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FICTION

And Quiet Flows the Don

Fiercely pursuing the enemy retreating from Ust-Medveditsa, the united forces of the Don army and the Upper Don insurrectionaries drove northward. Near the village of Shashkin, on the Medveditsa river, the routed regiments of the Ninth Red Army tried to halt the Cossacks, but were again beaten back, retreating almost to the very Grazye-Tsaritsin branch of the railway line without offering determined resistance.

Grigory and his division took part in the battle near Shashkin and rendered valuable aid to General Sutulov's infantry brigade, which bore the brunt of a flank attack. Yermakov's cavalry regiment, attacking on Grigory's order, captured about two hundred Red Army men, four machine guns and eleven munitions carriages.

Toward evening Grigory entered Shashkin together with a group of Cossacks of the First Regiment. Guarded by fifty Cossacks, a close-packed crowd of prisoners, a mass of white in their cheap cotton shirts and underwear, stood near the building occupied by division headquarters. Their shoes and clothing had been taken from most of them, and they were stripped down to their underwear. Only here and there did the dirty blouse of a uniform stand out green in the white crowd.

"How white they have become—like geese!" exclaimed Prokhor Zykov, pointing at the prisoners.

Grigory tightened the reins and pulled his horse sidewise. Locating Yermakov in the crowd of Cossacks, he beckoned to him with his finger.

"Come here. Why do you hide behind others' backs?"

Coughing into his fist, Yermakov rode up. Under his black, thin mustaches, on his torn lips, the blood had clotted; his right cheek was swollen and marred with fresh scratches. During the attack his horse, stumbling in his headlong gallop, had thrown Yermakov from the saddle like a stone. Yermakov slid about fourteen feet on his stomach along the rough ground. He and the horse regained their footing simultaneously, and in a moment Yermakov, in the saddle, capless, terribly bloodstained, but brandishing his unsheathed sword, had caught up with the Cossack lava pouring down the hill. . . .

"Why should I hide?" he asked with simulated surprise as he came alongside Grigory, but, disconcerted, he turned aside his still frenzied, bloodshot eyes, from which the light of battle had not yet faded.

"The cat knows whose meat it ate! Why do you ride in the rear?" asked Grigory wrathfully.

Yermakov, smiling with difficulty through his swollen lips, cast a sidelong glance at the prisoners.

"What meat are you talking about? Don't talk in riddles now; I'm in no condition to puzzle them out, ever since I fell head down from my horse."

Book IV of Sholokhov's *And Quiet Flows the Don,* from which we present these excerpts, has not yet been published in book form. A previous excerpt appeared in No. 3 of *International Literature.*

"Is this your doing?" Grigory pointed at the Red Army men with his whip.

Yermakov tried to look as if he were seeing the prisoners for the first time, and feigned indescribable surprise.

"Those damned sons of bitches! They stripped them! When did they have the time to do it? Figure it out: I just rode off, leaving strict orders not to touch them, and here you are—they stripped them clean!"

"Don't play the fool before me! What are you pretending? You gave the order to strip them, didn't you?"

"God preserve me! Are you in your right mind, Grigory Panteleyevich?"

"Do you remember the instructions?"

"You mean, about. . . ."

"Yes, exactly!"

"Yes, I remember them. I remember them by heart, just like the poetry we used to learn in school in the old days."

Grigory smiled involuntarily. Bending over his saddle, he caught Yermakov by the strap of his sword-belt. He loved this spirited, brave commander.

"Kharlampy! Joking aside, what have you done? The new colonel who has been put in Kopylov's place at headquarters will report, and you will have to answer for it. You won't enjoy it when the fuss begins, the questionings and investigations."

"I couldn't stand it, Panteleyevich!" answered Yermakov simply and in all seriousness. "Their clothing was brand new, it had just been distributed to them in Ust-Medveditsa, and our lads were so shabby; even at home clothing was scarce. And what damned difference does it make to them? Their clothes would be taken just the same when they got to the rear! We capture them, and the rascals in the rear get their clothing! No, thank you—I'd rather our lads got the benefit! I'll answer for it, and they can't get anything out of me! And as for you, please don't bother me. I don't know anything about this and such things are none of my business!"

They had reached the crowd of prisoners. The suppressed murmur of conversation in the crowd ceased. Those who stood at the edge drew back before the cavalrymen with sullen misgiving and wary apprehension. One of the Red Army men, recognizing Grigory as a commander, came up to him and touched his stirrup.

"Comrade chief!" he said. "Tell your Cossacks to return at least our coats. Please be so kind! It is cold at night, and we are quite naked, as you see."

"Never fear, you won't freeze in mid-summer, you marmot!" said Yermakov sternly, and, prodding back the Red Army man with his horse's flanks, he turned to Grigory. "Don't worry, I'll order some of their old things returned to them. Well, move aside, move aside, you 'fighters'! You ought to be hunting the lice in your pants instead of fighting against Cossacks!"

At headquarters they were questioning a captured company commander. Behind the table, which was covered with an old oilcloth, sat the new chief of staff, Colonel Andreyanov, an elderly, pug-nosed officer, with thick, grizzly hair on his temples and with big ears which stood out like a boy's. Opposite him, two steps from the table, stood the Red Army commander. One of the staff officers, the *sotnik* [1] Sulin, who had come to the division with Andreyanov, was taking down the Red Army commander's deposition.

The Red commander, a tall, red-mustached man with short stiff ash-white

[1] A commander of one hundred Cossacks.

hair, stood ill at ease, leaning first on one foot, then on the other, barefoot on the polished ochre floor. From time to time he glanced up at the colonel. The Cossacks had left the prisoner in only a soldier's undershirt made of yellow unbleached cotton; in place of his trousers, which they had taken, they had given him broad Cossack trousers, worn to rags, with discolored stripes and unskillfully sewn patches. As he approached the table Grigory noticed how the prisoner adjusted his trousers with a quick, embarrassed movement, to cover the holes in the back, through which his bare skin showed.

"By the Oryol District Military Commissariat, you say?" asked the colonel curtly, glancing up over his eyeglasses at the prisoner and lowering his eyes again. Blinking, he began to look through some paper, probably a document, which he kept turning over in his hands.

"Yes."

"Last autumn?"

"At the end of the autumn."

"You lie!"

"No, I am telling the truth."

"I say you lie!"

The prisoner shrugged his shoulders in silence. The colonel glanced at Grigory and, scornfully nodding at the prisoner, said:

"Here, look at him: a former officer of the imperial army and now, as you see, a Bolshevik. They caught him, and now he invents a story that he fell in with the Reds by chance, that he was mobilized. He lies like a little high school student, and he thinks we will believe him. The simple fact is that he just doesn't have the courage to admit that he betrayed the fatherland. The scoundrel! . . . He is frightened."

His Adam's apple jerking up and down, the prisoner spoke up: "I see, colonel, that you have the courage to insult a prisoner. . . ."

"I never talk to scoundrels!"

"Whether I like it or not, I have to talk now."

"Be careful! Don't force me to do it—I might insult you physically."

"In your situation that is easy, and, what is more important, it is quite safe."

Without uttering a word, Grigory sat down at the table and gave the prisoner, pale with indignation and fearlessly snapping back at the colonel, a smile of sympathy. "He plucked the colonel beautifully!" thought Grigory with pleasure, and glanced, not without malice, at Andreyanov's fleshy, purple cheeks, which twitched with a nervous tic.

Grigory had lost no love on his chief of staff from the day of their first meeting. Andreyanov was one of those officers who had not been at the front during the World War, but had safely sat it out in the rear, thanks to influential connections, clinging to a safe branch of the service with all their might. In the Civil War, too, Colonel Andreyanov had managed to work on defense while remaining in Novocherkassk, and only after the removal from office of *Ataman* Krasnov was he obliged to go to the front.

During the two nights he had spent in the same apartment with Andreyanov, Grigory had succeeded in learning from the former that he was very religious, that he could not speak without tears of the solemn high offices of the church, that his wife was the most exemplary wife imaginable, that she was called Sofia Alexandrovna, and that the *nakaznoi ataman* himself, the Baron von Grabbe, had courted her unsuccessfully. In addition, the colonel amiably described in detail the estates which his late father had owned; how he, Andreyanov, had attained the rank of colonel, and with what im-

portant people he had hunted in 1916. He also declared that he considered whist the best game, cognac the most useful drink and service in the Military Commissary Department the most advantageous service.

Colonel Andreyanov shuddered at the sound of close artillery fire; he rode horseback unwillingly, pleading a liver illness; he constantly sought to increase the guard at headquarters, and he concealed his dislike of the Cossacks with difficulty, for, as he explained, they had all been traitors in 1917, and from that date he had entertained a hatred for all lower ranks without discrimination. "The nobility alone will save Russia!" declared the colonel, mentioning incidentally that he himself belonged to a noble house, and that the Andreyanov line was one of the oldest and most honorable on the Don.

Undoubtedly Andreyanov's chief vice was chattering, that senile, uncontrollable, terrible garrulity from which some loquacious and not highly intelligent people who have been accustomed from their youth to pass judgment on everything lightly and jauntily, suffer when they reach an elderly age.

Grigory had met specimens of this parrot-like species more than once in his time, always reacting toward them with disgust. On the second day of his acquaintance with Andreyanov, Grigory began to avoid him. He succeeded in this in the daytime, but as soon as they halted for the night Andreyanov would hunt him out and promptly ask: "Shall we bunk together tonight?" And, without waiting for an answer, he would go on: "You, my dear friend, contend that Cossacks are not to be depended upon in infantry engagements, but I, during my experience as an adjutant under his excellency. . . . Hey, you there, bring my suitcase and bedding here!" Grigory would lie on his back, close his eyes, grit his teeth and listen; then he would impolitely turn his back on the indefatigable talker, would cover his head with his greatcoat, and would think in silent fury: "As soon as I receive my transfer I'll knock him on the head with something heavy, so he won't be able to use his tongue for at least a week!" "Are you asleep, friend?" Andreyanov would ask. "I'm asleep," Grigory would answer thickly. "Pardon me, I haven't finished!"—and the narration would go on. Half asleep, Grigory would think: "They deliberately stuck me with this chatterbox. Probably Fitzkhelaurov arranged it. How can I serve with such a cracked guy?" And, even while falling asleep, he would hear the piercing elderly tenor of the colonel, like the hammering of rain on a sheet metal roof.

That was why Grigory maliciously enjoyed the sight of the captured commander giving his talkative chief of staff tit for tat.

Andreyanov fell silent for a moment; he blinked; the lobes of his prominent ears turned crimson; his plump white hand, lying on the table, a heavy gold ring on the index finger, shook.

"Listen, you mongrel!" he cried in a voice hoarse with excitement. "I did not order you brought before me in order to indulge in repartee. Don't forget it! Do you realize that you can't worm out of this affair?"

"I realize it perfectly well."

"The better for you. After all, I don't give a damn whether you joined the Reds as a volunteer or were mobilized. That doesn't matter—what matters is the fact that you refuse to talk, because of your false conception of honor. . . ."

"Apparently we differ in our understanding of questions of honor."

"That is because you haven't any more left than this much!"

"So far as you are concerned, colonel, judging by your attitude toward me, I doubt whether you ever had any honor at all!"

"I see; you wish to hasten the end?"

"Did you think I was interested in dragging it out? Don't try to frighten me; it won't work!"

Andreyanov opened his cigarette case with shaking hands, lit a cigarette, took two deep puffs, and again addressed the prisoner:

"So you refuse to answer my questions!"

"I told you about myself."

"Go to the devil! I am interested least of all in your mangy self. Take the trouble to answer this question: what units joined your forces at Serebryakovo Station?"

"I told you that I do not know."

"You do know!"

"All right, I'll give you the pleasure of telling you that I do know but I won't answer."

"I'll order you beaten with ramrods. Then you'll talk!"

"Hardly!" The prisoner stroked his mustache with his left hand and smiled confidently.

"Did the Kamyshin Regiment take part in the battle?"

"No."

"But your left flank was protected by a cavalry unit. What unit was it?"

"Leave me alone! I repeat once more that I won't answer such questions."

"Choose: either you loosen your tongue immediately, you dog, or in ten minutes you face a firing squad! Well?"

Then, in an unexpectedly high, boyish, resonant voice, the prisoner said:

"I'm sick and tired of you, you old fool! Blockhead! If you fell into my hands, I would never question you in this manner! . . ."

Andreyanov paled and reached for his revolver holster. Grigory calmly raised a warning hand.

"Oho! That's sufficient! You have both chattered—enough! You are both quick tempered, I see. . . . Well, you didn't agree and you need not. What is there to talk about? He is right in not betraying his people. By god, it's splendid! I never expected it!"

"No, permit me! . . ." Andreyanov chafed, vainly trying to unclasp his holster.

"I don't permit it!" said Grigory with light animation, coming close to the table and shielding the prisoner. "Shooting a prisoner is an ugly affair. Doesn't your conscience misgive you for pulling a gun on him, on a man in such a position? The fellow is unarmed, a prisoner and practically naked, and you lift your hand against him. . . ."

"Get out of the way! That scoundrel has insulted me!" Andreyanov shoved Grigory aside and grasped his revolver.

The prisoner quickly turned his face to the window and shrugged his shoulders as if he were cold. Grigory, smiling, kept his eyes on Andreyanov, who, feeling the rough butt of the revolver in his palm, swung the gun awkwardly, then held it with the muzzle down, and turned aside.

"Why soil my hands. . .?" he said hoarsely. His breathing became normal and he passed his tongue over his dry lips.

Not restraining his laughter, his frothy-white teeth, bared in a grin, shining under his mustache, Grigory said:

"You would not have had to do it! Just look—your revolver isn't loaded. When I woke up in the morning I took it from the chair and looked at it. . . . There wasn't a cartridge in it, and it hadn't been cleaned for at least two months! You don't take good care of your side-arms."

Andreyanov lowered his eyes, twirled the revolver barrel with his thumb, and smiled.

"Damn it! You're right, too. . . ."

The *sotnik* Sulin, who had been watching the proceedings silently and with a mocking air, rolled up the record of the examination of the Red officer and said, with an agreeable burr in his voice:

"I have repeatedly told you, Semyon Polikarpovich, that you handle arms disgracefully. This is just one more example."

Andreyanov made a wry face and shouted: "Hey, what soldiers are on duty there? Come here!"

Two orderlies and the chief of the guard stepped in from the hall.

"Take him away!" Andreyanov nodded at the prisoner.

The prisoner turned toward Grigory, silently bowed to him, and went to the door. It seemed to Grigory that the prisoner's lips formed a hardly noticeable, grateful smile under his reddish mustache. . . .

When the steps died away, Andreyanov removed his eyeglasses with a weary movement, wiped them carefully with a piece of chamois, and declared spitefully:

"You defended that scoundrel brilliantly. That is a matter of your convictions, but to speak of the revolver in his presence, to place me in an embarrassing position—look here, what do you call that?"

"No great harm done," said Grigory conciliatingly.

"Still, there was no point in it. You know, I could have killed him. A revolting person! Before you came I struggled with him for half an hour. How he lied, twisted, dodged, gave us clearly false information—terrible! And when I caught him up, he simply flatly refused to talk. The officer's honor, you see, does not allow him to betray military secrets to the enemy. Bah! He didn't think of the honor of an officer, the son of a bitch, when he hired himself out to the Bolsheviks. . . . I suggest that he and two others of the staff officers be shot without any fuss. So far as providing information which interests us, they are hopeless; they are hardened and incurable scoundrels, consequently we shouldn't spare them. What do you think?"

"How did you learn that he is a company commander?" asked Grigory instead of answering.

"One of his own Red Army men betrayed him."

"I think we ought to shoot that Red Army man and leave the commanders," said Grigory, expectantly looking at Andreyanov.

The latter shrugged his shoulders and smiled as one smiles when some one makes a joke which falls flat.

"No, seriously, what do you think?"

"Just what I told you."

"But—pardon me . . . on what grounds?"

"On what grounds? On the ground that we must preserve discipline and order in the Russian army. Yesterday, when we went to sleep, you, colonel, properly outlined the regime we must institute in the army after we smash the Bolsheviks, in order to wipe out the Red contagion among youth. I was in complete agreement with you, you remember?" Grigory stroked his mustache as he watched the changing expression on the colonel's face. He continued judiciously: "And now what are you suggesting? You spread corruption in this way! 'Let the soldiers betray their commanders,' you are saying, in effect, no? What are you teaching them? And if we were in the same position—what then? No, if you please, I insist! I am against it."

"As you please," said Andreyanov, coldly, looking at Grigory attentively.

He had heard that the commander of the insurrectionary division was self-willed and queer, but he could never have expected this of him. "We always acted so toward captured Red commanders," he added, "particularly when they were former officers. You are proposing something new, and I don't quite understand your attitude on such an, it would seem, indisputable question."

"We usually killed them in battle, if it so happened, but we never shot prisoners unnecessarily!" answered Grigory, turning crimson.

"Very well, we will send them to the rear," agreed Andreyanov. "Now we have another question: part of the prisoners have expressed a desire to join our ranks. They are peasants mobilized from Saratov Province. Our third infantry regiment numbers even less than three hundred men. Do you think it permissible to accept part of the volunteers from among the prisoners, after careful selection? We have definite instructions from headquarters on this account."

"I won't take a single *muzhik* into my unit," declared Grigory categorically. "Let them fill up the losses in my unit with Cossacks."

Andreyanov tried to convince him:

"Look here, we won't argue about it. I understand your desire to have a homogeneous Cossack division, but necessity forces us not to be too particular about prisoners. Even several regiments of the volunteer army fill the gaps in their ranks with prisoners."

"Let them do what they want, but I refuse to accept *muzhiks*. So forget about it," Grigory declared flatly.

After a while he went out to issue instructions for sending off the prisoners. At dinner Andreyanov declared heatedly:

"Apparently we won't get along together in our work. . . ."

"I think so, too," answered Grigory with indifference. Not noticing Sulin's smile, he fished out a piece of boiled mutton from his plate with his fingers, and began to crush the gristle with his teeth with such a wolf-like crackling that Sulin made a wry face as if suffering from sharp pain, and even shut his eyes for a second.

Two days later General Salnikov's group took over command of the pursuit of the retreating Red units. Grigory was immediately called to the headquarters of the group, and the chief of staff, an elderly, handsome general, after acquainting him with the instructions of the commander of the Don army on the disbanding of the insurrectionary army, told him plainly:

"In the guerrilla warfare with the Reds you commanded a division with success. Now we cannot entrust to you even a regiment, let alone a division. You have no military education, and in the conditions of a wide front, with present-day methods of warfare, you are unable to command a large military unit. Do you agree with this?"

"Yes," answered Grigory, "I myself wished to give up command of the division."

"It is very well that you do not overestimate your abilities. We encounter this qualiity very rarely among our young officers now. So: by order of the commander of the front you are appointed commander of the fourth *sotnya*[1] of the 19th regiment. The regiment is now on the march some twenty *vyorsts*[2]

[1] A unit of one hundred Cossacks, commanded by a *sotnik*.

[2] Vyorsts (versts): a little over a kilometer.

from here, near Vyaznikov village. Leave today—at the latest tomorrow. You seem to have something to say?"

"I would like to be transferred to the commissary section."

"That is impossible. You are needed at the front."

"During the two wars I was wounded and injured fourteen times."

"That has nothing to do with it. You are young, you look fine and you can still fight. So far as wounds go, what officer does not have them? You may go. Good luck!"

Probably in order to prevent dissatisfaction, which was inevitable among the Upper Don insurrectionaries when the insurrectionary army was disbanded, many Cossacks from the ranks who had distinguished themselves in the insurrection received shoulder-straps immediately after the taking of Ust-Medveditsa; almost all the sergeants were promoted to subalterns, and the officers were promoted and were granted awards.

Grigory, too, was not forgotten. When he was transferred to the rank of *sotnik,* his outstanding services in the struggle against the Reds were noted in the army orders and he was publicly thanked.

The disbanding was carried out in several days. Generals and colonels replaced illiterate division and regiment commanders, experienced officers were appointed commanders of *sotnyas;* the commanding staffs of batteries and headquarters were completely changed, and rank and file Cossacks filled the gaps in regiments of the Don army which had lost many men in battles on the Donets.

In the late afternoon Grigory assembled the Cossacks, announced the disbanding of the division, and taking leave of them, he declared:

"Don't remember me with dislike, Cossack villagers[1]! We served together, necessity compelled it, and from today on we shall bear our grief separately.[2] The chief thing is to take care of your heads, don't let the Reds make holes in them. Even though you have stupid heads, don't go putting them in the way of bullets. You'll need them to think with, to think hard about the future. . . ."

The Cossacks were depressed and silent, then all began to murmur at once, in varied voices and muffled tones:

"The old times begin again, eh?"

"Where to now?"

"They do what they like with the people, the scoundrels!"

"We don't want to disband! What kind of new regime is this?"

"Well, boys, they got together—on our necks!"

"Again their excellencies are starting to crack our bones!"

"Be prepared now! They will begin to straighten our joints now with all their might and main. . . ."

Grigory waited for quiet, then said:

"You're getting sore throats for nothing. The easy days when one could argue over orders and oppose the chiefs are gone. Return to your quarters and don't wag your tongues too freely; nowadays they can lead you not to Kiev[3] but right into a court martial and the pen."

The Cossacks came up in platoons and shook Grigory's hand, saying:

"Goodbye, Panteleyevich! Don't remember us with dislike, either."

"It won't be easy for us to bear our grief with strangers, too."

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[1] Common Cossack greeting on taking leave of a friend.

[2] Another Cossack expression commonly used in farewells.

[3] Old Cossack proverb: "Your tongue can lead you to Kiev." *i.e.,* you can always ask your way.

"You shouldn't have let them disband us. You shouldn't have agreed to give up the division!"

"We shall miss you, Melekhov. Other commanders may be more educated, but that won't make it easier for us. It will make it harder, that's the trouble!"

Only one Cossack, from the village of Napolovsky, the jester and wit of the *sotnya,* said:

"Don't believe them, Grigory Panteleyevich! It's just as hard to work with your own people as with strangers if the work doesn't agree with your conscience!"

That night Grigory drank home brew with Yermakov and other commanders, and in the morning, taking Prokhor Zykov with him, he set out to catch up with the 19th regiment.

He had hardly time to take over command of the *sotnya* and to become properly acquainted with his men before the commander of the regiment sent for him. It was early in the morning. Grigory inspected the horses, lingered and showed up half an hour late. He expected the commander, who was strict and demanding of his officers, to remark upon it, but the latter greeted him in very friendly fashion and asked: "How do you find the *sotnya*? Are they a good bunch?" And, without waiting for an answer, looking past Grigory, he went on:

"Well, my dear fellow, I must tell you some bad news. . . . A great misfortune has happened at your home. We received a telegram last night from Veshenskaya. I'll give you a month's leave to arrange your family affairs. Go."

"Give me the telegram," said Grigory, growing pale. He took the piece of paper folded in four, opened it, read it and crushed it in a hand which had suddenly become moist with perspiration. He had to make a slight effort to retain his self-possession, but he only stammered slightly when he said:

"Yes, I didn't expect this. I'll go. Goodbye."

"Don't forget your certificate of leave."

"Yes, yes. Thanks. I won't forget it."

He walked through the corridor with firm and confident step, holding his sword as usual, but when he began to descend the steps of the high porch he suddenly ceased hearing the sound of his own footsteps and felt a sharp pain like a bayonet in his heart.

On the last step he fell forward and seized the shaky railing with his left hand while he swiftly unbuttoned the collar of his blouse with his right. For about a minute he stood there, breathing fast and deeply, but for this minute he felt drunk from suffering, and when he tore his hand from the railing and went toward the horse tied at the gate he stepped heavily and shook with each step.

Ilyinichna laid down without undressing. She had been lying there half an hour, silently tossing and sighing, when, just as she was preparing to get up and go to Kapitonovna, she heard faltering, dragging footsteps under the window. The old woman jumped up with animation unusual in a person of her years, hastily ran out into the hallway and opened the door.

Pale as death, Natalya, grasping the rail, was ascending the steps to the porch with difficulty. The full moon threw its bright light on her hollow-cheeked face, her sunken eyes and her eyebrows flexed with pain. She tottered like a wounded animal, and her footsteps left dark bloody marks.

Ilyinichna silently embraced her and drew her into the hallway. Natalya leaned against the door and whispered hoarsely:

"Everyone asleep? Mama, wipe up the blood. . . ."

"What have you done to yourself?" exclaimed Ilyinichna in a hushed voice, giving way to tears.

Natalya tried to smile, but her features only twisted into a sorry grimace.

"Don't make any noise, mama. . . . You'll only wake them. . . . I got rid of it. . . . Now my soul is at peace. . . . Let Grigory have his children with his Axinya. Only there is a lot of blood. . . . It spurts from me as from a butchered animal. . . . Give me your hand, mama. . . . I feel so dizzy."

Ilyinichna bolted the door, but, as if she were in a strange house, her shaking hand searched a long time in the dark before it found the bolt. Walking on tiptoe, she conducted Natalya into the large living room, woke Dunyasha and sent her out of the room, called Darya, and lit the lamp.

The door to the kitchen was open, and from the kitchen came the loud, measured snoring of Pantelei Prokofyevich. Little Polyushka licked her lips in her sleep and murmured something. How sound is a child's undisturbed slumber!

While Ilyinichna was beating the pillows and making up the bed, Natalya sat down on the bench and placed her head weakly on the edge of the table. Dunyasha wanted to enter the room, but Ilyinichna said sternly: "Go away, shameless girl, and don't show your nose in here! There's no reason for you to hang about!"

Knitting her brows, Darya took a wet rag and went into the hallway. Natalya lifted her head with difficulty and said:

"Take the clean linen off the bed. . . . Spread a sackcloth. . . . I'll soil it all the same. . . ."

"Keep quiet," Ilyinichna ordered. "Undress and lie down. Do you feel bad? Maybe you want some water?"

"I feel weak. . . . Bring me a clean slip and some water."

With an effort Natalya rose and walked unsteadily to the bed. Only then did Ilyinichna notice that Natalya's skirt, blood soaked, hung heavily and stuck to her feet. With horror she watched Natalya, bending, wring out the hem of her skirt as if she had been in a downpour, and begin to undress.

"But you are bleeding to death!" cried Ilyinichna.

Natalya undressed, shutting her eyes and breathing heavily and hard. Ilyinichna looked at her and resolutely went toward the kitchen. She woke Pantelei Prokofyevich with difficulty and told him:

"Natalya has fallen ill. . . . She is in very bad shape. I am afraid she may die. . . . Harness up immediately and go to the village to fetch the *feldscher*." [1]

"What the devil are you dreaming of? Why should she be ill? Fell sick? If she ran about less at night. . . ."

The old woman briefly explained what was wrong. Enraged, Pantelei Prokofyevich jumped up. Buttoning his trousers as he went, he strode toward the living room.

"The hussy! The bitch! What has she done? Necessity made her do it! . . . She'll catch it hot now!"

"Have you gone crazy, you damned fool? Where are you going? Don't go in there—she's in no condition now! You'll wake the children. Go to the barn and harness up as fast as you can." Ilyinichna wanted to stop the old man,

[1] *Feldscher:* village doctor, whose usual medical education consisted of the knowedge gathered in a few years of service under a doctor.

but he paid no attention to her, strode to the door of the living room and kicked it open.

"A nice job you've done, you devil's daughter!" he yelled from the threshold.

"Don't come in! Father, don't come in! For Christ's sake, don't come in!" shouted Natalya piercingly, pressing to her breast the slip she had taken off.

Swearing, Pantelei Prokofyevich began to search for his coat, hat and harness. He lingered so long that Dunyasha could stand it no longer. She rushed into the kitchen and, with tears in her eyes, began to berate her father:

"Hurry up! What are you hunting for, like a beetle in dung? Natashka is dying, and he fusses about a whole hour! Calls himself a father, too. If you don't want to go, say so! I'll harness up and go myself!"

"Fool! Have you snapped your leash? Your screaming is all we need now, you sticky scab. Yells at her father, too, the brat!" As he put on his coat Pantelei Prokofyevich flung up the sleeve at her, and, muttering curses, he went to the barn.

After his departure everybody in the house felt better. Darya washed the floors, moving chairs and benches with an angry flourish. Dunyashka, whom Ilyinichna allowed to enter the living room after the old man's departure, sat at Natalya's bedside, adjusting her pillow and giving her water. From time to time Ilyinichna looked in at the room where the children were sleeping and, returning to the living room, looked long at Natalya, who, cheek on her palm, sadly shook her head.

Natalya lay silent, tossing her head from side to side on the pillow, her hair tousled, stringy and dank with perspiration. She was steadily losing blood. Every half hour Ilyinichna carefully raised her, removed the wet bedding and replaced it.

With every hour Natalya grew weaker. After midnight she opened her eyes and asked: "Will it soon be light?"

"What do you want to see?" the old woman calmed her, and thought to herself: "That means she thinks she won't live. She is afraid she will lose consciousness and not be able to see her children. . . ."

As if confirming her surmise, Natalya whispered:

"Mama, wake Mishatka and Polyushka. . . ."

"Why, darling! Why wake them in the middle of the night? They will get frightened when they look at you, and they'll begin to cry. . . . Why wake them?"

"I want to look at them. . . . I feel bad."

"God bless you, what are you babbling? Father will soon bring the *feldscher* and he will help you. You should go to sleep, my dear, shouldn't you?"

"How can I sleep?" answered Natalya with a touch of vexation, and fell silent for a long time. She began to breathe more evenly.

Ilyinichna noiselessly went out onto the porch and gave way to tears. She returned to the living room with a red, swollen face. Dawn was breaking in the east. When the door creaked Natalya opened her eyes and asked once more: "Will it dawn soon?"

"The sun is rising."

"Cover my feet with a coat."

Dunyashka threw a sheepskin coat over her feet and tucked in the warm blanket. Natalya thanked her with a glance, then called Ilyinichna and told her:

"Sit down near me, mama; and you, Dunyashka, and you, Darya, leave

us for a moment. I want to talk to mama alone. . . . Have they left?" she asked without opening her eyes.

"They're gone."

"Father hasn't returned yet?"

"He will come soon. Are you feeling worse?"

"No, just the same. . . . Here's what I want to tell you, mama. . . . I'll die soon. . . . My heart feels it. How much blood I've lost—it is terrible! Tell Dunyashka to put more water on the fire when she heats the oven. You will wash me yourself when I'm dead? I don't want strangers to do it. . . ."

"Natalya! Cross yourself, my darling! Why do you speak of death? God is merciful, you'll recover."

With a weak movement of the hand Natalya asked her mother-in-law to be silent. Then she said:

"Don't interrupt me. . . . It's hard enough for me to speak, and I want to tell you. . . . I feel dizzy again. . . . Did I tell you about water? Yes? That means I'm still strong. . . . Kapitonovna did it at noon, as soon as I came. . . . She was frightened herself, poor woman. . . . Oh, how much blood came. . . . If only I could live till morning. . . . Heat some more water. . . . I want to be clean when I die. . . . Mama, dress me in the green skirt, the one with stitching on the flounce. . . . Grisha likes me in it. . . and in the poplin blouse. . . . It's in the right-hand corner of the trunk, under the shawl. . . . Send the children to my folks when I die. . . . Send for my mother. Let her come at once. . . . I must take leave of you now. . . . Take the bedding out from under me. It's all wet. . . ."

Ilyinichna, supporting Natalya's back, removed the bedding from under her and somehow managed to put other bedding in its place. Natalya was able to whisper: "Turn me over on my side," before she lost consciousness.

The blue dawn peeped in at the windows. Dunyashka washed the milk pail and went to the barn to milk the cows. Ilyinichna threw open the windows and the invigorating, fresh, sharp cold of a summer morning flooded the room, which reeked of the heavy smell of warm blood and kerosene fumes. The wind shook the dewdrops from the cherry tree branches which hung over the window. The early chirping of birds, the lowing of cows and the loud, sharp crack of the shepherd's whip were heard.

Natalya recovered consciousness, opened her eyes, passed the tip of her tongue over her dry, yellow lips, and asked for a drink of water. She no longer asked for her children or her mother. Everything seemed to her to be fading, and forever. . . .

Ilyinichna shut the window and approached the bed. How terribly Natalya had changed in one night! Yesterday she had seemed like a blossoming apple tree—pretty, healthy, strong. Now her cheeks were as white as the chalk of Obdon mountain, the flesh on her nose was drawn taut, her lips had lost their former bright freshness, they had become thinner, and were drawn up; they seemed unable to cover her teeth. Only her eyes retained their former sparkle, but their expression had changed. There was something new, strange and frightening in her glance when, from time to time, in answer to some inexplicable urge, she lifted her bluish eyelids and stared about the room, letting her gaze rest for a second on Ilyinichna.

At dawn Pantelei Prokofyevich came. The tired *feldscher,* weary from sleepless nights and the stream of typhus cases and the wounded, crept out of the carriage, stretching himself; took a package from the seat and entered the house. On the porch he removed his raincoat and, bending over the rail, he slowly soaped his hairy hands, staring from under his brows at Dunyasha,

who was pouring water into his palms; he even winked at her twice. Then he went into the living room and, after sending everyone out of the room, he stayed with Natalya about ten minutes.

Pantelei Prokofyevich and Ilyinichna were sitting in the kitchen.

"Well?" asked the old man in a whisper as soon as they left the room.

"Very bad. . . ."

"Did she do it of her own will?"

"She decided it herself. . . ." Ilyinichna avoided a straightforward answer.

"Hot water—quick!" ordered the *feldscher,* sticking his uncombed head out of the door.

While the water was boiling, the *feldscher* entered the kitchen. In answer to the old man's unspoken question he waved his hand hopelessly.

"She will die by noon. Awful loss of blood. Nothing to be done! Did you inform Grigory Panteleyevich?"

Pantelei Prokofyevich, without replying, hobbled off hastily to the hallway. Darya saw the old man go under the barnshed, behind the mower, and sob upon the covering of last year's pressed dung-and-straw fuel bricks.

The *feldscher* stayed another half hour, sat on the porch, dozed under the beams of the rising sun, and, when the samovar was ready, walked into the room again, gave Natalya a camphor oil injection, went out and called for milk. Suppressing a yawn with difficulty, he drank two glasses and said:

"You'll take me back immediately. I have wounded and sick patients in the village, and there is nothing more for me to do here. Anything you do is useless. I would render any service to Grigory Panteleyevich with all my heart, but I tell you honestly, I can't be of help. Our job is a small one—we know how to treat the sick, but we have not yet learned how to resurrect the dead. Your woman was handled so that she has nothing left to live with. . . . The womb is terribly torn. That old woman must have worked with an iron hook. That's our ignorance. What can you do about it?"

Pantelei Prokofyevich put some hay in the carriage, and told Darya: "You will drive him home. Don't forget to water the mare when you get to the Don."

Pantelei Prokofyevich offered money to the *feldscher,* but the latter refused it, putting the old man to shame:

"Aren't you ashamed, Pantelei Prokofyevich, to talk of it? Old friends, and you offer me money. No, no, don't even come near me with it. How to thank me? Let's not even talk about it. If I could set your daughter-in-law on her feet it would be a different matter."

About six in the morning Natalya began to feel better. She asked for water with which to wash, she combed her hair before the mirror Dunyasha held for her, and, looking at her relatives with eyes which held a new sparkle, she smiled, though with difficulty:

"Well, now I'm going to recover! And I was so frightened. . . . I thought my end had come. . . . But why are the children sleeping so late? Take a look at them, Dunyashka; maybe they are awake."

Lukinichna, her mother, came with Gripashka, her sister. The old woman wept as she looked at her daughter, but Natalya began to speak excitedly and rapidly:

"Why do you cry, mama? Am I so ill? You haven't come to bury me, have you? So why are you crying?"

Gripashka quietly nudged her mother, and the latter, understanding, immediately wiped away her tears and said consolingly:

"Why, my daughter, I simply shed a tear foolishly. My heart ached when I saw you. . . . You have changed so much."

A light crimson played on Natalya's cheeks when she heard Mishatka's voice and Polyushka's laugh.

"Call them here! Call them now! They'll dress later," she asked.

Polyushka came in first. She stood at the threshold rubbing her sleepy eyes with her little fist.

"Your mama is sick," said Natalya, smiling. "Come to me, my dear!"

Polyushka stared with surprise at the grown-ups stiffly ranged along the benches. Going up to her mother, she asked bitterly:

"Why didn't you wake me up? And why have they all come here?"

"They came to visit me. And why should I have waked you?"

"I would have brought you water and sat near you. . . ."

"Well, run along, wash, comb your hair, say your prayers, and then you can come and sit near me."

"Will you get up for lunch?"

"I don't know. Probably not."

"Then I'll bring your lunch here all right, mama!"

"The image of her father, only she has a softer heart," said Natalya with a weak smile, lying back and, chilly, she threw the blanket over her feet.

An hour later Natalya began to feel worse. She beckoned to her children, embraced them, made the sign of the cross over them, kissed them and asked her mother to take them home with her. Lukinichna told Gripashka to take them home, and remained with her daughter.

Natalya shut her eyes and said, drowsily:

"And so, I won't see him. . . ." Then, as if she had remembered something, she suddenly rose in her bed. "Bring Mishatka back!"

Gripashka, in tears, pushed the boy into the room. She herself remained in the kitchen, weeping quietly.

Sullen, with the unaffectionate Melekhov look, Mishatka came to the bed shyly. The great change which had taken place in his mother's face made her seem almost a stranger. As Natalya drew her little son toward her, she felt how rapidly Mishatka's heart beat, like the heart of a trapped sparrow.

"Bend down toward me, my little son," said Natalya. "Nearer!"

She whispered something in Mishatka's ear, then pushed him aside, looked searchingly into his eyes, compressed her quivering lips, and, forcing a tormented, pitiful smile, she asked:

"You won't forget? You'll tell him?"

"I won't forget." Mishatka seized his mother's index finger and squeezed it in his hot little fist, held it for a moment and then released it. From the bedside he walked, for some reason, on tiptoe, balancing with his hands. . . .

Natalya's look followed him to the door and then silently she turned to the wall.

At noon she died.

The telegram which wandered in search of Grigory through the villages of Khoper District came too late. . . . Grigory came home three days after Natalya's funeral. He dismounted at the gate and as he entered he embraced the sobbing Dunyashka, who came running from the house. Knitting his brows, he said:

"Trot the horse up and down. . . . Come on, stop crying!" He turned to Prokhor. "Go home. I'll call you if I need you."

Ilyinichna, holding Mishatka and Polyushka by the hand, came out on the porch to welcome her son.

Grigory seized his children in his arms and his voice quavered as he said: "Don't cry! No tears! My dears! So you are orphans now. Well. . . . Well. . . . Mama played us an ill turn. . . ."

And, holding back the tears with the greatest effort himself, he entered the house and greeted his father.

"We didn't take good care of her. . . ." said Pantelei Prokofyevich, and immediately hobbled off into the hallway.

Ilyinichna led Grigory to the living room and told him in detail about Natalya. The old woman, however, did not want to tell all, and Grigory asked:

"Do you know why she decided not to bear the child?"

"I know."

"Well?"

"Just before this she went to see your . . . your . . . you know . . . and Axinya told her everything. . . ."

"Aha. . . . so?" Grigory turned a deep crimson and lowered his eyes.

He left the room old and pale: silently moving his bluish, quivering lips, he sat down at the table, petted the children for a long while, seating them on his lap, and then he got from his bag a piece of sugar grey with dust, cut it in two on his palm, and, smiling guiltily, he said:

"Well, here is all there is of your present. . . . That's the kind of father you have. . . . Now, run to the barn, call your grandfather."

"Will you go to her grave?" asked Ilyinichka.

"Later. . . . The dead don't get offended. . . . How have Mishatka and Polyushka been? All right?"

"The first day they cried a great deal, especially Polyushka. . . . Now it's as if they had agreed on it—they don't even mention her in our presence, and last night I heard Mishatka cry noiselessly. . . . He put his head under the pillow so he wouldn't be heard. I came and asked: 'My own little boy, what is the matter? Maybe you'll lie down in my bed?' He answered: 'It's nothing, grandmother. It must have been in my sleep.' Speak to them, be affectionate. . . . Yesterday morning I heard them talking to each other in the hallway. Polyushka said: 'She will come back to us, she is young, and young people don't die forever.' They are silly yet, but their little hearts ache like those of grown-ups. . . . You must be hungry. Come on, I'll give you something to eat. Why are you silent?"

Grigory entered the room. He looked around at the walls attentively as if he were here for the first time, and his glance rested on the bed, tidily made, its pillows beaten until they were high and fluffy. On that bed Natalya had died, there her voice had sounded for the last time. . . . In his imagination Grigory pictured Natalya taking leave of the children, kissing them, and, perhaps, making the sign of the cross over them; and again, as when he had read the telegram reporting her death, he felt a sharp, stabbing pain in his heart and a muffled ringing in his ears.

Every little thing in the house reminded him of Natalya. The memory of her was ineradicable and torturing. For some reason or other Grigory walked through all the rooms and then left, hastily, almost running out to the porch. The pain in his heart grew steadily. Perspiration appeared on his forehead. He descended the steps from the porch, pressing the palm of his hand to his heart in fear. "Steep hills wind even the strongest horse," he thought. . . .

Dunyashka was trotting the horse around the yard. Near the barn the

horse, resisting her pull on the halter, stopped, sniffed at the soil. and, stretching his neck and raising his upper lip, showed the yellow slabs of his teeth, snorted and awkwardly began to bend his forefeet. Dunyashka tugged at the reins, but the horse, disobeying, began to lie down.

"Don't let him lie down!" shouted Pantelei Prokofyevich from the stable. "Don't you see he is saddled? Why don't you unsaddle him, you damned fool?"

Without haste, still feeling the sensation in his heart, Grigory advanced toward the horse, removed the saddle and, making an effort, smiled to Dunyashka:

"Father shouts at you?"

"As usual," countered Dunyashka, smiling.

"Trot him a little more, sister."

"He is dry already, but all right, I'll trot him."

"Let him roll on the earth, don't hinder him if he wants to."

"Well, brother. . . . Are you mourning for her?"

"What did you expect?" answered Grigory, short of breath

Moved by compassion, Dunyashka kissed his shoulder and then, embarrassed to tears, she turned away and led the horse to the barn.

Grigory went toward his father, who was diligently shoveling dung from the stable.

"I'm preparing your regiment horse's stall."

"Why didn't you tell me? I would have cleaned it myself."

"What are you dreaming of? Have I become so weak? I'm like a flint rifle, brother; I'll never be worn out! I can still get about. Tomorrow I plan to reap the corn. Have you come for a long time?"

"For a month."

"That's fine! Let's work in the fields together. It will be easier when you work. . . ."

"I thought the same myself."

The old man threw aside the pitchfork, wiped the sweat from his face with his sleeve, and, with an intimate note in his voice, said:

"Let's go into the house and have dinner. You can hide nowhere from this grief. . . . You can't run from it. That's how it is. . . ."

Ilyinichna set the table and gave the men a clean towel. And again Grigory thought: "Natalya used to do it. . . ." In order not to show his emotion, he immediately began to eat. He looked at his father with gratitude when the latter brought from the closet a jug of *samogon* (home brew) stoppered with a wisp of straw.

"Let us remember and greet the dead, may she rest in the kingdom of heaven," said Pantelei Prokofyevich firmly.

They each drank a glass. The old man immediately poured another, and sighed:

"In one year we have lost two members of our family. . . . Death loves our house."

"Let's not talk about it, father," asked Grigory.

He swallowed the next glass at a gulp, for a long time chewed a piece of smoked fish and waited for the intoxication to reach his brain and to drown his importunate thoughts.

"The corn this year is good, and our crop is far better than others," boasted Pantelei Prokofyevich. In his boast and in the tone with which it was delivered Grigory felt something studied and unnatural.

"And the wheat?"

"The wheat? The frost nipped it a bit, but on the whole it's pretty good; we'll get about thirty-five or forty poods[1]. Garnovka wheat came up well everywhere, but we didn't sow it. I'm not very sorry, though. What would we do with grain in these years of ruin? You can't bring it to Paramonov,[2] and it won't keep in the bins. As soon as the front comes close the *tovarishchi* will sweep so clean it will look as if everything were licked up. But don't fear, even without this year's crop we have grain enough for two years. Glory be, we have it piled up to the eyes in the bins, and elsewhere, too. . . ." The old man winked slyly and went on: "Ask Dashka how much we hid against a black day! A pit as deep as you are tall, and as wide as two cartwheels, filled to the top! This damned life has made us a bit poorer, but otherwise we would be big people, too. . . ." The old man laughed drunkenly at his own joke, but after a little he stroked his beard in dignified fashion and continued in business-like and serious tone: "Perhaps you're thinking of your mother-in-law. Well, I tell you, I didn't forget her in her hour of need. She did not have to embarrass herself asking, I poured out the grain without measure and hauled it off to her. Natalya was tremendously pleased when she learned of it; she even cried over it. . . . Come on, son, how about another drink? You're the last joy left me!"

"Let's have another," agreed Grigory, and set out the glasses.

Mishatka approached the table timidly, walking sidewise. He clambered up on his father's knees and, embracing Grigory's neck awkwardly with his left hand, kissed him hard on the lips.

"What's the matter, son?" asked Grigory, deeply touched. Scanning the child's eyes, covered with a film of tears, he held himself back so that he would not breathe the stink of *samogon* into his son's face.

Mishatka answered in a low tone:

"When she lay in the living room . . . when she was still alive, mama called me and told me to tell you: 'When your father comes, kiss him for me and tell him to love you children.' She said something more, but I forgot . . . ."

Grigory set down his glass and turned his head to the window. A tense silence reigned in the room.

"Shall we drink?" asked Pantelei Prokofyevich quietly.

"I don't want to." Grigory put his son down, rose and quickly walked to the hallway.

"Wait, son. And the meat? We have a boiled chicken and pancakes!" Ilyinichna went to the stove, but Grigory had already slammed the door.

Aimlessly wandering about the yard, he looked over the barn and stable, thought: "The horse should be washed," and went under the roof of the cart-shed. Near the mower prepared for the harvesting, he saw pine chips, shavings and pieces of wood with planed edges. "Father made Natalya's coffin," decided Grigory, and hastily stamped off to the porch.

Yielding to his son's insistence, Pantelei Prokofyevich hurried to the work, harnessed the horses to the mower, took a barrel of water, and set out for the fields that night with Grigory.

Grigory suffered not only because he loved Natalya in his own way and had become accustomed to her in their six years of married life, but also because he

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[1] Per hectare. A pood is 16 kg, a hectare 2.5 acres.

[2] Probably a grain-dealer or a miller.

felt guilty of her death. If, during her lifetime, Natalya had carried out her threat, had taken the children and gone to live with her mother; if she had died there, hardened in her hatred for an untrue husband, and unreconciled, Grigory would not have experienced the sorrow of his loss with such force, and certainly repentance would not have tortured him so madly. He knew from Ilyinichna's words that Natalya had forgiven him, that she had loved and remembered him up to her last moment, and this increased his suffering, weighted his conscience with incessant reproach and made him see the past and his conduct then in a new light. . . .

There was a time when Grigory felt nothing toward his wife except cold indifference and even enmity, but in the recent past he had adopted a different attitude toward her. The fundamental reason for this change in his relations with Natalya was the children.

At first Grigory had not experienced the deep paternal feeling for them which arose later. Returning home from the front for short periods, he caressed them and petted them as if performing a duty and in order to please their mother, but feeling no urge to do it; and he watched the marked expression of Natalya's maternal feelings with incredulous surprise. He did not understand how one could love so self-sacrificingly such tiny, screaming creatures, and often at night he would tell his wife with regret and amusement in his voice, when she was still feeding the children at the breast: "Why are you jumping up like mad? The child hasn't had time to scream yet, and you are already on your feet. Let him pout and scream a little; never fear, a golden tear won't fall from him!" The children were no less indifferent toward him, but as they grew up their affection for their father grew also. His children's love aroused a response in Grigory, and this response, like a fire, swept in Natalya.

After he broke with Axinya, Grigory never thought seriously of separating from his wife; nor when he again went back to Axinya, did he think she could take the place of a mother for his children. He was not averse to living with both of them, loving each in a different way, but having lost his wife, he suddenly began to feel an estrangement from Axinya, then a muffled wrath because she had betrayed their relations and by this deed had sped Natalya to her death.

No matter how much Grigory, setting off for the fields, tried to forget his sorrow, his thoughts inevitably returned to the same subject. He exhausted himself with work, for hours long he did not descend from the mower, and still he remembered Natalya; his memory persistently brought back long forgotten, sometimes insignificant episodes of their life together, their conversations. He had but to let his keen memory run free, and the smiling, living Natalya rose before his eyes. He recalled her figure, her walk, her manner of adjusting her hair, her smile, the intonation of her voice. . . .

On the third day they began to mow the barley. In the middle of the day, when Pantelei Prokofyevich halted the horse, Grigory descended from the seat of the mower, placed the short pitchforks on the cart, and said:

"I want to go home for an hour."

"What for?"

"I miss the children somehow. . . ."

"Well, go. . . ." agreed the old man willingly. "In the meantime we'll stack the grain."

Grigory immediately unharnessed the horse from the mower, mounted, and jogged down the yellow stubbled row toward the road. "Tell him to love you," Natalya's voice sounded in his ears. Grigory shut his eyes, threw down

the reins and plunged into reminiscences, leaving the horse to wander off the path.

In the dense blue sky a few clouds were scattering before the wind. Rooks waddled down the path. Whole broods of them sat on the stacks. From their beaks they fed their young, which had only just gained their feathers and still rose unsteadily on the wing. Over the mown fields spread the caw-ing of the rooks.

Clouds covered the sky. A fine rain fell in drops which seemed to have been passed through a sieve. Young after-grass, wild weeds and clumps of wild blackthorn, shone in scattered gleams across the steppe.

Vexed at their early departure from the village, Prokhor rode in silence. Not once did he speak to Grigory during the whole ride. Beyond Sevastya-nov village they met three Cossack horsemen, riding abreast, jogging their horses with their heels, and conversing animatedly. One of them, an elderly, red-bearded man, clad in a grey coat of homespun cloth, recognized Grigory from afar and cried to his companions: "Here comes Melekhov, boys!"— and, catching up with Grigory and Prokhor, he pulled up his tall bay horse.

"Greetings, Grigory Panteleyich!" he shouted to Grigory.

"Greetings!" answered Grigory, vainly trying to recollect where he had met this red-bearded, hard-looking Cossack.

He had apparently been promoted not long ago to the rank of subaltern, and had sewn new shoulder-straps onto his peasant's coat, not to be taken any longer for a simple Cossack.

"You don't recognize me, do you?" he asked, coming abreast and stretch-ing out his large hand, covered with fiery red hair. He smelled strongly of vodka. Stupid self-satisfaction shone on the newly-promoted subaltern's face; his tiny blue eyes sparkled, and under his red mustaches his lips framed a smile. The ridiculous appearance of the officer in a peasant's coat amused Grigory. With unconcealed derision he answered:

"I don't recognize you. Apparently I met you when you were a plain Cossack soldier. Were you recently promoted to subaltern?"

"You guessed it exactly! Only a week ago. And we met at Kudinov's head-quarters, on Annunciation Day. You saved me from trouble, if you recall. Hey, Trifon! Go on ahead, I'll catch up later," shouted the bearded man to his fellow-Cossacks, who had halted not far off.

With difficulty Grigory recalled the circumstances under which he had met this red-headed subaltern, and he remembered his nickname, "Semak," and Kudinov's comment on him: "He never misses when he shoots; he can shoot hares on the run, he is daring in battle and a good scout, but he has the intelligence of a little baby." During the insurrection Semak had commanded a *sotnya*. He had committed some deed for which Kudinov wanted to punish him, but Grigory had interfered. Semak was pardoned and left in command of his *sotnya*.

"Coming from the front?" asked Grigory.

"Yes. I'm going home on leave, from near Novokhopersk. I turned off to go to Slashchevsky, where I have relatives. I remember your kindness, Grigory Panteleyevich! Please don't refuse, I want to offer you a drink. I have two bottles of pure alcohol in my bags. Let's drink them up now."

Grigory flatly refused, but he took one of the bottles offered as a gift.

"You should have seen it," boasted Semak. "The Cossacks and the officers loaded themselves with riches. I was in Balashov, too. When we took Bala-

shov we ran right to the railway, where the trains stood one behind the other; all the tracks were blocked. In one car we found sugar, in another equipment, in the third, all kinds of supplies. Some of the Cossacks took up to forty outfits! And afterward we shook up the Jews. Some fun! One of my men, a specialist on Jews, collected eighteen pocket watches, ten of them gold. The son of a bitch hung them all on his chest; he looked just like a rich merchant. You couldn't count all the rings he got. Two or three on each finger. . . ."

Grigory pointed at Semak's swollen knapsacks, and asked:

"What have you got there?"

"Oh, all sorts of things."

"Did you get them by robbing, too?"

"What do you mean, robbing?. . . I robbed nobody, I obtained them legally. Our colonel said: 'When you take the city you will have two days.' What's the matter? Am I worse than the others? I took what was allowed. Others did worse."

"Fine fighters, you are!" Grigory looked with disgust at the light-fingered subaltern and went on: "With robbers like you one can sit waiting under bridges on the highway, but not fight!

"You turned the war into robbery. *Ekh,* you rascals! You've acquired a new profession. Do you think you won't be skinned some day for this—you and your colonel?"

"What for?"

"For just such things!"

"Who's going to skin us?"

"Those of higher rank."

Semak smiled ironically and said:

"They do the same! We rob by bags and carts, they rob by whole carloads."

"Have you seen it with your own eyes?"

"What do you mean, seen? I accompanied such a transport up to Yaryzhenskaya myself. There was a whole cartful of silverware, cups and spoons. Officers would sometimes stop us. 'What are you carrying? Come on, show us what you have there!' But I had only to tell them it was the personal property of General So-and-so, and they would ride off."

"Who is this general?" asked Grigory, blinking and nervously twisting the reins.

Semak smiled cunningly and answered:

"I forgot his name. . . . Let's see, who was it? No, it doesn't come back to me now, I can't recall it. But you scold us for nothing, Grigory Panteleyevich. It's god's truth, everybody does it! Among the others I'm like a lamb among wolves. I didn't take much, but others stripped people right in the middle of the street, they raped the Jews' women. Not me. I have my own legal woman, and what a woman! She's not a woman, she is a real stud horse! No, no, don't blame me for nothing. Wait, where are you going?"

Grigory nodded coldly to Semak, said to Prokhor: "Let's go," and galloped off.

Meetings with Cossacks, singly and in groups, riding home on leave, became more and more frequent. Sometimes they met carts pulled by two horses, their loads carefully tied down under canvas. Behind the carts, rising in their stirrups, rode Cossacks in new summer blouses and grey Red Army trousers. The Cossacks' dusty, tanned faces were animated and gay, but when they met Grigory the soldiers sought to pass him as quickly as possible. They

rode past silently, saluting as by command, and resumed their conversation as soon as they had left him a respectable distance behind.

"Merchants coming!" ironically called Prokhor when he sighted from afar horsemen convoying a cart with stolen property.

The closer Grigory approached the front, the wider there opened before his eyes the disgusting picture of the corruption of the Don army, a corruption which set in at the moment when, strengthened by the addition of the insurrectionaries, the army had attained its greatest successes on the Northern front. Its units were already incapable of undertaking a determined offensive and smashing the enemy's resistance; they were themselves unable to withstand a serious attack.

In the villages where the reserves closest to the front were quartered, the officers drank incessantly; transports of all categories burst with stolen property not yet shipped to the rear; the units had no more than sixty per cent of their men; the Cossacks went on leave of their own free will, and the punitive expeditions of Kalmyks roving the steppes were unable to hold back the wave of mass desertions. In the occupied villages of Saratov Province the Cossacks behaved like conquerors on alien territory; they robbed houses, raped women, destroyed grain reserves, butchered cattle. The gaps in the ranks were filled with green youths and men of fifty. The *sotnyas* on the march openly expressed their unwillingness to fight, and in the units marching to Voronezh the Cossacks frankly disobeyed their officers. There were rumors that cases of murder of officers had increased at the front.

At twilight Grigory halted for the night at a small village not far from Balashov. The Fourth Reserve *Sotnya,* composed of Cossacks of the older drafts, and the sapper company of the Taganrog Regiment had occupied all the available living quarters in the village. Grigory had to look long for a night's lodging. He could have passed the night in the fields, as he and Prokhor usually did, but it looked like rain that night, and Prokhor shook with his regular attack of malaria. They had to spend the night somewhere under a roof. On the outskirts of the village, near a large house encircled with poplars, stood an armored automobile smashed by a shell. At they passed by, Grigory read the inscription which showed through the paint on the green side of the auto: the slogan "Death to the white rascals!" and below it its name "The Fierce." In the yard tethered horses snorted and people's voices were heard; a bonfire was burning in the garden behind the house, and smoke rose over the green treetops; silhouetted against the fire were the moving figures of Cossacks. The wind spread the smell of burning straw and scorched pig bristles from the bonfire.

Grigory dismounted and entered the house.

"Who is master of the house?" he asked as he entered the low room, crowded with people.

"I am the master. What do you want?" A short *muzhik* answered, looking at Grigory, without changing his position.

"Will you allow us to spend the night here? There are two of us."

"We are crowded here like pits in a watermelon, without you," dissatisfiedly grumbled an elderly Cossack lying on the bench.

"I have nothing against it, but you see we are crowded enough here," said the master of the house, as if to justify himself.

"We shall manage somehow. We can't spend the night in the rain, can we?" insisted Grigory. "My orderly is sick."

The Cossack who was lying on the bench groaned, dropped his feet and, looking at Grigory, said in a changed tone:

"Your excellency, we are fourteen souls here, counting the owners of the house, in two rooms. The third is occupied by an English officer with his two orderlies, and we have one of our officers with them besides."

"Maybe you can bunk with them?" good-naturedly suggested the second Cossack, who had a thick grizzly beard and the shoulder-straps of a senior non-comissioned Cossack officer.

"No, I had better stay here. I don't need much room. I'll lie down on the floor and I won't disturb you." Grigory took off his greatcoat, patted his hair with his palm and sat down at the table. Prokhor left to tend the horses.

The conversation was probably overheard in the next room. A few minutes later a short, smartly clad officer entered the room.

"Are you seeking a night's lodging?" he addressed Grigory and, casting a quick glance at his shoulder-straps, he suggested with a polite smile: "Come to our place, *sotnik*. I and Mr. Campbell, a lieutenant of the English army, invite you. My name is Shcheglov. What is your name?" He shook hands with Grigory and asked: "Are you coming from the front? Oh, from a leave! Come along, come along! We are glad to offer hospitality. You are probably hungry, and we have something to treat you with."

His officer's order of St. George hung on the splendid light green blouse of his uniform. The parting on his small head was irreproachable, his boots were thoroughly shined, and his dark clean-shaven face, his entire handsome figure breathed of cleanliness and the scent of eau-de-cologne. In the hallway he courteously permitted Grigory to pass first, and said: "The door on the left. Careful, there is a box here. Don't stumble."

A young, tall, thickly-built lieutenant, with a soft black mustache which covered an upper lip cleft with an oblique cut, and with close-set grey eyes, rose to meet Grigory. The Russian introduced Grigory to him and said something in English. The English lieutenant shook hands with his guest and, looking first at hi mand then at the Russian lieutenant, said something and with a gesture invited Grigory to have a seat.

Four army folding cots stood in a row in the middle of the room; boxes, knapsacks and leather suitcases were heaped in the corner. A sub-machine gun of a make unknown to Grigory, a binocular case, empty cartridge shells, and a rifle with a dark gunstock and a new, unscratched. dull grey barrel lay on a trunk.

The English lieutenant was saying something in a pleasant, booming bass, with a friendly glance at Grigory. Grigory did not understand their talk, which sounded strange in his ears, but, guessing that they were speaking about him, he felt embarrassed. The Russian, searching through one of the suitcases, listened with a smile and then said:

"Mr. Campbell says he deeply respects the Cossacks. He considers them excellent cavalrymen and soldiers. Don't you want to eat? Do you drink? He is saying that danger makes people closer. Devil take it, he's talking all sorts of nonsense!" The Russian took from the suitcase some cans and two bottles of cognac and again bent over the suitcase, continuing to translate: "He says the Cossack officers in Ust-Medveditsa received him very amiably. They drank up a big barrel of Don wine there. They were all dead drunk, and they had lots of fun with some high school girls. Well, that's just as usual! He considers it his pleasant duty to pay back the hospitality he received with no less hospitality! You'll have to stand it. I'm sorry for you. . . . Do you drink?"

"Thanks. I do," said Grigory, furtively glancing at his hands, dirty from the reins and the dust of the road.

The Russian placed the tins on the table, and dexterously opening them with a knife, he said sighing:

"You know, *sotnik,* this English boar tortures me to death! He drinks from morning to late at night. He keeps pouring it in like I've never seen before. I'm not against taking a drop myself once in a while, but not in such Homeric doses. But this one —" the Russian, smiling, looked at the Englishman and, to Grigory's surprise, swore obscenely—"he gulps it down on an empty stomach and in every possible way."

The English lieutenant smiled, nodded his head, and said in broken Russian:

"Yes, yes! good! . . . We must drink your health!"

Grigory burst into laughter over his Russian pronunciation and shook his head. He positively liked these fellows, and the senselessly smiling English lieutenant, who spoke Russian in such a funny way, was marvelous.

Wiping the glasses, the Russian said:

"I've been with him two weeks. What do you think of that? He works as tank instructor in our second corps, and they stuck me with him as a translator. I speak English fluently, and that was my ruin. . . . We, too, drink but not like that. And he—the devil knows what he's capable of! He needs four or five bottles of cognac for himself alone every day. He drinks it all up, but he never gets drunk, and he's able to work after it. He's killing me. I'm so pickled in alcohol that I'm afraid to stay near a burning lamp, devil take it!" So speaking he filled two glasses of cognac and poured a drop for himself.

The English lieutenant, glancing at the Russian's glass, smiled and began to speak animatedly. The Russian, beseechingly placing his hand on his heart, answered with a restrained smile, but for a moment an evil sparkle flashed in his dark, kind eyes. Grigory took up his glass, clinked glasses with his hospitable hosts, and drank at a gulp.

"Oh," approved the Englishman, and, swallowing a sip, he looked at the Russian with scorn.

The English lieutenant's big, worker's hands lay on the table. Machine oil lay dark in the pores of the back of his hand, the skin on his fingers was peeling from frequent contact with benzine and they were marked with old scratches, but his face was carefully tended, plump and red. The contrast between his face and hands was so great that it seemed to Grigory at moments that the lieutenant was wearing a mask.

"You are freeing me by taking my place," said the Russian, filling two glasses to the brim.

"Doesn't he drink alone?"

"That's just the trouble. In the morning he drinks alone, but in the evening he wants company. Well, let's drink."

"Strong stuff. . . ." Grigory took a sip, but, under the surprised glance of the English lieutenant he poured the whole thing down.

"He says you're swell. He likes the way you drink."

"I would willingly exchange jobs with you," said Grigory, smiling.

"I'm sure you'd run away after two weeks!"

"From such a life?"

"Anyway, I'll run away from this life."

"It's worse at the front."

"What about my front here? There you can be hit by a bullet or a shell

fragment, but not necessarily, while here delirium tremens is a certainty. Try this canned fruit. Do you want some ham?"

"Thanks, I'm eating."

"Englishmen are experts in such things. They don't feed their army the way we do."

"Do we feed it? Our army is let out to pasture."

"Unfortunately, that's true. However, you can't go far with such service to the fighters, especially if you allow the fighters to rob the population with impunity. . . ."

Grigory looked attentively at the Russian and asked:

"Are you planning to go far?"

"We're traveling the same road as you; why ask?" The Russian did not notice the English lieutenant take possession of the bottle and pour out a full glass for him.

"Now you have to drink it down," smiled Grigory.

"Now it begins!" the Russian groaned, glancing at the glass. His cheeks were suffused with a broad thin flush.

All three clinked their glasses in silence, and drank.

"We ride the same road, only we ride differently. . . ." again broke in Grigory, making a wry face and vainly striving to spear a slippery apricot with his fork. "One gets off nearby, another rides farther, like in a train. . . ."

"Aren't you riding to the end of the line?"

Grigory felt that he was growing drunk, but intoxication had not yet overcome him; laughing, he answered:

"I haven't enough money for a ticket to the end of the line. And you?"

"My position is different. Even if I'm kicked off the train I'll walk the ties to the end of the line!"

"Happy journey, then! Let's have a drink."

"Come on. The beginning is the hardest. . . ."

The English lieutenant clinked glasses with Grigory and Shcheglov, drank in silence, and ate nothing. His face turned brick-red, his eyes grew bright, and a calculated slowness appeared in his movements. They had not yet finished the second bottle, and he had already risen heavily, and confidently advanced to the suitcase to get three more bottles of cognac. Placing them on the table, he smiled from the corner of his lips and said something in his bass.

"Mr. Campbell says we ought to continue our merriment," interpreted Shcheglov. "The devil take this mister! How about it?"

"All right, let's go on," agreed Grigory.

"Yes, but to such lengths! This English body contains the soul of a Russian merchant." (Russian merchants were notorious drinkers.) 'I think I'm through. . . ."

"You don't show it," said Grigory cunningly.

"What the devil! I'm as weak as a girl now. . . . But I'm still in the running, yes, yes, I can still keep my end up!"

Shcheglov became noticeably dazed after the second glass. His black eyes glazed over and began to seem cross-eyed, the muscles of his face drooped, his lips almost ceased obeying him, and the skin under his dull cheekbones began to quiver regularly. The cognac he had drunk began to stupefy him. He had the expression of a bull gasping under the blow of a ten-pound hammer before being butchered.

"You're still in good shape. You drink, and it doesn't show," affirmed Grigory. He too had become noticeably drunk, but he felt that he could go on drinking.

"Really?" Shcheglov grew gayer. "No, no, I was just in low spirits at first. Now, if you please, I can drink as much as you like! Just that: as much as you like! I like you, *sotnik*. One can feel force and sincerity in you, I would say. Let's drink to the fatherland of this fool and drunkard. Of course, he is brutish, but his fatherland is beautiful. 'Brittania Rules the Waves!' Shall we drink? Only not a full glass! To your proud fatherland, Mr. Campbell!" The Russian drank, closing his eyes desperately, ate some ham, and went on: "I speak of England with the envy with which a street urchin whose mother is a harlot with a broken nose speaks of a decent lady, the mother of his accidental acquaintance, a son of a good family. . . . What a country, *sotnik!* You can't imagine it, but I lived there. . . Well, let us drink!"

"No matter what your mother is, she is still closer to you than the mother of a stranger."

"We won't argue, let's drink!"

"Let's drink. Aren't you ashamed to speak so of your fatherland?"

"This fatherland. . . . We must burn out the rot in this fatherland with sword and fire, and we are helpless. It appears that we have no fatherland. Well, the devil take it! Campbell doesn't believe we can deal with the Reds."

"He doesn't believe it?"

"No, he doesn't. He has a low opinion of our army and admires the Reds."

"Has he taken part in battles?"

"And how! The Reds almost captured him. The damned cognac!"

"Strong, eh? Just like raw alcohol, isn't it?"

"A bit weaker. The cavalry saved Campbell from misfortune, otherwise he would have been captured. That was near Zhukov village. The Reds took one of our tanks there. . . . You look sad. What's the matter?"

"My wife died not long ago."

"Terrible. Any children?"

"Yes."

"Here's to your children! I don't have any, although maybe I have. If I do, they're probably newsboys somewhere. . . . Campbell has a bride in England. He writes to her regularly, twice a week. Probably writes her nonsense, too. I almost hate him. Don't you?"

"I have nothing to say. Why does he respect the Reds?"

"Who said he respects them?

"You said it."

"I couldn't have. He does not respect them, he can't respect them, you must be mistaken! Although, I'll ask him."

Cambell listened attentively to the pale, drunken Russian, and spoke for a long time. Without waiting for him to finish, Grigory interrupted:

"What is he babbling about?"

"He says he saw their infantry, in bast sandals, attacking our tanks. Isn't that enough? He says it is impossible to conquer the people. The fool! Don't believe him."

"What do you mean, don't believe him?"

"In general."

"Well, concretely?"

"He's drunk and he's babbling nonsense. What does it mean: you can't conquer the people? You can destroy some of them and force the rest to behead. . . . What did I say? No, not behead, obey. What bottle are we finishing?" Shcheglov dropped his head on his hands, knocked over the tin of preserves with his elbow, and sat there for ten minutes, his chest dropped on the table, and breathing heavily.

Outside the window, in the darkness, the steady rain drummed on the shutters. There was a rumble far off, and Grigory could not figure out whether it was thunder or artillery fire. Campbell, wrapped in a blue cloud of cigar smoke, sipped cognac. Grigory shook Shcheglov awake and rising unsteadily to his feet, said:

"Listen, ask him why he thinks the Reds will win?"

"The devil!" mumbled Shcheglov.

"Go on, ask him."

"The devil! Go to the devil!"

"Ask him, I say."

Shcheglov looked at Grigory crazily for a second, then, stammering, he said something to Campbell, who listened attentively. Then his head once more dropped on his palms. Campbell looked at Shcheglov with a disdainful smile, pulled Grigory by the sleeve, and silently began to explain. He drew an apricot pit to the center of the table and alongside it, as if to make the contrast he placed his huge palm sidewise, and clicking his tongue, his palm closed over the apricot pit.

"Invented something new! Huh! I understand such things without you . . ." mumbled Grigory thoughtfully. Swaying, he embraced the hospitable English lieutenant, pointed to the table with a sweeping gesture, bowed. "Thanks for the hospitality! Goodbye! And you know what I'll tell you? Go back home as quick as you can, before they twist your head off here. I'm telling you this from the depth of my heart. Understand? It's none of your business to mess in our affair. Got it? Get on home, or else they'll beat you up here."

The lieutenant rose, bowed, spoke animatedly, from time to time looking helplessly at his sleeping interpreter, and slapped Grigory on the back in friendly fashion.

Grigory found the doorknob with difficulty, and, swaying, he went out on the porch. A fine, slanting rain struck his face. Streaks of lightning lit up the big yard, a pile of wet homespun canvas, and the shining, glossy leaves of trees in the garden. Stepping down from the porch, Grigory slipped and fell, and as he rose he heard voices:

"All the officers drinking, eh?" some one asked, striking a match.

A muffled hoarse voice answered with a hidden threat in it:

"They're drinking toasts . . . . They'll drink toasts to their own finish!"

André Philippe

„Number Eleven"

"One! Three! Four! Nine! Eleven! Seventeen! Come on, there! Hurry up!" While Besset moved through the crucible steel foundry adjoining the forge shop, the foreman assembled the crucible carriers by calling out their numbers.

The furnaces which were in pits that looked like long, narrow underground passageways, gave off intense heat. The founder had just signaled that the steel was ready. The extractor, whose task it was to haul the crucibles out of the furnace, tied a crude sackcloth apron under his arms, wrapped his feet in similar cloth before putting them into his heavy, square-toed sabots, and plunged completely into a tank of cold water. Then he wet the mittens that reached up to his elbows, and with which he seized the tongs.

With a kick of his sabot he released the brick furnace door and looked to see if everything was ready. The tongs he wielded were attached to a compressed air hoisting tackle which was operated by an assistant by means of two switches.

Then, with his legs spread apart so as to plant himself squarely above the furnace, the extractor plunged the tongs into this hell and seized a crucible. With the sharp hiss of escaping compressed air, the hoisting tackle rose; the tongs balanced for a moment in space, then deposited the white-hot crucible on the ground. One man raised the cover, another skimmed the slag off the steel, and two carriers lifted the crucible with large, double-armed tongs, and carried it off to the moulder.

The operation proceeded with such precision and rapidity that one to whom it was unfamiliar would never have guessed that every time this was done, a load of sixty kilograms was raised and carried at a temperature of more than 1,500°. The more curious of the carriers tried, without success, to get close to the incandescent pit. It was impossible to face such a temperature, impossible even to distinguish the crucibles at the bottom of the hole which glowed with heat and light.

It is difficult to imagine how a person could endure such an ordeal. A scorching vapor enveloped the extractor, literally baking his skin. The bottom of his apron was already burned away and ash flaked off from the tips of his sabots.

When he had cleared part of the furnace, he wiped off the sweat and again soaked himself in the tank. When he touched his red face with his hand his fingers left long white tracks on his skin, which had become as tender as that of a newborn babe.

The carriers, in pairs, continued to seize the crucibles and pour the contents into the ingot moulds. Suddenly one of them, making a misstep, dropped the molten metal onto the casting floor.

Sparks flew about. His sackcloth apron caught fire; wanting to stick it out till the crucible was emptied he did not drop his burden to beat out the fire and thus found himself wrapped in flames.

Releasing the tongs he hurled himself towards the tank, but too late! He fell, rolled over on the ground, uttering cries like a wounded animal, while his comrades tried to smother the fire with rags.

Two boys ran to the infirmary for a stretcher. A nurse came, carrying some dressings. The wounded man continued to writhe on the ground, but one could hardly hear his breathless voice and his deep rattle. Strips of skin came off, large water-blisters of a vivid red formed.

A doctor was summoned. The nurse asked: "What's his name?"

The others shrugged their shoulders. "He's an Italian; he was number 11," they said.

The man was placed gently on a stretcher. His face was hideous, the eyes and lips seeming to hang away from the face. He was all red meat, skinned alive by the flames. He grimaced frightfully. Then his mouth twitched for the last time, retaining the expression of his last spasm of agony.

Crucible carrier No. 11 had just died.

All the men who were present, regardless of nationality or religion, bared their heads. No one spoke. The compressed air hoisting tackle stopped emitting its harsh cry; sabots no longer resounded on the casting slabs.

Besset fixed his gaze on a square ingot on the ground, alongside the body of the Italian. This ingot was marked in Troyes white—C. N. 5. One more number.

The foreman again summoned the carriers. The steel must not be left burning in the furnaces.

No one budged.

"In god's name!" a Spaniard broke forth. "These bastards! They'd rather have a man killed than spoil a casting."

"That's true," an Italian replied. "What are we to them? Scrap iron. When we're of no more use to them out we go on the junk pile!"

That was all the funeral oration that carrier No. 11 received from his comrades. Not that they did not respect him. But, as one of them said to Besset:

"We'd been expecting it for a long time. The tongs are old. The casting slabs of the floor are poorly joined. Now they're asking us to carry half as many crucibles again as before. We must go faster, always faster. As for me, if I'd been in his place I'd have put it down on the floor right away. He wanted to show he wasn't afraid, to get a pat on the back from the foreman, and it cost him his life."

Again the foreman hustled the groups that were talking, again called out the numbers. And one by one, then in groups the carriers let themselves be hurried away. There were fellows there from so many different countries, who did not even understand each other, who were split up by favoritism and fagging. Nervous Italians, fatalistic Algerians, reserved Spaniards, Russians, Poles, Greeks—all the nationalities, each with its own customs and characteristics, jostled up against each other. Work was resumed, but in anger and disorder.

The Forge Works

The first arrivals were at the iron works a good quarter of an hour before the siren blew. They were still unaware of the accident at the foundry, and while making their way to the lockers to hang up their bags there, they kidded each other.

"Hey, Camphor, listen!"

"Come on, Spud!"

News about work was simple enough—what they pay for castings, how many they were supposed to turn out. The forgers understood each other quite well on this question. The section foreman, like the department foreman, was unable to get higher ouput except on terms which ensured the workers at least a subsistence wage. Of course the payclerk in the office received orders—and he executed them scrupulously—to establish the lowest rates of pay. But in such cases the forgers would find a way of slowing up work to force a rise in the rate to stimulate production.

While some were discussing this and coming to an agreement on the production limits, others went to get their tongs which they had deposited behind the furnaces.

The siren had just sounded when Besset appeared. In a few words he described the accident he had just witnessed. The death of the Italian worker recalled painful memories to all the workers. They remembered Chavagnin who had had his hand crushed at the hammer. Someone had heard of him and repeated what he had heard. It was news for less than a month's time. Chavagnin, having disappeared from the plant, had disappeared from their minds. From accidents they passed on to the other miseries of their trade: the low wages, the arrogance of the guards. Soberly now as he set to work each one could not help having visions of himself dead, mutilated. The thought of his wife and children crying at home haunted each of them. The thought of it angered and depressed them. To go about with ruptured loins and worn-out muscles under patched clothing and even then not to earn enough to eat!

The foreman, after talking with the gang bosses about the work for the day, began to stir about in order to liven up the workers.

"It's a rush order; you've got to step on it, boys," he said.

He went nervously from the furnaces to the stamping machines; from the hammers to the presses, then from the machine tools to the anvils.

The furnaces, which had been charged the night before and started up an hour before morning, were filled with ingots and iron billets with rounded angles. More than fifty steel machines of a prodigious capacity shrieked all together, shearing, pounding, stamping the metal. Steam hammers, compressed air hammers, single-action and double-action steam hammers. English hammers, automatic hammers, belt hammers, mechanical or hydraulic presses—all joined their voices to those of the drop forges hitting the dies, to the crunching of the jaws of the forging machine.

The peculiarly pitched cries of the men and the loud clamping of the jaws dominated at intervals above the heavier noises.

"Oh, there crane!" a hammerman shouted, gesticulating to the crane driver perched on her stand six meters above the ground.

The young girl smiled down at these men with their loud, gruff voices. Her domination over these people of steel and muscle was friendly.

The smoke that rose from the fifty choke, gas and coal furnaces burned her eyes. The noises reflected from the roof deafened her. The heat that concentrated in the upper part of the shop smothered her. Her whole body vibrated with the vibrations transferred to the traveling crane by a thousand shocks of cold steel against hot steel.

Her aerial driver's cage traveled from one end of the shop to the other; the shouts and gestures of the men were her signals. A raised hand signified: hoist! A lowered hand meant: down! When only one or two fingers were shown, it called for slight adjustments in the movement of the crane. If the hands seemed to be pushing something in the air the young girl maneuvered in the direction indicated. She was able to interpret many more signs which were not, however, for her; certain gestures, certain positions would have seemed to her rude outside the shop.

She did not blush on seeing a stoker urinate into the coal, or a forgeman change his flannels, or a hammerman unbutton himself to smear saliva on a burn on his thigh or belly.

The sparks which the steel throws off when it is being hammered rained all over the place. They fell on the arms, face, into the shoes. The stamps flung them forth, not far but with force enough to stick into what they met and cut their way through blouses and trousers.

The spark is the first sting which the steel inflcts on the forgeman. It gives a steel pinch on the skin; it burns where it touches and sticks to the flesh. When it strikes the arm, the worker, at the risk of searing his tongue immediately brings the stricken part to his mouth. It smells of burnt meat and burnt hair. The bits of metal bite deep and have to be dug out with the nail.

Big Bauloi, a dry man, about thirty years of age, and as quick as his stamp, which strikes four hundred blows a minute, used to say: "If I were given a sou for every hole in my overall, and two sous for every burn on my skin I'd make forty to fifty francs extra a week."

Inasmuch as he worked the control treadle with his right foot, he arrived every Monday in overalls the right leg of which was new.

As for the large hammers, they flung off incandescent slabs as large as shields. The crane driver lived in the midst of these shooting stars that flashed across the heavens of the shop. Often sparks penetrated the poorly joined lockers and set fire to the clothing. Again and again alarms for the firemen had to be turned in.

At the anvils the sparks were not so numerous as at the stamps. There however when a chip struck, it went in deep. The forgers considered all of these accidents as the daily petty msieries of ther trade. No one stopped his work because a chip had nipped him. He would have been laughed at.

There were almost as many different kinds of furnaces at the forge works as there were steam hammers. Independently of the wood furnaces in which the steel was tempered, the powdered coal furnaces, the electric furnaces and the mazout furnaces that had but recently been installed, the revolving coke furnaces served to heat the small castings that later passed under the steel hand of the mechanical press. Some furnaces gave the effect of large mouths whose teeth were the castings aligned on the bottom in a double row. They were loaded from above by grated shovels, large ten or twelve pronged forks. The coal furnaces were charged from the side; as for the gas furnaces, they were fed by pipes like invalids who take their food through tubes.

Standing in front of the furnace jaws, some of the men, who were constantly exposed to the flames, withdrew the glowing steel with hooks.

Others, armed with fire rakes, stirred up the firepits raising huge black and yellow clouds which ascended to the ceiling where they flattened out into a dark blanket.

Autogenous welding was done at the entrance to the shop. The shearing flames from the nozzles of blow torches cut off large blocks of steel, emitting whistling sounds. The showers of sparks they threw off were beautiful as stars but they set fire to the surrounding objects.

Further away shears, like jaws of crocodiles, cut the smaller bars; others, whose outline recalled the guillotine, cut the thicker bars, which let out a vibrant wailing, like the last cry of the vanquished. A hand stamping press was used to true up the axles.

Over there was the checking corner. The pieces were spread out on the truing-up plate, like pawns on a large chess board. The hand of the examiner shifted them without stopping, as he called out his findings according to which the castings were separated into different piles. The good ones would be stamped. The others would be broken up.

At one side grinders rubbed away at the steel to abrade the damaged parts. Ten men, inhaling emery dust all day long, their eyes swollen behind their thick, crude glasses, applied the bad parts of the metal to the grindstone which, rumbling or crying out according to the resistance of the metal, wore away the burrs and the scales and sent them off as a cloud of incandescent dust.

The grindstones were adjacent to two cubical sheet-iron bases. Before going into them the two men who worked there put on large cloaks with hoods over their heads: the hoods had mica "eyes" and a "nose" piped to an air tank; their heads were imprisoned as in an inverted bucket whose brim rested on their shoulders. There the metal was cleaned, by a sand blast. The men lived in a white cloud of dust so fine that it got under the mask, into the clothes, stuck to the skin, filled the hair. At the sand blast apparatus, just as at the grindstone, it entered the lungs, penetrated into the stomach, whirling around, then settling into little pointed hills, just as on the grindstone table. In the stomach they showed their presence to the worker by his loss of appetite, gnawed away at his viscera, and killed him little by little.

Thus while, at the right of the works, the men who operated the torches, blow and shears, nourished by the steel shop of the neighboring rolling mills, began the productive process, at the left the grinders and sandblasters and examiners gave their concluded attentions to the castings which had to be finished despite everything.

The New Shift

About a quarter past two the new shift began to assemble in the shop.

Each worker set his watch by the time-clock so as not to run the risk of overstaying his shift.

Each shift foreman, each worker had registered his day's output on a sheet iron plate set up for this purpose near the door of his wardrobe. The department foremen then passed by to enter into their notebooks the number of axles, buffers, rollers, connecting rods, the total weight of small or medium castings made by the morning shift.

The stokers and their assistants were charging up the billet furnaces or togging mills for the night shift. At the anvils the smiths cleared the

forge, carried off the slag and rolled away the wheel-barrows of coal while their fellow-workers began to dip the tools in water so as to tighten the wooden handles. The stokers dropped bits of red hot iron into old buckets and so heated water for their toilette. All had unbuttoned their working clothes to change more quickly into their clean linen.

The siren blew. It inspirited all who had finished their day's work. They no longer felt tired. Each rushed to his locker, pulling off his working blouse on the way. Then, naked to the waist he splashed into the bucket of water, which he overturned with a kick of his foot as soon as he had finished washing.

Five minutes later the time-clock was stormed, amid an uproar punctuated by the following phrase often repeated:

"Now for some broiled ham; we've certainly earned it."

The men at the exit gates were the same who had come in at the entrance gates in the morning; their bearing had not changed, but their faces had a different look. The features were sharper, the eyes more feverish, with heavier rings under them, their gait more jerky. Instead of the dragging, monotonous but even resonance of their morning footbeats, now their iron tipped shoes struck the pavement clumsily and unevenly in their haste to get home.

With heads humming, stomachs empty, muscles sore, they staggered, drunk with the noise, fatigue, work.

Their backs were bent. Their shoulders unsymetrical—the left sunk, as if still following the hand which had held the tongs; the right shoulder jerked up as if following the hand that had held the hammer.

Every day the work made that deformation and others more pronounced.

At home Besset found his wife engaged in patching up his blue overalls. She was seated near the glass-door, to take advantage of the daylight. His mother was wiping the dishes. His father had gone out for a walk. The boys were working outside.

Changing from his heavy shoes into his slippers, Besset said to his wife:

"In the foundry today I saw an Italian burned alive."

She raised her head, sharply, and stopped sewing.

"What!" she exclaimed. "Dead?"

"Yes."

"He may have children."

"I don't know. We hardly know him. It seems he lived in the foreign district."

His wife was lost in thought. The persistent fear that her man would be killed intensified. In her eyes her big sons still were children who needed a father's guidance and care.

Besset sat down at the table and ate alone, as he did whenever he worked on this shift. The food, reheated on the stove, did not arouse his appetite; in his mouth were the fumes of the smithy, his throat was dry, his tongue thick. He exerted himself to eat, swallowing food with an effort. Frequently he poured himself a glass of wine. For a while he was content to drink.

His meal over, his muscles relaxed and his energy left him. The shop noises resounded in his ear. The blows of his steam hammer continued to strike. The tapping of the small, automatic stamp continued. To fight against this din, he took up the paper.

It was a gray day. The table was already in darkness. Besset tried to read, but even the headlines were illegible. And the day's images of the shop, the furnaces, the foundry, the dead Italian near the ingot marked in Troyes white, were stronger and joined with the noise of the metal, with the song and the cry of the steel.

When these echoes of the plant merged they lulled his fatigue. His body became heavy. The letters in the newspaper began to dance before his eyes. Soon they were one spot of black ink, a thick veil which separated him from the world.

He would have liked to resist, but fatigue held him fast to his chair. An enormous weight forced his head towards the table. His two wrists could not support this load, which increased from moment to moment. He crossed his arms on the paper spread out in front of him, buried his head in the encircling muscle, and fell asleep.

Solidarity

On pay day, a collection was taken up at the works for the widow and children of the man who had been burned alive.

A spontaneous impulse of solidarity had animated the workers. Irrespective of their nationality, all had contributed, according to their purses, from one to five francs, the foreman along with the others. Besset had taken the initiative in making the collection in his shop. When he brought his shop contribution—almost two hundred francs—to the founder charged with getting all the money together, the latter asked Besset if he had time to accompany him to the foreign workers' district.

"I'd like to very much," Besset answered. "We'll go after work."

A quarter of an hour after the shift was over, the two men met in front of he factory gates. The founder, whose name was Decroix, had brought two Italians with him, who had known number 11 well. His name—Santili—had been found out after the nurses had left.

The two Italians spoke a bit of French. They had circulated subscription lists among the building repair workers, among whom were many of their compatriots. They had also been assigned the task of continuing the collection in the district itself.

The four men walked down the paved road which led to the Loire. The district soon appeared in view, about three hundred meters from the gates of the steel works. A rough wall separated it from the road. Where it fronted the works it was bordered by an old dumpheap; the black, oily waters of the Ondaine formed the base of the triangle which the district occupied. It was called the Polish Section because the majority were Poles. During the war it had sheltered Indo-Chinese, Moroccans, Algerians, then Alsatian war prisoners. Among others who had been seen there were Spaniards, Italians, Greeks, Albanians and, in lesser numbers, Hungarians, Austrians, Turks and Russians.

The gate was made in two sections. To get through to the district it was necessary to go through a small door where a guard was stationed. Rows of narrow houses appeared. Their walls were very thinly plastered. Each of the four houses was inhabited by two families. In the winter they lived in the mud carried in from the inundated roadways, in the dampness of the thin walls, in the icy cold of the north wind. In summer the odors from the river, foul as an old stewpot, the stinking dust from the dumpheap and the fumes from the plant tainted the entire district.

In front of Santili's home the four workers, moved still more by the poverty of the bereaved, bared their heads. One of them knocked at the windows, which were patched with oil paper.

The widow came out to open the door for them, her last-born, a baby seven months old, in her arms. Her eyes filled with distrust. She invited them into a room the unvarnished furniture of which was heaped with empty tin cans and dirty linen. Two other children were making mud pies near the door.

"Madame," the founder said, "we've come to bring you the money of a collection taken up by the workers of the plant."

Noting that her looks did not soften, he added:

"Excuse us for disturbing you, but we are comrades of Santili; we worked together with him. . . ."

The Italian woman rocked her baby, like an automaton, in her grief-stricken silence.

One of the Italian workers then explained the action of the dead man's co-workers. He spoke in his Piedmont patois, quickly, very quickly it seemed to Besset. The woman made a sign to indicate that she had understood.

"Grazia, grazia," she said softly.

Decroix had been holding the donation lists and the money in his hand ever since he had entered. Outside youngsters had gathered about, surprised to see foreigners—for to them the French were foreigners—in "their village." Some women, their heads covered with red and black kerchiefs tied under their chins, cast furtive glances towards the half-open door and then went hastily away.

The founder unfolded the subscription lists, put the money on the table—a handful of silver coins and several bills—and asked Madame Santili to check the figures and the sum.

Again the Italian translated.

"Verificare."

Then the unhappy woman put her head in her hands:

"Niente, niente!" she exclaimed. Her voice choked in sobs. She sunk into a chair, murmuring:

"Povero Pietro! Poveri bambini!"

Besset and his comrades twirled their caps in their large chapped hands, stained by coal and rust. The words stuck in their throats. They could speak only with their eyes.

When the Italian woman raised her head she seemed quite surprised to see the four men still there.

Her eyes were dry now. They looked at the four large-boned, red faces of her husband's comrades, first at one, then at the other. She thought she saw him there, in the midst of this group, with the same manner, the same bearing, wearing the same cap. Humbly she extended her two fraternal hands to them.

"A Place for Everything. . . ."

At the entrance to the steel works the two sections of the main gate rumbled aside on their rollers to let the tucks pass. Every time this happened, the guard on duty appeared at the entrance and motioned to the driver to indicate that the road was clear. This brief moment permitted to the unemployed, waiting for the employment bureau to open, a view of the black buildings, the scrap iron piles, the freight cars, and the clouds of vapor and smoke rising from the roofs, signals of work going on.

Each of the unemployed, watching the metal being carted off and listening to the noises of the works, wondered what vacancy awaited him. Some, in order to see better, advanced timidly. Then the gate closed, the guard disappeared within his booth, and the blankness of the street crushed the hopes and dreams that had been aroused by the sight of the steel works, and those who had ventured closer to see the pleasant spectacle of work going on stepped back into their places.

Among the hundred people who stood along the wall of the "main office," about twenty meters from the "main gate," was Roche's wife. One could easily see she was not a factory worker. Her black woolen kerchief that framed her face, her restless, feverish eyes, the boy who stood at her side, the curiosity of both of them in everything, were sufficient proof.

The human swarm hanging around the door marked "Employment Office," was made up of people of all countries: black-bearded Moroccans in red fezes. Italians in soft felt hats, blond Poles, Greeks, Albanians, Turks, Portuguese, Russians, etc. . . . Ten thousand hands were at work there, behind the gate. The unemployed thought an additional two hundred hands could easily find places in such a number.

A man looked at his watch.

"A quarter past seven," he said. "Another quarter of an hour, and we'll be able to warm ourselves."

"That's none too soon," his neighbor grumbled, raising the collar of his overcoat. He was probably a skilled worker. The unskilled workers did not have overcoats, even the most threadbare.

The unemployed spoke little, as if they distrusted each other. If one of them, incautiously, asked his neighbor what his trade was, the other replied vaguely: "I've worked at the foundries," or "at the forge," or "at the moulds." Rarely did he say, "I'm a founder," or a "forgeman" or "moulder," afraid that the questioner might then feel in competition with him and take advantage, or reluctant to put himself in an inferior position by admitting that he was an unskilled worker.

The skilled workers looked down on the others. When it was said about someone that "he works in the yard," that is to say, at the wheel-barrows or the cart, it signified a lower status. The bearing of those who waited outside the employment bureau suggested that for the most part they were unskilled workers.

Realizing this, the man in the overcoat had much to say. He claimed he was a turner, and had worked as a precision mechanic. He even took out his batch of recommedations and flourished them. The others kept theirs in their pockets. The Moroccans began to talk in their native tongue. The others remained silent. Roche's wife drew her son aside and whispered some instructions to him.

The workers began to arrive. Hats, collars, overcoats denoted the affluent. They greeted each other warily in the passage-ways. At times all hats were raised as a man who was probably a foreman appeared. The employed looked away from the unemployed and in turn the unemployed smiled challengingly as if to say: "We don't give a damn about you, either."

Those who, while waiting, had been leaning against the wall, finally had to move in order to let the man in charge open the shutters of the office window. Then the door over which was the sign: "Employment Bureau," was opened. The unemployed reformed their line which extended out into the street since there was no room for all in the office.

Posters and placards on the walls gave preliminary lessons in hygiene, order and morals. The Roche boy read aloud: "A place for everything, and everything in its place." His mother shook him:

"Read to yourself! Everyone's listening to you!"

She herself, moving her lips quietly, deciphered the inscriptions in white letters on a blue background. The man in the overcoat broke in ostentatiously:

"Your son is right, Madame. 'A place for everything, and everything in its place.' It's no place here for you, among all these foreigners."

A young man in clothes that were all patched, although clean, rose from the bench where he was sitting and gave up his seat to an old Moroccan shivering from cold.

His neighbor protested: "He'll give us all lice. They all have them."

The other replied: "They're as clean as some among us whom you find no fault with."

During this time the Roche boy had been staring at a placard which showed a hand brandishing a dagger. He read:

"Cracher a terre, c'est attenter a la vie d'autrui." (To spit on the ground is to make an attempt on the lives of others.)

"What does '*autrui*' mean?" he asked his mother.

The latter was listening to the young worker who had just given his place to the Moroccan. She turned sharply to her youngster:

"Don't bother me. Read to yourself."

Then, as all the men were looking at her, she tried to puzzle out the word.

" '*Autrui? Autrui?*' Oh, yes, that means a hog of hogs!"

The French burst forth in a general roar of laughter, while the foreigners looked on trying to understand.

A small window opened and a rough voice thundered:

"Hey you, out there! Can't you stop that noise?"

There was immediate silence.

"Oh, I'm sick of these bureaucrats," a little woman said.

There was no response to her remark. No one replied for fear he would be heard and discriminated against.

A little later the crowd in the waiting room split up into two. A tall man, very erect, with red mustaches and a haughty look behind his eyeglasses, moved forward between the two rows of unemployed. Those who were seated arose; others raised their caps more out of the hope of being noticed by him than for politeness' sake.

The newcomer was the personnel chief, the colonel of an army of five thousand servants of steel. With an air of disgust he ran his eye over the hundred jobseekers, then unfolded a sheet of paper.

"Is there a good milling machine operator among you?" he asked.

No one answered. He made a cross in pencil on his sheet.

"A turner?"

Three of the unemployed, among them the man in the overcoat, jostled each other coming up to the chief.

"Where have you worked? Show me your recommendations."

He took their papers and questioned them.

"Do you understand thread cutting? Have you ever worked on a turret lathe? Would you know how to set a lathe?

The man in the overcoat again launched into the explanation he had given while waiting outside, on the sidewalk, in order to impress the manual laborers. However this time the personnel chief silenced him. The three turners were accepted and they moved on into the adjoining room.

The chief then asked for smiths and drillers, and selected several manual laborers, colonials and foreigners, taking care to measure them with his eye and to estimate their strength.

In one case he even went so far as to assure himself that the man was able to carry eighty kilograms. The man contracted his biceps.

"It's all there!" he said.

The chief slapped him in a friendly way on the shoulder, and laughed. He was probably thinking: "Another good animal!"

When it came to the miner Roche's wife, she explained that M. Roberti (Rabati as the workers called him) had promised M. Besset, the best smith in the shop, to hire her oldest son.

"He is big and strong," she added, pushing her son before her. "He'll be good at the forge. He'll make a good worker. And then, you ought to see what skill he shows in everything he does. He always has a hammer in his hands. . . ."

She would have said much more in praise of her boy's merits and to convince the chief, but the latter stopped her.

"Enough, enough, Madame. We'll telephone the forge." Some twenty-five had been hired. The others hung around.

"Sir," said an old worker who had not taken off his hat on the arrival of the chief. "Sir, I don't ask for big wages, but I must eat. Take me in your plant."

"Where have you worked? What is your trade?"

The old man searched about in his brief-case and held out his recommendations to the chief, who looked at the dates and kept the last document.

"So your name is Jules Lemaitre, fifty-eight years old; you've worked as a fitter and mechanic at the Internal Combustion Engine Manufacturing Company?"

The worker nodded humbly. The questioning seemed to lay an additional weight on his shoulders, to age him still more. The other unemployed looked at him with an air of pity. They had forgotten their own misfortunes. They were united in thought with father Lemaitre. That was all they could do for him.

The chief was embarrassed by this attitude of theirs. He couldn't tell the old man to go away; anger might take the place of pity among those who listened.

"Go into the other room," he said to Lemaitre, and then, turning to the others:

"Come back tomorrow; something may turn up then."

The men seemed not to understand. They didn't budge.

"It's enough to make you bust," a voice shouted.

"What do you want me to do! I told you. Come back tomorrow. . . ."

His threatening tone made the timid retreat; and when they went the others followed.

Among the men who had been hired was the young fellow who had given up his place to the Moroccan. The chief called him over:

"Robert Martel, how old are you?"

"Twenty."

"When do you leave for the army?"

"Beginning of next year."

"You're a smith. Where have you worked?"

"I began in the works of the Mines Company, where I repaired material. Then I was employed here, in the auto forges; after that I worked for a small manufacturer."

"You've worked at a pretty big number of places."

"Only three."

"That's a lot for a fellow of your age. Wait a minute. I'll call you again."

While an office worker interviewed the newly hired people and wrote down all their replies, the chief, in an adjacent office began telephoning; another employee consulted a certain file.

Several minutes elapsed. The chief reappeared in the room where the unemployed were waiting.

"Jules Lemaitre?"

The old man rose without replying.

"Why did you leave the I.C.E.M.?"

"I did not leave them. I was discharged."

The chief frowned; in his annoyance he himself said what he had wanted to make the man he was questioning confess.

"Then, Monsieur Lemaitre, Jules," he said, mockingly, "you've been really in conflict with the management of the I.C.E.M.?"

Lemaitre lowered his head, vanquished. The other resumed:

"I want you to know that I don't hold anything against you for that, but a while ago I had hesitated about taking you on because. . . we don't need a fitter-mechanic. I really should like to do what I can to help you get work. Leave your address with me. We'll write you. . . ."

Old Lemaitre did not answer the chief. He would have been driven to say too much. However, although he knew from long experience the value of that "we'll write to you," he went off, clinging to the hope.

"Robert Martel!"

The young smith rose next.

"There is no work in the forge at the moment. Come back another time."

"I understand," said the young man. "I know what you want to say. Because I've asked for higher wages, which, moreover, I've received, I no longer have the right to earn my living."

"Get out! Do you hear me?" the chief roared. "And don't show your face here again!"

Robert looked the other straight in the face and replied ironically: "Thanks, thanks, thanks again!"

The witnesses of this scene shrank into their corner. They feared lest the anger of the chief react upon them.

"Leon Pouchard!"

The man in the overcoat came forward.

"Here," he said, trying to make himself appear young by straightening up like a soldier.

"I've heard from M. Larchier about you. Have you seen him of late? How is he?"

Leon Pouchard grinned obsequiously.

"Very well, thank you. He asked me to give you his regards."

"You'll work under Perron," the chief said. "I think you'll like that. You'll work as a turner. That's your line, isn't it?"

Pouchard said it was, and he was permitted to go in and talk to his department chief to find out when he was to begin.

"Madame Roche!"

The miner's wife rose and her son took his hat off.

"Here, Sir," she said.

"How old are you, little one?" the chief asked.

"Fourteen years and two months, Sir," the boy replied, as though he were reciting a lesson he had learned by heart.

"What's your name?"

"My name is Blaise Roche."

The child lowered his head and blushed slightly. The chief patted his cheek.

"You're strong," he said; "it will do you good to work in the forge. You'll become a strong man before the fire."

The mother followed this comedy with her eyes. It seemed to take a long time. She wanted to see the contract concluded and leave for the hall.

"Have you your birth certificate? Did you get an apprentice certificate at the mayor's offices?"

She turned over the two certificates, the one—very dirty, the other—quite new, and she waited.

While the personnel chief continued to question those whom he had just hired, a clerk bent over the apprentice certificate, giving flourishes to the capital letters of the names he copied down. The boy admired these bold strokes of the pen. He would have liked to be able write like that, thinking that all science resided in beautiful penmanship.

When the clerk returned his certificate duly filled out, after warning him not to lose it, the boy was quite surprised to see inscribed on it the false statement he had just made to the personnel chief. Reading "Blaise Roche," he had a mental picture of his oldest brother, who was bed-ridden with a splint on his broken leg. He had never thought that a lie could be written in such beautiful letters. His own name was Marcel Roche. He was only twelve years old, and his body was still a child's but his face had the early maturity of the poor.

On the one hand he was proud of being employed when children of his age were still playing in the streets. But, on the other hand, he had a vague feeling of uneasiness, knowing that it was a sin to lie and fearing to be found out.

The clerk pointed to a door and told him to go in. His mother dared not embrace him, though she wanted to. She told herself that from this moment on, her child no longer belonged to her. To show her strength of character she pushed him with a nervous gesture towards the door and she, in her turn, rushed hastily away.

In the street the cold air aroused her. She felt as if she had been dreaming. She wondered how she could have acted so. She again looked at the large gate that was closing slowly. There was a tight feeling in her chest, which hushed the beating of her heart. Tears rolled silently down her cheeks.

In a small room, his face brightly illuminated by 50 electric lights, Marcel Roche was seated on a stool, facing the camera.

"Look this way," a man in a black blouse said, pointing to his left hand.

It was the first photograph Marcel had ever posed for. The only photograph his parents had of him was that of a baby whom he did not recognize as himself. When the photographer said, "You can get up," he was surprised at the speed with which it had been done, and he went into the next room.

It was the infirmary, a large hall with a tiled floor, and walls painted white. It was as light as the shops were dark. Men and women were there, separated into two groups. One group, the smaller, waiting to be enrolled, the other a line of people waiting for treatment. The door of a small office opened frequently and a voice shouted, "Next!"

One of the injured people then took off his dressing and went into the consultation room. Marcel had eyes only for the injured. He admired these men, heroes of a special war, of the grandeur and horror of which he caught but a glimpse. All spoke low, describing their accidents. They omitted no detail, and one felt a touch of pride in their intonation. Marcel didn't lose a word of the conversation. He would have liked to have been hurt also, so that he, too, could talk about it.

However, when more serious cases appeared, this feeling vanished. Gauze bandages were removed from a crushed hand, bleeding and deformed. The injured man grimaced with pain, and the face of the child unconsciously mimicked that of the man. Marcel shuddered. He saw burns, deep abrasions that had been stitched; inflammations, whitlows, fractures, stumps of amputated fingers and toes.

Those whom he did not see were the seriously sick and injured. They were at home, or in the hospital. But the boy saw enough to make him understand that the works were not a place of leisure.

When his turn came for the medical examination he had to undress himself completely. That was the rule. As the doctor looked at the boy's thin, dirty body, he frowned.

"You must bathe, my boy," he said to him. "Water doesn't cost much. Ask your mother for it."

Then he added: "You've never worked before, have you? How old are you?"

Marcel almost said twelve years. but caught himself in time and recited his lesson:

"Fourteen, Sir."

The doctor paid no more attention to him. He accepted this reply as he did all the others. His role in the plant consisted simply in checking up if a new worker at the Firminy Steel and Forge Works did not have a hernia or some other defect that could later be attributed to the works.

"Good, you can dress yourself," he said.

With a rapid stroke of his pen he signed the health record of "Blaise Roche, age 14 years and 2 months."

"Next!" he cried out, while Marcel was putting on his clothes.

The child walked through the plant to look at the forges. He was astonished to see such large machines moving quite by themselves. Man seemed a god among this multitude of giant automatons. It was enough, it seemed, merely to make a sign, even simply to think of an order for a movement to be started that would mould and carve metal.

The foreman at the forge told Marcel to come to work the next morning. He led him to Besset's stamp, and the boy felt proud when the smith shook his hand like that of a real worker.

Marcel returned home in time to sit down at table. He had many things to tell his mother and cousins. Blaise listened from his bed in envy.

At the mayor's office the secretary legalized the contract concluded between Roche and the management of the Steel Works for the employment of one named Blaise Roche, fourteen years and two months.

The plant's doctor had told one of his friends in confidence that the children of the poor had heads larger than their bodies, and that it is dire necessity that makes parents send such feeble youngsters to the steel works.

At Besset's home Roche, amidst repeated recitals of the misfortunes that compelled him to send Marcel to work, thanked Besset for his help in getting Marcel hired.

Jess Kimbrough

Brown Doughboy

Marion was a sleepy little country town that spilled out raggedly on one side of the railroad tracks. A few small one-storied houses marked its business section, and beyond this were dirt roads that ran to nowhere.

For the first time in almost a year, Jed's feet touched the virgin soil of his country. It seemed to spring under his feet. And never had Marion seen a Negro who walked quite so proudly. Never had the idle white men gazed upon an olive drab uniform that fitted so perfectly. The russet marching shoes, the spiral puttees evenly wrapped, the breeches, the close fitting blouse with two gold service chevrons on the left sleeve, and one gold honor chevron, on his right. His overseas cap sat at a rakish angle that set off his well formed head. Jed carried the honor of the service in his soul. All that he had suffered was forgotten in the inherent pride he held for the uniform of his country.

He took a soldier's hunch, and headed in the direction of the first Negro he saw, who happened to be an old gray-haired fellow, hobbling on a cane. The old man walked in the center of the road, stopping now and then to get his breath. Jed's easy stride soon overtook him.

"Can you tell me where Mrs. Callie Evans lives?" Jed asked the old man.

"Is you talkin' 'bout A'nt Callie, son?" the old man queried tremulously, looking Jed over from head to foot. "Lawd son, is you one ob dem sojah boys? Well Ah do declah; an' you's uh sojah boy, sho's you bo'n. Lawd, lawd. Com' on son, unk'll sho' you whah she lib's."

Jed smiled good naturedly, and followed the old man. They left the town behind them, and swung off into the squalid Negro section.

"See dat house, son?" the old man pointed to a shack that was once whitewashed, but had now faded to a sunbleached gray. "Dat's whar An't Callie lib's . . . an' son, ol' unk's mighty poo'ly now; been down mos' all wintah—"

The old man never finished. Jed knew what he meant, and pressed a dollar bill in his hand.

"De Lawd bless you son, Lawd bless all you sojah boys."

The news of Jed's arrival had flown swiftly on the still air. The shambling champions of white supremacy had seen too much, when a strange Negro came to town in a soldier's uniform. A nigger had insolently invaded their holy sancta, a nigger who neither cringed nor grinned. Their code of nigger behavior had been violated. In the few minutes Jed had been in town, a caucus was already in session, and a committee of three had been designated to show him his place. The old lame Negro who had directed him to Aunt Callie's home had also told the white folks where he was to be found.

Aunt Callie's home was a typical Negro shanty, with a high gabled roof covered with nondescript shingles. The front porch which sat low on the ground trembled under Jed's weight as he crossed it and entered the open door.

In one corner of a surprisingly clean room, a woman rocked slowly in an antiquated chair. She did not seem surprised at Jed's entry, and he stood before her, his overseas cap in his hand. It looked as though she was expecting him. Jed choked, and his blouse collar suddenly became inches too small. The sweat popped out on his forehead, and he forgot how to introduce himself.

"Mrs. Evans," he said gently, trying to control his heavy voice. "I'm Jed Daniels."

The situation was tense, and the only thing that calmed him was the smiling composure of the kindly woman. She was nodding her head easily, as if she understood what he was trying to do.

"Your boy Grease and me were buddies, ma'am. We fought together, ate together, and were never apart a day. He was the best friend I had, but—"

Jed swallowed a big lump in his throat before he could continue.

"He asked me to give you this." Jed pulled a package from his pocket, and slowly unwrapped it, laying the old testament in her lap. Her eyes widened for a second then suddenly become misty. "Grease carried it with him always, and when he was—when he was killed," Jed's voice was low and tender, "he asked me to bring it home to you."

It was the hardest speech Jed had ever made. One that pained his heart, but it was over, and he steeled himself for the reaction to follow.

"Mah boy Grease daid?" she queried, in a soft voice, so marked with humbleness, that it moved Jed deeply. "Lawd, Lawd, heah me Lawd, mah boy Grease is daid," she moaned, and then began to croon. Only Negro mothers can croon. It filled the room, rolling softly. They have suffered so long, and down through the centuries their love call has bubbled from the heart. Regret, pain and sorrow is expressed in every tone. And as she crooned, her white head swayed to the rhythm, and a vagrant tear trickled down her withered cheek, yet through it all she was smiling. Jed's heart had broken, giving way with a rumble like the turbulent waters of an angry stream. Droning in his ears was the song of a Negro mother, calling across the ocean to her child. Spanning the miles in an instant, it hovered over a rude grave in an alien country; and there it was picked up by the breeze, and wafted on and on, into eternity.

"Lawd Jesus, A'nt Callie's ready when calls. You don' spah'd mah eyes tuh see, yo don' spah'd mah yeahs tuh heah, an' now mah Jesus, Ah's ready."

"Aunt Callie, Aunt Callie," Jed called, fighting back the tears. "He died like a man, and a soldier; it was wonderful. He was hit beside me, and I watched him till he passed away. He was happy, Aunt Callie, because he was smiling, and I know his last thoughts were of you. Be proud that he was your boy."

Jed felt a great weight roll off his shoulders.

"They cited him in orders, Aunt Callie, cited him for bravery, and I've brought the order for you to keep with his testament."

He unfolded the mimeographed order and read it slowly.

"*Special mention is hereby given to privates Grease Evans and Jed Daniels, for extraordinary coolness under fire, and attention to duty: in that they did advance on night patrol to silence a one pounder, and so remained on this*

mission until caught in a barrage, and were forced to retire in the face of heavy machine-gun fire. All combatant units observe."

"It's yours, Aunt Callie, to keep forever."

In the midst of the silence that followed, heavy footsteps sounded on the porch. Jed looked around into the faces of three white men. One carried a shotgun in the crook of his arm. They were unkempt and hairy, and represented the type Jed had seen shambling along the streets.

"Niggah!" the foremost snarled, as he spat a stream of tobacco juice on the floor. "You cain't weah no sojah suit down heah. Niggahs don' dress lak white men in Alabama."

Jed was taken by surprise, and wholly unprepared for the move. His fingers clenched, digging into the flesh of his hands, as he looked down the barrel of the shotgun, leveled at his eyes.

"No funny moves, niggah, we mean business. Git outah them sojah clothes, an' git out in a hurry."

Jed relaxed, and his eyes bored them with a cold hate that gloats at gushing blood. The panorama of the past floated before him in a second. France, the battle front, everything that he had suffered, all that he had seen, centered on the leering faces of the white men.

Aunt Callie had risen, and was tottering unsteadily on her feet. The mother instinct stood out bravely, even against the wrath of white men. A child was in danger, not her boy, but some mother's child. Something in her wrinkled face told Jed that she had suffered enough, and to see him killed would have meant her end. She pleaded with him, begging him to save his life.

"Take it off son, dey'll kill you."

Jed realized the hopelessness of his position. Life meant nothing to him, yet he surrendered to ease the pain in a mother's heart. If there was one hour of comfort remaining in her declining years, he wanted her to enjoy it. And too, she was his buddie's mother.

The fire died in Jed's eyes, and they took on the clouded gloom of loathing. He felt akin to crawling things that hide from the wrath of a greater force. In the last spasmodic flutter of his crushed pride, he clutched his blouse with his hands, and in one vicious jerk, ripped it from his body, the polished buttons flying in every direction. Coatless, he stood to his full height, his chest heaving with suppressed emotion.

"Take it," he said coldly, as he dropped the garment of honor at the white man's feet. "It belongs to you. It never was mine, it never could be mine. I fought for you, suffered hell in the trenches, and all for this: to be killed for wearin' a uniform in my own country."

For a moment he stood motionless, his head high, but as the thought of disgrace sank into his heart, his chin dropped on his chest. Jed Daniels had at last suffered defeat at a white man's hand.

When Jed raised his eyes again he was alone. Grease's mother sat peacefully rocking. He did not know when the white men had left the house. His blouse lay on the floor where he had dropped it. He felt that he had been rushed to the outermost edge of a great chasm, and the very earth under his feet was slowly giving way.

"Com' tuh A'nt Callie, son. De Lawd, he know mah troubles," she called tenderly, in a devotion that only a mother can give to her heartbroken child.

Lashed and beaten down by the unmerciful forces that had crushed his soul, Jed sank to his knees, and buried his face in the old woman's lap, his heart gushing out in great sobs that shook his frame.

Outside, a faint breeze rustled through the cypress trees, and billowing through the open door, caressed a brown soldier, weeping on a black mother's breast.

The Overland Limited sped across the Mojave desert west of Needles. Since daylight, Jed had gazed out of the day coach window upon his country. Gaping peaks bathed in sunlight, endless stretches of dry clean sand, forboding canyon walls that reared up, defying the will of man. Jed's heart was touched.

"I wonder what it means to me?" he said softly. "I wonder what it meant to any of my buddies? They have sweated in the cotton fields, slaved like hell in saw-mill camps, fed coke ovens till their hands were blistered, and wound up wallowin' in the mud in France. We can't talk, we never will. Somehow, I feel like crawlin' away and hidin' my face. Poor Grease, shot in the belly, too game to even groan; and Sim, fightin' it out all alone; and the lieutenant, smilin' when death took him away. God, I can see their eyes starin' wide open, but there ain't no tears. They're just hurtin' inside like me."

"Going home, partner?" the train butcher asked pleasantly, eyeing Jed with a puzzled smile.

Jed turned a hard cold eye on the speaker.

"Yeah, I'm goin' home. I live in Victorville."

"Great country, there ain't no better one in the world, but there's many a lad buried over there in France that won't be seein' god's country no more."

Jed's lips trembled.

"You're right. I seen plenty planted over there."

The butcher looked at Jed's cheap civilian suit with a doubtful expression.

"And you was a soldier servin' your country? It's an honor any man ought to be proud of."

"Yeah, I served my country." Jed's eyes roved out across the waste. "And no man over loved it more'n I do."

Half faltering, Jed opened the clasp on his hand grip. Running his hand through the opening, his fingers fondly touched the buttons of his uniform blouse. Quickly, he shot an eager glance inside the grip. The symbol of dignity, the uniform of honor, all that identified him as a defender of a great cause, lay neatly folded away—

Semyon Kirsanov

Some future
flagless
day
When no longer shall
frontiers define
a nation,
Once more
perhaps
I'll make my way
To Negorelye [1]
station.
Before
the once placarded
pine
Detrain the passengers
of the fast
express;
And anxious mothers'
nervous fingers
twine
While children
round the panting
iron monster
press.
Museum walls shelter
the border post—
A totem pole,
a wooden ghost.—
You read the tablet,
the marble white
recorder
Of a vanished

[1] One of the principal border stations on the Soviet western frontier.

order.
"Here was
the border!"

The children ask,
"Border?—
Who's that?"
I stroke their heads,
do my best
to explain:
"Not a 'who',
but a 'what';
A place for passport,
stamped papers,
waiting,
strain—"
But uncle—
"Passport?—
Who's that?"
As a pedagogue
I've fallen flat.
"Well, long ago when you traveled
and you got off
around here,
Porters took your baggage
to the customs house
and you stood near—"
"Costumes house?—
Did they put on costumes?
Did they dance?"
Around me I throw
a helpless
glance.
"Well—
a sort of costume
you wouldn't understand;
They called it
citizen
of a foreign land."

Incomprehensible little post!
Better to sit
at a train-window
hurled
Three miles a minute
across the
world,
Earth's beautiful image
for your host,
Nowhere
disordered,
Nowhere
bordered!

Nowhere gendarmes,
officials,
frontiers—
Items for notebooks,
buried fears.
Forgotten words
that chill
no more,
With broken sleep
and dread of war.
But, not yet!
We fence an iron
"No!"
Around our borders
across which
lies
The swamp
of spies,
Who on their bellies
crawling
go.
Now be
each passport
double checked;
Sound each trunk
for a double
deck;
Our dearest,
our most sacred
care—
Our border
guarded
everywhere!

Translated by Isidor Schneider

WOLVES AND SHEEP

Some interesting notes on Jean Giono's *Les Cahiers du Contadour* are furnished by Georges Sadoul in a review of French provincial magazines published in the February issue of *Commune*. Their significance is by no means confined to the French provinces.

Jean Giono is a nature lover. There is little he does not know about mountain landscapes, the whispering of forests in springtime, and other poetic matters, of which he has written in all his books and, incidentally, always in the same strain. He dwells in the Lower Alps in one of the wildest and most beautiful spots in France. To this land of lavender and grazing sheep people come to hearken to the "prophet of Manosca." For Giono is not content with merely inhaling the mountain air; he poses as a teacher of life in the Tolstoyan manner.

And so young men and women come to Giono to learn the art of living from this prophet whom they call "Jean the Magnificent." Since 1935 he has gathered around him a group of young people who spend some time with him once or twice a year on the Gremona plateau "communing with nature." They call themselves "Contadours" and since 1935 they have published three issues of a journal describing their activities.

The Contadours claim nothing more nor less than to be bringing the world a new conception of life, rescuing unfortunate humanity from the awful morass of contradictions in which it is entangled. Regarding themselves as "the greatest hope of our times" they see in the works of their teacher something in the nature of a new gospel.

As a matter of fact, this gospel is by no means original. It is the thousand and first variation on the neo-Rousseauism theme with an admixture of the worst features of the Tolstoyism so popular in the twentieth century, when muddle-headed people sought escape from civilization in the "green pastures."

The Contadours abhor big cities and machinery, they advocate the "simple life," "back to the land," handicraft labor, "real life," *i. e.,* to tend cattle, shear sheep and read no newspapers.

Incidentally, as Sadoul sarcastically remarks, the Contadours are naturally strangers to work and none too interested in the peasantry who inhabit the mountain around them. Their "ideal life" is lived at the expense of the labor of others. But this is not so important .Were Giono to limit himself to neo-Tolstoyan sugar-coating he would not be worth mentioning.

But Giono endeavors to exercise an actual influence on the young generation. From his sylvan idyll of pretty flowers and fleecy lambs—which might strike most people as absurd and in bad taste perhaps, but quite harmless—there emerge political utterances of the most disgusting kind.

Giono has always hated war. War bruised his soul once and for all in 1914 and since then his horror of bloodshed knows no bounds. He adores peace and tranquillity. In 1936 he sent a message to the International Youth Congress for the Defense of Peace. In that message he glorified peace in the most poetic terms and has continued in that strain, to this day.

What we are concerned with here is *how* he hates war and *how* he proposes to defend the cause of peace.

Giono, the Tolstoyan, has an abstract conception of war. To him war is abhorrent as such. All wars are alike. The imperialist war of 1914 and the war of the Spanish Republicans are reduced by this freak-pacifist Contadour to a common level of cruel and senseless massacre. These Tolstoyans advocate laying down arms and sabotaging war. They call for the sabotage of any war, including a war of the people.

It goes without saying that gardens in spring bloom are more pleasant to contemplate than the bomb-mangled bodies of little children in Madrid or Nanking. But it is for this very reason that no honest writer in the world, today, can fail to see the difference between the predatory aggression of the imperialists and interventionists and the heroic struggle of the peoples for their independence and honor, for peace and democracy.

Ernest Hemingway, who in *Farewell to Arms* showed the senselessness of the war of 1914, now hails the "new Caporetto," the defeat of the Italian interventionists at Guadalajara, and has paid glowing tribute to the courage of the Spanish people. Ludwig Renn, Gustav Regler, Mathé Zalka, Ralph Fox and many other writers who deserve to be called real people, have proven by their service at the front, and many of them by giving their lives in battle, that they have grasped the difference between the imperialist war of 1914 and the just war of peoples defending themselves against fascism These writers really hate war, hate the fascism that gives rise to wars, hate it actively, by fighting and laying down their lives for it. People like these are real defenders of peace.

Giono in his *Les Cahiers du Contadour* gives utterance to statements so monstrous that it is impossible to speak of them without the deepest repulsion for this puny creature. While in 1936 the Contadours, who read no newspapers, kept silent about the Spanish events, in 1937 Giono gave open counsel on how to behave with regard to aggressors. Disagreeing with those who "pose and like to play the hero," he declares that the true hero of the *Iliad* is Odysseus who survived and not Achilles who fought and perished, and he openly advocates sabotaging the defense of the Spanish republic against Franco and the interventionists. More, his reply to the question of what to do should Germany invade France is—become Germans, do not resist the German fascists—for better a live German than a dead Frenchman. And having the audacity to link the bright name of Passionaria with the black name of Mussolini, both of whom, he avers, prefer to live one day like a lion, to living a hundred years like a sheep, Giono drives his point home with the incredible statement: "As for me, I say better live a hundred years like a sheep than one day like a lion."

Could Heinrich Heine ever have dreamed when he remarked ironically "better a live dog than a dead lion" that at the most critical moment of the struggle between reaction and revolution a writer would be found who could pen such words without a shade of irony? To Jean Giono go the laurels for having coined one of the most cynical phrases in the history of literature.

This is the other side of the idyllic picture of the innocent lambs—complete submission to fascist aggression, the glorification of a "life of servility."

That which Giono passes off as defense of peaceful life is actually treachery to the cause of peace, a betrayal of the people's interests, an apology for cowardice.

Critical moments, times of stress reveal the man for what he is.

Writers and intellectuals today are awakening to a heightened sense of *historical responsibility*. This is a splendid feeling,the genuine civic sense that has prompted thousands of people to flock to the International Brigades to help Republican Spain. They hastened to defend not themselves alone but the historical destiny of mankind as a whole. This sense of historical responsibility is expressed in Auden's fine poem, *Spain*. He writes:

> *"We are left alone with our day, and the time is short,*
> *and History to the defeated*
> *May say Alas but cannot help or pardon."*

Giono is not only devoid of the exalted sense of historical responsibility but seeks to discredit it as best he can. He declares that it is not worth while sacrificing oneself to the future when one may live for one's own pleasure. What care I about some future happiness if the moss will be growing over me by then?

And indeed what does this small-minded philistine care about the destiny of mankind? For in all these shoddy arguments Giono exposes his mean little soul and formulates the most shallow, backward and egoistic ideas of the French, and not alone the French, philistine, of all those who are prepared to live in servility and, what is more, to consider it the normal form of existence.

Gorky wrote of such puny people with biting scorn in his articles about philistinism in which he saw the "love of ownership which has developed along ugly lines; a constant tense desire for peace both within oneself and in the outer world; an obscure fear of everything which in one way or another may upset this peace."

As though addressing himself directly to Giono, Gorky wrote: "The philistines want to live in peace with the whole world at any cost, quietly enjoying the fruit of other people's labor and striving by all possible means to preserve that peace of mind which they term happiness . . . ." And the philosophy of such a philistine serves merely "for self-justification, to justify his passive attitude in the battle of life."

The Contadour "evangelists" are the expression of philistinism, frightened by the oncoming events, of the cowardly anxiety to find a place somewhere apart from the struggle, of the simple egoistic wisdom: "My house is on the outskirts. This does not concern me."[1] Giono's idyll is not even worthy of the name of neo-Russeauism, it besmirches the noble name of Rousseau, the forerunner of the fiery Jacobins.

Giono is offering the "poetic," "philosophic" justification for that which in the language of contemporary politics is known as "non-intervention." We do not wish to imply, however, that the utterances of Neville Chamberlain and those of Jean Giono are based on one and the same sentiments. We merely wish to emphasize that in the case of Jean Giono it is not a matter of some abstract philistine ideology, but of things which today acquire a clear-cut political meaning.

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[1] Old Russian saying

Incidentally, it were well for those who are prone to humor the political naivete of poets and to grant "poetical licence" for any kind of freakishness, to watch Giono closely.

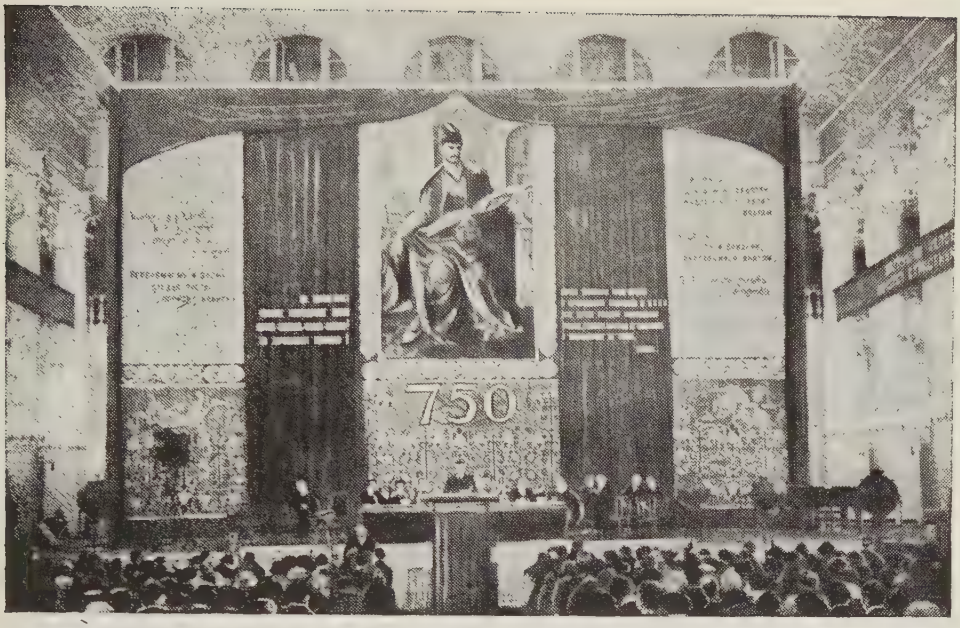
"The poet who has failed in the face of human problems posed in the form of political problems, becomes not only a traitor to reason for the sake of mercenary interests, but is lost also as a person. His ruin is inevitable. He loses his creative powers, his talent and will never again create anything of lasting value."

This is what Thomas Mann had to say about Spain and the behavior of men of letters in relation to Spain.

Let Jean Giono not consider himself a poet. Let him not consider himself a Frenchman either. For by preaching utter submission in the face of fascism he is betraying all the glorious traditions of the French people of Jeanne d'Arc, the heroes of Valmy, the Communards, who held back the onslaught of the German interventionists, and the French of the International Brigades in Spain. And although Giono always boasted that he lives close to nature and to the people this is purely a superficial, territorial proximity. By fighting tirelessly against international fascism, other French writers—who, much to Giono's horror, work in the noisy editorial offices of bustling Paris—are expressing the feeling and the will of the French people—not Jean Gione shearing sheep on the Gremona plateau.

For it is shameful to indulge today in sickly-sweet idylls, shameful for a man who lays claim to poetical vision to glorify a life of servility. And doubly shameful today when everything—thoughts, emotions, words, poetry—all must be mustered, clenched into a fist and flung in the face of fascist aggression.

EVGUENIA GALPERINA



A view of the meeting held by the Academy of Sciences of the U.S.S.R. to mark the 750th anniversary of The Knight in the Tiger Skin, *the epic Georgian poem by Shota Rustaveli.*

THE WRITER IN SOVIET SOCIETY

Yesterday and Today

At a recent gathering of literary people the conversation turned on the fate of writers. Someone suggested that they try to name a single classical writer who might be regarded as having had a happy life. But every name that came up in the discussion was that of a man with an unhappy fate.

Even the seeming successes: the rebellious, but tormented Byron, the outcast Heine, Dean Swift, the savage cynic who was finally driven into insanity, Voltaire who spent his whole life in humiliated and exasperated hostility to society, and even the great Goethe who, underneath his Olympian mask, concealed the oppression to which he submitted voluntarily, but which clawed at his heart.

The wretchedness of writers was most clearly revealed when the names of the Russian classics were called up—Pushkin, hounded by Nicholas I, Lermontov, banished to the Caucasus in his prime, the poet Polezhayev, reduced to consumption by the horrors of barrack life, the great Ukrainian poet Schevchenko, likewise drafted into the army and forbidden to write, Tolstoy, Nekrasov, all subjected to persecution.

This frequently led to lack of confidence in their own strength, withdrawal from the world, self-cultivation, which sometimes was carried to the point of almost fanatic individualism. Pushkin, even though he knew that "the people's path to me will ne'er be overgrown," exclaimed in a moment of despair: "Value not the people's love, O poet, you yourself are your best judge."

Only in an age when high thought and high emotion were persecuted, could the poet Nekrasov have proclaimed over the grave of the critic Pisarev, who suffered an untimely death:

"Be not with grief so wrung,
'Tis well that he died young."

Every Soviet schoolboy studies the works and the courageous and devoted life of the great critic Belinsky. But so deep was the prevailing gloom in Russia at the time that Nekrasov, in a poem on the death of Belinsky entitled *Memories of a Friend,* cheerlessly predicted:

From the close-mouthed people not a word;
By their descendants, you'll go unheard.

Loneliness and isolation were the lot of Russian writers before the Great October Revolution. The able spokesman of the Russian symbolists, Alexander Blok, said of the poets of his time:

Beyond the town on desert ground
On swamp and quaking soil,
The little hating poets are found
And at their ruin toil.

Soviet literature and the Soviet writer have been placed by life itself in a remarkable position, one that knows no parallel in history. The Soviet writer is primarily not a mere observer of life. He himself is a participant in the mighty work of Socialist construction; he is called upon to carry out Marx's injunction; he not only portrays the world, but seeks to change it.

Probably in no other country is the writer's work the object of such attention on the part of the reading public as in the Soviet Union. This is proved in the first place by the large printings of Soviet books. They are circulated in tens of thousands of copies and go through both cheap and de luxe editions. Even when a book has first appeared in a magazine, it is almost impossible to find it in the bookshops a few days after publication.

Naturally, such great interest in literature, in the printed word, can only exist in a country where the broad masses of working people have been roused to conscious life by the Revolution. Millions of Soviet readers are prompted by the eagerness to know everything, to understand the past and the present and to apply the knowledge gained from reading.

The majority of books issued by Soviet publishing houses contain a characteristic appeal to the reader to send his opinion of the book to the publishers. In this manner the publishing houses collect lively and many- sided data on reader reactions.

This is, of course, only one of the methods which writers and publishers use to communicate with the reading public. It must be said the Soviet writer by no means feels himself in the position of a priest or augur raised above the mass, but derives strength in contact with them.

Contact With the Masses

Some Soviet poets returning from a trip abroad voiced their amazement at the lack of mutual contact prevailing among men of letters abroad. In Paris, at a literary evening organized in honor of the Soviet guests, many French poets met each other for the first time. Needless to say they are only known to their readers through their books; and even then only to a narrow circle, since editions are extremely small.

Many Soviet readers know their novelists and poets personally. They are comrades engaged in a common task. Pick-axe and spade, combine harvester and tractor, engineer's drawings, construction plans, financial estimates, music, prose and verse—all serve the common cause of Socialist construction.

In the fighting days of the Revolution the great tribune of poetry, Mayakovsky, wrote: "The song and the verse are a bomb and a banner, and the voice of the singer arouses the class. . . ." More than once, Mayakovsky's pealing voice aroused his audience. He tirelessly talked with the masses, in the literal sense, eliciting numerous comments by his speeches, and answering these remarks sharply, pointedly and interestingly.

It may be said that to a large extent Mayakovsky taught Soviet poets to talk directly with the masses. By now this has become a tradition and an organic part of the work of the writer. When literary evenings are held in clubs, theaters and university auditoriums, the crowds of those eager to get in almost break down the doors. Young students and workers, army men and office workers, all are equally desirous of hearing the writers whose works are familiar to them from their reading. Although the huge editions are immediately exhausted, a well organized library system enables every reader to acquaint himself with each new book that comes out. The work of the libraries, especially the factory libraries, is not limited to giving out books; they also establish close contact between the readers and writers. Evenings are organized, devoted to some particular author, at which papers are delivered on his works and all the readers take part in the ensuing discussion. Frequently the writer himself comes to such evenings to tell about his work and to read from his books. On such occasions he not only reads from his known writings, but from new work not yet published. And the reader often gives the author keen pointers on how to improve, develop or condense various passages. This form of cooperation, this common enthusiasm and community of interests make the bond between reader and writer an organic one. At one such evening, organized by the library of a big factory, an old worker took the floor and told a famous writer who had come to visit the factory:

"I hardly raised my eyes from your book from the moment I opened it. I didn't sleep for two nights. What fine people it shows. People with fight in them, young, happy people . . . . You read about it at night, and look around you in the daytime and see whether people are really like that. It's true to life. . . ."

It is probable that no critical article with a detailed analysis and opinion of his work afforded this veteran writer such enjoyment as this ingenuous remark.

But contact between the writers and the masses is not limited to receptions. In practically every factory and enterprise there are dozens of people engaged in literary pursuits, poets, prose writers, critics, journalists. They

Ilya Ehrenburg discusses his experiences as Izvestia *correspondent in Spain with pupils of school No. 186, Moscow*

are for the most part young people. They organize literary circles under the leadership of experienced literary men.

The meetings of many such workers' circles are conducted by poets and novelists. Thus the poets Selvinsky, Antokolsky, Aseyev, the prose writers Ognev, Zozulya, Vsevolod Ivanov and many others conduct theoretical and practical meetings; share their experience and train the youth for serious literary work. The publishers in turn help by a real anxiety to publish promising young writers.

The Writers' Club

It is a usual matter for the work of some writer or poet to be discussed by his colleagues. Many visitors drive up to the brilliantly lighted entrance of the sumptuous mansion on Vorovsky Street in Moscow. This is the Writers' Club. The neighboring building, which is also like a club, houses the offices of the Union of Soviet Writers. It possesses a large meeting hall, where in addition to business meetings, concerts are held and previews of the latest pictures given.

Literary memories are aroused by this house and this meeting hall. The house once belonged to the wealthy Moscow family portrayed in Tolstoy's novel *War and Peace*. The dancing feet of Natalia Rostova, most charming of Tolstoy's heroines, tripped lightly through this hall.

Both these writers' buildings house an intense and varied life. The main hall of the club and the blue and red salons each have their program for the evening. Today for example it will be hard to find room in the big hall, for the writer Victor Fink is to discuss his impressions of the International Paris Exhibition. He speaks of that, and of the funeral of Vaillant Couturier, and of the French Communist Party congress at Arles, which he attended.

Next the well-known writer of children's poetry, Agnia Barto, reads her new verses. Her trip to Spain at the time of the Second International Writers' Congress in Defense of Culture inspired a whole cycle of poems on the heroic struggle of the Spanish people against the fascists.

The forms and genre of Soviet poetry are varied. Much attention is devoted to the poetry of the different peoples inhabiting the country. A great wealth of literature has been made available through translation. The mountaineer poet E. Kapiev, who has a splendid command of Russian, reads his new translations from the poetry of the mountain peoples. This audience listens raptly to the expressive verses with their peculiar way of repeating the last word, which conveys the national character of the work. Kapiev reads a translation of verses from the language of the Laki, describing the death of the mountaineer Red Partisan Ai-Gazi. A tremendous impression is created by the last lines of the poem.

The pale moon quenches over the mountains, Ai Gazi
And to the long road of sorrow, a length is added, Ai Gazi

Such evenings are rich in creative impetus.

The Writer and Books

Gorky Street is one of the busiest thoroughfares in Moscow. It is still too narrow and seethes with people, automobiles, buses. In the rush hour it is hard to make your way along this street. But the moment you open the door of a certain shop you are engulfed in quiet and shadow. Not because there are no people there, but because in this small shop where the crowded bookshelves reach to the ceiling, people involuntarily lower their voices, which are further muffled by the acoustics of the place. This is the writers' bookshop. This does not mean that people of other professions do not come here; but the shop mainly serves writers.

The director of the shop is a man of broad culture, with a great fondness for books, which indeed constitute his whole life. He not only knows the face of each customer, but his tastes, as well. He knows that Prishvin prefers tales of hunters all over the world, and the life of nature, down to the tiniest minnow and gnat, to all other subjects; he knows that Shklovsky will not pass up a single book on Russian history no matter how old and obscure. He knows that Pavlenko is chiefly interested in military literature.

He offers Leonov tales and legends, he offers Zenkevich English poets in the original; and to Vsevolod Ivanov he offers anything.

In this bookshop considerable space is given to old books. The old-fashioned and rather cramped premises seem to harmonize with the contents. The casual encounters of writers in this club, where there is not even a place to sit down, are charged with interesting exchanges of opinion on this or that book. Here friendly advice is exchanged on where to find a book not to be had in the shop. To quote the poet Izmailov, who wrote of the shop of the then famous bookdealer and publisher Smirdin:

Between your walls, one ever finds
Good people of the bookish kind;
In friendly talk we sit up late
And let our cooling dinners wait.

Gorky Street is the street of bookshops. And the small shop described above is not the only one run by the Union of Soviet Writers. Two blocks away, another shop recently opened and splendidly appointed sells mainly new books.

Since new books are so quickly snatched up, a distributing agency serving the writers has been organized, to assure them, as similar agencies serve libraries and universities, receipt of needed books.

One should add that Moscow possesses large specialized book houses, where writers have access to studies, where they can make use of rare editions and manuscripts required in their work.

The Writer Must Know His Country

The Soviet writer derives his most important and most valuable subject matter from his own country, from the people, builders of Socialism. The Soviet Union covers a vast extent; its boundaries extend for sixty thousand kilometers, two and one-half times the length of the equator. The area of the Soviet Union is nearly triple that of the United States. The climatic zones of the Soviet Union range from arctic to subtropical. All the minerals in the world are to be found in it, as well as most species of animal life. The northern extremities are sheathed in eternal ice, while in Colchis three crops a year are harvested.

In the years of the Stalinist Five-Year Plans, the face of the map has been altered. New fields have been opened in geology and botany. Vegetation has been made to grow beyond the Arctic Circle. A network of agricultural stations has sprung up in the Far North, where previously there was nothing but swamp and rock. Dozens of big state farms may be found on the shores of the Arctic Ocean. In the city of Kirovsk, which lies in the same latitude as the Magnetic Pole and the Pole of intensest cold, the only Polar botanical garden on earth is located.

The arid deserts of Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan and Kara-Kalpakia have ceased to be lifeless patches on the map. Agriculture spreads. Flourishing industries have come into being, using the mineral wealth of these regions. New cities have sprung up lush with orchards and gardens.

New roads are under construction over the face of the Soviet Union. The USSR is the country of vast distances. In addition to the railways, automobiles and airplanes provide fast transportation.

New waterways, such as the Volga-Don and Baltic White Sea Canals, connect the seas and oceans, providing through transportation routes. The map of the old ways of communication has been consigned to the archives.

Industry, transportation and agriculture have been transformed. Within the borders of the Soviet Union one-twelfth of the human race is building a new emancipated life, free from the exploitation of man by man. "For the USSR Socialism is already a thing achieved and won." (Stalin)

All this provides the writer with a marvelous wealth of material. And Soviet writers are given every opportunity to use it. A powerful organization, the Union of Soviet Writers, serves them. Writers receive assignments to visit distant places and are provided with every facility on the way, and on the spot, to make a careful and conscientious study of the day-to-day life of the builders of Socialism in that locality. The Commissariats of Industry and the various government organizations extend cooperation to writers seeking to obtain a knowledge of various sectors of Socialist construction and of the ways of life of peoples who in tsarist times were kept in the position of "savages" and "backward," and who now are full-fledged members of the new Socialist society.

Marietta Shaginyan received such aid in the writing of her monumental novel *Hydrocentral,* which deals with the construction of a hydroelectric station in Armenia. Lidin wrote about the life of the North after a voyage to Sakhalin and Kamchatka. K. Paustovsky, in *Kara-Bugaz,* described the construction of a mighty combinat on the shores of the Caspian, and told how nomad Turcomans were drawn into the construction work and of how the desert was transformed into a verdant garden. F. Gladkov *(Cement, Energy),* P. Pavlenko *(Travels Through Turkmenistan, Desert)* and other writers have produced books which speak of the practical activities of the Soviet peoples and of the changes in human relations in the process.

The principal method of Soviet literature is Socialist realism. The writer who works according to its methods must possess a comprehensive knowledge of the reality which he describes, otherwise he will fall into mistakes and fail to grasp his subject in its entirety and complexity. Making it possible for the writer to carefully study his material is a service to Socialist realism.

The Life of the Writer

Herzen house is located at No. 25 on the Tverskoi Boulevard in Moscow. On the stone fence outside is a bas relief of the great Russian writer and revolutionary, whose birthplace the house is, Alexander Herzen. After the revolution the building was turned over to the writers' organizations.

Herzen House is now occupied by an institution called the Litfund (Literary Fund). Its main purpose is to look after the welfare of the Soviet writer. Substantial resources have been earmarked for this purpose. All Soviet publishing houses make a payment calculated at ten per cent of the total amount of authors' royalties to Litfund. In addition, all the theaters of the Soviet Union turn over two per cent of their receipts to it. Litfund also has several subsidiary enterprises, bookshops, a bindery, etc., all of which bring in substantial income.

When a writer needs a certain sum of money, he applies to Litfund and receives the required amount, to be repaid within an agreed period. Sometimes Litfund pays subsidies, especially in cases of permanent or temporary

At the service of Soviet writers is this special rest home in Yalta, "pearl of the Crimea." The rest home is open only to writers who come to work and it offers them every facility for literary creative activity

loss of working capacity, which need not be repaid. Litfund is the agency through which writers receive the benefits of the social insurance guaranteed to all toilers by Article 120 of the Stalin Constitution.

In Moscow the writers are served by three of the best clinics. Litfund has reserved accommodations in the best sanatoria for its members.

A whole system of so-called "literary houses" has been organized under the auspices of Litfund. These literary houses, which exist in the environs of Moscow, in the South, the Crimea and the Caucasus, are equipped like comfortable hotels. There writers who wish to escape from the distractions of the cities may go for periods of intensive work.

One of the departments of Litfund, the service bureau, concerns itself with the necessary "trivialities of life." If a writer wishes to procure railway or theater tickets, wants his house repaired, and so on, the service bureau attends to the matter. Litfund also serves the writers' families. Care of children is an important item in its activities. It conducts its own kindergartens and other institutions for children.

Litfund has branches in many cities. The administration is appointed by the Union of Soviet Writers. It is a voluntary organization.

The Writer as a Citizen

Soviet writers are the heirs of the best traditions of Russian literature and of the best representatives of progressive Russian society. Pushkin, Lermontov, Nekrasov, Saltykov-Shchedrin and Gorky espoused the great mission of struggle for freedom and justice. Through the long years of the autocracy

progressive Russian literature inspired a generation of revolutionaries and promptly challenged every act of violence and oppression committed by tsarism.

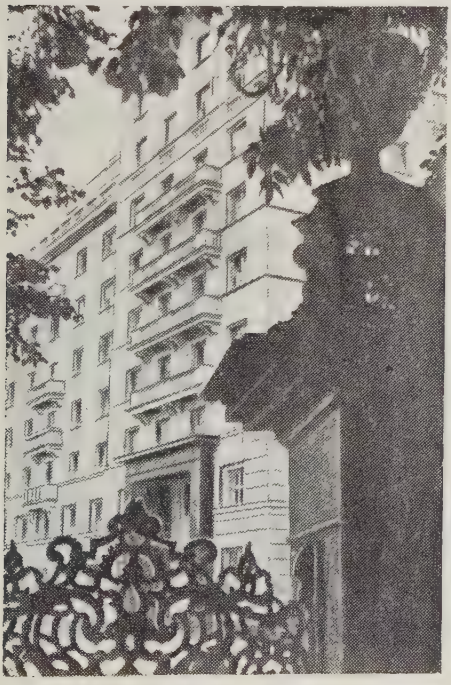
The poet Y. Polonsky wrote:

The writer is the people's nerve.
Bound with their fate he is;
And when their freedom, which he serves
Is lost, then lost is his.

Nekrasov formulated the significance of a writer as a citizen in the following lines:

From poetry you may slip
But not from citizenship.

In the period of Socialist construction every genuine Soviet writer recognizes himself to be a citizen of the Soviet Socialist fatherland and he places his gifts at the service of the Revolution. This should not be construed in a narrow sense. The Soviet writer does not deal exclusively with the problems of the present; he studies the past along with the present and evaluates it. The role of the literary heritage in the propagation of progressive ideas is large. Lion Feuchtwanger in his book *Moscow, 1937,* writes "Soviet citizens are indifferent to everything that has no bearing upon their reality, but having once discovered that some particular thing does have some bearing upon their reality, they compel it to live an extremely intense life; and the concept 'heritage' which they use with much eagerness acquires for them an extremely tangible character."



This new nine-story apartment house on Lavrushinsky Pereulok, Moscow, was built for writers

This contributes to breadth of vision in both Soviet writer and reading public; and the latter readily reacts to any problem of importance raised by a writer. One such burning problem is the country's defense, and Lion Feuchtwanger, with his keen perception, notes the increased interest in literature among Red Army people in the Soviet Union and the organizing role played by writers in the army which guards the borders of the U.S.S.R. "I do not know of any other country," writes Feuchtwanger, "where writing ability is so often combined with military talent. A great number of authors and editors in the Soviet Union are of the opinion that tomorrow, instead of continuing to dictate manucripts, they will command army detachments."

The writers react to all that happens in the country. Together with the whole people the writers come out in defense of their country against the

Trotskyite-Bukharinite traitors and agents of fascism, war-mongers, provocateurs, assassins and spies.

On December 12, 1937, a memorable day for the Soviet Union, when the first elections to the Supreme Soviet of the U.S.S.R. took place, Soviet writers—Alexei Tolstoy, Mikhail Sholokhov, Alexander Korneichuk, Vladimir Stavsky, Shalva Dadiani, Platon Oiyoonsky, Ibrahim Mirza Ajar-ogly—were among those chosen by the people, as the best sons and daughters of the country, the worthiest to receive the high title of Deputy to the Supreme Soviet.

This indicates the significance attached to the writer's craft in the Soviet land and how highly those writers are considered who have shown themselves devoted sons of the Soviet fatherland, serving with their pens the cause of Socialism.

In his report on the draft Constitution, J. V. Stalin declared: "Not property qualifications, not national origin, not sex, not official position, but the individual abilities and the individual work of each citizen determine his position in society."

These words inevitably come to mind when one speaks of the position of the writer in Soviet society. His abilities and work determine the writer's position and give him the possibility of occupying the place in the history of Soviet literature which he deserves.

The role of the master of the word is a great and many-sided one in the Soviet Union. He must be not only a creator of artistic works of high merit, creator of the future thoughts and feelings of millions of readers, but also the carrier of new ideas, of the most progressive ideas in the world.

The writer who is a citizen of the Soviet Union well knows that in the history-making epoch that he lives in, he has his duty as a defender and propagandist of Socialist culture, as its guardian from fascist barbarism and fanaticism.

ALEXANDER DEUTSCH

Alexei Tolstoy, author of Peter I, *addresses a gathering of his electors at the Leninist Days Collective Farm, Leningrad Province. Tolstoy is among those Soviet writers, who are deputies to the Supreme Soviet of the U.S.S.R.*

"STEEL" BY ANDRE PHILIPPE

The majority of the French prize books of 1937 bear witness to the bad taste and reactionary views of the jury. The Goncourt prize was awarded to the attorney Charles Plisnier, a political renegade, for his cheap "novel" *Forged Passports*. The selection of other "laureates" is hardly more satisfactory.

An exception is *Steel* by André Philippe, which received the prize "Cement," annually awarded for the best proletarian novel in French. The author is a young metal worker in an automobile plant. For fifteen years he worked in the Firmini steel foundry depicted in his book. He vividly depicts the speed-up at the plant, describing the industrial processes with great preciseness. Philippe wants to acquaint his readers with these "mysteries." His main character is steel. The huge steam-hammers and forges appear as living beings, resisting submission to man, trapping him.

The great steel foundry portrayed by Philippe, as well as the coal mines in which part of the action takes place, belong to the Firmini Co., and are situated near Saint Etienne. The workers of the plant are inhumanly treated. Accidents, which might have been prevented by rational organization of labor occur daily. The factory hospital fills with mangled and crippled workers.

Each worker is only a number to the management. Frequently even his name is unknown. With deep emotion one reads of the tragic death of No. 11, the Italian—the most vivid scene of the book.

Among the workers are Frenchmen, Italians, Spaniards, Moroccans. Work has brought them together, unites them in the kinship of proletarian solidarity.

In this, his first book, André Philippe has not yet acquired proportion in his narrative. The plot is a series of episodes, portraying daily life in the factory, the hiring of unemployed, work in the mines. The author fondly describes the family life of Besset and Roche. Several extracts from the newspapers, dealing with the steel-casting industry and the condition on the steel market in France, are wedged into the intimate episodes, and this confusion of styles is not always justified.

Philippe knows the life he pictures and his literary talents are indubitable. A fragment of his unpublished book *La Soudure* appeared in the December 1937 issue of the *Commune*. He describes Paul Vaillant Couturier's visit to the Besset family (who play the main part in the book) during Couturier's hiding from the police. The fragment gives a good idea of the ardent love of an ordinary proletarian family for the Communist Party, and makes exciting reading.

André Philippe has still much to do to master literary technique. But we welcome this newcomer to French literature as a talented son of labor, indissolubly linked with the people.

VLADIMIR RUBIN

The Most Responsive Audience in the World

In old Russia before the Revolution there were no theaters for the young.

Special children's theaters were established first in the Soviet Union in 1920-21.

The oldest are: The Central State Theater for young Spectators (Moscow), the Central Children's Theater (Moscow), and the Theater for Young Spectators (Leningrad).

The number of these theaters annually increases. At the present time in the U.S.S.R. there are, of established theaters, 104 providing entertainment for millions of children of all ages.

The network of theaters covers not only over the larger cities in the Russian Soviet Republic, but extends as well through the other republics: Ukraine, White Russia, Georgia, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, Kazakhstan, and Kirghizia.

The performers in these theaters are trained actors specializing in performing before child-audiences. The theaters are served by a corps of playwrights, composers, artists and producers who devote their talents to the children's theaters.

Besides the regular theaters, there are marionette theaters, which are extremely popular.

In March, 1938, one of the finest children's theaters—the Moscow Theater for Young Spectators—celebrated its tenth anniversary. The following data will give an idea of the scale on which these theaters work. During the ten years of its existence, 1927-37, this theater gave 4,836 performances to audiences numbering 2,535,000 people. Besides the performances given in Moscow, there were many on collective farms, in villages, factories, settlements, workers' clubs, Pioneer camps, including performances in the open air, in the squares and parks of the towns on public holidays. When on tour during the summer months the Moscow Theater for Young Spectators visited seventy-five cities in twelve national republics; it held five hundred and seventy-eight discussions with children and parents, conducted thirty-two courses for teachers and educational workers, fifteen exhibitions of children's work, and thirteen conferences of child-audiences.

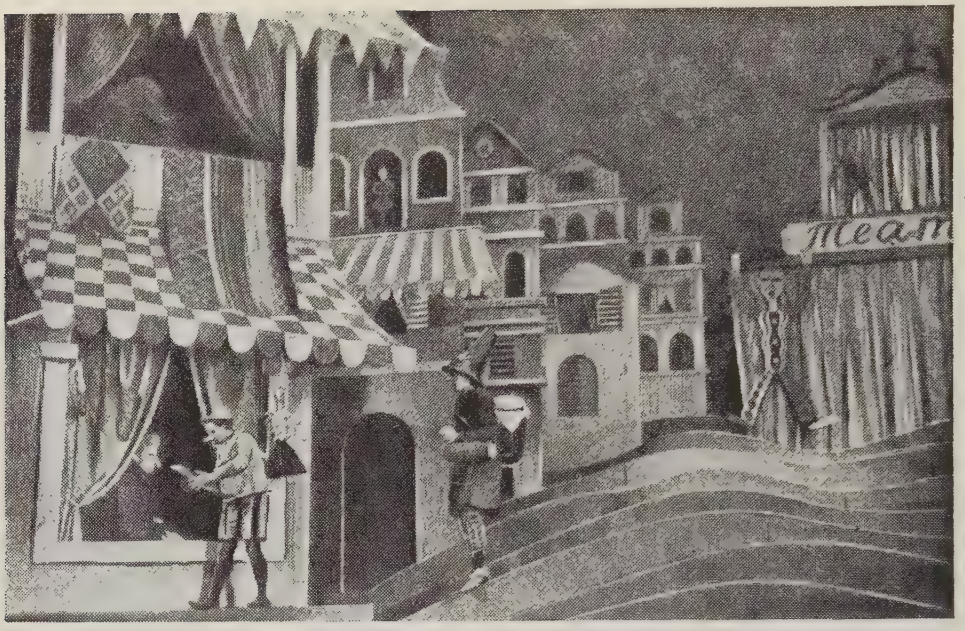
The theaters receive government support. The cost per auditor at the Moscow Theater for Young Spectators is six rubles, but the child pays only one ruble. Thus, five-sixths of the remaining expenses of the theater is borne by the government.

The proposition of educating children through art has been brilliantly stated by Nadezhda Constantinovna Krupskaya, co-worker of Lenin in his life and struggle:

"Through art, the child must be helped to attain a deeper understanding of his thoughts and feelings, a habit of thinking more clearly and feeling more deeply; the child must be helped to make this knowledge of himself the means toward a knowledge of others, the means of coming into closer contact with the collective, the means of growing up through the collective—together with others, and advancing, together with others, towards a new life, full of profound and important experiences."

THE CHILDREN AT THE THEATER

When Stanislavsky was asked how an actor should perform for children, he replied: "Exactly as he does for grown-ups; better if anything!"



Little Buratino sells his schoolbooks to buy a ticket for the puppet show—a scene from Alexei Tolstoy's play, The Golden Key, *at the Central Children's Theater, Moscow*

The words of this great master of the Russian theater are often quoted by the numerous Soviet children's actors.

The additional demands made on the children's actor are, first and foremost, a thorough knowledge of his unusual audience, a constant study of its peculiarities, and a sincere love of it.

It is an audience that can be compared with no other.

The adult who visits the children's theater for the first time, is puzzled and astounded. Until the curtain rises the theater hums like a disturbed bee-hive. The lights go out, but the children's animation is undimmed. The conductor raises his magic wand, but in vain.

But when the curtain goes up, there is instant silence.

The child-audience is the most difficult, but the most grateful and responsive in the world.

Alexei Tolstoy has written a play called *The Golden Key,* broadly adopted from *Pinnochio.* This has been produced at the Central Children's Theater. A wooden puppet boy, Buratino, is persecuted by the wicked Karabass-Barabass, who, at last, is caught in an awkward position. Buratino is able to tie him to a pine-tree and wind his beard—which is a meter and a half long—firmly around the resinous trunk. Karabass-Barabass tries to entice the unsuspecting little boy closer so as to grab the golden key from him.

"Buratino," he coaxes. "You're not a bad fellow, really. . . ."

The audience holds its breath. Will Buratino fall into the trap?

"Give me the little golden key," pleads the wily Karabass.

"Don't you give it to him!" comes the warning from the children in the audience, delivered in voices quivering with excitement.

"Come here, Buratino," Karabass-Barabass wheedles.

"Don't go, don't go!" the children scream, jumping from their seats and stamping their feet.

The child accepts everything that takes place on the stage in perfect seriousness. He does not put actor and character in separate categories. The stage "villain," who finds himself in the audience, has a bad time of it.

In *The Long Road,* produced at the Moscow Theater for Young People, there is a spy-part. At one point the actor impersonating the spy passes through the audience on his way to the stage. These ten paces or so become a long hard road for him. Little hands reach out pushing and pinching him. By the time the "spy" reaches the stage he has been pretty badly knocked about.

Need one be surprised at the zeal of such ardent patriots, these little owners of their country?

It must have been just such a child that the writer, Chukovsky, overheard in the Moscow Zoological Gardens.

"Svetik gazed at the huge beast for some time; at last he asked his mother: 'Whose elephant is it?'

" 'The government's.'

" 'Well, then, it's a little bit mine, too,' he concluded with great satisfaction."

How could a Svetik restrain himself from shoving and pinching a traitor, an enemy of his country?

On one occasion, after a performance of a play in which wrecking was shown, a sturdy nine-year-old went up to the educational worker on duty and, eyeing her with suspicion, said in a deep indignant voice:

"I can't understand why your theater employs a wrecker!"

At the close of the performance inveterate theater-goers crowd up to the footlights and call for their favorite actors. But they only call for the "good" people, the heroes. Even the older children act in this way. No matter how well an actor may play a "bad" part, he is never called for.

The child at the theater is extremely exacting—and cooperative. From the stage and the

Petya to the detective: "Please let me go . . . Mama will be anxious." —A moment in A Lone Sail Gleams White, *the play by Valentin Katayev, at the Central Childrens' Theater, Moscow*

actor he demands absolute truth and gives it approval by virtual participation. Adults often complain of the noise in the children's theaters.

The child audience makes two kinds of noise. It voices its excitement, its deep emotion; it is a form of spontaneous participation in the performance. This noise does not interfere with the performance, nor prevent the audience from following it. The actors appear to be stimulated by it.

But there is another kind of noise—the noise that comes from inattention; this is a confused tumult.

The children are not to blame for this, either.

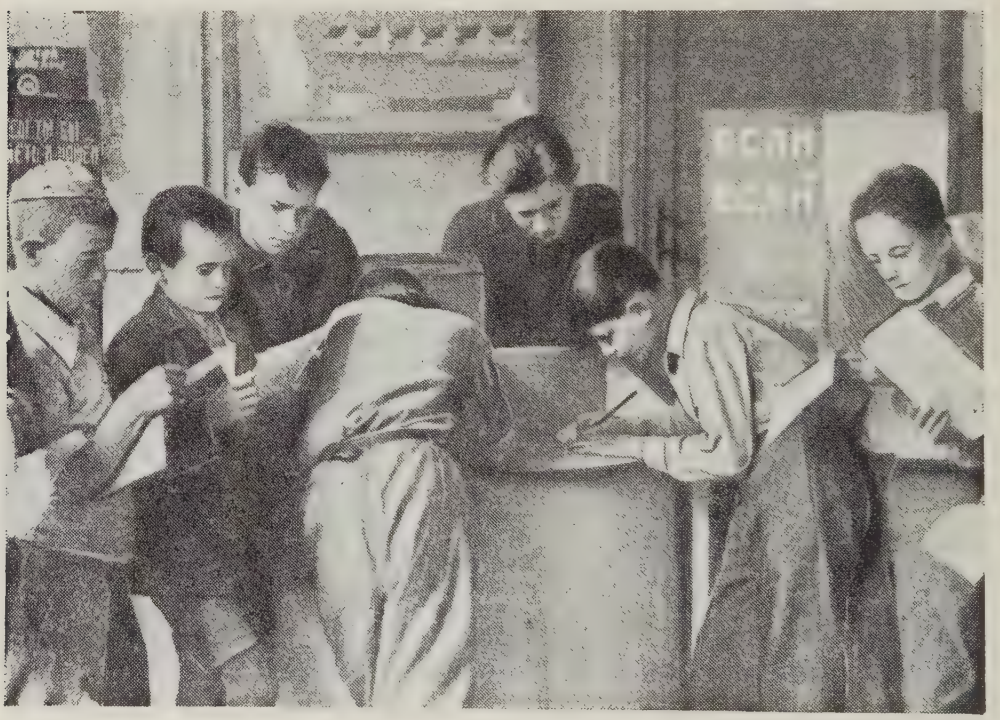
The actor, and none other, is to blame. It simply means that his perfomance is unsound.

In the intermission, the lively crowd troops into the foyer. A few years ago the children's theaters went in too sedulously for organized games, mass-dancing and singing, in the intermission.

This dissipated the children's attention, and drew it away from the performance. The child could not concentrate on the play, while someone called "Uncle Gene" was insisting on his joining in a game. It must be admitted that the energy shown by the aforementioned Uncle Gene was simply wonderful, but—it was out of place.

Nowadays the child finds in the foyer an exhibition devoted to the subject of the play. Every play has its own environment. When, for instance, Valentin Katayev's *A Lone Sail Gleams White,* or Trenyev's *Schoolboys* is being performed, the exhibition in the foyer illustrates events of the 1905 Revolution; if it is Kron's *The Rifle* the child will see exhibits dealing with the heroic Red Army.

By this method, the attention of the audience is properly directed, and the performance acquires a deeper significance.



Between the acts young theatergoers write their comments on the play at a special desk in the foyer. The children are encouraged to express their opinions, and their critical comments are discussed at frequent meetings between producers, actors and the young theater fans

Two 13-year old boys, Vitya Shevkov and Andryusha Petrenko, pupils of public school No. 186, Moscow, made this model of the Soviet North Pole Station

But in doing away with noisy games, the theater had no intention of making the intermissions severe and dull for the children.

They are free to run about and play in the foyer. There are "quiet" games for those who prefer them: dominoes, to which the local champions crowd, fishing-rods with real hooks on which, with patience and dexterity, one may catch a toy. There are also tables at which the children may draw, write their impressions, or read. Mass games are arranged for the youngest children only, before the performance starts. For these are impatient folk; they arrive forty or fifty minutes early and have to be distracted.

During the intermission there is always a big crowd around the "Questions and Answers" board. There is someone on hand to answer the inquiries of the visitors. The questions show great variety.

"Where is Flanders?"

"Does your theater work on Stanislavsky's system?"

"What's an indulgence?"

They are particularly interested in the technical points of production.

"How do they change the scenery?"

"How do they make thunder?"

Frequently the conditions of life in bygone days, as illustrated in the Russian classics, puzzle the children. For example, in Ostrovsky's *Accounts Between Friends Are Easily Settled,* the behavior of the heroine (the merchant's daughter Lipochka), impelled one little girl to ask:

"Why does she sit at home all the time? Doesn't she go out to work?"

The children's connection with the theater does not end with the performance. It is maintained through the schools, and through a lively correspondence.

A HUNDRED THOUSAND LETTERS

We do not assert that there were exactly a hundred thousand. Perhaps there were a few less, perhaps, a few more. . . .

At all events the postman delivers a great many every day from the child-audiences to their theaters. A child's letter is an important and useful document in the work of the theater.

The very little ones are the most zealous correspondents. For the most part, they address themselves, not to the managers, or to the actor, but directly to the hero of the play. Sometimes the addresses on the envelopes bring bewilderment to the workers in the post-office.

"The Golden Fish, Children's Theater," or "The Ostrich, c/o Aunt Tanya," are two examples.

"Tell me, Ostrich," writes a little girl, who evidently feels respect for the enormous bird, four times as tall as she is. "Tell me, Ostrich, are you a real ostrich or are you made out of a man?"

With regard to the poodle Artemon in *The Little Golden Key,* a little boy asks:

"Please explain, how this is done. Is it a dog in a person or a person in a dog or both?"

Generally speaking, the secrets of the theater "kitchen" have a tremendous fascination for the children. At the same time, they are exacting as to the technical details of the stage and never fail to point out defects. Here are three speciman letters:

"I didn't like the way the tree-trunk swayed when squirrels ran up it."—Shura Shmelkina (third year, School No. 167). "The trees Buratino swings on didn't stand firmly enough on the stage."—Reuben Nazharov (third year, School No. 25). "I didn't like the way the pine tree swayed—right from the root."—Nellie Zislin, aged nine.

Scene painters and makers of stage props would be unwise to disregard such criticism.

There are letters showing an accurate and profound appraisal of the performance.

"The music was well-chosen. It runs through the whole play like a needle and thread pierces the web of a fabric," is how Shura Leonov (a fifth year boy from School No. 25) describes the music Kovner composed to *Free Men of Flanders.*

The older children show a wonderful attentiveness to the social significance of a performance.

"*The Rifle* helped me to understand how the Red Army trains waifs and strays to be good, honest hard-working people."—Mikhailov (sixth year, School No. 28). Many criticize stage characters and demand greater emphasis on the social side. Of Calderon's play: *The Man Who Stands Guard Over Himself,* a fourteen-year-old boy writes: "It seems to me it would be still better if the king was a little different—cruel, harsh, rougher and more ignorant than he is in the play."

The actors who play children's parts receive the most letters.

They are very popular. Children's parts are usually taken by women, many with extraordinary success.

Some of the young correspondents are unusually exacting; they want to know literally everything.

"I would like to know how Buratino managed to get into such a very small log."

"What interests me is how Karabass-Barabass and the fox Alissa managed to get in through that door, when they had no key to it?"

"How did the toad let out the poison without first jumping to the ground?" "I would like to know who wrote the music!"

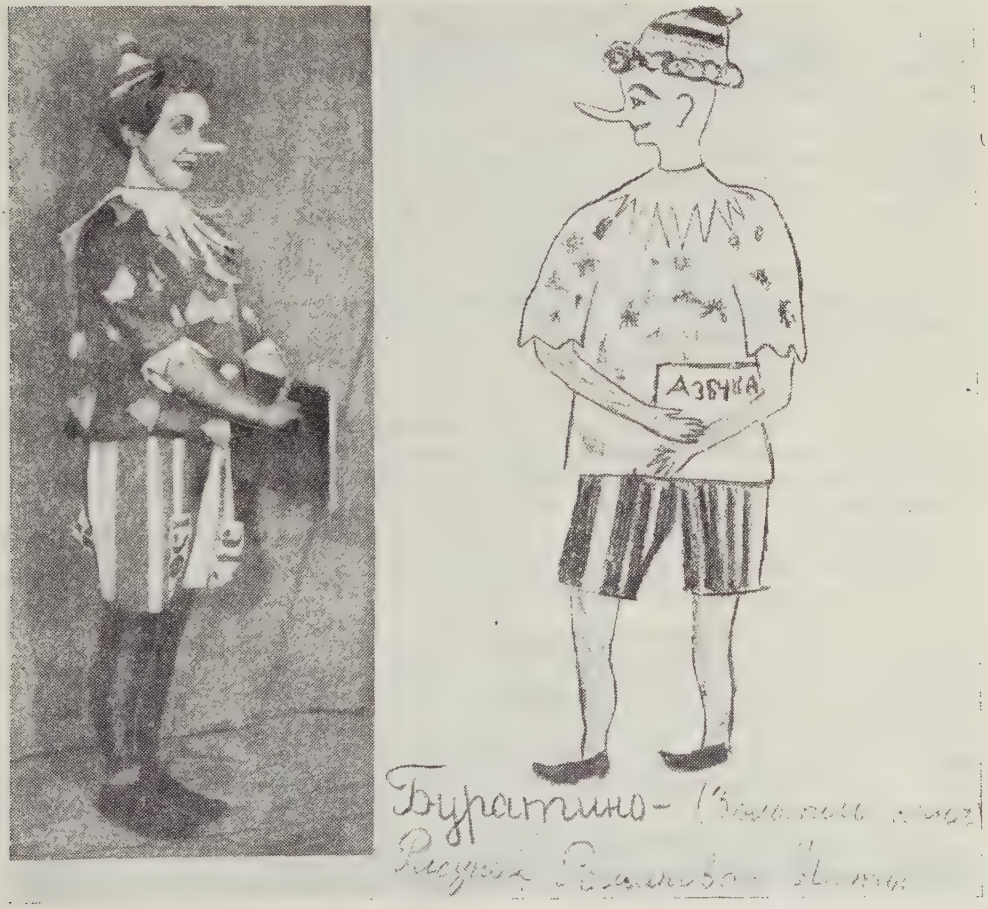
"Could you manage it so that Buratino wouldn't pose so much? And, if possible, could the fox have a longish muzzle? Yours, Ella Fyodorenko, aged ten."

Sometimes drawings are enclosed with the letters. Here again, the younger children are the most active. Technique has no terrors for them. A tiny tot will draw a stick and insist that it is a horse. The older children make greater demands on themselves. Drawings by elder children are rarer, they send only those that come up to their own standards.

THE THEATER AND THE SCHOOL

A close connection between the theater and the schools is indispensable: it helps the theater to select themes and to test itself.

This connection between theater and school takes different forms. While a play is being prepared the theater turns to the school for help. The Central State Theater for Young Spectators has just now set itself the task of producing plays about Soviet schoolchildren. This task demands a thorough knowledge of the conditions and customs of the Soviet school. The theater asked the pupils to describe scenes from school life. Now K. A. Trenyev, the



When Nata Romanova, 11 years old, saw The Golden Key *at the Moscow Central Children's Theater, she was inspired to submit the above drawing of the chief character, Buratino, whose photo is at the left. Literally thousands of such drawings, as well as critical letters, are received annually by the theater*

author of the play-to-be, has in his possession a big collection of these most interesting documents—letters from schoolchildren.

Through them the author is supplied with valuable information about his future heroes —Soviet schoolchildren.

The school takes an active part in the initial stages of production. Readings of the selected play are given in various schools. Both scholars and teachers are present. The play is discussed, improvements are suggested, corrections made, and wishes expressed. Permanently connected with the Central State Theater for Young Spectators is a child-artist circle, the members of which do still more interesting work. After they have heard the play read, they make models for the production. This work is entirely their own. Some of the models were shown at the International Exposition in Paris. Often these models suggest to the producer and artist some valuable detail for production.

In all cases of creative cooperation with the child, the theater keeps to one principle, namely: not to be led by the child, not to lag behind him.

Here is an interesting case from the experience of the Central State Theater for Young People: For the hundredth anniversary of the death of the great Russian poet, Pushkin, (February 10, 1937), the theater was preparing to produce *Russalka (The Mermaid).*

As is well-known, this poem—written in 1832—is unfinished. It breaks off at the point when the prince, seeing the little mermaid, exclaims:

"From whence art thou, bewitching child?" The liberetto of Dorgomizhsky's opera, based on Pushkin's poem, has an insipid ending. The prince is lured by the little mermaid to the bottom of the river, where he falls into the embraces of another mermaid, her mother, who was once a mortal and who drowned herself after being betrayed by him. The scene closes with general rejoicing.

To the child-audience the happy ending invented by grown-ups seems grossly unfair. The prince, they say, ought to be punished for his heartless conduct. When the producer, V. S. Kolesayev invited the schoolchildren to rewrite the conclusion of Pushkin's *Russalka,* an overwhelming majority called for the death of the prince. The opera was produced with that ending.

Not only authors and educators, actors as well, meet their audience outside the theater, in the schools.

The third year pupils of School No. 3, in the Krasnaya Pressnya District, Moscow, saw one of Hans Andersen's *Tales* produced at the Central State Theater for Young Spectators. A few days later the actors and educational workers from the theater visited the school to discuss the performance with the children. A lively conversation ensued.

Theater worker: "Children, not long ago you saw Andersen's tale *The Emperor's New Clothes* at the theater. In the play two boys appeared before the emperor and waved some material before him. Was it beautiful?"

All the children: "No!" Theater-Worker: "Why?"

Children: "There wasn't any really."

Theater-Worker: "But didn't the emperor's ministers see the material?"

Children: "No. They couldn't see it."

Theater-Worker: "Well, why didn't they admit it?"

Little boy: "The weavers had made it a condition, that whoever was a fool and didn't occupy his rightful place, couldn't see the material. So the ministers were afraid of giving themselves away."

Little girl: "When they went to look at the clothes they didn't want to think of themselves as fools."

Theater-Worker: "Now supposing you were in the ministers' place? Would you have said that there was no material?

Children: "Yes, we'd have said so."

Theater-Worker: "Is there anyone here who wouldn't have said so?" (Two raise their hands). "Why wouldn't you have said so?"

Boy: "I'd have said there was material because the emperor was a bad chap and would have thrown me out of my job if I'd confessed there wasn't any. . . ."

Theater-Worker: "So there are people in real life like the ministers in the tale?"

Boy: "Yes, some of the pupils here are just like that."

Girl: "It would be better to tell the truth, even if you lost your job. Anyhow, you could find another job right away. . . ."

Thus, the bridge between school and theater is strengthened, and becomes a sound and durable link, based on cooperation, mutual understanding and respect.

SUBJECT-MATTER FOR THE CHILDREN'S THEATER

The creative road of the children's theater has not been entirely free from mistakes.

At one time the pedologists in command of children's education, opened a campaign against fairy-tales.

The element of fantasy was strictly excluded from the child's daily life. The fairy-tale was declared to have an "injurious" and confusing effect on the child's mind.

The fairy-tale, then, having been sternly rejected, the pedologists advanced, as an "antidote" the instructive, educational play. This dealt with "scientific" questions: the child, they asserted, must not have recreation that was useless to him. There is no need to give examples here of the errors of over-simplified views like these views that show an entire disregard for the dialectics of childhood.

The stubborn pedologists strove to clip the wings of infant fantasy and hinder its flight. They forgot the works of the great Lenin regarding the importance of fantasy:

"It is folly to think that none but the poet stands in need of it. This is a stupid prejudice. Even in mathematics it is necessary, even the discovery of the differential and the integral calculus would have been impossible without fantasy. Fantasy is a quality of the highest value."[1]

The people who introduced this "stupid prejudice" into the science of child-training were depriving the child of the priceless heritage of the fairy tales.

There was an opposing school that went to the other extreme. It was the namby-pamby school that sedulously avoided subjects taken from life, and talked of creating "purely child-world" entertainment.

They forgot that the Soviet child is a little citizen with a broad outlook. He is not bred in a glass case. He is full of a burning interest in life and he wants to see the truth of it portrayed on the stage of his theater.

The Central Committee of the All-Union Communist Party had to interfere before these mistakes in child-training were corrected.

The repertoires of the children's theaters now include not only tales from Hans Andersen, Pushkin, Perrault and the Brothers Grimm, but the works of the realistic writers like Gogol, Ostrovsky, Moliere, Dickens, and Mark Twain, the scientific fantasies of Jules Verne, and exciting revolutionary subjects from the pens of contemporary Soviet authors: Alexei Tolstoy, Valentin Katayev, K. A. Trenyev and others.

The Moscow Theater for Young Spectators, which celebrated its tenth anniversary in March 1938, has produced in its short life forty-three plays. Its repertoire includes plays on the

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[1] *V. I. Lenin: Conclusion to Report of the C. C. at the Eleventh Congress of the Russian Communist Party,* March 28, 1922 (From Collected Works, Russian ed. Vol. XXXVII)

following subjects: national defense, the international brotherhood of peoples, life in the Soviet school, the solution of the street-waif problem, the fight against anti-Semitism. We also find subjects like friendship, family life, work, discipline, and prejudices; subjects, in fact, that appear to be thoroughly "grown-up," but which, in the form of a lively play with plenty of action in it are easily understood by the child audience.

The Central Children's Theater is preparing a play on the invention of printing, with Johann Gutenberg as the central character, the Central State Theater for Young Spectators an adaptation of Mark Twain's *The Prince and the Pauper*. Talented Soviet authors like K. Paustovsky, S. Mikhailov and others write for the children's theaters.

The heroism of Soviet life inspires children. At the time when the whole world was anxious over the fate of the four daring men in the frozen wastes of the Arctic, the Central State Theater for Young People received a present from two thirteen-year old boys, Vitya Shevkov and Andryusha Petrenko (School No. 186). It was a beautifully made model of Papanin's camp on the ice-floe. There was, by the way, a motive behind this gift; it was a hint to the theater to produce a play about the Pole!

JULES VERNE ON THE STAGE

With sinister leisureliness the pirate vessel approached the rocky shore where five men, armed only with the bows and arrows they had made themselves, were in hiding. Their doom seemed certain.

The audience held its breath.... Suddenly, there was a deafening roar, and a torpedo flung by the hand of the mysterious Captain Nemo rent the robber brig in half.

Applause and shouts from the audience.

A mysterious island; Jules Verne! Children all over world read this fascinating book. In March 1938, A. Talanov's dramatization of *The Mysterious Island* was produced at the Moscow Theater for Young Spectators. The staging of the story of the five daring Americans who found themselves on a desert island and made prodigious efforts to create their own little civilized world there, was extremely difficult. The author of the adaptation, was, of course, obliged to omit a good deal; the children know their Jules Verne and noticed these gaps at once.

"What a lot they've left out!" "Yes, of course. We'd have to sit here a whole month if they were to show all that was in the book."

"Would you sit here a whole month and see it all?"

"I'd love to! Wouldn't you?"

"Rather!"

Jules Verne's principal idea, which was to show the triumph of human will and knowledge over nature, and the great sense of human fellowship—is well conveyed in the play.

It portrays convincingly the struggle for the freedom of oppressed peoples, a problem which is only hinted at in Jules Verne's book. It must be remembered that the action takes place during the American Civil War of 1861-65.

This background is emphasized by the producer in the prologue, which shows the siege of Richmond, by the troops of General Grant.

The author returns to the question of the struggle for national independence (the emancipation movement in India against the colonial policy of the British) in the closing scenes, where Captain Nemo comes to the fore.

The theater has contrived to infuse the idea of genuine humanism into the performance. The colonists' protective, considerate attitude towards the criminal Ayrton, who had been left to the mercy of fate twelve years previously and has become only half-human, involuntarily excites one's sympathy.

The talented producer, however, has not been able to save the play from lengthiness. In the first scenes the action is slow. The setting, too, is not quite satisfactory. The island and the rocks look flimsy. On the other hand, the artist, V. Muller, has been successful with the scenery for the bamboo grove, which was vigorously applauded by the children. Effective, too, is the scene in the cabin of the *Nautilus* with the gigantic octopus quivering in the depths of the sea under the convex glass of a huge illuminator.

The ending of the play differs from Jules Verne's conclusion. The island is not destroyed by an earthquake, nor does a ship appear on the horizon and come to the rescue.

The bold islanders make their own sailing boat and sail away to their own country, only to return soon afterwards to their beloved island. . . .

It is with faith in human nature and respect for human labor that the audience leaves the theater after seeing this play.

PUPPET ACTORS

Until the performance begins these actors lie in boxes and drawers and special sacks or hang on hooks.

After the performance they often have to be sent to "hospital" to have heads and noses mended, for these features sometimes suffer in stage fights.

. . .The puppeteer takes his position behind the screen; his hand is raised, his head thrown back. Actors cling to each hand; they are toy-actors; The man sets them moving, laughing, weeping, running and tumbling, talks for them in different voices.

Petrushka, the Russian Punch, can trace his history back through the ages. We know from authentic sources that as far back as three hundred years ago the Russian people enjoyed the performances of this indefatigable buffoon, cynic and fighter.

In Adam Olearius' well-known work *A Journey to Moscovy* (1633-38) we find a detailed description of this remarkable popular theater, which, complete with stage and actors, could be carried on a man's back.

The Punch and Judy show (or Petrushka as it is called here), has always been a favorite with the Russian people. The poet Nekrasov in his poem: *Who Can Be Happy And Free in Russia* has devoted some fine lines to "Petrushka" and his exploits! Here is a rough translation of them:

With all the rest our travelers rushed
And at the puppet booth were crushed.
They clapped at all. And good jests flew,
Petrushka did his hullabaloo,
And nagged the goat who beat the tatoo
No hurdy-gurdy gave the tune,
Real music blared that sonorous noon
They looked; they laughed; the fun rose high
Petrushka never was so sly.
Tho connoisseurs might have disdained
The wit as coarse, the humor strained,
It was enough to see cops whacked.
And their spick uniforms mud-tracked.
The good crowd laughed aloud in glee
And often they would make so free
As put in, here and there a word
That might have angered, were they heard,
Officials in their offices.

Children at the Moscow House of Pioneers find a gay comrade in S. Obraztsov, Honored Artist of the Republic, director of the Moscow Central Marionette Theater

The Russian people, a rebel people who were kept for centuries in a state of hopeless slavery, loved Petrushka for his prowess, and daring repartee.

Behind his screen Petrushka fought the ancient enemies of the people: the merchants, the policeman, the horse-dealer. . . .

Petrushka thrashed the policeman, but in the end the policeman killed Petrushka. On the eve of the imperialistic war of 1914, the Petrushka theater disappeared almost entirely.

The Revolution restored this wonderful art and the puppet theater acquired a new audience in the Soviet child.

The calico curtains, daubed in gaudy colors, were replaced by complicated mechanical stage devices. It is no longer a one-man show; now a number of people work the dolls and instead of the single musician of the old days, a whole orchestra accompanies the performance.

There are two main types of puppet theater; the "Petrushka" or Punch and July show, and the marionette theater.

A "Petrushka" is a doll worn on the hand like a glove.

The marionette—a doll worked by strings.

In the U.S.S.R. the puppet theater is no longer a vagrant, traveling entertainment. These theaters have their own buildings, their own permanent staff of actors, producers, and artists. They receive generous support from the state. The Central Marionette Theater in Moscow, managed by S.N. Obraztsov (Honored Artist of the Republic), receives a yearly subsidy of a million and a half rubles from the state. This grant enables the child auditors to see productions at which no expense is spared at very low admission.

The puppet theaters have brought their work to a very high level, and achieved great refinement in technique, preserving at the same time the simplicity and charm of the old Petrushka show.

In December, 1937, an all-Union ten-day demonstration of the marionette theaters was held in Moscow. The puppet theaters of Moscow, Leningrad, Tbilisi, Yerevan, Kiev, Tashkent, Voronezh, Rybinsk, Kazan and other towns, gave performances—thirty-two in all.

The perfomances showed that the art of the puppet theater is growing and making progress, and that in certain localities extremely interesting national collectives, for example, the Jewish Marionette Theater in Kiev, are being built up.

"What is the use of a marionette theater?"

"Why bother with doll actors? Would it not be better if living actors played these parts?"

"What plays should a marionette theater perform?"

The reply is extraordinarily simple.

"Nothing that a human actor *can* play."

"Anything that a human actor *cannot* play."

This is just the point; how can a human actor be transformed from a lion into a mouse (as in *Puss-in-Boots)*? How can a pine-tree blossom out in roses; or a sun play the concertina (as in *By the Magic Pike's Orders*)? How could an ordinary dog (*Chestnut*) play the principal role in any stage but that of the puppet theater?

Naturally, S. V. Obraztsov, who invited the incomparable actor Moskvin to see him, had a perfect right to say challengingly—with a triumphant gesture in the direction of his toy-heroes:

"Now then respected Ivan Mikhailovich let's see how *you* would play that!"

Oaken pails acquire human legs, a cart rushes along with no horse attached to it, a stove makes its way into a palace, a huge tree chops itself up into neat faggots. And all these marvels are effected by the hands of five or six puppet masters, in the lightest and most compact of all theaters.

In the summer the puppet theaters travel many a mile about the various districts of Moscow, giving free performances for children.

Sometimes on a beautiful summer's day one may see a gaily-painted car drive into the courtyard of one of the huge Moscow apartment houses swarming with children. And the word goes round: "Petrushka's here!"

Scarcely has the car come to a standstill, when the yard is alive and busy.

Orchestra boxes and gallery are hastily improvised. The members of the audience run up with benches and empty crates or sit on the ground. The fences, the roofs of neighboring sheds, and the windows are packed with eager onlookers. Even the tiny tots drag up their own chairs (ones with round holes in the seat). Grown-ups come too.

The lively performance begins.

A man holds in his hand a little black skin, two glittering buttons of eyes and dejected tail. A minute later the skin comes to life; its paws move rapidly, it wags its tail triumphantly and then, over the top of the screen Puss-in-Boots appears, dressed in a red cloak and a green hat.

A man's fingers have brought him to life.

Every day the many children's theaters open their doors hospitably to the happy Soviet children. . . .

Once, after a performance, we overheard the whispered conversation of a group of conspirators in the cloak-room.

"You know what, next time let's agree not to go out of the theater at all. . . . Perhaps it'll start all over again!"

SERGEI BOGOMAZOV

LETTERS FROM WRITERS

Dear Comrades,

I am writing a great deal (for my work is not only a passion with me, it is also a social duty—I understand that better now than ever before). I recently completed a novel, *Water*. The theme is the struggle of the Spanish village against nature and a despotic state. I have also completed a collection of stories in which I strove to depict the intellectual life of Spain for the last ten years. I am now finishing a novel, *Man, His Shadow and the Wall.* This is the story of the life of a peasant who fled from the village and lived ten years in the hills, alone, like a wild beast. The novel portrays a man who stood a head above his contemporaries, who was imbued with high spiritual qualities, love of freedom, truth and justice. In the conditions of Spanish reality of those days (this took place in my village when I was nine years old) he reached complete desperation, complete spiritual ruin.

I have also written several plays, rough drafts as yet, for their production is temporarily impossible.

I wish your readers happiness, great happiness such as is possible only in the U.S.S.R.

RAMON J. SENDER

. . . I feel it a real honor that *Very Heaven* should be translated into Russian and should meet with the approval of your critics. Do you think you could send me a copy of the translation? I should be very glad to have it. And I should indeed be glad to have the press-cuttings. . . .

Next week a new novel of mine will be published in England. It is called *Seven Against Reeves*, and is the story of a minor English capitalist who retires on his invested savings to live the leisured life. He not only finds that he is bored, but becomes involved in a society of wasters, parasites and pretenders who shamefully get money out of him. Finally, in disgust, he goes back to his work. I do not know if this book would interest modern Russia, since you are no longer afflicted by social parasites of this kind, and the life described would probably seem utterly strange and futile. . . .

I have in mind another oblique attack on bourgeois culture, to be called *Let's Go On Talking*. . . . But as I have not yet thought out all the details, I will say no more of it.

With all good wishes

13/2/38 *RICHARD ALDINGTON*

Krasny Yar, Ilovatsky Canton, Volga German ASSR

Dear Comrades,

Please convery to the writer Richard Aldington that I think his novel, *Very Heaven*, splendid. In the figure of Chris this novel brilliantly portrays a talented young person persecuted by the existing system and finding no place for himself in life. The hero of the novel says with truth: "If we lived in Russia the question would not arise."—*i.e.*, the question of the impossibility of a free and joyous life for young people in love with each other.

These words are splendid, and perfectly true. I felt all the experiences of the hero of the novel, sympathized with him and suffered with him. Chris' words: "... but the rest of us can go hang ourselves..." breathe such tragedy that to us, citizens of the Soviet Union, it seems simply monstrous. Alongside a remarkable portrayal of all layers of the bourgeois world (except the working class) the author indicates Chris' optimism and his faith in an undefined future: "I know I shall never see the world of more perfect men and women of which I dream. . ." Chris says. However, I think such people as Chris can see this world of more perfect people quite well, for it already exists in the Soviet Union and will be established everywhere despite all barriers.

P. BOBROV, schoolteacher

International Literature has received a letter from its Paris correspondent, P. Pierreville, in which he reports interesting details of the book crisis in France.

"The book crisis here not only continues, but grows," he writes. "Even books of authors who hold *le prix Goncourt* do not sell. Recently I bought a new uncut edition of French classics at Flammarion's—for two francs a volume! In conversation with the manager of the bookshop, I asked him how he was able to sell such books so cheaply. He answered: 'We have to earn a living somehow! No one will buy Goncourt prize authors at eighteen francs a volume!' And Flammarion is one of the largest book dealers. Hundreds of new books, just issued, can be bought a month after their appearance at half price and even cheaper. No one wants to publish poets and new authors at all, who must publish at their own expense. Political pamphlets and brochures sell best of all. Textbooks still sell, because they are necessities."

A large number of foreign writers describe their immediate literary activities and their plans for the near future in letters to *International Literature*. We publish excerpts from letters from the following:

Jean Cassou (leading French anti-fascist writer and critic): "The article on the workers of 1848 which you saw in *Commune* is, as you thought, a chapter of a book I am preparing on that subject and on the philosophy and spirit of that exceptional period so vital in emotions and ideas. I hope that it will interest our Soviet comrades. . . ."

Carlo Sforza (Italian publicist, now an *emigré* from his homeland; a member of the bureau of the International Association of Writers in Defense of Culture): "I have finished a study *on Pachic and the Union of the Jugoslavs. Fifty Years of Wars and Diplomacy.*

"It is historical evidence which seeks above all to be true. It brings new proofs of the criminal folly of the cabinets of Vienna and Petersburg vis-a-vis the Balkans. . . . The book will appear in Czech, English and other languages."

Guglielmo Ferrero (anti-fascist Italian writer, member of the presidium of the International Association of Writers in Defense of Culture):

"I am now working on a duology—if may use that expression—on the French Revolution. The first volume was published a year ago by Plon in Paris, under the title *Adventure—Bonaparte in Italy, 1796-1797.* It is the real story of the Italian campaign and the treaty of Campoformio which for me marks the beginning of the great chaos of the West in which we still find ourselves after a century and a half. The book has made a big impression in French historical circles because it deals with the history of that campaign in a manner different from the traditionally accepted version, which one finds in all the historians both in France and abroad.

"Now I am working on the companion volume, a book entitled *Construction—Talleyrand At Vienna. 1814-1815.*"

CHRONICLE

CHINA

"October Sketches"

Our editorial office has received a copy of *October Sketches,* a magazine issued by the Chinese Anti-Japanese Association of Culture, and published in Shanghai before its occupation by Japanese interventionists.

We reproduce two columns from this paper with an explanatory note.

This paper is the size of a leaflet of four pages, three of which are filled with drawings by well-known Chinese artists. The drawings can be understood even by the illiterate. The desire to bring the paper nearer to the masses defines its character.

The editor of this unique paper is the well-known Chinese woman artist Yu Fin. It was published with funds obtained from donations. A large part of the issue was sent to the fighters at the front.

It is issued irregularly, depending on the funds donated, its title changing with the date of the issue.

Before us is the October number. The revolutionary history of the Chinese people is linked up with October by an important date, October 10, 1911. On this day the Manchu dynasty was overthrown. Ever since, this day has been celebrated as a national holiday.

In Chinese the figure 10 is represented by the hieroglyphic form of a cross. The tenth day of the tenth month—the date of the celebration—is represented by two crosses joined together. These two crosses form the main graphic motif of most of the illustrations.

On the first page appears the head of a wounded soldier drawn by Yu Fin. A bandage with the celebration emblem drawn on it covers the left eye of the fighter. Accompanying the drawing is a poem *To the Death of a Fighter.* This poem calls for vigilance—it speaks of the last minutes of a machine-gunner killed by a spy.

A spy creeps up and throws a grenade at the heroic machine-gunner. Mortally wounded, clothes soaked in blood, he continues to mow down the attacking enemy until he loses consciousness. He revives in the field hospital. He has lost so much blood that the doctor warns him of his danger and suggests writing a farewell letter to his relatives.

"My family is no more," answers the machine-gunner with a bitter smile. He suffers from the thought that he is dying not from an enemy bullet, but at the hand of a spy.

"Who is this spy? asks the fighter.

"He is Chinese also. We pay too little attention to educating and organizing the masses—the cunning enemy has taken advantage of this. From these masses he recruits his agents and incites them to murder their own fellow countrymen." The flame of life flickers out, but the eyes are still open, looking beyond as though fixed in a vision of victory.

The poem takes up the whole of the front page—the rest of the issue is given up to captioned drawings.

There are four drawings by the artist Tsai Jo-huan. A high sepulchral mound of stones, on it a tombstone in the form of the celebration emblem. On one-half is the inscription *The Manchu empire is dead,* on the other half, *The Chinese Republic is born.* Through dark clouds covering the earth the sun's rays are breaking. Beneath is the inscription: *On the grave of the Manchu Dynasty we celebrate our revolution.*

In the second drawing two swords are borne on the shoulders of a stooped Chinese. On one sword is written: *Imperialist aggression,* near the other: *Remains of feudalism.* The sun is shut out by a heavy black cloud. The two swords lay too heavy a burden on the backs of the people.

A heavy black boot steps on the chainfastened Chinese soil, sown with human bones. A short Japanese bayonet pierces a helpless human body—such is the content of the third drawing entitled: *How long shall we live under the heel of the enemy?*

Illuminated by the sun's rays the emblem of the people's holiday again rises over the world: Two large hands hold guns over the head of a running figure wearing a round Japanese cap and hornrimmed glasses. The inscription states: *This year we show our determination to repulse the enemy and build a monument to the rebirth of the Chinese nation.*

The appeal to struggle, to master all forces to save China runs through all the drawings.

In a drawing by Nu Y-deayo, a young Chinese standing by the bodies of his comrades killed by Japanese airplane machine gun fire says: "Bombardment has strengthened our desire to struggle."

The artist Ma Da depicts how the population aids its own army. Beneath the town-gates passes a slogan-bedecked truck carrying reserves. The people warmly welcome the fighters.

Another drawing commemorates the anniversary of the death of the writer Liu Sin. With a waving banner in one hand and a scroll of his compositions in the other, Liu Sin calls the Chinese people to the struggle.

The same spirit is to be seen in the drawing of the famous Chinese artist Chen Yun-nua. A fighter going into the attack raises his rifle, and calls on his comrades to defeat the enemy.

How to celebrate the anniversary of the Chinese Revolution is the caption to the drawing on the last page, by the artist Yoo Dza. A Chinese pierces two Japanese with his bayonet. The silhouettes of their bodies form a hieroglyph of the emblem of the People's Celebration Day.

Interesting are the *Historical Examples* by the woman artist Yu Fin.

Twenty-six years ago the people raised the banner of the Revolution and overthrew the Manchu monarchy. On October 10 the Chinese Republic was proclaimed. We see an energetic lad pushing out of an easy chair, symbolizing a throne, the little Emperor Pu yi, the last representative of the Manchu Dynasty.

"Then the northern militarists managed to put their hands on a few provinces. It required the three legacies of Sun Yat-sen and union with the U.S.S.R., union with the Chinese Communist Party, and the improvement of the position of the workers and peasants, and the famous northern campaign of the National Revolutionary Army to force them out," is the inscription to the next drawing.

In the drawing a general runs away from a club inscribed with the great legacies of Sun Yat-sen.

The lack of political unity in the country led to continuous civil wars. This is illustrated by the third drawing. Here are two Chinese fighting; behind a wall we see a dwarf hiding; he has a bag over his shoulder; looking on he incites them to further efforts. This is the Japanese imperialist. The inscription on the bag over his shoulder shows that he has already tucked in three north-eastern provinces. In his hand is another bag. It is his new prize: the Hua Bay valley in North China.

The concluding drawing shows the end of this fight. This year, states the inscription, on the day of the national holiday the Chinese do not kill each other. The illustration depicts the unity of the people in the struggle against the common enemy.

Historical examples teach that only by the joining of all their forces will the Chinese people gain their freedom.

GERMANY

The Struggle of the German Students Against the Fascist Dictatorship

The world press has repeatedly drawn attention the catastrophical condition in which the educational system of the "Third Empire" finds itself. Even the fascist press has been forced to acknowledge this. The *Frankfurter Zeitung,* in a special article, has remarked on the sharp reduction in the number of students and teaching personnel in all German educational institutions and the acute shortage of teachers in the elementary schools, a shortage felt despite the reduction in the number of schools.

How do the students and the teaching personnel, since they still do exist in the "Third Empire," react to the subversion of the cultural life of the German people? This question is answered in the correspondence from Germany received by the anti-fascist newspaper *Deutsche Volkszeitung.* This newspaper particularly notes that the German student has chosen tactics of "passive resistance" to the fascist regime. The methods of applying these tactics are varied.

With police terror reigning in the German universities, where students have not even the right to ask questions at lectures, open mass protest against the Hitler regime is of course impossible. Under these conditions an original form of protest was devised in one of the universities; as the fascist orator came forward, he was met with such prolonged deliberate "applause" that he was unable to begin his speech.

A new film, recast from Ibsen's play *Doctor Stockman,* appeared on the Berlin screens. At the student showing of this film, demonstrative applause was heard only when Stockman accuses the city officials. And it was clear to everyone that this applause was directed against the corruption and bribery in the fascist municipalities.

Berlin students circulate thousands of copies of Thomas Mann's famous answer to the rector of the Bonn University. Individual student groups publish illegal newspapers in which they indict the fascist regime.

Characteristic is the growth of the number of the so-called "free students," that is, students who are not members of any of the organizations of the National-Socialist Party. In 1937 more than 60 per cent of all the students of Munich refused to enter fascist organizations.

During last year's summer vacation, out of 16,000 Berlin students, only three hundred could be recruited into the fascist organization "Landhilfe," organizing students to help in the work on the farms of land magnates.

"Goethe... the Murderer of Schiller"

A year ago the German Ministry of Propaganda prohibited the publication of Ekkerman's *Conversations with Goethe;* and now, the *Neue Veltbühne* informs us, a regular devil dance of obscurantism and barbarism is being staged around the memory of the great German writer.

Frau Ludendorff, widow of General Ludendorff, already a specialist in graphological booklets on "leaders of the true-German spirit fallen victim to Jewish conspiracies," published a new "opus" with the title of *The Uncondonable Crime Against Luther, Mozart, and Schiller.*

The general's widow, in this booklet, denounces Goethe. . . . the murderer of Schiller, asserting "authentically," that Schiller (who, as is well known, died of tuberculosis in Weimar in 1805) "was poisoned by his own friends on direct instructions from Goethe." This was done, of course, on secret orders of the Masonic Lodge, servant of world Jewry.

The attempt to make Goethe the murderer of his own friend Schiller evidently suited the tastes of the fascist obscurantists. The vehement "frankness" of Frau Ludendorff earned the recommendations of the Ministry of Propaganda, and was published in tens of thousands of copies.

The "Goethe Society," still maintained in fascist Germany, publishes every year dry-as-dust philological reports. The ungifted functionaries of this society, frightened by the "troubadours" of Goebbels, commissioned Professor Marcus Hekker of Weimar to rehabilitate Goethe. The results of Hekker's work are contained in this book issued by the Leipzig publishers Insel-Verlag, *The Death and Entombment of Schiller.*

The auther of this tedious book meekly assures the reader that Goethe, strictly speaking, did not think of killing Schiller and ends the book with the following deferential apostrophe addressed to the menacing fascist General Staff.

"This woman carries a name which we will pronounce with pride and deep respect for the duration of a hundred years. For the sake of this great name we turn to the error of the author with silent grief." Further on the author mournfully states: "As new editions of this destructive book are thrown on the market, the fatal poison penetrates deeper and deeper." Hekker pronounces the "version" of Madame Ludendorff "obvious and indisputable insanity."

But in spite of the learned deprecations of Professor Hekker, the voice of this mad woman was heard from the German official circles: the naive professors of the "Goethe Society" did not appraise Herr Goebbels high enough. They hoped that although the government did not prohibit the idiotic book of Frau Ludendorff's openly, the Goethe Society would at least be allowed freedom of action. However, the ministry of propaganda, not meditating too long on the subject, excluded Hekker's book from circulation. Let not even well-meaning fascist professors presume to think that they can be better informed than Madame Ludendorff.

The Critic as Vandal

The famous Hitlerite "literary critic," the obscurantist Adolph Bartels, ecstatically informs his readers in the columns of the official Nazi *Voelkishe Beobachter* that the names of "non-Aryan" authors amongst whom are Heinrich Heine, Ludwig Börne, Ferdinard Lassalle, and others, have been excluded from the new catalogue of the veteran publishing house Reklam.

Bartels is still dissatisfied. According to this vandal the catalogue is contaminated by still another series of "non-Aryan" names, for instance, those of Georg Ebers, Hugo von Hoffmansthahl, Hans Olden, and others. And he demands their immediate exclusion from the catalogue. In his conclusion Bartels proposes a plan to publish a bibliography in which would be listed "all of the worst works published by Jews against the German spirit." Not yielding to false modesty, Bartels adds: "I am ready to undertake such a work and request the publisher inclined to undertake such an anthology to apply to me immediately."

Enemies of Art

The campaign against "degenerative" art is still being continued in the "Third Empire." Among the noted artists victimized by this campaign are included as is known such artists as Kathe Kollwitz, Georg Grosz and others. Recently a Berlin museum excluded from its galleries a painting having for its subject Judith with the head of Holopernes. It is forbidden to show to the German people the picture of a Jewess guilty of the death of "Aryans," ironically comments the Bashe *National Zeitung.*

Recently a conference of directors of German museums was held in Berlin. At this conference one of Goebbels' men, a certain Hansen, made an "instructive" speech, the import of which was: The conception of "degenerate art" concerns not only modern but ancient art as well. "We repudiate the painter of the Ghetto—Rembrandt." After this speech seven directors, invited to the conference, demonstratively left the hall.

As the anti-fascist *Deutsche Informationen* communicates, the fascist painter Willrich recently published a book called *The Purification of the Temples of Art* in which he pitilessly scourges all modern painters whose works are superior to his own daubs. All artists who paint the nude are accused of "cultural Bolshevism," and the exclusion of such pictures from German museums is demanded.

Arnold Zweig on the USSR

An interview with the famous German writer, Arnold Zweig, appears in the anti-fascist *Deutsche Informationen.* "If we compare the development of the Soviet Union with the development of Germany for the past twenty years," said the writer, "one may come to only one consolatory conclusion: in our difficult and terrible times, great things are still being accomplished. The progress, the spiritual freedom, and the growth of culture of the peoples of the Soviet Union provide guarantees of the victory of the toilers of all the world."

Hemingway's Appeal to the German People

The anti-fascist *Deutsche Volkszeitung* publishes Hemingway's appeal to the German people which was broadcast over the transmitter of the German Peoples Front, on a wave length of 29.8.

"I salute all Germans who in spirit and in action resist the oppression of the German people by Hitler. As far as I'm concerned I have arranged that not one of my books shall be published in German government publications while fascism remains in power.

"The German people may well be proud of those courageous Germans whom I had the chance of meeting on the fronts of the war for freedom in Spain. I salute them all and all of those in Germany who are in solidarity with them."

Book on the Brown Terror

The Paris publishing house Carrefour has printed a book in the German language by the German emigré, Maximillian Scheer, in which he describes the historical stages of the development of National-Socialism and its crimes against the German people. The author supports his statements with documentary material, photos, etc.

The last part of the book consists of a long list of victims to German reaction and fascism and is entitled *The Honor Roll of the German People.*

Goebbels' Hacks in Ecstasies Over Italian Air-Pirate's Book

Bombs Over Africa by the air-pirate, Vittorio Mussolini, son of the Duce, has been published in Germany in the German language. As is known, the author, in this book, cynically describes his pleasure in the bombardment of defenseless Abyssinian villages and the murder of non-combatants.

As may have been expected, this "literary" work of Vittorio Mussolini describing his bandit exploits met with the most sympathetic response from the German fascists. The National-Socialist *Völkischer Beobachter* printed an enthusiastic review. The critic writes that he received "enormous pleasure" from reading this book and describes it as a "charming book of adventure."

SPAIN

"Over the Grave of Lenin"

Entitled *Over the Grave of Lenin, Elegiac Variations,* a composition for the piano has been written by the outstanding Spanish composer Rudolph Jalter. The Spanish republican press gives a high evaluation of this work which has been published by the music section of the Commissariat of Propaganda of the Catalonian government.

Theater and Cinema in Republican Spain

The theater and cinema in Republican Spain are at the present time undergoing an important process of reconstruction.

A drive for profit, the absence of idea content, a departure from the present, and frequently a surreptitious propagation of ideas hostile to the people's struggle against fascism, —these comprise the legacy which the contemporary theater and cinema received from former Spain.

To eliminate these shortcomings the government has created a special theater council under the ministry of public education.

Serious problems confront the Spanish cinema industry. Technically, the Spanish cinema industry even in the past did not lag behind other countries. Spain always had a good acting personnel. However, the production level was never high. The films were stereotyped sentimentalities, inevitably connected with bull fighting, resembling each other like peas in a pod.

Many owners of cinema studios and factories went over to the side of the insurrectionists, or fled abroad. Trade union cinema workers undertook to run the cinema industry. But no essential changes occurred in the content or character of Spanish cinemas: films are produced as in the past on the old patterns.

The only cinema organization which has achieved definite successes, has been Film Popular. It has released a few scores of shorts on concrete fighting themes of the day. Other cinema organizations have remained bystanders.

The success of these shorts has indicated what part the contemporary artistic revolutionary film may and must play. The success of the Soviet films *Chapayev* and *We of Kronstadt* confirmed this. The production of artistic agitational films is one of the tasks of the reorganized cinema industry. The ministry of education is inviting the best writers,

actors and artists to work in the cinema. It has also been decided to concentrate activities in a few large enterprises to effect an economy in forces, equipment and material. A similar reorganization in the cinema and theater is going in Catalonia.

The congress of workers of amusement enterprises which took place recently not only approved the government decision, but called for nationalization of the cinema industry: only this measure, in the opinion of congress members, will permit the complete reconstruction of the cinema industry, inspire it with a new spirit and ideology and banish commercialism.

Actors Meet in Madrid

In the Atheneum club in Madrid a meeting was held by the General Actors Union. Resolutions expressing unconditional support of the People's Front Government, resolutions condemning survivals of Bohemianism among actors, resolutions to combat performances hostile to the people's cause, and a pledge to complete military training by all qualified members, featured in the meeting.

In the Apollo theater in Barcelona, a poetic drama by the Spanish poet Valentino Gonzalez, *Trench No. 13,* was produced. The Barcelona press hailed the considerable literary achievements of the poem and favorably appraised the production.

Statement by Casals

From time to time the fascist press of various countries spreads lying rumors on the crossing of this or that representative of Spanish intellectuals over to Franco's camp. These statements, as a rule, prove to be lies. The famous 'cellist Pablo Casals especially has been the object of such insinuations.

To put an end to this libeling campaign, Casals visited the Spanish consul in Perpignan (where Casals resides) and declared his unconditional devotion to the cause of the Spanish Republic.

FRANCE

"Fuente Ovejuna" on the Paris Stage

Lope de Vega's *Fuente Ovejuna* in a new translation by Jean Cassou is enjoying great success in the Peoples Theater in Paris. The scenes for the performance are by Liguetis, the music by Henri Colet, member of the Madrid academy of fine arts. Henri Colet, a connoisseur of old Spanish music, used Spanish folk songs of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.

The role of Laurientia is played by the young Spanish actress Germaine Montiero, who formerly performed in the troupe of Federico Lorca the poet, shot by the fascists.

Jean Cassou writes: "The struggle of the Spanish people against fascism adds new significance to this play which Spaniards consider one of the national masterpieces. Lope de Vega's play embodies the heroic spirit of the Spanish people, their striving for independence, their hatred of tyranny, their love for freedom, their feeling for human dignity—these wonderful qualities of the people, which they are revealing at present in their heroic fight against fasc[illegible]m."

Suppression of the Film "Spain of 1937" in France

A number of French newspapers express their indignation over the refusal of the French censor to permit the showing of a new film *Spain of 1937,* released by the propaganda bureau of the Spanish government.

Death of Pioneers of French Cinematography

The inventor of animated cartoons, Emile Col, died Jan. 22, 1938 at the age of eighty-one in the poor house in Villejuif, a Paris suburb, where he had spent the last eight months of his life.

The day after the death of Emile Col, another pioneer of the French cinema, George Melis, whose work was of great importance to the development of the cinema, died at the age of seventy-seven. To his last day he worked on the models for the stage settings for a fantastic film, which was being prepared by the young director Jacques Previere.

"In 1895, after the appearance of the first films by the Lumiere brothers," writes *Ce Soir*, "Melis constructed a cinema camera, and began to take pictures; he was at once scenario writer, director and cameraman."

Melis also died impoverished.

The almost simultaneous death and equal poverty of these veterans of the French cinema has called forth much comment. On the initiative of the Paris House of Culture and the cinema organization Cine Liberté, a committee in memory of Emile Col and George Melis has been organized. Among its members are the writers Louis Aragon, Jean Richard Bloch, Leon Moussinac, the cinema directors Rene Claire, Jean Renoir and others. The committee has appealed to public organizations and private individuals to help the families of Col and Melis, and has begun a collection of funds to aid aged cinema workers.

Rene Blech on Houses of Culture in France

In the December number of *Commune* an article appeared by Rene Blech, French writer and secretary of the bureau of the International Association for the Defense of Culture, on the activity of Houses of Culture in France. In this article Rene Blech shares his impressions of a trip which he made in order to acquaint himself with provincial Houses of Culture. "This trip," writes Blech, "revealed what great possibilities we have for work in the provinces. What vitality there is in these collectives, striving to achieve culture, to make it generally accessible!"

Blech writes on the conditions in the provincial theater. "An attitude exists, that new productions by the directors Dulaine, Coupeau, Juvet, Batis and others, cannot be put on in the provinces, because they are interesting seemingly to a limited circles of spectators. This is a great mistake. Our organizations must be a connecting link between theater workers and the masses. No less are the possibilities open before us in the field of music, the dance and the cinema. Houses of Culture must become cultural nuclei for whole cities. We see a brilliant example of this in Lyons, where under the leadership of a young professor, a House of Culture was established in which the many-sided culture work of fifteen different organizations is being carried on. We must announce for all to hear, that every French city may and must have its own House of Culture. In the near future a number of tours in the provinces by French musical theater collectives will be organized to aid provincial Houses of Culture."

In conclusion, Blech points out that the cultural movement in France arouses great interest in other countries. From England, Belgium, Holland, Switzerland, Czechoslovakia and America letters arrive with the request to share the experience of the French Houses of Culture.

Mauriac Scores Fascist Atrocities

The unexampled atrocities of the fascists in Spain, their violations of freedom of conscience and religion, are arousing the discontent even of French Catholic writers far removed from revolutionary views.

For example, the Catholic and Conservative writer François Mauriac, as *L'Humanité* points out, has come out in the Paris press with a article directed against the atrocities

of the fascist insurgents. This article is written in the form of a dialogue between the writer and his companion, a Catholic prelate.

Mauriac: What do you think of the bishop's recent acquiescence with the manifesto of the Spanish prelates?

Prelate: Pray, let's talk about something else.

Mauriac: On the day when it was published, when the bishop subscribed to it, did you notice in the papers the phrase from *il duce's* article?

Prelate: You mean the sentence in connection with the bombardment of defenseless cities: "The cries of those with weak nerves either make me laugh or fill me with nausea?" But why speak of this? Better speak about the grape harvest.

Renoir, Mussolini and Goebbels

The film by the well-known French director Jean Renoir, *The Great Illusion,* has been banned in Italy and Germany.

In an interview with a reporter of the Paris newspaper *Ce Soir,* Renoir commented: "In Italy this film is prohibited because I am its director. Evidently my new film *Marseillaise* will also not appear on Italian screens. The fact is that I once wrote an article in *Se Soir* critical of Mussolini. This last, obviously, especially offended *il duce,* for the Italian press has suddenly come down on me with the choicest abuse, promising at the first convenient opportunity to treat me to castor oil in accordance with the favorite fascist recipe.

"As for Goebbels, he was not pleased with the role of the German woman in the film, who gives herself to a Frenchman. Goebbels therefore decided that *The Great Illusion* is direct Jewish propaganda, and categorically prohibited the showing of the film."

At the Congress of the Communist Party in Arles

At the Congress of the French Communist Party in Arles, Jean Richard Bloch read this statement of Left French intellectuals:

"This congress merits the honor of being called not only the congress of one party, but a congress of the French people.

"For a long time we have been convinced that the flourishing of our country can be achieved only through Socialism. We see that the Communist policy has confirmed the living creative force of Socialism. The evidence of this confirmation is in the words of your speakers.

"The simplicity in the expression of a thought when that thought is broad and bold, is evidence that the order of thinking is subordinated to a definite discipline in the intelligence of man, that the contradictions have been overcome not as a result of accident. In this sense your Party, and its leaders, represent in France the most complete approach of man to a world outlook, based on scientific knowledge of nature and society.

"If we glance at the tribune and at the auditorium, where the delegates to the congress have gathered, we are convinced that in France today there is no other gathering so close to the masses, so welded with it, sprung so directly from the masses, or so capable of giving an authentic picture of the workers and farmers of our country.

"The signatories of these lines have had a long and sufficient experience in all possible groupings, meetings, leagues, parties and congresses. They consider it necessary to tell you that they have never seen anything which could compare with the magnitude, the clarity and creative enthusiasm at this congress.

'The signers of this declaration witsh to assure you that they feel more certain of the fate of the proletariat, of peace and democracy, because they are conscious that a party like yours exists, that there exists a worker and farmer mass which composes it, and that there exist leaders who enjoy your confidence."

The statement is signed by Jean Richard Bloch, Andreé Viollis, Henri Levin, Professor Prenant, Paul Gzell, André Ribard and Henri Sauverplan, on behalf of French intellectuals invited to the congress.

"Book Crisis" in France Continues

A number of French writers, among them Duhamel, have commented on the "crisis" in books in France. Both the crisis and the discussion of it continue to grow. Duhamel and his circle of writer-snobs view the cinema, radio and sport as competitors and enemies of books.

Micromegas (named after one of Voltaire's characters), organ of French book publishers, like Duhamel and his adherents, sees a menace for books everywhere except where it actually exists. Not one of these "champions" of the "rights of books" connects the book crisis with the general crisis. In its quest for a panacea the magazine has appealed to a group of deputies of parliament, several hundred persons, with the suggestion that they come out in defense of books. The magazine hestitated to appeal to the Communist deputies, although it was exactly from them that it could receive the most perspicuous answer.

Rudolf Leonhard, the German emigré writer residing in Paris, in his article *The Book Crisis,* leads us from these fogs into the field of real discussion. In his article, printed in the magazine *Das Wort,* he riddles the worthless explanation of the "competition" of the cinema and radio, and points out that the crisis in books must not be turned into a separate phenomenon, isolated from the general crisis. "By the way," he writes, "they have forgotten to raise one question: does there exist a universal book crisis? In actual fact this is not the case. There is a country in which a book crisis is an impossible phenomenon, in which editions grow to gigantic dimensions, a country where the production of the paper industry is unable to satisfy the needs of book production, where no matter how many new books are published, no matter how the printing facilities expand, it is still impossible to satisfy the demands of a people eager to read. In this country books flourish, in spite of the fact that the radio also flourishes, and the cinema is better developed than in any other country. No empty seat can be found in the theaters and cinemas of this country, yet, at the same time colossal editions of the books of favorite writers are snatched up in a few hours. This country is the Soviet Union."

NORWAY

The Ibsen Academy

The Basle *National-Zeitung* announces a plan to form an Ibsen international academy in Norway. It is planned to interest outstanding scholars of Ibsen's art and outstanding playwrights of all countries to become members of the academy. A publishing house will be organized at the academy. It is also planned to organize a museum in the house occupied by Ibsen during his sojourn in Oslo. The furnishing of Ibsen's studio which are now in a public museum will be transferred there. Furthermore the museum will have an exhibition of MSS and first editions as well as all foreign editions of Ibsen's works.

Four Cartoons

These four cartoons are by Boris Yefimov, talented staff cartoonist of Izvestia. *Irony and wit mark his pictorial*

ABOVE

The British lion has become so tame it has learned to put its head in the tamer's maw

AT RIGHT

He has earned a bone: the "special position" of Polish diplomacy

By Boris Yefimov

comments on world politics, which have become famous not only throughout the Soviet Union.

ABOVE

The model children of the German governess

AT LEFT

"The economic unification" of Austria

ABOUT THE CONTRIBUTORS

MIKHAIL SHOLOKHOV. Soviet novelist whose books have been widely published abroad. *And Quiet Flows the Don* and *The Soil Upturned* have both been adapted as operas to the music of the noted Soviet composer, I. Dzerzhinsky. The excerpt from Book IV of *And Quiet Flows the Don.* published in this issue, is the second to be printed in *International Literature;* another excerpt appeared in No. 3.

JESS KIMBROUGH. An American Negro worker. "When the U.S. entered the World War, I enlisted mainly because I would have been drafted," he writes. "And, too, I was curious to see first-hand the Negro worker's reaction to a capitalist war. I must confess that my experiences were a disappointment. Instead of a bold resentment that I expected, Negro soldiers displayed utter bewilderment. And it was this state of confusion that urged me to begin writing shortly after my return from France."

SEMYON KIRSANOV. Well known Soviet poet. *Borders* appeared recently in the Soviet press.

EVGUENIA GALPERINA. Soviet critic, professor of Western European literature, author of a series of lectures on the literature of twentieth century France.

ALEXANDER DEUTSCH. Soviet journalist and lecturer on the literature of the West. One of the editors of *Journal de Moscou,* French weekly newspaper published in Moscow.

SERGEI BOGOMAZOV. Soviet theater critic.

Associate Editor TIMOrEI ROKOTOV