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**Mathe Zalka**

# Doberdo

Haal came to make a confidential report.

"For several days we have been conducting observations, Herr Lieutenant, and today we came to the conclusion that the Italians are driving a mine under us."

"What?"

"Yes, they are mining our position."

"Speak out, man. What kind of a mine? And how did you find out?"

"As soon as we occupied the height, Herr Lieutenant, I went through all the caves. There are four of them, you know. Natural caves. The soil here is queer; limestone, lava, jura, all mixed up. Time has left its marks on this mountain. The Herr Lieutenant knows that nearby, near Kosich, a river goes underground, coming out again near the seashore. When the Herr Lieutenant set off for the funeral, I. . . ."

"I understand. The hydrogeological map. I brought the matter to Captain Lantosh's attention."

"Have you the map?" asked Haal breathlessly.

"He promised to get it, and I hope we shall have it in a few days."

"A pity, a great pity, Herr Lieutenant. If we had that map much could be cleared up."

"Go on, tell me about the mining."

"I must tell you, Herr Lieutenant, that when we captured the height, but left the enemy so close to us, my first thought was that the Italians might play us some dirty trick."

Hruna had said the same thing. "Tell me," I asked, "how are the Italians behaving?"

"Very quiet, Herr Lieutenant. Remember how they battered us for the first few days? Now it's as if they were dead."

"Even in the mornings?"

"Even in the mornings the firing is weak. Yesterday they fired without a pause from ten in the evening till three in the morning. The queer thing is that not a single shot reached us."

"Then why did they do it?"

"I shall tell you right away, Herr Lieutenant, only let me explain everything in order. We heard the boring for the first time in the cave of the second squad of the first company. Has the Herr Lieutenant ever been in that cave?"

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Concluded from No. 8.

"I must have been there, but I don't recall."

"A very deep cave, it slopes right down, very steep."

"No steps, as in a real cave. Now I remember."

"That was where we first heard the boring."

My sluggishness completely disappeared. I realized now the importance of Haal's report.

"Wait, Haal. It was the second squad of the first company. Did many people hear it?"

"The whole squad, Herr Lieutenant, and soldiers of other units who were there at the time. Without delay I detailed a man from our detachment for observation duty."

"Quite right, quite right," I said mechanically.

The cave of the second squad of the first company; it was almost in the middle of the height! Truly the best vantage point from which to hear what was going on inside the mountain.

"And the Italians?"

"The Italians, Herr Lieutenant, are cunning at it. In the first place—you will see for yourself tomorrow morning—they penetrated by a skillful maneuver to the terrace below the ten meter cliff. They've entrenched there, made a fortress out of it. I think that's only camouflage, though, Herr Lieutenant—or maybe it fortifies the entrance to their mine."

"Do you really think so, Haal?"

"It's only my hypothesis, Herr Lieutenant, but it has been confirmed by observation."

The more I thought of these facts the more understandable became the whole situation. The Italians were in a fix, and they had to take desperate measures to get out of it. Or they might be doing it for revenge.

"A diabolic plan," I said in a low voice.

"You can't reproach anyone for it, Herr Lieutenant. They do it today; we might do it tomorrow. That's war. And in war inhuman acts are heroism."

"What do you suggest?" I asked drily.

"I suggest, Herr Lieutenant, that first of all you report to the commanders, and then we shall take measures. But before all else we must get the hydrogeological map, without which we can do nothing."

"I shall call up the captain tomorrow morning and send somebody to fetch the map if necessary. It is true, we can't do without it. Tell me, Haal, what impression did all this make on the Honveds?"

"They don't like it. Who would enjoy such a situation? To speak plainly, it's high time we were relieved."

"Do you know that the archduke is coming here personally to present awards?"

"Very nice of him, Herr Lieutenant, only his highness ought to hurry, or there may be nobody to present them to."

I paced the uneven floor of the three-meter cavern dugout, but could not gather my thoughts. What I wanted most was to sob like a child whose card castle an unexpected draught has blown down.

"Tell me, Haal, do the officers know?"

"Herr Torma knew about it, and he probably told the officers. I told nobody, because I decided to wait for the Herr Lieutenant to return so I could discuss the situation with him."

"Haal, perhaps it's a hallucination? You yourself said, when we took Clara, that you feared the Italians would pull some dirty trick."

"Quite true, Herr Lieutenant, but I was not the first to hear the drilling, as I told you. That I had such an idea when we took Clara was quite natural. A height was

mined last year near Pevna, and near Larocco Herr Lieutenant Tushai laid a mine. I helped in it. Only the Italians got wind of it, and saved themselves."

"How?"

"They began drilling a countermine, so we had to stop. Then they stopped their drilling too. For two months both sides waited to see who would be blown up first."

"How did it all finish?"

"Herr Lieutenant Tushai found a solution: he set off a counter-detonation."

"What was that?"

"When the enemy has already placed his charge, a small detonation in the vicinity is sufficient to set off the chief mine—not when the enemy wants it to explode, but when we want it."

"Then let's make a counter-detonation."

"We shall certainly have to do it, Herr Lieutenant, but we can't do it until we establish the direction of their drilling. Here we shall have to work in rock, and at Larocco it was soft soil. If we don't know the direction we shall only be setting off fireworks."

"Leave me alone for half an hour, Haal," I said weakly. "I shall call in Torma then, and you will bring the man who first heard the drilling."

"It was Paul Remete, in the second squad."

"Bring Remete and Hiral. What a pity I sent Husar away."

"Let the lad have some rest, Herr Lieutenant. He was badly upset, poor fellow."

"During the next half-hour I want to rest and to think over everything carefully before we make any decision."

"I wanted the Herr Lieutenant to hear the sounds under the earth before all else."

"Right now?"

"No. You could hardly hear anything now. But my men are on observation duty, and they can call the Herr Lieutenant any time."

"All right, all right; but in half an hour I want to see this Paul Remete."

"Yessir, Herr Lieutenant! In half an hour!"

I had a letter from Ella Schick, Arnold's sister, who knew me as Arnold's favorite pupil. She was a brilliant and beautiful girl and now and then I had imagined myself in love with her. She wrote that she had gone to Switzerland to escape the war.

The letter brought me a glimpse of another world, a world of books and ideas, the intellectual world, slightly in love with itself, the world of the future Professor Tibor Matrai, linguist and explorer. For a second I plunged into the past. The street I knew so well, the cozy houses, the proud colonnades of offices and the friendly coffee-houses on Attila Street. Lost paradise!

Who had begun the war? Had we Hungarians begun the war? Yes, we too. Count Stefan Tisza, prime minister, had played into Kaiser Wilhelm's hands, and Bethmann-Hollweg stood behind old Franz Josef's back.... But all these were stories; the reality was that we Hungarians were up to our necks in the war; each of us was tied to it. General Keveschi, Colonel Kosha, Major Madarashi, Lieutenant Kenez—they were the professionals of war. Haal, Chutora, Arnold, Torma—even Torma—weren't of the profession ... though they did the fighting.

My mind drifted to Arnold's unceasing touchiness with me. Arnold demanded, with characteristic intolerance, that I share his point of view, even when it was not clear to me. Chutora told him:

"You get nowhere, Herr Doktor, because you want to sit on two stools at once."

"You are an old fool, Chutora," replied Arnold. "Do you imagine you will succeed in enlisting me in your party? I realize I could be useful to you. Without intellectuals, without 'brain men,' as you call them, you will have a hard time, you workers. Do you think I have rubbed blisters on my brain over your theory? No, Chutora. Your theory is useful to me only to polish my own ideas on it. It's plain the monarchy can't continue its former policy, that we must restore the rights of other nationalities, particularly the Czechs."

"Oho! So you're still at the national problem of the Czechs?" laughed Chutora. "Your path, Herr Doktor, is a third class cart road, far from the highway of history!"

"You have only one path, Chutora: 'Down with capitalism!'"

"But it's the main highway," said Chutora.

Arnold laughed softly, but Chutora kept up his attack with tragic earnestness. I listened to the argument, but pretended to be unconcerned. As a matter of fact, I listened with great attention. Perhaps they were right, and politics had become more important than anything.

I returned to Ella Schick's letter.

"...Ask Arnold why he does not answer State Privy Councillor von Riesenstern Alkranz, who feels favorably inclined to his petition and promised me to transfer him to the ministry at his first request."

What an enigma! Arnold had the chance to escape from the war that was ruining him; but some mysterious inhibition, that he perhaps considered honor, but was probably inability to come to a decision, kept him stalled here.

Arnold's sister also wrote that she was sending him his favorite green ink, his pen, even his paper weight, and pads of paper, and his green morocco case, and suggested that he use his leisure to write some articles. She also wanted me to urge him to write.

I had no inclination to urge any such thing upon him. Now it was the guns that were doing the speaking.

Toward evening I was called to battalion headquarters. Kenez received me with cold civility.

"Do not be angry with me, but you were wrong about this telephone call. Why get all worked up? Don't you see how nonsensical it is?"

"Have you taken into consideration everything I told you?" I asked defiantly.

"Now don't get panicky. I warn you as a friend: behave calmly when you speak to the Herr Major. We have plenty of trouble of our own."

"Well, if you are nervous yourself, how do you expect me to keep calm?"

"You think this imaginary drilling worries us? Not at all. We have more than that on our minds. His highness has graciously decided to visit our battalion."

"Hmm, so it's true?" I asked.

Kenez answered by describing the arrangements, which obviously interested him more than the fate of the men on Monte Clara. They had planned the itinerary: which communication trench the archduke would follow, how he would ascend Clara, under whose escort, and on what subjects he would speak... all the details of the ceremony.

I listened with clenched teeth. I had a strong desire to slap this glass-eyed monkey.

"Now I want you to concentrate all the forces of your detachment on two or three urgent tasks. In the first place the steps of the communication trench leading to the first company must be put in perfect order. In some places the steps

are in very bad condition; they're uneven; in some places they are too low. It is necessary to put up railings where the ascent is steep, for his highness' convenience. Dig detours around the dangerous spots in the trenches. Post sentries at these spots."

The major entered. He shook hands with me and offered me a seat.

"Well, what's going on up at Clara? I hear you're all nervous up there. That's because you've not been relieved for a long time. You ought to know the soldiers. They get downright ingenious when they get a scare. As for the mine—" the major spread out his hands—"well, you know, Matrai, it is the height of thoughtlessness. You are well aware that we expect his highness and that our sector must be absolutely serene. And at such a time you begin to make a fuss! Besides, you were wrong to make that phone call. You must never speak openly in the presence of a soldier. You are too democratic and frank. There is too much democracy in the battalion altogether. Oberleutnant Schick is a very cultivated and cultured man, but his ideas on the subject of relations with the soldiers are unorthodox; to say the least, they contradict the established ideas on the subject."

The major spoke for a long time in that vein. I would have preferred a sharp reprimand to the sermon. Again I explained that my report was not based on imagination, but on concrete data drawn from prolonged observations. I emphasized the gravity of the situation.

"This is no kitchen gossip, Herr Major. The height is mined and the danger is very close."

The major's face darkened.

"You see, my friend," he said softly. "You don't seem to want to understand that tomorrow or the day after tomorrow the archduke is to arrive. You say the Italians are boring a mine? Let them bore. Do you know how much time they need to drill a tunnel big enough to blow up such a position? Months! I ask you not to disturb us at this time with this fairy tale. If it reaches the ears of the high command there will be a scandal. Your nervousness may spoil everything, not only for the battalion but for the whole regiment, and, if you please, even the brigade. It will make trouble for everybody."

"If you are so nervous we can help you out," said Kenez sarcastically. "Tushai always stayed at battalion headquarters; your detachment is of battalion status, so we can offer you a dugout here."

I thanked Kenez for his kindness and turned to the major.

"Herr Major, if I understand you correctly, the battalion command does not officially recognize my verbal report; allow me to tender you a written report."

"All right, turn one in."

"In addition, Herr Major, I request you to permit me to continue my observations and to send you further reports on them."

"Only reports written and delivered in person."

"After we have made out the exact direction of the enemy's mine it will be necessary to begin countermining. The situation requires it."

"Under no circumstances," exclaimed Kenez.

"Not till after the visit of his highness," added the major.

"I would forbid observations, too, Herr Major," said Kenez. "It only excites the soldiers and provokes panic."

The major shook his head.

"That can't be forbidden. But it must be done without fuss, and he must see to it that the soldiers are not alarmed."

I took leave of the major and nodded coldly to Kenez. From the telephone station I called up Kostanjevica. For a long time I could get no answer. When at last the phone was answered I asked for Lantosh. He was not in.

"Lieutenant" Bogdanovich was on the other end of the wire. Judging by his voice, he was not quite sober.

"Since when have you been a lieutenant, Bogdanovich?" I asked sharply. Bogdanovich fell silent.

In the morning Torma knocked and entered. He was pale; he looked worn out.

"The Italians worked like madmen all night. Haal thinks a passage was driven between the second and third squad, in a northeasterly direction."

"You established it as precisely as all that?"

"Haal will soon come and tell you everything. You know, he and I decided to make a map of the mountain ourselves. With a map, even such a one, it will be easier. Haal thinks the Italians are pretty well advanced in their work."

"You know, Torma, somehow I don't put any stock in all this," I said with assumed indifference.

"Why?" asked Torma, shocked.

"I don't believe in the whole business. It's possible the Italians have never been drilling. And all this noise is simply . . . well, how shall I put it? . . . Did you ever hear a seashell hum when you put it to your ear?"

"Are you joking, Herr Lieutenant?"

"No, I am serious. Quite likely a cave exists inside the mountain. Air penetrates it from the south side, and it hums."

"But this night the third squad heard the noise, too!"

"Perhaps the fourth squad heard it also?" I asked mockingly.

"No, it was quiet there. And in the morning in Latrine No. 7 we could clearly hear the Italians digging out stones."

"Did you hear it yourself?"

"Haal will be here in a few minutes. Ask him if you don't believe me."

I was in a frenzy.

"Haal! Haal! He invented the whole story because he had nothing on his mind. He must be taken in hand. Do you know—" I lowered my voice—"there are rumors that Haal is a Socialist."

"A Socialist?" asked Torma, his eyes staring in fright. He did not know what the word meant but was contaminated by the skillfully spread prejudice that a Socialist was a trouble-maker; and in the army especially a Socialist was *persona non grata*. It was enough to scare Torma. He changed the subject.

"So you think they were not drilling at all?"

"Of course, I am not quite sure... For that reason the observations must continue, but none of the other men should be mixed up in this affair."

Somebody knocked. Haal entered. He too was pale and exhausted. Apparently he had had a night of nervous strain. I did not offer him a seat.

"Herr Torma has reported," I began coldly. "From the facts presented I must conclude it to be of little significance. Your conjecture seems dubious to me."

Haal gave a start. He wanted to speak but I did not want to be convinced. I raised my voice.

"The observations can be continued, but the other men must on no account be mixed up in this affair. Several men of the detachment are to be appointed to observation duty; you, Haal, will be very busy in the next few days. The archduke's coming visit is a

fact, and we must prepare for it."

Haal looked in perplexity at Torma, whose face had frozen; then looked narrowly at me to make sure I had not gone out of my mind. No, the lieutenant was not mad, but obviously something had happened.

"The archduke will come to the first company's positions. The communication trench must be put in order. The flank defenses are very weak in spots, and his highness may be in danger. In addition, there are still some steep places to be graded. . . ."

I gave detailed instructions, feigning to be absorbed in preparations for the archduke's visit. I made Haal jot everything down. As he wrote he cast furtive glances at me. Obviously he expected me to interrupt my instructions and say: "All right, now forget it, Haal, it was only a joke."

But no, Haal, it wasn't a joke, it was far from a joke. It was service, military service, the emperor's, the king's service. We served the archduke and Herr Major Madarashi.

"And what about the mining, Herr Lieutenant?" asked Haal, and his voice sank.

"I told Torma about that. He will give you my opinion on it. Of course I don't forbid you to continue your observations, but there must be no talk about it"—I addressed myself to Torma—"and I repeat, I don't put very much faith in all this. I consider it untimely to bother the men with it and excite them. Therefore I request you to remove the riflemen from this work. The observations are to be continued, but nothing is to be undertaken without my knowledge. Do you understand?"

Both saluted; Haal seemed stupified. Torma began to wake up, to understand. Obviously something was beginning to dawn on him. They left. At the door Haal stopped, glanced at me, then turned away sharply.

"Haal," I said in a low voice.

"Yes, Herr Lieutenant."

"Haal, if you don't agree you may give me a report with your opinion on this hypothetical mining." Then I turned to Torma. "You can also turn in a report on this subject, if you wish, and I will send it to battalion headquarters without delay."

"I? Hardly!" said Torma diffidently. A caustic smile appeared on Haal's face.

"So Herr Torma has no opinion of his own," he remarked.

"I have my opinion, but it is different from yours, Haal," said Torma in a hurt tone.

In order not to have them argue it out before me I shut the door on them. I heard Haal say conciliatingly:

"You see, Herr Torma, I myself am not quite sure."

Haal's voice was low, his words balm to the little wound he had inflicted on the self-esteem of the young non-commissioned officer.

The Italians worked on. That they were laying a mine was a fact. Again I warned the command. According to Haal's report the undermining had reached a dangerous stage. There was a strong likelihood that the Italians had come across a natural cave in which case the preparations for the explosion would last not a month but several days or even hours. I had declined all responsibility for the catastrophe that loomed ahead. I had declined the responsibility . . . but I would be blown up sky-high.

I prepared packets and sealed them with sealing wax. In these packets lay the fate of eight hundred men.

It was still daylight when Husar came. I gave him the packets and repeated once more:

"You are to address yourself to Bogdanovich. If you don't get the map try to phone me."

"Very well, Herr Lieutenant."

I understood that Torma and Haal had discussed the situation inside out and through and through and that Haal was aware of the scolding I had received at battalion headquarters. But what must Haal have thought of me? What did he think of me to have yielded so easily?

...The whole front line had been granted awards and promotions. Torma was given a commission and granted the small silver medal.

"And you've received the *Signum Laudis*," he said. "But you really deserved it," he added respectfully.

We went to Sexardi's. All the officers of the battalion had assembled there. Arnold was there, too. It seemed to me I had not seen him for ages. His hand was cold and weak, his face grey; he avoided my gaze.

"He must still be angry," I thought, smiling. "Well, today we shall put an end to this impossible situation."

The division orders clearly showed what the staff officers had made of the victory. The highest awards had gone to them. Herr Colonel Kosh, Captain Berend, Captain Lantosh and three or four names with which I was unacquainted. Majors, captains, adjutants, Oberleutnants....

"But why Lantosh?" I asked loudly.

"Yes, the command didn't forget number one," remarked Bacco.

"Herr Major Madarashi...."

"Well, that's all right," some of the officers agreed.

"No objections?" asked Sexardi, interrupting the reading of the orders, and looking at us over his eyeglasses.

"Go on, go on...."

"Herr Lieutenant Kenez...."

"Why him?"

"Why not, gentlemen? Chief physician of the battalion, Oberleutnant Doctor Aachim...."

Springer gave a low whinny, and everyone smiled.

"And why not, gentlemen? After all, do we begrudge it to them?"

I went out for a smoke. Bacco followed me. Arnold came out and joined us.

Bacco's eyes flashed.

"Swine!" he declared frankly, and spat in anger.

"Come, come, gentlemen. The command knows what it is doing," replied Arnold curtly.

"Listen, Matrai, is it true that you got raked over the coals by battalion headquarters about this mining business? Are they really laying a mine under us?"

"I'm convinced of it. But since battalion headquarters has ordered me to take no counter-measures...." I turned to Schick. "What do you think of it, Arnold?"

"If headquarters does not consider the Herr Lieutenant's arguments convincing, what can I say?" replied Arnold, and vanished into the dugout.

Was that Arnold who had spoken? Herr Oberleutnant Schick? I could not understand.

Inside, the officers were congratulating each other. The officers gave me a noisy triumphal reception. Everybody shook hands with me. I carefully avoided meeting Arnold. Bacco was given a company, displacing Dortenburg. Dortenburg, now Bacco's subordinate, congratulated his new chief. Bacco sincerely apologised; he told the lieutenant he was not guilty of what had happened. He did not want the promotion, he said, and if he had known he would have protested.

The telephone operator reported that Major Madarashi was calling.

He spoke over the phone to Bacco first. I made my exit noiselessly, and went home. In my hand I seemed to feel Arnold's lifeless palm, in my ears sounded his incomprehensible words. Was it a form of revenge? Or had Arnold surrendered?

Late in the evening Chutora came. I received a phone call from battalion headquarters. It was Lieutenant Kenez speaking.

"I have received your report. Under any other circumstances the Herr Major would never have forgiven you for such obstinacy. We sent your report on to regiment headquarters; let them decide. Captain Lantosh called us up not long ago. He also received a report from you. In his opinion the whole thing is nothing but morbid imagination."

I hung up the receiver without answering.

In the next two days Haal did not once come to me. He seemed to show no interest in what I had done with his report, which was a brief, precise summary of all the facts and made it clear that every minute was critical. I did not send for Haal. What for? We were expecting the archduke, and as soon as the celebration was over we were to be relieved—and after us, let it blow! Perhaps, to soothe my conscience, I would report the mining to Kostanjevica, where we would certainly be sent after being relieved—maybe even to Zagrai for garrison duty.

"How nice it will be," I thought, and stretched out in pleasant anticipation. I was trying to deceive myself. Sometimes my mind grew calm, and I began to believe it was nothing but panic after all, but I had only to look at Haal's report and everything inside me turned into a clenched fist. At such moments I tossed about angrily in my bed, and immediately Homok's head appeared in the doorway to ask if the Herr Lieutenant wanted anything.

Husar returned late at night, empty-handed. He did not conceal his indignation and bitterness; he poured out all his bitterness on the head of Corporal Bogdanovich, a drunkard who had led him by the nose for days. Husar had undergone a trying experience, wandering from one man to another. They kept him waiting for hours, then sent him on to someone else. The headquarters soldiers put on airs. And the officers simply did not want to be bothered by him. Somebody advised Husar to go to Colonel Hruna, but the colonel had set off a week ago for Tolmein and had not yet returned. All the threads led to Bogdanovich, who had a stock of hydrogeological maps but not the one we needed.

This morning Torma called, not to report but just for a talk. Suddenly he jumped up, shut the door and confessed in a tense whisper that he was afraid, afraid. Haal could not be wrong. For two days they had conducted observations together, and Haal had come to the conclusion that the Italians were almost through with their work.

When Torma said this the doubts and apathy which had possessed me sloughed off.

Just then Haal appeared on the threshold as if he had been awaiting his cue.

"Out with it," I said by way of welcome.

Haal stood at the door. Of late he had noticeably aged. And not Haal alone. As for myself, I had not dared to glance in the mirror for a week.

"Speak up, Haal," I said.

"I know the Herr Lieutenant's hands are tied, just as ours are. Discipline is no joke. But...."

"Go on," I urged.

"There is a paragraph in the statutes that says that if an order is definitely seen to be against the army's interests...."

"...The subordinate has a right to report over the head of his immediate superiors. Well, go on."

"I have a suggestion, Herr Lieutenant. In order to intensify our observations...."

"A big counter-mine?"

"Exactly."

"Impossible. You said yourself the work is too far advanced."

"Yes, Herr Lieutenant, the situation is very serious."

"Can you hear the drilling?"

"Very seldom now. Mostly we hear them digging out stones. Last night Kiral reported that he had seen cement sacks near a turning in their downhill communication trench."

"Cement sacks? Are you sure they weren't simply breastworks?"

"No, Herr Lieutenant, breastwork sacks are different in size, shape and color."

"What do you think it means?"

"Cement is used, Herr Lieutenant, in the last stages of the work, when the charge is sunk."

Torma jumped up.

"I saw those sacks, too, they're there now."

I went up to Haal and stretched out my hand.

"I forgot to congratulate you, Haal, on your promotion to the rank of sergeant-major and on the large silver medal you received."

Haal looked at me in amazement but he continued to shake my hand.

"Herr Lieutenant...."

"All right, Haal, all right, I understand. Somehow or other we shall decide this evening what to do. And now continue your observations. The archduke may really come tomorrow."

Haal turned away.

"Well, Haal," I exclaimed, "let's pull ourselves together."

"It's not panic," said Torma excitedly. "It's a fact, a fact, do you understand, Herr Lieutenant?"

After dinner I went over to Arnold's, to return a book I had borrowed from him.

"Thanks for the book, Arnold, I learned a good deal from it," I said, in the hope of drawing him into a conversation.

"Very glad," he replied apathetically, continuing to gather up the sheets of paper on which he had been writing. One of them fell, I picked it up.

"Are you writing an article?"

"No."

He put away the sheets of paper in a folder and turned to me

"A brief treatise."

"On what?"

"On Latrine No 7."

I saw mockery in his eyes.... Raw words fell from our lips.

Before leaving I burrowed among Arnold's books. I selected a small new volume: Sigismund Moritz's *Military Sketches.*

"Have you read it?" I asked.

"Junk."

I wanted to say: "Arnold, let's be frank. It can't go on so." But I couldn't. Pride silenced me. I had already taken leave when Bacco entered. As usual, he embraced me open-heartedly.

"Tibor, I spoke with the men at battalion headquarters. They believe and they don't believe. Do you understand? You ought to speak to them. How is it now?"

"Very bad. My corporal says the Italians are pretty near through. They may be packing in the explosives right now. What do they say at headquarters about the archduke's trip—is he coming or not?"

"Yes."

And suddenly I exploded:

"Is this what you call war? Is

this what you call an army? We're sitting over a mine; everyone knows it, and our orders are to be deaf and dumb. It's crazy. We sit here in the face of tragedy and the staff prepares a farce and we keep our mouths shut to order. The soldiers and the front officers captured Monte Clara and the staff officers behind the lines hand each other the prizes. It's a nightmare. A charge of a ton and a half is being laid under us, and we must grin!'

"So, the complete anti-militarist already, my friend. You have only to join Chutora's party," Arnold said ironically.

"Better Chutora than Captain Lantosh."

"Forget it, Matrai," said Bacco. "It can't be as bad as all that."

"Herr Lieutenant!" shouted Arnold almost hysterically. "I request you to abstain from such talk here. You permit yourself too many liberties."

"I?"

"Yes, you. Are we officers or not? What does this hysteria, this seditious talk, mean? I request you not to expose me to the humiliation of listening to such things. Besides, our subordinates hear us."

"It's just among friends, Herr Lieutenant," put in Bacco conciliatingly.

"Friendship is friendship and discipline is discipline. If the high command issues an order it is our duty to submit and not to criticize."

I saluted and left the dugout. What had happened to Arnold? Which of us was crazy?

We heard the Italians' driller for the last time that night. In the cave of the third squad a heavy knocking was heard after midnight.

Torma and Haal came to fetch me. We climbed the summit of Clara. From the other slope a mysterious, tense silence ascended to us.

"It's clear, Haal, quite clear that they've finished their work. Now we can expect...."

Torma was feverish. He was chilled and he had both hands sunk in the pockets of his greatcoat. The night was cool.

"Come to my dugout in an hour, both of you. And you, Husar, get ready, you will go with me."

"All right," said Husar with unconcealed joy.

"You understand me?"

Hastily I walked to my dugout. I had found a way out. I was doing my duty.

Near the dugout someone grasped my hand. I could not see his face in the darkness.

"Tss, Herr Lieutenant, it's me, Chutora."

"What's the matter? What are you out in the dark for?"

"I was waiting for you, Herr Lieutenant. Don't think Herr Doktor takes it easily. He is suffering, but it is his own fault."

"I can't make out what you're talking about, Chutora."

"The whole world is undermined, Herr Lieutenant."

Before I had time to answer, Chutora's shadow disappeared. What else had he wanted to tell me?

Homok opened the door quietly and stood blinking in the light.

"Herr Oberleutnant...."

"Shh...."

"What is the matter? Is it you, Novak?" asked Arnold. He sat up in bed, rubbed his eyes and looked around in surprise.

"I take the liberty of reporting, Herr Oberleutant, that Chutora and I looked everywhere for Novak and couldn't find him."

"I saw him twenty minutes ago, near Latrine No. 7."

"Go and look for him there."

"What do you need Novak for?" I asked when Homok disappeared.

Arnold was sitting on the edge

of his cot, his head bowed. He looked up at me, and once more it was the old Doktor Arnold Schick, the professor and my old friend. His eyes looked at me with their old reserved affection.

"Tibi, I guess I dozed off. Tell me, what is really happening?"

"In an hour I shall go to brigade headquarters," I replied. "If I get no results I shall go to division headquarters."

"Good fellow! Yes, go on."

"Five days ago I wrote that I declined all responsibility. How can I decline responsibility? It remains with me until I am blown up with the rest. I shall fight the battalion staff, the regiment staff and even the brigade staff, if it comes to that, but I'll get results. We are responsible for eight hundred men facing death. We must act."

"And those others, in the rear?"

"They? They don't feel responsible."

"You talk like Chutora."

"I prefer to talk like Chutora rather than like Count Stefan Tisza."

"Bravo! And I thought you were deep in the psychosis of victory."

"Every war, Arnold, begins with hopes of victory."

"Victories are different," said Arnold, growing gloomy. "It is quite clear that no victories are ripening here. . . ."

"Here at Clara we are like the builders of the Tower of Babel to whom fire is sent instead of water. The front and the staffs don't understand each other."

"You're beginning to think straight. And I thought you were all tangled up, Tibor."

Feeling that our relations were back on the old footing, I decided to counter-attack.

"What are you suffering from, Arnold?"

"I suffering? Who told you?"

"I can see it."

"Well, we might as well be frank. I suffer from the old unsolved contradictions of my soul," Arnold said in a low voice. "I lost my way among the pine trees and I feel awfully lonesome. I try to think, to write, and I come to the conclusion that I have lost the habit of thinking."

"You ought to take up Riesenstern's offer of a post in the ministry offices."

"That's no solution, Tibi."

"Just to get out of here and see the whole picture from some new perspective would be a temporary solution, Arnold. I am an absolute ignoramus in these things, but you must realize what the situation is and take a definite point of view."

"There are only two paths: Count Tisza's and Chutora's. You disagree? No, there is no middle path; don't waste time seeking one."

"Then," I said in a low voice, "a hundred times Chutora, and only Chutora, dear Arnold!"

Arnold laughed. As he leaned back on the pillow he pushed up the corner and I saw he had his notebooks underneath.

"Your treatise?" I asked smiling.

Arnold did not reply.

"Give me a cigarette. No, wait, I have my pipe. Let me have a match. Thanks."

When I stretched the match out towards him he seized my hand and made sit down on the cot.

"Did you come to these conclusions yourself?"

"What conclusions?"

"To go to brigade headquarters, better Chutora a hundred times, that you oppose them all and so on?"

"Yes, myself."

It was quiet for a few seconds. Arnold's pipe went out. Suddenly he rose, took his notebooks under

his arm and stretched out his hand to me.

"Well, don't stay long," and he went toward the door.

"I shall order Haal to report the results of the observations to you in my absence."

"I shall be very grateful to you, my friend."

Arnold's footsteps died out. And only then did I become aware how many things had become clear in my mind.

I looked at my watch. Dawn was near. I had to make haste.

Torma and Haal were punctual. I turned over the order to Torma. He read it and colored.

I explained to Haal that I had ordered Torma to lead the detachment to battalion headquarters because there was nothing for it to do at Clara.

"Herr Lieutenant...."

"No objections! Those are my orders. The observations can be carried on by a few men, the whole detachment is not needed here. Homok will also go with you. But you must leave without any noise or fuss, so that the riflemen will not notice. Is that clear?"

"Yes, sir, Herr Lieutenant."

Homok and Husar entered.

"Allow me to report, Herr Lieutenant, that Sergeant-Major Novak has been found," declared Homok. Husar turned away, his shoulders shaking.

"What happened to him?" I inquired.

"Somebody gave the Herr Sergeant-Major a ducking in the latrine," reported Husar, choking with laughter.

"In the latrine?" asked Torma.

"Ah! Ah! Ah!" Haal nodded.

I pictured Novak's ape-like bulk as it must have looked when he scrambled out.

"Has he been dug out?"

"They brought him to the first aid post to wash him," answered Husar. "They used the hose."

"Well, that's one who got what was coming to him," I said involuntarily.

The laughter they had held back so long broke forth. Haal laughed, coughed, choked. Husar had to lean against the wall, weak with laughter. Torma looked at them in surprise for several seconds, then let himself go. We laughed freely, happily.

I jumped out of the automobile in Kostanjevica in an anxious frame of mind. I blamed myself for having taken so long to make my decision. Now I had to hurry; every minute was precious. I was the messenger of eight hundred men sentenced to death.

It was 8.30 a.m. The shadows thrown by the surrounding hills kept the narrow street, in the hollow, in semi-darkness.

Colonel Hruna's orderly refused to wake him, but the old man was apparently a light sleeper, for he heard my knocking and in a few minutes he appeared.

"What's the matter? Come in."

The colonel was in slippers; a jacket was thrown over his nightshirt. I told him how matters stood at Clara.

At first he heard me listlessly, looking at his untimely visitor with fatigued eyes, but when he grasped the import of my visit Hruna suddenly slapped his knee with his palm, rose and asked:

"Where is the hydrogeological map of the mountain?"

"That is what I want to take up with you, Herr Colonel. Corporal Husar, whom I sent to the staff of the brigade for this map, wasted three or four days without getting it. Captain Lantosh did not find the map...."

"Why didn't the corporal come to me?"

"You were not in Kostanjevica at the time, Herr Colonel."

"True, I was in Tolmein. Well, but the map...."

"Has disappeared without a trace."

"Karl!"

The orderly rushed in.

"Fetch the chauffeur. Have the car here at once."

Karl vanished. The old man dressed hastily. In five minutes, dressed and washed, he was stamping nervously on the veranda.

"First the map," said the colonel when we were seated in the car.

Involuntarily I glanced at Husar, who was standing at the door.

"Who is that with you?"

"My corporal, Herr Colonel, the one I sent for the map."

"Well, get in, quick!" ordered Colonel Hruna, pointing to the seat next to the chauffeur.

Lantosh was still asleep. The colonel did not want to wake him, for Bogdanovich had already risen. We entered Lantosh's office. Despite all his efforts, Bogdanovich could not suppress a yawn. His face showed traces of recent debauch.

"Give us the folder which contains the maps."

"The one with the hydrogeological maps?" "Yes."

Placing on the table large blue binders containing the maps, Bogdanovich said:

"The Herr Lieutenant once before expressed interest in the map of Monte dei sei Boussi, but evidently someone has removed it, for it has disappeared. Yesterday, on the order of the captain, I wrote to the army staff, which has two such folders full of maps." And he turned on me a look of triumphant malice.

The maps were printed on hard glossy watermarked paper. As we turned to leave, Husar approached the wall where hung a drawing of a nude woman. Husar began pulling out the tacks which fastened the picture.

"What are you up to?" Bogdanovich shouted wrathfully.

"This sheet is the same size and paper as the maps."

"Leave it alone!" cried Bogdanovich in a rage.

"Go ahead, Corporal, remove this drawing," said Hruna, approaching the wall.

Husar took down the picture and handed it to the colonel who, looking at it, addressed Husar:

"Arrest that scoundrel." He pointed to Bogdanovich.

On the back of the drawing was the missing hydrogeological map of Monte dei sei Boussi.

Husar rushed out and returned two minutes later with a field gendarme. Bogdanovich was led off. As we entered the car, Captain Lantosh appeared on the balcony. The colonel turned to him.

"Herr Captain, report to division headquarters in ten minutes."

The car shot ahead giving Lantosh no time to ask what was the matter.

Hruna moved about with the liveliness of a lad of eighteen; I could hardly keep up with him. Karl went off to fetch the adjutant and we sat down to study the map. The colonel pointed to a wavy line in the middle of the map.

"Do you see? It is a small cave, with the entrance from the left. Does it correspond?"

Boussi seemed to be pitted like a sponge.

Hruna fired questions at me:

"Where did you first hear the boring? In what direction? Where are the pits? What is the distance between them?"

The old man listened, absorbed, to my replies; his thick red pencil moved rapidly, marking out on the map the direction of the mine. Now and then Hruna sighed deeply.

"You did well to come to me, son," he said, slapping me on the shoulder. At that moment a tall adjutant entered the car with Captain Lantosh. "You did well. You have prevented a great catastrophe: the archduke planned to pay a visit to Monte Clara today at two o'clock."

"The archduke?" I asked in amazement. "But what shall we do, Herr Colonel?"

"Prevent a catastrophe. First we must warn the archduke."

"'Prevent a catastrophe?"... Does the colonel mean that the visit of the archduke would be the only catastrophe? No, no, he is not the man to seeitin that way," I thought.

Lantosh and the colonel were in the rear seat. Lantosh knew nothing as yet. His face was pale. He was biting his lips nervously. The colonel did not utter a word all through the ride. Lantosh, too, was silent.

"They're ready to eat each other," I thought, getting a malicious satisfaction from it.

A smile seemed to flash across the face of the nude woman drawn on the back of the map. It was in my hand, rolled up, her face on top.

We followed the gravel walk. On the veranda we were met by the lame captain, the archduke's adjutant. Colonel Hruna reported that he had important information, and insisted on seeing the archduke. While Hruna was speaking to the adjutant, Lantosh asked me in a whisper:

"What's happened? I don't understand a thing."

"Did the Herr Captain read my report?" I asked coldly.

"Ah! So that's what it's all about?" A disdainful smile flashed across the captain's lips. "We are playing at panic, eh?"

He turned away and wished to leave, but the colonel stopped him.

"I have not dismissed you, Herr Captain."

"I'll just be gone a moment, Herr Colonel."

"Not for a second," Hruna replied, and turning his back, resumed his conversation with the archduke's adjutant.

At first the lame hussar listened in a bored manner, but he was soon excited enough.

"Unheard of!...Unbelievable!..."

They rose. The hussar turned to us:

"Wait just a moment, gentlemen," and he disappeared indoors.

We waited. Hruna began to smoke; I lit the match for him. Lantosh, who was standing alongside him, also took a cigar, and offered me one. But I lit no match for him.

"Tell me, Herr Captain, who is that fellow working in your office?"

"You mean Bogdanovich?"

"Yes, your corporal. Where did you get him?"

"Bogdanovich is a former Oberleutnant, Herr Colonel. He was demoted before the war. He has been working for me three months. But why?" concluded Lantosh defiantly.

"Captain Lantosh, I have warned you several times to keep the papers in your office in order. What you permit is monstrous."

"I?"

"Yes, you. If the Herr Lieutenant had not come on his own initiative today, the archduke, as a result of your carelessness, might have been exposed to mortal danger today."

"The archduke . . ." I thought. "But what about the eight hundred soldiers?"

I sat on the archduke's right. His highness' adjutant was treating me to aromatic Havanas from the same cigar box in which the

archduke's feminine fingers had been fishing one. A just perceptible odor of gentlemen's perfume was wafted from the archduke. All the men seated around the table were cleanshaven and ostentatiously elegant; glittering orders and ribbons were in evidence. "Tawdry brilliance," Arnold would have said. And it was at my call that this assemblage had gathered. They passed a resolution to bring up artillery, assemble reserves and prosecute the guilty. I wanted to take the floor and remind these gentlemen that our discussion concerned not only the archduke, but above all the lives of eight hundred soldiers and officers who yesterday were the heroes of the front and tomorrow might be human debris left by an exploded mine....

"Captain Lantosh must go to the front lines to investigate the situation and check the accuracy of Lieutenant Matrai's data; within twenty-four hours Colonel Hruna is to render a report to Herr Colonel Vonkach, acting commander-in-chief."

"In twenty-four hours! But what about the battalion?"

Nobody paid any attention to me. The archduke rose. He held my hand for a moment in his soft white palm. The commander-in-chief smiled benevolently.

"Thank you for your devoted service, lieutenant. I am very glad there are heroes like you among the officers of the tenth battalion. We set to work, quickly and energetically, to determine what the situation is," he added, addressing the division general, who placed his hand on my shoulder in fatherly fashion. "You will discuss the details at the division."

Spurs clinked, the white doors opened wide like wings of a large bird taking flight. Noiselessly they shut upon us.

"Let's go to division headquarters, son. We'll discuss this in detail."

And the general seated me next to him in his car. The auto tore up the road from Zagrai to Kostanjevica. The siren screamed and people we met shied away, making awkward, terrified salutes.

At headquarters everything went into feverish action. Men rushed about, telephones rang, motorcycles barked. Waiting at the gate was the familiar figure of Husar. He had come from the front lines, which now seemed so far off, so alien, so unnecessary. And really, who cared for the unfortunate soldiers and officers who composed the unit officially named "heroic battalion"? Who was interested in the fate of that paltry grey mass when the life of the archduke, the archduke himself, had been imperilled?

Yes, the archduke's life had been saved by the young lieutenant at whom the divisional general smiled as he got out of the auto. Everyone saw the division commander go upstairs arm in arm with a mere lieutenant from the front. Now this lieutenant was standing alone near the window, forgotten by everybody. He stood and waited while an argument went on behind the door. The division commander was bawling out the Herr colonels, captains and majors. A lieutenant, of course, had no right to be present; a man of a lower rank must not hear his chiefs reprimanded; bad for morale.

I realized I was no longer needed, I was dismissed. I went to the gate and called Husar. Husar stood erect. He had seen everything and he knew everything. About ten people had already asked him who I was, recipient of these honors.

"What's the matter, Husar? I don't understand what you're saying."

"They're here, all three of them, in the guardhouse, Herr Lieutenant."

"Who's they?"

"When the gendarmes and myself brought that damned drunkard and skirt-chaser Bogdanovich to the guardhouse, Herr Lieutenant, there was Corporal Egri, old Remete, and Chordash, who was sent out scouting from the third squad, remember?"

"What were they doing in the guardhouse?" I asked uncomprehending.

"They've been arrested, Herr Lieutenant," Husar lowered his voice, "as deserters."

"Where were they?"

"Ekh, Herr Lieutenant, they didn't even reach Novi-Vash; they hid behind the second line of trenches on Doberdo. The gendarmes got them there."

Paul Egri and his comrade Remete, who had first reported the Italians tunneling to lay their mine; Chordash, who made a seismograph from an Italian sword, and a kettle.... Paul Egri, who was right behind Lieutenant Bacco when the famous attack began....

"Where is the guardhouse?"

"Around the corner, Herr Lieutenant. The barracks with the square yard."

I walked there rapidly. Husar followed.

Paul Egri and his comrades—deserters? They would have to face a court-martial. Two officers, a priest, three soldiers, a clip of bullets—speedy justice. Paul Egri, who did not fear bayonets, who faced dum-dum bullets to bring in a wounded Italian through the barbed wire. Paul Egri.... Perhaps it had been he who had fired at Novak? Paul Egri had decided to commit suicide rather than be blown up. He had simply fled, and for that.... I, too, had fled from there, and sent my unit to the reserves. But I had the right to do it; Paul Egri was a runaway, a deserter.

The lieutenant on duty in the guardhouse rose politely and shook hands with me. (He had seen how the division general....)

"What can I do for you, colleague?"

"Three of my soldiers are here in the guardhouse."

"Three soldiers?"

"Yes. Paul Egri, Remete and Peter Chordash. I think his first name is Peter, but I am not sure."

"And what do you want?"

"I would like to speak to my corporal. He's a good chap, but lazy. I want to give him a scolding, damn him."

"Egri? Egri's a deserter! He was caught by Corporal of Gendarmes Mikolsky. He and his comrades had been gone two days."

"Impossible. It must be a misunderstanding. Let me speak to him, please."

He hesitated a moment; it was against the rules, but the lord knew who this lieutenant might be with whom the division general walked arm in arm.

"Certainly."

The Oberleutnant ushered me into a small bare room, with barred windows.

"I shall order him brought in here, only please do not be long."

"Three minutes. I only want to convince myself."

...I had said it was a misunderstanding. What if they had confessed and the confession was on the records?...

The door opened and Egri entered. No belt, no puttees, his jacket unbuttoned, his shoes unlaced and slipping from his feet at every step. A grey, swollen face.... When he saw me he turned his black, boyishly stubborn eyes away and stared at the floor. His lower lip fell and this made him seem even more like a stubborn boy.

"Well, what's the matter, Egri? What has happened?" I asked.

Egri was silent. He stood before me with hands hanging helplessly and head lowered.

"Do you hear me, Egri?"

The corporal raised his head and looked at me. It was not a soldier's obediently expressionless face; it was the face of an offended, exhausted man ready for defense or attack.

"No use, Lieutenant. They've got it straight," Egri said in a low voice.

"Then you did run away?"

Egri did not reply. He looked at me with defiant bloodshot eyes.

"So you. . ." wanting to stir him up. "So you, Paul Egri, are a coward?"

For a second I thought Egri would throw himself on me, and my hand felt for the clasp of my holster. The corporal's face was crimson, his eyes wild. Then suddenly the fellow buried his face in his hands and I saw his shoulders heave. I rushed to him and tore his hands from his eyes. Tears were streaming down his cheeks, leaving furrows on the filth on his long unwashed face.

"Paul," I said, in friendly low tones, "Paul, don't be a fool. Tell me sensibly what happened; maybe I can do something for you."

"Too late, Lieutenant," Egri answered, weeping.

"Tell me, anyway," I said wrathfully.

"They drew up a paper at Novi-Vash. They tortured me. They broke bones in my hands and feet, they beat me across the stomach."

"Let's see."

Egri lifted his jacket. On his back and stomach I saw long, swollen bruises.

"Why did they beat you?"

"Because I did not confess."

"What did you say at first?"

Egri stopped crying and looked at me searchingly and distrustfully.

"What do you mean, Herr Lieutenant?" he asked, feigning not to understand.

"When you were caught."

"I said I had dropped behind, that I. . . ."

"That you were at work?"

"Yes, but. . . ."

"How could you have forgotten that you, Remete and Chordash were sent by our detachment in the night, with Husar, with Corporal Husar, you understand, to Brestovitsa for sappers' tools?"

"For sappers' tools?" asked Egri in surprise.

"Yes."

"No, Herr Lieutenant, this won't help. The gendarmes have my signed confession."

"Nonsense. Pull yourself together and tell me frankly—frankly—why you ran away. But frankly, do you understand?"

Egri looked at me scared and distrustful. Was it a trap?

I understood what was going on in his mind. I took out my cigarette case and lit a cigarette. Egri's eyes were fixed on it.

"Want one?"

Egri swallowed and said nothing.

"Don't be a fool, Paul, take a cigarette. You can take three or four. Well, go ahead."

Egri's hand rose uncertainly. His fingers were stiff, and it cost him an effort to grasp a cigarette.

"What's that?"

Egri remained silent. Seizing his hand, I pointed to his finger.

"What's that?"

"They gave me the works." Tears in his eyes again. He puffed at the cigarette, breathed heavily, his nose and eyes red.

"Tell me everything frankly," I repeated.

"What is there to tell, Herr Lieutenant? At the examination I told all."

"What did you say?"

Egri looked at me distrustfully again, and then apparently realized that he had already confessed enough and further frankness could not add to his danger.

"I said I had deserted."

"Did you confess it after you were beaten up?"

"Yes."

"Well?"

"I said nothing more."

"Now tell me, Egri, why you ran away."

"I wanted to sleep soundly, Herr Lieutenant. At least I got a sound sleep here."

"Only for that reason?"

"I couldn't sleep there, Herr Lieutenant. I didn't sleep a wink in forty-eight hours. All the time I was waiting, listening. My whole body quivered, Herr Lieutenant. If I must die, I would rather die straight off. The waiting, waiting, waiting was terrible."

I looked at the lad's hair. White patches were to be seen on the temples.

"Was it because of the mine?"

"Yes, Herr Lieutenant. I have seen positions blown up. I was behind the trenches once when our troops blew them up."

Somebody approached the door but did not open it.

"All this is due to your laziness, Egri," I said sternly. "Where the devil did you go these three days? What shall I do with you now? Corporal Husar lost two days waiting for you in Brestovitsa!"

Egri took the cigarette out of his mouth and put it in his pocket without extinguishing it. The door opened and the captain of the gendarmes, accompanied by the Oberleutnant on duty, entered. I had seen this blond mustached captain at the conference in the morning. When he saw me his predatory face lit up with a smile.

"Ah, it is you! What has happened? Is this man your subordinate?"

"Not quite. He is from the first company of our battalion, but of late he and his comrades have been at my disposal. Idlers, wastrels! They were bound to get into trouble."

The captain turned to the Oberleutnant.

"According to the report they are deserters," said the Oberleutnant.

"Pardon me, but there must be a misunderstanding somewhere. It cannot be," I replied.

The sentry led Egri away. He walked lazily, with a slouch, before the armed guard. We entered the captain's office.

"Herr Captain," I said drily. "I shall be compelled to complain. Your people arrested those miserable blockheads, who had lost their way in the communications trenches, and by beating them forced them to confess to a pack of lies."

"What do you mean? Beating them?"

"Very simple. Your people beat them up."

"How do you know it?"

"The arrested showed me the marks."

The captain's face grew dark.

"Well, what do you want?"

"I want them released. Give them in charge of my corporal, who is waiting downstairs, and they will go to Brestovitsa, where I sent them for sappers' tools."

"Are you willing to put all that down in writing?"

"Of course."

The door opened, and a young Oberleutnant of the chausseurs entered.

"Herr Lieutenant Matrai?"

"At your service."

"Where have you been, damn you? The division commander made me hunt everywhere for you," shouted the officer, smiling.

The captain of gendarmes rose.

"I need no written statement. Send your corporal here," and, swearing, he shouted to the Oberleutnant: "Five days in the coop for Mikolsky."

The captain saw us off and did not shut the door until we had descended the staircase.

"You can't imagine what's going on at headquarters. The old man is on a rampage, heads are rolling in the dust. Nine men from the division staff will be sent to the front, and no less from the brigade. Colonel Kosha is all upset. But you're a clever chap! Everybody admired the way you carried it off. You know, Lantosh will also be sent to the front, if not worse. It's unheard of! How could they have dared expose the archduke to such danger?"

The corporal was waiting near the gate.

"Husar, go straight to the guardhouse and get Egri, Chordash and Remete, who strayed off three days ago and lost their way when I sent you to Brestovitsa for sappers' tools. Do you understand?"

"Yes sir, Herr Lieutenant, only it was four days ago."

"That's right, Husar, four days ago."

"What am I to do with them, Herr Lieutenant?"

"Send them to Brestovitsa for the tools, and give them a written order. I'll sign it."

Husar was perspicacity personified. He immediately rushed off to execute my order, sending the dust flying.

In a smoke-filled room, the division and brigade generals, Colonel Kosha, Hruna, Lantosh and a major from the general staff were waiting for me. Before them lay the map of Monte dei sei Boussi. The brigade general was nervously toying with a watch chain, at the end of which hung a little compass. Lantosh, red, perspiring—obviously he had been raked over the coals—gave me an evil look.

"We have decided that you are to set off immediately for Monte dei sei Boussi with Captain Lantosh to check the data."

"The mining was completed the day before yesterday and now we can estimate only by external indications."

"What are these indications?" asked the brigade general.

"The Italian trenches below ours are empty, the enemy has moved into new trenches, 250 to 300 feet away."

"That proves nothing," said the major from the general staff, examining the map.

"Pardon me," interrupted Hruna, "this circumstance is very significant."

"What other indications are there?"

"We can learn more only by scouting."

"Or by laying a counter-mine," Hruna suggested to the division general.

"Yes, a counter-mine, which..."

"And the battalion?" I asked.

"The battalion will receive its orders," Colonel Kosha interrupted me. In his every word I felt suppressed wrath.

"Well, act," said the division general, extending his hand to me. "I hope I shall see you again. Come to see me when this operation is completed."

The brigade general proffered his cold, flabby hand. Colonel Kosha's hand was hot and dry.

"You could have come to me. Why did you go straight to the division?" said Colonel Kosha with a sour smile.

"Herr Colonel, my report to Captain Berend gathered dust for more than a week."

"Well, let's not discuss it any more," said the colonel hastily.

"And now let's go ahead, and if your report is correct. . . ."

An hour later the brigade general's well-fed horse drove our carriage toward Doberdo at a lively trot. Seated on the coach box, alongside the coachman, was Husar. His knapsack held a tin box with a three-kilogram detonation shell. My immediate superior, Herr Captain Lantosh, sat beside me, his face sullen. Great changes had occurred in our relations. I had gone over his head, direct to division headquarters, instead of trying once more to deal with him. The Herr Captain spoke of it now in a broken voice, not the voice of a commander.

"You could at least have come to me this morning, instead of running to the colonel, who was naturally glad to have an opportunity to compromise me."

I could have expressed my frank opinion to the Herr Captain, but I was not in a mood for argument.

"I am quite sure, Herr Captain, that if I had waked you this morning and tried to explain the situation, you would have turned me out or you would have certainly put me under domiciliary arrest. And you would have seen to it that nobody heard of the mining operations. I cannot understand, Herr Captain, who could have had the crazy idea of concealing the imminent danger and of forbidding counter-action and even observation. This could only have been done by someone who had never smelled powder in the front lines."

"Blame your major," replied Lantosh.

Yes, a fundamental shift had occurred in our relations. When we took leave of him, Colonel Hruna declared: "The Herr Captain will be at the disposal of Herr Lieutenant Matrai, and will act according to his instructions." I thought Lantosh would protest. But he uttered not a word. And now he sat alongside me, a captain subordinated to a lieutenant. I never wanted to command Captain Lantosh. I never liked him; I knew him as a profiteer and a careerist, not as an officer, this man who had three stars on his collar.

I was in the grip of contradictory feelings. Anxiety and uncertainty offset any satisfaction I might have had over my honors. I felt as if I had entered on a criminal agreement with the staffs against the battalion on undermined Clara, the battalion of which the gentlemen of the staff did not even want to think, though it was the battalion and not the archduke now that was in danger.

I had to act carefully, coolly. I was entirely indifferent to the archduke's fate; what I cared for was the battalion; but I had to pretend that I stood chiefly for "in-the-first-place" and at the same time try to get the "in-the-second-place" out of Clara. And once we retreat, just let the Italians try to go higher; our counter-mine would settle them.

We entered the communications trench. Lantosh was transfigured, his flabbiness disappeared, he walked quickly and firmly. Berend lent him a handsome stick made of cherry wood. I walked in front, the captain behind me, and Husar followed.

When we were about a hundred feet from regiment headquarters Lantosh asked if I spoke German.

"Of course."

"And your corporal?"

"I don't think so."

The captain drew alongside me. The communications trench was rather wide at that spot, and two could walk side by side. The captain took my arm and pressed the elbow.

"Listen," he said in German.

"I see you are a sensible and energetic fellow. You are sure of reward and promotion. But you were wrong to concert with that old intriguer Hruna against us. Think how many men will be disgraced if we phone to division headquarters that Clara is mined! We can't do it today—try to understand that—not today. Tomorrow the situation will be entirely different. Tomorrow, or after tomorrow, all of us—the regiment and brigade staffs—will willingly sign a report that the Italians really mined the mountain and that the situation is unsafe."

I disengaged my elbow from the captain's shaking hand.

"What will happen to the commanders of the regiment and the brigade? Today, the archduke refused to receive them," Lantosh went on.

We approached the dugouts of battalion headquarters. From the communications trench we clearly saw the summit and the terraces of Monte dei sei Boussi. The distance to the mountain was only two kilometers.

"What will become of the men?" I asked the captain. "Have you thought of that?"

Lantosh fell silent. I let him go forward. I looked with loathing at his fat, stoop-shouldered back.

"Scoundrel!" I said through clenched teeth.

The road began to ascend slightly. I knew that ascent well: it was the thirty-seventh terrace, the last terrace of Monte dei sei Boussi.

Far off, near Kosich, guns began to rattle. The captain stopped and listened. Nothing. We went on. In front we heard scattered firing. A heavy shell flew past us. We ducked. The shell fell not far from the battalion reserve. Silence. We stepped forward, two more shells fell near the first. What was it? Was Clara being bombarded with shrapnel? So we still annoyed the Italians!

"Quicker, Herr Captain, we have about half a kilometer to walk to battalion headquarters. We shall have time to reach it before the Italians really open up."

"But they are bombarding!"

"Bombarding? Ridiculous, Herr Captain! We are at war."

The captain stumbled over something. I stooped over him, and suddenly felt the earth slipping from under me. I was flung against the wall of the trench.

"Husar, what is it? Husar?" I shouted, but I did not hear my own voice. A gust of wind knocked me from my feet and I fell on the captain. A deafening rattle was heard, and the sky darkened. It was not an explosion, no. It was something more powerful. An earthquake. The earth shook under me, the sky began to quiver, too; and everything in my soul crashed. It was almost a physical feeling. I placed my hand on my heart but I did not feel its beat. My hands shook as if they were being jerked from within. All the time I kept shouting, shouting, but I did not hear my own voice.

The end! The end of everything! The catastrophe had happened. A tremendous grave had opened, the grave of hundreds of men. Oh, this ghastly Monte Clara! Oh, Arnold, my dear Arnold, my beloved friend! This scoundrel, Captain Lantosh! He and his rats! Damned camarilla!

I rose. My hands were scratched, my nose bleeding. I was giddy. The sky shook again. But it cleared and I saw a shining sunny day again. I felt a ringing in my ears, a strange heavenly lightness in all my body. The captain sat stooping in the depth of the entrenchment. I rose and walked forward, keeping close to the wall. I saw nothing. I clambered up the wall, reached the sand-

bags, lay down on them and looked ahead. Everything was hidden by smoke. I remained motionless for a long time, watching. The smoke was rolling away....

"Well, Herr Captain, we can phone now," I said, weeping, and hearing my own voice at last. "We—can—tel-e-phone!"

Lantosh lifted his head and glanced at me wildly. Then he jumped up.

"Come down, come down from there!" he shouted.

"You can phone," I repeated menacingly, and opened my holster. Lantosh stepped back, mortal terror in his eyes.

"You, you, you . . ." cried the captain, covering his face with his hands. Then he turned and ran back. I jumped down, but I tripped over my stick and knocked against the wall. I pulled the trigger. Once, twice, Lantosh waved his hand at me, and I shot the third time. The captain tried to rise; rose. His hands were bloody. So were mine.

"Where is the blood coming from?" I thought, and for a second I forgot even my name. Lantosh was pale, his eyes glittering like those of a madman, his lips were forming words but I could not hear them. With his left hand he tried to push me off. Wrathfully I seized his jacket at the breast. The captain fell against me and groaned:

"What have you done? What have you done?"

"Are you satisfied now?"

I wanted to shout, but my voice seemed to have disappeared, only a sibilant whisper came from my throat. I raised my revolver and shot twice at the captain's face. He recoiled. Somebody seized me from behind and tore the revolver from my hand.

"You, Husar? You? Did you hear? Did you see? It's the end, Husar. It's the end of everything."

Enfeebled, sobbing, I fell on Husar.

"Herr Lieutenant, what are you doing, what are you doing, Herr Lieutenant?" Husar repeated as he lifted me.

"Herr Lieutenant," he shouted in my ear, "you shot the Herr Captain."

Husar left me and ran to the captain. Lantosh's feet twitched; he was still alive.

"Yes, I shot him, I shot him. He wanted to run away, the rat; he wanted to desert. I'll shoot everyone of them. Everyone of them!"

My chest contracted as in a vise. I leaned against the wall, and blood gushed from my nose and mouth. I felt I was losing all my strength. My body went cold and I fell, knocking my head against the wall. I swallowed blood and felt a salty iron taste in my mouth. I opened my eyes. Husar was doing something to the captain, probably bandaging him. I had fought a duel with the captain and killed him. Husar was my second, my doctor. At last I had given that scoundrel Lantosh his deserts.

Husar rose, ran up to me, lifted me from the ground, replaced my revolver in its holster and shook me by the shoulder.

"Herr Lieutenant," he said, gasping for breath. "Wait here. I shall come back in a moment."

He propped me against the wall. My head felt ready to burst, but my strength began to return. My nose stopped bleeding. What was Husar doing with the matches? He lit something, then rushed to me, grasped me by the belt, and we ran along, stumbling and with heavy steps. We rounded a corner. Then the sound of an explosion behind us reached our ears.

"What was that?"

"Wait, Herr Lieutenant. I shall be back in a moment."

Husar disappeared.

"He has abandoned me," I thought with indifference. But two minutes later the corporal returned. He was carrying my stick.

"Everything in order, Herr Lieutenant. There was nothing left of the Captain, not even dust. Three kilograms of dynamite is plenty for one man."

"Husar!"

"Let's go ahead, Herr Lieutenant. Don't you hear what is going on there?"

From in front of us came a scattered barking of guns. How miserable and petty now seemed the cannon which had once made us shrink in fear!

"Where is the firing?"

"Both sides are firing. Apparently a battle is going on. Let us get to battalion headquarters."

"And the battalion, Husar?"

"The battalion, Herr Lieutenant? The battalion was up there."

"It *was*.... Let's go. Forward, Husar, forward! I want to see Lieutenant Kenez...."

Now I was marching along firmly and resolutely. Anger increased my strength. "I want to see Lieutenant Kenez, damn him.... I shall make him answer for this. I'll kill him on the spot. The rat!"

A group of men were coming toward us. Husar stopped, looked at them, and shouted:

"Haal! Haal! Come here!"

"Haal?"

I saw Haal before me. Kiral... Torma.... I didn't see the others. Someone elbowed his way forward. Papa Andrisch! Homok touched me. On his back he had my officer's knapsack, under his arm ...under his arm Arnold's green notebook...

"Where did you get that, Homok?" I asked, and my heart sank.

"Herr Chutora brought it to me an hour ago," said Homok, giving it to me. I looked at the shabby morocco cover and fingered it.

"Well, Haal?" I raised my eyes and looked at the squad corporal.

"It has happened, Herr Lieutenant," Haal, very pale, replied.

"Where is Chutora?" I shouted.

"Herr Chutora gave me this and went back there," Papa Homok pointed to Monte dei sei Boussi.

Torma approached me and took my hand.

"You're all bloody, Herr Lieutenant."

"Yes," I said, "all bloody."

Somebody shouted behind us:

"Italians, Italians!"

Everyone gave a start. Their first thought was flight.

"Stop!" I shouted and raised my hand.

"Throw down your tools! Fix bayonets!"

The tools were thrown to the earth with a rattle. There came the clank of steel. The artillery ahead of us shifted its fire; our guns began to throw shrapnel.

"Husar!"

"Yes, Herr Lieutenant."

"Have you another clip of bullets?"

"No, Herr Lieutenant," answered Husar disconcertedly.

"Then we'll do without. And now let's turn to the communications trench and go ahead. Torma, you go to the left and I to the right. Haal will stay in the communications trench."

We all set out. I left the trench. Outside men were moving among the stones.

I took out my field glasses.

"Come with me!" I cried, and I turned to the right, whence the dark figures were coming.

I was treated like an easter egg. I was assigned one of the best rooms in a magnificent castle now used as a military hospital. People tiptoed around me and competed in doing me services. But I troubled them little. I had no wishes.

The letter from my family was prompt. My father's handwriting, the handwriting of an old man, roused sad reminiscences.

I was in a strange state. I felt as if I had fallen into a ravine. I had no external injuries except a wound in my shoulder, but within me everything was broken. Yes, everything within me was smashed as if I had been a crate of glass. The contents were in fragments though outwardly the box was almost intact. The knowledge of the wreck within appalled me. I was afraid to probe into it, afraid I would cry out.

I perceived everything around me with unearthly clarity. I heard what the doctors said. I heard the groans of the wounded in the nearby wards. I felt the doctors' hands. People bent over me solicitously. But nothing aroused any response in me. I did not wish to speak.

The shell that had broken the earth under me, crashed me against the rocks and shot a steel splinter into my shoulder, had robbed me of my will—but not the shell alone; there were other causes.

The doctors' diagnosis was shock. I was to be sent somewhere to recuperate. Doctor Kern and the chief surgeon of the hospital visited me three times to discuss it with me. The doctor-colonel examined my arm, praised my blood, admired my muscles that healed so rapidly, my clavicle that knitted so well, though my left hand would still have to be kept in a bandage; but he hinted that my staying so much in bed was not good.

I listened listlessly.

"Your wound is healing. Now we must think of your nerves. Where would you like to go for a rest? Austria, Hungary, Germany? Where do you want to go? His royal highness ordered us to let you choose."

I did not want to make the effort of choosing. Only the distress of Kern and the surgeon made me open my lips.

"Wherever you wish," I said indifferently.

A discussion began between the doctor and the representative of the Red Cross, not about where to send me but about how to answer the archduke's adjutant.

The colonel found the way out of the dilemma.

"Where do you come from? Fogarash? Ah, yes, that is now the Rumanian front."

"Perhaps you want to go to Schwarzwald or Semmering?" suggested Kern.

"Anywhere."

"Maybe to Tatri, in Hungary," proposed the doctor.

"All right, let it be Tatri," I agreed.

"Very well, Tatri, then. Beautiful mountains, fine air, lakes, electric treatments. In a month the Herr Lieutenant will be an Oberleutnant. And everything will be fine."

Arnold's sister Ella, who had gone off to Switzerland to escape the war, came to see me. She was as beautiful as I had imagined her, despite her tense, tearless mourning. But she was as aloof as she had been before when she had managed so decisively yet so tactfully to discourage any trespass upon the borders of friendship.

How to begin? Where to begin? At last I had to sort through the debris of my thoughts and feelings and pick out the memories of Arnold.

I told Ella of everything, beginning with Opaciosello and ending with the explosion. I told her of Arnold, of Chutora, Homok, Bacco, Spitz, Haal, the soldiers, officers, staffs; of the moment of revelation when I took aim at the

mortally frightened captain. At first I meant to speak of Arnold alone, but I found myself talking of the war, of the troops on Monte Clara sentenced to death, of Doberdo, of the world under which a mine had been laid.

"The explosion at Monte Clara is a small pyrotechnical rehearsal of what is going to happen. It must come, this all-destroying explosion. Only I don't know when. It is true that the best perished: Arnold, Chutora, Homok, Husar; but Haal, Paul Egri and Kiral are living. If you knew Paul Egri, you would know why I shot the captain. You ask why I did it and how I dared do it? But I did not think then; I knew. I shot him because I had to shoot him. Husar understood me without explanations. And then I saw Torma rushing in my direction, that poor innocent child armed to the teeth and consumed with the hysteria of heroism. We jumped out of the communications trench. I made my detachment turn back and rushed ahead to the steaming ruins. I still had a slight hope that someone had remained alive, that Chutora had succeeded at the last minute in pulling Arnold and the rest to safety. At the same time I knew that if I met Kenez or Madarashi I would shoot them just as I had shot the captain. Let the criminals pay for their crime. We rushed ahead, the shells roared. But what a pitiful sound it was now compared to the earthquake of half an hour before. 'It's the end of everything,' I thought. The thought was boring through my head. Still I rushed forward, to save and to punish. But the explosion had shaken the mists from my eyes, scattered all my illusions. And quite naturally I came to a stunningly simple conclusion: 'We must revolt against this criminal system, we must turn against its representatives, we must punish them.' I felt friends behind me; I was sure that if we met the men who were guilty of the catastrophe my friends would kill them as I commanded, considering it, as I did, execution of murderers.

"The dugouts of the battalion headquarters were empty. Some corpses lay at the bottom of a shell crater near the flower bed. Everything was covered with a coat of dust, gravel and shell splinters. One of the dead bodies I recognized as Lieutenant Kenez's clerk. But where were the rest? We moved on, and suddenly somebody shouted behind me: 'The Italians! The Italians!' Several figures appeared in the smoke and chaos. They approached us, jumping from stone to stone. I ordered my men to spread out. The soldiers obeyed perfectly; in every movement they displayed the precision of a military machine. We opened a running fire on the men approaching and they vanished immediately. What was going on there in front of us? This was the only question that bothered us. Would we be able to reach Clara, to see our comrades, our friends and brothers whom we had been too late to save? Would we at least see their dead faces? Forward!

"At that moment a large group appeared on our right; they were our own chausseurs. We recognized them by the feathers in their caps. The chausseurs slid downhill like an avalanche toward the south. To our surprise they were unarmed. A small band of fifteen or twenty followed them with fixed bayonets, Italians! What had happened?

" 'The chausseurs are prisoners, Herr Lieutenant.'

" 'Prisoners! But there is half a battalion there. Soon they will march past us.'

" 'Lie down! Take aim! Bring the machine-gun forward!'

" 'Shoot the lieutenant! Shoot the lieutenant! Let us surrender!'

"Husar jumped up and shouted fiercely: 'Shut your trap, donkey!'

"I heard Haal's voice: 'Don't dare touch the lieutenant!'

"The avalanche of chausseurs rattled past us, a small convoy following. But an Italian company appeared through the smoke and fired a volley. The chausseurs dropped to the ground, and the Italian company marching toward them shouted 'Avanti!' They fired on the prisoners squirming on the ground. The machine guns chattered furiously, and ours spoke up. The Italian bayonets flashed in the oblique sunbeams.

" 'Shoot the lieutenant!' That had meant me.

"The enemy was charging the unarmed chausseurs lying among the stones. The convoy took cover, too. At that moment the chausseurs jumped up with hands in the air—and the Italians stopped, dropped their arms and raised their hands, too.

" 'Fire!' I shouted. 'Fire! Forward!'

"Several shots. We plunged into the Italian flank, the chausseurs seized the arms abandoned by the foe, and everything became confused.

"The yellow flare of an explosion flashed before my eyes; someone pulled me back, I felt an awful pain in the shoulder, and as my body rolled into a shell crater I saw his brains slowly wrinkle out of Husar's shattered skull.

"Later I was lifted, I felt myself swaying on a stretcher.

" 'Where is Homok?'

" 'Homok is dead, Herr Lieutenant.'

" 'And Husar too,' I groaned.

" 'Yes, Herr Lieutenant; we got it from the Italians.'

"I did not lose consciousness, but from time to time I fell into a stupor.

"The end, the end of everything. I could not punish them now. Now I would be prosecuted, I was in their hands and they could do with me as they pleased.

"When we reached the medical station I no longer felt the pain; but I had become indifferent to everything. It took them a long time to stop my nose bleed, the result of the shock.

"After that I lost consciousness for several days. I remember being taken in an ambulance. I remember seeing the sea sparkling and I screaming as if I had been stabbed in the heart. Later the operating room, wards, long rows of beds, the wounded, the convalescent. Here I recovered my senses. I recalled that I had shot Captain Lantosh, had shot him like a dog; and I was ready to answer for it if necessary. Lantosh had killed eight hundred people, among them some of the best and dearest of men. I waited for them to come for me.

"They did come. I was given a special room and a private nurse. 'This is prison, naturally,' I thought. 'Apparently they know everything. Husar did not succeed in hiding the traces.'

"But it all turned out differently. They whispered to me that a very great person was going to visit me. The door opened wide. I heard soft clinking of spurs, people entered the room, lots of people. The chief doctor stood at the head of my bed, men with spurs formed ranks, and two of them approached me.

" 'The Herr Lieutenant's wound is healing, your highness. But the shock is still severe. It is necessary to place him in a hospital for nervous ailments.'

"I breathed perfume, heard a familiar voice; a soft palm patted my forehead.

" 'Every medical facility must be employed to treat the Herr Lieu-

tenant. Lieutenant Matrai is an outstanding hero of our front. He is the triple hero of Monte dei sei Boussi.'

"'Everything possible will be done, your highness.'

"'He saved his highness,' pronounced a woman's voice, and a still softer palm slipped over my forehead.

"I heard voices, I felt the touch of hands, I breathed perfumes; but I did not open my eyes. The doctor was agitated; he bent over me and felt my pulse.

"Then an unbelievable piece of clowning took place. My lieutenant's uniform was hung on the back of a chair and two orders were pinned to it. One was for saving the archduke, the other for the double heroism at Monte Clara. The archduke pronounced a short speech. I learned from his speech that after the explosion, Monte Clara remained in our hands, that the battalion of chausseurs we had freed had routed the Italians, capturing many of them; that they had taken possession of the height while the reserve units, rushing to their aid, covered their rear. Only a few men of the heroic tenth battalion remained alive. The game was going on.

"And I? I was lying in bed with a knitting clavicle and a heart smashed into bits. My uniform, with the two new orders, hung on the back of a chair next to my bed. I was the murderer of eight hundred men, and the savior of a strategic lump of useless earth. All I could do was to prevent the archduke's trip. 'Hero! Hero!' resounded mockingly in my brain; and, in loud counterpoint, in my heart: 'Murderer!' I did not open my eyes, but uncalled for tears appeared from under my eyelashes. The chief doctor invited the royal couple to leave the room because the Herr Lieutenant's nerves were still too weak and such a solemn ceremony had a bad effect on him.

"All this was so clownish, so stupid. The whole proceeding was like an operation under poor narcosis.

"'Poor man, how touched he is!' said a woman's voice. 'Just look, he is weeping.'

"I wanted to jump up, to shout, to smash everything around me, but I had no strength to move.

"I got what I deserved, Ella. Now if anything remained warm in my heart, it was the hatred of war, of the intriguing staffs, of the conceited generals, of the archduke, wrapped up in his own greatness, of everything that had transformed me into what they called a hero.

"I thought then: 'When I recover, I shall run away to Chordash, to Remete, to Egri.' Naive, crazy. That's not the way out."

I fell silent. Ella sat still. Her profile was very much like Arnold's. A sound broke the stillness.

"Do you hear that, Ella? Do you hear how it buzzes?"

I went to the windows. Ella looked at me in astonishment. I pressed a big fat fly to the window pane and seized it by the wings.

"Look! It came flying from over there, do you understand? It's a corpse fly!"

The war went on but I was on the way to the Tyrol with Ella for a rest. Seldom did we mention the war; mostly we talked of Arnold.

At Lavish our car was coupled to an ambulance train. The archduke's order had a magic effect. Our train was routed clear through without delays. We were headed north, far from the war, away from the front.

Ella treated me as if I was still seriously ill. Perhaps I was. Sometimes, despite all my efforts, I relapsed into near stupor. We rode up, up, up, toward the mountains, toward health, toward un-

derstanding. But the further we moved from the front, the more incomprehensible became the war. Somewhere battles were going on, men were murdering each other, were destroying buildings erected with pain and labor.

"Ella, is it true no corpse flies will come buzzing in here?"

We lived in a cabin in the forest with the Stiltz family. Not far from us were a small sawmill and a dairy farm. Our landlady's family consisted of herself, Frau Dina Stiltz, her son Rudi, and the huge St. Bernard, Hoeksl. Our life consisted of sun baths, milk diet, and short hikes. We were in a kingdom of peace. And all this had been created for me by a woman who had lost her brother, and in pure kindness and in memory of his friendship for me, had become a sister to me.

Food, rest, recollections, recovery.... Every day, accompanied by the dog Hoeksl, we went on excursions into the mountains. On the eighth day, armed with a stout alpenstock, we went far into the mountains. When we reached a summit, Ella congratulated me.

"How beautiful it is here!"

"Look, look!" cried Ella, pointing to the right. "See that summit, Tibor? It is Mutler."

"Mutler.... But that's Switzerland!"

"Yes, yes, Switzerland. Tra-la-la, Switzerland!"

We stood motionless for a long time, looking at Mutler's snowy peak.

On our descent I walked fast, jumping from stone to stone. Ella loudly congratulated me.

"If your recovery goes on at this rate we shall soon be able to try an all-day hike."

When we came back and I was alone, I took up Arnold's notebook for the first time. I opened it and for a long time gazed at the photographs which lay on top. One of them was a photograph of me with Spitz. A strange feeling possessed me. Of all those whose pictures I saw there, I alone was alive. But what was the sense of a life preserved by pointless chance?

I looked through the pages. The handwriting was nervous; pages devoted to various subjects, some in ink, some in pencil. Dates and place names showed when and where they had been written, sometimes at the front, sometimes in bivouacs—in Opaciosello, Kostanjevica, Brestovitsa....

In these lines there was evidence of a man who could think clearly but who was caught in the paralyzing clutches of necessity. A terrible tragedy was being played around him. A tragedy with too many victims and too little sense—a tragedy that robbed life of perspectives. Groaning, creaking, bleeding, the terrible juggernaut of war rattled by. What was to be done? To flee, as von Riesenstern suggested, or to smash this machine, as Chutora insisted?

I read these lines with horror. On these pages were not ink and pencil marks, but the blood of a mortally wounded man looking into his grave. What intellectual tortures, what a wreck they reflected, the torment of a man torn between Chutora and Count Tisza.

Ella found me reading them.

"Ella, have you read them?"

"Yes, why do you ask?"

"And you understand it all?"

"Yes," answered Ella sadly. Then, suddenly, she retreated to the door. "I'll be back in a moment," she said.

When she returned she looked straight in my eyes.

"I must tell you that in Switzerland I received some articles on the war from Arnold. He wrote them at the front. Arnold had written

that he would send me articles if I found a Left paper to publish them. I addressed myself to Alexei, a political exile in Switzerland, and asked if his paper would publish articles exposing the war. Alexei said he would welcome them. I thought the publication of these articles would revive Arnold, crushed by the war, and I waited for them with impatience. The articles reached us. They were a tragic disappointment. They revealed the wreck of Arnold's mind. When I understood it, I felt as I felt later when I got the news of his death. Arnold could not shake off his bourgeois terminology. He criticized the war from a bourgeois point of view, though the war was and is a historical 'creation' of the bourgeoisie itself. Arnold could not make the necessary break, he could not turn to the other side, which could have given him a true perspective."

"In a word, join Chutora?"

"Yes, join Chutora. He could not do it, and that is why he stayed at the front, why he stayed at Clara that day."

Ella fell silent; then, sighing deeply, she added:

"I lost the person dearest and nearest to me. The future lost one of its best, one of its firmest fighters, because Arnold was very close to choosing his path. Some day I shall show you the letters he sent me through Chutora to avoid the military censorship. He wrote a good deal about you in those letters. He had great hopes in you, though in his last letters one feels a great irritation toward you. But that is quite understandable now."

Toward evening a chilling fog covered the mountains. Ella ordered a fire laid in the fireplace. Scented pine logs, dry as powder, crackled and flared. The weather grew worse; an autumn downpour began. Big raindrops splashed against the window panes. Ella again took out Arnold's notebook.

"Do you want anything as a keepsake?" she asked.

I shook my head. Ella went to the fireplace and threw the papers into the fire.

As they blazed up Ella said:

"I must tell you that I have met the man who can answer the questions that tortured Arnold—and you and me. He is a real fighter for freedom, a revolutionist."

"Alexei?" I asked.

"Yes."

I knew, at the same time, that she had found, in Alexei, the goal of a more private search.

"Do you want to meet Alexei?" she asked. "I am sure you and he will become great friends."

"Yes," I replied.

"Do you know the diminutive of Alexei in Russian?"

I did not answer.

"Al-yo-sha, Al-yo-sha, Al-yo-sha. Sounds nice, doesn't it?"

Her voice had the cadences of a woman in love.

"What do you think, Ella—what party would Corporal Husar have joined?"

"Chutora's party," she answered.

Every day I rose early in the morning and watched the sun change from a source of light to a source of warmth. Sometimes with terror I came to the conclusion that life was captivity, life was sentries with fixed bayonets. One day, wandering in the mountains, a frontier guard saluted me and said:

"I earnestly request the Herr Lieutenant not to walk here; it is easy to lose one's way and to find oneself on the wrong side of the border."

Our faithful dog Hoeksl was with us. When he appeared among the bushes the frontier guard calmed down.

"Excuse me, Herr Lieutenant, I did not know you had Hoeksl

with you. That dog knows the frontier perfectly; one can never lose one's way with him. He will allow nobody to cross from either side. Right, Hoeksl?"

The dog barked loudly in answer and his bark resounded in a triple echo from mountain to mountain.

Strangely disturbed we returned home. Ella was silent, nervous. Perhaps she was not feeling well, I thought. Ella sick? She sick and I healthy? I had grown accustomed to the opposite; it had seemed natural to me. How selfish I was!

During the first two days that Ella's illness confined us to the house many things became clear to me. Ella disclosed that she had a plan, to prevent my return to the front.

"Von Riesenstern?" I asked.

"No, something quite different. I am waiting for a letter. When it comes we shall discuss it with you, Tibor. And now, rest!"

At times I thought Ella was playing a game with me. The third day of her illness she went out on the balcony with me, but she was still weak and pale.

"Do you know what I was thinking, Tibor?" she asked.

"No."

"It seemed to me that I was wrong in acting as I did. Maybe you have had enough of me, maybe I have become superfluous to you..."

"Ridiculous! If it were only not the other way round."

"I did not even question you about your plans for the future. Maybe you have other plans and I, with my feminine naiveté, have devised a romantic plot to save you from the war. Perhaps you don't wish it? You could carve out a rapid and brilliant career. You are the man who saved the archduke, a hero, a young lieutenant with five orders. The war hasn't lost its romantic coloring for everybody. That I hate war is a different matter. I have my reasons. The war humiliated me; it robbed me of my brother. There are other ways for you to escape it. You can always avoid the front lines, have yourself assigned to staff headquarters; you can get promotions and have a good time. And here I am inventing fantasies."

I played out my part in the little comedy. "When I know your plans I shall be able to make a decision."

The door opened and Rudi rushed in.

"The mail! Fräulein, Herr Lieutenant! A letter! A telegram!"

The letter was from my father, and brought with it a keen desire to see my parents once more, to embrace them, to let them know that their son had not forgotten them. Then I noticed Ella. She was deathly pale.

"Read this!" She handed me the telegram. "My god! What are we going to do? I haven't yet received the letter I'm waiting for."

The telegram was from Doctor Kern. He notified us that he was in Bozen and would pay us a visit the next day.

"He is coming to fetch me," I said in despair.

"No! Impossible," cried Ella. "Don't move from here. You haven't had a proper rest, Tibor."

The telegram had its effect; Ella felt worse. But she went on:

"When he comes you must meet him in a bathrobe, leaning on your stick. You must simulate illness. Call Frau Dina. I will give her instructions. Or rather, don't call her. Hide this suitcase with the things I bought."

The letter from Alexei that Ella was waiting for came the day after Doctor Kern's departure. Ella recovered at once.

"He is here, in Martinsbrukke," she said with sparkling eyes.

"Who?"

"Read this." Ella handed me the letter. It was in French, and had traveled four days from Berne. The letter was brief, and rather cold; just a few lines.

"Dear Ella, I have been rather busy lately. We met our friends at Zimmerwald, near Berne," I read.

"'Not 'friends,' but 'comrades.' You must translate 'friends' as 'comrades,'" said Ella.

"Isn't it just the same?"

"No, it is not. A comrade is more than a friend. Read on."

"'We discussed several questions concerning the present situation.'"

I paused, looked at Ella, and wondered what they could have discussed. "How naive they are," I thought. "They do not realize what a terrible force war is."

"Go on, go on," said Ella, shutting her eyes.

"'Now I am free and able to fulfill your request. Three days after I send this letter, I shall go to Martinsbrukke and wait for you and your cousin there. Greetings. Alexei.'"

"You understand now?" said Ella excitedly.

"I understand," I answered in a low voice.

"Well, what have you to say? There is my plan."

"This means flight."

"Yes, flight. Do you consider flight impossible?"

"No, no. But you know, it is so unexpected..."

Ella rose, went to the windows, and quietly, in a voice so low that I hardly heard her, said:

"Tibor, try to understand. I conceived this idea when I received the news of Arnold's death, and of your wound. Arnold perished because he was unable to overcome his inward chaos. He could not fathom the horrible secret of the war, and he fell. You began to resist in time and your reward is that you remained among the living. When I received the letter from the Red Cross, my first thought was: 'Tibor must be saved, he must be snatched out of it; it is my duty.' I told Alexei nothing of it, but I was sure he would approve my idea. You see, he writes: 'I shall wait for you and your cousin there.' I always spoke of you as a relation, and he apparently thinks you are my cousin. But that's unimportant. You are more than a cousin to me. Do you understand?"

"If Arnold were alive, we would be going, all three...." I said.

"Of course, of course!" cried Ella.

It was a long time before I could get to sleep that night. The project kept turning in my mind. I felt irritated with myself. What was I anxious over? What would happen if I ran away? Whom would I be betraying? The archduke? Let him be grateful to me for having saved his precious life! The army? Damn the army! My friends? Had I friends there? My parents? Oh, my dear old parents, I am sorry for you, but you would be the first to approve. My native Hungary?—Which Hungary? One was a land dear to me, wondrous beautiful, with white villages, quiet rivers, tidy cities, mountains, hills, cheerful honest workers, good-natured peasants. The other Hungary—men who deceived and betrayed the people, led them into a bloody adventure, men for whose selfish interests millions were suffering; men who were the greatest enemies of the people. Was that my native land?

"I will do it!" I whispered happily as I fell asleep. The problem was solved, everything had become clear and honest. By abandoning everything here I would save myself, and I would truly serve the memory of my teacher and friend. Indeed, Arnold ought to have done

the same. Arnold and Chutora and all the rest. But Chutora was dead, too; Husar, Spitz, Bacco . . . all the rest, dead. We, the living, were approaching our Rubicon.

In the morning everything was in order. We set off for a stroll in the mountains. Frau Dina urged Ella not to go far; the Fräulein was still so weak.

We walked in the direction of the sawmill. The road led east, into the heart of the Tyrol, but after the first sharp turn we went toward the west. Suddenly, to our dismay, Hoeksl joined us, yelping gaily. Frau Dina and Rudi were standing on the balcony waving to us. I looked at them through my field glasses and reported to Ella.

"They are waving. They seem to think Hoeksl will be a help to us. Damn them!"

Ella took out her handkerchief and waved to Frau Stiltz.

"Thanks!"

"But what shall we do with the dog?"

"Don't worry. Let's go. Hoeksl, forward!"

We turned down a forest path and climbed a steep hill.

"But what shall we do with the dog?" I repeated, after we had been walking three hours. We were at the foot of a steep slope. The mill was far behind us. Below us flowed a frisky mountain stream. We were at a great height.

I looked at the map and measured out our route.

"What time does he expect us?"

"At three o'clock."

"What shall we do with the dog?"

Ella patted Hoeksl's head and stroked his enormous ears. Trustfully Hoeksl rested his head on her knee.

"Leave Hoeksl to me," said Ella ironically. "Men and dogs always submit to women."

We laughed. Hoeksl laughed too, opening wide his mouth, and letting his tongue hang sid ways. But what if Hoeksl got stubborn at the frontier? Hoeksl was an Austrian patriot, he would not let a Honved lieutenant cross the frontier. He wanted me to fight and defend the Tyrol from the Italians. But Herr Stiltz was a German and Frau Dina an Italian. Then what was their boy Rudi?

"Thoughtful again, my friend?" said Ella severely.

"No, no, I was just thinking of Hoeksl."

After five hours of walking we reached a path long beaten smooth, a path which disregarded frontiers. Hoeksl stopped, looked at us, nervously wagged his tail, and began to whine.

"Well, Ella?"

We were descending now. Around us a forest. Two woodpeckers pecking rhythmically at a tree trunk sounded like the ticking of a clock.

"Hoeksl, do you want to go to Willi?" Ella asked tenderly.

The dog understood and dashed forward. Now there was no doubt but that we were on the right path. It was quiet, there was not a soul around us, although. . . .

"See that border guard, there, near the frontier post? But he's looking in the opposite direction. There—he's moved on and vanished among the trees."

"Forward, Hoeksl, quick! We'll soon be with your friend Willi Bregott."

The Swiss frontier post flashed by. We turned to the right. Ella took out the Stiltz's order giving them the right to cross the frontier. Ridiculous! Everybody here knew the Stiltz family. But Hoeksl showed what he was capable of. With great leaps he bounded forward, then stopped and looked at us expectantly. Remarkable dog! A compass and map were superfluous to him.

We crossed the highway and read the inscriptions on the posts: "To Block 88," "Zu Nicolaus Mauer," "Auf Mutler 3299." "Auf Servizel 1019," "To the Martinsbrukke Customs House."

"Ella, we must be more careful now."

Hoeksl, as if he understood our fears, turned rapidly and led us into the forest. Suddenly Ella shouted, dropped her alpenstock, and ran ahead like a ten-year-old girl. With a joyous yelp Hoeksl raced beside her. At a turn, on the outskirts of the forest, stood a man in a dark suit.

"Alyosha!" shouted Ella joyfully.

I picked up her stick, adjusted the knapsack on my shoulders, shook the dust from my boots, took off my hat and wiped my heated forehead.

So I was a free man. No more summons to night duty at Vermigliano. Br-r-r. Vermigliano, Polazzo! I recalled the names with nausea. My heart sank and only now, for the first time, did I really pity those who remained there. The figure of Haal rose in my memory, his intelligent brown eyes, his broad forehead. Haal! He remained there. "Shoot the Lieutenant! Let's surrender!" "Don't dare touch the Lieutenant!" Haal....

"Ti-bor! Where did you get stuck? Come over here, quick!"

I started. For some reason I felt embarrassed. Alongside Ella, his hand in hers, stood a tall, slender man clad modestly. His pale face was framed by a short-clipped beard. We shook hands, and his cold, light eyes, distant as the sky, smiled at me. Where had I seen that man? I had seen him somewhere, I was sure, but I could not recall where.

Ella's face was burning, her eyes sparkled.

"How do you like Alexei?" her eyes queried.

I smiled back approvingly. Alexei led us not to the forester's house but to a small hut.

"We shall stay here with a railroad worker, if you have no objections," he said. "He is a very nice fellow; your Bregotts seem to me too orthodox bourgeoisie. They might make a fuss about crossing the frontier and then you, Comrade Matrai, would have to be officially interned. So let's talk over our affairs here."

The railroad worker received us affably and put a spare room at our disposal. We acted the part of weary mountain climbers who had lost their way. Alexei was silent for the most part. I frequently caught him casting a searching glance at me but Ella talked without a pause. After lunch Alexei turned to me.

"What are your plans?"

I was disconcerted. My plans? But I had carried them out already. I had deserted. Ella answered for me. She told how I had reached the decision to break with the army.

"Tibor may become a real fighter, a real comrade, Alexei," she concluded.

Alexei listened calmly and, it seemed to me, with indifference. Then, turning to me, he began to put questions. His questions were consistent and carefully thought out. True, some of them appeared to me to have no relation to the affair, but I answered them all.

Was the army well supplied? What was the state of mind of the soldiers? Of the officers? What did the Italian prisoners say? Did the Hungarian army fight as it used to and why?

I hardly had time to answer one question before the next one came, and the more I answered the clearer became the connection between the questions.

"The soldiers' nerves are strained

to the breaking point, yes, to the breaking point."

Suddenly Alexei seized my hand and asked with special fervor:

"How long do you think the war can go on?"

"If it depended on the staffs and the ministers, it would go on to the last cartridge, to the last invalid," I replied bitterly.

"You mean you've had your fill of it?"

"I don't want to see another soldier. I'm tired and worn out morally. I oppose and hate the war," I said heatedly.

"Oppose or hate? There is a big difference."

He turned to Ella.

"Ella, I think Comrade Tibor's decision to flee was your doing. Unfortunately, I was unable to write it to you, but such things must not be decided hastily. True, Tibor?"

"Oppose or hate? Different things. You don't want to see another soldier? All right. But let me ask you: if you really hate the war, don't you feel yourself strong enough to struggle against it?"

"What do you mean? How can I?" I asked in surprise.

"Is it that you simply don't know how, or that you don't want to understand the struggle?" asked Alexei.

"No, I simply want to know how."

"That's different. I can answer that, and I am very glad to do so."

Alexei went to the cupboard and took out a small suitcase. The lock clicked open and Alexei took out several typewritten pamphlets and leaflets.

"Ella and I shall go for a stroll, and have a talk, and meanwhile you can read these leaflets and look at these two pamphlets. I would like very much to set you clear. If there is anything you don't understand, ask me."

Ella and Alexei left, and I read every word of the leaflets and pamphlets. So that was the subject of the Zimmerwald Conference! With what force those simple, dry lines struck me! Of course I understood everything. How could a man who had been on the battlefield not understand?

What I said later to Alexei quite satisfied him; but he put me through another examination.

"You could circulate these leaflets at the front?"

"Yes," I replied like a soldier receiving an order to go into battle.

At midnight we went to sleep. I slept as I had never slept before. My heart was calm and easy. The quiet pale man with the bright eyes made everything clear.

"You know, the war has already swallowed three and a half million people, and now, in 1916, twenty-one million soldiers are under arms. Several times you asked me: why? Not so easy to answer. Competition and markets are not the only reasons. Humanity of today experienced many diseases before it reached the stage which we Communists call imperialism. But sober consideration and analysis of historical facts prove that the masses are mature enough to understand when we, the vanguard, point to the arms in their hands and tell them: 'Brothers, turn these arms against those who force you to fight!' But that won't happen of itself. We need daring, strong-hearted people to bring that moment near, real heroes who can sacrifice themselves for an idea."

Alexei woke me up. What a sound, sweet sleep I had had! I looked at Alexei and smiled.

"Do you know where I first saw you? In my dream."

Alexei smiled absent-mindedly. He did not understand and I did not try to explain; there was no time.

"Time to leave," said Alexei.

The knapsack was ready, and my alpenstock stood in the corner. Ella was not in the room.

"Have we understood each other, comrade?" asked Alexei.

"We have."

"Remember the addresses. Show the pamphlets and the papers only to those you fully trust and to people who can circulate them."

Ella was standing in front of the railroad worker's hut. She was holding Hoeksl on a leash. When he saw me the dog began to leap.

"You forgot about him," said Ella when we set out.

Feeling that he was headed for home, Hoeksl pulled at his strap, which I had taken from Ella's hands. Near the highway we stopped. Ella kissed me and whispered in my ear:

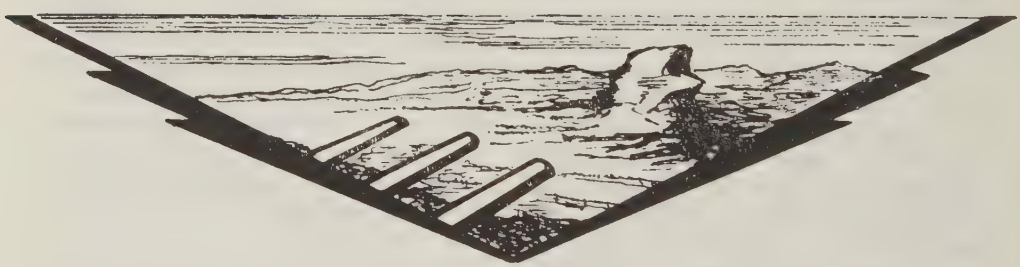
"Be brave! Be brave!"

Alexei shook my hand. I crossed the highway, removed Hoeksl's leash, and looked back. They were standing near the rock, hand in hand.

Hoeksl barked joyfully and insistently led me along. Hoeksl knew the way perfectly. The way back seemed shorter.

I do not remember when I crossed the Swiss border. The Tyrolean black and yellow post was left behind, on the left. I looked toward Switzerland. The glacier on Mutler gleamed with a rosy light. For a long time I could not tear my gaze from the beautiful scene; then I sighed deeply.

"Forward, Hoeksl! Forward, Lieutenant Matrai! You have declared war on war and now you are on your way to organize the legions of friends and comrades who will turn their rifles against those who make us fight."



Fyodor Knorre

# The Unknown Comrade

**A Story of the Japanese Intervention in the Soviet Far East**

The iron door of the railway warehouse was held ajar as the men, frowning and blinking with the pain, crossed the threshold into the crouching darkness. With an effort they advanced several steps and stopped in the middle of the warehouse. The Japanese guard at the door shouted long and shrilly, and the other soldiers laughed at his remark. Then the sheet iron door rattled as it was banged shut.

Bakhmanov, the village schoolmaster, stretched forth his hands to feel his way in the dark, and asked in a cautious whisper: "Who's in there, friends?"

From the darkness came a rustling of straw and the sound of many men's breathing. Someone sighed. Bakhmanov shrugged his shoulders, and his fists clenched tensely.

"Speak up, damn you! We hear you!" and he stepped forward blindly.

At his very shoulder a strange voice from the darkness warned: "Careful, there are wounded men lying here!"

"There are wounded among us, too," answered the newcomers with relief, and they asked no more questions, satisfied that they were among men who had also been seized, beaten up and driven to the warehouse at the bayonet point.

"Put your wounded men here in the corner, comrades. We have a doctor among us. But there's no light and we haven't anything with which to dress the wounds."

"Wait a minute," interrupted a new voice. It was the surly voice of an old man. "You'll step on everybody here. I'll light a match." There was the rustle of matches being fingered in their box. The surly voice went on querulously:

"Nine matches left. I'm lighting one."

There was the scratching of a match on the box, a blue spark flashed, and the match flared up. Its uncertain, quivering light illuminated the brick wall and the figures of men lying and sitting on the floor.

"Over here," said the old man and pointed with the hand holding the match.

The wounded moaned as they were placed on the floor.

Bakhmanov, carefully feeling his way in the dark, advanced to the old man who had lit the match.

"Did they hurt you?" he asked.

"Oh, my god—you here too, son?" answered the elder Bakhmanov, feigning surprise, for he had recognized his son's voice from the first, and had waited de-

liberately to be recognized himself. "No, they didn't hurt me. Just slapped me once or twice over the ear. It's hard for me to hear now. They shoved me about with the butts of their guns when they drove me here. But they didn't hurt me. I can't complain. Now Surin, over there in the corner, he got a real beating. He's dying. But they didn't hurt me. Oh, no. Would anybody dare hurt us old men when we have such swell protectors as you and all the other sheep?"

"Lay off," said his son wearily.

"Sheep," the old man went on venomously. "Sheep! You let yourselves be driven into a cattle pen."

"All right, then we're sheep, and forget it."

"It makes me sore."

"You're not the only one," his son replied.

"Yes, but I'm sore because my own son is just a bleating lamb."

Receiving no answer the old man fussily seated himself on the floor. Wrathfully he punched his coat, tucking it in under him.

"Schoolmaster," he grumbled. "Teaches others, and hasn't learned himself. Didn't even put up a scrap."

"Why blame your son?" intervened a soldier of the artillery, who sat near. "I'm not a teacher, and not a clerk. I was an N.C.O. in the artillery, three years at the front, and I let them take me without a fight, too. What can you do if they come for you?"

"N.C.O. Huh!" the old man snorted. "That's the way you talk in the dark, but if you had a look at this schoolmaster in the daylight you'd see which of you is more like an artilleryman. You think every schoolmaster is a weakling, with eyeglasses and a bald spot, eh? If he were like that there would be some excuse for him."

"He's pretty strong, is he?" inquired the artilleryman.

"Strong as an ox."

"Then he'll have a tough time."

"Why should I have a hard time of it?" asked young Bakhmanov in surprise.

"The Japanese will probably leave us here to starve. I don't think they'll shoot us; we aren't prisoners of war. . . . And the stronger they are the harder they suffer from hunger."

Bakhmanov remained silent.

"Did they catch you napping when they came to arrest you?" asked a new voice from the darkness.

"Were you asleep when they came?" asked the elder Bakhmanov as if he were grasping at the idea, cheered at the thought of an excuse for his son. "You can even capture elephants alive if they're asleep. Well, speak up, were you asleep?"

"Of course," replied the young Bakhmanov readily. "It was in the middle of the night. I was sleeping."

"You shouldn't have slept!" screamed the old man tartly.

He continued to grumble, but his voice gradually fell, and several times he stirred about impatiently, pulling and tugging at his coat.

The momentary bustle died down. In the torpor created by cold and darkness no one was inclined to move or speak. Even the wounded, eyes wide open in the dark, breathing heavily and sighing now and then, listened silently to the drip of water from the roof. The snow was thawing.

The day before, peace had reigned in the village, where a detachment of Japanese soldiers was quartered. The detachment was there, as its commander, Major Tokasima repeatedly affirmed, to "protect" the village, temporarily, from irresponsible elements.

True, all the hills and the forests and the lakes and all the land for

thousands of miles around the village were not Japanese hills and forests and lakes and land; and the people occupying the land no more understood Japanese than the inhabitants of Hondo Island understand Russian. But the times were not suitable for arguments on this ticklish question.

Vague rumors ran through the village. The trains which came irregularly from the west brought indistinct echoes of the thunder of Civil War battles across the plains of European Russia.

The inhabitants of the village began to display more and more obvious signs of impatience at the drawn-out "pacifying" conducted by Major Tokasima's detachment.

Then one day the merchant Zhikharyov, proprietor of the house where the major was quartered, made the rounds of the village. He knocked softly at each door and, when he was admitted, he lifted his cap, bowed staidly, and invited the head of the household to join the major at a tea for "representatives of all strata of the population." The amazement which followed this announcement was universal. However, to refuse was to invite danger, and that evening the "representatives of all strata," filled with vague fears, sat in the Zhikharyov dining room, anxiously staring at the pictures on the wall and the planks of the floor.

The major entered, smiling, accompanied by a Korean interpreter who, for some strange reason, bore the Russian name Yefimov. Zhikharyov's wife brought in the samovar.

The major, still smiling, addressed the gathering through his interpreter. The Korean explained that the major's name in Russian translation was Semyon Semyonich, and he wished to be so called.

The representatives of all strata, heir hearts in their mouths with fear, still unenlightened as to the reason for their presence, carefully sipped their tea, their gaze pinned to the tablecloth.

Zhikharyov, his boots squeaking, placed a slice of pie in front of "Semyon Semyonich." The major tried to sip his tea from the saucer in Russian fashion, and when he smacked his lips clumsily everyone smiled. The merchant's old gramophone, with its blue fluted horn, played two songs over and over, and the major gaily tapped time with his foot and smiled. Then he waved his hand as a signal for the music to stop, rose, brushed the crumbs from his uniform, and announced that he "entertained the deepest respect and the warmest regard for the Russian people, and that if somewhat earlier he had not enjoyed the pleasure of being born a Japanese he would now wish to have had the happiness of having been born a Russian. . . ."

The Korean Yefimov began to translate, and the major paused, nodding and smiling.

The representatives of all strata glanced at one another.

". . . And he regrets with all his heart that he has received orders to evacuate immediately and return to the fatherland, in connection with the departure of the Japanese army from the Far East."

Immediately every eye jumped from the tablecloth to the major's placid, fixed smile.

The schoolmaster Bakhmanov, forgetting his surroundings, bent across the table, upsetting an empty cup. "Not really? When?"

The major turned to the interpreter and the latter translated Bakhmanov's question. The major's smile became still more stiff.

"The evacuation will begin in the immediate future. In the very immediate future."

So that was why they had been invited to this tea! Some raised

their heads and glanced about as if they were seeing this room for the first time.

The schoolmaster left the table and began to pace the room, frowning intently. Before his eyes he saw nothing but the major's fixed smile. He stopped and smiled himself. Zhikharyov, pale, stood with his hands on the pie. The major bowed and left.

As soon as he was gone, Surin, a shy machinist, representative of the railroad workers' stratum, who had been silent all evening, suddenly rubbed his palms together and wound up the gramophone. As it ground out a tune everyone rushed for the door, impatient to spread the news.

That same night Major Tokasima's soldiers conducted their "operation" to render "harmless" the adult male population of the village. Men were seized at home, in bed, in their yards, in their barns, at the wells, and all so swiftly and unexpectedly that the operation provoked practically no stir in the village.

At the railway station, three railway guards and the station master resisted the Japanese. The station master succeeded in firing his old Smith & Wesson several times before he was stabbed to death by the wide Japanese bayonets in the corridor near the telegrapher's room.

The Japanese found the pale telegraph operator erect on a stool at his silent key. The major had ordered them to bring him back alive.

Immediately after the "taking" of the railway station the male population of the village was driven into the warehouse.

In the middle of the night the warehouse door opened again and a squad of Japanese soldiers entered, bearing lanterns. They held their lanterns aloft and stared about cautiously. Behind them loomed two soldiers supporting under the armpits a man who walked with difficulty, despite their support. His cap had slipped down over his forehead. He kept his eyes on the ground, and his legs moved wearily, with a heavy tread; they kept bending under him.

When the soldiers lowered him to the floor, and instead of sitting down he slumped over helplessly, everyone realized that he had either been wounded or severely beaten.

An exclamation of protest escaped young Bakhmanov's clenched teeth, and he rose to his full height. Instantly the soldiers swung their bayonets around at him and shouted shrilly and menacingly. They were obviously nervous. The iron door rattled again and more Japanese soldiers entered. With a brusque movement Bakhmanov wrapped his coat about him and, turning away, lowered himself into his place near the wall.

Behind the reinforcements appeared Major Tokasima, with the interpreter. The major was no longer smiling. The fur collar of his greatcoat was raised, and from time to time he pressed his warm woolen gloves to his cold lips.

The interpreter whispered to the major, then bent over the man the soldiers had brought in.

"Are you the telegraph operator?"

The man on the floor, on whose face the light of several lanterns was now directed, turned his head away and muttered a few words indistinctly. The major glanced impatiently at the interpreter.

"Speak up. Louder. So the major can hear you, and the prisoners, too! Well?"

The man's cap had fallen off. The swaying lanterns threw a bright glare on his face. The prisoners, craning forward, listened intently.

"Y-y-yes, I-I-I am the t-t-telegraph operator," stammered the man on the floor. His teeth chattered as if he had the ague.

"You were seized in your office? At the key? Right?"

"Yes," came the operator's voice, lifeless.

"Were you in communication with any other stations along the line?"

"I-I-I have bu-bu-been qu-qu-questioned already. I t-t-told them ev-ev-everything."

The interpreter impatiently brushed aside the man's reply and went on loudly and clearly:

"The major wants you to repeat everything before these men. You had an opportunity to communicate to other stations on the line the fact that there was shooting and arrests at our station. The major wants to know what you reported, and to whom. Well?"

There was a stir among the prisoners, which instantly died down as they strove to catch the answer. The telegraph operator looked around anxiously, as if he expected somebody to come to his aid. But everyone remained silent, waiting for his reply.

"I d-d-didn't c-c-communicate with anybody."

A muffled sigh escaped from the corner where the wounded lay, and the telegraph operator turned his head toward them.

Yefimov looked at the group of prisoners triumphantly.

"Maybe the apparatus was out of order?"

"What? What's that you say?" The telegraph operator seemed to lose his lethargy and there was sudden cold fear in his eyes. The interpreter repeated the question.

"The apparatus was all right." The telegraph operator began to speak rapidly, hardly stammering: "I know nothing more, I've told you everything. I was beaten terribly. It's hard for me to speak. Leave me alone." And he shut his eyes, breathing heavily.

The major took his glove from his cold lips, and the interpreter bent over to catch the major's whisper. Then Yefimov stretched his hand squeamishly toward the face of the man on the floor and pulled open his eyelids.

"Listen, you. The major isn't sure you're telling the truth. Tell us the truth and you won't be beaten any more. Do you understand? You won't be beaten any more, and we'll send a doctor to treat you. Well? Will you talk?"

"I didn't communicate with anybody," repeated the operator stubbornly.

"Why didn't you?"

"I-I-I w-w-was afraid."

The major whispered again to the interpreter, then stood erect and turned away. Obviously he intended to leave, and Yefimov, who had been making manifest efforts to suppress a yawn, now allowed himself to yawn with relief. He turned to the telegraph operator.

"You will remain here, with these men." He glanced around at the circle of prisoners, whose faces were visible in the dim light. "The major wishes it to be known that if anything happens to this man, nobody will be punished for it," he announced.

The operator on the floor was trying vainly to rise on his elbows.

"Why m-m-must I stay here? I don't w-w-want to stay here."

The major bared his teeth, shook his fist at the operator in a frenzy, and shouted excitedly and rapidly in Japanese, forgetting the interpreter, who could hardly catch his short, indistinct sentences.

"You're deceiving us, aren't you? Confess with whom you communicated! Well? We'll take you to a doctor if you talk; if you remain

here the prisoners will kill you. Well?"

The operator took a long breath as if he wanted to delay the answer. Then he said rapidly:

"I didn't communicate with anybody. I was afraid." And he convulsively covered his eyes with his hands. As his hands went to his face the lanterns lit up raw red stripes on the exposed part of his arms.

The major shrugged his shoulders and addressed his soldiers in a loud voice. Yefimov smiled, and translated for his own satisfaction:

"There you have the Russian people! No patriotism. He thinks only of his own skin."

And after some reflection he added his own remark:

"Swine!"

"Well, it's all over now! We can't expect help. The Japanese will let us rot here and Christoforov will only learn about us in the spring, when the snow melts and our bones are found . . . if Christoforov is alive himself then."

"Oh, shut up!" old Bakhmanov interrupted the artilleryman's gloomy reflections.

The wounded operator was lying in the dark with eyes wide open, listening anxiously. The words reached him through a muffled ringing in his ears. Once he lost consciousness for a while. Then it seemed to him that somebody was bending over him and wanted to touch him. Shivering, he swung his hand before his face to fend off the figure he imagined crouching above him. He did not notice the schoolmaster Bakhmanov approaching him. When Bakhmanov tapped him on the shoulder he shuddered and tried to push him off.

"Fellows, don't touch me, don't!" he screamed. "The Japanese beat me over and over again. Don't beat me any more, don't! I'll die anyway."

"I haven't come to beat you."

The telegraph operator fell silent, breathing hard. Then:

"Who are you?"

"I'm the village schoolmaster. I want to talk to you."

"Are you alone here near me?"

"I'm alone."

"Nobody else?"

"I'm alone, I tell you. Whom do you fear?"

"I'm not afraid, only it's dark."

"I wanted to ask you. . . ."

The operator moved restlessly.

"Why do you all torture me? One question after another!"

Bakhmanov bent to the telegraph operator's ear and whispered hotly:

"Tell me, don't be afraid of me. I'm the village schoolmaster. Bakhmanov is my name. You can tell me. Did you deceive the Japanese? Don't you understand? We would give our lives to know that you sent him word. I would go before the firing squad willingly if I were only certain that Christoforov got word. . . ."

The operator tried to stop him. His voice was weak.

"Don't torture me! Leave me alone, all of you."

"Tell me, buddy, tell me. . . . It's all over with us, anyway. We won't leave this place alive. Come on, buddy, tell me." He lowered his voice and again whispered in the operator's ear: "Did you let Christoforov or anyone else know? Wait! Here is my hand. Do you feel it? Squeeze my hand if it is 'yes,' and remain silent."

The operator moaned and pulled his hand away from Bakhmanov's. Then he suddenly became quiet, as if he were ready to give in, and asked in a whisper so low Bakhmanov could hardly make out the words:

"Who are you? Who are you?"

"I'm the village schoolmaster.

Every dog knows me here. Bakhmanov is my name. The Japanese arrested my father, too. You're a new man at the station, otherwise you'd surely know me. Everyone knows me."

The operator raised himself in a spurt of energy, pushed the teacher off and shouted hoarsely:

"But who are you? Who? A priest? You aren't a priest! And don't come sucking around to confess me!"

Bakhmanov rose.

"So it's true you're a rat." With a gesture of disgust he shoved the operator's foot with the toe of his boot. "I'd rather kiss Tokasima's mug than stretch a finger to help you."

The operator lay still for a while after Bakhmanov moved away. Then the others heard him thrashing about in the dark. Batushkin, the village doctor, crawled toward him. Batushkin was a stout, elderly man who could bend only with difficulty, and crawling was a torment for him. Groaning, he felt his way past feet, faces and coats. He kept adjusting his eyeglasses, which constantly threatened to slip from his nose. He felt helpless without the eyeglasses, even though they were useless in the dark.

"I'm suffocating," pronounced the telegraph operator intelligibly. The doctor wanted to say something soothing, but he could not muster his professional manner, and he contented himself with patting the operator's shoulder.

"I'm suffocating without light." He jerked his shoulder away from the doctor's hand irritably. His voice rose higher and higher and he seemed delirious. "Give us some light! Don't you see how dark it is? There's no air. I can't breathe!" he screamed wildly.

"Stop yelling!" someone shouted rudely at him. "There is no light."

The operator fell silent, quivering with fear. After a while he began to whine beseechingly:

"Light a match.... Light a match...."

"Anything else you want?" snapped old Bakhmanov tartly.

"Please light it," begged the dying man with rising insistence. "Grandfather, light a match."

"He'll light it in a minute," said the doctor uncertainly. "Calm yourself."

"Don't assume that I'll do it," declared Bakhmanov wrathfully.

"He doesn't want to light a match," complained the operator, convulsively seizing the doctor's hand.

"The cry-baby wants a toy to amuse himself with," exclaimed the old man bitterly, and lit a match. The telegraph operator did not notice the light at once, but he became quiet as he realized that the match was burning.

"How nice it is with a light," he told the doctor. "How roomy it seems."

The match went out.

"Another one!" he begged. No one answered, and, though he realized it was useless, he whimpered once more; then fell silent. He tried to retain the memory of the light as long as he could, but the dark swallowed him, crushed him in its folds.

Then the thoughts that raced madly in feverish confusion became crystal-clear. Beyond the wall, somewhere near the railway line, a dog was yelping. Drops of water dripped from the roof, and an elusive damp smell of spring was in the air. He imagined the melting snow and the rails shining and he wanted beyond power of words to see them once more.

... He saw himself at the key turning a dogeared page of *The Three Musketeers*, with smudged margins, just as the shots rang out. The first shot was followed by a ragged volley.

He rushed to the door and ran into the station master. Breathing heavily, the station master pushed him back to his key. Finally, gasping for breath, he shouted to the operator that the Japanese were murdering people in the village, that they would be at the station in a moment, and something more about Christoforov, which he blurted out as he rushed back to the door swinging his Smith & Wesson. The door banged behind him, and the operator remained alone. The narrow clock on the wall, with its slow pendulum. The window sill stained with ink, and the apparatus clicking impatiently. Slowly he climbed onto his stool and stretched his hand toward the key. . . . No, no, no. He must not even think of it! . . .

He shuddered. His eyes, which had closed in uneasy slumber, opened. The darkness was close to his eyes, it touched his face, pressed on him from all sides. As he raised his hand it brushed across the face of a man bent over him in the dark. A hand cautiously pressed his and lowered it. The movement was friendly.

"Did I talk in my sleep?" asked the operator anxiously.

"What were you dreaming about?' Zhikharyov smiled good-naturedly as he sat down near the operator.

"Nothing special. No, nothing. Sometimes I talk in my sleep."

"The doctor says you're in bad shape. You can't last until the afternoon. You were badly beaten up."

After a silence the operator asked:

"Will it be light here in the morning?"

"What do you mean?" replied the merchant with patent satisfaction. "How can light get in here? The windows are boarded up. It is always dark here, day or night. . . . Have you any relatives? I could give them your last words . . . if I remain alive myself."

"I have nothing to tell them." Then, after some reflection, he added uncertainly: "What could I tell them?"

"Whatever you want. I'll convey any message you give me. I'm sorry for you. You're dying here alone, a renegade. These 'comrades' of yours call you a Judas. But you probably have a wife and children. They'll hear about it, and they'll think of you as a Judas, too." He sighed. "It's a tough spot to be in. And maybe you're not guilty at all. Tell me. I'll let them know the truth."

"I'm suffocating!" whined the operator instead of answering. "Ask the old man to light another match," he whispered. "Tell him it will be the last one I'll ask of him, I won't ask for another one, on my word. Please!"

"I have a cigarette lighter. Tell me and I'll light it."

"What must I tell you?"

"With whom did you communicate by telegraph? . . . Don't fear, I only want to know so I can tell your relatives. I won't tell anybody else."

The operator breathed hard. Feverishly he uttered: "I don't know anything about it all. Give us a light. Oh, mother of god, give us a light."

"It's a good lighter. It can burn a long time. An hour, maybe more."

"A whole hour?" moaned the operator. He felt himself consumed by a burning desire to see the little flame dispel the darkness. Something clicked with a metallic sound, and a small blue flame burst forth.

The operator stared at it as if he could not tear his gaze away. Then Zhikharyov slowly lowered the cap over the wick. As the light went out the operator stretched forth his hand and snatched the lighter.

Zhikharyov muttered a curse and grappled with him, repeating in cold frenzy: "So that's it, eh? So that's it?" He twisted the operator's arm. Almost losing consciousness with the pain, the operator turned on his back and covered with his body the fist which held the lighter.

Zhikharyov, in a rage, tugged and pulled until he turned the operator over. He grasped the operator's fingers and twisted them back. The man's fingers were soft, damp and weak. The lighter fell to the floor, and Zhikharyov recovered it. With satisfaction he stuck it deep in his trousers pocket.

"What's all the noise over there?" asked Doctor Babushkin anxiously.

Zhikharyov answered in as calm a tone as he could: "This Judas tried to steal my lighter. . . . We ought to lynch him, the bastard. . . ."

Early in the morning the schoolmaster Bakhmanov woke from a doze and stretched his numbed feet. His throat was dry. The telegraph operator was shaking with chill. He was semi-conscious, and muttered something about a blanket that had remained in his apartment.

Bakhmanov listened to his mumbling, unbuttoned his coat, and threw it over the shivering operator. While Doctor Babushkin adjusted the coat over the limp figure of the operator, the schoolmaster scratched the frost from the wall with his gloved finger and licked the snow off the glove with a hot dry tongue.

In order to reach the frost at the top of the wall he stretched his hand up and it touched the bottom of the iron plate which covered the window. Irritation suddenly boiled up within him, and he seized the iron sheet and pulled at it wrathfully, straining harder and harder. A rusty screw gave way and a corner of the iron plate loosened.

A dull, grey sunbeam filtered through the cranny made by the loosened corner. Bakhmanov instantly forgot his irritation. With both hands he tore at the iron plate.

A Japanese, probably the sentry below the window, shouted excitedly outside.

With a rattle the iron gave way. Now it hung down, held in place by one last screw. The small high window lay bare, covered only with an iron grating.

The men lying on the floor saw a gloomy sky and the tops of pine trees. Bakhmanov, pulling himself up, caught a glimpse of the corner of the railway station, the platform, the rails running into the taiga.

Suddenly the end of a Japanese rifle barrel appeared in the window. Bakhmanov released his hold on the window sill and dropped just as a shot was fired in; the bullet lodged in the bricks of the opposite wall. The burnished barrel turned in all directions like the head of a blind snake, and another shot was fired. Nobody moved. The Japanese sentry fired blindly, forced to aim up at the roof because the window was too high for him. The bullets either lodged in the bricks or ricocheted from wall to wall. When the firing stopped and the restless muzzle disappeared everybody stirred and looked about. No one was hurt.

When Bakhmanov peeped out of the window, again, the sentry was being relieved. The new sentry turned away indifferently when he saw Bakhmanov's face in the window.

It was strangely quiet outside. Soon a Japanese soldier appeared from around the corner of the warehouse. He did not have his rifle, but he carried a pile of short logs,

pressed to his breast, the top log held in place by his chin. His hands were hidden in his sleeves for warmth.

Behind him came several more soldiers carrying wood and straw. They placed their burdens under the walls of the warehouse and went back for more.

Shivering with the cold and yawning, the prisoners paced the warehouse aimlessly.

Suddenly the door swung back. A Japanese officer entered, glanced about as if seeking someone, then caught sight of Zhikharyov and beckoned to him. Everyone turned toward Zhikharyov. The latter jumped up from the floor, brushed off his jacket, and stepped forward. The Japanese beckoned him to come closer.

"Fellows," whispered the artilleryman, "let's not betray each other, no matter what happens."

The prisoners stirred, glancing at one another. Zhikharyov recoiled from them and walked forward hastily, mumbling in fright. He squeezed past the half-open door as the prisoners watched in surprise.

As soon as the door banged to the prisoners crowded to the window. Bakhmanov again pulled himself up to the sill, and saw Zhikharyov walking along the station platform in conversation with the interpreter Yefimov.

The prisoners remained silent when Bakhmanov slid down and related what he had seen. Only old Bakhmanov spat fiercely and turned away.

Taking advantage of the light from the window, Doctor Babushkin began dressing the men's wounds. He examined each man's shirt to find the cleanest for bandages. A lanky fellow with almost white eyebrows, whose shirt was selected, pulled it off and put his greasy jacket over his naked body, blue with cold.

Meanwhile old Bakhmanov, who had been trying to clamber up to the window, at last succeeded in getting his chin level with the sill. He fell back like a stone, rushed to the door and began kicking it with all his might.

"Open the door!" he yelled. "What are you doing? There are wounded men in here! Open the door, damn you!"

Bakhmanov seized his frantic father and carried him away from the door struggling and kicking. All of the prisoners who could move rushed to the window.

Straw and logs had been heaped all around the bottom of the wall.

Two Japanese soldiers, with intent, sullen faces, were squatting over the piled logs. One was holding out his coat to screen the other, who was pouring kerosene over the straw and logs. The wind sprayed the kerosene out despite the shelter of the soldier's coat.

Soon the two Japanese disappeared in the direction of the station and returned with another can of kerosene. Suddenly there was a shrill whistle, and the soldiers dropped the can and ran back to the station.

Major Tokasima was walking rapidly up and down the platform with Yefimov and Zhikharyov. The platform filled with Japanese soldiers. A machine gun rattled across the planks of the platform. Then the soldiers disappeared and the platform was once more deserted. Only the major remained, watching a Japanese soldier fix a tattered red banner to the roof of the station. Then the major left, too.

The wounded lying on the floor were the first to hear the rumble of the approaching train. All the prisoners became excited. Old Bakhmanov held his jaw as if he had a toothache. "Oh, god. Oh, god," he kept repeating. "I don't care what happens to us, but if only

they don't catch Christoforov. . . ."

"Comrades," exclaimed the schoolmaster, "they must have telegraphed to Christoforov to come. They'll trap them in the train when it pulls into the station."

"You're the one who's guilty!" shouted the white-browed fellow to the telegraph operator.

The train slowed down when it passed the water tower. It was a troop train made up of box cars.

"If we could only shout to them!" someone suggested.

"They won't hear us."

"We'll perish all the same. Let's shout. All together."

"All together."

"All together now!"

Crowding underneath the window they raised a ragged shout.

"Save yourselves! Treason! It's a trap!"

"Save your—selves! Trea—son!"

Car after car, with a deafening rattle, the train slid past the window, and emitted a blast of steam that curled round its wheels as the locomotive engineer put on the brakes.

"Wait until it stops, then let's shout again."

"Maybe it's not Christoforov's men after all? On my word, it isn't."

"It's his train, all right."

The last car rattled by. Wheezing heavily, the locomotive pulled to a stop at the platform. The prisoners shouted desperately, in strained, hoarse voices, but no one in the train seemed to hear. The cars stood motionless in front of the station.

On the deserted platform appeared the merchant Zhikharyov in the red cap of the station master. The stove pipes in the box car roofs sent up placid toy clouds of smoke, but nobody looked out and the doors of the cars remained shut. A tall locomotive engineer with grey mustaches stood erect and motionless at the levers of his engine, staring at Zhikharyov.

The latter raised his head, adjusted the cap, which was too big for him, and inquired loudly:

"What train is this?"

His voice cracked on the last word.

The engine driver was silent a moment, coughed, then shouted hoarsely:

"Troop train of Christoforov's regiment!" And his pale face, smudged with black smears of coal dust, turned grey.

At these words Zhikharyov bent suddenly and ran back to the door of the station. Almost at the same moment the Japanese opened fire from all directions. From behind cover came the steady rattle of machine guns and jerky rifle volleys. The bullets, easily piercing the thin wooden walls of the cars, left splinter marks. The lower part of the cars, at the height of a man's stomach, swiftly became riddled. The driver fell to the edge of the platform near his locomotive.

But there was not a sound from the cars, not a door opened. As cries of command in Japanese were heard above the firing, bent figures jumped from cover and ran forward toward the cars, while the firing died down. They tore open the doors. There was not a soul in the whole troop train.

The interpreter Yefimov rushed up to the body of the locomotive driver, but only glanced at it and walked off. The platform filled with soldiers running forward from cover and chattering loudly. Among the confusion and the rattling of box car doors thrown open by excited groups of soldiers no one noticed several men in shaggy fur hats, peasant coats and hunters' fur moccasins walking rapidly and silently toward the machine guns. As they came up to the machine gun crews from behind, they held

their rifles at the charge and broke into a run.

The Japanese noticed what was happening only when a few stray shots sounded out.

The prisoners in the warehouse listened anxiously to the incomprehensible firing. Men clung to the window sill, clutching at the grating and getting in each other's way. The wounded on the floor demanded news in whining tones.

Everyone had forgotten about the telegraph operator. Under terrific strain, he watched the square of light which was the window. It seemed to be quivering, spreading and darkening over from time to time, although the operator strove with all his strength to keep his eyes open and retain consciousness. Again he saw himself at his telegraph key, again heard the door bang behind the station master. And though he sought desperately to banish these pictures, the scene recurred; he saw himself stretching his hand toward the key, fearfully, pulling it back.... Gasping for breath, he again saw the window clearly and the lad without a shirt clinging to its grating. The lad held Doctor Babushkin's small round medical mirror. Stretching his hand through the grating, he was trying to catch in the mirror the reflection of what was happening underneath the window.

Maneuvering with the mirror, the lad caught a glimpse of the corner of the warehouse wall, then a patch of snow stamped with the marks of many footprints....

He twisted his arm about to get a more convenient hold on the grating and cautiously moved the mirror. The snow appeared again. Then his hand stopped still. The mirror reflected the casing of a machine gun and a man lying on the snow, and his finger on the trigger. The man's fur hat lay on the ground near him—and he had long blond hair! As the man turned his head for a second to look around for his fallen hat, his face showed—a blue-eyed, snub-nosed face. The lad at the window shouted. The tops of the pine trees and the upset sky rushed into the mirror and danced up and down. "Russians!" he yelled. "Our men! Christoforov's partisans!"

The telegraph operator felt the frenzied throb of his blood in his ears. Christoforov! The square of light, the window, shook and melted and swam out of his range of vision as the prisoners cheered.

"Doctor," he called out in a clear, loud voice. Babushkin heard him above the shouting and bent over him. The window had become dark, then suddenly it flashed with sunlight. Everything shook and whirled in his head, but he lifted himself on his elbows and stared at what he thought was a wide open door: he saw a quiet evening sun such as he had seen only in his childhood. The sparkling curtain of dust motes in front of his eyes grew brighter.

The operator made a desperate effort and croaked out:

"I, I...."

Doctor Babushkin watched the exhausted lips of the dying operator, and he tried to catch the words. Out of habit he felt the man's pulse and reached for his watch fob, then shrugged his shoulders and dropped his hand. Groaning with the effort, he rose from his knees.

"He's dying," he said.

When Christoforov's men pried open the warehouse door, the prisoners started for the door one by one, but in a second they were stampeding in the rush to freedom. Outside they blinked and stared about.

The wounded groaned and smiled when they were lifted from the floor.

Babushkin tried to pronounce a few words of welcome, but he was so excited that he could not finish and walked of, sullenly wiping his glasses.

"Is he here?" Christoforov anxiously asked his chief of staff.

"Haven't found him yet."

"And among the wounded?"

"No, he's not among them. But here's the doctor. Doctor, is there a telegraph operator among these men?"

"What do you want of him?" asked Babushkin, paling slightly.

"Not to send a telegram, of course."

"He's in the warehouse, the rat," said somebody in the crowd.

Christoforov strode forward toward the warehouse, but Babushkin, flushed with excitement, barred his way.

"Comrade Commander, as an old doctor and a citizen I appeal to you to refrain from any acts of vengeance." He raised a fat, quivering finger.

"Eh, doctor! You ought to be ashamed of yourself for screening the fellow," said the lad without a shirt.

"Did the Japanese question him?" asked Christoforov.

"They beat him up," spoke up old Bakhmanov over the heads of those in front.

"Did he tell them anything?"

"No." The old man stepped forward.

"Did he mention my name when they questioned him?"

"No. But what has that got to do with it?"

"So they beat him up and he didn't talk?" asked Christoforov.

"No, he didn't talk."

"Lead me to him," Christoforov told the doctor.

They disappeared through the door of the warehouse. The doctor squatted near the operator. Christoforov stood by and looked on.

The doctor rose and uttered with obvious relief:

"It's all over with him. Dead."

Christoforov remained silent, staring at the operator.

"Is this the man?" he said at length.

"Yes. Internal hemorrhage. The Japanese did it."

Christoforov looked around the faces of the group which had gathered around them. Some of the men were chewing bread. Others were brushing the straw and dirt from their coats.

"When he telegraphed me I should have asked him his name," said Christoforov. He bent down on one knee, and, supporting his weight with one hand, in which was squeezed his fur cap, he kissed the dead man's brow and rose.

Men stared at one another. Old Bakhmanov looked at Christoforov in surprise.

"You mean to say you were in touch with him?"

"Up to the minute the Japanese broke into his room. I just had time to tell him not to let on that he had communicated with me. 'Let them think they're trapping us,' I wired. And he wired one word: 'Okay.' Doesn't anyone know his name?"

The men looked helplessly at each other.

"Guess nobody knows it," old Bakhmanov answered, pulling off his cap slowly. "He was new here."

When the order to march came in a long-drawn-out shout, the schoolmaster came running out of the warehouse. In his fist was a Japanese rifle. He carried it as lightly as if it were a stick.

"When peace and plenty come to our land," he said tensely, in a shaky voice, "we will remember you, even without a name, unknown comrade."

## Wayland Rudd

# ANDY JONES

This play is based on the recent autobiography of Angelo Herndon, the American Negro Communist leader. Angelo Herndon, the son of a Negro miner, joined the American Communist Party while still a youth. Working in the American South where to be a leader of the Negro masses, and a Communist, was a dangerous career, he suffered beatings and arrests. The climax came with his arrest in Atlanta, Georgia, for leading a demonstration of Negro and white unemployed workers, demanding relief. Herndon's sentence of eighteen to twenty years of chain gang labor was a virtual death sentence; few prisoners have survived more than a year or two of continuous chain gang labor. He was saved from this sentence by a prolonged mass protest which ended in a decision by the Supreme Court of the United States that the obsolete slave insurrection law on which Herndon was convicted, was unconstitutional.

The play makes no pretensions to being an accurate record and takes certain liberties for the purpose of theatrical presentation. The author Wayland Rudd is well known on the American stage where he appeared in such productions as *Porgy*, and *Thunder* by Lulu Vollmer; *Othello*, *The Emperor Jones* and the productions of the Hedgerow Players, under Jasper Deeter. He has played on the Soviet stage and is now studying theater directing at the State Theatrical Institute. Some of his dramatic and other writings have been translated into Russian.

The section of Rudd's play that we print below is the third scene of the first act.

*Interior of mine shaft. There is a turntable switching on to several sets of tracks each of which leads into a separate tunnel. A set of tracks running the full length of the stage from right to left also intersects the turntable. Up-stage center is a mine cable-elevator. There is one tunnel, stage right, wider and higher than the other tunnels. The dump car bringing the coal up from this tunnel to the elevator is pulled by a cable run by an electric motor installed by the side of the elevator. The motor is fed by a cable running down the elevator shaft from ground level. About three feet from the ground this cable shoots over to a rudely constructed control board on which is the switch controlling the motor. The cable between the elevator and the board is unisolated, and when the motor is running we see the blue flashes from poorly contacted wires. This switch is operated by a young white worker, Lee Simpson There are three empty dump cars standing off on a side track. On the control board near the elevator is a single electric light dimmed by*

*the heavy layer of coal dust. We hear noises up in the tunnels from coal being picked, broken and loaded into cars. Seated on a huge lump of coal under the light on the control board is Lee Simpson, reading a paperback novel. A few seconds after curtain rises we hear a long blast from a whistle. A second blast, but Lee does not hear. A third blast shrieking with angry impatience arouses him. He runs over to the mouth of the wide tunnel and answers with his own whistle. A reply signal comes back and Lee, standing by the control board, blows again. Upon the next reply he throws in the switch and opens up the three-speed control to the electric motor and the cable running down the wide tunnel begins to wind in. Lee goes back to his novel. At first we hear only the noises of thumping instruments and the hum of the electric motor. Later we hear the creaking of wheels grinding up the tracks. As the creaking gets louder, Lee gets up and stands on the alert. Shortly after, a train of four cars loaded with coal and one hard mature white miner come into view. The miner is Josh Simpson. Lee throws out the switch and as the cars come to a stop Josh bursts into a rage of temper.*

JOSH: What the goddamn hell you doin' up here? Sleeping, or playing pocket pool? Had to blow my lungs out before you answered me! Why ain't you on the job?

LEE: Ah, pa. . . .

JOSH: Pa, hell! I give you them two niggers to push the cars on the elevator! You want me to give you a feather bed an' a fan?

*Andy and Adam Johnson, each pushing a car of coal, emerge from one of the narrow tunnels and start loading cars on the elevator, beginning with the white miner's cars.*

JOSH: How's cutting today, boys?

ANDY: We gits behind pushking them cars up the grade and loading the elevator, "Cap."

JOSH: You all is young and strong. You kin catch up. *(Andy is about to push one of their loaded cars on the turntable.)* Hold on a minute, there! Open up that turntable again!

*Andy switches the turntable to his track and Josh pushes the empty car to the entrance of his wide tunnel. Andy waits until he pushes a second one there and then switches turntable back to his own tracks.*

ADAM: Alright, Andy! Here goes!

*Adam starts to push third empty on turntable.*

JOSH: Wait a minute! Where you goin'? To a fire? Give me that turntable again.

*Andy gives him the turntable and he pushes the third empty to the mouth of his own tunnel.*

ADAM: Ain't you going to leave us one of them empties, "Cap"? We ain't got none at all.

JOSH: Be some more comin' down in a minute. We's due four cars 'stead of three. As 't is we's one short. Couple them cars together there in a hurry! I've lost a good fifteen minutes on that no account boy of mine there! *(Andy couples up the cars together.)* Give me the juice, son! *(As the cars slide down the tunnel.)* If you don't answer my first signal next time I'll break your damn neck. *(Bad contact sputters and sizzles, and the speed lever jumps back into neutral bringing the cablecars to a stop.)* Goddamn the luck! I been trying to git the company to fix that switch for two months!

LEE: Ain't nothin', pa! You been tryin' four years to git 'em to build a cage around this motor and hot cable here!

JOSH: They won't fix nothin, 'till they have to. Shoot the juice again, son! *(As cars slide down tunnel again.)* Remember! No more sleeping on the job! Can't be wastin' my time comin' up here! Time is money!

*Lee waits at the elevator until Andy and Adam have pushed their two loaded cars on and then he sends elevator to surface. He goes back to his novel as Andy starts sullenly down tunnel.*

ADAM: Let's wait for the empties, Andy! Have to come back up tunnel anyhow!

*They sit down on the tracks. There is a heavy pause with only the noises that we are already accustomed to, breaking the silence. The speed lever suddenly jumps back into neutral again indicating that the cars have reached their destination.*

ADAM: Time is money! *(Laughs cynically.)*

ANDY: Not for you 'n me, bo'! We ain't the right color!

ADAM: Truth! Time don't mean nothin' to niggers!

ANDY: 'Cept more work and gettin' nowheres!

ADAM: Workin' with your hands may be honest, but it don't get nothin' but "old tired."

ANDY: That's what papa always said.

ADAM: Elevator's comin', Andy!

LEE *(closing novel with a slap)*: Mamma! What a lucky bird! Elevator's comin', boys! Say, Andy, you kin have this book now. Jesus, boy, it's a pippin'! All about a guy who saved his boss's daughter from drowning and the boss paid his way through college as a reward. And then the boss's daughter falls in love with 'm and they gits married. Then the boss gives him a big job traveling to South America an' everything! *(All listen to approaching elevator before Lee continues.)* Wish I could get a break like these lucky guys you read about in the books! Life ain't nothin' if you don't git the breaks! Is it?

ADAM: Ain't nothin'!

*Elevator comes into view. Instead of empties it carries the mine superintendent, paymaster and two guards armed with pistols.*

SUP'T: What are you niggers doin' loafin' up here? *(Sends elevator.)*

ANDY: Waiting for empties, "Cap."

SUP'T: Hell of a new wrinkle! Hereafter stay down them damn tunnels 'til the empties come! *(Addresses Lee.)* Whistle the boys up, son, for the paymaster. *(Lee whistles and receiving signal throws in switch. Sup't. sees novel in Andy's hand.)* Come here, nigger! *(Snatches novel roughly.)* This ain't no library! This is a coal mine!

*Blue flashes from the bad contact.*

PAYMASTER: Dangerous, that, Bill! Lot of juice there! Ought to be repaired. Easy thing for a man to snuff himself out on that hot cable.

SUP'T: Ain't much danger, Jack. They all know it's there!

*Out of small tunnels come several negro miners. We hear cable cars grinding up grade. Negroes huddle off to the side and wait. Paymaster pays Lee.*

SUP'T *(to Negroes)*: Well, guess all you all 'll show up drunk tomorrow!

ADAM: Not me, "Cap"! I don't drink!

WILLIE LAMB: My wife an' children gits my pay envelope every week, "Cap."

SUP'T: Hear that, Jack! These are all Sunday school boys! They don't drink.

PAYMASTER: Niggers is all liars! *(Cable car with white miners*

*arrives who file over to paymaster.)* Josh Simpson!

JOSH: That's me! *(Receives pay as do others.)*

PAYMASTER: Sol Lucas! Tom Bailey! Tim Moore! Bob Goens! *(All count money. Guards move closer together. Paymaster sits down under the control board and calls out the names of the Negro miners.)* Alright you! What are you standing over there looking dumb about? Come on and get it! Sam Jackson! Lem Hall! Willie Lamb! Adam Johnson! Slim Wilson! Andy Jones!

*White miners are now in a group talking in low tones to each other. Elevator with empties comes down.*

SUP'T: All finished, Jack?

PAYMASTER: O. K., Bill!

SUP'T: Grab your empties, boys, and trot back to work! *(Men do not move. Superintendent speaks directly to Negroes.)* Come on, clear off that elevator, you babies! We've got six other shafts to pay off and can't spend the day here with you.

ANDY *(naive and straightforward)*: How much are we gettin' paid, "Cap"?

SUP'T: What do you mean, how much?

JOSH: Yes, "Cap," there's been a little mistake somewheres.

SUP'T: Mistake?

SOL: We been paid a little short, seems like, "Cap."

SUP'T: Oh, yes! The company has cut from 41 cents to 31 cents, boys.

ANDY: How come, "Cap"?

SUP'T: You got a lot of curiosity for a nigger!

LEE: There wasn't no notice posted, "Cap."

CHORUS MINERS: No, there wasn't no notice!

SUP'T: Little hard, boys, but a cut's better than a lay-off. When the crisis lets up the company'll give you the old wage. Company's been losing badly this year.

TOM: My wife and kids been eatin' bad this year too, "Cap."

SUP'T: I know, boys! I know! But there ain't no use in beefin'. It's either a cut or a shut down.

BOB: We ought to walk out and let 'em shut down!

TIM: Yeah! Walk out and starve! Thirty-one cents is better'n a blank, boys!

SUP'T: Tim's right, boys. Walkin' out ain't wise. I turned a hundred and fifty men away this morning that were so hungry they'd work for half the wages you fellows are getting and love it. Come on now and grab your empties and get back to work.

*Slowly the men get busy taking the empties off the elevator. Lee throws in the switch to pull the one loaded car further up out of the wide tunnel. Bad contact sputters.*

JOSH: Maybe the company will use fifteen cents of the money they are savin' on the cut, to cover up that damn hot cable.

BOB: No! They'll wait 'til some squawking little brat's daddy is fried to a frizzle on it. Then they'll do something about it.

JOSH: Four years I been tryin' to git you to build a cage around that death trap.

SUP'T: Alright, Josh! I'll see after that tomorrow. Come on, Jack, let's go!

*They get on elevator and go up. Miners watch them disappear.*

SOL: Sons-of-bitches! We ought to walk out!

BOB: Yes, we ought, right now, and shut down the damn pit!

SLIM: Walkin' out won't get you nothin' these days!

SOL: What do you mean, won't get us nothin'?

TIM: Too many scabs and niggers waitin' to walk in!

TOM: By god, they do always play the niggers against us!

TIM: That's what I'm tryin' to tell you! *(Looking at the Negroes with hatred.)* The damn niggers spoil everything. They'll work cheaper'n a Chinaman and then they ain't got no guts. We white workers can't get nothin' on account of them.

JOSH: We'll take this cut up with the union, boys. We ain't lettin' 'em get away with this. If they don't give us back that ten cents, we'll strike. (*To Lee.*) Give us the juice, son!

*They disappear down the tunnel. Negro miners also saunter down their tunnels, except Andy and Adam.*

ANDY: Let's quit and try our luck some place else.

LEE: You're nuttier'n hell if you quit! There ain't no jobs nowhere. You'll starve!

ANDY: Starvin' anyhow!

LEE: Anyway, what do you have to work for? They say your uncle that's a bishop or somethin', is awful rich for a nigger. They say he's got a lot of learning too!

ANDY: Yeah! He's got a lot, but he don't want me to get none!

LEE: Gosh! You're in the same boat as me. My old man won't let me get no learnin' either. Gets madder'n hell when he sees me readin'. He says them what's got learnin' only puts on airs and. . . .

ANDY: . . . Keeps them what don't have it from gettin' it.

LEE: That's exactly what my old man says! Gee you're smart!

*Adam saunters down his tunnel leaving Andy and Lee alone.*

ANDY: Them what's got it have only got it for themselves. Learnin' and money alike.

LEE: Anybody'd think from your talk you was my old man sure enough.

*Whistle signal comes from big tunnel. Lee answers and throws in switch and electric motor starts pulling in its load of cable cars. The bad contact sputters away.*

LEE: My old man says them what's got learnin' an' money won't never give them what ain't got it no chance.

ANDY: Them what works is just as important as them what thinks!

*A pause with only mine noises audible as they both watch the blue flashing from the bad contact.*

ANDY: It ain't right! There ought to be some way out!

LEE: What, for instance?

ANDY: Don't know what, but something.

*Deep pause. Andy's young face militant and pensive. Lee's is sparkling with day dreaming. Mine noises are creaking and thumping in the background. Andy hums softly.*

LEE: Have you got a girl?

ANDY: Hunh, hunh!

LEE: I think you're lying. You was thinkin' about her just now.

ANDY: How'd you know?

LEE: I could tell by the way you was humming. I got a lot of experience.

ANDY: Yeah!

LEE: I had altogether two girls in my life! What's your girl's name?

ANDY: Della!

LEE: Della, what used to work for your uncle?

ANDY: You know her?

LEE: Yessiree boy! She is a pippin'!

ANDY: She ain't really my girl, I just. . . . Walked home with her once. Then I never saw her no more.

LEE: My girls both quit me because I didn't have money to buy ice cream every Sunday. You won't have no luck with your girl

if you don't have money all the time.

ANDY: Yeah?

LEE: Jesus! Wouldn't it be the nuts if a rich uncle would pop up then die all of a sudden and leave me a million dollars in a will! I wouldn't work in this hole any more. I'd buy a swell Packard and take ma and pa and travel every place in the world! I'd take you along as my chauffeur, Andy! You could read and study all the books you wanted to! Jeez! We'd.... *(There is a great sizzling and spluttering from the bad contact on the control board. Lee turns to look at it. There is a big explosive flash as the contact short circuits and burns away a section of the wire. Lee screams. Cable cars down tunnel stop screaking.)* Jeez! I'm blind! Jeez! I'm... *(Lee reels, stumbles and falls forward on the naked cable. He is killed instantly.)*

ANDY: What!... Oh!... *(He runs to Lee.)* Open your eyes! Say something! Open....

*He runs into the wide tunnel and blows his whistle. He disappears down the tunnel. A few seconds later the elevator loaded with empties, the sup't and a company official.*

OFFICIAL *(getting off elevator)*: Not nearly enough tons per day out of these shafts! Got to drive your workers harder. *(Stumbles against Lee's dead body.)* What the.... *(Flashes a light on the body.)*

SUP'T *(dropping down beside the body)*: Deader'n Holy Christ!

OFFICIAL *(noting bare cable)*: Why the hell isn't that cable insulated? You'll go up for this!

SUP'T: I reported that cable, sir! The company didn't give its O. K. It ain't my fault!

OFFICIAL: If the company pays it's going to be your fault!

SUP'T: He knew that cable was hot! He ought to have been careful!

OFFICIAL *(preoccupied)*: Not a chance in the world to prove it was his fault. We'll pay alright and you will go to the pen!

SUP'T: It ain't. . . . (Pauses.) Got anything on your hip, Cap'n?

OFFICIAL: What did you. . . .

*He understands and reaches in his pocket and pulls out a whisky flask.*

SUP'T: Nobody saw it happen! He was here all alone! *(They drop down and pour whisky into the dead boy's mouth. Andy comes to the mouth of the tunnel out of breath from running. He leans against the wall to rest.)* Now, Cap'n, you can swear he was drunk!

*As he hands the flask back to the official Andy understands what is taking place and makes a slight gasping sound. The two men become aware of Andy's presence.*

OFFICIAL: How long you been standing there, nigger? *(Andy's tongue cleaves to roof of his mouth.)* Did you see what we was doing just now? *(Andy hypnotized with horror nods his head affirmatively.)* Well, if you don't want to burn alive you will forget you saw it, understand, nigger?

*Josh and other miners dash out of the big tunnel.*

JOSH: Where's my boy? Son! Lee! Lee! My baby Lee! *(Dropping down.)* He's gone, boys! *(Bursting in a sudden fury at Sup't.)* Goddamn you! You killed him! You killed him!

OFFICIAL *(to Sup't)*: Whistle up all the miners. *(Takes his pen and a notebook from his pocket.)* I want each one of you to see if you smell liquor on this dead man. Come on! Come on!

SOL *(drops down and smells dead boy's mouth)*: Whisky, Josh!

OFFICIAL: Sign here! *(Negro miners come out of tunnels.)*

SOL: I ain't much on signin' things, Cap'n. *(Official pokes pen*

*in his hand and he signs as do the others one by one.)*

OFFICIAL: Come on you, niggers! You are in this too! Smell that dead man's mouth and if you smell whisky, sign or make your mark here!

*The Negroes obey fearfully.*

SUP'T (*to Andy*): Hurry up, Sambo! It's your turn! What are you trembling about?

*Andy still as if hypnotized kneels down by the dead boy. Something within him bursts.*

ANDY: They did it! They did it! So they wouldn't have to pay!

OFFICIAL: Nigger, you'll burn for that lie!

ANDY: I ain't lying! The bottle's in his pocket!

OFFICIAL *(whipping out revolver)*: Stinking nigger!

*As he raises revolver to fire, Josh wrenches it from him. Other miners attack Sup't. Negro miners huddle off to one side.*

JOSH: Give that redheaded son-of-a-bitch to me! *(He pokes revolver in Sup't's side.)* Come on, Red Head, is that nigger lying? *(Sup't only trembles.)* This ain't no plaything! *(Indicating revolver.)* Answer me or I'll solder your lying tongue with every damn bit of hot lead this baby can spit! Is that nigger lying?

SUP'T: He ain't lyin'! He ain't lyin'!

JOSH: Search him, boys! *(They discover flask of whisky on official.)*

OFFICIAL (*to Andy*): You'll burn for this, nigger! Meddling in a white man's affairs!

JOSH: If anybody burns today, it won't be no nigger!

*Throws whisky in official's face as he kneels down by Lee again.*

*Curtain*

**Jamboul**

# TWO HORSES

*I met my life's dawn in the saddle,*
*But my nag was as thin as a raddle;*
*She buckled to every steppe breeze*
*And a wind shook her down to her knees.*

*Her hair shed as after a scald,*
*Her wrinkled forehead was bald;*
*She had ever watering eyes,*
*Her oozing scars bred flies,*
*And burdock filled her mane.*

*Yet gaily I rode the plain,*
*And I sang as I rode, I poured*
*Song over my adored.*
*But the lovely one shamed my brag,*
*Cast her silver laugh at my nag.*

*Sad self, sad songs I took afar*
*To every fair, to each bazaar;*
*So roamed to every steppe aúl*
*On his poor nag the bard Jamboul.*

*When with Spring thaws the streams flow wide*
*The bosses to the roundup ride.*
*They count the colts, the Spring's increase,*
*They stroke their beards and are at peace.*

*Them, counting, how my mad eyes followed!*
*Salt tears of envy how I swallowed!*
*I too counted,—a horse of smoke,*
*A steed that vanished when I woke.*

*At night he came, brought by my word,*
*The chestnut racer, pride of the herd.*
*Hotly he neighs and bids me come;*
*Loud on the turf his quick hooves drum.*

*Night after night to me returned,*
*By day in my heart the vision burned.*
*The fiery racer, bridled bright,*
*Shone all day on my swimming sight.*

*Sleep left me; over grass and sand*
*On my spavined nag I rode the land.*
*My wingless youth I left behind;*
*My dream I buried in my mind.*

*So I rode out my dreary youth*
*On a bony nag as sharp as truth;*
*Years went by and old age neared;*
*The dream steed fled; he disappeared.*

*When on my head time's white flakes set*
*I learned the happy word "Soviet."*
*Then fresh and clear and blossoming*
*My life began its second Spring.*

*Revived and strong the Kazakh folk*
*Took fields and herds, broke off the yoke;*
*Like blotting fog blown from the sun,*
*The boss's evil day is done.*

*Sleek on the broad steppe now there rove*
*The mettled steeds of the kolkhoz drove.*
*Even nags like mine on this new earth*
*Into good horses have rebirth.*

*Stalin himself heard the Kazakh bard;*
*For his songs he sent him this reward,*
*A steed of matchless form and pace;*
*Only bold dreamers dream such grace.*

*Now here he is brought by my word,*
*The chestnut racer, pride of the herd.*
*Hotly he neighs and bids me come;*
*Loud on the turf his swift hooves drum.*

*His step is like a well rhymed song,*
*His neck, like a swan's, is slender, long;*
*Diamond rays from his eyes flash bright;*
*Like satin his glossy hair gives light.*

*His bridle is of silver chased,*
*His saddle with gorgeous patterns traced;*
*And sweetly like a gold harp string*
*His stirrups delicately ring.*

*The wings that dropped with my youth's dream*
*On my Springlike age unfold and stream.*
*New forces in my blood flow high,*
*New songs to sing, new deeds to try. .*

*In rich new raiment glad I go,*
*My robe with patterns all aglow,*
*And my Red Banner Order there*
*Where all may see it, proud I wear.*

*Gay self, gay song to each aúl*
*Well horsed now brings the bard Jamboul,*
*Who lives in Stalin's great red Spring.*
*Now dreams fulfilled the bard can sing.*

*The vale they fill,*
*They wreathe the hill,*
*The gardens with their fragrance spill;*
*The gorgeous flowers of our land*
*Perfume the wind, inlay the strand.*

*Diamonds spout in the steep cascade,*
*Rainbows stretch their flaming braid;*
*From their turquoise deeps our jewelled skies*
*Light and delight our gazing eyes.*

*And in our flower land I sing,*
*And sweetly echoes the domra [1] string.*
*Oh, how the heart to this theme bounds!*
*Lovelier than silver the music sounds!*

*I sing of him who spreads truth's power*
*Over the world from Kremlin tower;*
*Whose world-warming heart sent me a ray,*
*Gave me my youth, my steed, my day;*

*Whose word like thunder earth-wide sounds,*
*Whose word like swift wind earth-wide bounds,*
*Whose word like sunlight earth surrounds*
*And all the peoples leads and frees;*

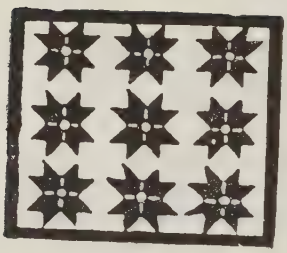
[1] Kazakh musical instrument

*Whose name in Polar snows is shown,*
*And on the highest peak is flown,*
*Whose ringing name by heroes blown*
*Flows with the stream that joins the seas.*

*The singing falls chant forth his fame,*
*The Spring steppes brighten in his name;*
*To him the dewdrop smiles, the star,*
*Shining, hails him from afar.*

*Great thinker in the Kremlin hear,*
*The mountains sing, the rivers cheer;*
*Stalin, hear them joining me,*
*Hear the whole world singing thee!*

*TRANSLATED BY ISIDOR SCHNEIDER*



*To our dear friend Upton Sinclair:*

*On your sixtieth birthday we send you warm greetings on behalf of the staff and readers of our magazine. Your many years of literary activity, which have made your name famous throughout the world, were always devoted to the defense of the rights and ideals of the exploited millions. In the U.S.S.R., the land of victorious Socialism, your books have become dear to the new Soviet reader, who places you among his most beloved authors. Can there be higher praise for an author who has devoted his art to the cause of toiling humanity, to the defense of culture and democracy, to the struggle against fascism?*

*We wish you many years of fruitful and happy labor.*

*INTERNATIONAL LITERATURE*

# THE MARXIST CONCEPTION OF THE ROLE OF THE INDIVIDUAL IN HISTORY

In one of their early works Marx and Engels wrote: "Consequently, the more thoroughgoing a historical action, the wider will be the masses whose cause it embodies." The Great October Socialist Revolution was the most "thoroughgoing historical action" the world has ever known. No past revolution has so deeply affected the destinies of hundreds of millions as the October Socialist Revolution, which produced the profoundest upheaval in social relations in an enormous country covering a sixth of the globe and inhabited by a population of over one hundred and seventy million.

The exploiting classes and the exploitation of man by man could be abolished, and Socialist society created, only by the action of millions of working people, led by the Bolshevik Party.

Only the vast millions, led by the most progressive, most highly steeled and most revolutionary class of modern times—the working class—and by the most revolutionary party in the world—the Bolshevik Party—could overcome the obstacles and difficulties that the working people of the U.S.S.R. had to overcome before they could achieve the victory of Socialism. The unprecedented rate of historical movement that the U.S.S.R. has witnessed during the past twenty years could be produced only by the efforts of tens of millions of people vitally interested in demolishing the old exploiting society and building a new Socialist society—only by the efforts of tens of millions of people actively engaged in making history. The October Socialist Revolution and the whole progress of the struggle for the victories of Socialism in the Soviet Union furnish one more proof that the driving force of social progress is the class struggle. Great historical events are produced by the activity of millions. The decisive role in history is played by classes, masses. The October Revolution has proved that the role of the public man, the man of politics, is directly determined by the extent to which he voices the needs and problems of his time, and the way he works to solve them.

Between February and October 1917, and after the October Revolution as well, dozens of bourgeois politicians appeared in the Russian political arena—Lvov and Guchkov, Milyukov and Savinkov, Kerensky and Kornilov, Martov and Chernov, Dan and Tsereteli, Kolchak and Denikin, Yudenich and Wrangel, Black Hundred monarchists and bourgeois democrats—men of the most varied political hues, all whom the bourgeois and landlords' counter-revolution could muster. They all endeavored, to

the best of their ability, to reverse the course of historical development, to strangle the revolution. The enemies of the working class, the enemies of Socialism, have resorted to every means—civil war, intervention, sabotage, wrecking, terror and espionage—but they have invariably been defeated.

After the open counter-revolution of the bourgeoisie and the landlords' had been smashed and its spokesmen had lost all political credit, masked enemies, people who used their membership in the Communist Party as a screen, began to act as the agents of the bourgeoisie. Trotsky, Zinovyev, Kamenev, Bukharin, Rykov, Tomsky and their accomplices acted as agents of counter-revolution. Maintaining secret connections with the intelligence services and secret police of capitalist countries, they first attempted to oppose the Party with all kinds of platforms, on the hypocritical claim that they were defending the interests of the workers and peasants. And then, when in the course of a bitter class struggle their platforms were exposed as counter-revolutionary, hostile to the proletariat, as platforms for restoring capitalism, when they had lost all influence among the working people, they became the chieftains of a gang of bandits, assassins, spies, diversionists and wreckers. They gathered around them the scum of the old world: former tsarist secret police agents, spies and provocateurs like Zelinsky and Ivanov, adventurers, rogues, bourgeois degenerates and bourgeois nationalists.

"All this horde of murderers, spies and wreckers was the last stake of the bourgeoisie. The whiteguards and Mensheviks, Socialist-Revolutionaries and foreign secret service spies counted on their disruptive and corruptive double-dealing activity. The old society had left nothing higher ideologically, nothing more reliable morally for combating Socialism. All these Trotskyites and Bukharinites, together with their helpers, of all kinds—nothing else than the dregs of bourgeois society, its agency—constitute the ideological and moral face of this society if one may still speak here of any ideals or any morals. We know well now who these people are who have utterly prostituted themselves. In their disgusting nakedness they reflect the ideological and moral face of the decaying bourgeois classes which are living their last days. We have sent them where history in the not too distant future will no doubt send capitalist society itself." (Vyacheslav Molotov, *Speech on Higher Education.)*

This gang of bandits, who hated the people, and are hated by the Soviet people, these "supermen," as they fancied themselves, wanted to turn back the wheel of history. They failed. The Soviet people, the true makers of history, have crushed the viper of fascism as represented by the Trotskyites and Bukharinites. The Soviet people are consolidating and developing the new, Socialist society, sweeping all enemies from their path.

The course of our revolution has exposed the old, reactionary idealist theory—now preached by the fascists—that social development results from the activity of individuals, of bourgeois "leaders" acting in isolation from the masses. The fascists despise and loathe the masses, the people. History, in their opinion, is determined by the deeds of a "*Führer*"; the people, the masses, are but a tool in the hands of the "*Führer*"—that is the fascist "conception of history."

History is made by the masses, by the revolutionary working class—that is the doctrine of Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin.

"The time has passed when the leaders were regarded as the sole makers of history and the workers and peasants were disregarded. The destinies of nations and states are now decided not only by leaders, but first and foremost by the masses, by millions of working people. The workers and peasants, who without fuss and bustle build mills and factories, mines and railways, collective farms and state farms, who produce all the benefits of life, and feed and clothe the whole world—those are the true heroes and builders of the new life." (J. Stalin, *Speech at the First Congress of Collective Farm Shock Workers.)*

Two hostile camps—Communism and fascism—face each other all over the world. Fascism is the cause of the savage, imperialist bourgeoisie, of the most reactionary sections of the bourgeoisie. Fascism means retrogression, a return to the Middle Ages, to barbarism—the destruction of all the great achievements of culture. Communism is the cause of the world proletariat. Communism champions the interests of all that is advanced and progressive in humanity.

The great service rendered by Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin lies in their discovery of the laws that govern the actions of the masses, the actions of classes, the laws of the proletarian, Communist revolution, the conditions, ways and means of the great struggle of emancipation of the working class—the grave-digger of capitalism and the builder of the new, Communist society.

"When we talk of examining the causes by which—consciously or unconsciously—prominent figures in history were prompted, and which were therefore the true ultimate causes of historical events, we must bear in mind not so much what prompted individuals, even the most remarkable, but rather what prompted the movement of vast masses of people—whole nations or whole classes of a nation. And even here, what is important is not short-lived explosions, transient outbursts, but prolonged movements which give rise to great historical changes. To seek the causes which clearly or vaguely, directly or in ideological, perhaps even in fantastic form are reflected as conscious motives in the minds of the masses and their leaders, in the minds of what we call great men, is to take the only road leading to a knowledge of the laws which govern history in general or history in various periods or in various countries." (Marx and Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. XIV, p. 669. Rus. ed.)

The founders of historical materialism considered that one of the chief defects of the old "sociological" theories was that they did not embrace *the action of the masses*. Historical materialism alone has enabled us to study the conditions governing the life and actions of masses and the changes of these conditions with the precision of the natural sciences.

"People make their own history. But what determines the motives of people, of the mass of people, that is; what gives rise to the clash of conflicting ideas and strivings; what is the ensemble of all these clashes of the whole mass of human societies; what are the objective conditions of production of material life that form the basis of all historical activity of man; what is the law of development of these conditions—to all this Marx directed attention and pointed out the way to a scientific study of history as a unified and law-governed process in all its immense variety and contradictoriness." (Lenin, *Karl Marx.*)

Lenin wrote of Marx that "he values *highest of all* the fact that

the working class with heroic, selfless devotion and initiative *makes* world history. Marx viewed world history from the standpoint of those who *make* it."

All the theoretical and practical activities of Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin are marked by a profound and unbounded faith in the masses, primarily the proletarian masses. This faith has always been based on an intimate knowledge of the life and activities of the masses, of the laws of social development. And, as a consequence, regardless of the difficulties encountered by the working class in its struggle, the entire philosophy of Marxism-Leninism is distinguished by its profound optimism. This revolutionary optimism is a distinguishing feature of the working class, of its vanguard and its leaders.

"Marxism," Lenin wrote, "differs from all other Socialist theories in that it represents a remarkable combination of complete scientific soundness in the analysis of the objective conditions of things and of the objective course of evolution and the very definite recognition of the importance of the revolutionary energy, the revolutionary creative genius and the revolutionary initiative of the masses—and also, of course, of individuals, groups, organizations and parties, which are able to discover and establish contact with classes." (Lenin, *Against the Boycott*.)

The enemies of Bolshevism, in combat with whom Bolshevism formed and developed—the Narodniks, and their successors, the Socialist-Revolutionaries; the Mensheviks, Trotskyites, Zinovyevites, Bukharinites, and all the other scum that has drained into the sink of fascism—have always been distinguished by their lack of faith in the masses, their fear and hatred of the masses. The great and invincible might of Bolshevism has always rested on a profound faith in the masses, a faith in the leading role of the working class in the struggle of the people against tsarism, in the struggle of the working people against the landlords and capitalists, in the struggle for Socialism.

In their efforts to build up a mass working class movement, the Russian Marxists first came into conflict with the reactionary ideology of the Narodniks, their reactionary subjectivist theory of the "heroes" and the "mob."

After the liberation of the serfs in 1861, Russia entered on the path of capitalist development. Capitalism had already become the dominant force in Russian economic life, yet the Narodniks still dreamed of a "peculiar" non-capitalist development for Russia, imagining that in Russia Socialism could evolve out of the peasant commune.

The development of capitalism had given rise to a revolutionary proletariat—a force that, in alliance with the peasantry, was capable of overthrowing tsarism and capitalism. Yet, instead of devoting their efforts to educating and organizing the proletariat for the struggle against capitalism, the Narodniks, guided by their anti-popular and unscientific theory of "heroes" and "mob," frittered away their energies in fruitless terrorist acts against individual representatives of the tsarist administration, and thereby did great damage to the development of the mass revolutionary movement.

In the 'eighties and 'nineties the Narodniks abandoned the struggle against the tsarist government and preached a policy of reconciliation with the latter. They appealed to the tsarist government to "avert the decay" of the already decayed village commune system.

The Narodnik subjectivist theory of the role of the individual in

history was founded on the reactionary view, borrowed from the exploiters, that the masses, the people, are clay that can be moulded at will into any historical social form.

The only active creative force the Narodniks recognized was the "hero," the "critically thinking individual," to whom they opposed the supposedly featureless, inert and passive mob. The millions were ciphers and nothing more. These ciphers acquired magnitude only when preceded by a "critically thinking" individual.

Unless the reactionary subjectivist Narodnik theory of "heroes" and "mob" which determined the terrorist tactics of the Narodniks, in particular of the Socialist-Revolutionaries, were overthrown, it would be impossible to achieve any successful development of the mass revolutionary working class movement, or to build a mass proletarian party to lead that movement.

It was Plekhanov who dealt the first decisive blows at the Narodnik movement. Particular mention should be made of his splendid article entitled *The Individual in History*, written forty years ago—an annihilating criticism of the subjectivist role of the individual in history and one of the finest expositions of historical materialism.

Plekhanov set forth and championed against the subjectivists the Marxist view that social development is a prccess strictly governed by law and necessity.

But do not historical necessity and conformity to law preclude the fact that history is made by men?

Is there not an intrinsive contradiction between the historical materialist doctrine that social development is a process of natural history and the fact that the Marxists organize a political party of the proletariat, that they organize the proletariat and call upon it to overthrow capitalism?

Stammler, a German bourgeois critic of Marxism in the 'nineties, pretended to "discover" an intrinsic contradiction between the theory and the practice of Marxists. He advanced an argument which he thought annihilated the Marxists. You Marxists, he said, consider that social development is a necessary, law-governed process of natural history. According to you, Socialism will be the inevitable result of this necessary, law-governed process of development of capitalism. But why then do you organize a political party to effect a Socialist revolution? Marxism suffers from an insurmountable intrinsic contradiction, Stammler declared. "Why, nobody would think of setting up a party to further an eclipse of the moon!" he said scoffingly. In his brilliant and witty article, Plekhanov annihilated Stammler and all similar critics of historical materialism. He ridiculed Stammler's analogy as utterly absurd, saying:

"Man's activity forms no part and can form no part of the conditions whose combination is required for an eclipse of the moon; for that reason alone a party for furthering the eclipse of the moon could arise only in a lunatic asylum. But even if man's activity were one of the above-mentioned conditions, nobody would form a party for furthering the eclipse of the moon who, while very anxious to see it, was nevertheless convinced that it would take place anyhow without his *assistance*. 'Quietism' in such a case would only be abstention from *superfluous*, *i. e.*, *useless action*, and would have nothing in common with real quietism." (G. V. Plekhanov, *Works*, Vol. VIII, p. 276, Russ. ed.)

While regarding social development as a law-governed process of natural history, historical materialism does not deny or belittle the role of the individual, as its

enemies assert. Marxism has always proceeded from the undeniable fact that history is made by men. Even in their early works Marx and Engels subjected the old, metaphysical materialism to annihilating criticism; and one of its main shortcomings they considered, was that it adopted an attitude of contemplation, ignoring the practical revolutionary activity of people. The founders of the new materialist philosophy considered it their primary task to change the world, and not merely to explain it, to overthrow capitalism and to build a Communist society, where there would be no exploitation of man by man, and where the free development of each would be a condition for the free development of all. The materialist conception of history and the revolutionary tasks of the proletariat are indissolubly connected. There can be no genuinely revolutionary, proletarian movement that does not rest on revolutionary theory—on Marxism-Leninism. And, conversely, revolutionary theory loses all meaning and justification when separated from the movement of the proletariat whose historical mission it proves and expresses.

It was no accident that the founders of scientific Communism were the organizers and leaders of the First International, the leaders of the international proletarian movement. The one aim of their lives was to arm the working class of all countries with a revolutionary theory, to organize and unite the revolutionary proletariat and to lead its historic movement. Marx and Engels cherished most of all the bold, revolutionary historical initiative of the masses, as their attitude towards the heroic struggle of the Paris Communards in 1871 clearly shows.

The question of the role of the individual in history is intimately connected with that of the significance of historical accident.

What part does historical accident play in the generally law-governed process of history?

In his article, *The Role of the Individual in History*, Plekhanov showed with the aid of a number of examples how the materialist conception of history, proceeding from the recognition of law in social development, explains the action of historical accidents.

Plekhanov disclosed the causes of France's defeat in the Seven Years' War and cited historical facts testifying to the disintegration and deterioration of the French army in the time of Louis XV. This deterioration was due to the rotten state of the feudal regime in France and the decline of the aristocracy, who held the key posts in the army and the government machine. These general conditions were enough to explain France's defeat in the Seven Years' War. But the fact that incompetent generals like Soubise held high posts in the army owing to personal connections at court and not to their abilities, multiplied the causes which resulted in France's loss of the war. That incompetent generals could occupy high posts in the army was due to the social system prevailing in France at the time. It was this social system that explains why events could be influenced by kings' mistresses like Mme. Pompadour, owing to whom it was that France joined Austria in an alliance against Prussia. The susceptibility of Louis XV to female charms was a personal quality that had nothing to do with the state of social development in France. It was an accidental factor, not a necessary attribute of the king of France. But the fact that such qualities definitely affected or could definitely affect the issue of the Seven Years' War for France

—and therefore the historical destinies of France in general—was due to the social regime prevailing in France at the time. "The Marquise of Pompadour," Plekhanov wrote, "was powerful not in her own right, but through the power of the king, who submitted to her will..... After all, if it had been not the king, but one of his cooks or grooms that had suffered from weakness for the fair sex, she would have been of no importance in history."

Lenin in 1918 analyzed why the Socialist Revolution had triumphed in Russia with such comparative ease. Among the causes he mentioned was the fact that bourgeois and landlord rule in Russia had been headed by such an idiot as Nicholas Romanov or such an empty braggart as Kerensky. Was it essential that the tsar and autocrat of "all the Russias" in 1917 should have been an idiot? The course of Russia's development did not necessarily demand it. True, none too many of the tsars were gifted with brains, but the throne of Russia in the twentieth century might have been occupied by a man who was not a fool and regarded his state functions differently from Nicholas Romanov.

The character and condition of the social regime determine the role and public significance of the talented and the untalented. That in Germany today outstanding public men, scientists, philosophers and writers have been exiled or confined to prisons and concentration camps, while the destinies of the great German people are ruled by incompetents and nonentities, is due to the character and condition of the social regime now prevailing in that country.

We see that the accidental qualities and abilities of a historical figure do influence the course of historical development, but that the extent and scope of this influence is determined by the form of social organization, which depends on the alignment of class forces in the country, determined in its turn by the method of production.

Thus historical accident does not preclude law in social development. On the contrary, historical accident can be properly understood only in connection with the laws of development of society.

The Frenchman Sainte-Beuve wrote that the issue of the French Revolution would have been different if Mirabeau had remained alive, and Robespierre and Napoleon had been accidentally killed. But the French Revolution was produced by profound social causes, the urgent demands of developing capitalism, the conflict between the nobility and the "third estate," headed by the bourgeoisie. None of the accidents mentioned by Saint-Beuve could have eliminated the needs that gave rise to the revolution. Consequently, the revolution would have continued until the contradictions that had produced it had been resolved.

Even if Napoleon had been killed in battle in Africa or Italy the revolution would not have taken an opposite course.

"...The general course and issue of events would probably have been *essentially* the same as under Napoleon. The republic, mortally wounded on the Ninth of Thermidor, was slowly dying. The Directory could not restore order, which was what the bourgeoisie, having rid itself of the rule of the higher estates, now most ardently thirsted for. As Sieyès put it, a 'good sword' was needed to restore order. At first it was thought that General Jourdan might play the role of the benefactory sword, but when he was killed at Novi, the names of Moreau, MacDonald and Berna-

dotte were bruited. Bonaparte was not mentioned until later; and if he had been killed, like Jourdan, he would have been totally forgotten, and some other 'sword' would have come to the fore. Of course, a man who was being raised by events to the position of a dictator had on his part to fight his way tirelessly to power, vigorously thrusting aside and ruthlessly crushing all who barred his way. Bonaparte was possessed of iron energy, and he spared nothing to gain his ends. But besides him there were plenty of energetic, gifted and ambitious egoists. The position he succeeded in occupying would hardly have remained unoccupied anyhow." (Plekhanov.)

Engels wrote to Starkenberg:

"The fact that a particular great man appears in a particular country at a particular time is, of course, pure accident. If we deleted this figure, the need for a substitute would arise, and such a substitute would be found—for good or for bad—but in course of time he would be found. That this particular C rsican was Napoleon, that this particular man was the military dictator who became essential to the war-exhausted French Republic, was an accident. But if Napoleon had not existed, someone else would have played his part. That is beyond all doubt, for whenever such a man was needed, he appeared—Caesar, Agustus, Cromwell, and so on. The materialist conception of history was discovered by Marx, but Thierry, Mignet, Guizot and all the English historians down to 1850 show that many were making for it; and that Morgan discovered the same conception shows that the time for it was ripe, and that this conception had to be discovered."

Great or prominent figures have always appeared in critical, revolutionary periods in the history of the world or of individual nations. Were it not for these great social movements, produced by profound social needs, historical figures could not have displayed their talents and abilities. Thus, were it not for the French bourgeois Revolution, the world would not have heard of Robespierre's outstanding ability as a statesman, or of Bonaparte's military genius. It is known that several years before the revolution Bonaparte, then a plain army officer, conceived the idea of going to Russia and serving as a mercenary in the Russian army. Owing to his remarkable military talents he might have risen to the rank of colonel or general. But he would never have been the great military leader and ruler before whom all Europe trembled.

The Great Socialist Revolution in Russia has shown that the needs of the Revolution, and the Civil War, discovered among the workers and peasants remarkable military leaders who routed not only the white-guard armies led by tsarist generals, but also the armies of foreign intervention—German, Japanese, British, French and Polish. The names of Voroshilov, Budyonny, Frunze, Chapayev, Bluecher, Shchors and many other of the glorious leaders of the Red Army will be long remembered by the enemies who have experienced the blows of the Red Army led by Red commanders.

Great or prominent historical figures have always appeared whenever and wherever they were needed. The greatness of Marx and Engels, the service they have rendered world history, lies in their having discovered the laws of social development and transformed Socialism from a utopia into a science. They provided the proletariat with a scientific understanding of its

historic function as the gravedigger of capitalism and the builder of the new society. Marx and Engels could not have performed this function if they had lived, say, during the French Revolution, in the eighteenth century.

That the founders of scientific Socialism appeared in the forties, and in Germany, was no accident. Germany at that time was pregnant with the impending bourgeois revolution, which there was to take place under more advanced conditions than the bourgeois revolutions in England and France.

"The Communists turn their attention chiefly to Germany," Marx and Engels wrote in the *Communist Manifesto*, "because that country is on the eve of a bourgeois revolution that is bound to be carried out under more advanced conditions of European civilization and with a much more developed proletariat than that of England was in the seventeenth, and of France in the eighteenth century, and because the bourgeois revolution in Germany will be but the prelude to an immediately following proletarian revolution."

Quoting these words in his *Foundations of Leninism*, Comrade Stalin remarks:

"The center of the revolutionary movement was being transferred to Germany.

"There can be scarcely any doubt that this circumstance, noted by Marx in the above-quoted passage, explains the fact that Germany came to be the fatherland of scientific Socialism and that the leaders of the German proletariat, Marx and Engels, were its creators."

Only when the contradictions of capitalism had reached a definite degree of acuteness, and the proletariat had appeared as a new historical force in the historical arena in the advanced countries of Europe, could scientific Communism arise; and only then could Karl Marx, doctor of philosophy from Tréves, appear as the great founder of scientific Communism, and lend that doctrine his immortal name.

Were it not that the contradictions of capitalism had reached a definite degree of maturity and acuteness, were it not for the Lyons rebellion in 1831, the Silezian weavers' rebellion in 1844 and English Chartism—the first national workers' movement—in 1837-42, Marxism, the ideology of the proletariat, could not have arisen.

Engels, Marx's great co-worker and friend, wrote:

"Two great discoveries—the materialist conception of history and the disclosure of the secret of capitalist production by the concept of surplus value—we owe to Marx. Thanks to them Socialism has now become a science which only needs to be elaborated in all its details and in the interconnection of its various parts."

Only such an intellectual giant as Marx could have produced *Capital*, the fundamental work of Marxism. Only a mind of such a vast genius could, in addition to mastering all the knowledge of his time, have critically analyzed all that had been produced before him and have evolved the most progressive and scientific philosophy—Marxism. Only a genius like Marx could have worked out this doctrine so deeply, fundamentally, comprehensively and brilliantly, and have lent it the great conquering force of conviction.

Of the parts played by Marx and by himself in evolving scientific Communism, Engels said:

"Recently people have repeatedly pointed to the part I played in evolving this theory. For this reason I am compelled to say a few words here that will exhaustively answer the question. I cannot deny that

before, too, during my forty years' relationship with Marx, I independently assisted both the grounding and primarily the elaboration of the theory of which we are speaking. But much the greater part of the main and guiding ideas, especially in the field of history and economics, and their ultimate clear-cut formulation, belongs solely to Marx. What I contributed Marx could easily have added without me, with the exception, perhaps, of two or three special departments of knowledge. But what Marx did I never could have done. Marx stood higher, saw further, surveyed things more widely and grasped them more swiftly than all of us. Marx was a genius; we, at best, were mere talents. Without him our theory would now be very far from what it actually is. Therefore it justly bears his name." (Marx and Engels, *Collected Works*, Vol. XIV, p. 662, Russ. ed.)

Of course, Engels' words must not be taken to mean that scientific Communism would have been impossible, that it would not have been evolved, if Karl Marx had not seen the light of day on May 5, in the town of Tréves in Germany. No. What Engels stresses is that were it not for Marx our great theory would not have been as thoroughly elaborated as it has been, and as only Marx could have done at that time. That scientific Communism was an expression of the needs of the time, of the growing labor movement, and not the chance product of a brilliant mind, is proved by the fact that Marx and Engels, living in different places, the former in Paris and the latter in London, arrived almost simultaneously at the same conclusions.

Marx and Engels were not only the founders of the theory of proletarian revolution; they were also the leaders of the world proletariat, the organizers of the First International. Marx and Engels were first of all revolutionaries. Struggle was their element. But not even a genius can conjure a mass movement of the proletariat into being if the time for it is not ripe, if the conditions of life which call for such a mass movement of the working class do not exist. By their tireless activity in the field of theory and in practice as the leaders of the Communist Party, Marx and Engels lent the working class movement the force of organization and class consciousness.

The relation between the practical movement of the masses and the role of the leader—what a leader can do to develop a mass movement, and what he cannot do for all his genius and might of theory—in a word, the relation between objective conditions and the subjective factor, is shown in the case of Marx and Engels. Were it not for them, for their assistance, the organized working class movement could not have attained the heights it did during their lifetime. Nevertheless, the proletarian Communist revolution, whose heralds Marx and Engels were, and whose laws of development they discovered, could not appear in their time, despite their ardent desire and passionate hopes and expectations, and despite their tireless and titanic activity.

Marx and Engels lived in the period of preparation for the proletarian revolution. The epoch of the actual storming of capitalism came later, and it produced new geniuses of vast might and power, capable of most fully voicing the needs and interests of this new epoch—the greatest and most impressive since man's appearance on earth.

Marx and Engels lived when capitalism was on the upgrade of its development. Now it is on the

downgrade. Capitalism has entered into its final stage, the stage of monopoly, the stage of imperialism —the eve of Socialism, the period when all contradictions become extraordinarily accentuated. The proletarian revolution has been placed on the order of the day all over the world. In virtue of the law of the uneven development of capitalism, and in virtue of specific historical conditions, the beginning of the proletarian revolution, its first victory, took place in Russia. And it is no mere chance that Russia was the birthplace of Leninism, that Russia gave the world two great geniuses, titans of revolutionary thought and action, leaders of the world Communist revolution—Vladimir Lenin and Joseph Stalin.

By the beginning of the twentieth century the center of the revolutionary movement had shifted to Russia. Here a bourgeois revolution was maturing. It was to take place under more advanced conditions than all the bourgeois revolutions of Western Europe, with a most developed proletariat which had already become an independent political force. Russia was the nodal center of the contradictions of imperialism. Because of all these conditions, the impending bourgeois revolution in Russia was bound to become, and did become, the "prologue of the proletarian revolution" (Stalin), and the Russian proletariat "the vanguard of the international revolutionary proletariat" (Lenin). That was why Russia became the birthplace of Leninism, and Lenin and Stalin, the leaders of the Bolshevik Party—its founders.

The international Communist revolution is the greatest and most urgent task of our time, the greatest task that has ever faced history. The Communist revolution, the abolition of capitalism, the annihilation of slavery in every form, and the establishment of Communist society, represents the greatest and most far-reaching upheaval in the history of the world.

This revolution touches the profoundest roots in the life of all strata of the population of the globe. It will rouse vast masses of people to political activity. It can be effected only by the world proletariat, whose vanguard is the working class of the U.S.S.R., which in alliance with the peasantry has triumphed over Russian capitalism and has already in the main built a Socialist society in the Soviet Union.

Only with such a party as the Bolshevik Party could the Great Proletarian Revolution have been victorious in Russia and the exploiting classes defeated and abolished. The overthrow of capitalism and the building in the main of Socialist society in Russia is the greatest event in world history. The Great Socialist Revolution in Russia in its very first years shook the world: crowns rolled to the ground in a number of European countries, and there was a series of revolts of the revolutionary proletariat and oppressed colonial nations. The international influence of the Russian revolution is growing from year to year.

Great historical missions must be commensurate with the greatness and might of the class that is to perform them. The Russian working class has proved its greatness and might in three revolutions, and most of all in the Great October Socialist Revolution, in the Civil war against internal and external counter-revolution, in the struggle against a whole host of enemies.

After defeating its enemies in the Civil War, it was faced with the most difficult problem of all—the building of a new social system. Now this problem too has been solved: Socialism has in the main

been built in the Soviet Union. The working class, the great Bolshevik Party and its leading geniuses have thereby proved that they are capable not only of razing to the ground the old, exploiting society, but of building a new society, unknown to history, a society where there is no exploitation or class antagonism, where development is guided by a state nation-wide plan, and where the conditions for a happy and joyful life for all working people are provided.

The working class could perform this historic mission only provided it had a strong and tried party, inseparably bound up with its class: a bold, revolutionary party armed with a progressive revolutionary theory and utterly devoted to the cause of the working class; a party whose words are never at variance with its deeds, a party capable of heading the great struggle of the working class. The Bolshevik Party is such a party. Without its tried leadership, the working class could never have won the victories it did on so many fronts.

Every party has its leaders. It was Lenin and Stalin that forged the Bolshevik Party and made it hard as steel, firm and indomitable, strong in its indissoluble bonds with the working class, and with all the people. The greatness and strength of Lenin and Stalin, those brilliant leaders of the working class, their importance in history, are intimately bound up with the greatness and strength of the Bolshevik Party, which they founded, moulded and trained.

The greatness and strength of Lenin and Stalin lie in the boundless devotion, confidence and love they enjoy among the working class and the whole people. This confidence and love were won in the fight against the enemies. The people know their leaders not by fine words and declarations, but by their deeds, by the way they actually champion the cause of the working people. Leaders whose words are at variance with their deeds do not enjoy the confidence of the people, and never will. The people turn away from such leaders, discard them and forget them.

By their decades of struggle Lenin and Stalin have proved their boundless devotion to the cause of the working class, the cause of Communism—and their readiness to lay down their lives, to sacrifice their last drop of blood for this great cause.

"If," said Comrade Stalin when interviewed by Emil Ludwig, "every step in my work of elevating the working class and strengthening the Socialist State of that class were not directed toward improving and strengthening the position of the working class, I would regard my life as pointless."

It is because the working class, and all the people of the Soviet Union regard their leaders, Lenin and Stalin, as the embodiment of their finest ideals, that they so profoundly love them. As far back as the first Russian Revolution in 1905, the time of the first armed conflicts with tsarism, the advanced section of the working class already perceived that the Bolsheviks and their leaders were the only ones to point out the correct road of struggle.

In 1914 one of the most criminal of imperialist wars broke out. The bourgeoisie succeeded in infecting the petty bourgeois masses and even certain sections of the workers with the intoxication of chauvinism. The so-called Socialist-Revolutionaries and the Mensheviks became social-imperialists, defensists. This was the case not only in Russia but everywhere. The acknowledged leaders of the Second International went over to the side of their own

bourgeoisie. The Second International collapsed. In the terrible disaster that had overtaken humanity, when millions were being exterminated and the battlefields flowed with the sacred blood of the working people, when the boom of cannon mingled with the groans of the wounded and the wailing of widows and orphans—one honest and mighty voice resounded through the world exposing the true character of this most criminal of imperialist wars, branding the true culprits—the predatory imperialists of all countries and their flunkeys—the social-chauvinists, the traitors to Socialism. It was the voice of the Bolshevik leaders—Lenin and Stalin.

Lenin and Stalin called upon the nations to transform the imperialist war into a civil war, into a war of the workers against the capitalists—the only war that was just and sacred. The voice of the Bolsheviks won the following of millions of exhausted and suffering people, for the Bolshevik slogan expressed the cherished thoughts, strivings and interests of the millions. Lenin and Stalin, the leaders of Bolshevism, were the only ones to show the exhausted and suffering people the true way out of the imperialist war—Socialist revolution, the establishment of the dictatorship of the working class.

In the bourgeois-democratic revolution of February 1917 the masses, profiting by the experience of the Revolution of 1905, set up Soviets, which Lenin and Stalin regarded as the embryo of the future power. The slogan "All Power to the Soviets!" advanced by Lenin and Stalin was a great mobilizing force, and under this slogan the dictatorship of the proletariat and the poor peasantry was won.

The success of the Socialist revolution was due not only to the existence of the objective premises for it, the existence of a revolutionary crisis. It was also due to the leadership, who were able to form a correct estimate of the situation and the relation of class forces, and correctly to gauge the most advantageous moment for the offensive of the army of revolution. Spontaneous indignation had long been rising among the masses, as was shown by the April, June and July demonstrations of the Petrograd workers. In the process of these demonstrations the army of revolution was formed and tempered.

It is to the enemy's advantage to give battle to the proletariat, to the forces of revolution, before they are ready. The leaders of the proletariat had to gauge the right moment for action when the superiority of forces was on the side of the revolution.

In that period between February and October 1917, the compromising Menshevik and Socialist-Revolutionary parties had to be exposed and isolated from the masses; for otherwise the victory of the proletariat in October would have been impossible. Not only had slogans to be used expressing the fundamental tasks of the revolution and the interests of the proletariat and the toiling peasantry, but these Bolshevik slogans had to be made the slogans of the masses themselves.

"For the victory of the revolution," writes Comrade Stalin in *The October Revolution and the Tactics of the Russian Communists*, "if that revolution is really a people's revolution which draws in the masses in their millions, it is not sufficient to have the Party slogans right. For the victory of the revolution one more condition is required, namely, that the masses themselves become convinced by their own experience of the correct-

ness of those slogans. Only then do the slogans of the Party become the slogans of the masses themselves. Only then does the revolution really become a people's revolution. One of the special features of the tactics of the Bolsheviks in the period of preparation for October lay in their having correctly foreseen the paths and turnings which would naturally lead the masses to the Party's slogans, to the very threshold of the revolution, so to speak, thus making it easier for them to feel, to test, to realize by their own experience the correctness of these slogans."

Without the direction of the Bolshevik Party, the Great October Socialist Revolution could never have triumphed. Nor could the revolution have triumphed without leaders, the brilliant strategists of the proletarian army, capable of correctly gauging the situation and the alignment of class forces. Such great leaders were produced by the proletariat of Russia. Lenin and Stalin—the guiding geniuses of the proletariat—combined great theoretical ability with practical experience in organizing the mass revolutionary movement. They most fully expressed the needs of the international revolutionary movement, and the tasks facing the Socialist revolution. The leaders of the Great Socialist Revolution saw farther than all others and had a broader view of the field of historical struggle. Lenin and Stalin most fully expressed the hopes, thoughts, and strivings of millions, and their leadership assured victory for the Socialist Revolution with the fewest possible losses for the working people.

"A great man," Plekhanov wrote, "is great . . . because he possesses faculties which render him the most fit to serve the great social needs of his time arising from general and special causes. Carlyle, in his book on heroes, calls great men *beginners*. This is a very apt description. A great man is indeed a beginner because he can see farther than others and desires *more strongly* that others. He solves the scientific problems raised in the preceding course of intellectual development of society; he points to new social needs evolved by the preceding development of social relations; he takes the initiative in satisfying these needs. He is a hero. He is a hero not in the sense of being able to arrest or modify the natural course of things, but in the sense that his activities are a conscious and free expression of this necessary and unconscious process. Therein lies his importance, therein lies his strength." (G. V. Plekhanov, *Works*, Vol. VIII, pp. 304-305, Russ. ed.)

Lenin and Stalin, possessing as they did great theoretical ability, a profound understanding of the laws of revolution and experience in the class struggle, were always able, even under the most complex circumstances, to provide the masses with the right slogan, to point the goal and the ways and means of its achievement. October 1917, the Brest-Litovsk Peace, the Civil War, the New Economic Policy, the industrialization of the country, the collectivization of agriculture and the liquidation of the kulaks as a class—these were all tremendous turning points in the development of the revolution: and at each of these historic moments a clear, sober and scientific assessment of the situation and a correct assessment of the alignment of class forces was essential. The great leaders of the working class, Lenin and Stalin, mercilessly combated those who rushed ahead and lost contact with the masses, as well as those who lagged behind the working class movement and dragged it back. And it was their leadership that en-

sured the victory of the working class. Profound scientific sobriety coupled with revolutionary audacity are the distinctive features of the working class leader. Comrade Stalin said of Lenin:

"Brilliant foresight, the ability rapidly to catch and appreciate the inner sense of impending events—this is the feature of Lenin that enabled him to outline the correct strategy and a clear line of conduct at the turning points of the revolutionary movement." (J. Stalin, *On Lenin.*)

Lenin and Stalin, the leaders of the proletariat, by their masterly understanding of the process of social development, enabled the proletariat to foresee the course of events and mould its actions accordingly. The Bolshevik Party was never caught unawares.

The leaders of the proletariat are distinguished by their boundless belief in the masses, in their might, reason and creative powers. Not only *to teach the masses*, but *to learn from them*—such is the unchanging law unswervingly followed by Lenin and Stalin, the great leaders of the working masses, and that is what they taught other Bolsheviks. Therein lies the source of the strength and might of the Party and its leaders. At the March 1937 Plenum of the Central Committee of the C.P.S.U., Comrade Stalin quoted the ancient myth of Antaeus, who drew his strength from his mother—earth. The inexhaustible source of strength of the Bolshevik Party—the leader of millions—is its constant and indissoluble bond with the masses.

"Leaders come and go, but the people remain. The people alone are immortal. Everything else is transient." (Stalin.)

If a leader becomes divorced from the masses, loses sight of their vital interests, becomes conceited and overweeningly arrogant—the people forget him, turn away from him, discard him. The people, like history, cannot be deceived.

Deception, hypocrisy, chicanery are inalienable characteristics of the "leaders" of the bourgeoisie today, notably of the fascist leaders. Hitler in his book *My Struggle* openly proclaims deliberate deception of the masses to be an essential and constant rule of fascist leadership. Contempt and loathing for the masses, the people, characterize the fascist leaders; and the people repay them in kind.

There was a time when the bourgeoisie produced prominent and gifted personalities as its leaders. But that was in the days of its youth, when as a class it served the cause of progress. But now the bourgeoisie is a force of reaction. History has pronounced its inevitable doom. And the function of the bourgeois "leaders" nowadays is by every means in their power, even the bloodiest and vilest, to avert or at least to postpone the doom of capitalism. The interests of the bourgeoisie and the interests of progressive humanity are incompatible—which explains the revolting man-hatred, cannibalism, hypocrisy and falsity of the leaders of the bourgeoisie, nowadays. It is only in a decaying capitalist society that such nullities as Hitler, Goering, Goebbels and Mussolini can "rise" to the position of leaders of bourgeois states. The bourgeoisie today can produce nothing better.

The only leader and vehicle of historical progress is the proletariat, whose victory nothing in the world can prevent. The political leaders of the proletariat voice its invincible might and strength, its strivings and aspirations. Like Lenin and Stalin, these political figures are clear and definite, bold and fearless in battle, uncompromising and ruthless to the enemies of

the working class, the enemies of the people. Like Lenin and Stalin they are honest and forthright. Like Lenin and Stalin, they love their people and are thoroughly devoted to the cause of Communism.

When he learned that Babushkin, a fine Bolshevik and an active member of the St. Petersburg League of Struggle for the Emancipation of the Working Class, had been shot by the tsarist butchers in Siberia, Lenin wrote in an obituary:

"There are heroes among the people. They are men like Babushkin. They are the men who, not for a year or two, but for ten whole years before the Revolution gave themselves unstintingly to the struggle for the emancipation of the working class. They are the men who did not fritter away their energies on useless terrorist acts by isolated individuals, but who worked persistently and unswervingly among the proletarian masses, furthering the development of *their* class consciousness, *their* organization, *their* independent revolutionary activity. They are the men who headed the armed mass struggle against the tsarist autocracy when the crisis arrived, when the revolution broke out, when millions upon millions were set in motion. All that has been won from the tsarist autocracy has been won *solely* by the struggle of the masses, led by such men as Babushkin.

"Without such men the Russian people would forever have remained a slave people, a serf people. With them the Russian people will win complete emancipation from all exploitation." (V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. XIV, p. 398, Russ. ed.)

The description here given by Lenin of this outstanding Bolshevik, and hero of the proletarian struggle—of the part played by him and by other leaders of the proletarian masses like him, in the struggle against every form of slavery—applies first and foremost to the great leaders of the working class and of all working people—Lenin and Stalin. Without such leaders, the nations of the U.S.S.R. would still be slaves. Thanks to the leadership of the Bolshevik Party and of such leaders as Lenin and Stalin, the peoples of the U.S.S.R. have abolished every form of slavery and oppression, have abolished the exploiting classes, and have in the main built up Socialism in their country. Under the leadership of Comrade Stalin the proletariat will overthrow capitalism and assure the triumph of Communism throughout the world.

*FYODOR KONSTANTINOV*

# SOVIET DEPUTIES ABOUT THEMSELVES

## VALERIA BARSOVA

### People's Actress of the U.S.S.R.

*Valeria Barsova—Deputy to the Supreme Soviet of R.S.F.S.R.*

"The life of the actor is his life in the theater. All else is secondary."

That is the accepted view everywhere. And it used to be the view of some in our country. But reality, the happy reality of our Soviet days, has destroyed this false assumption.

The life of the actor in our Soviet Union is the life of the people, a life shared with the people. And art in our country is only one of the means, a splendid and wonderful means, of serving one's people.

The Soviet people have done me a great honor. The workers of the Moscow Kaganovich Brake Plant have nominated me candidate to the Supreme Soviet of the R.S.F.S.R.

I was overwhelmed with happiness when I learned of the decision. So strongly did the news affect me that for a long time I could not control my agitation. Could I ever have expected such a high honor?

I am an opera singer. The Government has marked my work on the opera and concert stage by granting me the highest award, the Order of Lenin, and the title of People's Actress of the U.S.S.R. In no other country are actors and artists, especially women, held in such esteem.

I am proud of the fact that I owe these honors not only to my natural gifts but also to systematic and stubborn work, day in and day out.

I was born in Astrakhan, on the Volga. I do not remember my fa-

ther, who was an office worker; I was scarcely a year old when he died. The family was left to the care of two older sisters, Olga and Maria.

Maria is now a well-known teacher of singing. She had a wonderful voice, strong and fresh, with a marvelous timbre. I owe my musical education chiefly to her.

Our family loved music and encouraged my interest in the art. At the age of nine I entered school, and simultaneously joined a music school. I was so small that when I walked to my lessons all that could be seen from the side was my portfolio with the word "Music" in large gold letters toddling along on little legs, surmounted by a red cap.

I played the piano at parties willingly and without the least shyness. I even think that I was less subject to stage fright in my childhood than now.

Only once was I a complete failure. Anxious to display my brilliant technique at an amateur concert, I decided to use the pedal. I stretched and stretched trying to reach it with my foot, when all at once I toppled off my stool. The young pianist, sobbing loudly, was led off the stage by the school janitor amidst deafening applause.

I left secondary school in 1909 with a teaching diploma and joined my sister Maria in Moscow. Maria had just graduated from the Conservatory, which I entered as a student in the piano group. At that time I did not dream of becoming a singer. I practiced singing with my sister but attached no significance to my voice. Maria was constantly telling me that I did not have much of a voice, and that I could make something of it only by stubborn, unrelenting work. Years later, when student days were long over, Maria confessed that this was only a pedagogical trick: she feared I might become conceited and drop my systematic and persistent studies.

We lived in poor circumstances, like the overwhelming majority of pre-revolutionary students. To make a living and earn tuition fees I had to give music lessons to the children of rich families, and even so I had a hard time making ends meet.

In those years the director of the Conservatory was M. M. Ippolitov-Ivanov, a talented musician and composer. He became interested in my voice, and, learning of my difficult circumstances, he secured me a place as teacher of choral singing in an elementary school.

My first efforts as a teacher of singing in this boys' school were not very successful. I was very young, and the boys refused to recognize my authority. There was constant whistling and catcalls, and the throwing of spitballs at my lessons. I often left the classroom in tears. But necessity kept me at it, and I did not quit.

Once, when the little mischief-makers became entirely out of hand, I decided to sing myself to show them what it was I wanted to teach them.

The effect was astonishing. They fell silent and began to listen attentively. When I finished my authority as a full-fledged teacher was firmly established.

I told them that all who listened to me and behaved in class would learn to sing as well as I did by the end of the year.

Life became much easier after that.

By chance I came across a newspaper advertisement announcing a contest for young singers to be conducted by the Chauve Souris Theater. I decided to try my luck.

The Chauve Souris was not a theater as we understand it; it was rather a restaurant with a variety program. Balieff's clever work and

the more or less serious attention devoted to the staging placed its revues on a higher level than others of its kind.

Balieff greeted me with ironical courtesy. The Conservatory miss in long braids with a music portfolio under her arm was an amusing enough spectacle within the walls of the Chauve Souris.

When I sang my aria he laughed heartily and asked whether I had nothing more lively in my repertoire. I sang the liveliest thing I knew.

But Balieff liked my voice and took me on at a salary of seventy-five rubles a month. At that time this seemed to me an unheard-of success.

But despite this "successful" start in my stage career, I did not want to throw up the Conservatory or the school, where I had already grown accustomed to my pupils, and had even made friends with them.

My working day was as follows: from nine to eleven in the morning I taught. From the school I dashed to the theater for rehearsals. From four o'clock to the evening I studied at the Conservatory, and from ten on I performed at the Chauve Souris in a musical tableau.

This double life was full of unexpected surprises. One day the *Stock Exchange News* carried an item about the singer Barsova. My fellow-teachers asked me if the Barsova in question was a relative of mine.

"My sister," I timidly lied.

If only the school administration had got to know that it was I and not my sister, and that the lovely little song, *Three Brave Soldiers Set Off for the Wars*, which we studied in class—with all the boys in turn taking the part of the soldiers, and myself as the king's daughter—was one of the popular hits at the Chauve Souris, I would have been driven from the school in disgrace.

I met Balieff once again later in life. It was several years ago in London, where I was on tour. The papers called me "the Prima Donna of the Moscow Opera." I impersonated the art of the Soviet Union for them.

I met my first manager in a shabby basement cabaret. He cracked jokes in broken English, but the laughter that had greeted him of old was missing in the half empty hall. We met, greeted each other, but had nothing to talk about. Our paths had diverged: behind me stood my country, great, mighty, wonderful. Balieff had nothing—neither country nor art.

It is easy for me to recount my years in opera. I became an opera singer in 1917. I made my debut in *Rigoletto* in the Zimin Opera House in the spring of that year. But the opera season began in the autumn and by that time the theater had been taken over by the Moscow Soviet. I then joined the Theater of Art Education of the Union of Workers' Organizations, whose troupe was recruited from the younger actors of the former Zimin Theater.

Firmly resolved to devote my art to the new public which filled the theaters after the Revolution, I performed almost daily at meetings and concerts for units leaving for the fronts of the Civil War. And this new audience greeted the art we brought them with warmth and gratitude.

The theater I had joined was a "synthetic" theater. The actors had to be able to do everything. I was both singer and actress. For instance, I sang the part of Rosina in *The Barber of Seville* and at the same time rehearsed the part of Suzanne in *The Marriage of Figaro*.

It was only in 1919, when I was already a professional singer, that I graduated from the Conservatory in the piano group; and I passed the examinations for singing with its kindred subjects as an external

student. For a year after that I attended Professor Mazetti's class.

In 1920 I joined the State Grand Opera Theater. At the same time I studied in K. S. Stanislavsky's studio. That supreme master of drama, superb stage director and actor of the Russian theater, taught us to be exacting toward ourselves, to be faithful to dramatic truth and to respect our audience.

Under I. V. Nemirovich-Danchenko, another great stage director, I simultaneously played the part of Cleretta in the musical comedy *Madame Angot's Daughter*.

I had a great desire to get into close contact with my audience. In 1925 I began to combine concert performances with my work in the Grand Theater. These concerts brought me into contact with the most responsive and attentive audience in the world. I performed before workers of the large cities of the Soviet Union. I sang for the textile workers of Ivanovo, the oil workers of Baku, the collective farmers around Moscow, the miners of the Donbas, the gallant men of the Red Army, Young Pioneers and school children.

I have traveled a great deal in the Soviet Union, and everywhere I have met happy people, people who genuinely appreciated our art. This has inspired me with the energy and the desire to work still harder and better for the good of the Socialist country.

I have represented Soviet art in Europe. I have sung in the Baltic countries, England, Turkey and Poland. And I have felt the sharp contrast between the capitalist countries and the U.S.S.R., the land of universal happiness and joy, which surrounds her sons and daughters with maternal care and solicitude.

Working with talented youth, I want to help train a generation to succeed us, so that I may yet see during my lifetime the fruits of the labors to which I have devoted my life. I have been working on the art front for twenty years, and the last ten have been years of especial creative urge.

I am now preparing for the role of Antonida in Glinka's opera, *Ivan Susanin*. I am deeply stirred by my part. I have to depict on the opera stage a Russian girl who enters upon a self-sacrificing struggle against the invaders of her country. I wish to create the noble character of a Russian girl patriot. It is a character that should have an especial appeal just now to millions of Soviet citizens, who are ready at any moment to give their lives, to sacrifice their last drop of blood, for our Socialist fatherland.

## MIKHAIL KIREYEV
### Professor of Medicine

I am sixty-four years old. I can remember three wars and three revolutions, one of them the Socialist Revolution. And in my time I have met many people from different sections of society.

During my train travels in prerevolutionary Russia and in my life in Moscow, I have met people who were famous and people who were unknown but none the less interesting for all that—workers and manufacturers, peasants and landowners, artists and petty bourgeois, merchants and students, lawyers, soldiers and scientists.

I have had many encounters during the twenty years of Soviet power. But I am glad that I can no longer encounter, whether on trains or in Moscow, manufacturers, merchants or petty bourgeois. But what remarkable people, people hitherto unknown to the history of mankind, it has been my good fortune to meet in these days!

I have seen the liberated, free and equal woman, who will never more be the slave of family and prejudice.

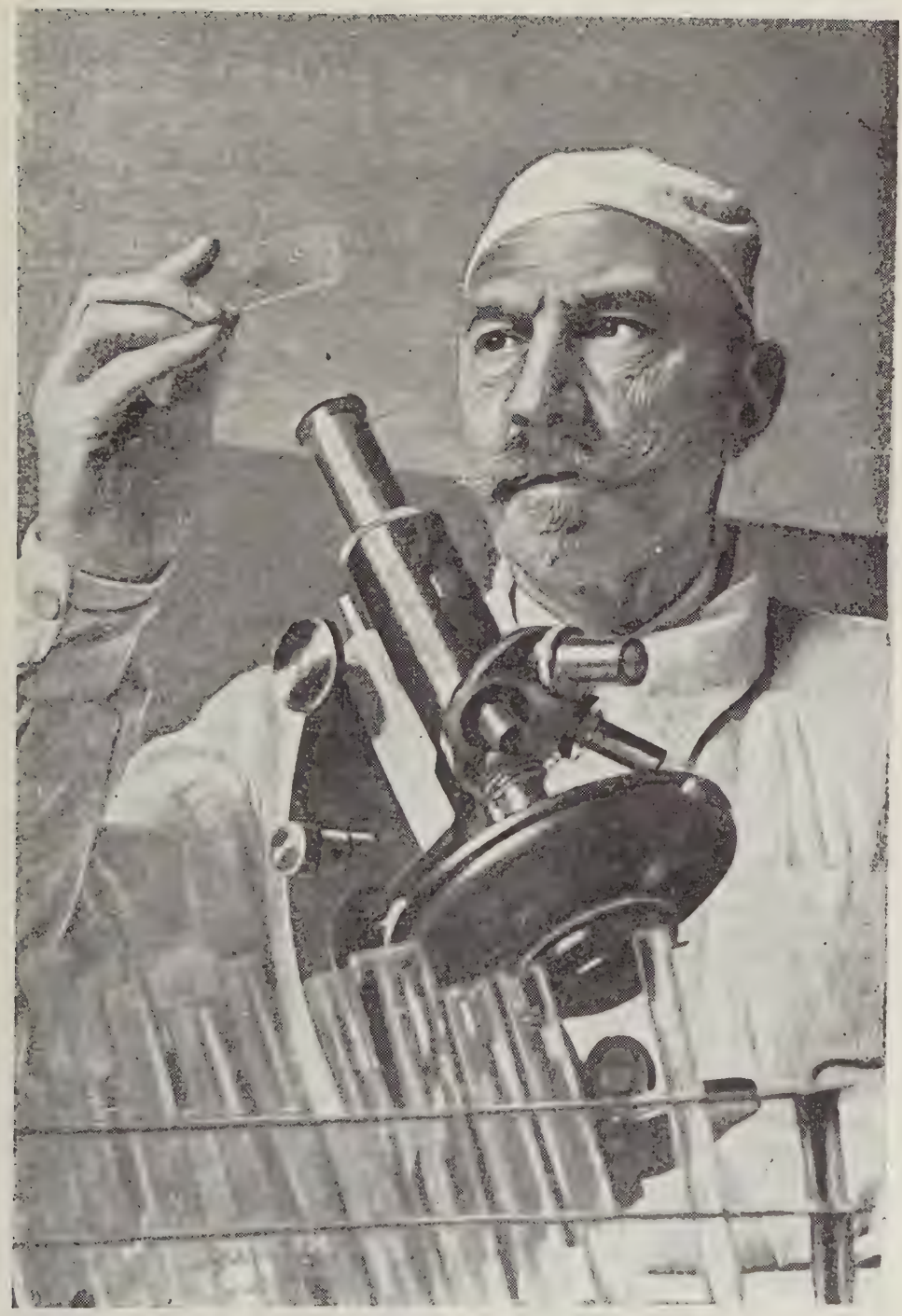
I have seen the free worker, no longer bent, cursing, beneath the burden of hopeless drudgery; a worker who does not toil for the exploiter, but works joyously and eagerly for the prosperity of his Socialist society. I have seen the free peasant, who is no longer obliged to overtax his strength for the landowner, and to lead a miserable semi-starved existence. United with his comrades in mighty collective farms, he is now successfully battling the forces of nature, securing crops of a size hitherto unknown in our land.

I have seen the free intellectual, who is no longer obliged to serve the capitalist, painfully struggling with his conscience, and mourning the humiliation of art and science, but who is now happy to be able faithfully and truthfully to serve his own people who have elevated art and science to unprecedented heights.

Yes, I have encountered many Russian people in my lifetime. A doctor is a public figure and is constantly meeting people. This intercourse is the source of the greatest satisfaction to me, and though time may have obliterated their names from my memory, their images, actions and words are still fresh.

Once while a student I traveled down the Kama River. Our steamer stopped at a small town. The gangway was lowered. Ragged stevedores hoisted the heavy bales onto their broad shoulders and staggered down the gangway. And invariably as he almost reached the shore, every one of them stumbled. A crossplank had been nailed in a most inconvenient place, at the end of the gangway. It seemed to have been deliberately placed there for the men to stumble over.

Finally one of the passengers lost patience and asked a titan of a stevedore, a man with a broad, good-natured face, who was clad in a



*Mikhail Kireyev — Deputy to the Supreme Soviet of R.S.F.S.R.*

shabby jacket through the rents of which his brawny, sunburnt chest showed:

"What is the idea of that plank?"

A grin lit up the stevedore's good-natured face. He winked slyly to his comrades and replied:

"I suppose it was put there for people to ask questions, to interest the passengers. I don't see any other reason."

Unfortunately, this absurd plank fastened to the gangway of an unknown Kama jetty was not the only utterly senseless thing in the old Russian Empire.

Obsolete customs, obsolete institutions and obsolete classes found hospitable shelter in the Russian Empire. And Moscow, the ancient and favorite abode of the Russian merchants, was in this respect perhaps the most characteristic of all the cities, big and small. Zaryadye, Simonovka, Rogozhskaya, Pyatnitskaya, Yakimanka—these Moscow streets were inaccessible fortresses of prejudice, superstition and willfulness.

The brass band of the Alexandrovsky Military Cadet School, conducted by Kreinbring, was famous throughout Moscow. But the conductor was famous not so much for his musical gifts as for his skill in charming away erysipelas! He had no peace from merchants and their wives anxious to test his magical powers.

And this was Moscow, the capital of a huge country, where the level of culture might have been expected to correspond with the city's importance. But the hopeless and willful stupidity of the merchants would not kowtow to any culture. The only thing to be done with these doughty tradesmen and their worthy spouses, all these Kit Kitiches so satirically depicted by Ostrovsky, was to stun them.

As a young doctor I was once asked by a colleague to relieve him in the watching at the bedside of a woman merchant who was ill with pneumonia. Even when healthy she was a regular tartar, but now that she was sick she kept the whole house in a state of panic with her endless whims and caprices. When I arrived she asked for a drink. She was given some mineral water at the room temperature customary in such cases. She immediately began to howl at the top of her voice that the water was icy, that she had been given a cold and would surely die. No argument, coaxing or pleading were of any avail. I was not used to dealing with these willful Zamoskvoretsky fools and rather lost my head. And the woman kept on storming. Fortunately, an old experienced doctor, who had been specially summoned to calm her, arrived at this juncture. When he learned the cause of the alarm, he pretended to be lost in thought for awhile, then said with an air of seriousness, although I saw a smile lurking in the corner of his eye:

"You say it was mineral water? Well, nobody ever catches cold from mineral water."

I could scarcely refrain from laughing at this absurd pronouncement uttered with such authority. But the woman was completely reassured. The more senseless the argument, the more eagerly these people accepted it. Thus I learned to deal with this merchant breed, who, unfortunately, were also a ruling power in that terrible, oppressive world in which I passed almost half a century—forty-four years of my life.

All these upholders of the principle, "I shall do as I please, don't interfere," were astoundingly rich. The anecdotes about the barbaric and extravagent orgies during which thousands of rubles were wasted on the principle mentioned, are by no means exaggerated.

Side by side with this part of Moscow, where meaningless extravagance prevailed, there was a part where extreme poverty ruled, where even the minimum wants of the human being went unsatisfied. One of the most poverty-stricken spots of Moscow was Khitrov Market.

This was the lower depths of the social system, to which the outcasts of life sank. Its inhabitants were bereft of all opportunity of observing even the most elementary rules of hygiene, even of changing once a month the rags that served them both for outer clothing and body linen. Because of this, Khitrov Market was always the breeding place of the infectious diseases that afflicted Moscow—the epidemics of spotted fever and typhus.

What could a doctor do here? What could all Russian medicine do, when the way was barred by a social system that crushed every vital and rational measure?

But even in this stifling world saplings forced their way through the dead weight of the Nicholas regime. Again it was the simple Russian folk, endowed with a firm faith in their own strength, in their right to a human existence, uncrushed and unbowed.

It was as a student in my fifth year that I first came into close contact with the workers. I was sent to practice in the hospital of the Bezhetsk Rolling Mills, Briansk Province. Here I saw at first hand the desolate conditions in which the workers lived and toiled before the Revolution. Inhuman labor, beggarly wages, shameful neglect of the human being, of his health and life, his abilities and desires.

I shall never forget the gas poisoning which took place at the Bezhetsk Mills at the very beginning of my practice. The management had refused to spend a few wretched rubles on essential sanitary and technical measures, and the result was that a number of men were poisoned by carbon dioxide. Two of them died.

I shall never forget the stern faces of the workers, their grief and hatred, when they accompanied their comrades to their last resting place. I thought then that people who were able to hate so passionately and so unanimously were bound to win in the end.

And the Russian workers did win. They won in alliance with the Russian peasants, whose lot was even worse than theirs.

The conditions of the Russian proletarians made a human existence almost impossible; but the condition of the peasants was still worse, because of their disunity. Countless boundaries divided the Russian soil into insignificantly small plots. The harvests they yielded barely sufficed for the healthy.

But woe betide those who fell ill! A sick person was an incubus to the peasant family. There was not enough food to feed the healthy, let alone the sick. This attitude did not spring from hardness of heart. The Russian peasant is good-natured and tender-hearted. He has a mild, lyrical soul, as we found so wonderfully reflected in our folk songs. No, only gloomy poverty and bitter grief made him seem more callous and brutal than he really was. And now, when no longer oppressed by the burden of poverty, we find him displaying examples of generosity, responsiveness and heroism.

It was generally held that the pre-revolutionary peasants distrusted townsfolk and all who "looked intellectual." That is not true. Their mistrust was aroused only when they scented the enemy—the landowner or manufacturer. I often had occasion to converse with the peasants in the old days; and

I observed that they were sincere, keen-minded and steadfast.

But I came to know the character of the great Russian people even better in times of hardship.

I was still in the secondary school when the famine broke out on the Volga. Hundreds of volunteers from among the intelligentsia hastened to the spot to help to the best of their ability, determined to give their lives to rescue their fellow men.

I well recall the self-sacrificing work of the whole medical personnel, from doctors to nurses and stretcher-bearers, during the cholera epidemics that used to ravage the country.

Finally, there was the supreme and unexampled endurance and heroism displayed by the people during the Civil War, when Russian workers, peasants and intellectuals, starving, shoeless, poorly clad, poorly armed, routed the well fed, well equipped and well armed enemy.

Two things have always amazed me in my encounters with Soviet people—the unusually swift, fabulously swift way they develop, and the continuity of the Russian national features.

Of course, of all my encounters, the most thrilling were those with my electors, who nominated me as candidate to the Supreme Soviet of the R.S.F.S.R.

And attending numerous meetings and hearing the remarkable speeches of orators skilled and unskilled—housewives, domestic workers, doctors, Red Army men, Young Communists, old men, airmen, locksmiths, women workers and artists,—everywhere I observe these two features, fabulous speed of development and continuity.

At a meeting in a Red Army regiment I saw a man who was semi-literate when he entered the army a year before. Now he had a perfect mastery of the technique of arms, and had become a junior commander—and I recalled the supreme courage and untiring spirit of the Red Army man.

I have seen Stakhanovites who have in a short time perfectly mastered the most complex machinery and who constantly perfect it, who increase the labor productivity and surpass the standards of Europe and America—and I recalled the pre-revolutionary Russian workers, keen, shrewd and resourceful.

I have seen intrepid and skilled pilots, who not long ago were collective farmers, turners or students, and who with masterly hand now pilot planes through the boundless ocean of the air and I recalled the Russian people, just as intrepid, and always striving higher and higher.

The impression created by my meetings with my voters was so profound and thrilling, that it seemed to me that I was meeting the whole of our great country, its present and its future.

I say "and its future," because children were invariably present at these meetings. When I left they would surround me in a close ring and cry:

"Give our regards to Comrade Stalin!"

"Regards to Comrade Stalin!"

Thus our present and our future are united by this great name which makes the heart of an old doctor and the heart of the Young Pioneer beat faster with happiness.

# FILMING "ALEXANDER NEVSKY"

In the midst of one of the greatest heat waves Moscow has ever seen, a battle on the ice for the historical film *Alexander Nevsky* was recently screened at the studios of the Moscow Film Trust. For twenty days scenes from the eleventh century combat between the Novgorod warriors and the German knights of the Teutonic Order were shot on a battlefield of artificial ice with the thermometer around 101 deg. Fahrenheit.

The story of the film, which Sergei Eisenstein is directing, is based on an episode in the early history of the Russian people. In 1242 German knights, at the head of a strong army, fell upon the land of Novgorod, laid waste its towns, and threatened to destroy the city of Novgorod. Prince Alexander Nevsky, or Alexander of Neva, so called because of his earlier victory over the invading Swedes on the River Neva, gave battle to the Germans on Lake Chud, put the Teutonic knights to flight and pursued them to the very frontier of his land.

From early morning until sunset the studio worked on one of the most interesting episodes in the picture: the duel between Alexander Nevsky and Count von Balk of the Teutonic Order.

The field of battle and its surroundings, transformed by artists and decorators into a wintry scene on the ice-covered Chud Lake, presented a startling contrast to the sultry July reality outside the studio.

By nine in the morning the unbearable, devitalizing July heat had begun. Behind light wooden partitions the actors were busy with their makeup, and beyond, grouped in the shade, stood the armored, helmeted knights, warriors and armor-bearers with swords and shields. Moving slowly under the blazing sun came the Novgorod fighters clothed in heavy fur overcoats and high felt boots and carrying massive spears.

"Knights, forward march! Warriors, to the left!"

At the command the participators in the "battle" set off for the artificial frozen lake. A few minutes' walk brought them to the ice. An enormous field covered with a layer of melted glass and alabaster, topped with a sprinkling of chalk and salt, gave the complete illusion of ice.

The warriors, perspiring profusely under their heavy fur coats and hats, stood in formation opposite the knights. A heated battle was about to begin.

At the stroke of ten an automobile drove onto the "icefield." Director Eisenstein and cameraman Edward Tisse, in tropical helmets, alighted.

"Wind!" demanded Tisse imperiously, and the next moment came the whirring of a tractor with a propellor attached. The wind rises. A heavy downfall of salt

*Honored Workers of Art Sergei Eisenstein and Edward Tisse filming "Alexander Nevsky"*

snow swept over the lake and two horsemen rode onto the foreground.

But first permit me to introduce the actor who plays the leading role in this film. Three days before, when he made his first appearance on Chud Lake, the knights and warriors threw up their spears and applauded thunderously.

"Greetings to the deputy of the Supreme Soviet!" they shouted, crowding around N. K. Cherkasov, who is to play the part of Prince Alexander.

Cherkasov who, despite his youth, had already been awarded a Government Order for his distinguished acting, was elected in Leningrad a deputy to the Supreme Soviet of the R.S.F.S.R. The Novgorod warriors, catching sight of Cherkasov from the other side of the lake, were deeply offended: "Come over to us, Prince!" they called to the deputy. "What do you mean by conversing with the enemy?"

Cherkasov had come to Moscow to attend the First Session of the Supreme Soviet and was able to come to the studios only in the intervals between session meetings.

"Begin!" roared Eisenstein. "Gallop!"

Cherkasov's white horse pranced forward. The blue velvet mantle fell from the horseman's shoulders as von Balk galloped out to meet him, ugly and fearful in a silver helmet.

"Meet!" "Clash!"

The horsemen plunged into the fray through the blinding snowstorm. The Teutonic knights, witnessing this grim duel, brandished their spears but backed away in fear at the martial visage of Alexander Nevsky. The Novgorod fighters were rejoicing in triumph as, spurring his horse forward, the prince struck the spear from von Balk's hands. The German seized his sword, upon which Alexander Nevsky flung down his spear and drew his own sword from its sheath.

*A still from the forthcoming film "Alexander Nevsky"*

And again the horses clashed. The snowflakes flew under the horses' hooves. Suddenly the prince's sword was smashed in twain. At that moment an aged Novgorod warrior dashed up to Alexander and handed him an axe.

"Hack him to pieces!" yelled the fighters. "Kill him!"

One of Alexander's blows felled Balk. The knight raised his hand to beg for mercy, and a noose was slipped around the neck of the vanquished leader.

With shouts of "Kill them," the fighters swooped down on the leaderless knights, and then something quite unforeseen happened.

"Cut! Stop!"

But the fighters continued to dash in pursuit of the German knights.

"Halt! Halt! Come back!" yelled Eisenstein but no one heeded him.

In their heavy fur coats, oblivious of the scorching sun, the Novgorod fighters chased after the knights to the end of the lake and beyond on the grass.

At last the regisseur's appeals reached their ears and the warriors and knights formed in battle array once more.

Around six o'clock Cherkasov began to glance anxiously at his watch—the meeting of the session of the Supreme Soviet was to begin at six.

In the car en route to the Kremlin where the session was held, Cherkasov spoke of his role in the film.

"I confess that this role, quite new for me, has caused me some agitation. It is the first time I have attempted to play a heroic role," he said.

"In *Alexander Nevsky* I must show an outstanding, clever, gifted soldier who, notwithstanding his youth—twenty or twenty-one years —drew up the splendid plan which led to the defeat of the foe.

"I have made a study of ancient manuscripts, records and the accounts of eye-witnesses. Although information about Alexander Nevsky himself is meager, the docu-

ments give a striking picture of this great epoch in Russia's history. It is a pleasure for me to work with Director Eisenstein, who is engrossed in this new film. Regisseur D. Vasilyev, the cameramen and the cast make a friendly team and I am confident that the arduous task of producing a historical picture like *Alexander Nevsky* will be creditably fulfilled."

His new role of a man of action has proved absorbing to Cherkasov. So far he has chiefly played character parts. As the car bore us swiftly to the center of the city, Cherkasov recalled his former roles, contrasting the images he has portrayed. And suddenly amid the hubbub and commotion of city traffic the voice of the aged Professor Polezhayev was heard. Cherkasov stretched out his hands—one gesture, one word—and the moving figure of the aged scientist of *Deputy of the Baltic* was with us in the car. All at once the hands began to tremble, pitiful wrinkles appear on his brow and Tsarevich Alexei (son of Peter I) was moaning piteously. In a flash the stern, valorous countenance of Alexander Nevsky appeared.

The automobile slowed down. Red Square. The car came to a halt outside the Spassk Gates and I bade farewell to Cherkasov as he showed his deputy's mandate to the guard and passed into the Kremlin.

*MIKHAIL ROSENFELD*

# GIPSY THEATER STAGES PUSHKIN CLASSIC

The Romany Theater in Moscow, the only Gipsy theater in the world, has produced an adaptation of the poem *The Gipsies*, by the classic Russian poet Alexander Pushkin, presenting his verse in the Russian original and his artistic images in graceful, colorful staging replete with Gipsy songs and dances.

Pushkin's romantic figures come to life in all their freshness and color when the Gipsy camp come on the stage in the twilight, with the hubbub of women and children; when the multicolored, vivid Gipsy camp is seen on the move; when the tents spread over the broad Bessarabian steppes.

The Romany Theater is only seven years old, and when its founders established this unique cultural institution they had to build from the bottom; they had no tradition, no experience, no playwrights or trained actors. Nevertheless, basing their work from the start on the rich Gipsy folklore, they have created a theater of genuine merit, with a repertoire based on authentic folk music and drama.

At first the theater's plays had the most elementary of plots, but what they lacked in complexity of action and sophistication they made up for by sincerity and simplicity. Although the Russian language is interlarded with the Gipsy tongue on the stage, the performances are calculated to allow both Russian and Gipsy spectators to follow the action with ease.

Honored Artist of the Republic M. Yanshin, a pupil of Stanislavsky and Nemirovich-Danchenko, is director of the theater. He is now working on a production of *Bloody Wedding*, a play by the Spanish poet Garcia Lorca, killed by the fascists in Granada. The play was recommended by Rafael Alberti and Maria Theresa Leon, Spanish writers, who inscribed these lines in the theater's visitors' book: "It is impossible to find anywhere in the world better actors for this play than those of the Romany Theater."

Like all Soviet theaters, the Romany troupe tours the country frequently, and often visits those parts of the country where Gipsies have settled on the land in collective farms.

*A scene from "The Gipsies"*

*Scene from the play "The Gipsies." From a production of the State Gipsy Romany Theater,*

*The popular actress Lalya Chornaya as Zemfira in the play "The Gipsies"*

# CHRONICLE

## Theater and Cinema

### A NEW PRODUCTION OF "HAMLET"

The plays of the great dramatist Shakespeare are never absent from the theaters of the Soviet Union. Theaters in the large cities, distant provincial theaters, amateur circles—all are continually putting on his plays. . . .

The Leningrad theater under the direction of Sergei Radlov has produced *Hamlet*, every staging of which is a complicated and responsible matter, for no other play has had so many diverse interpretations.

In Radlov's production the text of *Hamlet* has been seriously and thoughtfully studied, its inner meaning disclosed. The central theme of the tragedy stands out clearly before the spectator: the struggle of *Hamlet*, a true humanist, with the base, sanctimonious, hypocritical world around him. The theater has been most successful in revealing the interrelationships of Shakespearean types, in all their living and manifold concreteness.

In the actor D. Dudnikov's performance Hamlet is no abstract philosopher but a man of flesh and blood. The actress T. Pevtsova's Ophelia is a good but weak woman powerless to fight for her love.

In depicting the representatives of the world hostile to Hamlet the theater has avoided schematism and lifelessness. The king is sagacious, energetic, perhaps even not a bad "ruler." It is possible to understand how such a woman as Gertrude could become attached to him. Gertrude too is a clear-cut figure, a woman incapable of ruling her base passions.

Such is the world with which Hamlet struggles, a world terrible for the very reason that it consists not of grotesque monsters, of dyed-in-the-wool scoundrels, but of clever, cunning people, capable of defending their false moral code.

Radlov's production conveys the real "music" of the great Shakespearean tragedy, that symphony of thought and feeling which is *Hamlet*.

The stage-settings by the artist V. Dmitrov are excellent, the somewhat aloof music of S. Prokofyev most expressive. The new translation of the text by Anna Radlov contributed much to the success of the performance—it is Shakespearean in its terse expressiveness and color.

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### "THE MARRIAGE OF FIGARO" AT AN AMATEUR THEATER

Mozart's opera *The Marriage of Figaro* was staged by members of a local amateur group in the Palace of Culture at Orekhovo-Zuevo Moscow Province (one of the biggest centers of the textile industry),

### THE MARRIAGE OF FIGARO IN TATAR

The Kazan State Academic Theater has staged Beaumarchais' play *The Mad Day, or the Marriage of Figaro*, in Tatar.

### A DRAMATIC CIRCLE'S TWENTIETH ANNIVERSARY

The dramatic circle of the village of Zavorochi (Ukraine) has celebrated its twentieth anniversary. Now the circle has grown into a strong theatrical company of forty members. The circle gave four hundred performances in its own village and paid many visits to neighboring collective farms. Its repertoire includes Russian and foreign classics and also those of Soviet playwrights.

### SHOSTAKOVICH'S SIXTH SYMPHONY

The composer Dmitri Shostakovich has begun work on a new symphony, his sixth. The theme of his new work was inspired by Mayakovsky's famous poem on Lenin.


*Honored Artist and Order-Bearer B. Chitkov and Artist Order-Bearer V. Kibardina studying their parts in the forthcoming film "On The Viborg Side," the third part of the Maxim screen trilogy.*

## FUENTE OVEJUNA IN THE THEATER OF THE REVOLUTION

The interest of the Soviet public in Spain has grown immensely as a result of the heroic struggle being carried on by the Spanish people.

Exhibitions of Spanish art, concerts of Spanish music, plays about Spain invariably attract much attention from the Soviet public.

The Theater of the Revolution, Moscow, has staged the Spanish dramatic classic, Lope de Vega's *Fuente Ovejuna*. Although the action of the play is laid in the Spain of more than three centuries ago, it sounds timely in the light of recent events.

A difficult task confronted the producers. Lope de Vega's drama has its own ancient stage traditions, and requires from the performer an impressive stage personality. The producers succeeded in meeting these demands.

Young actors took part in the play—the role of Laurencia, who embodies the spirit of revolt, is taken by a quite young actress, who has never before had a leading role. Only last year she graduated from the Dramatic School. She is twenty-four, a Young Communist. Before entering the school she worked in a power plant. In the play she has presented an unforgettable picture of a Spanish woman in which the spectator sees a forerunner of the fiery Dolores Ibarruri, the people's tribune of present-day Spain.

*Artist V. Enutina as Laurencia in* Fuente Ovejuna *at the Moscow Theater of Revolution*

The performance is enjoying great popularity.

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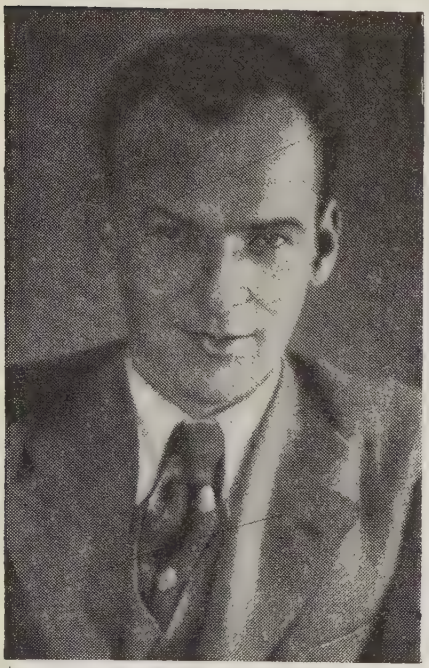
### A FILM ON THE DEFENSE OF TSARITSIN

Following their film *Volochayevka Days* the Vasilyev brothers (producers who have received government awards for their work) have begun work on a new film about the defense of Tsaritsin, based on Alexei Tolstoy's latest novel, *Bread*.. The Vasilyevs will collaborate on the scenario with Tolstoy. No attempt will be made to cover the entire novel in the screen version. It is to be a film about Stalin and Voroshilov, about people who came from the mines of the Donbas, from the fields of the Ukraine, from hungry Petrograd to defend the young republic against the White interventionists.

### MEN OF LENINGRAD

The producers Heifitz and Zarkhi, who will be remembered for *The Baltic Deputy*, are now working on the film devoted to contemporary Soviet youth, *Men of Leningrad*.

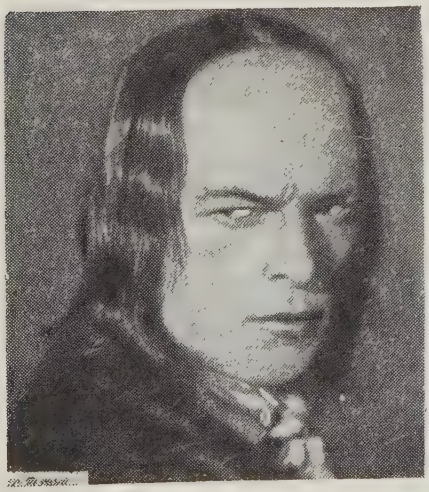
# ALEXEI TOLSTOY'S "PETER I," ON THE STAGE



*Nikolai Cherkasov, well-known Soviet stage and film actor. Recently elected Deputy to the Supreme Soviet of R.S.F.S.R.*

The Pushkin Dramatic Theater of Leningrad has staged ***Peter I***, adapted for the stage from his world famous novel by the author Alexei Tolstoy, who also prepared the script for the screen version. The play contrasts the mighty figure of Peter with the despicable character of his son Alexei. From the latter are stripped all the mystic veils with which reactionary literature and historians formerly enwrapped him. He is no poor, weak-minded, downtrodden fool but an active enemy of all that is fresh and new, a betrayer of his country and state.

The difficult role of Peter is brilliantly played by the actor Cherkasov, who in the film version plays the role of his dramatic opposite, Alexei.



*Cherkasov as Alexei—eldest son of Peter in the film* Peter I

*Cherkasov as Peter I in the play by Alexei Tolstoy*

# Points from Letters

*In INTERNATIONAL LITERATURE No. 4 we printed an article by Georg Lukacs, noted Soviet critic, on Walter Scott and the Historical Novel. We have since received a number of comments on the article, two of which we print below together with a reply by Georg Lukacs.*
*The editors.*

...Georg Lukacs' article on Walter Scott in No. 4, 1938, is an exceptionally fine piece of work. I know of no English writer who has so well put his finger upon the central significance of Scott. Curiously, it so happens that just before this issue reached me I had received a letter from a Scottish comrade urging me to do a study of Scott on the same scale as my *Dickens*. If I do do so I shall not be able to do other than to enlarge upon and supplement Lukacs' central thesis. By the way, this article suffered to an unusual degree from incidental editorial blemishes arising from transliterating proper names from German into Russian and then back again into English (or more properly, Gaelic). This is, of course, the merest of superficial trifles, but I mention it to show how carefully I have read it, and also because we don't want to give the philistines any chance to sneer, however trivial.

Yours,
With the best fraternal wishes,

*T. A. Jackson.*

I was disappointed with the study of Walter Scott and the Historical Novel. It seemed to me that it showed two grave misunderstandings of Scott's position. First, there is a misunderstanding of his social status. He was not "a small nobleman." Even now there is a sharp distinction between noblemen, even small ones, and what is called a gentleman, and in Scott's day the distinction was much clearer because at that time small noblemen never *earned* their living, whereas gentlemen frequently did, in such professions as the church, the law, the service of the state, etc. Scott was born into the professional gentleman class, before he earned his living as a writer he earned it as a lawyer.

Second, there is a more serious misunderstanding as to Scott's national status. Scott had no quarrel with the Act of Union between England and Scotland; but he was always a Scotsman; and his training as a lawyer certainly reinforced this national consciousness, as the Act of Union left intact the Scots law, a legal code using different methods and different terminology to the legal code of England. Why I say this is a serious misunderstanding is that it leads Georg Lukacs to overlook an aspect of Scott's writings which has a lesson for the world today. Strongly conscious of his nationality, proud of his country's history, always delighting in the portrayal of Scotch character and customs, Scott was yet quite comfortable, so to speak, in the United Kingdom. He is a most important example that a minor nationality can be blended into a compound state, without either servility or the chauvinism of racial theories; and as such, Scott is relevant to the question of national minorities today. Under quite different social circumstances,

as a dweller in bourgeois society instead of under Socialism, Scott can thus be dimly related to those folk poets whose work sometimes appears in *International Literature*, those poets who, preserving their national traditions and idioms, use them to express their loyalty to the U.S.S.R., to Lenin and Stalin.

And, though this is a smaller point, Georg Lukacs should not say that "the hero of Scott's novels is invariably a rather ordinary English squire" when the "hero" of one of Scott's greatest novels, *The Heart of Midlothian*, is a Scotch peasant girl! This is allowing theory to ride rough-shod over fact.

With cordial greetings,

*Sylvia Townsend Warner.*

*Moscow, July 24, 1938*

First of all, I must express my gratitude to T. A. Jackson. It is always pleasing to an author to know that his thoughts have been grasped immediately and correctly. The misunderstanding which found place in Sylvia Townsend Warner's letter is chiefly due to the fact that only the first part of my article was published in *International Literature* without any indication that a second part would follow.

As concerns certain of Sylvia Townsend Warner's objections, I would take to heart most of all her third objection, which she considers the least weighty, if it held for my article in the full form in which it was written. But the problem of *Volkstümlichkeit*—based on an analysis of *The Heart of Midlothian*, too—constitutes the major element in the section as yet unpublished in English. I presume that my critic [Sylvia Townsend Warner] would not have maintained her second objection if she could have acquainted herself with my real thought as expressed in my article *in toto*. Hence my desire to elaborate the world-literary significance of Walter Scott, on the basis of his great conception of universal historical development.

A decisive role is played by other questions: the origin of the modern state, struggle of the "uppers" and the "lowers," the inevitable downfall of the remnants of the gens (clan society), etc...

Naturally, I would have liked to round out my article with an independent analysis of the Scotch problem as Walter Scott saw it. But since I wrote only a general account of the major stages of the historical novel, this problem was beyond the bounds of my article.

As regards the first problem, I do not feel that there is any real contradiction between us here, too. I wanted to show the Engelsian "victory of realism" in the dialectics between the individual outlook of Walter Scott, and its artistic embodiment. Here the difference between the small noblemen and the gentlemen has little connection.

It would be otherwise were I seeking to explain the works of Walter Scott by his social status. Then it would be necessary to dispute over how great a role the specific social strata plays in analysis. I think Sylvia Townsend Warner in such a case considerably overestimates the importance of the social strata. But this question does not arise within the sphere covered by my article.

*Georg Lukacs*

*Editor's note.* The concluding section of Georg Lukacs' article will be published in a forthcoming issue.

# The Lighter side

ON THE CZECHOSLOVAKIAN FRONTIER

*" Why the soldiers?"*
*" In case of provocation."*
*" But if there isn't any provocation?"*
*" How can there not be with soldiers present!"*

(Ganf in *Krokodil*)

IN THE "THIRD REICH"

*"These sausages made of wood shavings, Herr Schultz, have got me stumped. I don't know whether to put them on the oven or in the oven.*

(Rotov in *Krokodil*)

*It's a rare diplomatic performance when the drummer plays first fiddle*
(Yefimov in *Krokodil*)

# ABOUT THE CONTRIBUTORS

*MATHE ZALKA*. Prominent Hungarian writer who was killed near Huesca, defending Spanish democracy. *Doberdo* is his last novel.

*FYODOR KNORRE*. A young Soviet playwright and scenario writer. *The Unknown Comrade*, which we publish in this issue, is his first short story.

*JAMBOUL*. Famous folk bard of Kazakhstan who was awarded the Order of Lenin on the seventy-fifth anniversary of his creative activity. Ninety years old, he is famous throughout the Soviet Union as a poet of the people. He is a Deputy to the Supreme Soviet. He was the subject of an article in No. 6 of *International Literature* for 1938.

*FYODOR KONSTANTINOV*. Staff member of the Philosophy Institute of the Academy of Sciences of the U.S.S.R. and editor of the magazine *Books and the Proletarian Revolution*

*MIKHAIL ROSENFELD*. Soviet journalist.

# To our readers

The editors of *International Literature* would like to know what the readers think of the magazine.

In this period, more than ever before, with menacing attacks upon world culture, *International Literature* feels the gravity and significance of its role as an organ devoted to the cultural interests of the advanced and progressive people throughout the world. It wishes to fill this role as effectively as possible. For that reason it calls upon its readers for this cooperation.

Even if you have a good opinion of the magazine there may be some features you prefer to others. We would like to know what they are. You will help the work of the magazine if you tell us.

If the magazine has disappointed you in any way please let us know.

Please tell us what type of stories you have liked, whether you object to serialization of material; what type of articles you have valued; what aspects of international and Soviet cultural life you would like to have chronicled in the magazine; and how you would like to have the chronicle material presented?

Do you find the present form of the magazine attractive and readable? Recently, at the request of some of our readers we introduced illustrated covers and a two-column page. Are there other changes of format readers would like to see introduced? Are you satisfied with the quality of the translations?

Address letters to editor of *International Literature*, Box 527, Moscow, USSR.

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**Associate Editor TIMOFEI ROKOTOV**