular, and the constant self-criticism which accompanies the development of Soviet science have made it possible to solve correctly the problem of the anti-Marxist theses in the historical views of M. N. Pokrovsky. The chapter from Gorokhov's book which we publish below takes up one of the chief errors of M. N. Pokrovsky—his thesis: "History is politics fitted to the past." Gorokhov correctly criticized this thesis of Pokrovsky, who did not understand that the partisanship of the Marxist-Leninist theory is a special kind of partisanship, characterized by the fact that its subjective tendency coincides with the objective process of development of humanity, since the proletariat in the Socialist revolution solves not only its class problems, but at the same time is the only class, which fights for the future of humanity.

Among the other serious errors made by Pokrovsky, we must mention particularly his incorrect approach to the evaluation of outstanding historical figures. Thus, for instance, the approach of Pokrovsky and his school to the career of Peter I, denying that his reforms were of any progressive significance, was entirely unscientific and anti-Marxist. The classics of Marxism have evaluated the activity of Peter I very highly. Engels called him "a really great man, immeasurably greater than the 'Great Frederick.'" To Pokrovsky, Peter I is an ordinary person of no significance in the history of Russia. Here we can see the failing of Pokrovsky's methodology: He did not understand dialectically the interaction of economic factors and the role of the individual in history. Marx, however, in his letters to Kugelmann, while pointing out the significance of chance occurrances in the course of the development of history, remarks: "These accidents themselves fall naturally into the general course of development and are compensated again by other accidents. But acceleration and delay are very dependent upon such 'accidents,' which include the 'accident' of the character of those who at first stand at the head of the movement."

The incorrectness and falsity of M. N. Pokrovsky's interpretation of history: "History is politics fitted to the past" becomes especially clear in the light of the revolutionary and scientific objectivity of the Marxist-Leninist theory of the historical process. Such an interpretation of history is subjecti-

vistic and directly contradictory to Lenin's theory of reflection. Because of that conception of science M. N. Pokrovsky shows the political interests of the contending classes as in a crooked mirror, in which historical facts are distorted by the political interests of the current day. Such an interpretation of history naturally obliterates the line of demarcation between the objectivity of events as they occurred in the past and the subjective mood of the investigator, who always lives in definite social and political conditions, with definite party-political interests.

M. N. Pokrovsky applies this interpretation of the science of history not only to bourgeois science but also to Marxism. Thus he ignores the most important difference historically established between Marxist science and bourgeois science. Marx and Engels emphasized this difference, characterizing the bourgeois theories as an ideology distorting reality in the interests of their class; the ideologists of the bourgeoisie cannot disclose the laws of social development in their entire depth because to acknowledge the regularity of the historical process would mean to acknowledge the imminence of their own destruction, the destruction of capitalism. Lenin also emphasized this difference, speaking of the seignorial skepticism characteristic of the bourgeoisie, as of every declining class. (We must note in parenthesis that Lenin as well as Marx repeatedly noted the differences in the degree of objectivity of bourgeois science, which depends on the stages of the historical development of the bourgeoisie itself, and pointed out that even in our times bourgeois scientists often produce works of considerable value in the investigation of certain domains of historical facts, economics, etc.)

M. N. Pokrovsky did not understand the fact that the interests of the universal historical struggle of the working class coincide with the entire course of contemporary history, and that, consequently, the most objective presentation of the reality of the past and of the present is an organic and inalienable feature of Marxism.

Pokrovsky attempted to substitute his subjectivistic formula: "History is politics fitted to the past" for the Marxist-Leninist doctrine of the partisanship of theory—a partisanship which forms the noblest and best expression of the idea and the crowning acknowledgment of the objectivity of the world conception of the foremost, revolutionary class, openly and courageously directing its eyes toward the future, learning openly and courageously from the experience of the past.

Were this formula of Pokrovsky's to be applied to the investigation of the historical process, history would take on an extremely quaint and distorted aspect. Applying this scale of the political interests of the proletariat to every epoch of the past, to events and to the historical actions of one or another class, party or individual public man of the past, we would have to consider all of them either as preparatory steps for our contemporary historical activity or as acts detrimental for it. History would take on a mystical appearance. All of the past generations would appear to have been assigned the task either of preparing the ground for us, people of the present, or of putting obstacles in the way of this work. This would result in an idealistic conception of the historical process. In his *German Ideology* Marx wrote about such a conception of the history of human society as follows:

"Speculatively, this may be distorted so that it would seem that the purpose of preceding history was to create later history—as if, for instance, the purpose of the discovery of America was to facilitate the victory of the French Revolution. Owing to this, history acquires its own peculiar tasks and becomes 'a person alongside of other persons . . .' In reality that which is denoted

by the words 'designation,' 'task,' 'embryo,' 'idea,' of past history is nothing but an abstraction derived from later history, an abstraction of that active influence which past history exerts upon subsequent history."

"By such means," says Marx further on in the same work, "it is very easy to lend to history 'singular' turns: it is sufficient to present every latest result as a task which 'it had truly set itself, since times immemorial.' Owing to this, the past centuries acquire a quaint and unprecedented appearance."

Examples of such subjectivistic presentation of historical events are rather numerous in the works of the Pokrovsky school.

When an investigator of historical processes and events begins to apply the yardstick and character of his contemporary interests and problems in measuring, comparing, condemning or approving people of the past and their deeds, the perspective naturally becomes thoroughly distorted. Generations, classes, people of the past, who fought for their specific interests in different ways in their different epochs, appear in such a distorted presentation of history, in the capacity of some sort of fertilizer for the present-day epoch and its political interests. People are artificially torn out of the social environment in which they lived and worked. Aims and tasks are attributed to them which were entirely foreign to their characters; and they become fictitious characters, instead of real living people, who made the history of their period, in accordance with the vital interests of their time. Although the people of the past set before themselves the tasks and aims of their time and solved them (some playing a progressive role, others a conservative or reactionary one) in the particular conditions of their epoch, an attempt is made to judge them exclusively from the point of view of our contemporary interests.

It is natural that with such an unhistorical approach the historical activities of Peter I, let us say, lose every element and character of progressiveness. A man of his own times and class, Peter I set before himself the problem of reforms and solved it by methods of his epoch, methods that were inseparably connected with the most brutal oppression of hundreds of thousands of enslaved people. Nevertheless it is impermissible to ignore the historical significance of his activities in his struggle against the extreme backwardness of Russia of that period. It is also natural that the Decembrists, for instance, also people of their own period, who aimed in their own way to start a movement for liberation, often appear, in the light of the views of the Pokrovsky school, not as revolutionaries and fighters for the cause of liberty, but simply as the ideologists of the nobility, a class of oppressors—ideologists of oppression. In such a characterization of the Decembrists their revolutionary role is lost sight of altogether.

Such an interpretation of history breaks away entirely from that most important principle of Marx and Lenin which demands that social development be approached as a natural process, as a regular objective succession of classes and generations. Every one of these generations sets itself definite tasks connected with the conditions and mode of its life, and solves them by methods of its epoch; it necessarily creates the conditions (material and cultural) for the historical activity of new generations in a new epoch. This principle of historical materialism does not at all exclude passionate exposures on the part of the historian in investigating the struggle of the past. Still less does it exclude a like tendency to evaluate the revolutionary or reactionary character of the role or behavior of one or another public man, party, state, etc. On the contrary, it was historical materialism that for the first time gave historians a guiding line for getting down to the root of historical facts, and,

consequently, for passionately revealing, finding out the errors and pointing out the merits and shortcomings of historical deeds.

The materialistic conception of history absolutely excludes the anti-historical method of investigation which substituted the interests of the present for the interests of the actual creators of the past. That anti-historical conception of social development despite its externally arch-revolutionary appearance is in reality based on disbelief in the possibility of an objective truthful knowledge of history—that objective knowledge which is an inalienable feature of Marxism, the ideology of the most advanced and revolutionary class of the present time. This disbelief, a direct tribute to idealism, has been formulated more than once in the works of M. N. Pokrovsky. His formula: "History is politics fitted to the past," is an example. This disbelief also finds its acknowledgment in Pokrovsky's assertion that the question of historical regularity "is solved not so much by the investigation of facts as by abstractly logical considerations."

It is known that the materialistic conception of regularity is the only one that reflects correctly and scientifically the phenomena of objective reality, the interconnection of facts; it reflects the objective reality existing without us. It is just on that point that there is no clarity or consistency in Pokrovsky's works. He compares the conception of the regularity of nature with the spiritualistic and idealistic explanation of nature, and says that it explains nature "more capably" than the others. And side by side with this shaky and insufficiently clear recognition of the only correct and only objective conception—the materialistic conception of regularity, he makes the thoroughly incorrect assertion that the question of regularity of facts is settled not by the facts themselves, but by means of abstract logical considerations.

The theory of "economic materialism" followed for a long time by M. N. Pokrovsky in his study and critical review of bourgeois historians is completed and aggravated the subjectivistic elements of his method by schematism.

Economic materialism reduces the great variety of angles and phenomena of social development to the economic factor. It denies or brings to naught the relative independence and active role of other demains of social life: politics, law, the sciences, modes of life, etc. In the light of economic materialism history becomes one-sided, one-colored. Instead of a presentation of history in all the wealth of its content, its different aspects, events, human deeds, we get a dry scheme of a one-sided subordination of the entire multiformity of history to the economic factor.

Historical materialism recognizes that *in the final issue* economics form the determining basis for all social development, but at the same time it emphasizes the active role played by the totality of all other sides of human activity. Economic materialism, on the other hand, gives a monotone scheme, deadening all colors of historical life, a scheme of the automatic and absolutely all-determining action of economics. Hence, insufficient attention to the study of concrete historical facts; hence, the schematism and abstractness peculiar to the entire Pokrovsky school in the application of the conceptions of economics and social-economic formations to historical reality—an attempt to fit historical facts to the constructed schemes in an abstractly logical manner.

Marx repeatedly warned against the wrong use of abstractions, against losing contact with the background of real history.

"These abstractions," wrote Marx, "by themselves, isolated from real history, are of no value. They can serve only to facilitate the arrangement of historical material, to mark the sequence of the different strata. But . . . by no means do they furnish a recipe or a scheme to which historical epochs may

be fitted. On the contrary, the difficulties only begin when you get down to the examination and arrangement of material, whether of a past epoch or contemporary—when you get down to its actual presentation."

Lenin also taught us that the Marxian interpretation of history is not an abstract scheme, but a method of scientific study of history in its totality "as a single process, regular in all its multiplicity and contradictoriness." He speaks of this in many characterizations of the essence of historical materialism as a theory. We are taught how to apply this conception in his concrete historical and politico-economical studies, of which his works: *The Economic Contents of the Narodnik Theory, Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism*, and the works devoted to the analysis of the development of the bourgeois and proletarian revolutions in Russian are highly gifted examples. Finally we learn this most important truth—of the necessity of the most serious study of concrete history—from the facts of Lenin's political and organizational activity; for this practical activity, besides its other great merits, was mighty as a concentration of exceptional historical experience of the past, many-sided knowledge of the present, and great historical and political vigilance.

Lenin constantly demanded a clear and sober attitude towards historical facts, a consciousness of the historical connection of events. Let us recall, for instance, how Lenin emphasized this side of the matter in 1917, when the reaction began to lift its head and persecuted the Bolsheviks with unheard-of slander and extreme political measures. Nevertheless, the voice of Lenin, the great leader of the proletariat, sounded mightily and cheerfully in this most complicated political situation:

"The more violently they slander and lie about the Bolsheviks in these days, the more calmly must we, while disproving the lies and slander, meditate upon the historical conception of events and the political, *i.e., class signifiance* of the given course of the revolution.

In this advice of Lenin's is expressed a profound confidence in the revolutionary vigor of the advancing people, the proletariat, the toilers and at the same time the recognition of the *power of the objective knowledge of facts*, so important and indispensible for a policy which leads forward instead of trudging at the tail of events.

*Translated by S. Altschuler*

**Ilya Ehrenburg**

# New Short Stories

*I*

The collective farm office was full of girls, green-eyed, laughing. The bearded old man with the pock-marked face was scratching his head in astonishment. Akimov, the chairman of the collective farm, was talking about the beehives.

Our guest sat on a bench, resting his bony face with its heavy jaw on his hand. His eyes were dark and restless. I said: "This is a Spanish comrade. He's been in the war. Now he's going to Gorlovka." A young fellow whispered: "See—" A little boy, bolder than the rest, plucked the newcomer by his sleeve. Akimov said: "Tell him the collective farm's fairly on its feet now."

Silvario Fernandez had remained alone—the last man—beside a machine-gun. For two days he had kept the attackers at bay. When the Legionnaires occupied San Pedro Square, they saw a corpse lying beside the gun. One of them gave the dead man's head a kick. That night, though wounded in the leg, Silvario crawled as far as the woods. He floundered about in the snow and dozed off to the croaking of hungry vultures. Many times over he told me how an old peasant woman brought him a crust of bread, crossing herself in terror as she did so. Some fishermen lent him a boat. Winter storms were raging. For four days it was a living death. When, at last, he sighted land, he did not even smile. He knew then the nostalgia that comes in a strange land, heard reproaches and felt the contempt that the conquered have to breathe. In the springtime he came to Moscow.

He looked at the new houses, at the shop windows, at girls in sports vests, at bunches of bird-cherry blossom. He thought of the cellars of Sama where the triumphant enemy were torturing his comrades. At night he listened to the wireless. "Madrid speaking!" announced a calm, imperturbable voice. "Perfect calm reigns throughout the country."

The blare of a jazz band: there was dancing in Madrid. Silvario gazed about him in bewilderment. Then he said: "I want to work." He was eager for the close air of the coal mine; this was his world.

I thought the green of the fields would console him. His thoughts were too long. All the way there he was silent. Perhaps he was seeing the giant boulders, the silver of the blown olive branches, mountain huts, a dense blue sky. I interpreted what Akimov had said. He replied: "That's good." We tramped about the fields for a long time. We looked at the cattle, the beehives, the creches. Akimov said: "Now we're building a club with a stage, translate that for him." Silvario wagged his head and gave a mournful smile.

We went into a house. Akimov patted the cheek of a little girl of eight or nine. "She looks rather pale and peaked today," he said to the woman of the house. Then he turned to me. "Tell the Spanish comrade that this little girl belongs to the collective farm. She's an orphan, her parents died of typhus. We're looking after her." Silvario brightened up at this and said: "That's what we were fighting for." Then he fell silent again. I knew he had left a son behind in Asturias.

We went back to the office. The people crowded round us as before. One

of the young fellows suggested: "You ought to ask him what our collective farm looks like compared to others." At that an old woman cried out: "Wait! Can't you see the man is fretting?"

It was Korenyeva, the mother of Misha Korenyev, who was shot by the whiteguards in 1919. Her face was a network of the finest wrinkles. She wore a black shawl over her head. She stood before Silvario a while. Then she went away. She returned with a bowl of warm milk. Going softly up to Silvario with the bowl clutched in both hands, she set it down on the rough chipped table and, without speaking, began to stroke the man's stiff, curly hair. Then he jumped up. All the feelings he had hidden so stubbornly for many months now broke loose. He raised his fist and shouted in his own tongue the war slogan of the Asturians: "The union of brother-proletarians! *Uacepe! Uacepe!*"

His guttural cry sounded solemn and terrifying. I shall never forget the glow that came into the eyes of the people of my own country.

## *II*

The story I want to tell may seem incoherent; it is the story of my world. Whenever I look through the windows of bread shops, I envy the bakers; the smell of bread speaks of life. I envy founders and welders: liquid metal throbs like blood. I envy gardeners: they grow firm cucumbers and childishly tender potatoes. I envy astronomers: when they make mistakes a new era opens.

I wrote my *Book for Grown-Up People* day and night. Under my window motor lorries rattled, and street singers mourned their youth. I wrote about my life. The flayed years became paragraphs. On waking up in the morning, I encountered myself: these were unpleasant meetings. I built sentences out of what, not so long ago, had been my passion. When I finished the book, my life seemed exhausted like a field eaten bare by cattle and I knew not where to wander.

I received a letter from an unknown Frenchwoman. "I am a teacher," she wrote. "I am fifty-two. I must tell you about my life. Let me know when I can see you. I enclose a stamp for a reply." I delayed a long time before replying: I was writing the *Book for Grown-Up People*. My letter was returned marked: "Addressee dead."

Not long ago I was traveling from Vienna to Paris. My traveling companion proved to be on the staff of the Soviet trade delegation in Paris. He was in charge of the sales of platinum for catalyzers. He had mocking eyes of a vivid green. He described the physical culture parade, and the clatter of Moscow burst into our depressing railway carriage. He talked of his work, of the cunning of buyers, the intrigues of competitors, of the courteous hatred of enemies. I willingly forgave him his childish superciliousness and the march from the film *Gay Lads* which he whistled till I was nearly distracted: this was a human being who was forced to live in a world of banquets, brokerage commissions and rascality.

He lay down on the upper berth. We wished each other good night. Suddenly he said: "A funny thing happened to me in connection with your book. I was having a run of bad luck; things wouldn't go right at the office, I quarreled with my comrades, and then there was a bit of domestic trouble. I can tell it to you as you're a writer. Although it really amounts to very little; simply that my wife took up with someone else. We were still sharing the same room. Formerly she was in the habit of calling me, not by my name, but

by a sort of nickname, it's not worth while telling you what it was. Suddenly I heard her call him by the same name. The blood rushed to my head. I became very irritable at work. I was working on cork just then: we were buying it from Spain. Out of sheer pig-headedness I took and scrapped the lot. At night I came home with the craziest ideas in my head. I had a revolver. . . . But after all I went to bed. I took up a book—without thinking. It was a novel. I read till morning. Then I asked myself suddenly: 'What's happened to me?' It was as if a fever had left me. I was quite calm as I went to work. Wasn't it funny?"

I saw his light head hanging down over the upper berth. "Funny," he repeated several times. There was no laughter in his eyes; evidently he recalled the past with reluctance.

In the morning he spluttered over the wash-basin good-humoredly, hung onto the straps of the carriage and waved his hand to the school children crowding the platforms at the small, tidy railway stations. "You're short of optimism," he said banteringly to me. "Now, tell me, why are all your books so depressing?" The train rushed past rows of houses; shadows flitted by the windows. I thought of the letter written to me by the teacher to whom I had replied too late.

I went to the library in Paris. I needed some information about Eugene of Savoy. The library was dark and cool. People spoke in whispers. The Gothic windows and close air reminded one of a church. Beside me sat a young student. He moved his full lips as he read. I looked to see what he was reading: Joachim du Bellay. He was probably preparing for an examination in literature. I called to mind Bellay's verses: the dust of roads and the mournful beat of an aging heart. The backs of the books gleamed faintly on the shelves. The pages rustled serenely. I wrote down the dates of battles forgotten by everyone. A girl approached my neighbor. They whispered a while and went out together. I handed in my books to the drowsy attendant. Outside the street smelled of summer showers. After I had gone a few paces I saw the student and the girl. They had turned their backs on the passers-by. They were kissing.

## *III*

The town was disturbed. Through the hot dust marched flaxen-haired soldiers. They glanced distrustfully at the open windows of the upper stories. Gendarmes probed hay wagons with their bayonets. In a coffin they discovered handbills covered with terrible words. The tiers of the prison hummed like a beehive. A black-moustached major questioned the prisoners. When Rita, the consumptive seamstress, was brought before him, he chuckled. Rita started to sing. "Tell us where the printing press is hidden," said the major. "Stand up when the International is being sung," cried Rita.

They dragged her away by the feet and it took the orderly a long time to clean the stain off the carpet.

The local idiot Leib, who had been running about with a wheelbarrow for thirty years, fell to the ground and whinnied. "Misfortune's coming," the Hassidim declared, "the Jew howls like an unclean beast." The wife of the Zadik buried her emerald ear-rings in ashes. The Zadik said: "We must dance and be merry. God is pleased when people make merry." He drank the sugary Palestinian wine, sniffed at a clove and smiled as he combed his beard with his dirty fingers.

On the eve of the Feast of the Torah old Sura died. She lay dying among

her rags and rusty salt herrings. The Hassidim crowded around her bed, thronged the stairs and the yard. Sandberg the manufacturer called out to a boy: "Put on your cap, snot-nose, a holy woman's dying." A short, hollow sound issued from Sura's chest. Berkovich the tailor wiped his eyes and said: "The trumpet of the archangel has sounded; the Messiah will be here before long."

That evening Sandberg's workmen went on strike. Cartridges and cigarettes were distributed among the soldiers. Two policemen climbed onto the roof of the courthouse to pull down the flag. The blood-red rag fluttered in the wind like a flame.

On the day of the Feast of the Torah Sandberg came running to the Zadik. "May my tongue wither," he said breathlessly, "if I tell you a lie. He was in my factory. He talked to the workmen."

The Zadik raised his moist inflamed eyes and asked: "Who?" Sandberg made no reply.

Then the Zadik began to dance. He raised his gouty, swollen legs. He beat his bony breast. His yellow beard wagged like a pendulum. The Hassidim clapped their hands. Then the Zadik came to a standstill, spat upon the floor and cried: "Cursed be the Zionists! Cursed be the high-school teacher! Cursed be the Communists! Cursed be the Jew who came to Sandberg's factory!" Then he spat once more and whirled about in the house of prayer.

In the morning a bugle-call sounded through the barracks. The young officer looked nervous. He wiped the perspiration from the corners of his mouth with his handkerchief. Sandberg's workers crossed the bridge. Hearing the roar of the crowd, the horses backed onto the footpath. There was a sound of windows being broken. The officer waved his handkerchief and closed his eyes.

Sandberg shouted to the Zadik: "It's like Russia. You'll see, they'll take away my factory yet." The smile on the Zadik's face did not fade. "There are clean beasts and unclean beasts. There are tiny stars and a large moon. Your factory is your factory. Or do you perhaps not believe in God, shameless old man." Sandberg was standing by the window. He saw his workmen knock down a line of soldiers. "I believe in God," he said to the Zadik. "But I do not trust him. This is a crazy God."

Like a fowl in the hands of the butcher, the Zadik's wife writhed when she heard the shooting. Her wig slid off; under it a pitiful grey fluff could be seen. The Hassidim on the stairs cried: "Woe, woe!"

"You are lying!" shouted the Zadik. Sandberg shrugged his shoulders. "I told you," he said, "that he came to the factory sometimes."

After a while the Zadik said: "He was a bad Jew but still he was my son." Then the Zadik took a scissors and ripped his long silk garment and sat down on the floor and wailed. Beside him crouched his wife and behind them the more prominent Hassidim. All that day and that night and the next day they wailed without ceasing.

The Zadik's son, Hersch the Communist, was buried on a hot windy evening. Frail seamstresses and stalwart, red-bearded porters followed the coffin. Cabmen got down from their boxes and followed on foot. The workers' children carried wreaths sent by the tanners, bristle workers and upholsterers. Then came peasants in sheepskin coats, barefoot women with flowered kerchiefs over their heads, Jews in tiny peaked caps. Half-naked gipsies, tinkers and musicians ran out of their hovels and took their places in the procession. The coffin was draped in red calico and it seemed as if Hersch's blood had

soaked through into it. In the deserted squares the wind tossed up columns of dust and the words of forbidden songs.

When the Zadik heard the singing he went over to the window. Suddenly he burst out laughing. The Hassidim did not raise their heads; they went on lamenting the dead. The Zadik said: "Have done with your shouting! Can you not see that the people are dancing in the street? God is pleased when people—" Before he completed the sentence he swayed and fell to the ground. Sandberg kicked his big hairy head viciously.

*IV*

I am thinking of the fate of Jacques Devaux, the farm laborer, murderer and Foreign Legionnaire, whose bed was a heap of cow dung. He was a lean, grey-eyed fellow, son of some unknown wastrel and a dishwasher on a steamer. His childhood was spent in an orphanage. He was thrashed for the misdeeds of others. He peeled potatoes and held his tongue. Then he was sent to a farm. For three years he worked in silence, as if in a dream. Once his master said to him: "It was you who stole the money from under the mattress." Devaux replied: "No!" His master struck him across the face with a horse's bit. Devaux went into the cow struck. The cows were chewing the cud wearily. He lay in the sticky straw until night fell. Then he stole into the room where his master lay asleep and killed him with a blow of an axe. He made his way to Barcelona, where he worked as a longshoreman. He thought as he dipped his bread in his wine that nothing had altered in his life.

Devaux was once sitting in a tavern, eating fish. A Frenchman with a red moustache sat down beside him. Devaux glanced at him and choked. All night he rushed about the narrow streets of the "Chinese Quarter." Prostitutes smirked and embraced him; someone set a jug of wine before him; he ran without stopping. Among the painted women and night watchmen in the courtyards flitted another figure—the man with a red moustache. In the morning Devaux came to a standstill before a gate plastered with gay posters: on these the buglers' mouths were twisted mockingly. Devaux joined the Foreign Legion. He knew the heat and fever of Africa. He knew love in Melilla where naked women were exhibited like the carcases of sheep in the shop doorways. He fired at Arabs. His life was full of changes and dangers, but he did not know his life. His gaze was bent mournfully on the ground as before, and the sand of Africa was as the manure of the Normandy farm.

It was a clear day in autumn. Together with other men from the Legion Jacques Devaux was sent from Tetuan to Spain. They landed at Jijona. They were ordered to subdue the coal miners. The soldiers marched sullenly over soil black with coal and grief.

There was fighting in Oviedo. The active nozzles of machine-guns protruded amid the Gothic gargoyles on the bell tower of the cathedral. The miners swept down on the town like a landslide from the surrounding hills. They brought dynamite with them and blew up the buildings. Stone angels and ponderous doves winged skywards in clouds of fine white dust. In the public gardens two corpses lay: an old man with hands blue from coal dust was holding a little girl; she had a pink naked doll in her arms. The miners' shells did not burst and Señora Perez, who kept the brothel frequented by the officers of the garrison, set up a candle to the Virgin Mary. In the vast convents nuns howled their wolf-like litanies day

and night. Women brought cartridges and round loaves of bread to the Reds. On the hill of Naranca Aida Lafuente, a girl of seventeen, held off, alone, the attack of the Legionnaires. Bombing 'planes set the hovels on fire. The wounded lay in silence: there was no one to bind up their wounds; the children picked up the rifles of the dead men and charged the Legionnaires.

On the tenth day the guns were silent. The Legionnaires roamed about the streets as if they were in the African desert. They were of all nationalities, these men, and they were searching for pleasure. They swore in German and sang Portuguese songs. They butchered fowls with their swords. They reduced houses to fragments, stuck their black nails into feather beds, and, yawning aloud from weariness, disembowelled the miners with their bayonets. They burned down the theater: they wanted to see sights. I saw the tragic muse Melpomene; she alone remained with her broken nose, her smoke blackened hair gathered into a knot, and the vacant eyes of a tragedy, a woman, a statue.

I visited the hovel of old Dolores. She had black eyes and dazzling white hair. She had reared two sons. She salted with her tears her hard Spanish bread. She had her own trade: she washed the bodies of the dead. When a major in the Royal Army lay dying, they sent for Dolores. She had always been called "the old woman"; she had gone grey before she was thirty. At forty she was bent like an olive tree beaten by the wind from the sea. Old Dolores washed the yellow body of the dead major. Then the corpse was laid out in dress uniform. The major lay in the cathedral, amid saints with feminine curls, amid the tolling of bells, amid lilies and decay.

Old Dolores washed hundreds of bodies, eaten by sores, swollen with dropsy, withered into a resemblance of birds' skeletons. She counted out her coppers and cooked peas for her children.

It was a day in October. The Legionnaires entered old Dolores' hovel. Juan they killed on the spot. The youngest, Pepe, they chased for a long time about the steep slopes of the hills. They shot him at last in a hothouse, among shattered glass and roses.

Old Dolores was sitting on her cot when the door opened and a Legionnaire came in. She stood up, spread out her bony arms and cried: "Never mind if I am an old woman! I shall bear more children! Young ones! Others will bear them too! And we shall kill you—to the last man!"'

"He raised his arm to strike—at first," she told me. "He was standing where you are now. Then he threw down his rifle. 'What are you standing there like that for?' I asked him. He said nothing. I set a basin on the table and said: 'Eat, dog.' He started to eat. Then I said to him: 'Go.' He did not go. He flung himself down at my feet. Then he went away, leaving his gun behind him. I buried it. When our men came out of prison, I took the rifle to the committee and said: 'Teach me how to shoot. We shall kill them to the last man, yes, to the last man!' "

Old Dolores raised a withered arm, clenched her fist and shrieked something into the rainy stillness of the evening.

## *V*

"We must try to get in touch with Floridsdorf." Heinz did not raise his eyes. He was bandaging Krantz' daughter's arm. The long straight street had

been swept bare by a machine-gun. In the middle lay a cap. The Heimwehr were approaching the house from the west. When the guns became silent, a sound like the breathing of an excited pack reached the windows. Krantz' twenty-year old son, Otto said: "I'm going." He blushed with embarrassment. Heinz tore the bandage in his fury and swore. Everybody looked at him. He went on bandaging in silence. At last he said: "Ready!" There was a rumble. "It's in Block Three." Heinz rose and pulled his cap down over his ears. "Otto's too green yet for a dirty business like this. I'll go."

Heinz was forty-six. He was a sorter at the goods station. He lived alone in a tiny house, among his pumpkins and hens. He was a big man with a grey moustache. He was fond of sour young wine. When he was asked: "Are you a Socialist or a Communist?" he gave an angry tug to his moustache and replied: "I'm Heinz." The first day of the revolt he came to Krantz, picked up a rifle and said: "Now we're going to shoot some hares." He was a good shot, and his loud imprecations beat like the wind on the people, who were ready to drop with fatigue.

Heinz crawled out on his stomach. Otto stood, not daring to breathe, at the narrow window on the staircase. Then Heinz turned into a side street. Otto went in to Johanna and said: "Heinz would not let me go."

He stood there with his big hands hanging guiltily by his sides. Johanna could not repress a smile. She carried some big loaves into Block Three where the machine-gunners were stationed. Otto followed her. There was a splintering of glass and Johanna vanished in a dense grey cloud. Then he saw once more the golden colored bread and a rosy cheek. They went into the room where Johanna lived. They did this by silent agreement. Johanna laid the bread down on the table. Broken glass crackled under their feet. A chill wind raised the edge of the curtain. Rifles lay on the bed. For some reason or other, Otto's eyes were drawn by the picture postcards arranged fanwise on the walls: a blue lake, large yellow flowers. "Do you remember how we went to Semmering?" said Johanna. He smiled faintly; he remembered the smoke of the bonfire and Johanna's hot body. Then he said: "If Heinz gets there . . . ." He could not complete the sentence; like all the fighters who were defending that half-demolished building, he no longer hoped for anything. After a while, he flung back the curtain that flapped in his face and said: "We'll settle with them yet." Johanna said: "No, Otto, others will have to do that." She embraced him hungrily, awkwardly, and ran down the long corridor without looking back.

Quiet came with the evening. A baby could be heard crying. Otto sat on the landing of the iron stairs with his rifle in his hand. Before him lay the dim roofs of the neighboring houses. Here and there between the clouds stars twinkled. He fought off sleep. When his cheek came in contact with the iron railings he started back in fright. He was roused by a lonely shout. The Heimwehr had broken in at the south gate. They had to battle for every step; the workers would not give in. Otto called out cheerily: "Ah!" and struck one of the Heimwehr with the butt of his rifle. He forgot himself. He was seized and flung down into the black empty yard.

Heinz was taken alive near the bridge. A policeman shot him through the leg. He struggled and shouted as they dragged him to the barracks.

He lay on the frozen ground in a cellar. A lantern glimmered through a crack. Soldiers were playing cards outside the door.

"It's a good thing it wasn't Otto!" Heinz thought to himself. The pain in his knee made him clench his teeth. In the morning he could see some barrels. A soldier opened the door that creaked on its unoiled hinges, cleared his

throat and went out. Heinz closed his eyes and saw his home: he was going out to work, the curly-haired sheep dog thumped the ground with its tail. He remembered the scent of grass rubbed between his palms and smiled. Memories crowded breathlessly in upon each other: the chill of autumn morning, the firm bosom of his neighbor Anna, biscuits flavored with caraway seed, his stumpy burnt pipe. Life had tasted good, like a hunk of newly baked bread.

He was tried that evening. "Prisoner at the bar, stand up," the short, puffy general ordered him. Heinz replied: "To hell with your trumpery shop!" The lawyer for the defense broke in hastily: "The prisoner cannot stand up because he is wounded." Heinz listened in silence to the charges brought against him, to the speeches made by both sides, to the sentence. "Do you wish to add anything?" Heinz smiled; he could feel the savor of life in his mouth. Tearing himself away for a moment from his tense happiness, he said: "You'll soon be shot like hares."

He was led away, his hands bound, to be executed. Fiercely he breathed in the damp air of the first day of thaw, and swore. Then he tightened his lips and glanced back. Great drops were falling from the wet trees. He wanted to say something, then changed his mind, made a gesture of dismissal and smiled absently.


*Cover of Album of Drawings of the War by the Spanish Artist Souto.*

Isaac Babel

# A Reply to an Enquiry

In reply to your enquiry I must inform you that I began my literary labors early—when I was about twenty. I had a natural leaning towards literature and was led into it by my love for a woman named Vera. She was a prostitute who lived in Tiflis and, among her friends, had the reputation of being a good business woman. She did pawn-broking, launched beginners and, whenever an opportunity occurred, traded in company with Persians in the Oriental bazaar. Every evening she emerged in Golovinsky Prospect and, tall and white faced, glided before the throng like the figure-head of the Virgin Mary on the fishing boats. I stole after her, speechless. I saved money and at last summoned the necessary courage. Vera demanded ten rubles, pushed her big soft shoulder close to mine and forgot about me. In the eating house where we had Lula-Kebab, she grew flushed with vehemence, arguing with the proprietor to extend his trade and move to Mikhailovsky Prospect. After leaving the eating house we called at the cobbler's for her slippers, then she left me and went to a friend who was having a christening party that day. It was midnight when we got to the hotel, but even here there was something to be done. An old woman was getting ready to go to her son in Armavir. Vera knelt on the suitcases to force them to close, and wrapped up pies in grease-proof paper. The old woman, wearing a gauze bonnet and carrying a rusty looking bag at her side, went round to the different rooms to say goodbye. She shuffled along the corridors in galoshes, whimpering and smiling in every wrinkle.

I sat waiting for Vera in her room; it was furnished with three-legged armchairs. It had a clay stove and the corners were ornamented with streaks of damp. In a bottle full of some milky fluid flies were dying, each one after its own fashion. Other people's lives were shuffling and scraping and laughing in the corridor. An eternity passed before Vera appeared.

"We'll be off in a minute," she said, closing the door behind her. Her preparations resembled those of a doctor before an operation. She lit the kerosene stove, put on a saucepan of water, poured the water when it was warm into a glass vessel to which a length of white rubber tubing was attached. She threw some crystals into the vessel and proceeded to take off her clothes.

"Well, we've seen Fedosya Mavrikyevna off," said Vera. "Believe me, she was the same as our own flesh and blood to us. . . . She's going all by herself, poor old thing, no one traveling with her, not a soul. . . ."

In bed lay a large woman with drooping shoulders, her flattened nipples staring blindly at me.

"Why do you sit there so down-hearted like?" she asked, drawing me towards her. "Do you grudge the money, maybe?"

"I don't grudge the money. . . ."

"Why don't you? Are you a thief?"

"No, I'm not a thief, I'm a boy. . . ."

"I can see you're not a cow," said Vera, yawning. She could hardly keep her eyes open.

"A boy," I repeated, "a boy for the Armenians." I turned cold at the suddenness of my own invention.

I could not go back on it now, so I told my casual acquaintance the story of a boy kept by Armenians.

"We were living in Aleshki, in the Kherson district," I went on. "My father was a draughtsman, and tried to give us children some education, but we took after our mother, who was fond of cards and sweets. When I was ten I started stealing money from my father. When I was a bit older I ran away to my mother's relations in Baku. They introduced me to an Armenian called Stepan Ivanovich. I took up with him and I was his lover for four years. . . ."

"But how old were you then?"

"Fifteen. . . ."

Vera evidently expected some wickedness from the Armenian who had corrupted me, so I said:

"We lived together for four years. Stepan Ivanovich turned out to be a trusting sort, he believed everyone's word. . . . I ought to have been learning a trade all those years but all I thought of was billiards. . . . Stepan Ivanovich was brought to ruin by his friends. He gave them dud I.O.U.'s, and these I.O.U.'s were presented for payment."—What put dud I.O.U.'s into my head I cannot tell, but I did right to mention them. The woman believed everything implicitly and as soon as she heard of the dud I.O.U.'s she wrapped herself in her shawl; the red shawl quivered on her shoulders.

"Stepan Ivanovich went bankrupt. He was driven out of his flat, his furniture was auctioned off. He got a job as a traveling salesman. I was not going to live with a beggar so I went to live with a rich man, a church-warden." . . . This bit I stole from some writer, it was the invention of a lazy mind. In order to please the woman, I planted asthma in the old man's yellow chest—fits of asthma, and the wheeze of suffocation. . . . The old man got out of bed of a night and, groaning, breathed in the kerosene-filled air of Baku. . . . He soon died and his relatives drove me away. And then I came to Tiflis with twenty rubles in my pocket. The head waiter of the hotel where I stayed had promised to bring me some rich visitors, but so far he had brought me none but small eating-house proprietors. . . .

I began to blather about these people, their roughness and greed—a lot of nonsense that I had once heard. . . . My heart was ready to break with self-pity, my ruin appeared inevitable. I paused. My story was done; the kerosene stove had gone out. The water had boiled and was cooling. The woman moved noiselessly across the room. I could see her back, sad and fleshy, moving before me.

"The things people do," she whispered, opening the window. "God, the things people do. . . ."

Through the square of the window frame receded the stony slope of a crooked Turkish street. The stones were cooling outside. A smell of mingled dust and water rose from the pavement.

"Well, and have you had any women?" asked Vera, turning towards me.

"How should I? Who would let me go near them?"

"The things people do," said Vera. "God, the things people do."

I will interrupt my story here to ask you, comrades, if you have ever seen a village carpenter building a house for one of his own trade? With what speed and strength and joy the shavings fly from the log he is planing.

That night a woman of thirty taught me her simple craft. That night I experienced a love full of patience and heard the words of one woman to another.

We fell asleep at daybreak. We were awakened by the heat of our own bodies. We had tea in the Maidan, the bazaar of the old town. A peaceful

Turk poured out our tea from a samovar wrapped in a towel. The tea was as red as a brick and steamed like freshly shed blood. A caravan of dust blew in upon Tiflis—the city of roses and mutton fat. Dust covered the raspberry red bonfire of the sun. The long drawn out cry of the asses mingled with the hammering of the boiler-makers. The Turk poured out more tea for us and counted up on the abacus the number of rings of hard bread we had eaten.

When I was covered with beads of perspiration, I turned my tea-glass upside down and pushed two gold five-ruble pieces towards Vera. Her plump leg lay on mine. She pushed away the money.

"Want to fall out with me, little sister?"

No, I did not want to fall out with her. We agreed to meet that evening and I put back in my purse my two gold pieces—the first money I ever earned for a story.

# Thirty-five Years Since the Death of Emile Zola

To the Soviet reader it may even appear strange at first sight that the writers of the People's Front pay more attention to Zola than to the great realists who preceded him, including even Balzac.

There is a good reason for this. They turn to Zola as a memorable example of civic courage and honesty and a literary example of a great social novelist.

"At one time Zola was the conscience of humanity," wrote Anatole France. Barbusse, in his book on Zola, emphasizes his honesty as a great artist and a citizen.

In the time of the Dreyfuss case Zola's famous pamphlet *I Accuse* made him the leader of the Lelft-wing intellectuals. We recall this pamphlet as an example to writers of courageous and unreserved decision, in political questions, in days of great social turmoil; in it Zola showed his unity with the people of France.

Now, forty years after those battles, in days of much greater social upheaval, the writers of France take arms against fascism just as Zola did against reaction and in defence of justice. More than ever before, they need daring, honesty and consistency in their decisions. And the figure of Zola rises before them as an example, as the forerunner of the great writers who later became the "conscience" of the country, Romain Rolland, Henri Barbusse and many others.

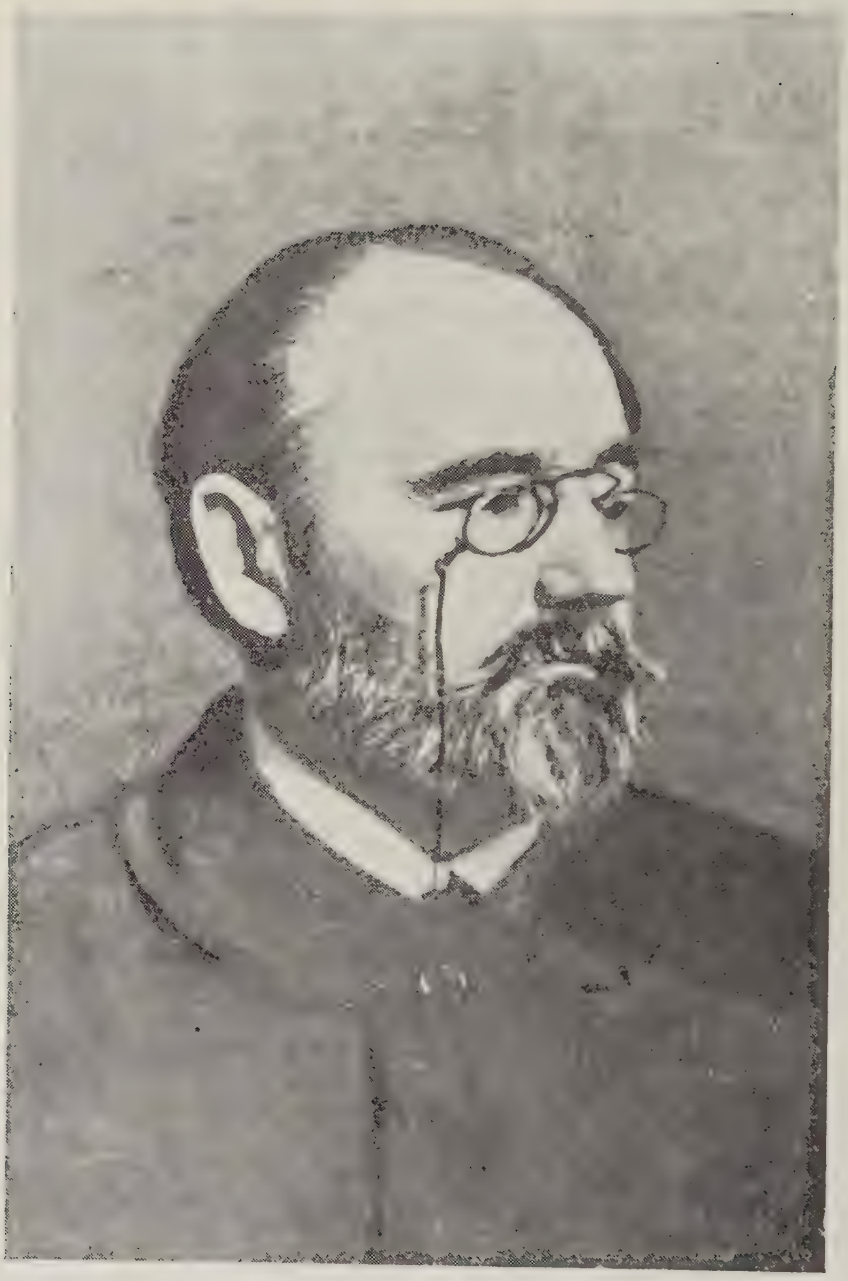
After decades of fruitless formalist and psychological epigonism in French literature, the writers of the People's Front are beginning to go back to the great realist social novel. And here, in quest of tradition, they turn to the name of Zola. One may well assume that the great canvases of Rougon-Macquart rose before Aragon when he began his cycle of realist novels, *The Real World,* before Roger Martin du Gard when he created his social-political fresco, *Thibault Family,* and before Jules Romains in his tremendous work *Mean of Good Will.*

The social scope of Zola, his optimistic, life-giving drama, his youthful faith in the progress of reason, science and justice seem very vital in France after the sterile art of decadence.

Zola's sincere democracy, as expressed in his ideas, form, language; and the unusual vitality of his books despite their "coarseness" and cumbersomeness, seem refreshing after decades of the refined "cult of proportion," sterile and remote from life.

We cannot at present overlook the weak sides of Zola. In championing individual progress, achieved in the filth and through the filth of capitalism, Zola was often inclined to be carried away by the drama of money and capital which appeared to him as the inevitable accompaniements of progress. "Money is the best and the worst of everything." While forcefully introducing the subject of labor into the social novel, Zola was too often content with reformist solutions.

These weaknesses which on the literary plane were expressed in the imposition of naturalist limitations on the possibilities of realism led Engels to regard Balzac as a more profound social novelist than all the Zolas of the past, present and future.



*Emile Zola*

And undoubtedly, when we seek examples of penetration into social life we will invariably return to the peak of nineteenth century bourgeois realism, the classical realism of Balzac and Stendhal.

However, Zola, who came several decades after them, not only had the drawback of a writer in the period of the incipient decline of the bourgeois world, but the advantage of the period when the labor movement was beginning to develop.

That is why he could introduce into the social novel contemporary capitalism and the proletariat. Furthermore, he could give the subject of labor such an important place that it brought his books closer to our contemporaries than the novels of his great predecessors.

For the literary generation of the 'ninties, Zola was the initiator of naturalism and the leader of the new literature. This generation, which regarded Zola as its teacher, was little influenced by his weaknesses as a theoretician and a realist.

Then came the time when Zola was forgotten. The aesthetes and decadents and the entire upper crust of the bourgeoisie nourished an aristocratic contempt for this "coarse" democrat and realist who derived his inspiration from the thick of life.

The time has now come for proper evaluation of the heritage of Zola both here and in France.

Lately, in Soviet criticism Zola has been definitely placed as the last of the great nineteenth century realists, and the one in whose work the great tradition of Balzac's realism enters its naturalist degeneration.

This is true of course. It is also true that many features of the degeneration of realism in the twentieth century are to be traced from Zola, that the weakest sides of Zola were further accentuated by the worst of his followers in the twentieth century.

But it would be absurd to equate the significance of Zola as a figure, as a fighter and writer, with the naivite and vulgarity of the theory of the naturalist novel. Many of our critics failed to understand what the foremost writers of France understood in emphasizing Zola's importance as an "example."

The last of the nineteenth century realists, Zola was at the same time the first writer of a new epoch. The end of nineteenth century realism and its decline are combined in Zola with the dawn and the beginning of the new.

That is why we, along with our French comrades, now regard Zola as a figure of great contemporary importance.

In his brilliant book on Zola, Henri Barbusse quoted Zola's words: "Salvation is only in the people" and turning to him, as a forerunner of a new social literature, he rightly said:

"We must not place this great shade behind us but before us, and use it for the enlightenment of people, for the collective needs and for that dramatic progress which will change the whole face of the world; we must turn this shade not towards the nineteenth century, but towards the twentieth and those following—eternally to greet the youth."

**Elena Usiyevich**

# Political Poetry

At the last plenum of the Union of Soviet Writers much was said about Soviet poetry. Beside a discussion of "current" questions and a review of the year's work the plenum dealt with the fundamental problems facing Soviet poetry. And this was not by chance. The plenum assembled on the hundredth anniversary of the death of Pushkin and set itself the task of discussing the significance of his life and his literary legacy. It was not only perfectly legitimate, but also extremely encouraging that the pressing question of Soviet poetry should have been brought up on this occasion. It showed the general anxiety to bring the critical appreciation of the classical heritage from the purely theoretical level to the level of practical life, another evidence of the growth among our writers of the sense of what is owed to the past.

It is true that the second part of the plenum, spent in a heated discussion of Soviet poetry, was little related to the first part devoted to Pushkin's work. As soon as the discussion turned to Soviet poetry Pushkin's name was hardly mentioned again. But to dwell on that would be to carry away a superficial impression. The question which became the central point of the discussion —the question of the political character and the political content of poetry— is intimately bound up with the problems of Pushkin's work and his importance to Soviet literature.

Unfortunately it is difficult to approve the manner in which this fundamental problem of the relation of poetry to politics was stated even on this occasion. We say "even on this occasion" because the statement of the problem which we heard at the last plenum of the union was not by any means new and was linked up with certain traditions cultivated by the theories of RAPP (Russian Association of Proletarian Writers). According to this tradition political poetry proper was opposed to non-political poetry. It was of course assumed that the latter, like all literary manifestations, was determined by social causes and expressed a definite conception of life. But as its political essence was not expressed in a direct manner, was not explicitly stated and was therefore almost imperceptible, this kind of poetry was placed in a compartment by itself. The most zealous critics of the RAPP type took poems which did not directly express the political convictions of the poet as an undoubted proof that their author was an alien type imbued with petty bourgeois ideas and deliberate in keeping aloof from political life.

It is quite evident that the mere fact of making such a division betrays a fallacy which makes all arguments based upon it barren. Such a division explains nothing and merely expresses a well known fact, namely, the divorce of art, and especially poetry, from the socio-political life of the people and popular movements.

This fact cannot be taken uncritically as the starting point for a discussion on Soviet poetry as it is not by any means an "eternal" law, but is merely what in the course of history the fate of literature must be in a class society.

The question of political poetry, as distinct from "other kinds of poetry," could not even arise in those periods of history which represented the heyday of world realist art. No one would dream of asking, for example, whether the Greek epic, and the Greek tragedy were political or non-political poetry,

whether one could describe as political poetry the work of Dante, Shakespeare, Pushkin, Nekrassov. It should be quite evident to anyone that the organic completeness, the profound realism, the genuine popular spirit, the full expression of all the important aspects of national life which we find in the work of the great poetic geniuses would have been beyond the powers of a poet working within the frame of a narrow group outlook or by egoism. The works of which mankind is proud could only have been produced by a genuine citizen poet, a public-spirited man who shared the fundamental interests of the people. In the work of such a poet political questions, in the very nature and structure of things, always play an extremely important role, for he understands the place occupied by politics in the life of the people and in the working out of their fortunes. Political and social ideas fill his work, whatever subject he chooses, however "personal" or "individual" it may be. This does not exclude the possibility—on the contrary it makes it inevitable—that every such poet will produce works on burning questions of the day, and that such works, being inspired by genuine passion, love and hate, will attain great power and be artistic monuments of their age. Pushkin in his day had no opportunity of writing what are called "newspaper" poems on current questions, but if we take his poem *Hurrah! A Nomad Despot is Galloping Through Russia,* and other political epigrams of his which passed from hand to hand in manuscript, we will be forced to admit that they are the ideal of what newspaper poems on current political questions should be. Pushkin wrote poems on definitely political subjects, and these were masterly poems full of point and perfect in form. However, *Eugene Onegin, Poltava* and *The Brass Horseman* are no less political than *In Deep Siberian Mines* or his political epigrams. Both types embody the same conception of life, the same love for the people, and hatred of oppression and every form of political and spiritual obscurantism. Political poems of such philosophical and artistic power could only have been written by a poet for whom politics is derived from a knowledge of the nation's life, and is an organic part of his philosophy. They are the poems of an active participant in the social struggle and not of a man of letters with narrow professional interests.

All this is true not only of Pushkin: Francesa da Rimini's *History* is no less politics than Dante's explicit pronouncements upon the Guelfs and Ghibbellines: Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* and *The Tempest* are no less politics than his chronicle plays.

It was entirely natural that the work of the best poets of ancient Greece should show such unity and completeness. It was due to the fact that "the people of those days had not become slaves to the division of labor, the narrowing and crippling influence of which we so frequently observe among their successors. But what is particularly characteristic of them is that nearly all of them live for the interests of their day, take part in the practical struggle, take up the cause of one or other of the parties and struggle, one with the pen, another with the sword and some with both. Hence the fullness and strength of character which makes them complete men. Armchair philosophers were in those days an exception; either second or third rate people or prudent philistines who did not want to burn their fingers (like Erasmus)."[1]

But if this was the origin of the organic completeness of the poetry of the Renaissance the poets of the end of the eighteenth century and after had to acquire this philosophic completeness by force of arms in the struggle against the tendency to tear literature away from its roots among the people.

[1] F. Engels, *The Dialectics of Nature.*

The social division of labor under capitalism had as its result the widening of the gap between art and life, and the narrow specialization of writers. The latter ceased being immediate participators in the social struggle, and became onlookers responding only to those phenomena which, by force of circumstances, asserted themselves in their personal life and compelled them to react. But even then the poets' reaction often consisted in mere attempts to escape from social conflicts and to "liquidate" them in their minds in a purely ideological and æsthetic fashion.

Different bourgeois poets have, of course, reached this attitude to reality in entirely different ways. Some have refused to stand up to the social problems and have become entangled in the contradictions of the bourgeois world, the practical solution of which they have lost all hope of finding. Others have been led to exclude social problems from poetry by their fear of the real revolutionary solution of social conflicts: such has been the fate of poets whose conception of the world has been close to that of the dominant exploiting class, and who have sacrified truth to the interests of that class. In spite of the different and sometimes even opposite causes the result has been much the same in both cases: poetry became narrow, and pale in thought and feeling. This is particularly true of the second case, *i.e.,* where poets have consciously refused to state serious problems of real life from self-interest and narrowly egoistical class motives. Narrowness and poverty of idea, poverty and conventionality of emotion have inevitably led to the poetic form becoming trivial and degenerate however exquisite the workmanship in detail.

It is only during a period where art is falling into decay as a result of certain peculiarities of bourgeois development, that "apolitical" or "anti-political" poetry arises. In opposition to this form of poetry there is poetry with a clearly defined political import which sets itself definite political aims and confines itself entirely to celebrating or stigmatizing political occurrences or standpoints. Naturally political poetry is more or less sharply differentiated from the ideological and class point of view. No less sharply defined are the artistic differences associated with differences in ideology. Political poets who have consciously made it their aim to defend exploitation and oppression of man by man never created and never could create anything of moment in poetry. Baseness of instinct and self-interest can never be the source of genuine artistic production. One cannot name a single great work which is hostile to the people.

It may be mentioned in passing that reactionary writers have frequently tried to conceal their hostility to the people by adopting a pseudo-popular style. This should be borne in mind because hitherto one has seen attempts being made on all sides either from a misunderstanding or with malicious intent to offer writings full of conventional mannerisms as popular literature, or peasant language as proof of the folk origin of their work. Those were the tactics followed by Bukharin, when in his speech at the First Congress of Soviet Writers he cited the formalist experiments of Selvinsky with the Russian song and made out that it was one of this poet's merits that he drew on the folksong and the popular epic; as is well known this enabled Bukharin to gloss over the antipopular tendencies present in Selvinsky's poetry.

To return to our subject we repeat that "political poets" advocating oppression and exploitation in their verses could give us nothing coming under the name of poetry, unless we understand by that word merely any rhyming and measured lines.

The best historical traditions were continued at such periods by poets who shared the interests of the people, and the political import of whose poetry

was the direct result of their efforts to make a better life possible for the people. It is characteristic of such poets that they are interested in every aspect of, in everything that has to do with the life of the people, and that they enrich their work with all those values which the people themselves create.

Nekrassov marked the summit of this kind of popular poetry in the second half of the nineteenth century. Definitely political subjects take up a very large part of his work, proportionate to the place occupied by political forms of the class war in the society of his day. But it must be said that only in very rare cases do his political poems present any definite political thesis. Nekrassov in expresing his partisan and tendentious ideas presents them as deductions from life itself. Such forceful political works as *Who Can Be Happy and* Free *in Russia* give an all-embracing picture of the contemporary life of the people. Of course Nekrassov's political convictions, the most advanced and revolutionary of his time, helped him to understand the people and to give a realistic picture of their life as a whole. But on the other hand Nekrassov's incorruptible artistic honesty brought him close to the people, awakened in him an ardent affection for them, called his attention to all the most urgent problems in their life and helped him to form the most advanced political views. That is why his political poetry proper has such power.

Unlike Nekrassov, working class poets of the 'eighties and 'nineties were not proof against bourgeois decadent influences. Their narrow approach to the life of the people deprived them of the inexhaustible sources of subject matter which this life offers and they had to "supplement" their set political ideas with emotional and æsthetic borrowings from the poetry of bourgeois decadence. This emotional poverty was particularly marked among the men of the proletarian culture movement, that is to say among those who, following A. A. Bogdanov, disavowed the historical mission of the proletariat and deliberately cut themselves off from the cultural riches of the past. Shutting themselves up in their pseudo-proletarian shell like their teacher, who supplemented their narrowly and therefore utterly erroneously understood Marxism with reactionary bourgeois philosophy, the proletcult adherents mixed their "pure proletarianism" with all kinds of decadent trash. Even leaving aside the reactionary nature of the proletcult "theories," let us recall the dependence of the "*Kuznitsa*"[1] poets on symbolic and decadent poetry.

This emasculation of poetry due to the divorce of political themes from the real life of the people which had already made its appearance when "the friends of the people" movement[2] was falling into decay, assumed a particularly acute form during the proletcult period.

It should not be thought, however, that the process of disintegration had spread to all political poetry by the beginning of the twentieth century. Widening our discussion to include literature as a whole and not merely poetry we may say that Maxim Gorky's work represented a tremendous force in the opposite direction. But in the field of poetry itself a remarkable figure appeared on the scene. In 1909 E. A. Pridvorov,—Demyan Bedny—began to write and in 1911 began to contribute regularly to the Bolshevik press. In contrast to the working class poets referred to above, here was a writer the political content of whose work grew out of his lively interest in every aspect of the people's life and his conviction that the whole of this life was important

[1] *Kuznitsa*—the Forge—a literary group which dealt with cultural problems from the narrow interests of their group, which linked them with the Mensheviks. They made a fetish of industrial processes.

[2] Similar to the American Populist movement.

politically. In other words he had the true political outlook of a Bolshevik for whom the political struggle is the most important side of social life and the political program is a program of action representing the resultant of the manifold tasks imposed by reality.

Even Demyan Bedny's earliest poems evidenced a revival of organic completeness, a return to the best poetical traditions developing along new lines.

It is sufficient to compare the terse, printed verses of Demyan Bedny, who is often able to expose quite a number of social phenomena in a single quatrain, with the lamentations of "political" working class poets of semi-populist or semi-proletcult persuasions, to see the immense difference between the verses of a poet-politician, who sees the whole system of exploitation in all its manifestations, who knows the life led by the people and is therefore able to tell exactly where the percussion point lies, and those of a poet whose work merely illustrates a preconceived and abstractly presented political theme.

People will say that this is due to Demyan Bedny's great talent. Undoubtedly, and we do not wish to underestimate the importance of talent. It is just here that the strength of great talents is manifested, namely, in their ability to utilize to the best advantage those opportunities which a new turn of political events offers. It is they who are able to breathe with the respiration of the people, see the direction in which they are going, absorb and express their aspirations. Their talent consists in the ability to experience.

Not all of his work is of equal value. The false theory according to which poetry is divided into two opposite kinds, the tendency to put political newspaper poems in a separate category, has left its mark to a certain extent on Demyan Bedny's work. We could mention a number of his poems in which in a mistaken attempt to be "topical" he has narrowed down his theme to an excessive degree and thereby impaired his poem both politically and poetically. This was the case with *Jump Off The Stove* and recently with *Heroes;* But Demyan Bedny's best works are examples of the way to combine poetry and life, poetry and politics. Demyan Bedny is therefore the best "political" poet among our contemporaries and is incomparably superior to other poets who would like to be regarded as experts in the writing of "political verse."

The work of the "best and most talented poet of the Soviet epoch"—Vladimir Mayakovsky, who died seven years ago—was a model of political poetry. Vladimir Mayakovsky came to write politically effective poetry in quite a different way from Demyan Bedny. Demyan Bedny entered the literary arena as a poet-Bolshevik fully conscious of the tremendous importance of politics in the life of the people. Of this Mayakovsky was not conscious when he began writing. He was only taught it by the Great October Revolution. But all his work, from the very beginning of his literary career, evinced his close contact with the exploited sections of the immunity, his love for and sympathy with the oppressed and his hatred for and disgust with the oppressors and the social system created by them. This refusal to be reconciled with all aspects of a society founded on exploitation, gave all the productions of this poet a strongly marked socially tendentious character, and this is true even of those poems of the first period of his work when he was apparently writing of his personal sufferings, and hyperbolizing them in an individualistic manner. However paradoxical it may sound it is true to say that there was more social import in Mayakovsky's cry about his unhappy love than in many lamentations on political subjects by small, latter day exponents of populist poetry. All Mayakovsky's work had social import, all his work—right up to the time of the World War which gave him a very definite political theme—consisted of searchings for all that was most profound in life. That was why

when Mayakovsky found his way politically not only did all his work become imbued with the most radical political ideas, but also, perfectly naturally and organically, an unquenchable spiritual need made him give expression in his verse to the political questions of the day.

Mayakovsky's topical contributions to the newspapers are extremely powerful and many of them are masterpieces of world revolutionary poetry.

Mayakovsky wrote a great deal of poetry for daily newspapers and he could not help writing it, for a poet who shares the interests of the people, a poet all of whose work is full of political fervor, cannot keep out of the daily struggle or fail to utilize the tremendous opportunities for propaganda offered by the daily press. Pushkin had not this opportunity but we know that he dreamed of it. It is enough to recall his constant desire to have a literary newspaper of his own. It can hardly be doubted that in such a paper he would have published poems on topical events so far as conditions would have permitted. After all he actually did write such poems although he had no opportunity of publishing them. Both Pushkin and Nekrassov contributed to magazines, that is to say the most effective publications of their day. (For quite obvious reasons Nekrassov wrote more on actual social questions of the day than Pushkin, but this does not take away from what has been said.)

After the Socialist Revolution the opportunity arose for advanced poets to have their work published in daily papers with a large circulation. Demyan Bedny and Mayakovsky made very wide use of this opportunity, just as Pushkin and Nekrassov would have done had it been granted them, indeed as any poet worthy of the name would have done.

There thus does not appear to be anything new in a poet writing newspaper poems on current topics. However this work presents no small difficulties. The necessity for quick work and for an immediate response makes very exacting demands on the poet. It is very easy to become superficial, lax with regard to form, onesided and insufficiently thorough in the working out of one's ideas. It is just this that has given rise among some poets to discussions as to whether political newspaper poetry is real poetry at all. There have been people who have regarded it as a sideline, and of inferior value.

Some poets and would-be critics would have it that political life as it stands is an "unpoetical" subject. It is not necessary here to marshal detailed arguments against a view so obviously a survival of bourgeois decadence in literature, and the decadence resulting from it of the different forms of the apolitical attitude (which all have the same root) which we have dealt with earlier in our article. Moreover, very few poets still maintain this point of view, and of these, the true character of their "apolitical" attitude becomes clearer and clearer with the passage of time.

Let us now turn to some other objections which are raised against "newspaper poetry." The chief is the speed of work required, the impossibility (owing to the rush) of entering fully into one's subject and "gestating" one's idea. This objection appears at first sight to have a certain theoretical justification borne out as it would seem in practice: very very many of the verses on topical subjects which are printed in the newspapers are politically superficial and poetically uninteresting. But if we look closer at this objection we shall see that we are not here concerned with any difference in principle between "newspaper" verses and the "highest" type of poetry.

Why are Mayakovsky's "newspaper" verses much better than the same kind of verses by any of his contemporaries? Because whatever topic suddenly arose and demanded an immediate poetic response it did not appear to Mayakovsky as something isolated from the rest of life. It became linked up

with ideas which had long before been thought out and emotionally experienced, and which had arisen in Mayakovsky's mind because of his serious attitude to the life of the people, his profound understanding of the struggle for Socialism, and his hatred for the enemies of Socialism. The topical theme made Mayakovsky see the phenomenon, which had became the center of attention, in a new light and feel its attributes with new vividness, freshness and acuteness. The urgent subject given him was the stimulus which made him at once take up his pen and produce a literary work which would be an organic component of his work as a whole. It therefore called forth inspiration, that is to say, an intense and natural activity of the mind's creative function. Consequently his "newspaper" verses were poetical and their subject "gestated" and well developed. The high standard of Mayakovsky's newspaper poetry was due to the same causes as the high standard of any great poet on any subject. But to say no more of the role of Mayakovsky's newspaper verses in his poetry as a whole is not sufficient. They were not only fed by all Mayakovsky's political poetry but were themselves a running spring of inspiration for it, and to a greater degree, perhaps, than with any of the great poets of the last century. That is not difficult to understand. Never before had such large masses of the people participated so actively in political life, never before had all sides of life been so intimately bound up with political tasks, with the solution of political questions: In the social revolution life becomes impregnated with politics and politics thereby become and acquire the broadest and most varied content. A great number of branches become interwoven with one another and all become directed towards the same great aim—the struggle for the dictatorship of the proletariat. For his work to be informed by the genuine life of the people he had himself to be an active participant.

And it was not a matter of merely sharing the most advanced political convictions of his day. It was necessary that his social convictions should not be restricted to bare platform deductions, that his political program should develop in his mind with all its vital implications and should reveal its significance in the historical fortunes of the people and in their everyday life. The best "newspaper" poems of Mayakovsky and Demyan Bedny were the result of such an understanding of politics. Both poets wrote also on political themes that they had not rightly understood and in every case such verses were not only inferior poetically, but were also unconvincing politically and sometimes even actually erroneous. We here again call to mind *Jump Down From The Stove* and *Heroes.* But this is only another confirmation of our thesis that success here depends not only on the innate aptitude or genius of the poet, and the cause of failure is not always the absence of these qualities, but is often an incomplete understanding of the political function of poetry.

That is how matters stand with political poetry in our country. The issue would seem to be clear enough but the discussion about "newspaper verse" and "political poetry" has nevertheless been going on for some years now. At the same time people who do not write and do not feel called upon to write poetry on topical political questions try to make themselves out as honest and disinterested champions of high standards in poetry.

Their colleagues who with great despatch between two games of poker or patience, put into rhyme a subject which has been dictated to them over the telephone, put themselves in the special category of "political poets" and for that reason alone expect people to judge leniently their very bad verses which have not the slightest warmth of feeling or inspiration to impart. And no one will tell these people that neither type are true poets, that both of them, either intentionally or unintentionally, today misunderstand what our people need.

One set purveys "pure lyrics" and the other set "political verses." But both ardently defend their specialty, which it is true, helps them temporarily to justify their existence in their own and others' eyes, but nevertheless retards the real development of literature.

Caught between the horns of this "tragic dilemma" many of our critics have been hesitating for some years as to which side to take. Either they deny all æsthetic value to "propaganda" verse and bow down before those who "although unfortunately apolitical are nevertheless great poets, masters of their art, lyricists," and so on and so forth. Or on the other hand they start taking in hand politically those whom they themselves have raised to the dignity of great poets, accuse them now of being apolitical without, however, casting any doubts on the poetical qualities of their work or asking themselves the question whether a great poet can ever be apolitical; thus they burn incense to the writers of newspaper verse, quite irrespective of whether this verse is of any poetical or political value.

This confusion, which arose in the question of political and non-political poetry, was taken advantage of by Bukharin in his speech at the First Congress of Soviet Writers. Under cover of condemning the slovenly workmanship of certain poets who advertised themselves as strictly political or "fighting" poets, Bukharin declared all newspaper poems whatsoever to be "bare propaganda which has now become out of date." While heaping hypocritical praise on Demyan Bedny's work and mouthing empty phrases about the greatness of Mayakovsky, "the classical poet of Soviet literature," he really made both these poets out to be one-sided writers of "bare propagandist" work. Having thus carelessly swept aside these two poets who, in spite of their great differences, are genuine political poets, Bukharin focused all his attention on praising the "great artistic talents" of Selvinsky whom he proclaimed as the greatest of all Soviet poets. In Selvinsky, Bukharin saw a poet who combined artistic talent with political direction, a poet who had triumphed on both fronts, that is to say, in the struggle against "bare talent" on the one hand and in the struggle against "bare propaganda" on the other.

The declaration that Mayakovsky, the best poet of the Soviet epoch, the genuinely political poet, the people's poet, read and loved by the millions, was out of date, and therefore no more needed at the present day, and the raising up in his place of a poet like Selvinsky, who has not yet outgrown a number of tendencies in his work which are actually hostile to the revolution, and the æsthetic discussion he raised around the work of Boris Pasternak was all calculated to mislead Soviet poetry into political and poetical decadance.

One has to confess that the confusion which reigned with regard to the question of political poetry was rather cleverly utilized by Bukharin, and he succeeded in disorganizing large sections of the literary public for quite a long time. The real reaction to all these views did not set in until Bukharin was exposed as a political double dealer. And this reaction itself, moreover, took a wrong course. What happened at the last "Pushkin" plenum of the Union of Soviet Writers? Selvinsky and Pasternak who had been praised by Bukharin were hastily rejected and the "political poets"—A. Bezymensky and M. Golodny (and with them, without more ado, Altauzen, Zharov and others) were brought to the fore. But the "dilemma" raised by Bukharin: either good "apolitical" poetry or bad "propaganda verse"—either Pasternak or Zharov—was not removed or ever put in question. And yet the essentially bourgeois nature of the "conception" brought forward by Bukharin in his speech lay in this way of stating the problem, and the wrong estimate of individual poets arose from this conception.

Bukharin rejected poetry which dealt with everyday political subjects. This side of his speech was at once subjected to the sharpest criticism at the First Congress of Writers. But no one paid attention to the fact that the fallacy of the "conception" lay in the idea that poetry can be divided and that topical verse can be broken away from the main body of poetry.

The lyric which represents the poet as in opposition to all other persons, the lyric which has a morbidly subjective character is a sign of bourgeois decadence in poetry and is due to the divorce of poetry from the life of the people and the divorce of the poet's political convictions from his personal life, including in the latter his personal tastes, inclinations and habits.

What happens when a person who is suffering from this kind of split personality makes political poems on topical subjects his specialty? It is quite clear that if the "personal" lyrics of such a poet are cut off from social life and the emotions experienced by the public, then his political poems will likewise be cut off from his personal life and they will not, nor can they, contain profound and creative thoughts or genuine and heartfelt emotion. A political theme which cannot be linked up with the personal social experience of the poet will give rise to *invented* poetry. Persons who are hostile to the development of our poetry along political lines are for ever taking poor and pseudo-political poems as a pretext for declaring political subjects themselves "unpoetical." Bukharin rejected Mayakovsky's political poems on the grounds that they were "now out of date," put a line through all Demyan Bedny's work and was at pains to assert that Svetlov's *Granada* was, in his opinion, an artificial poem. In attacking genuinely political poetry, Bukharin tried to compromise it by associating with Mayakovsky a number of poets who had published very poor poetry. By making generalizations from the instances cited by him Bukharin attacked not merely individual poets but the main line of development of Soviet poetry as a whole.

Bukharin's counter-revolutionary views must be exposed and refuted. But they can never be fully exposed so long as we merely reject his individual judgments but retain the division of poets which he introduced according to which Pasternak and Selvinsky, as writers of the "highest" kind of poetry, are contrasted with Mayakovsky, Bedny, Zharov, Bezymensky, Golodny, Altauzen and others as all representatives of the same political class of verse.

The attempt to combat bourgeois æstheticism in poetry by praising or justifying any hastily composed verses on a given subject can only lead to a perpetuation of the bourgeois thesis that political poetry is a "lower" kind of poetry. Consequently in defending the work of Vladimir Mayakovsky, the poet of the Socialist Revolution and the best political poet of our era, from the calumny of burgeis æsthetes and Leftist RAPP vulgarizers, we must not allow ourselves to cloud the issue by offering as political poetry verse which is remote from the life of the people, verse whose matter is poor and circumscribed and whose form is colorless and slovenly. To give such poems the judgment they deserve is not to attack but to defend political poetry. If this were not so we should have to class as an enemy of political poetry its chief exponent and the chief contributor to its fund, Vladimir Mayakovsky, for he repeatedly exposed the feeble, prosaic and impersonal character of the work of Bezymensky, Zharov and other poets of their kind.

It should not be forgotten that the author of *Germany,* Heinrich Heine, was reproached for having attacked political poetry when in *Atta Troll* he made fun of Freiligrath's empty and bombastic poems. He answered these criticism in his introduction to *Atta Troll.*

"But you lie, Brutus, you lie Cassius, and you lie Asimius when you say

that my derision is directed at those ideas which represent man's most precious inheritance and for which I myself have fought and suffered. No, it is just because these ideas are ever before the poet's mind in all their magnificent clarity and splendor that he is seized with an uncontrollable desire to laugh when he sees how clumsily, blindly and inanely such ideas can be comprehended by contemporaries of limited outlook. On such occassions he laughs as he might at a bearskin with which they had temporarily clothed themselves. There are some mirrors which have such a distorted surface that even Apollo would be reflected in them as a caricature and would make onlookers laugh. But we would laugh only at the caricature, not at the god."

We are with the great poet Heine, and we are with Mayakovsky in protesting against reducing the conception of political poetry to rhymed trash.

We wish to show in this article that poets who write bad verse on subjects of political moment have no right to excuse themselves on the grounds that in newspaper work one has to write in a hurry. It is not a question here of insufficient technique, or of insufficiently finished form; it is a question of the poetry, and narrowness of the writer's outlook and especially his artistic outlook.

The political life of our country is becoming richer and fuller year by year. Year by year the great masses of the people are becoming more and more interested in the carrying out of the Communist program, day by day politics are becoming a personal matter for every true citizen of the Soviet land: We are frequently being given examples of the public activities and speeches of workers and peasants—impressive speeches which reveal a profound understanding of political questions and a passionate desire to take active part in the subsequent struggle to attain Communism, to win happiness for the toilers of our country and the whole world.

But in spite of this, poetry in our country is in a very poor way in comparison to the first years of the revolution, the period when Mayakovsky and Demyan Bedny were at the height of their powers. How can this be explained? Can it be that our country lacks talent? Talent is to be found in every other sphere of life, in engineering, in economics, in politics! Moreover in literature itself during recent years such a powerful writer as Nikolai Ostrovsky has arisen showing what artistic ability combined with passionate political convictions can do even where an auther lacks literary experience. And in poetry too there are many talented people, people who have shown promise of becoming great poets. For instance is A. Bezymensky without talent? He certainly is not. Undoubted ability is shown by a number of young poets who have only recently begun to write. It is not that there is no talent. The fault lies in the fact that talent may be destroyed in this instance by dissecting poetry into two watertight compartments or "specialties," in the fact that poets limit themselves to their own particular shop, thinking that in so doing they will raise their qualifications as political poets. This is really nothing more than a transference to our conditions of an approach to the question of the philosophical fullness of art which is alien to the Soviet public. And what is still more serious, there lies at the basis of this artistically false attitude a wrong approach to politics, a tendency to treat politics as a separate, specific sphere of life and political activity as something concerning only a limited group of professional politicians; such a point of view itself hinders a broad and realistic portrayal of contemporary life and compels the poet to confine himself to a very narrow compartment of that life, to whittle down his theme and atrophy his talent.

We would do well to recall that in the case of our greatest poet, who was

at the same time an organic and brilliantly political poet, Vladimir Mayakovsky, the largest number of poor poems were written during that period of his literary activity when, entangled by the bourgeois "to the order of the public" theory which reduced the public and the poet to the respective positions of client and contractor, he attempted to reduce his poetical output to daily "deliveries" of poems on the subjects given him, and did not overstep the limits set by the given event or slogan which he had to illustrate. It is true that in the process of his work Mayakovsky realized the falsity of this position. His newspaper work helped him to gain a profounder knowledge of life and of people, to see the many different aspects under which politics makes its appearance in everyday life, how important every sphere of life is politically and the extent to which they are all bound together by politics, from the most abstract scientific theories to the people's behavior in the home. Mayakovsky realized the falsity of the Leftist arguments about the specific nature of newspaper poetry. He was therefore able to enrich his poems written for the newspapers, to give them life, suppleness, the plasticity of realism.

Does this mean that verses intended for the newspapers do not differ in any way from lyrical poems, and narratives or dramas in verse? Of course it does not. Newspaper verses, thanks to the work of our best poets, have crystallized into a new literary genre which has won for itself an honorable position in literature and has a great future before it. But would it be right to assume from this that the newspaper genre differs from others in the fact that it represents exclusively, or at all events chiefly, "political poetry"? Such an assumption would be entirely incorrect. Political power and trenchancy, ideological content cannot be regarded as exclusive attributes of a single literary genre. The political essence of a Socialist state should permeate the work of every Soviet writer whatever his literary genre. The marking off of a special territory for "political poetry" is bound not only to injure poetry as a whole but also to lower the standard of those poets who want to make "the political genre" their specialty.

Verses on immediate political questions, on topical political events, are among those that are most needed by our reading public. But surely every Soviet poet, worthy of the name, could write such poems, and in doing so will he not be following his own most deeply rooted and heartfelt convictions?

Only a poet who is vitally interested in social life and takes an active part in it, who breathes with the breath of the people, can write such poetry well. Only such a poet will be able to find in the political life of the country subjects for poetry which are dear to him, which are bound up with his conception of life and which he has gestated in his mind. But then only such a poet is a real poet. Only such a poet can produce great works of art on all other aspects of the life of man in society. A poet who conceives politics—one of the most important sides of the people's life—as a field apart, a poet who does not understand that politics concentrates in itself the whole life of the people, cannot write a lyric dear to the masses, he cannot write an epic or a great tragedy.

In our life the social division of labor created by capitalism is being done away with and so its crippling effects are disappearing. It is our duty to struggle against everything that stems this progress.

In order to stamp out and expose the remnants of the pernicious bourgeois theory, at one time so actively preached by the "literary leaders" from RAPP, and again offered us at the All-Union Congress of Writers by Bukharin, we must not rush from a pseudo-apolitical Pasternak to the pseudo-specialists in political poetry like A. Zharov and M. Golodny but must struggle for really good poetry which will at the same time be genuinely political poetry.

# From Two Fronts

The Second Congress of the International Association of Writers had a great moral effect and justified the hopes placed upon it by the toilers of the world, whose voice sounded there.

The outstanding writers of twenty-eight countries participated. Many of the delegations had to fight their way through the Congress. They had to overcome many obstacles, including those raised by their own governments (the English delegation, for instance). The vitality of the very idea of an international alliance of writers for the defence of culture against fascism found its strong expression and corroboration in all these facts.

There were present at the Congress numerous delegates from South American countries, who had never before participated so actively in the work of the Association.

The Congress, as we know, worked in Valencia, Madrid, and Barcelona, and completed its work in Paris, where delegates from Denmark, North America and other countries had by this time arrived.

Brigades of Congress delegates visited various sections of the Republican front. This mobility of the Congress and the necessity of having recourse to the most varied means of transportation gave rise to the joke that that was the first automotorized travelling congress in the world.

The fact that the Congress worked on the territory of revolutionary Spain, and even in Madrid, in the advanced firing zone, demonstrated the profound conviction of the foremost intelligentsia of the entire world that the cause of Republican Spain is a just cause, the cause of all advanced humanity; that it evoked the most lively response in the hearts of world leaders; and that Republican Spain will surely triumph.

The delegates of the Congress attested by word and deed their profound conviction in the victory of Republican Spain.

Members of the International Association of Writers who had joined the ranks of the Republican army in Spain brought to the Congress the hot breath of the front. Among them were Ludwig Renn, Hans Marchwitza, the heroic commissar of the International Brigade, Gustav Regler, just recuperating from serious wounds, and many Spanish writers.

It is perfectly natural that the Congress delegates desired to plunge directly into the fighting atmosphere of the front, to meet in a comradely way and talk with the fighters of the people's army. Breaking up into groups, they visited the forces in the Madrid suburb Carabanchel-Bajo, the Guadalajara positions and other sectors of the front.

One group of delegates consisting of V. Stavsky, V. Vishnevsky, Ilya Ehrenburg and one Spanish writer, was lucky enough to visit Brunete, Villaneuve de la Canada and the vicinity of Quijorna, the day after the beginning of the Republican army offensive and the capture of the first two of the above-mentioned points.

They were eye witness of the crushing attack of the valiant Republican troops on the fascist hordes. They witnessed the remarkable enthusiasm of the fighters of the people's army in beating off the furious counter-attacks of the fascists after the taking of Brunete.

Here standing beside the look-out in a trench about a hundred meters from the insurgents the delegates saw a trench wall newspaper with Comrade Stalin's portrait. One cannot recal this without a feeling or the deepest emotion.

They also had occasion to stop in many villages in Catalonia and in the province of Castille, and to speak with the peasants. In these conversations one could feel almost physically the rage and hatred of the Spanish people towards the fascists, and their impelling surge for victory and the establishment of a new life.

The Soviet delegation at the Second Congress of the International Association of Writers became convinced that the ranks of the defenders of culture and fighters against fascism are growing all over the world. The Congress considerably broadened international connections among writers.

Now that the Congress is over, it is our immediate task to consolidate these connections.

We must do much more than heretofore in the field of international propaganda and in uniting the best writers of the world for the struggle against fascism and for aiding the Spanish Republic. This work must be done in a more organized manner, and the Soviet writers must show an example of organizational discipline.

The first task is to carry out the decisions of the Second Congress of the International Association of Writers, to bring these decisions to the broadest masses.

*Translated by S. Altschuler*

*Mikhail Koltsov*

# The Front Has Stretched Through the Whole World

*(Speech of Mikhail Koltsov, Chairman of the Delegation of Soviet Writers, at the Congress of the International Association of Writers in Spain)*

On my way to this Congress, I asked myself what is it essentially: a Congress of Don Quixotes, a literary prayer for victory over fascism or still one more international battalion of volunteers in spectacles? What and to whom can this Congress and discussions of men armed only with their words give, what can they give here where metal and fire have become arguments, while death has become the main proof in the dispute?

From the most ancient times, from the moment the art of thought expressed in words arose, up to the present day, the writer asks: what is he, the prophet or the clown, the commanding general or the drummer of his generation? The answers were always different, sometimes triumphant, sometimes destructive. In the country in which we now find ourselves, in Spain, the writers have known both, have known insult and humiliation, and the highest honors for themselves and their craft. There are countries where writers are looked upon as something in the nature of hypnotizers. There is one country where the writers participate in the administration of the state, just as, by the way, the cook does, just as, by the way, all those who work with hand or brain do.

If writers have flattered themselves and entertained delusions in estimating their role in society, this is partly the fault of the special nature of their profession. The labor of the man of letters, his production, are almost never anonymous. The name of the author, his personality, even though most insignificant, officially serves as an object of demand of the public and becomes an inseparable element in the judgment of the quality of the book. When a worker produces, for example, matches, or a peasant grain, he might put into his work all his personality, all his personal skill, his whole soul, and yet the fruit of his creation will remain anonymous; it will simply be matches or grain. Even if a writer produces only ten, be they colorless, be they empty and careless lines—he signs them, and this is considered normal; it is almost obligatory, and the smaller the number of lines written and the less they can tell, the more necessary does the author's signature become.

This has partly created in writers of various epochs and various peoples the false theory of "expression," a theory which, changing its aspect and terminology, always reduces itself approximately to this, that the writer has within himself, perhaps somewhere between his liver and kidneys, a sort of mysterious gland which, like the "philosopher's stone" of the ancient alchemists, of itself produces the precious substance, literature. According to the theory of "expression," the whole task of the writer lies in finding the greatest force in the interpretation of himself, for which purpose he must go more deeply into himself, fence himself off from extraneous influences so as to enable the miraculous gland to work out its syrup of art.

I am inclined to think that in this hall, at this Congress, there are no people with whom it is necessary to argue about the theory of "expression." The creative and social path of each one here present, before it brought him here to the heroic anti-fascist Madrid of 1937—this path had long since saved him from such illusions. You and I have long since convinced ourselves, and verified it a thousand times, that our writers' feelings and moods are born not from within, but express the state of mind of peoples and classes, their strivings and hopes, their disappointments and anger. Our splendid friend

Romain Rolland has expressed this strengthened sense of the tie between writer and society in the following words:

"What is new here is not that great artists—heralds—sing of the sun before it rises, but that the dawn is already here, that a bridge has been built between the vision of art and social action. The dream of art is no longer woven merely from visions; it is created from material life. It is realizing itself in reality. A new, a hitherto unexperienced sense of security has appeared among us. We are no longer men who are walking on water. When Wagner created his *Tristan* he did not hope ever to find in Europe a public which would listen and understand, and he wrote, they say, for an imaginary public of Rio-de-Janeiro . . . Geniuses of art were forced to create for themselves, simultaneously with advanced works, the illusion of the vision of a future people, who will come to know in these works their songs. Today there is such a people. We are no longer alone. We create in common. Even though the role of a great artist will always consist in being in advance of the existing stage, in seeing fully that which at a given moment is only indicated, he nevertheless belongs to the same age to which other brigades of workers belong, all together building according to one plan, as once people built cathedrals."

What in our epoch is the standard of conduct of an honest writer who recognizes his ties with society and with his class? How better can he serve the toilers?

You know that the temperament and sincerity of a whole number of anti-fascist writers has led them to direct participation in this civil war in the role of volunteers. Some have already locked up their manuscripts in their cupboards at home and come straight here as fighters in the international brigades of the Spanish People's Army. Others have come here with good intentions to look and to write, but on seeing the war, on seeing the danger for the Spanish people, have interrupted their literary work and taken to arms.

About this there are disputes: how should a writer in touch with the civil war in Spain behave? Of course, they are right who prove that the writer must fight against fascism with the weapon that he wields best, that is, the weapon of letters. Byron did more for the emancipation of all mankind by his life than he did by his death for the liberation of Greece alone. But there are moments when the writer—I am speaking of some—is forced himself to become an actor of his work, when he cannot trust to imaginary heroes even though invented by himself. Without this the thread of his art is broken, he feels that his heroes have marched forward while he himself has remained behind. But, of course, writers must participate in the struggle first of all as writers.

Our friend Ludwig Renn at Guadalajara marched forward under the fire of Italian machine-guns in the first ranks of the German anti-fascists and commanded with a pencil in his hand. But German fascist flyers who were taken prisoner confessed that Ludwig Renn's *After the War* is, like forbidden fruit, passed from hand to hand all through the German squadron in Seville. Many of us should follow the example of André Malraux, who gave the Spanish people an anti-fascist squadron and is now giving them an anti-fascist novel.

But in order to help the people it is by no means absolutely necessary to fight on the front or even to come to Spain. It is possible to participate in the struggle while finding oneself in any corner of the earth. The front has stretched out very far. It comes out of the trenches of Madrid, it passes through all Europe, through the whole world. It intersects countries, villages and cities, it passes through clamorous meeting halls, it quietly winds itself upon the shelves of book shops. The chief peculiarity of this unseen fighting

front in the struggle of humanity for peace and culture lies in the fact that nowhere will you find a zone in which anyone who is thirsting for quietness, tranquility and neutrality may hide himself.

During the last month, I saw in Europe men calling themselves materialist and ultra-Left revolutionaries, who were trying to prove the necessity of a compromise with Hitler; I saw also Basque Catholic priests, who, together with the troops of their people, and alongside Communists, were marching in the attack on Italian fascist legions which had received the blessings of the Vatican.

In the ranks of the fighters against the common enemy, fascism, there is room for all: for Republicans, Anarchists, Marxists, Catholics and simply non-party people. There is no room only for those who want or believe in any possibility of a compromise with this enemy. And here, however deep the idea of capitulation or understanding, with whatever complicated political, philosophical or artistic structures it be covered, it is bound all the same to come out on the surface, it is bound all the same to expose itself.

Pronounce one hundred thousand words about what you please, praise, criticize, go into raptures, shed tears, analyze, generalize, make brilliant comparisons and give most stupendous characteristics—all the same—such is the logic of our times—you will have to say "yes" or "no" to fascism.

Peace between peoples has become indivisible, and indivisible has become the struggle for the peace of peoples. For us, men who have adopted the Stalinist Constitution, both American and French and even Spanish parliamentarism are sufficiently far. But we consider that all this stands on one side of the dividing line. On the other side stand the Hitlerite tyranny, the soulless love of power of the Italian dictator, the Trotskyist terrorism, the unquenchable rapacity of the Japanese militarists, the Goebbelsite hatred for science and culture, the race-frenzy of Streicher.

Nowhere can you hide yourself or take cover from this dividing line, neither in the front line of fire nor in the most distant rear. It is impossible to say: "I want neither the one nor the other," just as it is impossible to say: "I want both this and the other." "I am in general against coercion and in general against politics." Least of all can this be said by the writer. Whatever book he may write, whatever the subject on which it is written, the reader will penetrate into its most hidden lines, will find an answer: for or against.

This truth has best of all been confirmed by the example of André Gide. In issuing his little book, full of dirty slander against the Soviet Union, this author tried to retain an appearance of neutrality and hoped to remain in the circle of "Left" readers. In vain! His book at once fell into the hands of French fascists and became, together with the author, their fascist banner. And what is especially instructive for Spain, realizing the sympathy of the masses for the Spanish Republic, fearing to attract to himself the anger of readers, Gide placed in an out-of-the-way corner of his book a few indistinct words praising the Soviet Union for its attitude towards anti-fascist Spain. But this masking deceived no one. The book was reprinted in full in several issues of *Diario de Burgos*, the chief organ of Franco. They have recognized their kith and kin!

This is why we demand from a writer an honest answer to the question: with whom is he, on what side of the front of struggle does he find himself? No one has a right to dictate the line of conduct to an artist and creator. But anyone who desires the reputation of an honest man will not permit himself to walk sometimes on this side and sometimes on the other side of the barricade. This has become dangerous to life and fatal to one's reputation.

You know that for us, writers of the Land of Soviets, the problem of the role of the writer in society has long since been solved quite otherwise than in the lands of capitalism. From the moment that the writer has said "yes" to his people that is building Socialism, he becomes a full-fledged advanced creator of the new society. By his works he directly influences life, pushes it forward and changes it. This makes our position high and honorable, but difficult and responsible. Our writer Sobolev said—and there is truth in it—that the Land of Soviets gives everything to the writer except one thing: the right to write badly. The growth of our reader outstrips the growth of the writer sometimes. The author must strain all his creative strength not to lag behind his readers, not to lose their confidence and their very attention.

We would not change our position for any other and easier place. We are proud of our responsibility and of the difficulties which we are experiencing, because never in history was the writer entrusted by the people with a higher honor: with the aid and cooperation of the state to educate in art tens of millions of men, to form the soul of man of a free Socialist society.

The Stalinist Constitution—this greatest document in the history of the emancipation of the human personality—opens up new tremendous creative possibilities to the writer. We will have to do everything in order to live up to the heights of these possibilities.

Here, at the Congress, there are men who are surprised at the determination with which we, Soviet writers, are supporting the firm and relentless measures of our government in relation to traitors, spies and enemies of the people. They believe that we, though good Soviet patriots, but peaceful and inoffensive workers of the pen, should leave this matter to the stern organs of power, that we should stand apart and not mingle in this business, or at least be silent about it and not speak in full voice in the columns of our press. No, colleagues and comrades, this is a matter of our honor!

It is a matter of honor for Soviet writers to be in the front ranks in the struggle against traitors and spies, against all attempts on the liberty and independence of our people. We support and value our government not only because it is just and leads the country to plenty and happiness; we value it also because it is strong, its hand does not tremble uprooting the enemy.

Maxim Gorky said: "If the enemy does not surrender—he is destroyed." Why is it possible to fight Franco when he has stopped on Spanish soil with foreign legions, with Morocco infantry, with German air forces, and why should not this have been done when the same Franco was only preparing his attack? How many hundreds of thousands of human lives would have been preserved in Spain, how many hundreds of millions of bullets, how many thousands of shells and bombs from the air would not have performed their death-dealing work, if at the appropriate moment a military tribunal and a platoon of soldiers had destroyed the conspiracy of the treacherous generals.

Our country is fully insured against the adventures of big and little Francos. It is insured by its vigilance and determination, it is insured by the fact that at the very first step of the Trotskyite Francos, their path was barred by the organs of Soviet security and that they were punished by the military tribunal with the support of the entire people. For the sake of the peaceful Socialist labor of our cities and villages, for the sake of the tranquillity of our wives and mothers, for the sake of the carefree laughter of our children, in order that they may never be threatened by bombs of foreign air bandits, for the sake of the flourishing of culture and creativeness of our people and our fraternal peoples—we, Soviet writers, are always ready per-

sonally to execute the sentence of the court, to pick up a rifle and destroy the Trotskyite vanguard of fascism and capitalist restoration.

Is it necessary to explain the position of Soviet writers, as of the whole of our people, in relation to the struggle in Spain? With pride for our country we, Soviet writers, repeat the words of Stalin: "The liberation of Spain from the oppression of fascist reactionaries is not a private matter of the Spaniards, but the common cause of all advanced and progressive humanity."

We are proud of these words not only because they were a most authoritative call to all that is honest in the world to support the Spanish people, but also because when our Stalin speaks, it is not only words but deeds. Our country knows this, Spain knows this.

The anti-fascist character and composition of our Congress relieves me of the need to speak to its delegates about the necessity of a struggle against fascism. But the struggle itself, the defence of culture against its most cruel enemy, is not yet conducted with sufficient energy. Our Association has not yet convinced sufficiently wide circles of writers of the breadth of its base and program, of its determination and energy in the struggle for the defence of culture. Attack was always the best form of defence. Writers of France, England, North and South America, Scandinavia, Czechoslovakia—members of our Congress, ask your colleagues and brother craftsmen, what are they waiting for? Are they waiting until the enemy will grip them by the throat in order that what is happening here, when German bombing 'planes and Italian artillery are destroying the beautiful, clean, merry Madrid, should happen in their country? Are they waiting until the enemy should in the same way approach London, Stockholm and Prague?

I will never forget the terrible November days here in Madrid when writers, artists and scientists, among them the aged and sick, and with children on trucks, abandoned their homes, their studies and laboratories, only in order not to fall into the hands of the enemy. Only in order not to surrender to destruction by Hitler-Mussolini-Franco. Then the militiamen of the Fifth Regiment, fighters of the People's Army, some of them semi-literate peasants —then these militiamen with care and love carried them out of danger as the most valuable capital of the country.

Madrid is defending itself against the fascist beast. It is stained in blood, it is tortured—this wonderful city, but it is free, and even renders us, writers of the whole world, its noble and modest hospitality.

But the danger to Madrid has not yet passed. Half of Spain is trampled on by the boots of the fascist conquerors. They are trying to march further and they will march if they are not stopped. The criminal inactivity and so-called non-intervention will also in the future encourage their brutalized insolence. In Hendaye, on the Spanish frontier, I saw frontier posts of the French Republic, scratched by bullets from German machine-guns. Fascism is grasping the world by the throat. Decisive, historic hours are drawing nigh.

Writers and all honest intellectuals of the world! Take your place, raise your visors, do not hide your faces, say "yes" or "no," "for" or "against"! You will not escape and answer. Answer, then, more swiftly!

And to you, noble and touching Spanish people,— our admiration and love— to you our thoughts and strength.

We will be with you and, just as you, we believe that now your back has once become unbent, it will never again bend before the oppressor, that you will never allow the beacon of your liberty to become extinguished. Cervantes wrote on the escutcheon of Don Quixote: *"Post tenebras spero lucem"*—"After darkness I hope for light."

**Jose Bergamin**

# We Defend Culture

The defence of Spanish culture is inseparable from the struggle of the Spanish people. When we say this, it is not an unfounded assertion, but a precise statement of fact. For a close study of our cultural history has led us to this conclusion.

Spanish culture includes not only the heritage of the past, the accumulated wealth of ages; but also the rising sprouts of the future. The life and creative powers of the people—this is the soil in which our culture grows up like a mighty tree, and from which its roots absorb the living saps. The profound folk character of Spanish culture—this is why it flourishes today and gives sure promise of a plenteous harvest in the future.

We shall examine invisible subterranean roots of Spanish culture, the roots nourished by the saps of folk poetry. We shall review its past, in the mellow soil of which its present grew. The culture of the past, which has come down to our day retaining all its force and vitality, seems to us to be wholly and utterly of the people. The thoughts and aspirations of the people are expressed in the works of Spanish art. Created by the people, they have again returned to the people, and to them the people have come running as to solace in sorrow, as to the source of joy and partner in play. So many examples could be given that one would enumerate almost all our poets, novelists, artists and musicians. From the *Cantos of El Cid,* from the archpriest of Hita to Cervantes, Lope, Quevedo, Gongora, Calderon, all our classical literature is of the people's workmanship. So also is our painting: Murillo, Velasquez, Goya, El Greco, Zurbaran, as well as our music; and our theater is a synthesis of all these forms of art.

When the very life of the people proved to be in danger, then our people's ignored culture derided by the privileged classes who did not even know it, also faced the threat of death; and we writers, scientists, artists and musicians feeling the need to unite in its defence, formed the Union of Anti-Fascist Intelligentsia. And we took a firm stand on the people's side in the struggle of the people against the fascist militarists, the ecclesiastics, the representatives of those classes which grew wealthy on the sweat and blood of the people. We were aware that not only our present culture, rooted deeply in the people's soil but also our future culture, depends on the issue of this struggle in which a savage attack, fiendish in its barbaric cruelty, is launched against the people.

It is in no way incidental that an utter and absolute want of culture is typical of all the elements whose common denominator is fascism, that is, for the insurgent militarists supported by foreign states and marching hand in hand with the catholic church and the capitalists who always and everywhere defend their selfish predatory interests. Nor is there anything casual in the fact that, following the "renowned" traditions of world fascism, the enemies of the people take aim and fire at the very name of culture. This conforms to historical law.

For a whole century the militarists boasted that they do not know Spanish culture. The corrupt ecclesiastics, rotten to the core, blessed this infamous ignorance. Capitalism, encouraged by the state itself, brought with it misconstruction of culture, behind which a cynical, insolent exploitation lay concealed. Egoism and prudence, such is the "culture" of capitalism, which we ourselves, suffering together with and for the people, have all experienced. As Unamuno said, the word "Intelligentsia" has been converted into a disgraceful stigma which they have branded on our forehead. And before he died, this same unhappy Unamuno, tortured in Salamanca by his primordial enemies, had to hear their bellicose shout—Death to the intelligentsia! Contempt for the people's culture, and in Spain there is no other culture nor can there be! Barbarism! And as a sequal idolization of everything that is foreign! Firing at culture, they shoot at the people. And contrariwise, aiming to destroy, to crush the Spanish people, they, by this very thing, perhaps sometimes without realizing it, aim to destroy and crush Spanish culture.

Spanish culture—this is the life of the Spanish people. And culture as well as people stand under the threat of death. Our sacred duty, the duty of the intelligentsia, is to struggle for culture, struggle for the people. For the people alone is the original, unique creator and defender of culture. For culture is firmly rooted in the people, and nourished by the sap of the people, it will grow in majesty and splendor with its crest rising to the sky itself, the clear and transparent sky, which spreads above our native Spain.

*Translated from Spanish by N. Lyubimov, from Russian by A. J. Steiger*

*Battle In Spain. Painting by the American Artist Gropper*

*The Fascists Leave Their Mark. From Album of Drawings by the Spanish Artist Souto*

**Ilya Ehrenburg**

# In Memory of a Hero
# General Lukacs

He was a jolly lively man who was fond of life. People liked him. He knew how to do everything; he could write books, fight, secure trucks for his brigade and make his comrades laugh. On duty he was always calm and confident of victory, whether at Madrid, near Guadalajara or on the Jarama River. In rare moments of respite he chatted with the fighters about the past, about life and happiness and sang Hungarian, German, Spanish and Bulgarian songs. He had devoted his whole life to struggle. Under fire his good humor did not desert him. He was by turns a poet, an artist and a psychologist and he could devote his attention to questions regarding ammunition, canned goods for the soldiers or sleeping quarters. He not only knew how to win on the battlefield, but he made careful preparations for victory beforehand. He infected other people with his faith in life. I remember one evening in a small village near Guadalajara, soon after the victory. General Lukacs, a former Hungarian army officer, danced nimbly with the Spanish peasants. A few hours before his death he said jokingly, as he shaved himself: "I can't discuss strategy now or I'll cut myself. . . ." He came to Spain to shed his blood for the happiness of this foreign land and this foreign land soon seemed like his native soil. The Spanish peasants loved him as a brother. They always greeted the young general with a friendly slap on the shoulder. His body was carried past the ruins of Sietamo, it was a sultry day, amid the bare rocks of Aragon. He was born in a land of green pastures and sparkling, refreshing rains . . . The fighters raised their fists in silence:

"The drum did not beat before the ranks
When we buried our leader . . ."

Lukacs' Twelfth Brigade was fighting near Huesca at the time. It had been on nearly every front. Boadilla, Marata de Tajuna, Palacio y Bara, Brijuega, Casa del Campo—names of blood and glory.

An old Pole from the Dombrovsky Batallion, a World War veteran, a miner and Communist, who had spent long years in prisons, said softly: "General . . ." He couldn't finish the sentence; he was sobbing like a child.

I went to see Regler at the field hospital. He lay there white as a sheet. He had lost a great deal of blood and he gritted his teeth to keep from shrieking with pain. The first thing he asked was: "How is Lukacs?"

Lukacs had one great treasure—a full life and he surrendered it for the sake of life. Above his body in Valencia, the banners of the young Spanish Republic dipped. Meanwhile his comrades in arms, the heroes of the Twelfth Brigade, lunged to the attack.

**Associate Editor TIMOFEI ROKOTOV**

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