Workers of the world, unite!

International Literature

2

1938

THE STATE LITERARY-ART PUBLISHING HOUSE
MOSCOW—USSR

CONTENTS

No. 2 FEBRUARY 1938

FICTION

VALENTIN KATAYEV — I, Son of the Working People . . . 3

M. ARNO — The Wallet 43

POEMS

MIKHAIL SVETLOV — Granada 45

N. A. NEKRASOV — Commemorating the 60th anniversary of his death 49

DOCUMENTS

KLIM VOROSHILOV — Stalin and the Red Army 57

HOW WE SEE IT

VICTOR FINK — The Frontiers of Our Fatherland . . 59

NO MAN'S LAND 70

GRANVILLE HICKS — The Social Criticism of John Ruskin 73

TRUE STORIES

CAPTAIN KAITANOV — My Jumps 81

MIKHAIL KOLTSOV — Alexei Stakhanov 89

ALEXANDER FADEYEV — Sergei Lazo 94

A LETTER TO THE EDITORS 101

BOOK SHELF 103

ON THE LIGHTER SIDE

VICTOR ARDOV — Happy Ending 108

SOVIET CARRICATURES 110

THE EXHIBITION OF SOVIET PHOTOGRAPHIC ART

Letters and Telegrams: P. O. Box 527, Moscow
Editorial Office: 12-Kuznetsky Most, Moscow

Valentin Katayev

I, Son of the Working People...

(CONCLUDING SECTION)

CHAPTER XVIII

The Engagement

The same evening Semyon put on his service uniform, pinned on his St. George cross and with his billhook at his side, but without epaulettes of course, entered Tkachenko's house in the company of his elders, his mother and some neighbors invited as "esquires."

"Well Kotko, how do you do?" said the ex-warrant officer.

"Good health to you, Nikanor Vassilyevich."

"So, it turns out we meet again."

"Yes, sir."

"Long out of the battery?"

"I was demobilized on the fifteenth of last month."

"Good for you. I suppose the guns and horses were left to the Germans?"

"The guns and horses stayed where they were; they're under the Workers' and Peasants' Red Army now."

"Ah, that's how it is! I see. So the battery is all there. Whom did they put in command?"

"Samsonov, he's been put in command."

Tkachenko raised his brows and turned to the guests with a look of childish innocence.

"Just think of that," he carolled in a thin voice. "Just think of it, gentlemen—tut, tut, excuse me, comrades—how nice it must be in the service nowadays. Common soldier commanding a whole battery. Well, well. That's the war for you. If that's the case, you, Kotko, could have taken an artillery brigade under your command at least. Easy as anything. But why are you all standing? Sit down."

"Your hospitality, our schnapps," said the sailor, producing a fresh bottle from his inside pocket. "One and one makes two. Arithmetic."

Here, as it were, the two houses, the suitor's and the bride's-to-be, were united for the first time. And the feast began.

While the headman and Tkachenko were half-heartedly discussing the dowry, while the sailor, who had not got going yet, was fingering the

---

[1] For the beginning see No. 1 "International Literature."

bass keys of his accordion and casting languishing eyes on Lubka, while both mothers, wiping their noses after their tears with new, as yet unlaundered handkerchiefs, were exchanging endearments in the corner, recalling their young days and rejoicing in their new relationship, while the girls were still giggling bashfully, too shy yet to sing—Semyon sat wedged behind the table, and tried not to look at Sofia.

She was in the place set by tradition, standing alone on the threshold, tears on her eyelashes.

But at last she tugged her blouse straight, went up to her suitor, curtsied to him and without saying a word offered him a kerchief on a plate.

"That's the way," remarked the headman.

Semyon stood up and returned the bow. He took the kerchief from the plate and tucked it in his belt next his billhook. For some time the groom-to-be and the bride-to-be stood opposite each other without drawing breath. At last Sofia flung her arms about his neck and pressed her lips to his soldierly cheek which was hard as board. He kissed her clumsily on the eye, tasting the salt of her tears, and after embracing they kissed each other's hands over and over again.

Encouraged by this, the girls began to sing.

Early, oh early
A new house on the hill,
There stood a bride-to-be.
At the betrothaly
Her brother asked her:
"Sister, who is your dearest?"
"My dear father."
"Sister, you are wrong."
Early, oh early.

Every word of this old song re-echoed fondly in Semyon's heart.

He put his arm round Sofia's waist, who, making a pretence of disengaging it, took his fingers, pried them up gingerly, then squeezed them tighter to her.

They sat together at the table, bolt upright, motionless, wrapped in embarrassed bliss.

The crimson sun drooped past the windows, then sank out of sight behind the silhouette sharp as if cut out of black paper of a windmill on a mound far off in the steppe.

"Now, cavalier, let's have your sword," said the headman, unsheathing Semyon's billhook.

To its hilt the helpful hands of the girls fastened a wax candle which the sailor had brought. It was the custom to prink it with cornflowers, guelder-rose and ears of wheat. And notwithstanding that it was March, cornflowers and guelder-roses and ears of wheat—dry, it is true, but retaining their colors—appeared; and with them Summer entered the room.

The headman scanned the girls with a business-like eye.

"Now we need a good candle-maid."

The girl elected to this office was generally twelve or thirteen years old and pretty—the most poetic personality in the ceremony, the symbol of virginity.

"Come, which of you will do?"

As soon as the headman uttered these words, Frossya flamed to the roots of her hair. Even her hands reddened. Her heart stopped beating.

She had not been bustling and fussing and drumming her heels and dropping her shawl all day for nothing. It had long been her secret dream to become candle-maid at a wedding.

The girl bit her lip hard. Her brows rose. Her eyes were fixed in a desperate stare at Remenuk, signaling from her very soul: "Take *me*, dyadechka![1] Take *me*, dyadechka!"

The headman looked at her with his terrible eye and pinched her crimson cheek.

"Who are you?"

"Yefrossinya," she whispered, barely shaping the word with her lips. "Kotko. Semyon's sister."

"You'll do. Can you hold a sword up? Then hold it. You'll be the candle-maid."

And suddenly Frossya was so stricken with fear that she darted into a corner, hid her face in her hands and stamped the floor with her boots.

"No, dyadechka, no," she wailed, her pigtail quivering at each "no."

But the next minute she was on her dignity, and pale with solemnity she sat beside the headman, holding in her stiffly extended hand the blade and the burning candle trimmed with ears of wheat, cornflowers and guelder-roses.

The clear flame flickered to and fro. Luminous and bold in the candle flame the girl's face seemed to sway to and fro like some magic portrait in the air.

And the girls went on with their song:

Early, oh early,
A new house on the hill. . . .

CHAPTER XIX

The New Hand

More than once the guests made moves to go home but every time they got up Tkachenko scowled at the candle and said:

"Keep your seats. The candle is good yet."

According to the custom they were to stay until it had burned more than half down. The sailor, who never allowed company to break up early, had brought a candle of about one and a half pounds' weight to keep the dances and supper going until at least two in the morning.

They had long ago emptied the first and second bottles; they had sent out for a third and a fourth. They had found time for the bird-polka, the polka proper and the polka-coquette, and the special sailors' polka imported from East Prussia—and for four turns of each. They had sung: "And the wind raged in the thicket," "Paths overgrown," and, of course, "August forest," "Sigh, wide Dnieper," and "Oh, let the reapers reap on the mountain."

Then the headman and the sailor danced a fashionable novelty for the first time in the village. This was Yablochko (apple)[2] and everybody went crazy over it. The words were memorized at the first hearing—it was as though they had suggested themselves. Then a fiddler appeared from nowhere and began to scrape on his fiddle. And the ceremonial candle-half was not yet consumed.

---

[1] Diminutive of "uncle."

[2] See Mikhail Svetlov's "Granada" in this issue (p. 45).

It was past one o'clock when the headman, slipping out for a breath of fresh air, saw a man in the yard.

"Stop! Who are you?" he thundered, but immediately bethought himself that this was Tkachenko's new hand.

"Excuse me, but damn it, what are you doing out here, alone in the yard? Why don't you come in? That's strictly forbidden under the Soviets. Now we have Soviet government everybody's the same, master or man makes no difference. Come and have a drink and a snack. See this towel on my sleeve? I'm the elder here so you must do as I say."

With these words the headman dragged him, protesting, into the house.

"Join in," said the sailor and gave him a full glass.

"Drink, look happy. Bottoms up."

The guests took stock of the new hand. Although he had been living in the village for some time, he was rarely seen. He hardly ever went out. When he did he kept to himself and answered questions in monosyllables.

Now, standing in the middle of the room with a glass in his faltering hand, he looked interrogatively at his master. He was dressed in a soldier's felt boots, well worn, and a jerkin botched together with pieces of sheepskin. His sickly, bony face was overgrown with thin whiskers and a beard. His hair had not been cut for three or four months and lay like a greasy mat on his greasy coat-collar, like a deacon's.

There was no telling how old he was: twenty-five, nineteen or fifty. In short he looked like an ignorant, down-at-heel soldier from a non-combatant company, and recently discharged from a hospital. But there was a mysterious gleam in his dark blue eyes which set everyone thinking: what province bred people like that? Tkachenko looked sourly at his employee. They could see that his laborer's presence at his daughter's engagement was an offense to the ex-warrant officer. However, he nodded and said:

"Drink. Drink, when you're asked."

"Good health," said the man with a wry, enigmatic smile, and downed the glass in one gulp.

Somewhere about two in the morning the candle was down three quarters.

"Bah!" exclaimed the sailor. "I didn't get the right candle. Not by a long chalk.Well, never mind. I'll be getting engaged too—then I'll dig up a better one, two poods solid wax. What do you say, Lubka?"

The guests began to take their leave. Tkachenko did not detain them. Cocks crowed in the village. And that was the end of the ceremony.

CHAPTER XX

The Dream

"A lovely vision had Tatiana. . ."
Pushkin

After the engagement came the visit of "inspection." The father and mother of the bride-to-be with all their relations were to set out for the bridegroom's home and inspect his house and chattels.

On that day the suitor and the bride-to-be kept house together for the first time and received guests. This was the final stage of the courtship. The suitor and his husbandry had to be at their best before the parents of the bride-to-be. The issue of the whole affair might depend upon it.

Impatient though Semyon was to celebrate the wedding, still he had to postpone the visit of "inspection" for a few days. He had to re-thatch the

house and drive over to Balta to buy presents for his betrothed and her relatives.

When he had finished the roof Semyon hitched up the horses, his own Klembovsky mare, now given the new very interesting name of Mashka and the gelding Gussak, also Klembovsky's, loaned for the occasion by Mikola Ivasenko, Frosska's swain—took leave of Sofia and drove to town.

That night Sofia went to bed early and dreamed.

And the dream was that she woke up in her house, just where she had gone to bed, that on waking up she looked round, and saw no one, neither father, mother nor Semyon. But where were they all? This must have some meaning. Then she decided to go into the parlor where the honey and poppy seed were on the stove—perhaps somebody would be there. But then she remembered that she had awakened in the parlor and never in all her natural life had there been any other in the cottage. There on the wall were the same tufts of dry, odiferous grasses, the same nosegays of guelder-roses, cornflowers and wheat ears. But the furniture had been taken out. It was empty except for a wax candle standing on the floor and burning slowly. Probably just lighted, the wick was not yet black. Frightened, Sofia ran into the yard. Perhaps she would find somebody there. The yard had been swept clean; you could still see the fresh broom marks, but there was not a soul around. At least the horses would be in the stable. But no, neither horse nor stable were visible. And a dusty, dull day, sultry as before rain, hung over the yard. And in the middle of the yard was a wax candle, and its wick was black, and it was dripping on one side.

"What strange thing is happening?" thought Sofia, wringing her hands, and then she saw the farm hand. He walked past her without a glance, but he nodded. Sofia at once realized what he wanted. He was beckoning her to follow him into the steppe, at once, while there was nobody to hinder.

Sofia felt more scared then ever. Trying not to let him hear her, she ran barefoot into the street. It was deserted; and not only of people. There was not a single hen, not a dog, not a sparrow to be seen. And the whole village—from end to end—as though on the seamed palm of a hand, stood, with its church, graveyard and dry hayricks, empty and terrifying in its quiet. And the farm hand came up from behind pointing mutely to the steppe with his grey eyes.

"What are you following me for?"

"But I'm not following you," he replied solemnly.

The surroundings grew greyer and more desert like than ever. She must run to Semyon before it was too late, but she had hardly run half way when she knew that she was already too late. All was lost. She ran to hide in the smithy, but in the same instant the smithy door swung open and the farm hand came out to meet her. In the smithy Sofia could see a half burnt candle on the anvil. And the farm hand's eyes motioned towards the steppe.

"Don't follow me around," wept Sofia.

"But I'm not following you."

And suddenly Sofia noticed that he was smiling in a satisfied manner, and his smile was hard. At this, not fear but horror gripped her and shook her from head to foot. Just as though the blast of a whirlwind had struck her in the back and lifted her off the ground, she ran on the air, with tiny, tiny steps, and rebounding from knolls and boulders. Thus she flew,

her mind a blank, into an empty room with sabers on the wall. She slammed the stained glass door behind her, put her shoulder to it, turned the key twice, then saw that she was trapped. In the middle of the room was a smoky candle nearly out. The farm hand stood in the grey corner, grey himself, and quite indistinct.

He was taking his boots off in haste, one leg kicking at the other, to get the boots off quicker.

"Have pity!" cried Sofia but could not hear herself speak.

He was dumb. And she realized that he was not a man but an evil spirit. She must cross herself instantly, without a moment's delay. But she was numb all over and stood like a stone. Suddenly her right hand became transparent, imponderable as a thing made of light. Of its own accord it made the sign of the cross. The same instant Sofia saw that she was standing in an empty church before the closed curtained portals of the altar. And around her an invisible choir was singing a requiem in dirge-like angel voices. The voice rose higher and higher, louder and louder. The candle had burnt out, but a disembodied tongue of fire flickered on the stone flags. And suddenly the altar gates flew open. The farm hand peered out thievishly. Observing that they were alone in the church he ran down the steps and drew her towards him. She saw his hateful eyes quite near. In an unexpected final frenzy she seized him with both hands by the leather tie on his throat and tore it away. His coat fell open. His neck was exposed. On it Sofia saw something between a crucifix and an amulet.

"Aha, you've given yourself away!" cried Sofia.

And he suddenly grew pale, handsome, melancholy, and began to droop feebly, melt before her eyes, float away like incense, until he was quite gone. And her dream ended. And Sofia forgot it at that very minute.

CHAPTER XXI

At Balta Market

When Semyon came home a few days later, he brought news: the Germans were marching on the Ukraine.

Rumors to this effect had long been circulating among the people, but nobody had known anything definite. But now much had become known from authentic sources. The Central Rada, which had been so roughly handled front and rear by the insurgent workers and peasants at the end of January that there was not a trace of it left in the Ukraine, turned up again at Zhitomir early in February. From Zhitomir it addressed an official call to the German Empire for armed assistance against the Bolsheviks; and German troops invaded the Soviet Ukraine.

"To all Soviets, to Berlin, London, Paris, to all. . . ."

On the way from Pskov to Kharkov the Delegation of the People's Secretariat of the Ukraine Republic despatched the following communiqué to the Ukraine:

"The German military authorities detained our delegation a day and a half in Pskov, and then refused to let us through to Brest-Litovsk, because for their own ends they preferred to recognize the old government of the Ukraine. This means that Germany plans to take our grain, all our resources and politically enslave the Ukraine through the agency of the hirelings of Austro-German imperialism, the former Kiev Rada. The march from the West is bringing death, desolation and slavery to workers' and

peasants' Ukraine. The country's only salvation is for us to defend it with all our energies and resources, to the last drop of blood. In retreat, leave the enemy nothing. Destroy all stocks which cannot be carried away. The Austro-German marauders must be made to understand that they are not strong enough to enslave the Soviet Ukraine. Publish millions of leaflets explaining to the peasantry the piratical plans of the Austro-German imperialists. The working people throughout the world will support the Ukrainian workers and peasants in their struggle for the salvation of the Socialist fatherland. Long live the free Ukrainian Republic of workers and peasants! Long live Socialism!

"The members of the Ukrainian peace delegation. March 3, 1918."

Semyon saw this in a newspaper at Balta market in the possession of a huckster, an ex-soldier who was making noisy attempts to sell a fine tent, almost new, four English hand grenades and a live hog struggling in a sack and squealing as though it was already under the knife.

Kotko read the communiqué where he stood and asked if he might take the newspaper back to his village. The soldier was reluctant to give good newsprint away for nothing. He hung on tenterhooks for a while, wrinkling the thick bridge of his nose, shifted his cap from his forehead to the nape of his neck and from ear to ear, brushed the spangle of sweat from his pockmarked cheekbones with his sleeve, but agreed at last.

"Take it!" he cried, his hoarse voice ringing through the market for everybody to hear, and flailing the air as though he were surrendering his last shirt off his back. "Let the people know how the bourgeois are selling us out to the Germans, left and right. Let them know."

Semyon carefully folded the paper and put it in the lining of his cap.

He heard much more there, in the market. The rumor had been confirmed that an agreement, signed by the former Rada of Kiev, obligated the Ukraine to supply Germany with 30,000,000 poods of grain before the end of April and permit unlimited exports of ore. In making an alliance with the exiled Rada, the Germans revealed that their main design, aside from the extortion of grain from the Ukraine, was to throttle the Ukrainian Soviet Government which suited all the working folk and to reinstate the old regime.

The villagers on business at the market shook their heads and said: "That's the Rada for you. The Rada is glad, but not the people."[1]

And they hurried home to break the news.

North of Volochisk, eye witnesses reported that the Germans were advancing on a wide front bearing east and southeast: via Lutsk, Rovno, Sarny, Korostan, Kiev.

A woman who had started out for the Rumanian front in search of her missing husband but had got lost and landed at Balta market swore that she had seen German columns in Shepetovka and Kazatin with her own eyes.

She showed a pass, typed in German by the looks of it, stamped with a freakish eagle and signed by the German commandant.

"First of all," she said, prodding her dishevelled hair under her kerchief with nimble dabs of her stiff fingers, one with a silver ring, "first come the Haidamaki[2] in sheepskin caps with red crowns, and yellow-bluish ribbons on their chests, and after these here Haidamaki come officers and

[1] A play upon words. Rada also means "glad."

[2] Originally Ukrainian peasant bands rebelling against Polish overlords during the eighteenth century. During the Civil War, counter-revolutionary troops.

officers: over here Russians with epaulettes and cockades, and over there Poles with snow white eagles on their caps with pink bands, and all around Magyars and Ukrainians and Galicians. And all looking fierce! Behind these officers come Galician and Ukrainian prisoners. And after them the Germans. And what haven't they got in that bunch! One regiment cavalry, one regiment Royal Guards, one regiment—every mother's son on bicycles, and in one regiment the Germans sit in armored cars—inside, you see nothing outside...." The woman suddenly wrinkled her nose—tears trickling down it—and she screamed: "Our Russia is lost!" and threw herself head first upon some sacks of maize, on a cart nearby.

Semyon headed the horses home. He was alarmed. He lashed into the horses without sparing the whip.

Mashka, as Klembovsky's old horse, got the worst of it.

"You bastard!" he groaned, and reversing the whip leaned forward and cudgeled Mashka's spine with the stock. "And this is what they call a squire's horse. And hasn't learned to run properly yet. Never mind, I'll teach you!"

But Semyon had hardly reached the steppe when his alarm subsided. Everything around was unchanged and peaceful.

Through the close of the day and all through the night he drove along the deserted road, surrounded by the blackness of the earth and the familiar windswept stars of his childhood. Before dawn he began to feel cold. He lay in the straw, drew his leather coat over his head, soldier fashion, and feeling cosy, fell asleep. When at length he awoke, damp with the dew, he saw that the sun was rising and he was approaching his village.

The pale gold of the cross on the village church glittered. It was still dark blue on the glassy water of the pond, the reflections of two cottages and the stork-like silhouette of the well handles, now a bright pink at the tip, projected from the margin. And the fields spread all around, fiery green patches of winter corn, charcoal black strips of newly ploughed earth. On the horizon opposite the sun moved an oblong box on high wheels. With his hand over his eyes Semyon had a good look and recognized the twelve-row sower from Klembovsky's farm. Sitting at the reins was Mikola Ivasenko, Frossya's swain. iFgures could be seen everywhere going forth to sow. And high above all an early lark fluttered in the radiant sky.

"It's time I was out sowing too," thought Semyon. Yesterday's fears seemed mere stupidity. Still, when he had unharnessed the horse, he went to the village Soviet and showed Remenuk the newspaper. The headman read it through several times without saying anything.

At noon, when the folk returned from the fields, Remenuk called a meeting. Briefly, but unhurriedly, he told them what had happened and when he was done, he suddenly cried at the top of his voice:

"Comrades of the village! Listen everyone of you and understand. The German is on his way here, and the German doesn't take any jokes. He wants to make slaves of us again, take away our land, put an end to our freedom. He wants to squeeze out of us thirty million poods of grain and provisions of every kind for Germany; he wants to choke the Ukraine and Russia. That's what the German and Austrian landlords and capitalists are after. This is no time for talk. Comrades of the village, now's the time to show in action that we are not damned mercenaries, but will fight to the last to keep outsiders out; just as our forefathers fought against the

Swedes, who also butted in, once upon a time, but thank god, couldn't get out of the Ukraine quick enough. The same with the French counter-revolutionary Napoleon Bonaparte, who came a cropper too. What does this mean? It means that we must give them no food, we must starve them out; we must burn our barns. No bread for the Germans! Rise like one man to the defense of the revolution and freedom!"

CHAPTER XXII

The Visit of Inspection

And the next day before evening the whole family of Tkachenkos came to Kotko's cottage on the visit of inspection.

The suitor's homestead was at its best. The new thatch, twined from selected rushes into a thick, neat layer, was fresh and golden in the sun. The cottage had been newly whitewashed all over and fresh lime stains made bright spots on the surrounding soil. The yard had been swept clean with a new broom so that there was not a feather on it. The table, covered with a Household Cavalry tent, the best of all the tents Semyon had brought back from the war, might have satisfied the richest and nicest in-laws anywhere.

Set out on this table in neat order were German, Austrian and Rumanian aluminum flasks, with and without grey cloth trimmings; burnished with sand, they shone like silver; then came messtins, also of aluminum, and without handles; then enamel mugs, bowls and cups; then two brass vessels made out of Russian three-inch shell cases. And, lastly, Bavarian officers' dinner kits of four tin plates, a folding knife, spoon and fork, and a collapsible cup in a leather case.

The gem of the collection however was a dozen aluminum spoons molded by Semyon himself from enemy time fuses, and painstakingly and tastefully embellished. They were not copies of round village spoons. They were real town-house spoons, long things modeled from an officer's table spoon found by Semyon in those very famous trenches abandoned by the 2nd Household Corps at Smorgon.

But that officer's spoon was a poor thing in comparison. It had its genteel shape but that was all whereas on Semyon's spoons sprays and borders had been lovingly engraved with an awl. And the finest of them bore the inscription: "Sofia."

The rest of the display spread through the cottage, front room and back. There was a trenching tool, a horse cloth as good as new, summer and winter vests, German mackintoshes and dust cloaks, tents, English shoes, breeches, Zeiss field glasses, shoe leather, cotton shirts, a padded chest protector, packets of Rumanian tobacco, a leather ammunition belt, Austrian, and a lot more things which a pack and a kitbag could hold—in short the miscellany of trophies retrieved by thrifty Semyon on his battlefields.

Housewife and hostess this day for the first time in her future home as was the custom, Sofia could not keep her eyes off this treasury. It was hard for her to conceal her pride as she curtsied to the feasters and served at the table, remarking:

"Eat with your spoon, mama, never mind."

Or: "Fill yourself a 'luminum glass, Frossichka."

Semyon, on his part, tautening his cheek bones, and furiously knitting his brows in what he thought was the mien of a steady, independent house-

holder, remarked with the austere nonchalence of an old head of the household:

"Why you should stand dawdling there, Sofia, I don't know. Perhaps our dear guests would like something else? Mama's got some calf's foot jelly in the cellar there. You know where our cellar is? Well, go and fetch it, that's a good woman."

And Semyon stole a glance at old Tkachenko, his future father-in-law. What did he think of their housekeeping?

But the ex-warrant officer did not twitch an eyebrow as though there was nothing noteworthy either on the table or in the cottage. Only once, just as he came in, had he looked startled by the display and he had then remarked:

"Why, our Kotko's bought a whole quarter-master's stores. Everything money can buy. Forgot nothing. Did it cost much?"

The future father-in-law however showed not the slightest interest in the horse, cow and sheep. When Semyon's mother asked him to see what their livestock was like, he replied:

"What is there for me to see? I know 'em well, from the time they were Klembovsky's."

And he smiled darkly.

Anyone else in Semyon's place might have felt the ferocious, ineradicable hatred hidden under this spiteful banter, and the evil smile that accompanied it. But Semyon was so engrossed in his bliss that he had no ears for it.

After the visit of inspection the wedding day was to be appointed. Here everything depended on the father-in-law. Semyon and Sofia wanted to celebrate the wedding as soon as possible. But Lent was nigh. They would have to wait till the first week after Easter. And this date they proposed to Tkachenko. But he told them flatly there could be no mention of the wedding until after harvest. And then as god would dispose.

It became clear that Tkachenko was stalling. But there was nothing to be done; it was his right.

Semyon, however, tried to press him.

Tkachenko looked at Semyon with a queer smile and said:

"First you did something for me, Kotko. Then I did something for you. Now it's your turn again. Isn't that so?"

Semyon gave it up as a bad job. Wild horses couldn't move Tkachenko.

Here they called it a day. The Kotko family saw the Tkachenko's to the fence. Semyon opened the gate and the Tkachenkos filed out into the street.

The Tkachenkos were hardly ten paces away from Kotko's cottage when children ran with upturned faces down the street, crying in rapture:

"Oh, look, an airplane!"

High in the clear, mellow sky an airplane was flying over the village.

This was an out-of-the-way village miles from anywhere and the appearance of an airplane was an event. Men and women ran out of the cottages and looked up. The airplane was flying east. The declining sun distinctly illuminated its ribbed, trapezoid wings. And on these wings the people saw two black crosses of an unfamiliar shape.

"A German!" said Semyon instantly and ran into the house for his field glasses.

The airplane disappeared, then reappeared from another quarter of the sky, flew back over the village and was gone.

The people exchanged glances.

It was a German war plane.

The same night Tkachenko harnessed his horses and drove away. He was gone till next evening.

But one day passed and another and a third. Everything was quiet and peaceful.... And the villagers, busy in the fields, Semyon among them, thought no more of the Germans. Not once in four years of the war had he seen Germans, properly, at close quarters, and he simply could not imagine them turning up there, in the village. It was unthinkable. No. People had raised a panic for nothing, you bet. It would blow over.

Spring moved swiftly to its climax. Not long before Easter when he had got the spring sowing off his hands and planted a small melon patch Semyon went to spend the night with Sofia for the first time. This was his traditional privilege. Here, at least, the warrant officer could do nothing.

The girl nimbly unbooted her swain and they lay on the stove, their covering a white smock lined with black sheepskin.

Sofia pillowed her head on Semyon's outspread arm and with her knuckles tight to his firm bosom listened with bated breath to his thumping heart. He did not dare to breathe.

They lay like brother and sister in an innocent embrace whispering in the fragrant darkness about their future home and children to come. He demanded a boy.

"I'm afraid," she whispered.

"What are you afraid of, minx?"

"Supposing I don't pull through?"

"Why shouldn't you?"

"Who can tell?"

"Don't think about it. Don't get hysterical. Nothing's happened yet."

"Listen, Semyon, how shall we christen him? After grandfather Fyodor or what?"

"Who?"

"The baby."

"Whose?"

"Why, ours."

He chuckled softly.

And Sofia's mother, as was the custom, lay there on the floor near the stove and kept awake to supervise the purity of this first night together. She listened to the whispering and could already feel herself holding a grandson wrapped in a fine blanket. She could already hear the sleepy creaking of a cradle and see the baby's little round face with the nose small as a pea.

Tears prickled her wrinkled nose but she was afraid to blow it lest she should startle the two above.

CHAPTER XXIII

An Execution

Lent was over, Easter week was over. The southern spring had ended royally and now retired, yielding to summer the dusty road edged with ground ivy and the pale pink gramophone horns of bindweed.

And then, one day, women who were gathering rollingstone and spurge

in the corn saw three grey-uniformed men with slung rifles on the highway. They were approaching the village.

When they drew level with the women who were speechless with fright and curiosity, one of them, a staid fellow who looked like a sergeant, raised his hand to his pancake cap, waggled his beetle-colored Kaiser-Wilhelm moustache, puffed out his tight cheeks and drawled in a deep bass as though from his bowels:

"Mo-oen!"

"Gott help!" cried another hoisting his pancake which had a little round pin-point badge.

The women fell back in the corn, covered their heads with their aprons and made off as fast as they could.

Before the strange soldiers reached the smithy the whole village knew that the Germans had arrrived.

Behind their fences and palisades, on their sills and thresholds, the villagers looked with more curiosity than fear at the three men who strode up the street with steel helmets hanging behind them from their thick belts.

The Germans kept to the middle of the broad village street crushing the young grass under their feet.

They wore tunics vented at the back, baggy where they were not belted tight, and thick boots with a double seam up the leg.

Judging by these dusty boots, tawny from the Ukrainian sun, and by the sweat blotches around their armpits, the Germans must have come fifteen versts at least.

From time to time they halted near a house where the sergeant would apply his plump hand to his pancake cap, puff out his cheeks and bassoon:

"Mo-oen!"

After this the other man, apparently their linguist, would step forward, raise his pancake and cry jauntily in execrable Russian: "Gott help, master. Goot day! How goes one here to find the village Rada, please?"

But the master or the mistress—or the two together, or the whole family with half naked tots and bent over old people—would look at the visitors with silent curiosity.

After standing at the fence a little the Germans would move on.

And so they roamed politely through the village for about an hour and a half until they came across old Ivasenko who was famous twenty versts around for his education and his ability to talk apropos of anything until his audience succumbed to headache.

"So what do you want?" began old Ivasenko, and, in anticipation of a long conversation, settled his elbows more firmly on the fence. "So what do you want, gentlemen? You want to know the place and the premises of the village office, or what is one and the same thing—the village Rada?"

"That is so. We are obliged to you," said the Russian expert brightening up and nodding his head.

"You've nothing to look pleased about yet," was the stern retort. Ivasenko simply could not stand interruptions. "You'll have a chance for your remarks afterwards. So what is it you want?" he continued pedantically, enjoying the fluency and elegance of his style. "You want or what is the same thing, you are required to appear according to your orders before our village Rada. Well, all I can tell you is this. That village office,

or, what is the same thing, that village Rada, so called, has been conspicuous for its absence since the month of January this year. Now you may ask: Where is that office or where is that same Rada so called.

"This is what I have to tell you. There is none. None whatever. There has not been one for a long time because it came to a happy end, or—what is the same thing—it was dissolved in the month of January this year. And in its place there is now the office, or—what is the same thing—only not what is called the village Rada, but what is now called the village Soviet of Workers' and Peasants' and Soldiers' Deputies. The Rada is a thing of the past. A thing of the past. Now. You want to know the place and premises of the village office, or—the same thing—now the village Soviet. If so, then what I can say to that is, but not right off, but when I get my bearings—"

By this time the Germans had had their fill and easing their rifles they pushed on, dragging their heavy boots over the weeds.

Old Ivasenko gazed after them for a long time with venomous resentment in his eyes and shook his head contemptuously.

"Let 'em, if they think they're so clever—let 'em find it themselves."

At last the Germans got to the village Soviet.

On the thatch, next to a stork perched on one leg near its nest, they saw a drooping red flag, somewhat faded by the sun.

Apparently this startled them, because the sergeant took a long look at the flag, then puffed out his cheeks, raised his brows high and said in a gastric bass:

"Oh!"

Then they went into the khata.

The khata, as always, was crowded. Remenuk in his inevitable tarpaulin coat and hood, which he never left off either winter or summer, sat behind a table as though nothing had happened and was painstakingly sketching out in watery ink a list for the distribution of P.P.C.[1] farm implements to needy households.

The linguist doffed his pancake.

"Gott help!" he exclaimed briskly enough, despite his obvious fatigue. "Good day."

With these words he turned his face solemnly to the corner and with a sweeping gesture crossed himself from left to right before a new colored poster from Moscow, depicting a priest with a basket of eggs, captioned with satirical verses by Demyan Bedny.

"All men are brothers,
And what is my brother's is mine."

After this the sergeant uttered his abysmal "mo-oen," produced a paper from his inside pocket, and laid it on the table.

"Bitte."

"Please," the linguist translated.

Remenuk unfolded the sweaty paper and without hurrying read out the Russian typescript, the demand from the commanding officer of the combined imperial and royal force for the delivery of twelve hundred poods of corn or wheat, two hundred poods of bacon, three thousand seven hundred and fifty poods of hay and eight hundred and ten poods of oats to the stores of the field commissary in three days' time. If this order were neglected the culprits would be arrested.

---

[1] Poor Peasant Committees.

Amid general silence Remenuk folded the paper in four, ran his shell-hard nail along the crease, put it under his elbow, wrinkled his brow and returned to his penmanship.

"Also?" demanded the sergeant after a long silence.

"Herr Unterofficier," translated the language expert, "that's in Russian—mister Unterofficier—is having to know from you, mister, the reply for Herr Oberleutnant."

"Tell him, without fail," answered the headman nonchalantly, without looking up from his scribble.

The sergeant nodded approvingly, then puffed out his cheeks sternly, pointed his fat index finger to the ceiling and boweled out:

"Aber! . . ."

"You can rely on it," said the headman.

The Germans shuffled about a bit longer, poking into the corners. They were obviously looking for something to drink. But they found no water. Then the interpreter crossed himself before the priest with the basket, and said sociably:

"Goot day, goot night," and, accompanied by silent glances, the Germans left the Soviet.

On the way back they called at a farm house for a drink.

While the sergeant was sensuously bathing his whiskers in a bucket of icy cold water, the linguist managed to put in a word with the housewife who brought this bucket.

"A little to eat," he said with an eloquent gesture. "In Russian that will be, dogs so are hungry, as we."

Although quite recently the villagers had unanimously agreed at a meeting to give the Germans no bread and drive them out of the Ukraine by fair means or by foul, still, the housewife, true to womanly custom of old, took pity on the soldiers—especially the third, the deadest-beat and puniest of them, a man with a dry wrinkled head like a tortoise's, and round steel-rimmed spectacles, held together with cotton thread.

The housewife went into the cottage and brought a quarter of a loaf and a big chunk of bacon.

Emboldened by this success the Russian expert called at a few more farms on the way back and parleyed. Anyway, when the Germans passed the smithy, the interpreter dangled a sizable bundle in a clean, red handkerchief embroidered in gothic style, on his bayonet.

The same women who had been weeding the corn saw the Germans leave the village, flop down behind a mound and have a nap. And when they awoke, they took out their outlandish long-stemmed, green-tasseled porcelain pipes, further ornamented with transfer pictures, and had a comfortable smoke.

Then they pushed on, but now the sergeant had unbuttoned his tunic exposing his grey jaeger shirt, with mother-of-pearl buttons and a camphor bag against vermin. And the dead-beat with the glasses sang a German song in an effeminate voice.

In short, the Germans were liked rather than disliked in the village. And then they were forgotten. But exactly four days later they turned up again and made a beeline for the Soviet.

This time the Soviet was locked and a notice had been stuck on the door with a paste made of flour and water: "To whom it may concern, I am away serving as elder at the engagement of the sailor Tsaryov in Remenuk's khata behind the pond. Chairman of the village Soviet, Remenuk."

The linguist could not read a word of Russian, and the Germans stood before the locked khata in perplexity.

But just behind the pond, they could plainly hear the sound of a fiddle, an accordion and a tambourine. The Germans conferred and sallied towards the music.

As soon as they got round the pond they stumbled upon the khata where seamen Tsaryov was celebrating his engagement to Lubka Remenuk.

The sailor was doing it in style. The khata could not hold all the guests. Tables had been set in the yard. Although Remenuk was up to the eyes in work he could not disappoint the sailor. The headman sat in a prominent place with a towel on his sleeve and a baton and played the master of ceremonies in his leisurely way.

The German sergeant walked in, strode to the table where the headman sat, stared at him with bulging eyes, grey as lead, puffed his cheeks formidably, twitched his whiskers, then gave such a whoop in German that a spoon fell off the table.

"Herr Unterofficier asks," explained the interpreter, "where is the needful provisions?"

"What provisions?" said the headman. The sergeant fished a notebook from his side pocket, opened it and tapped menacingly on the leaf with an indelible pencil capped with indiarubber.

"Eintausend zweihundert," said the interpreter. "In Russian that will be two hundred and one thousand poods of wheat and two hundred poods of bacon and seven hundred and fifty thousand poods of hay and eight hundred and ten poods of oats. Where is they?"

"Stop joking," the sailor exclaimed after a general silence. Then he filled a glass to the brim and pushed it towards the sergeant.

"You'd better take that — drink up. Something for you to write home about. You've got nothing like it in Germany and never will."

"Nein!" said the sergeant, and pushed the glass aside with the edge of his palm resolutely, but cautiously so as not to spill it, after which he uttered a loud phrase and unslung his rifle.

The interpreter hemmed and hawed a bit, looking round at the crowd of girls, esquires, musicians and lookers on. He smiled cautiously and took a step back.

"Herr Unterofficier has it to do, mister chairman, that you are now arrested and must have a direction to the commandant."

"Ja!" said the sergeant. *"Stehe auf!"* and hoisted his rifle.

"Well, I'll be damned, is this a joke?" groaned the sailor, almost weeping with vexation at this hitch in his ceremonies, and snatched the sergeant's rifle, discharged it in a flash and hurled it so forcibly behind the cellar roof that it smashed a dog kennel and flattened a grey goose that unluckily happened along at the wrong moment.

The guests jumped from their seats and, a moment later, the other two rifles flew across the yard rebounding like sticks along a railing.

The Germans were then shut up in the cellar and given a large plate of calf's foot jelly with garlic, a loaf of bread and a messtin of wine.

The betrothal resumed its course.

At first the Germans drummed on the door and shouted. But they quieted down afterwards, and towards evening an effeminate voice stole up from the cellar piping German songs.

The engagement party broke up at dawn when the Germans were let out. They demanded their rifles back. But the rifles had disappeared.

The Germans went from farm to farm until morning asking if anyone had seen their rifles.

The villagers had no information to give. Then the sergeant raised his hand to his cap, gargled "mo-oen," gave his party the order to right about, and marched them out of the village, his cheeks quivering with indignation.

And the next day, before sun up, a cloud of dust rose on the highway at a distance from the village.

The village was surrounded by German troops.

While the grey soldiers were taking the covers from four machine-guns emplaced on rises of ground, dragoons galloped into the village. Near the church the squad split into three groups. One patrol, without changing pace, rode direct to the village Soviet. The other to Tkachenko's khata. The third dismounted where it was.

By this time the Germans knew the lay of the land perfectly.

Old Ivasenko, who suffered from insomnia and got up before everybody else, saw Tkachenko talking with the N.C.O. of the German patrol which had stopped near his house.

The villagers hardly had time to wake up and run into the street when the dragoons who had gone to the Soviet trotted back to the village green. Behind the patrol staggered the headman, Remenuk, his tarpaulin coat ripped from top to bottom, his hands bound with a rope held at the ends by the dragoons.

Behind the first patrol came the second dragging the sailor. Tsaryov looked awful. His mouth had been smashed with a rifle butt and the blood streamed down his striped vest. His forelock was half torn off and what was left was plastered to his forehead which had been rolled in the soil.

His trussed hand convulsively clutched the tatters of his accordion which he had used to beat them off.

His St. George ribbon was entangled in the rope so that the dangling cap beat about his bare feet.

In front of the church was an old, withered pear tree which had been blasted by lightning the previous year. Under it the German Wachtmeister [1] stood in his stirrups and turned slowly about. The dragoons laid nooses over the prisoners' heads. The Wachtmeister waved his saber. A minute later the execution was over. And as the two bodies dropped and swung a woman screamed so loud that the bronze of the big bell in the church tower vibrated in audible sound.

Lubka Remenuk, her arms outstretched, stopped as though rooted to the spot, five paces from the pear tree, her eyes glassy in her expressionless face. Then she fell down.

With field kitchens and transports, the German infantry marched into the village to the sound of bugles.

CHAPTER XXIV

The Golden Sword

Oberleutnant von Wirchow, the German commandant of the district, arrived in the rebel village early in the afternoon.

[1] Sergeant-major in the German cavalry.

He sat in a dusty carriage driven by a lance-corporal.

The young man at his side was an official of Hetman Skoropadsky, the new ruler of the Ukraine.

They had had a hot journey.

The Oberleutnant took off his new white suede gloves, that had a faint tinge of lemon — turned them inside out and hung them on the hilt of his saber, propped between his knees. The official had relaxed so far as to unbutton his tunic, which had dainty epaulettes, and take off his white service cap which was moist inside. But when they drove into the village the Oberleutnant drew on his gloves again and the official from the Ministry of Agriculture buttoned up and put his cap on.

A sentry in a deep helmet was standing guard beside the tree from which the corpses of Remenuk and the sailor hung. He halted and sprang to attention.

The Oberleutnant put two fingers to his cap but kept his eyes front. The official cast an oblique glance at the pear tree, felt in his narrow trouser pocket, produced a cigarette case plaited from Egyptian straw inset with an enamel scarab instead of a monogram, and nonchalantly tossed a brown Mesaxudi cigarette into his mouth.

The carriage rattled through the village and drove into the Klembovsky manor, where the headquarters had already been billeted.

A field kitchen smoked in the yard. A squad from the signal corps were installing a telephone wire on varnished poles. The dragoon horses at the tether swished their tails to keep the gadflies off. A machine-gun had been mounted on the roof.

The sentries sprang to attention. The Oberleutnant went up the steps and tossed his grey cloak to an orderly. The official from the Ministry of Agriculture trotted after the commandant, dusting his boots as he went with a pocket handkerchief. In front of the house the Oberleutnant drew his arm back and snapped his fingers. Two chairs immediately appeared in the porch. The officer sat down, crossed his legs and airily inserted his monocle. His attention was fixed on a big tent spread in the middle of the yard.

On the tent lay two rusty clips of 30 mm. rifle cartridges of Russian make, a Cossack saber minus scabbard but with a leather sword knot, an ancient carbine and a fowling-piece of the kind which watchmen load with salt to keep boys out of melon patches. From time to time a villager—man or woman—came into the yard, looked round timidly and added a contribution to this collection, a hand grenade or a bayonet.

Old Ivasenko was one of the first. He was the owner of the aforementioned carbine, a momento of his Turkish campaign.

Now the old man stood in a crowd of villagers leaning on a rail in front of the porch and described how that morning he had seen Tkachenko point out Remenuk's *khata,* where seaman Tsaryov had been staying, to the German dragoons. But he spun his story out so long, and with such detail, as was his wont, that nobody listened.

The Oberleutnant looked at his watch. It was half past twelve. According to the order announced that morning, all arms in the possession of the population were to be surrendered before 1 p.m.

After that anyone hiding arms would be court-martialed and would be liable to be shot.

Among others came Semyon to lay down his arms. He came in a clean shirt with an open collar. His face was as white as the shirt. The vision

of the terrible tree where his matchmakers hung was fixed in his unshifting eyes.

As soon as the news of the execution reached him he had gone immediately to the smithy and buried his soldier's Nagan revolver, complete with cartridges, a couple of hand grenades and the dragoon rifle, all of which he carefully smeared with pork fat and wrapped in a piece of sacking. For the time being Semyon left his billhook in the *khata.* Now, to throw off suspicion, though grudgingly and resentfully, he brought his billhook to Klembovsky's courtyard, placed it on the heap, and said, downcast:

"That's all, I have no more weapons."

And he withdrew to one side with the villagers.

After him came Frossya, eyes half closed, with a bayonet which had served the household as a tether peg for the young pig, and laid it on the tent cloth.

"Write down my bayonet as well. There are no more weapons in the house, you can dig it up from top to bottom." She spoke saucily to the Wachtmeister who was recording these trophies in a notebook.

Nobody else came.

"Not enough, not enough," said the official from the Ministry of Agriculture in a thin but blatant voice. "I never saw such a bunch! They carted a whole arsenal of arms from the front and give us old rubbish. The noodles don't understand what a court-martial is, eh?"

And he hummed down his nose, a song which seemed to mean a lot to him.

On the sands behind the bathing tent,
Spooning with Sharitt, little minx.
She calls me Minute,
And she's always saying:
"Stop a minute, Minute,
Wait a bit, my little-sweetie-pie."

In the meantime Tkachenko came into the courtyard with his farm hand. Tkachenko was wearing his epaulettes, service cap with a cockade and all his four St. George medals pinned to an orange colored band across his chest. He carried a narrow ledger under his arm.

If the farm hand had walked behind—as a man should walk behind his master—perhaps he would not have been noticed immediately. But the farm hand walked in front of Tkachenko and the ex-warrant officer followed after him, deferentially, as though after the battery commander.

The farm hand was clean shaven, his hair had been brushed and instead of the usual felt boots he wore tight chrome leather boots with dainty spurs. On his outstretched hands was an officer's sword with a gold hilt and a St. George sword knot.

He went up to the porch and offered the commandant the golden sword. At the sight of this strange peasant in a ragged leather coat offering a sword the Oberleutnant fell back in his chair and exclaimed in surprise:

"Oh!"

"May I speak to you in French?" said the farm hand in that language.

"Naturellement," replied the commandant, rising.

"I am Captain Klembovsky of the former Russian army, son of the late General Klembovsky and owner of this estate. It would be too boring now to go into the story of this masquerade. Now allow me, in compliance with your order, to hand you my weapon."

And Captain Klembovsky made a bow, or rather, a mere inclination of his narrow head and prominent nape.

The Oberleutnant took the sword respectfully, held it a while before his monocle, then returned it with a sweeping gesture.

"Oh, no! I can understand the inscription; it is 'For bravery.' This is not a weapon to be taken barehanded. Keep it. The German army knows how to appreciate a noble opponent. But excuse me for occupying your house without your permission."

"It is at your disposal, as long as you need it."

The Oberleutnant, the official of the ministry of agriculture and Klembovsky went into the house. As he went in Klembovsky crossed himself three times.

The door closed after him but opened again the same instant and Klembovsky shouted:

"Eh! Tkachenko! Nikanor Vasilevich! Come and join us, there's a good fellow."

The ex-warrant officer pulled his tunic straight under his belt and hugged the ledger under his elbow. With his eyes fixed resolutely on the ground he walked through the villagers, who fell back on both sides, and disappeared into the house. After two minutes the official of the Ministry of Agriculture brought Tkachenko out into the porch.

"Now, my friends," said the official of the Ministry of Agriculture. "Listen to me. There is an ordinary, elementary purpose in all laws and there is not one country in the world where robbery can be made legal. Authorities which make robbery a legal right, digress from the common purpose of world law and are unlawful by their very nature. Whoever thinks to get something for nothing, whether land, cattle, farm tools or anything else, is a fool. You won't get land free; that's as certain as two and two make four and not five. And now, here is your new prefect. Do you like him? Carry on, Tkachenko. Good day."

Alone on the porch, face to face with the villagers, Tkachenko paced thoughtfully to and fro as in the old days when his battery was on parade, his legs aggressively apart, his thumb stuck in his belt; and said:

"Look here, friends. I won't say comrades because that idiotic word is a thing of the past and I, thank god, never knew it in the past and didn't want to know it. So, see here, friends, fellow villagers. The monkey business is over. Whether you like it or not, that's how it is.

"Concerning a couple of uninvited matchmakers, well, you yourselves know where they are now. High up, that's where. And if any of you hasn't seen them, there's still time to have a look because they'll stay up there three days, by order of the German commandant. And this was done only that people should see for themselves and get the nonsense out of their heads. Now, thank god, his grace Captain Klembovsky has come back to us so that we won't be left without a lawful master. Many of you, my friends, have taken your chance and grabbed anything you could get hold of belonging to the Klembovsky estate. Well, it must all be given back to avoid worse accidents than we had this morning. And if anyone, maybe, has not kept that property safe—be it cows or horses or sheep—let him get his money ready at the market price. As for Klembovsky's land which you had the nerve to steal and sow, you are bound by law to till it until autumn and reap the harvest which will go entirely to Klembovsky, the lawful owner of the land; and you will be paid for your work at the rate of hired laborers. So get ready. As regards the arms I must say you are making a poor show. And I warn you. But I'll leave

you to our present allies and friends, the Germans, who have come to help us against any wrong doers. Put that in your pipes and smoke it. I have nothing more to say for today.

"But tomorrow there will be a meeting at eleven o'clock. The gentleman from the Ministry of Agriculture will have another talk with you. Everyone must attend. And be sure you've got the nonsense out of your heads. See?"

Tkachenko paced to and fro without looking at the people.

"Dismiss!" he said at last. The villagers dispersed, glancing up at the sky.

CHAPTER XXV

Four Toasts

A blue-black cloud like gunpowder emerged from the horizon and rose over last year's ricks and the still acacias of the village. On this day a great honor fell to the Tkachenko home. The hungry authorities condescended to have dinner with the new prefect.

Never had the ex-warrant officer's *khata* seen such august guests. On this day, Herr Oberleutnant von Wirchow, his nobility Captain Klembovsky and the official from the Ministry of Agriculture, Solovyov, sampled the milk soup, curd dumplings and roast pork of warrant officer Tkachenko. The lovely Sofia, pale as death and therefore still more beautiful than usual, served the guests without daring to raise her lashes.

For the occasion her father had ordered her to put on her best skirt, her best blouse and her best necklaces. He inspected her from top to toe and then said:

"One word: if you don't get that out of your head I'll kill you; if you put one foot over the threshold I'll kill you; if you say one word too many I'll kill you."

A cloud hid the sun. The wind rose and wafted a hot smell of hemp.

Tkachenko set out the best ninety-seven proof spirits, moderately diluted with hot water, on the table. The guests drank three toasts.

The first toast was proposed by his nobility Captain Klembovsky.

"I drink this toast," he said, "to my savior, Nikanor Vasilyevich Tkachenko, my faithful servant and friend; I drink so that gentlemen should know, in the future, how to own and manage their land, without turning up their noses at a rural life, that they learn how to be hospitable to good, devoted people, take wives unto themselves from the prettiest village maidens without minding their peasant origin; because land must he held not with one hand but with two; otherwise you'll not keep hold."

With these words his nobility, Captain Klembovsky, as though casually, cast a fleeting glance at Sofia who stood frozen in the doorway; then he emptied his glass in one gulp.

The next toast was proposed by the official from the Ministry of Agriculture, Mr. Solovyov.

"This toast, gentlemen, I propose to drink to love."

And the guests drank the second toast.

The third toast was proposed by Oberleutnant von Wirchow.

"To India!" he said in French, then observing that he was expected to continue, went on:

"Yes, gentlemen, in this remote Ukrainian village, at this rude peasant table I drink to India."

His eyes were filled with a blue, transparent vacancy and distance.

"We give you peace and stability. You give us grain and open a safe route

to India. England has strangled us in the West. But the route to the East is not only through Constantinople-Bagdad. It is also through Kiev, Yekaterinoslav and Sevastopol. From there German ships set sail for Batum, and Trebizond. I see Mesopotamia. The Arabian wind blows in the face of the German soldiers. And—India! India! There we will tear England's heart out. To India!"

The fourth toast was the host's.

"I am humbly grateful to you for accepting my hospitality, such as it is. My toast is to be worthy of your confidence and handle the people properly."

The *khata* grew dark. A torn-off acacia branch, every leaf of it livid in the lightning, flew past the window. The thunder exploded like a bomb in a caisson and spattered the iron roof

The guests drank the fourth toast.

The downpour flattened against the window.

Smoky torrents of rain swept through the village one after the other.

In another moment the *khatas* were lilac black on one side. The street swelled like a river.

The lightning struck down a crow and the storm drove it along the grey waters with bubbles and dross into the pond.

Aflame with lightning on all sides the sky threw incessant and savage salutes toward the cringing earth.

In the meantime Lubka Remenuk, soaked to the skin, walked through the village in the teeth of the wind with her mad unseeing face tilted to the sky. She walked leisurely in her long, Sunday skirt, a blouse with embroidered sleeves, her head garlanded in necklaces and ribbons, which the storm tore from her matted pitch-black hair.

The rain turned to spray against her arms which she stretched towards the khatas as she halted at every step.

She was singing monotonously in a vehement voice of inhuman pitch.

Early, oh early,
A new house on the hill. . . .

And she rambled on, staggering and cleaving the strong water with her knees.

The thunder pealed until after midnight, now retreating from the village, now returning.

CHAPTER XXVI

Insurgents

And when I die
My bones shall lie
Beneath the plain;
Let over my head
The broad steppe spread
Of dear Ukraine.

Taras Shevchenko,
"A Testament"

Late in the night there was a knock at Kotko's *khata*. Semyon darted to the window. By the flash of lightning that lit the sky at that moment he recognized Sofia's shawl. He opened the door hastily. Sofia ran in and embraced him with trembling arms. Water dripped from her hair and onto his shirt.

"Semyon, run!"

"What? Your father?"
"Father."
"Savage?"
"Worse than a dog. Oh, my legs won't hold me up any longer."
"Sit down."
"Run, for god's sake!"
"Have a drink of water."
"Run, I tell you. . . ."
Semyon fumbled for a box of matches on the hob. It rustled.
"Stop. Don't strike a light. Perhaps they are watching from the street."
Frossya and her mother glided about the cottage, covering the windows.
"You can strike a light now," whispered Frossya, trembling all over.

The small flickering flame of the charcoal brazier lit up the *khata* and red cushions laid against the windows. Sofia sat on a stool near the stove, her fists dug spasmodically into her bosom, and was licking her lips. Her eyes sparkled drily and fiercely in her pale face, which was spattered with mud.

"Run away, Semyon," she said in a quick monotone, as though in a trance. "Run away, today—tomorrow will be too late! Run, while it's dark. For the sake of our holy Lord Jesus Christ harness the horses. That devil, that damned Satan, my father—denounced you to the German commandant."

"So," said Semyon, looking at the ground and his lips quivered. "So. It's come to this, that I must harness my horse on a dark night and steal away, like a thief, from my own farm. I had kith and kin: a widowed mother, an orphaned sister and a maid pledged to me in first love. I had a *khata* as *khatas* go and a farm, and land ploughed by my own hands and watered with my sweat. And now these have swooped down on us from nowhere, and ruined our peasant life and are driving me out of my happiness to the devil, to follow my nose, to roam about the steppe in the dead of night like a Gipsy or that Serbian with a monkey. In the night I must bunk out of the village, leaving everything in the world—my dear mother, and my orphaned sister and my sown land and a plighted maid and my matchmakers hanging unburied, to feed the crows." Here Semyon remembered his battery, Samsonov's parting words and wept with vexation.

He wiped his tears dry with the end of his cotton soldier's shirt, drank off a mugful of water, gritted his small teeth and began to work his cheekbones.

"But no, you crows, you won't crow over me! Mama, go into the yard, put some bacon and bread in the cart. And you, Frossichka, put your boots on and run over to Ivasenko's—sharp's the word. Tell your devil Mikola to bring his Gusak here quietly, right away. I want to harness him with Mashka. In any case Gusak will be taken back to the estate tomorrow." Frosska nimbly thrust her feet into the enormous boots but she didn't have to run.

The door, which they had forgotten to bar, opened and the dishevelled head of Mikola himself peered into the *khata*. He was not surprised to see them all up. It is doubtful if anyone had gone to bed that unholy night.

"Excuse me for butting in at this time of night. I came to see you, Uncle Semyon. . . ."

Ever since Mikola had started keeping company with Frossya he had been all reverence toward Semyon. It was "uncle" all the time with him.

Mikola was dressed for a long journey and his boy's face, which had never known a razor, was tensed with determination.

"Uncle Semyon, I gave you my Gusak when you went to Balta. Now give me your Mashka. I want to harness her with Gusak."

"Why, I was just sending Frosska to you for the same thing."

Semyon stared at the lad.

"Going somewhere?"

"Yes."

"Tonight?"

"Eh-heh."

"Where?"

"Anywhere. And there's something else, Uncle Semyon. My best respects and don't refuse me. I saw you with a good Nagan revolver and cartridges. . . ."

"Well, let's go outside for a minute," said Semyon without giving Mikola time to finish.

They went out; and in half an hour, Semyon's cart stood outside the smithy, with Mashka and Gusak in the shafts.

Semyon dug up the weapons and his entrenching tool, brought them out of the smithy and put them in the cart.

Mikola covered them with straw. Sofia threw herself on Semyon's breast.

"Don't leave me here, take me with you!"

"No, Sofy. You mustn't dream of it. This is our business, not yours, a soldier's, not a woman's. Wait for me, don't fret. God willing, we will soon meet again. Those blackguards won't domineer our land much longer. And so goodbye."

They embraced and kissed each other's tearstained hands over and over again as on the happy day of their betrothal.

Then Semyon bowed low to his mother and she to him. And Frosska got a hearty, brotherly slap on the back.

Semyon and Mikola made themselves comfortable on the straw. The cart started. But it had scarcely rounded the smithy when Frossya ran after it, lighter than the wind, and hopped onto the hub.

"No last word for me?" she whispered to Mikola.

"I say the same: wait for me and don't fret. We'll meet again, soon."

"Where are you going, crazy?"

"If we live, you'll hear."

Mikola lashed the horses and the cart vanished into the shadows.

"Well, cavalier, is your spirit still in your body, or has it fizzled out?" Semyon asked his future brother-in-law in a low voice as the cart came out on the green opposite the church.

There was not a star in the sky. But the rain had stopped. The old pear tree was hardly visible in the darkness.

"I can't tell what my spirit is like," muttered the brother-in-law suddenly reining in the horses; "I haven't been in a war yet."

"Halt!" came the sudden, imperious cry of a German sentry.

The same moment a rifle butt crashed down on his helmeted head. The sentry dropped without a word. Semyon with a dragoon rifle in his hands, and Mikola with a soldier's revolver, jumped out of the cart and bent over the body. Semyon stayed his companion's hand.

"Don't shoot, you ass. Quiet. No panic."

Mikola tore the helmet off the sentry's head and struck it several consecutive blows with the butt of his revolver. Then he swarmed noiselessly up the tree and cut the ropes with a jack-knife. Two rigid bodies fell heavily but softly to the wet grass.

The friends put them in the cart, covered them with straw, slung the sentry's corpse on top without ceremony and urged the horses on. They stopped

at the pond, swung the German one, two, three, then pitched him into the water as far out as they could.

They drove on cautiously and got clear of the village. Then they turned off into the corn, made several wide circles in the steppe to throw off pursuit and finally tangented towards the heart of the district.

At dawn, after driving some eighteen versts, they reached a deep gulley and plunged into it. It was a secluded spot. Thence, by driving along the gulley bottom they could reach a certain wood, not known to many, without being seen.

The sun rose among the clouds of the retreating storm. A thick tyre of mud with adhering flowers slowly accumulated on the wheels.

Mikola crouched with his head in his hands.

"My god, my god," he whispered with pallid lips. "Forgive the blood spilt with my own hands."

"Now one can see you haven't tasted real war yet," said Semyon sternly. "Leave god alone, he's not concerned about you anyway. He won't even bother to talk to you, you fool. But men will forgive you, yes, and thank you."

The yellow sun shone vaguely upon the narrow, gleaming cloth-like leaves of a wild olive where a sleepy dove rocked on a branch.

In the afternoon they drove into the wood; some men jumped out from behind a hazel bush with poised hand grenades and leveled rifles.

"Stop! Who are you?"

"Villagers."

"Good. Where to?"

"Away from the enemy."

"Better still. To us, of course. Have you any arms?"

"A soldier's Nagan revolver, a dragoon rifle, caliber 30, two hand grenades and four German guns—the devil knows what caliber."

Semyon spoke the truth. There were four German rifles. One was the sentry's and the three others were the rifles lost by the German patrol at the betrothal of the seaman Tsaryov and Lubka Remenuk. They had been bagged that night and buried in straw by Mikola.

"Good.... Have you cartridges for the German rifles?"

"No, we haven't. We never thought of it."

"Christ almighty! Talent! They steal German rifles and not a man-jack of them thinks about ammunition. Any food?"

"We have some bacon and bread."

"So have we, too damn' much. You haven't a machine-gun by any chance?"

"No."

"Christ almighty! Look at 'em! Just like little children. What else have you in the cart?"

Semyon and Mikola parted the straw. The men peered into the cart and uncovered in silence. One or two crossed themselves.

"Our Soviet government," said Semyon with downcast eyes. "They were my matchmakers, too, both of them. Those two contracted me and engaged me. But there was no wedding after all. Neither for them, nor for me. Those wolves swooped down from nowhere and ended everything. Left us peasants nothing to live for."

By this time the cart was surrounded not by five but by at least forty fugitives, villagers who had gathered here from the districts overrun by the Haidamaks and the Germans. They were here to fight for their own with arms in their hands.

Silent and bareheaded, some with caps, some with steel helmets, they led

the cart into the depths of the forest until they came to a scheme of dugouts; gruel simmered in dixies. In a glade, under a young oak they buried seaman Tsaryov and Remenuk, chairman of the village Soviet, and carved their names and a cross on the tree and nailed on the sailor's cap.

CHAPTER XXVII

Under Red Banners

"The German, grandpa, what of the German?"
"The German scourged us, son.
Till the hour came to raise our backs
The hour to lift the ax."
N. A. Nekrasov.

Summer was over. It was August, the last summer month.

The Congress of Revolutionary Committees and Staffs of Kiev Province in a manifesto issued in mid-August to the workers and peasants of the Ukraine said:

"Comrades! Five months ago the Central Ukrainian Rada consisting of Right Socialist-Revolutionaries and Mensheviks, supported by the landowners and capitalists of the Ukraine, summoned German bayonets and with their assistance destroyed Soviet power. For five months they have ruled in the Ukraine, and all through these months of their rule workers' and peasants' blood has been shed that capitalism might remain master. During this time all the revolutionary achievements of Soviet power have been wrested from the working people by them and trampled under the heel of Hindenburg.

"The land has been taken from the peasants and once more given back to the landowners. Haidamak and German punitive forces have been sent to every village and under their protection the landowners, lost to all shame, rob the peasants of their last loaf and the last kopek. They have extorted a hundredfold for what was taken from them by the Soviet Government when the working people were in power.

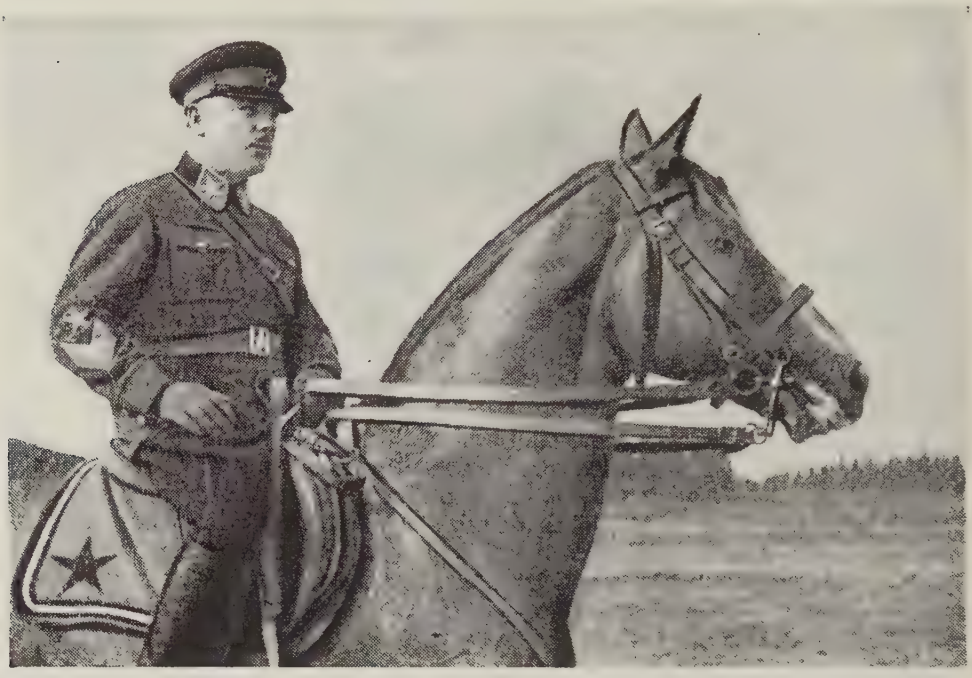
"Their greed is insatiable and insatiable their vengeance. From Rostov to the Trojan Wall, and from Kursk to Jankoi and on to the shores of the Black Sea; on the banks of Father Dnieper and on the banks of his sluggish brother Don and on the banks of his swift brother Dniester; among the Swedish tombs and Scythian barrows; around the whitewashed *khatas* nestling in the shade of conical poplars and acacias, around the lone windmills of the steppe, along the unmowed gulleys where the lilac shadow of the heavy cloud slumbers as in a cradle, and throughout the bounteous, vast and beautiful Ukraine, the grain crops eared in their time and season, blossomed, bending their stalks, and soon the Ukrainian fields were covered with straw hives of wheat from horizon to horizon and the whole Ukraine, like an infinite garden, glittered in the relentless sun.

"But in this terrible year the people had no joy in the beauty and bounty of their soil. They had sown in freedom, and reaped as slaves.

"Now all the working people can see what they lost with the fall of the Soviet power," continued the manifesto. "And the hearts of the workers and peasants burn again to fight for Soviet power and take the fortress of Revolution back by storm.

"Tomorrow, if not already today, the Germans will transport all the grain from the peasants' fields.

Recently in Moscow was held the first Exhibition of Soviet Photo-Art which represented various moments in the life of the Soviet Union during the twenty years of its existence. In this issue we print some of the photos exhibited, among them those representing the glorious Red Army and Navy which on February 1938 celebrated its twentieth anniversary.



People's Commissar of National Defence, Klimenty Efremovich Voroshilov, at the maneuvers of the White-Russian Military District in 1936

Photo by Halip

Cossack detachment

Photo by Halip

Soviet Cruisers Steaming Ahead

Photo by Petrusov

"Only the rich will be left with grain. The workers and poor peasants of the fertile Ukraine will perish of hunger while the landowners will count up marks and kronen for the peasants' grain. It should be clear to every man, woman and child that if the Germans and the landowners with their Skoropadsky have their own way another week we are doomed to die of starvation.

"Now or never!

"In another week it will be too late. We must raise a mass insurrection immediately; we must fight the enemies of the working people. We have nothing to lose but our chains. Either we will die of slow hunger like slaves, or as cattle, die in a drouth, die to the exultation of the international bourgeoisie. Or, to the joy of the international proletariat, we will throw off our oppressors and win the kingdom of labor and freedom—Soviet power. Insurrection has already begun in village and hamlet."

The people thrashed Hetman Skoropadsky's young toffs at Korosten. Shchors with his stalwarts at Kiev joined with Batko [1] Bozkenko in Chernigov Province, struck terror into the Haidamaks and Germans hankering after Ukrainian grain and honey.

North of Mogilev Podolsk in the region of Kukovka, Perebelovska and Nemirets two thousand villagers rose in arms. That night within a stone's throw of Proskurov a train plunged down the embankment.

Beyond Lubny landowners' ricks went up in flames.

Donets colliers, black from head to foot, crept out of the earth and blinked their white eyes in the daylight they had almost forgotten.

The Lugansk ironworker Klim Voroshilov, who had battled with the enemy at Zmiev in the spring, now mustered a whole army and fought his way to Tsaritsyn to join forces with his leader and friend, Comrade Stalin, to strike the enemy in a combined operation.

And wherever his sun-singed and bullet-torn colors appeared over the steppe the workers and peasants swarmed out. The colliers emerged into the dazzling daylight and marched up the railway tracks to meet him.

Partisans bearded to the eyes came up, men who had not bathed for five months, hauling machine-guns, leading runaway peasant horses which had gone wild in the forests. Deserters from the hateful Ataman army came in whole platoons. Cossacks, risen for their rights, came from the Kuban and the Don.

On they came with red ribbons sewn across their caps, and fell in behind those glorious colors.

CHAPTER XXVIII

Wedding

I dug a well
One week, two weeks,
I courted a maid
For another, not myself.
Ukrainian song

In the wood where seaman Tsaryov and Remenuk, chairman of the village Soviet, had been buried under the young oak there were now not forty men in hiding but at least a hundred and fifty, not counting two women mad with jealousy who refused to let their men out of their sight and settled there with their children and their sheep.

[1] Ukrainian for "father."

It was no longer a fugitive gang but a well-armed insurrectionary force with its own headquarters, field kitchen, machine-gun party, horses and artillery.

Artillery was represented by a mountain gun which our well-to-do partisan company had exchanged with a poorer troop for two machine-rifles, four German rifles, an Austrian tent and six pounds of bacon.

The gun had neither limber, caisson nor a single shell. But rumor had it that a man in the village of Peshany, eighteen versts away, had a whole tray of suitable shells buried in a cellar; and there were hopes of a deal one way or another.

The gun was in the charge of Semyon Kotko. He taught the young lads who had never been to the war how to set the sights and handle the optical instruments.

Under tarpaulin sheets near the young oak were store wagons, tumbrils, sacks of flour and sugar, boxes of tobacco and barrels of kerosene captured from the Germans. But for the machine-guns emplaced along the edge of the wood and the military saddles of the horses tethered to the trees, one might have thought an itinerant grocer had set up shop.

Now, as was proper by all the rules of position warfare, the wood was interconnected by a deep gulley and a communication trench invisible from an angle; an observer sat up a tree day and night with a V-glass; and kneeling at the entrance of a dugout, over which was a panel of plywood inscribed with an indelible pencil "Company Headquarters," was Mikola Ivasenko, in a soldier's trench cap with the peak skewed on his ear. He was bawling tearfully down an Erickson telephone:

"Stepan, hallo! Observation! Stepan, hallo. Observation! Observation! Observation, do you hear? Devil take you, I'm not joking."

But observation did not reply.

Mikola slated "that damned Erickson" in good army style and went to examine the line.

That day Company Headquarters were waiting impatiently for a mounted scout who had been secretly dispatched to make contact with the underground Revolutionary Committee of the province. The company had been ready for action a long time. All it was short of was artillery and a definite objective. But they had been informed by the Provincial Revolutionary Committee a week before that a light battery of the Red Army was on its way to join forces with them. This outfit had been left behind in the Ukraine and had been lying low for five months, hiding from the German and Ataman troops in the forests and out-of-the-way frontier districts in the region of the Dniester. This might seem incredible now, but in that legendary yesterday when peasant farms had been known to have four-and-a-half inch Howitzers complete with ammunition, hidden under straw, biding their time, no one saw anything unusual in it.

So they were not stuck for artillery. The battery was due any minute. If it came to a pinch they could go into action as they were, with machine-guns alone.

But they were waiting for battle orders. It is easy to imagine the impatience of the whole company as they listened for the scout.

In the meantime the lookout was silent for a very simple reason.

Sitting in his tree, he was talking to a slim, red-haired girl about fourteen years of age who had suddenly appeared on the edge of the wood.

She was dressed in rags thick with heavy August dust. Her long legs were

bare and her bare, blackened toes showed she had run a long way, ten miles, perhaps more. The sweat poured down her nose and bony temples.

Her mouth gaped like a fish while she labored for breath. In her inflamed face her green eyes looked almost white.

Only for the neat bow on her carroty plait and the round steel comb in her hair over her brow she might have been taken for a village beggar.

"Halt!" said the observer.

"I'm halting," she replied.

"Come here under the tree."

"I'm here."

"What are you up to in our wood?"

"I'm looking for my brother."

"Have you gone crazy or what? This is no place for brothers, this is an army camp! Go back where you came from."

"Whose camp, Haidamaks or villagers?"

"Villagers."

"That's what I'm looking for."

"Frossya?" cried Mikola, who was just on his way to the observation post. "Well I'll be—! Frosska!" And he turned towards the wood and shouted:

"Hey, Semyon, come on over. Frossya's here!"

With these words he guided her to a bivouac. She could hardly walk and bit her lip at every step.

"Hello, Frossya, what's happened over there. Anything up?" said Semyon, scrutinizing her face.

"Everything's all right yet, thank god," replied Frossya, eyes roving. "Have you any water here?"

She knit her brows, as though struggling with herself, grinned through clenched teeth, then unable to contain herself any longer burst into a fit of sobbing which shook her from head to foot.

"Oh, folks, what those damned blackguards are doing to us, we can't bear it any longer! They've cleaned us out, not a crust of bread left anywhere. The people go out to harvest the squire's crops, and they drop with hunger on the way. Then the Haidamaks prod them with their rifle butts and drive them along, yes, and laugh over it. The people have sold everything off their backs and taken the last stick of furniture to the market to raise money to pay Klembovsky. And whoever had no money to pay, they didn't spare them whether they were old men, babies or nursing mothers. They drove them into Klembovsky's yard, called them into a shed one by one; then they laid them on a sack of oats and flogged them. Two men held their hands, two held their feet, one held their heads and another beat them until he got tired. They beat some with a gunstick and others with a rod. Semyon, brother: we're cleaned out. They've left us nothing. They put three hundred rubles against us for the horse, and because we had no money they dragged me and mama into the shed and beat us with the rod. They didn't beat me long, thank god, 'cos I soon got tired and fainted. But mama wouldn't cry and they beat her for a long time and the Haidamaks made fun of her. They gave her such a beating she can't work any more. And now she goes around the district with a bag, begging. But who has anything to give her? They have nothing to eat themselves. And Sofia Tkachenko, her father is marrying her to the squire, Klembovsky."

Semyon began to see double.

"Was Sofia willing?"

"No. Her father is forcing her into it. He put her in the cellar and has been

keeping her there over a week. The night before last I crept into Tkachenko's yard on the sly and had a talk with Sofia through the keyhole. And she wept fit to break her heart through the keyhole and said, "For god's sake, Frossichka, run to Semyon, find him; tell him they're separating us; tell him he may have forgotten me already but I can't sleep at night for thinking of him; tell him I trust in him alone to rescue me. Tell him to hurry."

"When is the wedding?"

"Tonight, in our church."

"We'll see about that!" cried Semyon and was about to turn around to run to the commander when he saw him right there with his staff and all the soldiers standing round in silence.

"Comrade commander and comrade soldiers, did you hear it all?"

"We heard."

"Well, if you heard it, what are you standing there for? Why don't you jump to it? To horse, comrade commander, Zinovy Petrovich, give them the word!"

"No, Semyon, I have no right to take my company into action without the orders of the Provincial Revolutionary Committee and without artillery. This company doesn't belong to you and me. It belongs to all the working people and to the Soviet Government first of all. That's military discipline. You're an old soldier, Kotko, and you should understand that."

"So, it turns out I have to lose what's mine through your military discipline?"

"No, Semyon, go and fight for it yourself. Take any brichka from our park, harness a pair of horses, any you like, the best, if it comes to that, mount a machine-gun, take ammunition. And god speed you. I've nothing against you doing that."

And before the commander reached his hut the prize brichka, once a priest's, flew out of the forest behind a prize pair of horses, trophies of battle. Mikola and Frossya sat on the coachbox, Semyon, crouching behind a machine-gun, jogged up and down in the back seat. The vacant seat opposite could accommodate a fourth passenger.

But the sun was past the meridian. The wind of the steppe whistled in their ears. And high above the stubble, with flowing crests and swelling, snow-white bosoms, nomad camps of clouds flew forward over the empty sky to meet Semyon's prize horses, trophies of battle. The sun was sinking when he at last glided along the faraway barrows and toppled over the verge of the steppe.

A marmot peeped from his hole and whistled softly.

"Mikola, keep 'em going, don't spare them! Give 'em the whip, good and proper!"

"I'm not sparing 'em!"

Foam sprayed from the horses' muzzles, soared and settled on the immortelles in the steppe.

Red Mars came out. At the same pace as it shot from the woods in the afternoon the brichka tore into the dark village. The church alone broke the darkness with its windows blazing with golden light. The people in the porch gasped when they recognized Semyon. He leapt from the still moving brichka with a grenade in each hand.

"Are they married?"

"Not yet. They've only just met the bridegroom."

Semyon saw Sofia as soon as he entered. She stood before the lectern,

side by side with Klembovsky, beaded and ribboned, her head covered with a veil. The bridegroom was dressed in a scarlet pelisse with a dolman; a monogrammed cartridge pouch hung over the patent leather top of his boot.

With one hand resting before him on the hilt of his saber, and the other hugging a hussar's field cap to his breast, Klembovsky jutted his knee and slightly inclined his narrow head over which somebody's white-gloved hand was holding the crown.

The harsh light of many candles filled the village church with an unwonted glow. Even the all-seeing eye in its triangle of yellow rays and the god of Sabaoth in the starry sky done in crude blue paint, under the dome of the church, were clearly visible.

But he saw nothing. For him everything coalesced into a single, nebulous impression of an ill-spent holiday.

"Sofia, here, quick!" cried Semyon, holding the grenade above his head. It was as if she had been waiting for his voice. Without a tremor or a cry she spun around, elbowed her way through the guests and rushed to him. She caught his sleeve.

"Keep your hands off," he muttered in vexation. "Outside, quick, our brichka's there, jump in."

She was outside in a flash. But the spell was broken, people rushed at Semyon. Semyon saw Tkachenko near him in full dress uniform, a new one, a Haidamak uniform. As usual the four St. George crosses spanned his chest. His epaulettes were of the old army pattern but not a non-com's.

They were officer's, golden. One star.

Semyon gave him a dig in the chest with his elbow and swung the bomb.

"Look out!" he cried.

The people cringed away from him. He ran out into the porch, then hurled the bomb through the chink between the doors—toward where Klembovsky and his retinue were.

A violent gust blew the candles out. The windows left their frames. The chandelier fell in fragments.

By then Semyon had one leg in the brichka where Sofia lay, hugging the machine-gun with bloodless hands.

"Right-o!"

"Right it is!"

The horses hurtled forward.

Shots cracked after the fugitives from the porch.

The hum of bullets was almost lost in the whistle of the wind.

The brichka was level with the smithy. The open steppe lay ahead. At that moment a patrol of mounted Haidamaks careered from behind the smithy and headed them off. The brichka came to a standstill. Before he knew where he was Semyon lay trussed on the ground. Two Haidamaks hacked the traces with their sabers. Mikola, laying about him with the whip, was dragged off the coachbox by three others. Sofia had fainted and lay motionless across the road. Her shawl had slipped from her head and glimmered white in the darkness. In five minutes all was over.

But nobody noticed Frossya.

As soon as the Haidamak patrol sallied from behind the smithy, she jumped off the hurtling brichka and lay where she fell under a tree.

The trophy horses trotted past her, trailing the traces which had been slashed to ribbons. She stole up to one of them, seized him by the mane, scram-

bled on to his back, dug her elbows up and down, drove her naked heels into his ribs with all her might and vanished in the darkness.

The prisoners were taken to the village.

CHAPTER XIX

A Trial

Before sunrise, next day, a cloud of dust arose on the highway outside the village. A German howitzer unlimbered on a mound, half a verst from the village.

And the first rays of the sun had hardly jetted over the steppe when a bugle sounded in the crystal air.

The German howitzer fired ten volleys. Five projectiles, one on top of another, landed in Kotko's farm, lifted it in the air, and left a black crater. The other five landed in Ivasenko's farm, lifted it in the air and left a black crater.

And the bugle sounded the retreat.

At noon the German court martial rode into the village in two carriages escorted by dragoons.

They put a table and four chairs in Klembovsky's porch. They covered the table with a blue cloth which they had brought with them and laid out pencils and paper. Seated on the chairs were Oberleutnant von Wirchow, president of the court martial, Herr Berens for the prosecution and Leutnant Rumpel, agronomy officer, for the defense.

The fourth chair was occupied by the interpreter, Mr. Solovyov, official of Hetman Skoropadsky's Ministry of Agriculture. His right hand hung in a black sling. He had been Klembovsky's best man and had received a small wound in the explosion in the church.

He used his left hand now to extract his cigarette case and light up.

Two witnesses appeared before the court. Klembovsky had been wounded in the head and lay bandaged on a camp bed. Warrant officer Tkachenko, whole and unscathed, stood at attention beside him.

Semyon Kotko and Mikola Ivasenko were brought in under guard and set before the court.

"*Also,*" said Oberleutnant von Wirchow, airily inserting his monocle.

"Without loss of time," Solovyov interpreted, tossing a brown Mesaxudi cigarette into his mouth.

The trial lasted a quarter of an hour.

"Well, brothers, that's how we stand," said Solovyov, rising at length and nosing over a sheet of paper covered with pencil script. "Sentence is pronounced: 'For assault and murder of a German sentry—one, for being in unlawful possession of arms—two, and three, for raiding a church during divine service, Captain Klembovsky and Solovyov, an official of the Ministry of Agriculture, being there wounded by a hand grenade, which is fully confirmed by evidence of witnesses and by admissions of the defendents themselves, the court martial sentences Semyon Kotko, peasant, and Nikolai Ivasenko, peasant, to death by shooting. Sentence to be executed publicly in two hours. Oberleutnant von Wirchow, President of the Court.' That's all. Good afternoon."

The Oberleutnant waved his glove. Semyon and Mikola were led back into the shed.

"Well," said Mikola, parting his lips with an effort when they were alone in the straw; "now I can ask you: is your spirit still in your body or not?"

"My spirit left me back in 1914," replied Semyon, trying to smile.

"Mine's still holding on," whispered Mikola and suddenly dropped his head on Semyon's shoulder. "Oh, my god, my god, little did I think last week a German bullet would get me today." And he burst out crying to himself like a child.

"Sh-sh!" said Semyon sternly. "Don't let them hear you."

He lolled his head back on the wall, spread his legs out in the straw, eased the knots on his wrists which were bound behind his back and began to sing an old Ukrainian song of his childhood, loudly defiant but doleful.

"I had a horse,
I had a mettlesome horse,
I had a sword and gun
And a pretty maid. . . ."

The time passed in a queer way. First it would race along at express speed and your heart would turn to ice, then it would stop dead and hang over your head with insufferable heaviness.

In this way an hour passed and the second hour was almost spent.

A bugle sounded not far away in the village.

The bolt rattled like thunder. The door opened. Tkachenko entered in a Haidamak cap with a red crown.

"Well, Kotko, having some music," he said, halting opposite Semyon. "You'd better sing them all, you won't get a chance to sing them again."

Semyon made no reply. Tkachenko paced before him as though on parade and halted again, smoothing his mustache with two fingers and a thumb.

"You won't speak to me? Silly of you. You think you have something against me, but I've nothing against you. I'm sorry for you, Kotko, in your last hour."

"So the wolf said to the mare. I don't need your pity. If you want to do me a favor, don't let me see your dirty mug in my last hour."

"There you go again. You're a fool, Kotko, you're a fool. You always were a fool and a fool you'll go out now to the firing squad."

"What a pity those blackguards tied my hands," whispered Mikola, grinding his teeth. But Tkachenko did not even deign to look at him properly but threw him a contemptuous squint.

"And, if you want to know, Kotko, I can tell you in your last hour," he continued, "where your rustic stupidity lies. You didn't use your head. You aimed too high. You wanted all the happiness in the world at one go. Your eyes were bigger than your belly, Kotko. You saw a pretty maid and you grabbed—tsop! And you didn't have the sense to see that the maid might be the rich daughter of an educated man, your superior officer, and no match for a peasant like you. Then Klembovsky's pretty livestock and Klembovsky's good land made your menial paws itch and you grabbed—tsop! And you hadn't the sense to see that this pretty livestock and this good land and these new farm machines were the sacred property of our master, Klembovsky, appointed over us by god and the tsar. But this was not enough for your greedy eyes and grasping hands. You looked further and saw power, Kotko, power over everything on earth, under the earth, in the water and on the sea, you took a liking to that power and you joined your jail-bird matchmakers, you joined the Bolsheviks, and with them you laid foul hands on that divine power—tsop! And look where it's brought you, Kotko. But what do brainy people do? Look at me. I kept to my oath of allegiance. I never aimed too high, and if I had an ambition I kept it to myself. I respected my superior

officers. I protected other men's sacred property like the apple of my eye. I had to suffer hell for it. But I made good. And you? Who are you, now, and who am I? Now, for my loyal service his excellency, the noble gentleman, Hetman Skoropadsky, has given me these officer's epaulettes. I am marrying Sofia off to a nobleman; and I myself, god willing, will become a nobleman in time. And you will rot in an unmarked grave."

"You're talking in your sleep, you fool," cried Semyon leaping upright. "I'll burrow out of the grave for my happiness and strangle you with my bones!"

A second bugle-call sounded in the village.

"You haven't much time left, Kotko. Maybe you won't see ten minutes out. We'd better say goodbye forever with nothing against each other as our Lord Jesus Christ teaches us. You did me a good turn once. . . ."

"The more fool I, when I did."

"The next time I did you a good turn. The third time you did me one."

"My stupidity again."

"Now it's my turn again, for the last time. Have a smoke, Kotko, and never say die."

Tkachenko took a silver cigarette case from his pocket, and offered to put a cigarette in Semyon's mouth. But Semyon jerked his head away.

"This for your kindness!"

And Kotko spat in Tkachenko's face. Tkachenko turned away, wiped his face with a handkerchief and backlashed Semyon across the face with his whip.

CHAPTER XXX

Zinovy Petrovich

Frossya galloped over the steppe without stopping.

She drove her heels into the horse for all she was worth, hoping to reach the partisans and get help in time. She was not fifteen versts away from the village when lights appeared in the steppe.

The trophy horses took her into a camp full tilt. Camp fires burned. Unlimbered horses stood there. The horse neighed for joy and stopped. The girl was surrounded.

By the light of the camp fires many faces seemed familiar to her. One had a strong resemblance to the look-out she had talked with that morning on the verge of the wood, another was the image of the commander of the company; and the two women dandling children and the black sheep with hobbled legs in the cart appeared before her eyes like a repetition of a dream.

Frossya slithered off the horse. "Water!" she said and dropped exhausted to the ground.

It was the same partisan company. An hour after Semyon's departure, the long expected scout arrived at a gallop with the Revolutionary Committee's battle order in the lining of his cap. The company advanced at once; it had just joined forces with the battery which arrived opportunely at this moment.

The commander glanced at the severed traces, groaned, gathered the sleeping girl under his arm and put her on the cart with the women and the sheep. Then he flung a *burka*[1] on his shoulders and gave the order to advance.

The company moved slowly and cautiously. At dawn they halted in a ravine, about seven versts from the village. In this one night their numbers had

[1] An ample cape of felt, worn in the Caucasus.

trebled. Villagers issued into the steppe from all sides to meet the company, bringing horses and arms and wearing ribbons in their caps. Now there were no less than five hundred fighting men in the company, not counting the gunners.

An advance scouting party had returned from the village at noon and reported that Semyon and Mikola were locked in Klembovsky's shed awaiting court-martial.

The commander posted a hundred men on the right flank and a hundred on the left. He sent another hundred on a wide detour to surprise the enemy from the rear. He asked the new commander of the battery to be so kind as to put his blunderbusses as near to the enemy as he could and blow 'em to blazes. He took the rest under his own command with all the brichkas, machine-guns, women and field kitchens.

The third bugle sounded from the village.

And suddenly the curfew sounded from the belfry; swung by frantic hands.

Tkachenko listened.

A shell whistled low over the shed and burst, that very moment, in the middle of the yard. The artilleryman's ear could not be mistaken; it was a Russian three-incher. The next shell fell in the haystack. Thick, opal smoke at once rolled out. A prolonged yell from a hundred voices burst into the village through a cross tone of machine-gun fire. A third shell flew over the shed and hit Klembovsky's roof. Tkachenko crouched and ran headlong. A German squadron trotted out of the yard.

A wave of heat swept from the blazing stack. Semyon and Mikola exchanged glances and walked cautiously out of the shed. There were no sentries. The yard was empty. And the curfew still rang.

Hardly had the first gun discharged and the first shell whizzed over the steppe when the partisan hundreds streamed into the village with yells and whistles, from the right flank and the left, from front and rear.

And in the forefront, sitting sideways on a brichka, with flowing whiskers and steel-rimmed spectacles, the commander, Zinovy Petrovich, rode into the village, wrapped cannily in his *burka* to escape the dust.

The combined Haidamak-German force retreated in panic. The commandant's carriages just managed to scrape out of the village at a gallop, taking the German court and Captain Klembovsky with it.

And the church bell clanged without a pause as though tolled by a bell-ringer who had suddenly gone insane. If you looked up into the belfry you could see skirted figures darting to and fro. One was a tall, bony old woman in rags and with a sack on her back, the other a young woman in necklaces and ribbons, with a veil floating behind her shoulders.

They were Semyon's mother and Sofia. Incessant as clockwork, they swung the clappers, crying at the top of their voices: "Help, folks! Help, folks! Help!"

They were pulled forcibly from the rope and hauled down the steps.

The first lads in Klembovsky's yard, arriving at a gallop in a brichka armed with a machine-gun, unbound Semyon and Mikola. They hoisted their lost comrades, whom they had never hoped to see alive, into the brichka and drove at a gallop to the church by which time Zinovy Petrovich had quartered his staff and was about his favorite business, receiving the prisoners and the trophies.

"Well, hero, what about it? Have you won your own?" Zinovy Petrovich inquired, looking with mock severity at Semyon over his glasses.

But Semyon had no time to make any reply for the simple reason that he saw his mother and Sofia that very moment pressing towards him through the crowd. They stopped at arm's length, gazing in terror as though he had risen from the dead.

"Oh, Semyon, my love, safe and sound. . . ."

Sofia darted towards him, but Semyon, with a sidelong look at his commander, tautened his cheek bones and said:

"Wait a bit, Sonia, for god's sake. Don't you see me talking to the commander? Stay with my mother until I'm ready. These women! Always in a panic."

Just then the crowd parted and Ensign Tkachenko was brought in.

"What's this when it's out?" said the commander, eyeing Tkachenko from head to toe. "Well, young feller-me-lad, turn round a peg, let the folks have a look at you, maybe they'll recognize you and say something nice about you. So's we'll know where you go from here—left or right."

"You've no need to waste any time," said Semyon. "I know this rat well enough. It's not the first time we've met. It's not long—maybe an hour ago—since he was talking to me in my death house, Klembovsky's barn. I've still got his mark on my face."

"On your own head," said Zinovy Petrovich. "Go ahead, do as you say. Right or left?"

"Left," said Semyon.

Hearing this, Tkachenko fell on his knees. But the men seized him under the arms and pulled him back on his feet.

"Left," said Zinovy Petrovich.

Tkachenko was taken behind the church.

Sofia hid her eyes and turned away.

A shot rang out behind the church.

"Now," said Zinovy Petrovich to his staff. "The war isn't over by a long shot. This is only the beginning. While the Germans are still wondering what hit 'em I think we'll clean up the village, then shoot straight into Kodyma station, and do 'em dirt on the railway to stop our Ukrainian corn from going to Germany. And you, Semyon, while our artillery is changing position, run to the battery commander and report for orders. He's just pining for good gun-layers. Stop. That's not all. Two words about your women. They can sit in a cart and keep with the second-line transport, where, thank the Lord, we have more of those spitfires than we need. Now, carry on."

CHAPTER XXXI

A Soldier Left the Front

The guns stood in the steppe outside the village among the remaining stacks of corn.

The commander strode over the stubble with a surveyor's compass under his arm, aligning the battery. He was a lame man in black breeches with red piping and a Swedish jacket with velvet frogs, artillery pattern. An enormous blond beard seemed to be tied to his sun-bronzed face which had a white zone where the peak had shaded it. But it was hot on the steppe and the commander held his cap in his hand. His glistening, cleanshaven skull reflected the sun.

At the sight of the three-inch guns Semyon straightened up, as was the old custom in the artillery, and bobbed up like a jack-in-the-box before the battery commander:

"By order of the comrade commander of the combined partisan company, Bombardier Kotko reporting for orders."

Jovial surprise twinkled in the boyish blue eyes of the battery commander.

"Well met, Semyon. In that case, take your gun, number three. You've not forgotten how to sight?"

"And who may you be?"

"I don't know who I may be but the girls call me Samsonov. Now what are you goggling at me for? Don't you like my beard?"

"Samsonov!" cried Semyon.

"That's me. The beard for beauty."

"And the battery?"

"The same. Field battery, the good old three-inchers."

"And my gun?"

"Here."

"Ah, so help me god, who would have thought it?" exclaimed Semyon, wiping his eyes with the palm of his hand. "Can you beat that? A soldier left the front, and came back to the front!"

"Didn't I tell you to stay, you ass? Well, why did you clear out?"

"I had to sow."

"Well, did you sow?"

"Yes."

"And others reaped?"

"Yes."

"You see how it is. Well, that's that. And now me *and you* will start the threshing. Stand to your gun. It seems to me I can see some horses over yonder, coming down a hillock towards us." And Samsonov put his cap on and shouted briskly: "Battery, into action! Sight seventy. Direct fire. At the German howitzer battery. High explosive! Don't let us down, Semyon! Two, running fire!"

Semyon crouched—his shoulder to the wheel—behind his gun and his heart seemed to turn over with joy. He could recognize and count every mark, every scratch on the shield and the wheel just as a mother would recognize every birth-mark on her baby and count them.

Semyon layed the gun in a twinkling, plugged, fixed ammunition into the breach, slammed the lock and gripped the lanyard.

"Fire!"

A sheaf of red fire spurted from the bucking gun. The battery fired two rounds running fire. One, and then another. Semyon clapped his eye to the sight.

With the first volley six black trees grew from the ground right in front of the German battery. With the second volley six black trees grew from the ground right behind the German battery.

"Fire!"

And with the third volley six black trees grew from the German battery. The caissons flew up in fragments. The wheels flew. The team horses fell and kicked, entangled in the traces. The crew ran.

"Well done, Semyon! Give 'em some more. Finish 'em off. Two running. Fire!"

But, now, athwart the line of Germans, cutting them off, hundreds after hundreds of partisans, appearing as though risen from the ground, poured down the slope, Zinovy Petrovich in the forefront riding in a brichka, and wrapped in his black *burka*. And the Germans ran a second time that day.

But, as Zinovy Petrovich rightly said, the war was not over yet; this was only the beginning.

The Germans had to be thrashed another two months, front and rear, right flank and left before the Ukraine was cleared once and for all.

To give this in detail is a historian's job, not a poet's. All we can add to our story is that Zinovy Petrovich's company first became a brigade, then a division and finished the German campaign gloriously at the end of October by joining the colors of the Workers' and Peasants' Red Army in a body. Comrade Samsonov's battery swelled into a battalion; Semyon Kotko was appointed battery commander. He chose his friend Mikola Ivasenko as senior telephonist. As regards the women—Sofia, Frossya and Semyon's mother—they followed the company in a second-line transport. This, of course, was against the regulations, but Zinovy Petrovich made an exception. In that second line transport, in the middle of 1919, Sofia bore Semyon a son. In honor of Comrade Remenuk, brutally done to death by the interventionists, the first chairman of the village Soviet and Semyon's senior matchmaker, they called his son Trofim. Captain Klembovsky vanished without a trace. Of course, he might turn up again somewhere. Our history knows where a tsarist officer sold his arms three times; once to the Germans, next to the working people and a third time—the last—to the Germans again. Only it is doubtful if Klembovsky will deceive anyone now, let him put on whatever farmhand's sheepskin he may.

Conclusion

Nearly a quarter of a century has passed. There have been many uninvited guests on Soviet soil during this time. Some of them even got near to Moscow. But not one escaped the fate of the Swedes and the fate of the Germans.

For a long time now, in the village where Semyon Kotko's poor *khata* once stood, there has been a large, prosperous collective farm. And it is managed by Mikola Ivasenko. And in that large, prosperous collective farm there is a model piggery famous throughout the Soviet Union, and that famous piggery is managed by Comrade Ivasenko's wife, Yefrossinya Fyodorovna, or, simply, Frossya.

And the wood stands in its place not far from the steppe. Still standing in that wood is the young oak under which lie the glorious bones of Trofim Remenuk and his friend seaman Vassily Tsaryov. Bark has grown over their names, there is nothing left of the nail which once fastened the sailor's cap to the oak.

And the young oak glitters with its indented leaves over the quiet grave. We say, the young oak. It was young then and it is young still. It takes more than a generation to age an oak. What is twenty years to an oak? And the glory of heroes never grows old.

So now, every spring, before the chimes on the Spassky Tower in Moscow have died away, Klim Voroshilov, Marshal of the Soviet Union, rides into the Red Square to receive the May Day marchers. He inspects the troops on a handsome golden brown horse and greets the units, motionless like figures carved in grey granite. Then he alights, hands the reins to the grooms and mounts the left wing of the Lenin mausoleum.

Thence, in the electric hush, his strong, clear, unhurried voice rings out. "I, son of the working people. . . ." And the young soldiers repeat the words of the oath after him, unhurried, clear and strong.

"I, a son of the working people. . . ."

Semyon Fyodorovich Kotko and his wife Sofia Nikanorovna watch from a tribune near the mausoleum. Standing on tiptoe they search anxiously in the files of young soldiers of the Proletarian Division for their son. They have come specially for one day from Zaporozhye, where Semyon Fyodorovich is managing one of the plants of an aluminum combine. Semyon Fyodorovich has changed little although he has put on weight and there are streaks of grey in his shaggy eyebrows. He wears a leather cap, and a blue raincoat because rain has been threatening all morning. But the weather having cleared up, it has grown hot and Semyon Fyodorovich unbuttons his coat. The Order of the Red Banner shows on the lapel of his jacket, and he has a yellow boxwood stick, bought in Sochi the previous year, in the crook of his arm. Sofia Nikanorovna is dressed as all not-too-young wives of directors dress in Zaporozhye: she has a little felt hat and a gabardine coat with a rabbit imitation of lynx collar and cuffs of the same fur. She has filled out too and there is a glint of grey in her hair as well. There are dry wrinkles of good nature at the corners of her eyes, which, however, are just as young, prominent and cherry-like as in the old days.

"Semyon," she whispers breathlessly, "I see him, there—there! In the second rank, fourth from the left. So help me god. See! There's another man next to him just in the same helmet and the same tunic, only he's quite pale, a blond, and our Trofim's auburn."

"Good heavens, Sonia, how can you pick out one man in a mass of soldiers like that? Don't make a fool of me in public. You'd better keep quiet and watch the parade. Well, where do you say Trofim is?"

"Why, there he is. In the second rank, fourth from the end."

"That's not our Trofim."

"I'm telling you, it is our Trofim."

"All right, let it be our Trofim if you like," said Semyon, politely, setting his jaw. And a strong, gusty, satisfied sigh sweeps through the square.

"I, a son of the working people. . . ."

And this sigh re-echoes everywhere.

"I, a son of the working people. . . ." thunder the glassy slabs of the mausoleum, where on the left wing, in khaki overcoat, in all his stern and kindly simplicity stands Stalin, hearing the oath.

"I, a son of the working people. . ." say the grey walls of the Kremlin. "I, a son of the working people. . ." sounds the bronze of Minin and Pozharsky. "I, a son of the working people. . ." sounds the electrified air.

"I undertake, at the first call of the Workers' and Peasants' Government to come to the defense of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics against dangers and assaults from any of its enemies and in combat for the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, for the cause of Socialism and brotherhood of the peoples to spare neither strength nor life itself."

——I, son of the working people!

POEMS

M. Arno

The Wallet

We hadn't had a chance to rest all day. The weather was bad, but we were expecting an alarm any moment. These days one attack followed another. But with discipline and determination our division had closed its ranks and given the Nationalists such a hot reception that they had been forced to retreat south of Madrid to Cuesta de las Perdicis. The dead left behind by the enemy were hurriedly removed and we rushed to our new quarters. It was only when the darkness like a thick black broth overflowed the fields and blotted out the horizon that it began to quiet down.

At last we were able to have a bite and rest. I was rummaging about in my knapsack and stretching out when suddenly my foot struck something hard. I stooped down and searched around on the ground in the dim light of my flashlight, in which the battery was almost used up. A soldier's cap lay half buried in the sand. I picked it up. It was the cap of a Nationalist, dropped, perhaps, during the flight; or else it belonged to one of those whom we had just buried.

I lit up the spot again and scraped about in the sand with the edge of my boots. A small brown wallet came into sight.

I called our Commandant, and we inspected the wallet, whose owner death had probably taken unawares. The Commandant opened the wallet. A few blank sheets of paper, a well sharpened pencil with a metal cap, a tiny notebook and a coin were its contents. No personal papers to identify the owner. The Commandant kept turning the wallet about in his large hands. Something about it seemed to puzzle him. Suddenly he threw away his cigarette and declared: "This belonged to no Spaniard, else there'd have been some documents. And besides—this carefully sharpened pencil with the cap?"—he queried thoughtfully.

We laughed and kidded him: playing detective?

He paid no attention to us, continued to explore in the side pockets, and suddenly drew out a small folded note from a secret nook. When opened out it proved to be a big transparent sheet of paper.

We all bent over while he smoothed it out with his rough fingers. It was closely covered with script, a fine, pointed woman's handwriting. The writer had taken pains to squeeze as much as possible upon the two sides of the paper.

It was a letter written in German. There was a strained silence while one of the comrades read the letter out aloud.

"Dear Erich! We were very glad at first when we came home. You know what 200 marks mean these days. Winter came quite late this year, but was a

hard one just the same. Father had stored coal in the cellar. I had my coat padded. Now I don't feel my rheumatism so much any more. Have you heard of the snow we've been having? In the Hartz the snow covers the roadsigns. It's so hard for your mother to think you're so far away. We were proud at first, father and I. But now, with no letters from you, and not knowing how to get in touch with you, we can't help worrying. The other day father went without his evening pipe, just kept on muttering: 'It's right for the sons to fight for the fatherland.' He was also in the war. . . . But if you're not even allowed to tell anyone, is that honorable too? You know your father. He was peaceful and honest his whole life long, never in debt to anyone. Now in the evening we often get depressed. We don't even put on the radio. Only the little lamp burns and everyone keeps on nagging himself with the question: 'Where's Erich? Why did we let him go?' Everything happened so quickly! We had hardly a chance to choose. The Herr Colonel tries to comfort me and keeps on assuring me that we have nothing to worry about. But it's easy enough for him to talk that way; he can let it go at that. Do write oftener, Erich. And take good care of yourself. I don't know what I'd do if you were sent back wounded. Day and night I'd be at your side, nursing you. You're still young and might come through. There'd be nobody to help us though. Do you remember Albert, who was so long in the army? Now he's dead. His mother is all broken up about it. She doesn't get support any more, and she wasn't even supposed to have told me or anybody about it. She sits there now—no Albert and no money. I often lie awake long after father has fallen asleep. If only I hadn't let you go!! You would have listened to your mother, wouldn't you, Erich?

"And why should a strange country be dearer to you than your own parents? Father worked himself into a rage not long ago—he's never that way—and said it was an assault on defenceless people. I quickly closed the kitchen door and begged him to be quiet else the police would come. Don't keep this letter long. If M. hadn't taken it along I wouldn't have dared write you about my troubles. M. had coffee at our house before he left and said: 'Don't you worry, Erich loves his own skin, he'll find his way home from over there may be quicker than from here, just as I did.' I didn't understand that at all, and looked at him with alarm. He just winked at me and told me to write the letter in very fine writing. I hope you can read it. The woman from next door said the other day that it was always better here than in the labor camp, and after all we still get money. But I thought if one is to be skinned alive one should at least know what for. Life is hard enough here—why should our blood be paid that another people should have it that way too? Yes, Erich —only don't be angry at your mother. I've been puzzling over it during these sleepless nights till my poor head aches like my heart. It's as though blinders had fallen from my eyes and you can be sure I'd never let you go again! Take care you come out of it. There's enough misery in this world and it hurts me that my son should help to make more! Let those who are so worried about it that they even drag our sons into it, do it themselves. Who are you fighting for and against whom? What have you got to do with it all? Why didn't we ask ourselves that before? It's always our kind who go for the others. If I had only thought that over before! You are young, my dearest Erich! Reflect upon what your mother says. I have to finish now. My eyes are all red from crying and father is grumbling again. The space is all used up, too. Take good care of yourself! We embrace you. Write at once.

Your old mother."

Mikhail Svetlov

Granada

With slack rein we rode,
In battles we galloped,
The "Song of the Apple"
Was sweet in our mouth.
How fresh keeps this song
That by day and by night
Recalls the spring meadow
The steppe malachite.

From another good land
Another good bit
My comrade had with him,
The prize of his kit.
He sang as we rode
Home earth and home stone,
"Granada, Granada,
Granada my own!"

Like echoing heartbeat
Long drummed that refrain.
How came in his kit
This sorrow of Spain?
Say, Alexandrovsk,
And Kharkov, explain
How come that you sing
In the language of Spain?

Is it not, oh Ukraine,
In this very rye
That Taras Shevchenko's
Campaign relics lie?
Whence comes this song then;
Whence, comrade, this moan,
"Granada, Granada,
Granada, my own!"

In no haste to answer
The dreamer replied;
To a small book he pointed
"Granadá's inside!
Lovely the sound of,
Exalted the name,
Yet in that county
Peasant toil is the same.
Farewell to my cottage,
Farewell to my kin;
To the fight I rode off
So that peasants might win
In Granada the land
That is theirs, blood and bone,
Granada, Granada,
Granada my own!"

We galloped on dreaming
How soon would be won
The grammar of battle,
The lore of the gun.
Rose morning, fell evening,
Oh, quick the days went,
Till with our riding
Our horses were spent.
Still made our squadrons
The "Apple Song" flow;
Time was our fiddle,
Our suffering the bow.
"Oh, comrade sing too,
The song you made known,
"Granada, Granada,
Granada, my own!' "

Down slipped his body,
No longer he coursed;
At last by a bullet
That rider's unhorsed.
I saw the moon bow;
The wind sighed an "ah!"
I heard the slain lips,
They whispered "Grana-"
Aye, to a region
Voiceless and long
Our far dreaming comrade
Has carried his song.
No longer his homeland
Hears his sad tone,
"Granada, Granada,
Granada, my own!"

No halt for the dead,
No other heads bend;
The "Song of the Apple"
We sang to the end.

But softly and steeply
Clouds curtained the plain;
From heaven's dark brow
Fell tears of the rain.

From life the composer
New tunes come along.
No need, ah, my comrades,
To mourn the lost song.

No need, ah, my comrades,
New songs will be known,
Granada, Granada
Granada, my own.

Translated by Isidor Schneider

N. A. Nekrasov
(1821-1878)

NIKOLAI ALEXANDROVICH NEKRASOV

Commemorating the sixtieth anniversary of his death

The Poet of the Russian People

The Soviet people cherish the memory of one of the greatest Russian poets, N. A. Nekrasov, whose work has lost nothing of its appeal and power by the passage of time. In commemorating the sixtieth anniversary of the day of Nekrasov's death we honor a writer whose art was permeated with a great love for his fatherland and for his people. Nekrasov was what a poet of ours should have been—a citizen whose poetry inspired his countrymen to struggle for the overthrow of the oppression of tsarist autocracy.

The great leaders of all suffering humanity, Lenin and Stalin, repeatedly referred to Nekrasov, drawing illustrations from his works for their political articles and speeches.

Quotations from Nekrasov are frequently to be met with in Lenin's works. Lenin held him in especially high esteem as a writer who laid bare the falsehood and violence on which tsarist and feudal Russia rested. In one of his articles [1] Lenin reminds us that it was no other than Nekrasov, along with Saltykov-Shchedrin, who taught Russian society to discern the predatory interests beneath the sleek pomaded exterior of the cultured serf-owning landlord, taught it to hate the hypocrisy and callousness of such people.

Lenin pointed out [2] that Nekrasov at times, out of personal weakness, was guilty of some verses of liberalistic obsequiousness, but he stresses that Nekrasov himself bitterly bewailed these "sins" of his, publicly repented of them and called them "false notes" of his lyre. Lenin specially brings out the fact that Nekrasov's sympathies lay on the side of the revolutionary people.

Just after the victory of the Great October Socialist Revolution, Lenin and Stalin quoted some well-known lines of Nekrasov's depicting the state of Russia whose development was being strangled by the tsarist regime:

Abundant yet pitiful,
Weak and yet powerful,
Russia our Mother!

And the great leaders set before the Soviet people the task of refashioning Russia, cost what it might, so that it should no longer be weak and pitiful but only powerful and abundant.

Nekrasov himself knew, foresaw and firmly believed that the day of triumph and self-fulfillment would come for the fatherland he loved so dearly, but he knew that he would not live to see it.

---

[1] Vol. XII, p. 9, Russian ed.

[2] Vol. XVI, p. 132-33, Russian ed.

He was somewhat mistaken in his estimate of the tempo of growth of the revolutionary movement and the time which would be necessary to bring about the victory of the people. Only forty years divide the date of his death from the great milestone, the October Socialist Revolution.

And we, living in the happy times of which the poet dreamed, in the days of our country's triumph, of the victory of Socialist humanism and democracy, bow our heads with the gratitude of heirs before the poet whose whole life was devoted to the welfare of his people.

G. V. Plekhanov

Nekrasov and Russian Society

... Nekrasov gave poetic expression to an entire epoch of our social development. This epoch begins with the entrance on the stage of Russian history of the educated "raznochinets"[1] (intelligentsia); it ends with the appearance on this scene of the working class, the proletariat in the real meaning of the word. Whoever is interested in the ethical or ideological content of this remarkable epoch will find very rich material for its analysis in the poetry of Nekrasov.

Poetry, like all Russian literature in the preceding social epoch, was for the most part the poetry of the higher nobility. I say "for the most part," since there were brilliant exceptions to this general rule. It is enough to mention Koltsov.[2] But these exceptions were invariably encountered only as exceptions, and for that reason confirmed the general rule.

In the romances of the nobility, even though they were many-volumed, there was little space for expression of the distress of the people.

In Nekrasov we see something completely different. All his most widely known works are devoted to a portrayal of the distress of the people.

The poetry of Nekrasov is permeated throughout by an attitude directly opposed to the feudal order. Note that this opposition is not confined in his poetry merely to feudal rights, but generally to the entire mode of life of the landowners. No, to the whole structure of social relationships which grew up on the basis of the enslavement of the peasant, the attitude of the educated intellectual was one of opposition and hatred. The intellectual is hostile to the nobility; but officialdom as well does not deserve mercy in his eyes. He sees in the official only another, more gluttonous and fawning variety of exploiter. Nekrasov brands the official with merciless sarcasm, in *A Lullaby:*

All the province heard the crooning,
In every ear t'was sweet:
Daddy's being tried—don't worry
His way out he'll cheat.
Though the evidence indict him,

[1] Raznochinets: a member of the Russian intelligentsia of the eighteen-sixties, not belonging to the upper classes.

[2] Alexei Koltsov, a noted poet of the nineteenth century famous for peasant songs, and himself of lower class origin.

Him no jail will keep;
Sleep, then, while you can be honest,
Little scoundrel sleep.

An official career does not attract the progressive intellectual. The progressive "intelligentsia" view it as "a school of complete moral corruption."

Such official look comes easy
With the scoundrel heart.
At our parting I shall wonder
On what crimes you start.
Quick you'll learn for what advantage
Bows and vows are cheap;
Sleep, then, while you can be honest,
Little scoundrel sleep.

Although Nekrasov himself was never a fighter, it does him great credit that he understood, through his poetic sensibility, the psychology of a new social type. In his poem *Poet and Citizen,* as early as 1856, we find the following expressive lines:

Enough officials, little bourgeois,
Cadets and squires and business men,
We've even had enough of poets,
We need, we need a citizen!
Go scour the land, you'll stir up planters,
Enough big shots to star your trip;
But size them up, these big shots, does one
Measure up to citizenship?
Appear, oh citizen among us.
The nation needs you, waits your voice.
Alas no answer, though that answer
A whole people would rejoice.
Not a poet can shape your image,
Though he twist, and strain and spread,
If unknown you walk among us
Oh, what tears you shed!

To what extent the powerful idea of citizen was felt by Nekrasov himself, is indicated by other lines in the same poem:

What son to his weeping mother turns
Indifferent eyes and listless hand?
In what true citizen heart can be
A cold thought of the fatherland?
Deep and unsleeping his remorse!
Far, far other be your course.
Thus will you praise your fatherland:
What your mind frames and heart calls good
Go against fire for; 'twill prevail.
Firm lives the cause that's grown in blood.

Here the poetry of Nekrasov who was never a revolutionary, becomes revolutionary poetry, and it is not surprising that fragments similar to those just quoted were memorized by progressive Russian people.

What are those convictions for which citizens must go through fire and, if need be, shed their blood? In general it is a vain task to search for accurately formulated social and political demands in poetic works. But Nekrasov's poetry, which expresses the strivings of the foremost Russian intellectuals, sets before the citizens a fairly well-defined social task. This task consists in the liberation of the Russian people from the multiform oppression imposed on them . . . by the feudal order.

. . . . Oh, fatherland,
Is it here, is it there, can you tell me where,
In the North, in the South, is such a place known,
Where the peasant, the nation's preserver can sing,
Walk erect on tilled earth and not stoop and not moan?
But alas not a field, not a road that you trod
But the wind on it carries his moaning on.
From the jails it breaks out, from the chain gang it rings,
From the mines it floats up, it never is gone.
In the barns you will hear this grim national sound.
On the steppe where he waits out the night on the loam
If you come within hearing, what you'll hear is his moan;
Seek him out in his hut,—he has brought it home!
Not for him to enjoy the light of the sun,
Nor to go on an errand and go without fear.
He is cheated in towns, he is fleeced in the courts,
And the street, like the field has his moaning to hear.
Oh broad river Volga, pitch pipe of the land,
To what note do you echo?—The moaning of men!
Hear the barge haulers straining in their ropes.
What we heard in the fields, on your shores sounds again!
Oh, broad river Volga, your Spring floods ride far,
But further and deeper than ever they spread
Flows the peasantry's sorrow through fields and through towns.
This salt is the savor when the nation eats bread.
Wherever are people there moaning is heard.

The first duty of a citizen, the first duty of any thinking son of his country who is unable to look calmly on the misery in his native land, is to serve the unhappy people, in their struggle against that injustice and craft which enslaves and oppresses them.

Foremost the people,
Watch well their fate,
Light them to freedom,
In that be great.

This service rendered to the oppressed people, this struggle for their emancipation, constitutes not only a moral obligation, but at the same time an insuperable need on the part of every honest thinking person:

Joy to a noble mind can come
When all men have a share;
To see the people suffering
Is more than it can bear.

This was exactly how the self-sacrificing "intelligentsia" thought, when, as early as the end of the fifties, they asked themselves: "What's to be done?" in their attempt to lead the people out of their difficult position . . . In view of this, it becomes entirely comprehensible why these intellectuals not only read the verses of Nekrasov, but regarded his genius superior to that of Pushkin and Lermontov: he gave poetic expression to their own social strivings; his "muse of vengeance and grief" was their own muse.

In proof of the fact that Nekrasov, through his verse, aroused the most advanced contemporary youth, and expressed their progressive strivings, I cite an experience from my own life.

I was at that time in my last year at the military academy. A few of us had gathered after dinner and were reading Nekrasov. We had hardly finished *The Railway,* when the signal sounded, summoning us to drill. We hid the book and dashed off to the arsenal for our weapons, but remained gripped by the profound force of what we had just read. We began to line up, when my friend S. came up to me and, grasping the barrel of his gun, whispered, "Ah, I could take hold of this gun and fight for the Russian people!" These words, pronounced stealthily, a few steps from our forbidding drillmaster, engraved themselves deeply in my memory. I remembered them later every time I had occasion to reread *The Railway.*

Nekrasov considers it the primary task of a citizen to serve the people. For this reason the people becomes the protagonist of his chief works. However, what do we learn from him about this hero of his? We know that the situation of his hero is extremely onerous. But this is not enough for us. We want to know what he himself does to ease his lot.

Nekrasov, in this connection, gives us little consolation. His people is not capable of fighting, and does not recognize the necessity of struggle. Its distinguishing characteristic is its everlasting patience.

Subsequently . . . Nekrasov manifested a more optimistic outlook for the Russian nation. He no longer has any serious doubts as to its future. On the contrary, the picture of this future is painted in bright colors. In *The Railway,* written 1864, he exclaims:

Do not sloven your fatherland with doubt,
Enough great ventures has it carried out.
Our people put this railway 'cross flood and hill;
They will achieve all, send god what he will.
Their courage and labor will meet all tests.
Broad is the way they make with their breasts.

But the old influences are still too strong in the poet to permit him to see the happy future of the Russian nation as near. No, it is still very, very far off. The poet himself will not live to see it, nor even that boy Vanya, with whom he converses:

Alas nor you nor I shall see
This happy earth that is to be.

The uprising of the people, certainly, would not have frightened him with its so-called terrors. His "great sinner," the bandit ataman Kudeyar, who later became a monk and upon whom, as punishment for his sins, "some saint" imposes the task of felling an oak with a knife in three strokes,—he immediately received forgiveness for his sins when he thrust his knife into the heart of the cruel landowner, Glukhovsky.

With the appearance of the proletariat in our country a new epoch began, remarkable also for the fact that now even the peasant is not so fixed in his hut as he was during the life of Nekrasov.

Nekrasov was not fated to live to see the new epoch. But if . . . he had lived to greet its advent, he would have seen that in contemporary Russia there is a people—the workers, the proletariat—devoting themselves to the struggle for the liberation of their class, and firmly convinced of the historic inevitability of that emancipation.

And having recognized and understood these people, new in Russia, he would perhaps have written in their honor a new inspired "song," not a "hungry" and "tearsalted" one, but a fighting Russian "Marseillaise," in which, as previously, the notes of revenge would be heard. But the sounds of "grief" would be replaced by notes of joyful confidence in victory.

A. V. Lunacharsky

Nekrasov—the many sided genius

Nekrasov is a poet of the people, but he is a poet, and therein lies his power. A poet burning with a love of justice, but lacking in the capacity for poetic expression may be worthy of respect, but he will hardly accomplish much. Art should be art first and foremost, that is, it should, to quote Tolstoy, recreate the artist's spiritual experiences in us, kindle our souls with his fire. For this two things are needed. In the first place this fire must burn within the poet's soul, his experiences must be more significant than ours, he must be a great man, for a commonplace one cannot be a great poet, having nothing to communicate. .

This first condition Nekrasov satisfies to the full. His lyricism is burning, glowing, it has both force and depth. A great man he undoubtedly is. And, in addition to this, the feelings with which he inspires us are just those which are most necessary for the growth of Russian society. . .

But this alone cannot make him a great artist. It is possible to imagine a great man, possessed of high enthusiasm and a brilliant mind, who at the same time is incapable of adequate communication as though there were a broken wire interrupting the flow of current between the author and reader. He is as it were a Raphael without hands.

But nothing of this kind applies to Nekrasov. His expression is entirely adequate to his thought. Everyone understands him, reads him, learns him by heart, sings him, every one who can read.

Why is this? It is because the high pathos in which Nekrasov's soul had its being demanded expression in song. And here I shall show you the touchstone, how you shall know a good poet. If his poetry does not sing, then let him give up poetry and write prose; he may turn out to be an excellent prose-writer. Poetry should sing, sing in your heart, if you read it to yourself, and spontaneously weave melody if you read it aloud. Good poetry leads to good music, as we see whenever good lyrics are set to music. Is this not true of Nekrasov?

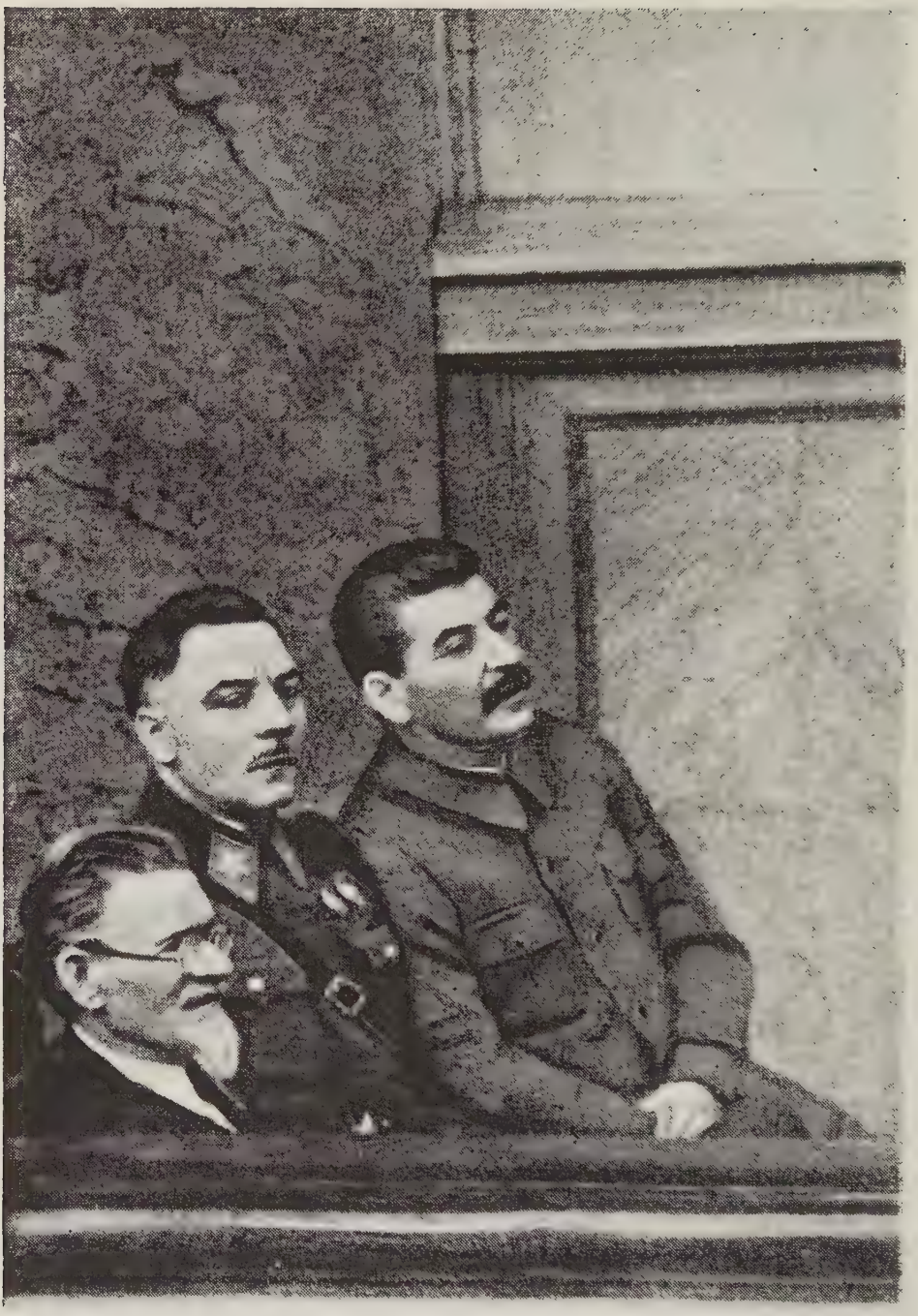
It is a question whether even Pushkin or Lermontov wrote such a number of verses suited to being set to music as Nekrasov Who of the Russian poets

is the most sung? Is there a spot anywhere in the land, however remote, where you will not hear *Come to the Volga* or the exuberantly happy song *Peddlers*?

So far I have spoken only of Nekrasov's lyricism, but besides this he is a great descriptive and epic poet. He has created unforgettable characters, landscapes unsurpassed in vividness. His pictures start into life before your eyes. And he paints not only as a realist—how splendidly living is Nekrasov's imagination. One has only to think of the flight of fancy in the appearance of the folk-lore character King Frost in the wonderful poem of that name. What superb audacity is here, what scope, what demoniac verve!

We feel that still greater possibilities were latent in Nekrasov, as in the Slavic beauty whom he describes in the same poem. The cry once escaped him, "I cannot sing for I must fight"—but we cannot agree; no, he could both sing and fight. If he had lived in happy times, his songs would have been happy; but there is no doubt that in singing happy songs, songs of beauty and love, Nekrasov would have been as great as he is, if not greater. Perhaps he would have been greater in the sense that he would have created more splendid and enchanting images, but would he have been greater as a teacher? Laments and threats he endues with high poetic beauty without in the slightest impairing their force.

We would not for a moment abate our reverence for Pushkin and Lermontov, nor for the more modest but nonetheless excellent work of Alexei Tolstoy, Tyuchev, Fet and others, yet we may say that nowhere in the whole of Russian literature is there a man before whom we bow our heads with greater love and veneration than before Nekrasov.



Mikhail Kalinin, Klimenty Voroshilov and Joseph Stalin in the Government's box at the Session of the Soviet of Nationalities on January 14, 1938

DOCUMENTS

Klimenty Voroshilov

Stalin and the Red Army

Petrograd

In the spring of 1919 the whiteguard army of General Yudenich, carrying out the task set by Kolchak of "seizing Petrograd" and diverting the revolutionary forces from the eastern front, with the help of the White Esthonians, the White Finns and the British fleet, suddenly took the offensive and placed Petrograd in real danger. The seriousness of the situation was further accentuated by the fact that in Petrograd itself counter-revolutionary plots were discovered, the leaders of which turned out to be military experts serving in the staff headquarters of the western front, in the Seventh Army and the Kronstadt naval base. While Yudenich advanced on Petrograd, Bulak-Balakhovich scored a number of successes in the direction of Pskov. Betrayals began on the front. Several of our regiments went over to the side of the enemy; the entire garrisons of the Krassnaya Gorka and Seraya Loshad forts came out openly against the Soviet power. Dismay seized the entire Seventh Army. The front began to waver; the enemy was moving on Petrograd. The situation had to be remedied immediately.

The Central Committee again chose Comrade Stalin for the job. In the space of three weeks Comrade Stalin succeeded in effecting an improvement. Laxity and dismay were soon eliminated from the ranks. The staffs were put into shape. Mobilizations of Petrograd workers and Communists were carried through in rapid succession; enemies and traitors were mercilessly destroyed. Comrade Stalin took a hand in the operative work of the military staff. Here is what he telegraphed to Comrade Lenin:

"Following Krassnaya Gorka, Seraya Loshad has been captured. Guns on both forts are in perfect order, a rapid . . . (illegible) . . . of all forts and strongholds is under way. The naval specialists assert that the taking of Krasnaya Gorka from the sea upsets all naval science. All I can do is weep for such so-called science. The rapid taking of Gorka is the result of the grossest interference on my part and on the part of civilians in general in field operations even to the point of countermanding orders on land and sea and imposing our own. I regard it as my duty to declare that in the future I shall continue to act in this manner, despite all my respect for science.—*Stalin.*"

Within six days Comrade Stalin informed Lenin:

"A change for the better has begun in our troops. For a week there has been no single case of individual or group desertion to the enemy. Deserters are returning in thousands. Desertions to us from the enemy camp have become more frequent. In a week four hundred men have deserted to us, most of

them armed. Yesterday our offensive began. Although promised reserves have not yet come up, to remain longer on the line where we had halted was out of the question—it was too near Petrograd. So far the offensive is going successfully; Whites are on the run; today we occupied line Kernovo-Voronino-Slepino-Kaskovo. We have taken prisoners and captured two or more cannon, automatics, cartridges. Enemy ships do not show themselves, evidently they are afraid of Krassnaya Gorka which is now entirely ours. Urgently dispatch two million rounds of cartridges at my disposal for the Sixth division. . . ."

These two telegrams give a clear picture of the important work carried through by Comrade Stalin in remedying the extremely dangerous situation that had arisen near Red Petrograd.

In the Civil War Comrade Stalin displayed outstanding ability as a revolutionary strategist under varied and complex conditions. He always correctly determined the line of the main attack and by his masterly adherence to tactics suited to the circumstances he achieved the desired results. He retained the qualities of proletarian strategist and tactician after the Civil War. These qualities of his are well known to the Party. The Trotskyites and their ilk, who paid with their hides for the attempt to substitute their petty bourgeois ideology for the great teachings of Marx and Lenin, could testify to this better than anyone else. The Right opportunists, who only recently were completely routed, are equally aware of this.

And in time of peace, no less successfully than in the Civil War, Comrade Stalin, together with the Leninist Central Committee, conducts a relentless struggle against all conscious and unconscious enemies of the Party and of Socialist construction in our country.

But at the same time, though he long ago ceased to be a military man in the formal sense, Comrade Stalin has never ceased to pay profound attention to the problems of the defense of the proletarian state and now just as in former years he knows the Red Army and is its closest and most cherished friend.

Excerpt from an article by Klim Voroshilov, written on the occasion of Comrade Stalin's fiftieth birthday (1929).

The Frontiers of Our Fatherland

Trocadero Square commands the Exposition area, or at least, commands its most festive section, the international block.

It is situated on an elevation from which an immense stone stairway, in the classic style, sweeps down to a spacious esplanade decorated with greenery, fountains and ponds.

The Seine traverses this esplanade. The Pont d'Iena, a grand breadth of paving spanning the water, connects both banks, giving symmetrical prolongation to the greenery, fountains and ponds. Here the genius of French decorative art celebrates a merited triumph.

A spectacle surpassing in splendor and majesty the panoramic view afforded from the upper terrace of Trocadero Square can scarcely be found.

The whimsical variety of the Exposition palaces, the play of water and light, leave an unforgettable impression. The huge flags remind the visitor that his hosts are all peoples of the world, that all corners of the earth where man lives and toils are represented here in specimens of their most artistic workmanship.

A sublime embodiment has been given here to the idea of the brotherhood and the peaceful collaboration of peoples.

But when you visit Trocadero Square the first thing to strike your attention is a towering statue in stainless steel—a man with a hammer and a woman with a sickle. These sturdy young people twenty-four meters tall with the play of sunshine on their shoulders seem light and impetuous in the transparent blue of the Parisian summer sky.

Nobody asks who they are. They are universally known. Everyone has seen them on postcards, medals, medallions, and pins. Everybody knows them and, seeing them, exclaims: "Ah, there they are!"

By a strange play of chance the German pavilion is situated directly opposite ours. Directly opposite our young world which embodies a thrust forward, the hook-nosed eagle of Germany perches, frozen in stillness. The swastika is gripped in his predatory claws. Very well, let the people of the world compare these two symbols!

It must be said that despite their national variety the foreign pavilions display only what is called "goods"—utensils, furniture, machines, objects of luxury and common household articles. England even exhibited horse shoes and shepherd staffs. These goods are excellent in quality, in finish and design. Even the most trifling article is an actual union of technique

and art. But nevertheless these articles are merely "goods." Exposition articles are not for sale. One cannot buy these goods here, but they are on sale everywhere and anywhere, and only await buyers. These splendid foreign pavilions, put together with fine taste, are a defunct department store. It is a world in a static state, and considering the crises in world consumption, it is a world in an impasse.

Our pavilion has been filled in accord with a taste far different from that which dominates in the pavilions of certain other countries. Many things in our exhibit, it is useless to conceal it, are clumsily displayed. But whoever he be, friend or foe, the visitor cannot but feel upon entering that he has come into another world, impetuous, creative and exciting; a world challenging to thought and calling for conscious and effectual relations to itself. The figures on the roof of the pavilion do not deceive. Displayed within the pavilion is a country in forward movement.

With one or two exceptions almost all the pavilions, for instance, have books on display as examples of printing production. Lying under glass covers, they are opened at chance pages. The visitor sees the type, the paper and the binding, sometimes displayed, it must be acknowledged, in a striking way. But the visitor does not see, nor does he ask anyone, what kinds of books these are, who wrote them, or about what, who reads them and how they are circulated. Yet the visitor wants to know not only about printing, but also about literature. A proof of this is the deplorable state of the books on display in the Soviet pavilion. They lie open on our tables, accessible to everyone. People come, read them, leaf through, some take notes, write out the figures on the size of the edition, make enquiries about the literary trends, about the circulation of individual works, about the life of the writers, about the libraries, ask what is a cottage reading-room, about the increased consumption of books, the methods of training library workers, and so on. And since the visitor can talk with a qualified specialist on any question, a new world actually opens up before him, a world of social relations he is unaccustomed to, a world where things acquire a surplus "non-commodity" value, and this, it turns out, is the dominent value.

Textile, printing and other machines are displayed in many foreign pavilions. Among them are some very remarkable ones. Sometimes an expert explains on the spot the design of the machine, its advantages and shows how it operates. But no one in any pavilion has a word to add to the technical explanation. There is nothing to add. It is interesting to see just what goes on around the machines displayed in the Soviet Pavilion.

Tractors, seeding drills, huge Rostov harvesting combines are on display. For very many, especially for townspeople, these machines are rarities. Others, peasants, farmers and landlords have seen them.

The combine backfires. People rush up. They stand around and look. Someone asks who, since there are no landlords in the Soviet Union, makes use of a combine? This simple question is like a key which opens huge gates. Behind the gates lies a world of unknown wonders. The people have not yet grasped the technical properties of the combine, but they are absorbed in tales about the life of the peasant who is exploited neither by landlords, kulaks, or speculators.

But now disputes arise, wranglings, discussions among the visitors themselves. Some are attracted and absorbed, others show alarm. But

a stone has been thrown in the water and circles radiate from it. Someone is always found who wants to slam shut the door to the world of miracles.

"Excuse me, permit me, Monsieur!" a gentleman once said to me. Under his arm was a briefcase; in his buttonhole a ribbon of the Legion of Honor. "I do not see what is the essential difference between these belauded collective farms of yours, that is, societies of shareholders, and any other anonymous joint stock company. Now what has really changed? Why such a fuss over it?"

One's patience sometimes fails to hold out at such stupid questions when asked by a gentleman wearing a decoration in his buttonhole. But surrounding us were rough, weather-beaten faces—vinegrowers from Burgundy, farmers from Perche and Breton fishermen. It was necessary to reply. And I was ready to go into detail about collective farm construction. However, I did not have time to open my mouth, when someone behind my back said:

"Come on! I'll enter your joint stock company and you the collective of toiling peasants. I bet your hands will pain the more."

Laughter resounded. The gentleman flared up. He began to feel out of place. But they did not let him get away.

"And do you know who works for you and where, in your joint stock company? Did you ever even see how people work? Take note, Monsieur, that I do not ask you, did you yourself ever work at any time? That's clear without asking."

The speaker pauses, then continues: "They told you what the peasantry of the U.S.S.R. invented, peasants who earn a living by their own hard toil, and you point to a joint stock company. Man, you're joking!"

The gentleman, however, does not surrender. "All right," he says. "They organized a commune. What's new about that? We had it in France, in the Middle Ages! But we've gone far ahead of this. Though it may be all right in a backward country like Russia. . ."

Another burst of boisterous laughter resounds.

"Backward country? A country which produces such machines and gives them to the peasantry is a backward country? Monsieur, if I could spare the time I could laugh at that joke until dinner. . ."

The gentleman glances at his watch and with exaggerated haste departs.

The peasants remain. They look long and lovingly at our machines, messengers from a fairyland. I tell them about the distribution of income in the collective farms, how collective farms build their own clubs, nurseries, hospitals, how the peasant children are educated. The conversation lasts a long time. We sit on the footboards of machines. We smoke and talk. The gentleman with the decoration has long since gone. Nor do they any longer call me "Monsieur!" They call me simply "Comrade!" We speak as intimate friends, as people of one life. And when we part company, a heavy rough peasant hand thumps me on the shoulder:

"You have a good fatherland!"

Suddenly I feel that the frontiers of my fatherland extend far, far beyond those borders marked on the maps. They pass through the minds and the spirits of all who labor in this, the so-called "best of all worlds," and who perish in it from inequality, from exploitation, at the hands of the privileged.

The Soviet automobiles M-1 and ZIS-1 stand in the pavilion. Crowds throng around them.

It is difficult to astonish anyone in France with automobiles. The motor car traffic here is developed as perhaps nowhere else in Europe. Excursion groups arrive at the Exposition not only from Dijon and Lyons but also from Belgium and Holland. I mention this to make clear how commonplace the automobile is here.

Then why do these people scrutinize with such curiosity two Soviet motor cars?

We have an elaborate psychological complex here.

Twenty years of untiring misrepresentation by the so-called "big press" could not but do its work. Many people in Europe do not know the real truth about us. Even our friends, in the mass, know only what the newspapers admit. Even they do not know the truth in all its fullness. Very many persons come to our pavilion expecting to see samovars and *portyanki* (coarse rag puttees), in French they are even called *chaussettes russes,* that is "Russian stockings." And here the entire pavilion is inspected and there are no *portyanki* and no samovars. But there are two splendid automobiles.

Then it begins: "Where do you import these automobiles from? From America?"

"No, we do not import them. We make them ourselves."

"Yourselves? Well, yes, you assemble them from ready-made parts, I understand. But the parts themselves. . ."

"We produce them at our factories in Moscow and Gorky."

A pause.

"Mm, yes. . . . But then, all right, fine automobiles. . . We have cars like them. Is it possible you expected to surprise the French people with automobiles?"

The person with the red band on his sleeve rarely has to reply to such a question. A cap is always found in the crowd who answers for him.

"Monsieur, don't you see the point? We do not have such machines. These automobiles demonstrate that the working class itself is able to organize a good industry without the help of the bourgeoisie. This means it is not a question of why the Russians brought these machines here, but why the proletariat in other countries support the factory owners?"

A discussion begins. It is inconvenient for the person with the red band to take part in it. He stands aside.

"But the historic service of the bourgeoisie. . . ."

"But the right of the working class. . . ."

"Very well, Monsieur, you work and we pay you. . . . ."

"That's right! But you do not work and we also pay you. What for? Look at Russia! That country is flourishing ever since it got rid of the bourgeoisie. . . ."

And when the discussion has ended the caps approach the man with the red band and press his hand.

"Are you a Russian?"

"Yes."

"From Moscow?"

"From Moscow."

"A long time?"

"Three months."

"Stay here a minute, I will look up my wife. Let her also see a genuine person from the U.S.S.R."

The person with the red band on his sleeve sits on the terrace of the pavilion. Suddenly someone gives him a friendly jolt. He jumps up. Before him is a worker with a box of tools, a mason or a plumber. He wears a work shirt thrown open at the breast, wide velvet trousers and wooden clogs. He taps the person with the red band merrily on the shoulder.

"Hello! We work nearby. On our way we have run in to see you. I say 'to see you' like a visitor. But we are at home here! Then so, there's no time to talk long. I will say only: Good day! That's all."

The person with the red band had been sitting on the terrace, smoking, reading the paper listlessly, feeling homesick for his fatherland. And here his fatherland had come to him, had found him in a distant country among international throngs.

It has already been mentioned above that for twenty years the hired press has daily lied about the Soviet Union. The lies are of two kinds: the lie direct and evasion of the truth. Hundreds of big and little "hard-working people" earn their daily sustenance in this work. Special agencies exist for it. They give out information which breathes of threadbare fantasy, such for example, as the recent news from Riga that "in connection with the poor harvest in the U.S.S.R.," somewhere, either in Tallin or in Kovno, the rate of exchange on tsarist paper money had risen.

And here it turns out, it did no good. Bursting through the palisades, fences, enclosures and high walls, the interest, sympathy and friendship of peoples reaches us.

The Soviet pavilion is undoubtedly the one most frequented.

Whether the temperature be 36 degrees Centigrade, or the rain falls, the people swarm in. Daily, thirty to forty and sometimes fifty thousand persons pass through the pavilion. Police stand at its doors. Sometimes the influx is so great that the police have to hold one another by the hand and form a cordon. But the crowds wait their chance. Then they strike, breaking through the cordon and crashing into the pavilion. The jam is like the crush into a street-car in Moscow at rush hours. Sometimes people faint and are carried to the first-aid station, but the crowds keep pouring, pouring, pouring in. No longer is it possible to break through to the exhibits. Nobody sees anything but the crowd moves on. It drifts, is carried onward and so as not to lose one another in the throng, the people shout and whistle to each other. I saw a family of five persons tied to each other with towels. The women scream, the children cry. But the crowd drifts on, possessed by a strange and agitated mood. It is in the pavilion of the Soviets!

A vase of red roses stands beside a bust of Lenin. The flowers are changed daily, are always fresh. The management of the pavilion sees to it but the management did not take the initiative. On the opening day a visitor put a rose before the statue. A few minutes later it was strewn with flowers.

Even now, when our management puts decorative flowers on all the sculptures of Lenin and Stalin, the public still carries in its offerings, sometimes a bouquet of roses from the Communist cell of one or another organization, at other times a bunch of lilies from a group of non-party workers.

An elderly man, who looked like a peasant, wearing an old-fashioned black coat and an unbuttoned vest, laid a cluster of full wheat-ears tied

with ribbon on the pedestal of the figure of Lenin sculptured by Merkulov. He laid them down, adjusted them, looked to see that they lay neatly, then from a side pocket he pulled out a piece of paper with an inscription and pinned it to the tuft of wheat-ears. The paper was legibly and painstakingly inscribed: "An old French peasant brings his best wheat-ears to Lenin."

The peasant was surrounded.

"Did you know Lenin?"

"No, Monsieur, I never knew him. Only I understand it so, he labored for the peasants of the whole world. That is all."

Once while I was talking in Russian with one of the women who worked at the pavilion a young fellow of athletic build stood suspiciously for a long time near the bench where we sat. When the woman worker went away and I was alone, the fellow now turned toward me and looked at me searchingly, now pretended to pay no attention to me. Then he turned completely around. I felt, however, without knowing why, that it was a dodge, that the fellow was excited and that something would happen.

The fellow turned back sharply toward me, came up close and with a timidity little in keeping with his powerful figure, stammered:

"Does a French worker have the right to shake your hand?"

I extended both my hands to him. We sat side by side.

"You understand! Here I stand and stand, I look and look and understand that we French workers must learn from you. You know they fill our heads with all kinds of lies about your country. And one comes here, looks around, aha, why we did not even dream of this."

After this I was asked brief questions as in a questionnaire:

"Is there unemployment?"

"Is it true that the old receive a pension from the state?"

"Is it true, that the young people all get an education?"

"Is it true that everything belongs to the working class?"

One question, apparently, interested him above all others.

"If, let us say, a type of person appears who has something in the 'buffet' (in the head, author's note) and he might get on in life, do they give him a chance or not? I, you understand, am a coupler. But I have some ideas in the 'buffet.' I understand this work. And everyone knows that I should long ago have been made foreman. But the bosses say: 'You are too young to be a foreman. You are only twenty-eight, what are you in a hurry about? Older people than you still work for low wages and keep quiet.' Now, I would like to know is such a thing possible in your country? I walk through your pavilion here, look around, think. . . I have decided, no, in such a country where all love to work, if you have something in the 'buffet,' they will not ask you how old you are and what color garters you wear."

The press bureau of the pavilion is situated outside the exposition grounds, rather far away, not less than a half-hour by subway. An unknown Frenchman recently came into the bureau. He was obviously excited and embarrassed. He said:

"I live out in the provinces. Yesterday I arrived in Paris, and friends proposed that I go to the exposition. They told me I must go to the Soviet pavilion and write something nasty in the visitors' book. My friends are fascists, Monsieur. I listened to them. When in the pavilion, I put my signature under the lines they had written. These were unfriendly, hostile lines, Monsieur. After that we looked through the pavilion and went out.

And all day long I've been ill at ease: why had I put down my signature? In that pavilion I perceived a great deal at once and understood that I have been deceived, not only yesterday, but for twenty years. Every day I pay money to people who deceive me in the newspapers about your country. Why, you are realizing the dream of mankind! Then why should you be cursed? I thought this over the whole night. In the morning I ran to the exposition, to your pavilion, so as to remove my signature. But they told me that the book had been taken away in the evening, because it was full and they suggested that I apply to you. Monsieur, I am now going away. I have to catch my train. Give me a sheet of paper, I want to write an apology and say what I actually think about your country."

This book of impressions, excerpts of which it seems have already appeared in our press, is of the greatest interest. It is interesting not only that people write but that they feel the need to write, to express themselves. At the book there is always a queue of people constantly quarrelling, arguing and discussing. Sympathy and hostility alternate, but both the one and the other are fervid and passionate, for the idle curiosity of the tourist at once leaves the visitor to the Soviet pavilion. He is at once drawn into the impetuous life of the new world, of new ideas, new feelings and new words. The notes in the book are written in all European languages, and in all the languages of Asia and Africa.

Who does not register his thoughts there! A legless war invalid attracted attention on the opening day. He came in on a wheel-chair, accompanied by friends. The invalid inspected the pavilion with attention and in detail. Sometimes he waved his arms silently. Later we read his note in the book: "Long live peace and the country which struggles for peace."

Groups of Arabs in burnouses and turbans, delegates of the "Society of Friends of the Soviet Union," arrive from Tunis, Algiers and Morocco. There are Sudan Negroes with scarred faces; swarthy women from India in silk robes; Scottish Highlanders in tams and kilts; Bulgarian peasants in coarse stockings who have come to France with the idea of making their way secretly to Spain, to the army of the Republic. The oppressed and the persecuted pass through. They look around for a long time, question minutely, shake our hands and we feel that the frontiers of our fatherland grow and expand, that foreign and far away peoples become our own and intimate.

During the summer the author of this letter had an opportunity to go to Spain, to the Writers' Congress in Defense of Culture.

It seems that one need but visit Spain to gain a good understanding of what our country means in the universal economy of the human world.

Spain is now bleeding. From behind the front lines Spanish peasants see the phantom of that oppression which they banished together with the king, and they are struggling for their freedom, for their labor, for their life. The forces are unequal. A well-drilled, disciplined army advanced against the peaceful peasantry; artillery and aviation against rusty double-barreled hunting rifles. And the peasants hold them back!

Our country shines in the night which envelops mankind. By the very fact that it exists, a country which the oppressed took away from the oppressors; by the very fact that it grows, flourishes and gains in power, it has become a mighty support to all who are oppressed and struggle.

I had a chance to see the fighters of the International Brigade in Spain. In Guadalajara I got into a battalion kitchen—the 12th battalion kitchen. One need not be embarrassed here at not speaking the Spanish language.

A Russian who could make up several Polish, Czech or Bulgarian phrases from Russian words, was not lost.

The smoke stung the eyes. The cook with cockroach mustaches swore in Bulgarian at the firewood which burned poorly and must once have been a door. Someone was singing *Mamita Mia,* a song popular now in Spain.

"Our Madrid held staunch and fast.
Mamita Mia!
It was broken by the bombs,
But it laughed beneath the bombs.
Yes, our Madrid laughed."

Somewhere seagents' whistles blew. Buglers trumpeted. Behind the wall two were either quarrelling or being reconciled. One cried in French; the other shouted in German.

Twenty years rolled off me like a week, and I recalled another war and another place. Rheims arose before me—the Foreign Legion warming itself before a smoking campfire, and the great misfortune of my generation, the war of 1914, again unfolded before my eyes.

But here was another war, with different fighters. They had brought their young lives here so that on Spanish soil they might serve the great cause of the toilers and the oppressed.

Among those who greeted us at Portbont right on the frontier was an unknown man in his thirties. He sought out the Russians. We became acquainted. He spoke to us at once in Russian. His name was Bazels, he was now a judge in the city of Gerona. He had studied the Russian language so as to be able to read *Pravda* and *Izvestia* and become familiar with the bases of Soviet legislation.

"You, probably, did not know that I, a judge, was living somewhere in Catalonia, in the ancient Roman city of Gerona, next door to a cathedral built in the eleventh century, and there studying Soviet laws?"

In this same place, Portbont, my attention was attracted to a man without a necktie. The man though not young was lively. He closely resembled the chairman of a collective farm in Dniepropetrovsk Region. He greeted us in the name of the local Party committee. He seemed familiar to me. But where could I have met him? In Gerona after supper he ran up to me.

"Listen, Moussinac says that you are a Russian and that you are from the Foreign Legion! Is that true?"

"It is true."

A few questions were asked: what regiment, battalion, company, unit and a moment later the Catalonian Dniepropetrovsk-citizen embraced me, slapped me on the shoulder, shook my hand. We, it turned out, had been comrades in 1914.

"Why, I am Alonzo! Alonzo Felistei from the third company! Akh, old fellow, old fellow! How splendid this is!"

As befits good legionnaires we both felt thirsty at once, and a bottle of wine rose between us in a trice. We recalled comrades, commanders and battles.

"Akh, old fellow! Where did we crawl to in 1914?"

I noticed that only Alonzo's left arm was active. The right hung in a sling.

"Why, what have you here.—Rheims?

"This? Nonsense! This I got in the fight near Madrid, where I went to correct our old political mistake. Well, I was wounded. It doesn't amount to anything. Drink, ours will take power just the same." Alonzo, it turned out, also spoke a bit of Russian. He had once been in the Soviet Union.

"Looked around some! Every person who makes a fight for the new life should see the Soviet Union. You have a fine country, old fellow."

From the frontier to Madrid is a thousand kilometers. We covered them in an automobile. One day we stopped at the little village of Manganilla, between Valencia and Madrid. Manganilla is crooked, bumpy streets, stones and sultry heat. We had breakfast in the building of the *ajuntamento,* as the town-hall is called in Spanish. Several scores of children and women, some of them old women, two or three old men, gathered under the windows. That was the entire population. The men were at the front. At first they stood still and looked with the usual village inquisitiveness toward city folk, foreigners, writers. Suddenly we heard a thin feeble voice pipe out the *International.* A moment later everybody under the window was singing.

The people in the *ajuntamento* jumped up from their places. Food was forgotten. We ran out onto the streets. The women and children stood rigid and still. The mothers of fighters, the wives and widows, the children and orphans of poor peasants struggling for their freedom, sang the song of rage and brotherhood, and this was the hymn of our fatherland!

It is raised like a torch above a world of suffering.

One evening in Madrid Mikhail Koltsov invited me somewhere with him. While still not late, the city lay in darkness. The lights here are not put on. Cannon roared in the distance, not however very far away. A battle was on for Brunete. We came to a house unknown to us, located in a garden outside the city. The house had evidently belonged to aristocrats, Spanish grandees. On the stairway stood a mannequin in armor and helmet with a huge ostrich feather. On a separate pedestal in a corner of the dining room lay a steel helmet, which as the copper plate designated, was 600 years ago the property of Seladonela Philiberto, duke of Savoy. Pinned to the wall a bit higher up and to the left was a clipping from *Pravda* with an illustration showing a parade on Red Square. An elderly woman with deep eyes and wearing only black garments received us. She was Passionaria. Several military men surrounded her. Among them was the legendary Lister.

We spent the entire night in this house and left at dawn the next morning. The night passed, but we did not notice it. It passed in such an atmosphere of simple and friendly warmth, as when people meet who are long attached to one another.

I asked V. Vishnevsky where we had really been. With a characteristic shrug of the shoulders, Vishnevsky replied:

"In the villa of the M.C.!"

For some reason I did not at once comprehend. After that I surmised. Why, M.C. means not only the Moscow Committee, but also the Madrid Committee of the Communist Party. A feeling of the greatness and infinitude of our cause overcame me.

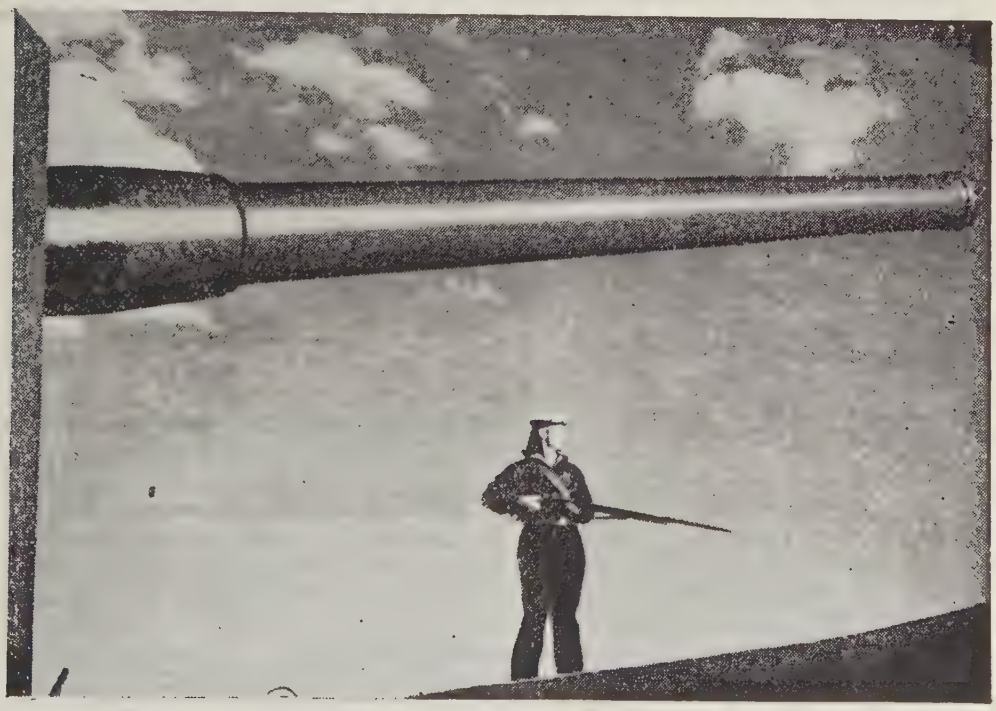
VICTOR FINK

Paris

Future pilots

Tank-driver at rest in a kolkhoz
(during the manœuvers)

Parachute descent at the maneuvers of the Moscow Military District in 1936



Red Navy man on guard

No Man's Land

An article on the Spanish writer Unamuno by Ilya Ehrenburg contains a pointed and picturesque passage characterizing the position of certain modern European literary men who wave the banner of "neutrality."

Ehrenburg writes: "Between hostile front line trenches during the war lay a narrow strip of land on which shells burst daily. Clouds of poison gas enveloped it; a maze of barbed-wire entanglements seamed it: corpses were strewn over it. It was called 'No Man's Land.'

"Who would have sought salvation on this accursed land? Yet in our epoch of social war certain writers who still imagine they are neutral, go with their typewriters, their muses and their publishers to settle on No Man's Land."

Ehrenburg named Miguel Unamuno one of the inhabitants of No Man's Land. We have recently witnessed the tragic end of Unamuno. Coquetting with the revolution during the years of Primo de Rivera's dictatorship, he later withheld his sympathies from the people in revolt; pretending "to keep his balance," he began to render service to the reaction. Sauntering through No Man's Land he slipped imperceptibly into the trench of General Franco and discovered it too late. Unamuno had, literally, a lingering death in fascist Salamanca. Shortly before his death he declared to a foreign newspaperman who interviewed him: "I authorize you to say everywhere in my name that I live in hell, that I am surrounded by horrible mass lunacy."

This example should serve as a warning to those who, in the hour when the best people are engaged in a mortal struggle, think there is anything to be gained in the service of the dark forces of fascism, and who make rationalizing discourses on "non-intervention," or "freedom of the spirit"; or merely hide their ostrich heads.

The Englishman Aldington's novel *All People Are Enemies* is a long singsong on the theme of the idyllic charms of No Man's Land. Having grown weary of war and politics, of the infamy and disillusion in the life of the West, the hero, Anthony Clarendon, retires with his beloved to an ideal island Ea, where he finds felicity.

Aldington's novel is written in an exalted tone. We make bold to introduce a dissonance and offer as an epigraph to the novel some lines from Wells' recent *The Croquet Player,* namely the concluding remark of Mr. Frobisher in response to the passionate appeal of Dr. Norbert in defense of civilization:

"I said politely, but firmly: I don't care. The world may be going to pieces. The Stone Age may be returning . . . I'm sorry, but I can't help it this morning. I have other engagements. All the same I am going to play croquet with my aunt at half past twelve today."

It remains to add that the luxuriant island of Ea on which Aldington

planned to play croquet is placed . . . in the Mediterranean Sea. It would be difficult to imagine a more malicious joke . . . .[1]

The Second International Congress of Writers, held this summer on the territory of republican Spain, devoted much attention to the struggle against the illusions of "non-intervention." Its chief resolution maintained that "any kind of neutrality is impossible and unthinkable in the present war which fascism is waging on culture, on democracy, on peace and on the happiness and well-being of mankind in general."

Impossible and unthinkable. Unthinkable because all theories of this kind, however thoughtful they seem, are founded on false premises. Impossible because even he, who honestly professes this faith, in practice cannot remain neutral in the struggle.

In Julien Benda, head of the French delegation and an outstanding critic of the old generation, the Congress had, as it were, one personification of the speculative course of "neutrality." Ten years ago Benda wrote the sensational book *The Treason of the Intellectuals*. In it he charged the workers of mental labor, the intellectuals, with betrayal of the basic principle of spiritual activity, which he held to be "independence of the spirit," removed from modern political life. "Intellectuals," he declared, with aversion, "are becoming involved in the play of political passions." As examples of the pernicious influence of politics on "spiritual production," he cited d'Annunzio, Barres and other reactionary literary men, assuming reactionary-bourgeois politics to be a prototype of politics in general.

Eight years later, in an ambiguous speech at the Paris Congress for the Defense of Culture, Benda contrasted abstractly the "Latin concept of culture," supposedly founded on the primordial recognition of the "independence of the spirit," to the Communist concept of culture misinterpreted by him as the negation of occidental culture. While the speech bore evidence that Benda's mental outlook had enlarged, it was not in fact a departure from his old position.

At the Madrid Congress Benda delivered an impressive address marking a turning point in the consciousness of this world-famous ideologist of "neutrality." "I maintain," said Benda, "that the intellectual fulfills his real vocation at the time when he abandons the ivory tower to defend right and justice from barbarians."

Pronounced under the thunder of the fascist cannonade in the heart of republican Spain, in the face of the people's struggle and the people's grief, these words had concrete meaning.

Every defender of "neutrality," every apologist from No Man's Land is undoubtedly welcome just now to the fascists, who are aware that this imponderable theorizing slows up aid to the Spanish people and serves as a blindfold before the bloody acts of the fascist intervention.

Nevertheless one must not imagine that the dispute is waged over the sole issue of politics or no politics.

An article, clearly counter-revolutionary in character, written by the French critic Ramon Fernandez urging "more politics" in literature, appeared in the bourgeois monthly *Nouvelle Revue Française*. Entitled *Is This Treason?*—an echo of old disputes raised by Benda's book—it develops the idea that political activity is natural for the artist and greatly enriches his creative work. Fernandez cites as a praiseworthy example Drieu la Rochelle, the fas-

[1] These views as shown in Aldington's recent novel *Very Heaven* have been seriously reconsidered by the author. *(Editors)*

cist hireling, who recently wrote a pamphlet exalting the Trotskyist fascist renegade and scoundrel Doriot. Thus the honorable Fernandez is sympathetic to the penetration of politics into creative artistic work, but on condition that the politics must be counter-revolution. There are politics and "politics." Benda approaches an understanding of this most important question when he speaks "about politics in the most vulgar sense of that word" and contrasts to this "the defense of right and justice." He says of Barres, D'Annunzio and their kind, that "the betrayal of people of this category found expression in the fact that they did not comprehend what genuine intellectual values are, and hired themselves out to serve the interests of the bourgeois class." This means that he now identifies politics in general with the politics of the reactionary class and addresses his accusation of betrayal directly to those intellectuals who serve fascist obscurantism.

A box on the ear from an old man can be recorded for Fernandez. But in No Man's Land the rustling of mice is stirred up not only by idealists and blunderers who have had their bivouacs demolished there and who stagger from trench to trench. In hopes of winning writers' souls fascist agents have also sent there literary gunmen and pimps, gangsters of the pen, all who can be bought. With unerring scent they nose out among the "neutral supermen," from time to time, the commonplace, inveterate, bourgeois liar and triumphantly parade him into the camp of fascism. This can only be welcomed. Let the bourgeois swine rot at home and not infect the surrounding world. Scores of writers of the People's Front, upright sons of the people, have arisen and arise to replace each solitary turncoat. Some of them have laid down their lives in the struggle for freedom, against fascism; others create immortal books which inspire millions to struggle and glorify for posterity the names of fighters for the freedom of the Spanish people.

The line of the front is clear as never before. There is no space left for talk about neutrality. All honest people rally under one banner.

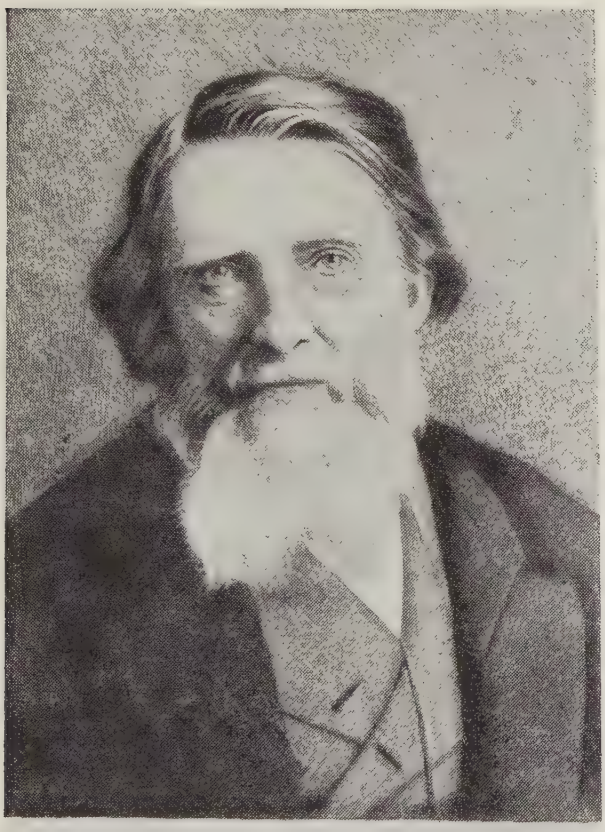
With the greatest force and clarity Mikhail Koltsov spoke about this in his remarkable address to the Madrid Congress.

"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 Goebbels 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.' We just say to fascism: 'yes' or 'no.'"

A. B.

The Social Criticism of John Ruskin



The early nineteenth century witnessed the completion of the industrial revolution in England and the consequent rise of the commercial middle class to a dominant position in politics. For many centuries the merchants, bankers and manufacturers had been gaining in power, as Marx shows in Chapter XXIV of *Capital,* and the Reform Bill of 1832 was, as such measures usually are, little more than the recognition of a *fait accompli.* In religion and morals Puritanism, Methodism, Evangelicalism—all expressions of the middle-class mind—became the strongest influences. Utilitarianism was generally accepted in practice, even when it was theoretically rejected and the doctrines of the *laissez-faire* economists were regarded as laws of god.

Opposition to the middle-class synthesis came from two sources. The rise of the factory system had encouraged the growth of labor unions, even in the face of violently repressive laws, and strikes were common in the first quarter of the century. In the second quarter economic action was reinforced by political action: the Chartist movement arose in three great waves, 1839, 1842 and 1848. In other words, just as the middle-class completed its triumph over feudalism, it was faced by a new opponent, the proletariat.

And at the same time a very articulate, if neither far-reaching nor powerful, opposition came from a group within the middle class—the men of letters.

This opposition was from the start linked with the romantic movement, and its first great spokesman was Samuel Tayler Coleridge. Coleridge's influence, soon supplemented by that of Thomas Carlyle, was felt by most of the writers of the earlier Victorian period. A whole school of novelists—Disraeli, Kingsley, Mrs. Gaskell, and to a great extent Dickens—preached the theories of Coleridge and Carlyle. Cazamian, in his *Le Roman Social en Angleterre,* cannot find a single early Victorian writer of prominence, with the exception of Thomas Babbington Macaulay and Harriet Martineau, who upheld utilitarianism.

It must be recognized that the ideas of Coleridge and Carlyle were in the true sense of the word reactionery; they looked back to pre-industrial days. Carlyle was opposed to industrialism, to democracy, and to scientific thought, and his disciples in greater or smaller degree accepted his prejudices. Yet parts of Coleridge's *The Friend* and *Lay Sermon,* Carlyle's *Chartism* and *Past and Present,* Disraeli's *Sybil,* Mrs. Gaskell's *Mary Barton,* and particularly Dickens' *Hard Times* do give memorable pictures of the exploitation of the factory workers. Fantastic as are the theories linked with these descriptions, the descriptions themselves were and are a powerful indictment of capitalism, and they aroused in many readers a more humanitarian attitude and in a few they stimulated revolutionary convictions.

The relationship between this literature of social protest and the Chartist movement was close. The opposition to utilitarianism was probably in large measure independent of the working class revolt, but the concern with the evils of industrialism owed much to the way in which those evils had been dramatized by the demonstrations for the Charter. This is proven by the attitude that these writers take towards the Chartist movement. Each of Carlyle's three major criticisms of *laissez-faire* capitalism followed a Chartist upsurge. Carlyle says frankly that he opposes Chartism, but he warns the capitalists that it will succeed in wrecking the state unless they become true captains of industry, leaders in the Carlylean sense of the word. Disraeli calls upon the aristocracy to check the capitalists, and warns the workers that they will find their true friends among the aristocrats and not among the Chartist demagogues. Kingsley offers the Church as an alternative to Chartism. Mrs. Gaskell and Dickens preach the gospel of good will.

When Chartism collapsed, the literature of social protest almost disappeared. Chartism itself had forced the capitalists to realize the wisdom of granting concessions to the workers, and England's industrial pre-eminence made concessions possible. With the middle of the century the English labor movement entered a new stage. The best organized trades won improvements in their conditions, and they abandoned political action. A general air of peace seemed to prevail in England, and writers no longer talked about "the two nations" or "the condition-of-England question."

It is because John Ruskin stands so nearly alone in his period that he is an interesting figure. Great evils persisted, as Marx showed, when, in his *Capital,* he analyzed conditions in the 'sixties. Large sections of the working class still suffered, and the bourgeoisie had developed an almost incredible complacency. Yet in the literary world, few voices were raised in protest. And this is important, for Ruskin's solitude is the key to the explanation of the peculiar development of his thinking and of his fate.

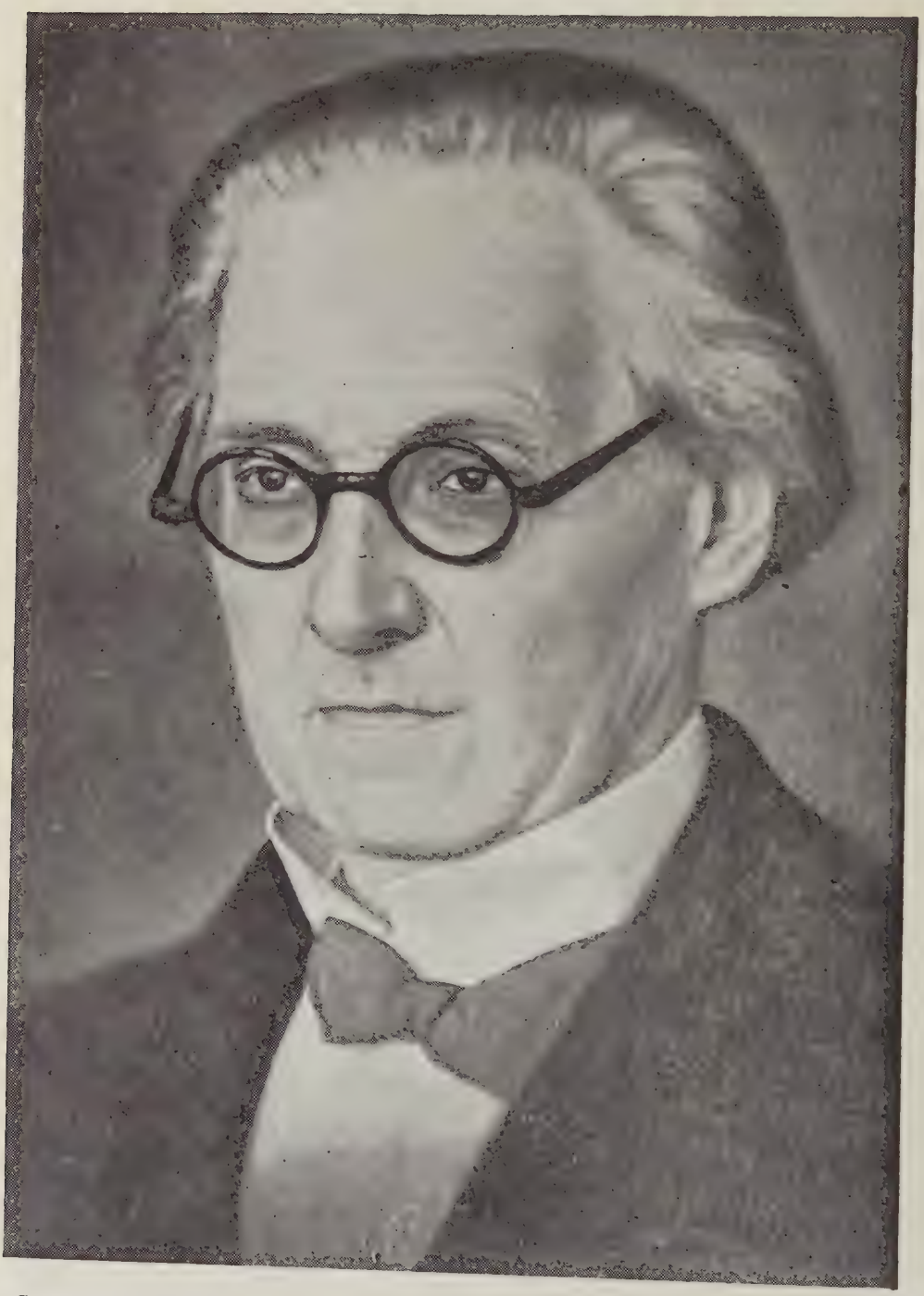
The first thing that strikes the attention is that Ruskin was not concerned with social conditions at the time when they so deeply concerned his contemporaries. Born in 1819, he developed precociously, acquired an unusual knowledge of the history of art, and at the age of twenty-four published the

first volume of his *Modern Painters.* He continued to work on this study all through the years when *Alton Locke, Sybil,* and *Mary Barton* were being written. *Modern Painters* delighted such persons as Tennyson, Charlotte Bronte, Elizabeth Barrett, William Morris, and Holman Hunt, and gave the young critic such a reputation that he became almost a dictator in the realm of æsthetics.

And it was this man who suddenly turned on British society. The steps by which he came to his heretical conclusions can be traced. In 1850, in *The Stones of Venice,* he wrote: "A great cry rises from all our manufacturing cities, louder than their furnace blasts. We manufacture everything there except men." In 1851, distressed by the state of England, he wrote three letters to the London *Times,* calling for a steeply graded income tax and a mild capital levy, but his father suppressed the letters. In 1854 he began teaching at the Working Men's College that Maurice and other Christian Socialists had founded. In 1860, appearing before a parliamentary committee on increasing the usefulness of libraries and galleries, he declared it was idle to talk of improving the minds of the workers so long as their bodies were exhausted by their toil. Asked if conditions were not improving, he said: "While greater efforts are being made to help the workman, the principals on which commerce is conducted are every day oppressing him and sinking him deeper." The chairman remarked that of course Mr. Ruskin did not intend to cast a slur on the principle of competition, and was told; "Yes, very distinctly; I intended not only to cast a slur, but to express my excessive horror of the principle of competition in every way." Finally, when the committee asked him what he wanted for the workers, he replied that, if one of them had a son and knew that he could never be anything but a workman, he would be able to answer that question.

So far, however, his unorthodox views on economics had been overlooked by a public that his views on art enchanted. But in the same year that he testified before the parliamentary committee he began to publish in Thackeray's *Cornhill Magazine* his first direct discussion of social and economic principles, *Unto This Last.* Immediately he revealed the satirical gift that was to enliven much confused and inconsequential writing during the next two decades. "In a community," he wrote, "regulated only by laws of demand and supply, but protected from open violence, the persons who become rich are, generally speaking, industrious, resolute, proud, covetous, prompt, methodical, sensible, unimaginative, insensitive, and ignorant. The persons who remain poor are the entirely foolish, the entirely wise, the idle, the reckless, the humble, the thoughtful, the dull, the imaginative, the sensitive, the well-informed, the improvident, the irregularly and impulsively wicked, the clumsy knave, the open thief, and the entirely merciful, just, and godly person."

Despite shrewd thrusts of this sort, *Unto This Last* was, compared with what Ruskin later wrote, a gentle criticism of capitalism, but it did attack the economic doctrines of Smith, Ricardo, and Mill, and these were doctrines concerning which the middle class was deeply emotional. The dogmas seemed the very cornerstone of Victorian prosperity, and it appeared to humble clerks as well as powerful bankers that Britain's position as a world power might crumble if the laws of supply and demand were proven false in the most minute detail. Amabel Williams-Ellis in *The Exquisite Tragedy* writes: "The scandal, outrage, and tumult which were caused by this essentially mild book were extreme. Reading the newspaper attacks upon him, it seems im-



Gordon Craig

Photo by Sterenberg

The ballet

Photo by Sterenberg

possible that Ruskin had not married two wives, stolen money out of the poor-box, or been involved in an Oscar Wilde scandal. . . . The contemporary press outdid itself in abuse of Ruskin, who formerly could do no wrong. His economic essays were called 'intolerable twaddle,' and the author 'a perfect paragon of blubbering.' " So intense was the protest that Thackeray had to suspend magazine publication of the essays.

Instead of being frightened, Ruskin became more resolute than ever. In 1864, speaking before the people of Bradford, who were proposing to build an Exchange, he said: "I do not care about this Exchange because *you* don't: and because you know perfectly well I cannot make you. . . . You are going to spend £30,000, which to you, collectively, is nothing. . . . But you think you may as well have the right thing for your money. You know there are a great many odd styles of architecture about; you don't want to do anything ridiculous; you hear of me, among others, as a respectable architectural man-milliner; and you send for me, that I may tell you the leading fashion; and what is, in our shops, for the moment, the newest and sweetest thing in pinnacles." And he continued in the same vein of audacity. "Your ideal of human life," he told his listeners, "is, I think, that it should be passed in a pleasant undulating world, with iron and coal everywhere underneath it. On each pleasant bank of this world is to be a beautiful mansion, with two wings; and stables, and coach-houses; a moderately-sized park; a large garden and hot-houses; and pleasant carriage drives through the shrubberies. . . . At the bottom of the bank, is to be a mill; not less than a quarter of a mile long, with a steam engine at each end, and two in the middle, and a chimney three hundred feet high. In this mill are to be in constant employment from eight hundred to a thousand workers, who never drink, never strike, always go to church on Sunday, and always express themselves in respectful language."

In 1866 this lecture, "Traffic," together with two others, was published in a volume called *The Crown of Wild Olive,* in the preface to which Ruskin employed the descriptive powers that had delighted the admirers of *Modern Painters* to reveal in all its hideousness the squalor resulting from industrialism. In 1872 he returned again to economic theory, setting forth in *Munera Pulvis* what he called "the first accurate analysis of the laws of political economy which has been published in England." Even earlier, in January, 1871, he began publication of his series of letters to workmen, *Fors Clavigera.* "I am not an unselfish person," he wrote, "nor an evangelical one; I have no particular pleasure in doing good; neither do I dislike doing it so much as to expect to be rewarded for it in another world. But I simply cannot paint, nor read, nor look at minerals, nor do anything else that I like, and the very light of the morning sky, when there is any—which is seldom, nowadays, near London—has become hateful to me, because of the misery that I know and see signs of."

In the fifth letter he made his specific proposal: "We will try to make some small piece of English ground beautiful, peaceful, and fruitful. We will have no steam-engines upon it, and no railroads; we will have no untended or unthought-of creatures on it; none wretched but the sick; none idle but the dead. We will have no liberty upon it, but instant obedience to known law and appointed persons; no equality upon it, but recognition of every betterness that we can find, and reprobation of every worseness. When we want to go anywhere, we will go there quietly and safely, not at forty miles an hour in the risk of our lives; when we want to carry anything anywhere, we will carry it either on the backs of beasts, or on our own, or in carts, or boats;

we will have plenty of flowers and vegetables in our gardens, plenty of corn and grass in our fields,—and few bricks. We will have some music and poetry. . . ." And to help make this possible he would give a tenth of all he had and all he should thenceforth earn.

It is almost unnecessary to say that the Guild of St. George was a failure. Many of its enterprises, indeed, were not only unsuccessful but ridiculous. One group of individuals persuaded the Guild to buy a farm for them at some expense, and then proved completely ignorant of farming. Two plots of land were given to the Guild, but turned out to be sterile. A woolen industry without steam was founded in the Isle of Man, and hand-spinning and handloom weaving were carried on at Langdale; both undertakings collapsed. In some places medieval customs and ceremonies were revived, with ludicrous results.

But this is only what might be expected. Ruskin's utopian schemes are important only as evidence of his sincerity. We see him as a critic of Victorian society, a critic endowed with fine sensibility, which, under the circumstances, found expression in eloquent, ferocious satire. His whole training as a critic of art, his early exposure to more spacious and more dignified cultures, had made him almost pathologically sensitive to Victorian vulgarity. "Simple and innocent vulgarity," he wrote, "is merely an untrained and undeveloped bluntness of body and mind; but in true inbred vulgarity there is a dreadful callousness, which, in extremity, becomes capable of every sort of bestial habit and crime—without fear, without pleasure, without horror, and without pity." Slowly he learned that this vulgarity was in some way a product of the economic system, and he began to attack prevailing economic theories. He never understood capitalism, but he did realize that the only way to meet the economists was to destroy the fundamental assumptions implicit in their concept of value. There is nothing in *Unto This Last* or *Munera Pulvis* to indicate that he comprehended the terms on which production for use could be established; indeed, as the Guild of St. George shows, he was always looking back to a kind of reformed feudalism rather than ahead to anything that might be described as Socialism, but he did show that capitalist theories might be questioned, and he was genuinely effective in his exposure of capitalist practice.

Because he did not understand capitalism and looked back to feudalism, he was in certain ways as reactionary as Carlyle, and it was no accident that he stood with Carlyle in defense of the murderous Governor Eyre of Jamaica. In *Munera Pulvis,* discussing slavery, he said: "The essential thing for all creatures is to be made to do right; how they are made to do it—by pleasant promises, or hard necessities, pathetic oratory, or the whip—is comparatively immaterial." That became the motif of his reply to Mill's essay *On Liberty.* "There are certain eternal laws for human conduct," he wrote, "which are quite clearly discernible by the human reason. . . So far as they are disobeyed, by whatever good intention the disobedience is brought about, there follow ruin and sorrow." Again: "You will get wiser and stronger only by doing right, whether forced or not." And again: "Of course the restriction of thought, or its expression, by persecution, is merely a form of violence, justifiable or not, as other violence is, according to the character of the persons against whom it is exercised, and the divine and eternal laws which it vindicates or violates." He argued against the extension of the franchise, and even used the arguments employed by the *laissez-faire* Liberals: if power was obtained and laws were passed unfavorable to business, "the only result would

be that the riches of the country would at once leave it, and you would perish in riot and famine."

That Ruskin's ideas should be in part ridiculously impractical and in part dangerously reactionary is exactly what we would expect. He had no sound grasp of economic principles, such as enabled Karl Marx to see through and beyond the capitalist system. His whole training was æsthetic and impressionistic rather than philosophic and economic, and he had had none of Marx's contacts with the revolutionary movement. He was moved by a violent hatred of capitalist injustice and bourgeois vulgarity, and he naturally turned to and enlarged upon Carlyle's theories, which enabled him to attack capitalism without abandoning certain cherished prejudices acquired in the course of his bourgeois upbringing. It is significant that he turned from the middle class to the working class, but he had little to say to the workers that they needed to hear, and, on the other hand, the labor movement was at the moment too disorganized to teach him anything, even if he had been prepared to learn.

A confused and helpless rebel against capitalism, it is his rebellion that is significant. Here was a man who wanted to be concerned only with art, but the very quality that made him an effective interpreter of art, his sensibility, would not permit him to remain indifferent to the kind of civilization he was living in. The bourgeoisie, which prates so prettily of the cost of revolution, never stops to count the cost of capitalism. As Ruskin says, it has become calloused, and the callousness that permits it to ignore injustice vitiates its art and, indeed, all its cultural achievements.

This is easy to see today, but Ruskin saw it seventy-five years ago, and he was almost alone among his class in doing so. For this perceptiveness he paid a bitter price. Leslie Stephen said of one of his books: "One seems almost to be listening to the cries of a man of genius, placed in a pillory to be pelted by a thick-skinned mob." It is no wonder that more and more of the purely wilful and eccentric crept into his writings—long dissertations on philology, painful discussions of his personal affairs. And perhaps it is no wonder that at last his mind failed him. Doubtless there were other causes, but he may have been nearer right than the psychologists would admit when he declared:

"The doctors said that I went mad. . . from overwork. . . . I went mad because nothing came of my work. People would have understood my falling crazy if they had heard that the manuscript on which I had spent seven years of my old life had been used to light the fire like Carlyle's first volume of *The French Revolution.* But they could not understand that I should be in the least annoyed, far less fall ill in a frantic manner, because, after I had got them published, nobody believed a word of them."

That is the tragedy of John Ruskin—an extreme form of the frustration that has overtaken so many sensitive writers under the capitalist system. Today one reads his books with a strange mixture of pity and respect. There is so much that is almost laughably wrong, and so much that is startlingly and profoundly right. Ruskin was and is no guide out of the evils of capitalism, but his words are an eloquent testimony to the existence of those evils. And so is his life.

GRANVILLE HICKS

My Jumps

A PARACHUTE JUMPER'S NOTES

A DOUBLE DELAYED JUMP

I happened to read in a magazine that a flier abroad had made a double delayed jump with a parachute that could be detached in mid-air. He had dropped several hundred meters before opening his first parachute, which he had then detached, and after a second fall, at a height of 300 meters, had opened a second parachute and landed safely.

I thought it would be interesting to make such a jump.

In August 1934, on my way back from a vacation trip to Sevastopol, I stopped off for a few days in Moscow, where I called on my old friend Moshkovsky. After our greetings the talk naturally turned to parachute jumping, a subject close to both of us.

Comrade Moshkovsky spoke to me of a big aviation meet scheduled to take place in Moscow on August 18. A rehearsal was to be held before the meet and Moshkovsky proposed that I take part in it.

Thus, though I had expected to attend only as a spectator it turned out that I could participate in a more active manner.

Comrade Moshkovsky mentioned, as though in passing, that he had a parachute which could be detached in mid-air. . . . Wouldn't I use it to take part in the rehearsal for the meet? Needless to say I readily consented.

The rehearsal was scheduled for August 6. On that day all Moscow seemed headed for the flying field at Tushino. Hundreds of buses and passenger cars, thousands of bicycles and motorcycles crowded the smooth roadway of the Leningrad Chaussee.

The nearer one got to the flying field the heavier the traffic. There was a crush at the gates. Those who had no tickets to the flying field found places in the neighborhood. They had brought along gramophones and guitars; the meadow filled with gay groups.

The sight of such mass outings always gives me the keenest pleasure. I feel that I have a close friend in each one of these thousands of people who come to view the achievements of our aviation. This was only a rehearsal for the big meet yet the crowd was enormous. It made you wonder what the turnout would be for the meet itself.

It is also interesting to note how weatherwise our civilian aviation enthusiasts have become. On this particular day the sky was overcast and a brisk wind was blowing. But the Moscovites knew that this would not deter our fliers and parachute jumpers.

It was agreed that I should leave the plane at a height of approximately 2,000 meters; after a jump of from 700 to 800 meters I was to open my detachable parachute and descend 150 meters with it, then detach it and make a second jump, falling as far as safety would allow.

The pilot took off and the plane began to climb. I gazed down at the flying field which was like a teeming anthill. It seemed amazing that the people managed to avoid stepping

on each other. The rehearsal had started but people were still flocking to the flying field as though drawn by a magnet.

The Moscow River looks funny from an altitude. It is hard to associate this puny stream with the name of Moscow, with its associations of bigness and power. There comes to mind the thrilling thought that soon the waters of the Volga will float ocean steamers up this river.[1]

Raising his hand the pilot pointed to the clouds looming close upon us. It seemed as though at any minute they would touch the wings of the plane and shroud us in a blinding whitish mist. We had reached an altitude of 1,000 meters and could climb no higher. What should we do?

"Shall we land?" the pilot asked.

Landing would have meant missing a splendid opportunity. There was no knowing when another such chance might come my way.

"I'll jump!"

I signaled to the pilot and prepared to jump. I carefully climbed out of the cabin and shoved off.

When by my reckoning I had fallen 300 meters I turned over on my back and opened the parachute which was strapped to my chest. The white ropes uncoiled like serpents and I felt a violent jolt as the parachute opened.

Then something utterly unforeseen happened. According to all the rules the parachute should by now have begun its gradual descent, but suddenly I realized that the metal fastener connecting me with the ropes of the parachute was not holding. The unattached parachute began floating away. With one hand I instinctively grabbed at the ropes but I could not hold on, as the parachute was being blown away with a strength hundreds of times greater than mine. It broke away with its ropes flapping while I plunged downwards.

Nothing of the sort had ever happened to me before. For a fraction of a second I was terrified but then the reassuring reminder intervened:

"I still have my other parachute."

I plunged headfirst, I was still 600 meters above the earth. I decided to drop another 300 meters. At 250 meters I felt for the ring and pulled it.

Again the snaky white ropes uncoiled. I seemed to be re-experiencing my first jump. I thought in a flash: "Supposing this parachute also breaks loose?" A strong jolt wrenched my whole body. The parachute opened and I began floating downwards.

As I adjusted the ropes I felt a sharp pain in my right hand. Evidently I had injured it on the jagged edges of the broken metal fastener of the first parachute. I saw that my whole hand was covered with blood. The pain grew sharper. As soon as I landed an ambulance drove up and they promptly bandaged up my hand.

I was asked to come to the microphone and tell the crowd about my jump. It had all happened so quickly that before I had had time to recover from my sensations in the air I was suddenly standing before two microphones.

I had never spoken into a microphone before. In my excitement I leaned towards the instrument and instead of talking I shouted. I didn't know what to do with my hands. I stuck one of them in my pocket and clamped the other one over the mouth of the microphone. A woman spectator tactfully put me right.

I told the assembled Moscovites about what had happened in the air. As I spoke I seemed to be re-experiencing what I had felt a few moments before when I grappled for the escaping parachute.

GREETINGS FROM THE ARCTIC

I once found a letter in my mailbox with this unusual return address:

"Alexander Lapshin, Murmansk Sea, Radio Station, Spitzbergen."

To make sure I read the letter through twice. It said:

---

[1] Since the publication of this sketch the Moscow-Volga Canal has been completed

"Dear Comrade Kaitanov, I heard over the radio about your new record and I am writing to you in the heat of my first impressions although I do not know where to address the letter. I am sending it to a friend in Leningrad who works on a newspaper; maybe he will hunt you up. I shall be coming to the mainland on my vacation with the first steamship. I would very much like to meet you. Frankly speaking, I should like to set eyes on a man who is endowed with such grit and determination, with traits which we who winter in the North are sometimes short of.

"Although my profession (I am manager of a radio station) does not require that I go in for parachute pumping (although I might try a jump from the top of the antennae tower, say), I nevertheless would be very glad if you would allow me to come and watch you jump and maybe even have a try at it myself."

I had something to attend to that same day and I did not answer the letter; then I forgot about it altogether.

Almost six months rolled by.

One day I was at my home near the flying field. I was sitting, relaxed, at the window, when I heard my name spoken. A man in civilian clothes had stopped a passing aviator and was making inquiries about me.

A few minutes later he was sitting in my room, disclosing the purpose of his visit. Then it all came back to me. I recalled his letter and my failure to reply. I was face to face with Alexander Lapshin, radio operator from Spitzbergen. He was a pleasant chap, small in stature, with a bashful smile. I took an immediate liking to him. It so happened that on the morrow I was due to make my two hundred and fiftieth jump.

"Please come along," I told him, "I'll be very glad if you do." And I told him where to meet me at the flying field.

At the appointed time I saw Lapshin in a white duck suit standing at the gate to the field. After a friendly salutation he showed some embarrassment, then said, glancing sideways: "Do you mind our going together? This is my wife."

After an introduction the three of us headed for the field. At first I had intended taking Lapshin along in the plane but the peculiar nature of the flight (I was to jump as the plane described a sharp curve) decided me against it.

Having left my new acquaintances on the field I went to change into flying togs, I strapped on two parachutes, one to my back and the other to my chest.

When I came out the plane was ready for the takeoff. Lapshin inspected my parachutes and with a meaningful nod he remarked:

"Hm, yes."

"What's that?"

"Why nothing, how interesting."

I chuckled and climbed aboard.

After our takeoff we circled the field. Lapshin waved his hat. We climbed rapidly; Lapshin and his wife, in their white clothes, were like dots on the green expanse of the field.

The pilot opened the throttle and banked sharply. I glanced at the pioneer.[1] It registered a list of 70°, the speedometer showed 190 kilometers.

"Time to jump," I decided.

It took considerable effort to overcome the strong centrifugal force. I rose in the seat and leaning against the edge of the cockpit with both hands I flung myself sideways, shoving off with my feet. At that instant I felt a new force bearing me downwards, not perpendicularly but at a tangent. I was hurled from the plane at a tremendous speed, and, after dropping for four or five seconds I opened the parachute.

I felt a sharp jolt. The sudden opening of the parachute checked my fall and caused me to hang motionless in the air for an instant; then with my legs dangling, swaying violently from side to side, I began to float downwards.

At first the earth seemed dark gray; the light-colored roofs of the hangars had a pallid color. Then the landscape gradually reacquired its familiar hues. I landed in the center of the flying field. People ran out to meet me.

By their white clothes I recognized Lapshin, and his wife, who lagged far behind her excited husband.

Lapshin reached me the moment my feet touched the ground. But the photographers and reporters immediately shoved him aside.

"Well, so you've made your two hundred and fiftieth jump," said a newspaper correspondent, new to me but addressing me like an old acquaintance.

"It looks that way," I answered.

"Was it a record jump?"

"By no means."

"A delayed jump?"

"No."

"Beg your pardon then, but just what kind of a jump was it?"

"A figure jump, from a turn."

The pencils paused for an instant. The newspapermen glanced at each other questioningly.

"What do you mean by a figure jump?"

While they helped me out of my harness I initiated them into the subtleties of the figure jump and before leaving they avowed that all they needed to complete their course was to make the jump themselves. From the theoretical standpoint they had mastered the subject thoroughly. I suggested that they avail themselves of the opportunity.

Lapshin and his wife were standing over at one side. I edged over and asked Lapshin:

"Well, how was it?"

"Interesting, but vicarious."

"You mean you would like to have a try at it yourself?"

Flustered by the direct question, Lapshin glanced at his wife. She smiled.

"I'd be very much obliged. . ." he blurted out. "It certainly would be interesting."

My interest in my new friend deepened.

"After you've gone up a few times," I told him, "and have been through the preliminary ground training, you can jump."

In August when his vacation was nearly finished, Lapshin came to the Osoaviakhim flying field for the last time. On that day I had made arrangements for him to jump from

---

[1] An instrument indicating the list of the plane.

a plane. He was passed by the medical commission, which pronounced his heart perfectly normal. I had reached the field ahead of time. After completing my preparations for a jump from a tailspin, I decided to make it from the same P-5 plane that was to take Lapshin aloft.

Equipped with two parachutes, one strapped to his chest and the other to his back, Lapshin calmly approached the plane. He confidently stepped across the sill and hoisted himself into the cabin. Lapshin's wife was also at the field, silently watching the preparations.

Skitov, the pilot, was already in his seat.

After a final inspection of our equipment and our parachutes, I also climbed aboard. Thereupon the pilot steered onto the runway.

The starter waved his flag. While Lapshin's eyes searched for his wife among the onlookers, the plane took off.

A warm breeze was blowing. Our plane, reddened by the glow of the waning sun, began to circle upwards. Flying at low speed Skitov described two circles. I watched the novice parachute jumper; to all appearances he was in fine spirits.

"You haven't changed your mind?" I whispered to him.

"No."

On the third circle I gave the order.

"Get ready."

Lapshin stood up, glanced at me and without waiting for the word, leaped overboard. In a few seconds we saw the spreading dome of his parachute. Circling near him in the plane I waved to him, and he, observing me, shouted something, but his words were drowned out by the roar of the engines.

When we were only between 200 and 300 meters from the ground I saw a cluster of people running towards the center of the flying field where Lapshin was smoothly descending. They were shouting at him (at this point I recalled my own first jump when they also shouted at me for neglecting to pull up my legs) and a moment later Lapshin was on the ground gathering in the billowing parachute.

Descending to 50 meters we swooped across the field and nosed upwards at a steep angle.

Now it was my turn.

At an altitude of 1,500 meters Skitov brought the plane into a tailspin. With all my strength, I gripped the sides of the cockpit and stood up in the seat.

The plane plunged downwards, spinning at terrific speed. Remembering my calculations, I leaned forward slightly from the waist and dove from the seat into the centre of the tailspin.

The whirling plane was falling a few meters away from me and I opened my parachute the moment I was clear.

JUMPING FROM A DIRIGIBLE

In the autumn our detachment received a consignment of new pursuit planes. These light, speedy machines soon won the fliers' affection. One day while carrying out a complicated assignment in one of the new pursuit planes, I stayed in the air for about three hours. Meanwhile the weather took a turn for the worse, I flew at a high altitude while dense grey clouds gathered below.

Peering through a rift in the clouds at the earth I realized dusk was approaching and decided to land. I plunged through a cloud, emerging 400 meters above the ground; as I leveled the plane I was surprised to see a huge dirigible gliding slowly past on the right. On its side I read: "USSR-V-2 Smolny."

By comparison my pursuit plane seemed like a bird.

The newcomer roused my curiosity and I followed it at low speed. I soon sighted landing signals and a hangar at a spot a few kilometers from our field. I realized that the dirigible was to be berthed there. The smooth flight of the dirigible circling over the field aroused my interest.

The thought crossed my mind: "I wonder what it would be like to jump from it."

Early next morning I set out on foot for the village where the hangar was located. When I arrived I was impressed by the sight of the dirigible calmly reposing within the hangar like an enormous silk cocoon. In the air it had seemed smaller. Here it was as high as a five-story house.

After introducing myself to Comrade Opman, the commander of the dirigible, I told him of my wish.

No one had yet jumped from a dirigible in the Soviet Union. If the experiment proved successful why not give the dirigible crew training in parachute jumping?

Opman was agreeable. I rushed back to our quarters for my parachute and returned accompanied by a parachute adjuster and two of our fliers. Before I had reached the village I was hailed by a passing huntsman.

I turned around and smiled. It was Georgi Golitsin, the former commander of our pursuit plane squadron, here on his vacation. He was an old hand at parachute jumping and the news of the forthcoming jump excited his interest. He decided to come along. He tossed his rifle into the cart and joined us.

It was still dark in the hangar and the rays of the autumn sun which pierced the few small windows cast feeble rectangles of light on the huge bulk of the dirigible.

The preparations were long and tiresome. Accustomed as I was to taking off at a moment's notice, I was irked by the tedious process of hauling the dirigible out of the hangar. The crew tugged on the ropes that hung from the sides and from the cabin and the huge ship slowly emerged. At last when the dirigible was on the field they began the process of balancing, that is, of adjusting the weight of the load and crew to conform with the lifting power.

Finally everything was ready. The engines were started, the commander gave his final orders. The dirigible began to rise.

I am in the habit of climbing rapidly to 1,000 meters, but the dirigible rose slowly, describing wide circles, and this also got on my nerves. However, flying in it was pleasanter than by plane; there was none of the lurching and pitching. It was more like a ride in a comfortable motor car.

Having attained an altitude of 600 meters the dirigible proceeded along the prescribed course.

The engines turned slowly, propelling the craft at a speed of no more than 25 to 30 kilometers an hour. I carefully calculated the landing place. The commander held the cabin door open, I shifted the parachute which was strapped to my chest to the right, and bending slightly I fell through the door.

After a delayed jump of 60 meters I pulled the ring. The parachute opened more slowly than is usually the case when one jumps from an airplane. It took longer for my body to attain the required velocity—the dirigible traveled slowly and the momentum was small. When you jump from a plane the momentum of the latter, usually not less than a hundred kilometers an hour, is added to the speed of your own fall; therefore, to attain the velocity required to blow open the parachute, I had to drop a longer distance.

When I landed and began folding up the parachute I watched the dirigible retrace its course and saw Golitsin jump from the cabin.

I timed his fall with a stop watch seeking to determine how long it required for the parachute to open completely. The jump was successful.

I became convinced that dirigibles are well suited for training parachute jumpers. The jump in no way affects the behavior of the craft. According to calculations the loss of even

a fraction of its load should cause the dirigible to rise. In practice, however, the difference is negligible.

To check up on my observations I decided to repeat the experiment.

That evening the dirigible made ready for night flying. The dim lights of the field scarcely illumined the belly of the huge ship; its sides and back were swallowed in darkness

I arrived on the scene intending to make an experimental night jump. But by the time I had arrived, the number of aspirants had trebled. Strizhov, the parachute jumping instructor from our detachment, and the parachute adjuster Matveyev were both on hand to watch the jump.

Long before the flight I noticed that Strizhov was constantly shifting his weight from one foot to another, unable to summon courage enough to voice his wish to make the jump. Matveyev was bolder, he was right at my heels the whole time, muttering: "Take me along."

I did not want to disappoint my comrades so I let them have my last two parachutes.

We flew off in the darkness and soon from a great height I could only distinguish the flying field by a few lights.

On the first two circles I saw Strizhov and Matveyev off in turn with a slap on the shoulder of each; as the dirigible circled for the third time I shook hands with Opman, thanked him, and immediately plunged from the well-lighted cabin into the night.

I made a delayed jump of at least 350 meters, opened my parachute and made a quick landing. From below I directed the landing of Strizhov and Matveyev who had jumped before me but had opened their parachutes immediately. We landed within thirty meters of the point we had steered for. At night such an error is negligible.

Early one morning at five or six o'clock the sky was grey and sullen and apparently no good for flying. Having returned to the field at dawn after night flying in a pursuit plane I was about to snatch some sleep when an automobile horn began honking persistently beneath my window.

I realized that this heralded the arrival of my parachute pupils who that day were scheduled to make their first parachute jump from a dirigible. After my tense and sleepless night I longed for a good rest, but I went out without even stopping for breakfast.

We made the trip to the field, singing. The twenty young people, among them four girls, were in high spirits. Their gaiety communicated itself to me and by the time we arrived my fatigue had vanished.

The flights started off well. In two hours' time the dirigible made three landings and every time the landing crew nimbly grabbed the ropes. After each trip the dirigible again went aloft after taking on a new group. There were eleven jumpers in all and the first eight jumpers were handled in this fashion. Only the last group of three remained. The pangs of hunger were gnawing at my vitals but I consoled myself with the knowledge that this was the last flight.

"I'll finish with these three," I told myself, "and then I'll go and have dinner."

I went aloft and let out the first two jumpers. Through the open cabin door I watched my pupils as they descended and landed. They both made good landings. In fact I had no reason to doubt their success, for during the theoretical part of their training I had made a careful study of each of my pupils, otherwise I would not have allowed them to jump.

After correcting my calculations to allow for the increased velocity of the wind, I let out the last jumper. It was the Y.C.L. member Krichetnikov.

Falling head first he immediately pulled the ring and with the dome of his parachute flashing in the sun he slowly floated earthwards. His slow descent alarmed me. It was evident that the wind had died down just as suddenly as it had come up, while my calculations had allowed for a strong wind. My alarm increased when I saw Krichetnikov was headed straight for the roof of the hangar. Evidently he himself was rather frightened

for he cast helpless glances around him, as though he expected help to materialize from somewhere. It was only at the very last moment that I saw that he knew what to do. As soon his feet touched the roof he immediately seized a projection and managed to hold on. The crumpled parachute sagged over the edge. The landing crew which had witnessed the whole performance rushed to the rescue. With the aid of a fire ladder they got Krichetnikov off the roof of the hangar.

I do not suppose that Krichetnikov was calm at the time. But I myself was no less anxious for I clearly forsaw the possible consequences of a landing on the steep roof.

Among the members of the landing crew who held the dirigible I saw my pupils. Still excited over their recent jumps they gaily gave me their impressions, and even Krichetnikov who had been stranded on the roof, forgetting his mishap, walked up to me smiling happily and thanked me for his "aerial baptism."

I felt satisfied in spite of my hunger and weariness.

SEVENTEEN HOURS FALLING THROUGH SPACE

Once in a circle of friends at the flying field we tried to add up the flying time of our chief, one of the oldest pilots in the district, who had been flying ever since the days of the imperialist war. Our subject himself happened to look in at this point and modestly suggested that we find some other pastime.

"It would be more worth while," he remarked, turning to me, "if you took a pencil and figured up how many times you have jumped and it would be even more interesting to know how much time you have spent falling through space with your parachute."

This problem absorbed us for nearly half an hour. I had jumped from various heights and almost no two jumps were alike. We decided in the end to count all four hundred and three jumps as one jump with a total length of 306,400 meters.

On the basis of an average rate of descent of five meters per second we calculated that together with my parachute I had fallen continuously for nearly seventeen hours.

I have done my jumping from heavy and light airplanes of various types; one hundred and seventy of the jumps were experimental, made while the plane was describing complicated figures.

Many of my jumps were made in snowfalls, at night, in the pitch dark, with a strong wind blowing. I have landed in a forest, in the water, on the ice, at a strictly specified point, and so on.

Skeptical comrades sometimes ask: "Are such jumps necessary?"

They certainly are, and not only for army fliers, but for civil aviation as well.

Neither dark of night, blizzard, nor any caprice of the elements can prevent the flight of our machines, though they may complicate the job of the pilot. The plane can take off under all conditions and our fliers must know how to use their parachutes in any situation.

Often as I thumb the pages of my parachute book I recall my first jump. I was fascinated by the parachute. Now I have studied the complex and absorbing technique of parachute jumping and although I have made over fifteen hundred solo flights I have never yet had to resort to the parachute in an emergency. The splendid Soviet aviation industry has provided us with reliable machines and equally dependable, parachutes.

Once in the course of conversation some comrades asked me:

"Why don't you use an army parachute instead of your double trainer's parachute?"

That same day I acted upon their suggestion. Fingering the ring of the army parachute, I leapt from the plane and after a delayed jump of 300 meters I pulled the ring. Army parachutes are easier to guide. Since then I have jumped with army parachutes many times and I have thoroughly tested their sterling qualities.

Every Soviet parachute is perfectly safe; it is only necessary for the jumper to know how to handle it.

CAPTAIN KAITANOV

ALEXEI STAKHANOV

"All my life, I have seen real heroes only in people who love to and know how to work, people who have set themselves the aim of liberating all the forces of man for creative labor, for making the earth more beautiful, for organizing a form of life on it worthy of man."

Maxim Gorky

Alongside the giant Nikita Izotov he seems small, slender, almost frail. Actually he is a tall, athletic, perfectly proportioned man. His expression is thoughtful, and his eyes narrow as they attentively, deliberately take in people and surroundings.

His hands are comparatively small, not at all work coarsened, and very clean. But their skin is spotted with numerous small scars, cuts and nicks, some of them long healed, and covered with strong waxen scar tissue, some stained with coal dust, like tattooing, some quite fresh, blood-red or pink.

His long fingers pick up a new, unused notebook from the table. On the binding is stamped in gold: "To Stakhanov, from the Stakhanovites of the Metro." Carefully he writes in it:

"Comrades, ardent greetings from the Don coalminers' delegation.

"1. Comrade Stalin's speech.

"2. In the pit.

"3. Leadership in the shaft."

He pauses, thinks, listens to the rumble in the hall and the cheery chatter of the speaker. He examines the black charcoal point of his pencil, and resumes writing.

"4. Work[ers] of the Donbas.

"5. Earnings.

"6. Why this is necessary.

"7. Newspapers wrong, foreign."

The speaker has concluded. Now all eyes turn to Stakhanov, the newsreel cameras peg him with shafts of light. The foreign delegates shout greetings, others applaud. Finally, all rise.

Stakhanov waits. Attentive, pleased, smiling, composed, he receives the long ovation. He shows no trace of embarrassment. He waits for silence, then opens his notebook, speaks the greetings, and proceeds with the seven points of his brief speech. Quietly he sits down.

Testing his modesty, I say:

"You certainly are famous. In two months you have become the talk of the world. In our country you can't go anywhere without hearing about Stakhanovites and Stakhanov. There's not a column in our newspapers that hasn't carried that word."

His answer does not conform to the long-established canons accepted as proper in such cases. He does not protest against the clamor and rhapsodies. He does not pretend that they annoy him. He does not ask to be let alone.

He joyfully, earnestly and almost didactically, corroborates me. "Rather! Practically the whole world knows. All through the country they are trying to follow my example. And it will go still further. I've already made so many speeches, I myself can't count them up. But that's still little. I'm going to rest and then begin again. There's still a lot to be done, in coal and in other fields as well. Notice how those girl weavers are coming along. We must work practically everywhere in Stakhanov fashion."

No. Fame does not embarrass him in the least. That is because there are no poisonous juices of vanity, conceit, self-consciousness, or egotism in his soul, the soul of a man of a new generation, reared under a new social order. He considers his success the success of his method, correct, happily conceived, victorious, and regards himself as a standard-bearer, a representative, but in no sense the boss or proprietor of that method. He pronounces the words "Stakhanovite" and "in Stakhanov fashion" with assurance, approvingly, in a manner which excludes the very idea of personal pretentions to that word.

He discussed with Nikita Izotov the work in the Metro subway construction which they had watched the day before.

"Well, the stratum is soft in Shaft No. 51. Therefore, the timbering must be exact. It should be figured in millimeters. The slightest deflection, and all the work is wasted.

"The Stakhanov method helps them. They showed me figures, simply unbelievable, of how they had run up their digging quotas, when they went over to the Stakhanov method!"

This Stakhanov himself says. From force of habit he calls the work on the Metro "digging," and correctly. To him it is "unbelievable." But he himself, by his own example, has shown how fabulously productivity changes when a worker concentrates mind and muscle on one thing—on how to get everything there is to be gotten from a machine, how to compel it to work for man to the utmost, to the very last rotation.

When he hears objections to his system, the calm, self-controlled Stakhanov becomes heated, even impassioned. Especially when the objections impute to the Stakhanov method exhaustion of the worker, excessive tension, overstrain.

"What haven't they yelped at me! As if I didn't leave my shift on my own legs but was carried out on a stretcher and taken straight to the hospital. And as if"—he laughs aloud,

for the first time, and heartily—"as if I spent a couple of days in the hospital recuperating and then went out and set another record. You'd think the Stakhanov method is one in which workers are carried back and forth on stretchers between the stope and the hospital. I'll tell you straight—after work I feel like going for a stroll, having some fun, or else I study with a teacher; my head is clear and so is my body. Of course anyone, in the stope for the first time, will find his arms and legs ache. But that's only at the beginning, with an inexperienced worker.—I don't know whether what I said was translated well—I wanted to tell all those workers from abroad that the foreign papers write nonsense, that it's all untrue!"

Stakhanov—tall, young, good-looking, strong—bears his fame easily and calmly. His records have already been broken, other people push these records higher and higher; yet he is not chagrined, not disturbed; it only increases his satisfaction and pride; his restrained smile engraves itself all the deeper in his assured face. He himself pulls a newspaper from his pocket and with his nail points out an item about a new record set by the Gorlov miner Stepanenko.

"Look—been away from the pit nearly a year. He's serving in the fleet. Comes home for the holidays, steps in and cuts 552 tons! What are our people coming to, eh?"

Some sob sisters among our journalists set out to present Stakhanov as a proletarian Prince Bova (a legendary figure in Russian folklore) who cuts coal until he loses consciousness, and is rewarded with half a kingdom, a sable cloak and a magic ruble that buys everything and is never spent. Others endow him with a college education, a specialist's knowledge of all the mineralogical sciences. They call for his views on Persian painting, ask for his greetings to every sort of congress against corns and callouses; implore him to write a few lines on the Stakhanov method in philosophy.

Actually he is a natural, if you wish ordinary, miner of the Donets basin, outstanding neither in physical strength, learning or experience. He came to the pit not so long ago, from the village, and not to establish world records—he had not idea that this would happen—but to earn enough to buy himself a horse, a dapple gray stallion, of which his grandfather had dreamed, and his father, and he himself, and all his family—poor horseless Orlov peasants.

"The village is pouring over," it used to be said in factory offices, in the offices of trust administrations, in the shops. Some said it in alarm, some in gleeful malice. When industry —mining and metallurgy—came to grow in terms of hundreds of per cent, when peasants flooded through the open gates of the factories, to the new built, still "green" shops, many feared that newcomers would damage and ruin the machines, perhaps break their heads on them, but not master them. Almost all—and tradition, too—had to make a tremendous rectification of this estimate of the "cultureless," "backward" and "barbarous" peasantry in contact with the new environment. The old villagers did not walk but swarmed, did not drink but ladled, did not eat but crammed, guzzled, bolted, did not weep but whimpered like dogs. No other words to describe village life existed. Even writers of fine taste, setting to work on a novel of peasant life, went over, though with reluctant hearts, to this standard vocabulary. Otherwise no one would consider it authentic.

Stakhanov, son of a poor peasant, came to the pit reluctantly. The Donbas was for him a strict uncle, for whom you had to work hard before you could earn enough to buy a gray horse, and then quit.

He had already made attempts to acquire a horse, but everything had turned out to be either miscalculation or out-and-out cheating. He worked for a kulak miller. His work included looking after the kulak's horses—and among them was the yearned-for gray stallion. He turned back his earnings to the miller, along with fifteen rubles that he had saved up earlier. But it ended badly. The miller swindled him, and he went horseless.

The Donbas, though, was a Soviet master, a worker-master, an honest master. There nothing was a fraud. Stakhanov began on a quiet job—driving a team underground. He worked accurately, was promoted and, having saved up enough for a horse, prepared to return

to the village. Besides, the carting of coal had been mechanized, horses were no longer needed. But his fellow workers persuaded him to stay on, to try out working in the stope. He went to work breaking coal, at first with a hand pick. Mechanization came, and with it the pneumatic drill—what a machine—as if alive. It breathes compressed air, no, it doesn't breathe, it snorts, better than the most spirited horse.

Stakhanov's comrades, advanced miners, Bolsheviks, also got him to go to evening school, to the course for the liquidation of illiteracy. They taught him to read, write and figure, to pick up a newspaper in the evening. This, in some way that Stakhanov did not understand, reflected itself in his work. It seems a simple thing to cut coal, yet it is easier for a literate person to cut it. The young fellow's aptitude was awakened and came out, and his good sense, his ability to figure things out, his resourcefulness. And most important of all, his courage was awakened, his faith in himself and his trust in his comrades. The poor, lone individualist had become aware that the collective was not an enemy but a friend, that the collective helped. The Bolshevik, Myron Dyukanov, had persuaded him to go to work in the stope; Dyukanov and Petrov, the Party organizer of the pit, and all the comrades around him encouraged him, inspired him, helped him with advice and commendation.

"They turned out eight tons a shift, and I turned out eight tons. I was not behind. And then I began to turn out ten tons, and became so absorbed in my work that I surpassed many others. And the better I work, the more sure I feel that I can work still better. And all the time, I feel regret over my darkness, for the uselessly lost years."

To this something new was added, something to which formerly Stakhanov would never have given a moment's thought. In his head there had earlier been no place for such ideas. Now he heard comrades saying worriedly that the output of coal in the pit was fluctuating, that the plan was in danger, and that this was bad. These ideas sank into his mind together with the kindness and encouragement of his comrades, together with higher earnings, together with his first newspaper reading. The pit's plan, which took a firm place inside Stakhanov's head, pushed back his old concerns, and even dimmed the alluring hues of the future dapple-gray horse.

Dyukanov, Petrov and other Bolsheviks—splendid organizers, untiring proponents of everything new and daring, Bolsheviks organizing a single stope and all Soviet industry, one Stakhanov, and all the proletariat of the world—stirred a revolutionary spark in the young miner. And the spark suddenly flared up into a tremendous initiative of great historical significance, a soaring rocket, a blazing signal for a new advance by Soviet industry.

It is just this, and not the petty, trickily advertised loudly proclaimed trivialities, that is important in the figure of Alexei Stakhanov. His career, his transformation from a backward peasant with a pathetic dream of a gray horse, into a bold, victorious reformer of production methods, a famous exposer of "scientific," "patented" technical norms of production.

The "it-can't-be doners"—with a sneer Stakhanov speaks of engineers who swear it is impossible to extend the existing limits in mining. As he says it the word sounds almost like "latrines"—is accusing and scornful.

It is just this that has been noted by the keenest observers of our life as being most important. And the newspaper *Le Temps,* one of the most authoritative bourgeois organs in the world, utters the following warning in an article by Pierre Berdain:

"This movement is all the more forceful in that it has its source in the personal initiative of Soviet workers and not in any administrative measures. It shows that the Soviet workers are able or will soon be able to compare themselves with their foreign comrades. One must realize how swiftly Soviet industry is developing, must realize that henceforth it can produce, for example, special steels for the most complex machinery, which it has mastered. If in the years just ahead Soviet industry will continue to grow in the same way and

raise the quality of its output at the same rate, it will quickly become a serious rival of the Western countries."

I translate it to Stakhanov. Certain words of the quotation arrest his attention.

"Compare ourselves with the West? We can with them, of course, but they with us, that's a sad story. Because when anyone there does three times his norm, two workers alongside him are fired. While with us there's work and money enough for all—just break it out, just get out the coal."

Yesterday a peasant, morose and poor, today remolded in the Bolshevik forge into an advanced worker, proud of his class and his country—before our eyes he is becoming the man of tomorrow, the strong and trusty friend of his still shackled brothers abroad, whose power and will to produce are paralyzed by the absurdities of the capitalist system.

"And what about the horse, Alexei Grigoryevich?"

He laughs cheerfully. "I've been given one. And what a horse! Gray and dappled, a fine riding stallion. But, understand, I've not time to go riding. There simply isn't time to go to him."

MIKHAIL KOLTSOV

SERGEI LAZO

(RECOLLECTIONS)

Sometime in January or February 1919 I was assigned to guide the Bolshevik Delwig from his hide-out in one of the working class suburbs, to the Pervaya Creek, to the house of a Bolshevik railwayman whom we called "Uncle Mitya."

Delwig had recently arrived from the Siberian Center and did not know the layout of Vladivostok. I myself was new in the Party at the time and my work mainly consisted of such technical assignments. When Delwig and I set out it was late in the evening and quite cold.

We found quite a gathering at Uncle Mitya's house, where a plenary session of the Bolshevik Far Eastern Territorial Committee was to be held. My eye was arrested by the remarkable appearance of one individual, a young man about twenty-three who was a head taller than anyone else. There was a striking intellectual beauty in his swarthy, oval face with its sparkling eyes and frizzly black stub of a beard. It was an arrestingly clever face. His movements had the angularity common to bashful folk. The gathering was a lively one, many of those present not having seen each other for a long time; and the first impression I got was that he felt awkward and out of place. But this impression vanished as soon as he began talking. His voice was steady and assured; he gave his r's a slight roll that was pleasant to the ear.

It was not merely his outward appearance that roused my interest but also the fact that he was treated with a special warmth and respect.

To my great disappointment I was not allowed to attend this important meeting; but in

order to see Delwig home I had to hang around somewhere until it was over—but where? Everyone started teasing me. My cousin Igor Sibirtsev suggested that I wait outside, the fresh air would be good for me.

A better-natured one proposed: "Suppose we put him to bed on Uncle Mitya's couch with strict Party orders to go to sleep."

This met with general approval and they put me to bed. Naturally no one really expected me to go to sleep. Although I lay facing the wall I never closed an eye and probably my ears were never so alert; I heard out the whole meeting.

Thus it was that I heard Sergei Lazo, whose name I did not find out till afterwards, make his report and I must say that it amazed me. I had heard many reports before, but Lazo's astonished me with its unusual logic. He spoke precisely, briefly and to the point. I got the impression that he was reading it off.

As I lay, face to the wall, I did not see his gestures, but I heard his firm, pleasant voice with its slight roll. At the time I was something of a political ignoramus, even though I had what was considered a good education. The content of Lazo's report, however, fairly took my breath away. To this day I recall his analysis of capitalist contradictions on the Pacific Ocean. In the main this analysis remains valid today. It should be borne in mind that Lazo had not yet read what Lenin wrote on this question in 1918-19.

Around three or four o'clock in the morning they "woke" me. I escorted Delwig and then went home. I was living at the time with my cousin Igor Sibirtsev. To sound me out he kept bantering me for having slept through such a meeting. I stubbornly maintained that I really had been asleep. He then produced several sheets of paper from his pocket and remarked:

"Take a look at these theses!"

I examined the sheets. They were covered with neat, legible writing written with an indelible pencil. When I started reading them I realized that they were the theses of Lazo's report. They were transcribed in such a way that they could be understood without hints from the author. The theses were precise, clear and condensed. I did not yet know whose report it was that I had overheard and who the author of the theses was. I could not refrain from asking who had written them. And that was how I first heard the name of Sergei Lazo.

"What logic," I remarked to my cousin. "How plainly he puts everything!"

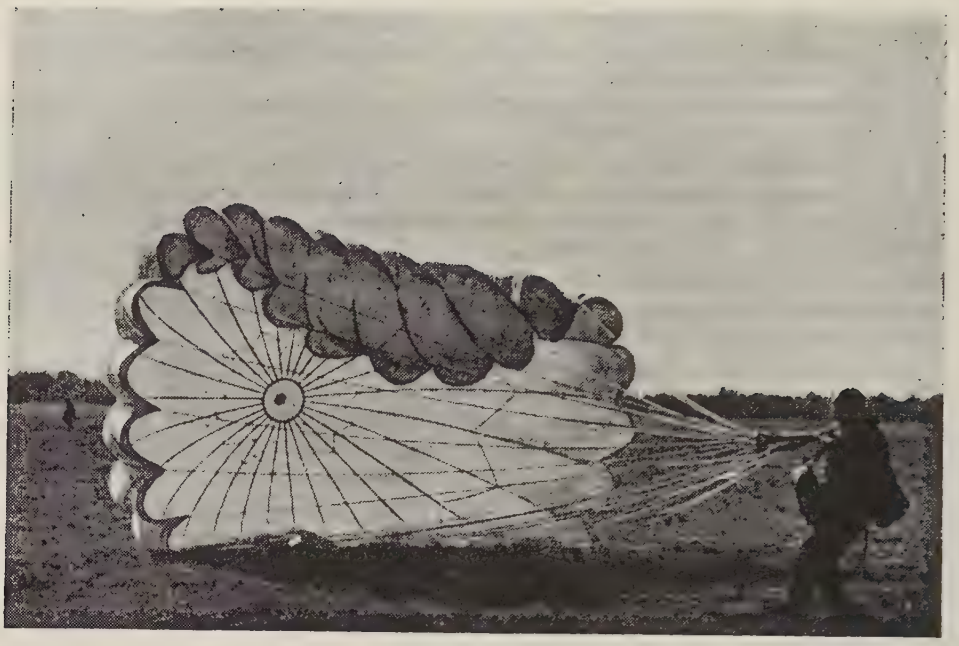
He answered: "He is an amazing fellow: a splendid mathematician and a brilliant chess player. And the qualities that distinguish him in mathematics and chess influence all of his work. He is one of our chief workers in the Transbaikalian region. He commanded on the Transbaikalian front and he proved his ability as a strategist in the campaign against Ataman Semyonov."

I came to know Lazo at closer quarters during the partisan movement on the Suchan River.

It was late in May or early in June 1919. The Whites had been cleaned out of almost the whole of Olga county and I had just returned from an agitation campaign in the north, in the neighborhood of Olga and Tetyukha. I went to the village of Frolovka, where the partisan staff was located. Here I met a large group of functionaries of the Vladivostok underground Party organization. Lazo was among them.

Sergei Lazo had been sent by the committee to assume the post of commander-in-chief. This was the first time in the history of the partisan movement that the revolutionary staff had appointed a commander-in-chief. Hitherto all the commanders had been elected and as a matter of fact there had been no commander-in-chief. The chairman of the revolutionary staff, the chief of staff and the commanders of the various detachments were all elected just like the company and platoon commanders.

When the rumor spread that some unknown fellow had been appointed commander-in-chief, the more backward elements among the partisans, including several of the commanders, raised a row. I jumped right off the saddle into a big partisan meeting in front of the building of the revolutionary staff in Frolovka. It is hard now to imagine such



Parachute landing

Photo by Halip

Soviet seamen at rest

Photo by Halip

On a kolkhoz in Moldavia

Photo by Shimansky

At the Physical Culture Parade on the Red Square, Moscow, 1936

Photo by Rodchenko

a meeting. Outwardly everything seemed to proceed according to the rules; there was a chairman and a secretary. But about them surged a veritable sea. Feeling ran so high that people threatened each other with rifles and swords. The struggle between the forces of order and that unruly tide lasted two or three hours.

Here I became acquainted with some of Lazo's amazing qualities. It is an understatement to say that his calm was imperturbable. Most surprising of all was the fact that although he was the main "object" of the tumult, he was unconcerned as to how it might turn out for him personally. One felt that he was in no way worried over his own fate. I later had occasion to see for myself that he behaved the same way in battle.

It was clear that whenever he spoke, he spoke out of conviction, a conviction that worked on the masses like magic. In addition he was an excellent orator and knew how to find plain words which penetrated the minds of the working people. Despite the extreme tension he succeeded in getting the crowd to listen to him. When it dawned on the individual partisan leaders that he was trying to make them submit to his authority and take them in hand, they again raised a rumpus. But he calmly waited for the noise to subside, then resumed his speech.

The meeting ended in a victory for us. The rank and file partisans learned for the first time who Lazo was.

After that he and a group of comrades traveled to the more turbulent partisan districts. There he again had quite a struggle. He had no armed forces to back him up; he used only the authority of the Party and his own name. There were even attempts to arrest him, but the fighting was going on and everywhere he gained the confidence of the partisans by his able leadership in battle. By the time he returned to Frolovka he was already a recognized authority among the masses; people obeyed him as a senior comrade.

I do not remember whether it was in June or July that we called a congress of the working people of Olga County. It was a most interesting congress. In the first place many nationalities were present. Russians and Ukrainians were not the only inhabitants of Olga County. There were also Koreans, Chinese, Letts, Esthonians, Finns, Moldavians and other peoples. In the second place the congress took up such complex questions as land distribution and the regulation of prices for grain, fish, meat and furs. There were no outlets to city markets and the price trend was unfavorable to all but the grain growers.

The question of the prices for grain and fish was especially involved. Fishermen constituted a considerable portion of the population of Olga County but there were also many farmers. Naturally the farmers could get by without fish. But the fishermen could not get by without bread. Consequently prices for bread were high while fish sold for almost nothing. At the congress this question acquired great political importance. There was danger of a split between two large groups of the population.

Furthermore a representative of the right-wing Socialist-Revolutionaries arrived at the congress. The moment Kolchak clamped down on the Socialist-Revolutionaries a little, they opened flirtations with the partisan movement.

Finally, another peculiar feature of the congress was the fact that it took place at a time when not only Kolchak, but also the interventionists were already operating against us. The congress was held at the village of Sergeyevka while twenty kilometers away, at Kazanka, we were fighting the Americans, and a Japanese landing party was expected any day.

Here I got to know Sergei Lazo as an ardent political fighter and a practical politician. In theoretical knowledge and mental capacity he was doubtless one of the most outstanding of our leaders. I well remember Lazo's speech against the representative of the Socialist-Revolutionaries and how, literally, in the course of a few minutes, Lazo reduced him to an object of general ridicule.

At the same time he was a model of tact when the question of the prices for grain and fish came up. For a long time the farmers remained obstinate and there seemed to be

nothing we could do with them. We had to raise the price for fish and lower the price for grain,—but how? Lazo spoke quietly and tirelessly.

Feeling rose to such a pitch that I, being young and excitable, got up and said that by their stubbornness on this vital issue the farmers were behaving like kulaks.

You can imagine how stupid and tactless this was! It led to such an uproar that a recess had to be called.

During the recess Lazo came over to me and gave me a meaningful look with his penetrating eyes. He said nothing, he only shook his head. I felt like sinking through the floor. At this point a woman came over to us, an active figure in the partisan movement. At the time she was a Left Socialist-Revolutionary but was tending in our direction. Lazo looked at her and suddenly remarked with a sly smile:

"There are your muzhiks for you! What do say to that?"

He clearly perceived the "two souls" of the middle peasant, and, while censuring me for my hot-headedness, he used the conflict over prices to deal a death blow to the Socialist-Revolutionary ideology of that woman.

In the end we carried through our price scales.

At this congress Sergei Lazo was recognized by the people as a whole as commander-in-chief of the partisan forces in the Maritime Region.

I should like to describe Lazo in battle. An amusing touch was lent by the fact that he was very tall while his horse was unaccountably small. His stirrups barely cleared the ground and he towered above the horse's crupper like a maypole. The comparison with Don Quixote was irresistible. But there was nothing of the Quixote in his character. In action Lazo was never at a loss for bold, swift moves while at the same time he was prudent, capable, realistic and absolutely fearless.

I have seen many brave commanders. I have seen daring people who were the first to lunge into battle, who were eager and full of fighting spirit. I have seen cool-headed courageous people. But even these people show by their behavior that they are under fire, that their calmness is unnatural, that they are not acting as they would at home. Theirs is the calmness of courageous men who are accustomed to battle and who know that they must keep cool. Sergei Lazo, however, was the same in action as he was everywhere; his eyebrows were arched the same way; his habitual expression of close attention and mild surprise, indifferent as to what might happen to him personally and what others might think of him, was unchanged. He did only what was required in order to attain his military objective.

At the time I was a rank-and-file fighter and was therefore not familiar with the plan of the partisan campaign, worked out by Lazo. I know, however, that shortly after his arrival, what we were after came through; our operations along the railway to cut the Suchan mine off from the city succeeded. However, Japanese forces far outnumbering ours and with superior armament were sent against us, and we were compelled to evacuate the Suchan valley.

I stayed behind with a partisans' detachment which attempted to entrench itself in the Suchan taiga. Lazo and the others left for the Anuchino district. We were soon dislodged from the Suchan taiga and retreated to the same district, where the partisan forces were rallying to renew the struggle. But Lazo was no longer there. He had fallen seriously ill and was concealed somewhere in the taiga.

I next met him after the defeat of Kolchak, in February or March 1920, at the Far-Eastern Conference of Bolsheviks in Nikolsk-Ussuriisk. I attended as a delegate from the Spassko-Iman military district. Lazo was chairman of the army military council.

At that time political commissars were being introduced in the army. Lazo discussed with us the appointment of a political commissar for our district. I seized every opportunity to put in a word for Igor Sibirtsev. He had been my first Party teacher and I was tremendously fond of both him and his elder brother Vsevolod.

Lazo suddenly looked at me and said with a chuckle:

"Supposing we appoint Buliga political commissar?"

Buliga was my partisan name. I was thunderstruck; I began gesticulating and stammering that I considered myself too young for such a responsibility. But he kept on chuckling:

"No, we must by all means appoint Buliga."

And he suddenly launched into a conversation with me about the importance of placing political educational work on a proper footing, now that we were reorganizing the partisan detachments into a regular army. He expounded the whole plan of work to me. And I never suspected that he was instructing me. When we got back to our district it turned out that Igor Sibirtsev had been appointed political commissar and that I was his assistant in educational work. Igor Sibirtsev is dead now; he was wounded in both legs in 1922 in a battle with the Kappelevtsi,[1] and he shot himself rather than be taken prisoner.

My last meeting with Lazo took place two weeks before the Japanese attack. I refer to the Japanese attack upon our garrisons on the night of April 4-5, 1920. I had been sent to Vladivostok on some business matter and I met Lazo at a private gathering of friends who had worked together illegally in Vladivostok, in the days of Kolchak. It was quite a party, many of us had not seen each other for over a year and in the meantime some of us had even managed to marry. An atmosphere of the warmest comradeship and cordiality prevailed. Lazo was in the center of the gathering, he laughed a great deal, his clever black eyes sparkled with enjoyment. None of us suspected that we were soon to lose him.

It would, I believe, be no exaggeration to say that Lazo was a rarely gifted man. Had he lived, he would now be holding important political and military posts.

What were his qualities that warrant this assertion? He was first and foremost a proletarian revolutionary, a revolutionary to his last ounce of blood; at the same time he had great personal ability and was extremely versatile. In addition, he possessed enterprise and a tremendous capacity for work, he studied every question thoroughly and from every angle. At the same time he was remarkably modest. He was a man with chivalrous instincts and noble feelings.

When the Japanese made their attack our garrison at Spasskoye was dislodged from the city and cut off from Vladivostok for several months. It was a long time before we learned that Lazo, together with Vsevolod Sibirtsev and Lutsky, had been taken prisoner by the Japanese.

We refused to believe that they had been murdered. When I again reached Vladivostok in August, after the armistice, all the papers were still running the headline: "Where are Lazo, Sibirtsev and Lutsky?" The Japanese command "officially" denied knowledge of them. But we knew that they were lying, since a few days after their capture by the Japanese, Sibirtsev had been visited by his father and Lazo by his wife. We were powerless to do anything but we nevertheless refused to believe that they had perished.

I stayed with the Sibirtsev family in the country, twenty miles from Vladivostok on the shore of the Amur Inlet. Everyone felt very depressed. Night after night when she came home from work, my aunt Maria Vladimirovna, mother of Vsevolod and Igor, would deal out the same game of solitaire, with her small, strong, wiry hands. It was obvious that she was constantly gnawed by the thought of her son and his comrades.

Igor and I went out in the garden and I asked: "Well, what do you think, Igor?"

"I think they've been murdered," he gloomily answered.

Not until a year later was it established by testimony and circumstantial documentary evidence that our unforgettable and heroic friend Sergei Lazo and his faithful comrades had been burned alive by the Japanese militarists in a locomotive furnace.

ALEXANDER FADEYEV

---

[1] A whiteguard band operating up to 1922 in the Far East in the service of Japan. Crushed by Red partisans and the Red Army in 1922.

A LETTER TO THE EDITORS[1]

I decided to write you this letter after reading in *International Literature* the account of the Second World Congress of Writers, held in Madrid and Paris in June 1937. In reading the article I met the names of writers from different countries, from France, England, America and, first and foremost, the names of the writers of heroic Spain. It gave me the greatest pleasure to read about the speeches of people many of whom are now defending the liberty and independence of the Spanish people by arms.

Before I had read through to the end I began regretting that the editors had not published the speeches also, since I wanted to hear the actual words of the participants in that remarkable congress.

Imagine my delight when, having finished the article, I saw the heading: "Speeches of the Participants in the Second International Writers' Congress." I read these speeches word for word. I felt like a participant in the Congress; I imagined the Congress was in session and that I myself was hearing these flaming words spoken from the tribune.

And then I made up my mind to tell in this letter how the youth used to live in tsarist Russia and how it lives now in our happy Stalin epoch.

I had not the misfortune to live in the old tsarist Russia. I was born at the beginning of the imperialist war; then the Great October Revolution broke out and I grew up in a Soviet country. What I know of the past, I know from what my father and his friends have told me. Boys and girls at that time hardly had an idea of science and culture in general, and little enough of literature. The tsar, the landlord and the capitalist had no interest in teaching the children of workers and peasants. They wanted to have them raised as "cattle," to obey them in everything and work for them. This is what I hear when people who lived then, speak of the past: "When I was eight or nine I was sent to work. As for science, we had no idea of it. Our parents were told: 'Educate them and they will leave you, and you will have no one to care for you in your old age.'

"That's how it was. Are there many among us who had a chance to learn? Very few. And if somebody got the chance it was by luck and usually had to paid for by hardships."

The best sons of the people, the creators of culture such as Pushkin, Lermontov, Nekrasov, Turgenev, Gorky and others saw the basic lie of the old regime; they tried to present the actuality, realistically. But the gendarmes shadowed them. And it was not until the great red colors waved over our land that they came into their own.

Now the whole Soviet people reads Pushkin, Lermontov, Nekrasov, Gorky and the others. Every worker and every kolkhoznik feels that they are his own. You can see everywhere, on the shelves of libraries, shops, and in the homes of the toiling people volumes of

---

[1] The author of this letter serves in a Red Army division. It was written to the editors of the Russian Edition of International Literature. We publish this letter as an interesting document testifying to the affection which our Soviet people harbors for the people of Spain, to the spirit of proletarian internationalism which pervades the thoughts and aspirations of Soviet people, who are well aware that "the liberation of Spain from the oppression of the fascist reactionaries is not the private cause of Spaniards, but the common cause of all advanced and progressive mankind."

Pushkin, Lermontov, Nekrasov, Shakespeare, Walter Scott, Alexei Tolstoi, Gorky and others.

I couldn't give you in words a fair idea of the everyday life of the Soviet youth. They have schools, technicums, high schools, theaters, cinemas, clubs, libraries, sportfields, and so on. They also have rest homes, sanatoria and everything else our lavish fatherland affords. And the chief pride and happiness of our youth: according to the Stalinist Constitution it has the right after reaching the age of eighteen, to vote, to elect and be elected to the Supreme Soviet of the USSR.

Can the youth of the countries in which landlords and capitalists are still in control—not to speak of the lands where fascist barbarism is in power—expect anything like this? No.

Ask a young fellow or a girl of our country: who gave you this life, this happiness, this science and culture? And you will receive the unhesitating reply: This life has been given us by the All-Union Communist Party of Bolsheviks, the creators of which were Lenin and Stalin. To bring us this happy life they endured imprisonment and exile and made three revolutions. And our youth repays with work, good records in the schools, the conquest of technique, Stakhanovite methods of work, the vigilant watch on our Socialist frontiers and many other things we are proud of.

And what were human morals in the old days? They were based not on mutual love between a young fellow and a girl but on self interest, on money most of all.

Now, the morals of our youth are determined not by self interest, not by money, there are new Communist morals. These morals call on us to build a good family. Socialist morals and love—that is the foundation on which the union of a young man and woman is put. They have no worries about jobs. And as for a child, it is welcomed by the country like a ray of the sun. Such are the morals of the youth in our flourishing country.

And this life—bands damned and despised by the people would rob us of it! These trotskyite murderers, hirelings of fascism, would restore the capitalist "old order" in our flourishing fatherland. They would surrender the Soviet people to the landlords, capitalists and the rest of the pack, to be devoured. To accomplish these frightful ends they resorted to every sort of terror, espionage, diversion. They would sell our land to the fascists who are now torturing the best sons of the people in their prisons and concentration camps. They are helping to flood the cities, fields and forests of heroic Spain and China with the blood of workers and peasants, and of harmless women and children and old men.

But the Soviet people and its glorious organs of proletarian dictatorship have called the cards of the fascists. The enemies have been caught red handed and all their attempts have been crushed and our fatherland has been cleansed of this pack. And let all others who would plan any harm to our country, know that they will be crushed in the same way. This is the declaration of the Soviet people: We will defend our country and ever be led in the struggle by the words of our beloved Stalinist People's Commissar Voroshilov: "We will reckon with the invadors on their own territory."

Our people and our youth know that their class brothers in the capitalist countries are at the present time condemned to hunger, want, oppression and unemployment. We also know that the time is not far off when the oppressed peoples of every country will proclaim: "The rule of the landlords and capitalists is over, the rule of the workers and peasants has begun."

But this will only be possible when all the proletarians of the world grasp their situation the way the workers of heroic Spain have done. The Soviet people is wholly on the side of the Spanish people because the latter is fighting for life, for bread and for culture. And for this reason with all my heart I send greetings to the writer comrades who have shown their solidarity with the Spanish proletariat, and take part in the fight against fascism.

Long live the heroic Spanish people, fighting for its liberty!

Long live the USSR, the homeland of culture and progress!

With greetings. V. Nazarenko.

Makhach-Kala

BOOK-SHELF

FEUCHTWANGER'S BOOKS IN THE USSR

Lion Feuchtwanger, profound writer and enemy of our enemies, is beloved and popular with Soviet readers.

The appearance in Russian of each new book by him draws immediate comment in the periodicals of the U.S.S.R., is subjected to careful and thorough criticism.

THE SONS

International Literature, Russ. ed. Nos. 10-12, 1936
Reviewer Georg Lucacz

This highly interesting work of Feuchtwanger is "transitional" in two ways. In its composition it represents a change from the first parts. At the same time, the book marks a transition stage in Feuchtwanger's development. . . .

Now the author approaches the people's movement altogether differently. He shows that the emergence of Christianity was conditioned by economic and social relations among the Jews. . . . To have come to this understanding is a considerable step forward. . . .

In . . . events psychologically interesting and effectively portrayed the basic problems in Feuchtwanger's work are evident—the struggle between nationalism and world citizenship, internationalism. . . .

The Sons is the work of a transitional period, with much beauty and depth, with many contradictions, a work which raises many problems. It is an important document in the history of the development of German humanism after Hitler's coming to power. One will be able to pass final judgment on the significance of the problems raised here only after Feuchtwanger gives us, in the third part of his cycle, his own solution.

Literaturnoye Obozrenie, No. 9, 1937

CALCUTTA, MAY 4—PLAYS

The United Magazines and Newspapers, Moscow, 1936

. . . His plays are distinguished by external expressiveness, mastery of dialogue, striking action and a wealth of well-realized characters.

The themes of Feuchtwanger's plays echo the themes of his novels. It would be easy here to note the similarity of individual plot situations. But the basic problems with which the writer is concerned are usually presented in his plays in a fresh manner, sometimes more barely than in his novels; they are freer of philosophic generalizations; it is in his plays that Feuchtwanger has reached a genuinely tragic keenness.

. . . Feuchtwanger's plays are deeply emotional. . . . These tragedies compel hard and deep thinking. The thought of the spectator is tensely held by contradictions, and through it the spectator comes to the perception of the tragic figure of the hero. . . .

Literaturny Sovremenik, No. 5, 1937

THE JEWISH WAR

State Literary Publishers, Moscow, 1937. 540 pp.

. . . In his striking speech at the First International Congress of Writers, in 1935 . . . Feuchtwanger declared that "the serious novelist seeks in historical themes, as far as possible, an exact reflection of his own epoch, of his own contemporaries and subjective views. . . ."

The characters here are shown in living, authentic surroundings. One must note the fact that Feuchtwanger devotes considerable attention to the setting—environment, historic details, etc. The writer has examined a distant epoch with the eyes of a man of our time, and he aims to have the reader see it similarly. . . . Feuchtwanger invests in contemporary terminology his understanding of the past, and the reader, thanks to this, perceives and experiences with sharp clarity the events and figures he depicts. . . .

In *The Jewish War* the proportions between the individual and his surroundings, between the person and events connected with him, are well observed. . . .

A. Herbstman, *Literaturny Sovremennik,* No. 10, 1937

MOSCOW, 1937

State Literary Publishers, 1937

Reviewer F. Ernst

The writer Lion Feuchtwanger, honored in all cultured lands and therefore slandered in Hitlerite Germany, visited Moscow early in 1937. He termed himself a friend of the Soviet Union, but his sympathy for the U.S.S.R. was mixed with a certain skepticism. "Full of curiosity, doubts and sympathy," he observed life in the U.S.S.R. with a measure of mistrust. The beautiful reality of Socialism convinced the skeptic. . . .

Feuchtwanger, although not entirely, yet to a considerable degree has understood the essence of Soviet democracy. . . .

Feuchtwanger was received by Stalin. In Feuchtwanger's description of this reception one feels what a strong impression the powerful personality of Stalin made upon him. . . . He succeeded in noticing much that is fundamental: the inexhaustible strength, the unshakable firmness, the genius of deeply true ideas, the strong ties with the people of the leader "in whom is united the strength of both classes (workers and peasants)." But the personality of Stalin the statesman remained incomprehensible to the writer, despite the fact that he perceived and felt certain characteristics. . . .

"One feels glad when after all the half-ways of the West, one sees a cause to which one can with all one's heart say: 'yes, yes, yes.' And as it seemed to me dishonest to hide this 'yes,' I wrote this book."

And as this book opposes the sorry half-ways of indifferent "democrats" or hypocritical "friends of the U.S.S.R." with their unending "ifs" and "buts," as the author has the daring not to smother his "yes" in reservations, but to state it openly and courageously, *Moscow 1937,* despite shortcomings, is a valuable addition to anti-fascist literature.

Communist International, No. 10-11, 1937

FORTHCOMING WORKS

The State Literary Publishers is preparing to issue the collected works of Lion Feuchtwanger. Its lists for 1938 include the following books: *The Ugly Duchess, Jew Süss,* (American title, *Power*), *The Jewish War, The Sons, The Oppenheims,* and the first part of *Success.*

"THE OPPENHEIMS" ON THE SCREEN

The Moscow Film Studios will soon release *The Oppenheims.*

Honored Art Worker T. Roshal, cinema regisseur, writes: "I am working on the filming of Lion Feuchtwanger's novel, *The Oppenheims.* Unquestionably Feuchtwanger's well-known novel cannot be presented on the screen in all its complex literary detail. . . . Feuchtwanger, in our work together over the scenario, displayed keen understanding of the laws of the cinema art. . . .

"The authors of the film, together with Feuchtwanger, seek to make the basic theme of the picture the path to the united People's Front and the exposure of fascism and its animal hatred-of-humanity essence. The scarcely evident figures of the proletarians in the novel take on great significance in the film. We will show the ties of the masses with the leading detachment of fighters for a new world—the Communists and the Communist Party. . . ."

Sovietskoye Iskusstvo, July 29, 1937

OSCAR MARIA GRAF—"ONE AGAINST ALL"

State Literary Publishing House, Leningrad, 1937. 246 pp.

The novel *One Against All* (written by Graf in 1932) deals with an unsuccessful attempt to escape the confines of bourgeois society. . . .

As an epigraph to his novel Graf chooses the lines from Strindberg's play *Gustav Vasa:* "Time has passed over me; I know not where my home is."

However, towards the end of the book the author skillfully shows how this outlaw, who has declared war on all, unconsciously succumbs to the homeward pull. The circle of his wanderings constantly narrows with his native haunts as the center until he falls into the clutches of the police near his own village. He is homesick but he has no home, he has no country. Such is the end of this unfortunate who had resolved to fight bourgeois society as a lone wolf.

Graf presents the story of Girgl Loeffler with the honesty and knowledge of life that characterize all his work. He does not write from the viewpoint of an observer on the sidelines. The village he describes is his own village, the city street his own street. . . .

But while he presents his hero in actual surroundings, Graf is sometimes weak in his generalizations. For example, in the short chapter on Max Helz the writer gives the impulse priority over the conscious action of the revolutionary. In the Bavarian countryside Graf sees only the rich peasants and ignores almost entirely the middle and poor sections. This is a gross error.

Literaturnoye Obozrenie, No. 8, 1937

PEARL BINDER—"PUKKA POO"

State Literary Publishers, Moscow

. . . This is a typical sketch-book by a literary journalist. The sketches are sometimes grotesque, sometimes lyrical. . . . The last of the four narrative pieces, the one called *Tussaud Museum,* is the weakest in the collection, though it is not without its portion of amusing observations. It betrays the author's weak side, noticeable also in the preceding stories, namely her penchant for exotic detail and the accumulation of oddities for variety's sake.

However, the author's sharpness of observation and her well aimed strokes hold the reader's attention regardless of the shortcomings noted. . . .

H. G. WELLS—"THE FACE OF THE FUTURE"

The United Magazines and Newspapers, Moscow, 1937.

Reviewer Y. Fried

The scenario is interesting in itself and actually reads like imaginative fiction.

The Face of the Future clearly expresses both Wells' hostility towards contemporary capitalism and the naivete of the illusions with which he soothes himself.

Wells prefers not to say who will attack whom in 1940 nor what the nature of the war will be; he makes no mention of the proletariat and the peasantry. As in others of his recent works he persists in "overlooking" the Soviet Union. The war which Wells depicts occurs as it were in a vacuum, between two irreconcilable adversaries who clash in an utterly schematized and unreal setting. . . .

Having conceived the nature of the "future world war in abstract terms," Wells "finds" a way of overcoming war in the same abstract fashion. Since the main cause of "endless war" is the inexhaustibility of technical resources, the technicians who control these resources can put an end to war.

In *The Face of the Future* the aviators, technicians and engineers seize power; they depose the bourgeois dictators and compel mankind to live in peace. . . .

The victory of the aviators over the headstrong modern militarists opens a new era in history. Men go to live in the bowels of the earth to attain ideal man-controlled conditions.

Valery Bryussov in his pre-revolutionary play presented an impressive fantasy of future civilization which also left the earth's surface to live in the bowels of the earth. . . . The sun had begun to cool and all life on the surface of the earth was dying out. Bryussov describes humanity's imaginary decline; Wells portrays its imaginery golden age.

Save us, oh science, from such a boring "golden age," presented as occurring under purely laboratory conditions! Wells himself would doubtless be bored in a subterranean laboratory for the incubation of "healthy intelligent people."

We recommend Wells' naive movie-scenario to the reader precisely because it provides a good illustration of the helplessness of contemporary bourgeois conservative humanism, cautious, cowardly and abstract, when it comes to solving social problems and meeting with complete failure when it encounters reality,

Herbert Wells also sees things somewhat differently now than he did when he was working on *The Face of the Future* (in 1935, before events in Spain). After fascist intervention had begun in Spain Wells wrote his story *The Croquet Player* wherein, allegorically of course, he calls the fascists not "headstrong children" but "cave-men" who threaten civilization and mankind with destruction. *The Croquet Player* is by no means free from abstractions. But it is not afflicted by the naivete of *The Face of the Future.*

Literaturnoye Obozrenie, No. 21, 1937

MICHAEL GOLD—"CHANGE THE WORLD"

Before this collection of Gold's columns appeared in book form, the Soviet reader had already met with some of the pieces, in various Soviet periodicals: *International Literature,* (Russian edition), *Krasnaya Nov,* etc.

The form of Gold's columns is as varied as their subject matter. Some of them are answers to letters from *Daily Worker* readers. Some elaborate into essays; some into lively sketches of people and events; others turn into literary reviews. Gold does not hesitate to employ the narrative form, filling his naive, symbolical stories with a current political content.

Whatever the literary form of Gold's columns, it is always marked by aptness and a pleasing unforced simplicity. . . .

Gold knows how to draw generalizations from the most trivial facts which appear insignificant in themselves; this faculty is indispensable to a newspaper columnist. Almost every one of Gold's columns provides an object lesson in the political struggle.

International Literature, Russian edition, No. 5, 1937

ROGER VERCEL—"CAPTAIN CONEN"

The United Magazines and Newspapers, Moscow, 1937

Reviewer N. Chetunova

The author conceived Conen as a tragic figure. . . .

Roger Vercel assures us that we are not dealing with the chance misfortune of an individual "hero," but with the tragic fate of all "conquerors," who lived a "full life" only during the war and who do not know what to do with their "excess daring," now that they no longer venture to air the "instinct" which had such free rein in wartime and which, alas! they find it impossible to "suppress."

Roger Vercel's disclosure of the psychology of an unemployed murderer is done with brilliance.

The reader is gravely mistaken, however, if he imagines that Vercel's book is a realistic portrayal of the past of a contemporary fascist. In that case we would by no means object to examining Conen, we want to know the enemy's face however loathsome it may be. But Roger Vercel deliberately idealizes Conen. Conen is a picture of what the fascist would like to be. He is "tragic" because the author sympathizes with him, he is tragic because idiotic peacetime compels him to "suppress his killer's instinct."

In Vercel's book the murderer and bandit Conen speaks in the name of the "best" part of the army.

The "spiritual fare" with which writers such as Vercel try to feed the reader can only arouse the Soviet reader's disgust and indignation.

Literaturnoye Obozrenie, No. 21, 1937

On the Lighter side

Victor Ardov

Happy Ending

The chief of the out-of-town section of the Mail Order Trust was speaking:

"Comrades, who has package No. 7213, addressed to Instructor Sobolev, Novocherkassk?"

The packers called out: "Girls, who's got 7213?" "Marusya, have you got it?" "No, Katya has it." "Katya Chesova." "Katya, Katya, that's your number."

Katya Chesova, a snub-nosed girl with distracted blue eyes, stood numb for a second, then asked: "What number did you say? 7213? I had it . . . Somewhere in Novocherkassk . . ."

"Right. Books."

Katya, surprised, turned about. "Books?" she said. "No, it wasn't books; 7213 was a layette for a newborn baby, diapers, baby's shirts, nipple and. . . "

The chief made an irritated gesture. "What's a newborn baby got to do with it?" he demanded. "A scholar, a lecturer, has ordered books and you talk about nipples?"

"But, Nikolai Karpich, I think I sent a layette to Novocherkassk three days ago . . ."

The chief of the out-of-town section bit his lip, then shouted: "What kind of work do you call his? Sending a lecturer nipples?!"

"I didn't think of it," answered Katya, her eyes blinking with tears all ready to come. "There was an order for seventy-six rubles and forty kopeks, and I set out the goods . . ."

"How much? How much did you say?" the filing clerk exclaimed, turning the pages of his book. "Seventy-six forty?"

"Yes," sobbed Katya.

"It's all clear, then," said the clerk, and pointed to his books. "Look: here is order No. 7213, Sobolev, Novocherkassk, 7640, and right next to it is No. 7214, also for seventy-six forty, Potapova, Textile Mills, Apartment House No. eighteen, apartment 433, Dresna City."

"Oh! Now I remember!" Katya cried. "The cards and the address slips fell on the floor, and I. . . "

"And you mixed up the addresses," the chief exclaimed, "that's clear enough."

"No, maybe I didn't mix them up, Nikolai Karpich . . . Maybe I sent them correctly. . ."

Ludmilla Potapova, of the Dresna Textile Mills, returned home from her work. On the dining table she noticed an opened plywood box. "This must be the package from Moscow," she exclaimed. "Is it a nice layette, mama?"

Ludmilla's mother ironically pursed her lips, closed her eyes, and sang out: "A nice one, daughter, a nice one. . . They don't come any better."

"Shirts?"

'Yes, shirts!"

"And a rubber sheet?"

'Yes, a rubber sheet."

"Show me the diapers and the nipples . . ."

The old lady seized two books from the table and, thrusting them in her daughter's face, sputtered: "Here's the diapers. . . And here's the nipples. . . "

"Diapers?" asked the puzzled Ludmilla, and read the titles: *Growth of the National Economy of the USSR in diagrams and figures. They shall not pass. A Symposium on the War in Spain*. . . "What are the other books, Mama?"

"Here they are—plenty of them. Seventy-six rubles worth of our hard-earned money.

This thick one, I suppose, will make a good baby blanket, and that one we'll cut and grind up for baby powder," raged the old lady. "Write those rascals in Moscow to send you the goods you ordered or else to send back your money."

But the daughter said thoughtfully:

"You know, Mama, we will keep these books."

"What do you mean, keep them?"

"Yes, keep them. There's always a crush at the library. And these books sound interesting. We'll send more money for the layette."

The old lady sizzled like potatoes on a frying pan.

Instructor Sobolev returned from his classes, took off his coat in the hallway, laid aside his brief case, came up to his wife, and kissed her on the forehead.

"I got my pay today," Sobolev said.

His wife, hardly opening her mouth, answered frigidly:

"Is that so. It's probably the last time you'll receive it in full."

The lecturer turned his head in surprise: "Why the last time?"

"One-third will be deducted according to the law," his wife declared angrily.

The lecturer sat down, rubbed his forehead, and said: "I don't understand, Musechka. What is it all about?"

"So you don't understand? Tell me, have you been living with her a long time?"

"Living with whom?"

"How do I know? I only see that I owe you congratulations on becoming a father and... and... and..."

She burst into tears. The instructor ruffled his hair and cried distractedly: "What on earth does all this mean?"

"I am the one who ought to ask what it means, not you," she answered. "What did you order from the mail order house?"

"Books."

"Books? Are nipples books? And a syringe—I suppose that's a book, too?"

"I don't understand anything," mumbled the lecturer, "I sent through an order for books... The list came to seventy-six forty."

"How much? How much did you say?" interrupted his wife.

"Seventy-six forty. And then this comes..."

"'This' is also marked seventy-six forty," said his wife thoughtfully. "Maybe they really mixed up your order..."

The lecturer immediately regained all his liveliness. "Well, of course! It happens only too often. I must sit down right now to write them a complaint and demand that they send the books immediately, and as for this junk..."

His wife stopped him, raising her palm. "Wait," she said. "This junk, as you call it, need not be returned. It will come in handy for my sister. You know, she's expecting a baby."

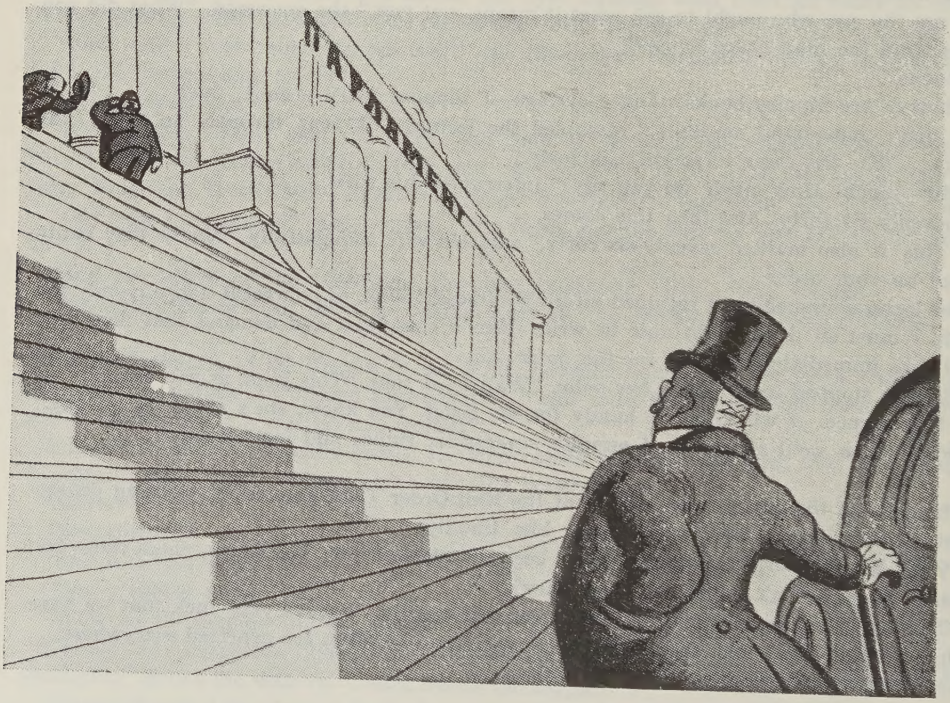
"Fine. Then we'll simply send another seventy-six rubles and forty kopeks. . ."

The chief of the out-of-town section of the Mail Order Trust entered the packing department. Packer Katya Chesova addressed him timidly:

"Well, Nikolai Karpich, has that affair been investigated yet? You know, about those two orders? They weren't mixed up, were they?"

"Of course they were mixed up," the chief said sternly, "but it's your luck that we have such a country that books are wanted everywhere and children are expected everywhere... Both consignees accepted the goods sent them..."

Triumpirate *("Krokodil")*



In Capitalist Countries. The deputy of the overwhelming minority
("Krokodil")

Uneasiness In Rome.

Do you know Signor general, have our guns been sold for cash or on credit?

Of course, on credit, but its a safe investment. It is secured by the whole people's wealth of France.

The Absent-Minded Professor.

It seems to me I've met you before somewhere. Are you a scientist?

No—I'm a weaver. It was Comrade Kalinin who introduced us when we both received orders.

About the Contributors

VALENTIN KATAYEV. Since the publication of our biographical note in the previous issue, a play version and a film version of *I, Son of the Working People* have been prepared by the author and are soon to be produced. The film version of Katayev's previous novel, *A Lone Sail Gleams White,* is being ranked among the outstanding Soviet films of recent years. A play version of *A Lone Sail Gleams White* is one of the most successful productions in the current repertory of the Central Children's Theater in Moscow.

M. ARNO, pen-name of Maria Arnold. Formerly active in the German Young Communist League. Now living as a refugee in Paris. This is her first story, her work having previously been chiefly in criticism.

MIKHAIL SVETLOV. Among the outstanding Soviet poets. The author of several collections of verse.

VICTOR FINK. Soviet dramatist and prose-writer. Excerpts from his book *The Foreign Legion* were published in *International Literature* in the July 1937 issue. He was on the staff of the Soviet Exhibit on the recent Paris International Exhibition.

GRANVILLE HICKS. Generally regarded as the leading American Marxist critic. He is the author of *The Great Tradition,* a Marxist history of American literature, and *The Life of John Reed.* The essay on Ruskin which we publish is to be part of a forthcoming study on English nineteenth century literature. There will shortly be published *I Like America,* an expression of an American Communist's love for his country. He is one of the editors of *The New Masses.*

KONSTANTIN KAITANOV. The leading parachutist of the Soviet Union and holder of numerous records. Was awarded the Order of Lenin. The book from which we print selections is shortly to be published.

MIKHAIL KOLTSOV. Soviet journalist and writer of international note. Has published several collections of short stories and reportage. He is head of the Foreign Commission of the Union of Soviet Writers. Headed the Soviet Writers delegation to the recent Madrid Congress of Writers in Defense of Culture. Reports of events in Spain for the Soviet press have been published in other countries.

ALEXANDER FADEYEV. Two of this noted Soviet novelist's books have appeared in English, *The Nineteen* and *The Last of the Udegei* published in *International Literature* in the August 1936 issue.

VICTOR ARDOV. A young Soviet short-story writer and satirist. He is a frequent contributor to *Krokodil,* the leading Soviet satirical journal.

Associate Editor TIMOFEI ROKOTOV