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## *THE 150th ANNIVERSARY OF THE FRENCH REVOLUTION*



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## *BOOK-SHELF*



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**ROMAIN ROLLAND**

# ROBESPIERRE

(Excerpt)

*On the hills of Montmorency, the 7th of Thermidor (July 25). A hot late afternoon.*

*A road which rises on the right at the back crosses the stage at a sharp angle from right to left and then slopes gently downwards towards the right. Beyond the ridge which commands the valley, stretches a vast plain. In the distance Paris lies, shimmering in the heat. Here and there the house-tops flash back the slanting rays of the setting sun. To the left along the road an oak grove projects like a promontory from a forest into which a winding footpath disappears.*

*Robespierre enters from the right walking up the slope with a brisk stride and carrying his hat under his arm. He halts to catch his breath on the crest of the ridge and surveys the landscape and the road behind him from right to left. He shuts his eyes as though dazzled and exhausted.*

*ROBESPIERRE:* What a torrid sun! When I close my eyes I see red. I feel dizzy. *(He sits down on an embankment to the left, in the shade of the trees.)*

*The voice of Simon Duplay is heard calling in the distance:* Hey! Yoo-hoo!

*ROBESPIERRE:* I have escaped my bodyguard. He is worried. The good Simon feels duty bound not to lag one step behind me. Well, let him look for me! I must collect my thoughts alone with god and nature, I must escape the poisoned atmosphere of the big city for a few hours. *(He indicates the direction of the city with a thrust of his chin.)* Even the presence of a good lad like Simon has a way of returning one's thoughts to the human race, to the role in which destiny has cast us, in this cesspool of folly and wickedness. Oh, for one hour of forgetfulness! Is it possible in the thick of the fight? My head swims, I have been walking fast in the sun. *(He shuts his eyes.)* How dear this is, this spot, to my memory! How many times have I come here in spirit, searching for the peace and confidence which have deserted me! And the light of that day, whose reflection still lingers beneath my closed eyelids, fifteen years after. . . . *(He is silent for an instant and soliloquizes.)* I was under twenty then. Here it was that I met old Jean-Jacques Rousseau. Nothing is changed, save that the trees have grown taller. It was

a young grove then. Then a skylark sang, winging upward. *(He keeps his eyes closed during what follows.)* I was here at this very spot. I saw the philosopher approaching me along the road I had just traveled. He was alone, bare-headed, stooping slightly, a bouquet of flowers in his hands. He crouched from time to time to pick a flower, talking to himself. *(As Robespierre is speaking a figure with the posture and likeness of Jean-Jacques approaches along the road, repeating the actions described by Robespierre; Robespierre, whose eyes are shut, does not see him. He is engrossed in his soliloquy and continues in a low voice.)* He did not see me for he was plunged in deep thought. And I who recognized him at first glance was dumbstruck, paralyzed. He paused on the crest in contemplation. Then he resumed his walk, leaning on his stick, heading towards the woodland path. As he passed close to me he raised his eyes, wide and brown, like those of an owl. They seemed to look inside you, and he gazed straight into my eyes.

*At this point Robespierre opens his eyes and sees the figure which stares at him in stony silence for a few seconds and then passes on. The apparition takes the path leading to the woods and disappears. For a few instants Robespierre remains motionless as though petrified, then he tries to shout. He raises his hands to his throat and finally succeeds in calling.*

*ROBESPIERRE (shouting):* Simon!

*The voice of Simon answers him from a distance and grows nearer; and Simon Duplay, hurrying and panting, enters from the road on the right at the back.*

*SIMON DUPLAY:* I found you at ast, Maximilien! How did you get away from me? You have no idea what a chase you gave me! *(He notices Robespierre's extreme agitation.)* But what is wrong with you? Why, you're shaking, your eyes are blinking, what are you looking for, what has happened?

*ROBESPIERRE (making an effort to regain his composure):* Didn't you see anyone come up the road just now?

*SIMON:* Nobody. . . . Why yes. There was someone in front of me, a stroller.

*ROBESPIERRE:* What did he look like?

*SIMON:* I took little note of him. I was thinking only of you and paid no attention to anything else. Moreover all I could see was his back. Yes, I remember now, he was an elderly man. His clothes were old-fashioned. In the village they told me of an old prescribed man, in hiding—a philosopher—one of the gang of Caritat and the Rolland woman. Did you run into him? I shall go and give the alarm. Which way did he disappear?

*ROBESPIERRE (stops him with a gesture):* Forget it! Give me your arm. I feel tired.

*SIMON:* Sit down, over there. *(He leads him to a fallen tree-trunk in the shade.)* Take it easy! After months of being shut up indoors it may be dangerous for you to remain in this scorching sun.

*ROBESPIERRE (his eyes shut):* Oh, sun who absorbs the fevers of the earth, if only you could absorb life as well, this bad dream!

*SIMON:* What are you saying?

*ROBESPIERRE:* Life. What have I done with it? Nonsense! I should rather say, what has life done with me? For it was not what I intended.

*SIMON:* Who more than you has succeeded in proceeding direct towards his goal?

*ROBESPIERRE:* In revolution, Simon, one never goes so far as

when he does not know where he is headed.[1]

*SIMON:* You are a man who should know.

*ROBESPIERRE:* Yes, am I not? I am not one of those lucky people who live from day to day, without the misfortune of always foreseeing and always remembering. And yet...! The force of things, Simon, leads us, perhaps, to results which we had not contemplated.[1]

*SIMON:* What are you thinking of?

*ROBESPIERRE:* I am thinking of Jean-Jacques, the idol of my youth, my teacher and comrade. I feel as though I had just heard him, he was telling me that *nothing down here is worth buying with human blood*, and that *the blood of a single man is more precious than the freedom of the whole human race.*

*SIMON:* Do you think so?

*ROBESPIERRE:* I did once. In former years, I carried these beautiful words in my heart. I promised to make them my law and to lead men to observe them. Did I not declare three years ago that *if the laws shed human blood, if in the eyes of the people they conjure scenes of cruelty and mutilated bodies, then they pervert the ideas of the citizens, they give rise to savage prejudices in the bosom of society; these prejudices in turn produce others.*

*SIMON:* Who is wrong then? Do you repudiate your actions?

*ROBESPIERRE:* I do not repudiate them. The force of things has decided for and against me. It had to be so. I did as it ordered. But it is hard to be merely its tool.

*SIMON:* If this was required for the good of the Republic, there was no choice but to obey and all is well.

*ROBESPIERRE:* You talk like a soldier; Simon, you are lucky, you shift your responsibilities to your chief. But the chief has no one with whom he can share it. He must decide and choose the course of action. And this course is not inscribed deep in our hearts. It is imposed upon us from without. It must be disentangled day by day from the serpent's knot of events. It changes from day to day, adapting itself to the exigencies of the moment; such are the links of an inexorable fate. One cannot escape them and when we realize what this fate has done to us, what it has forced us to do, we ask in alarm what the morrow will require of us.

*SIMON:* You are weary, you are not sure of yourself, Maximilien. But we have no doubt about you. We hold on to you.

*ROBESPIERRE:* My good friends! It is true, I felt tired for a moment. And that encounter just now.

*SIMON:* What encounter?

*ROBESPIERRE:* Nothing. It is over. Simon, let it be over for you as well! Forget everything I have said. Let us enjoy the peace of these fields and the crimson gold of the sunset, of the fading light, before returning to the fierce arena which awaits me!

*SIMON:* Are you still determined to speak at the Assembly tomorrow?

*ROBESPIERRE:* I must

*SIMON:* Take care!

*ROBESPIERRE:* Truth and virtue have nothing to be afraid of.

*SIMON:* Do not break the truce which Saint-Just signed for you!

*ROBESPIERRE:* No one has the power to sign for me. I make no truce with perfidy.

*SIMON:* Do you think the Convention will follow you?

*ROBESPIERRE:* It will hear me. The rest is in the lap of the gods.

*SIMON:* I have little confidence in the gods. I would prefer it if

[1] True words of Robespierre.

you would allow us to organize a good armed defense.

*ROBESPIERRE:* I have forbidden it, for this would lend substance to charges of dictatorship. The only dictatorship which I intend to exercise is that of the force of truth. I have no weapons save my word.

*SIMON:* Are you unaware of those who are secretly plotting against you?

*ROBESPIERRE:* I am aware of everything, of every detail of the conspiracy. But there are two alternatives. Either I shall destroy it by exposing it in the eyes of France where there is no longer any place for it in the order of things, or else justice is an illusion. I address my supreme appeal tomorrow to honest folk of all parties and of no party. Let them answer!

*SIMON:* I would rather see you derive your support from the people.

*ROBESPIERRE:* I never cease to draw my inspiration from them. They are my strength.

*SIMON:* Are you quite sure that they are with you?

*ROBESPIERRE:* I am with them. If they deny me, they deny themselves. If they deny themselves, there is nothing left for me. And we shall have lived in vain. But I shall fight to the end.

*SIMON:* We must go back. It will soon be time for the coach to Paris. Let us go down to the post.

*ROBESPIERRE:* Isn't that the White House which we can see from here?

*SIMON:* Yes, that is it, and beyond is the ribbon of road along which the coach will come.

*ROBESPIERRE:* So it's only a few steps away. You go on ahead and reserve our seats. I will stay here a while longer. I want to enjoy to the full the beauty of the evening. You call me when the time comes.

*SIMON:* I leave you in the care of this good woman.

*He points to an old woman who approaches carrying a huge basket strapped to her shoulders. He makes his exit along the road which descends on the right in the foreground. The old woman sits down on the tree trunk by Robespierre.*

*OLD WOMAN:* Saving your reverence, citizen, may I rest my bottom beside yours?

*ROBESPIERRE:* Sit down, good mother! Your basket is heavy, put it down for a moment.

*OLD WOMAN:* No, thank you. When your horse is tired, do not unharness it, until it reaches the stable! Oh, my sides ache!

*ROBESPIERRE:* It's hard to climb with your load.

*OLD WOMAN:* I am an old ant who is used to dragging her bundle. If I did not have it, I would miss it.

*ROBESPIERRE:* Where are you from?

*OLD WOMAN:* From the field below. I have a garden there, and I have to water my vegetables. I cannot satisfy them in this heat. They are always so thirsty, those poor lettuce plants of mine. I always have to keep going for water. Time and again, time and again. It keeps me on the move from dawn till dusk.

*ROBESPIERRE:* Have you no children to help you?

*OLD WOMAN:* Nine sons. Seven are boxed up.

*ROBESPIERRE:* Where?

*OLD WOMAN:* In the ground; and the two eldest were taken from me. They left, so I was told, to defend this land from the enemy. I don't know which enemy. Those in the East or those in the West. There are so many of them! I have no enemies myself, for if they should come, all they could take would be my troubles.

*ROBESPIERRE:* You talk of trouble with a smiling face.

*OLD WOMAN:* Trouble and I

have kept company for so long that we know each other intimately. I laugh in its face.

*ROBESPIERRE:* Holy wisdom of the cottage. I envy you.

*OLD WOMAN:* It is yours for the asking, my son. I am quite ready to exchange it for a bigger and better furnished house.

*ROBESPIERRE:* You will find more trouble in your furnished house than here with nature.

*OLD WOMAN:* What do you mean by nature? Do you mean this earth of ours? Yes, when you pass she's all velvety so as to flatter you, the sly cat! You do not know her. Our entire harvest this summer was burned up. We worked for nothing.

*ROBESPIERRE:* My poor woman, your lot is hard. But mine is not much better. Our sole comfort is in the knowledge that none of our efforts are lost. A supreme being watches over us.

*OLD WOMAN:* The good lord has made quite a reckoning this summer! It's a habit with him. Not that I reproach him for it. He is getting old. He has worked. Everyone has his day!

*ROBESPIERRE:* What, mother, do you not believe in god?

*OLD WOMAN:* I do not know enough about it. I have nothing against religion. One may believe in god. There's no harm in it. But regardless of whether he exists or not, it is always better to work without the lord! Only then can you be sure the work will get done.

*ROBESPIERRE:* But in our sorrow, does not the thought of a better life, of the immortal soul, provide consolation for all our woes?

*OLD WOMAN:* A good sleep is just as good. I am not so anxious to begin all over again! I have worked hard; I do not complain. When all is taken into account, I am glad that I have lived. But there must be an end, so that the young folk may also begin! I hand them my basket! Do you want to hold on to yours?

*ROBESPIERRE:* I do not want to give up my basket before my work is accomplished.

*OLD WOMAN:* Oh! Very well, you are in no hurry! You will have to wait for the end of time. As for me I do not wish to accumulate all the sorrow, I leave their share to those who come after, as well as the pleasure and the boredom! And there is sufficient store of all these to last for a long time to come!

*ROBESPIERRE:* We have labored to make the future better than the present.

*OLD WOMAN:* If only you could make the present a little better, that would be enough.

*ROBESPIERRE:* That is why we made the Revolution.

*OLD WOMAN:* Ah! So it is you who broke up house for us?

*ROBESPIERRE:* But citizen, you did it together with us. We are all together! The Revolution is our work.

*OLD WOMAN:* No, no! I have plenty of work of my own! As for your work, I know nothing about it

*ROBESPIERRE:* But citizen, that is not right! One cannot be indifferent to the public good. We are not alone, we must help each other in a neighborly fashion. And on this earth all those who travail are our neighbors. Can you, people in our villages, remain indifferent to what the Revolution accomplishes for you, to its labors and its struggles?

*OLD WOMAN:* Yes, there were meetings in our church where our chatterboxes told us all sorts of things. Now and then some cockaded gent would come from Paris and show us magic lantern slides. He would tell us that the world

had changed. We waited with bulging eyes. We saw nothing. We were disappointed. There were no longer any noblemen and priests. But their capes and moneybags were not given to us. New men of wealth came. But those who were poor stayed poor. And to tell the truth, the people are discontented. At the present time the workers in our countryside refuse to gather the harvest.

*ROBESPIERRE (irritated):* Yes, they would leave the grain and the hay to perish on the stalk rather than accept the maximum honest wage which the committee has established. They are bad patriots. They want to speculate on public difficulties. But if they persist they will be broken, they will answer for their mutiny before the Revolutionary Tribunal.

*OLD WOMAN:* You will not be able to do without them.

*ROBESPIERRE (his irritation growing):* We will call out the military workers. And if necessary we will even use prisoners of war to gather the harvest. The law must be enforced.

*OLD WOMAN:* Very well, perhaps. But why does not the law exist for us?

*ROBESPIERRE:* It exists for everybody. All have their duties.

*OLD WOMAN:* But we think it would be better if those who are the poorest had the most rights.

*ROBESPIERRE (suddenly softening):* What you say is true, I agree. *(With a motion.)* Ah, citizen, how I would like to build the Republic for the poor! We well know that for the rich the Revolution was no more than an opportunity for illicit gain, for usury, fraud and depredation! We know well that its true friends, those who gave themselves to it without reserve, are the poor, the peasants, the workers, who are the victims of the rich. We make every effort to defend them. But they should realize that with the republic encircled by a world of enemies we must still demand sacrifices from them, from the poor, from our friends, make compromises with the rich whose cooperation is required in order to defend the country from the attacks of the kings and their armies. Willingly or not, at the present time we must make a united front of the rich and the poor, for at the present time the life and death of both, of the whole of France, of everything that we have accomplished with the Republic depends upon it! Later, when the country is safe, the Revolution will resume its course. It has already won more than one battle, and it will win others—for the people. But first we must live and in order to live we must win. Be patient.

*OLD WOMAN:* As for me, I am willing, I expect nothing. I have patience. But as for the others, they are in a hurry. They have heard so many promises! They want something now. They have not much confidence left in the "you shall have," which the gentlemen in Paris have been dangling before our noses! People ask: "What are they doing?" They spend their time arguing. What difference does it make to us which of them win or lose? We lose every time.

*ROBESPIERRE:* You are unjust, mother. Do you put them all in the same basket?

*OLD WOMAN:* We confuse them, we have a hard time keeping track of them. Formerly we had our good Monsieur Marat. We also had our Robespierre. But it's a long time since he did anything for us.

*ROBESPIERRE:* They say, however, that a few months ago he promised to divide among the poor the property confiscated from suspects.

*OLD WOMAN:* Yes, a fine promise, but what has come of it?

*ROBESPIERRE:* Perhaps he cannot do everything that he would like to.

*OLD WOMAN:* Possibly. So you see, everyone says that it is better to look after his own field and to leave the people in Paris to fight it out amongst themselves. Is that not right? Is it this that seems to trouble you?

*ROBESPIERRE (sadly):* Yes, mother, I had hoped—I have been wrong—that we could form an alliance of all good people.

*OLD WOMAN:* It will come to pass, perhaps, but only later, my boy. Do not be discouraged! We will no longer be here to see it. But as long as it is accomplished even without us what difference does it make? I am sure that the knowledge that it will come to pass, even though not in your time, will be enough for you.

*ROBESPIERRE (surprised):* How do you know it, mother? Do you recognize me then?

*OLD WOMAN (maliciously):* And perhaps you know Robespierre, too?

*They exchange an affectionate smile of understanding. The voice of Simon is heard calling from below.* Maximilien! *Robespierre gets up and walks away.*

*The Wounded Robespierre* *by Duplesis Berteaux*

**MIKHAIL SVETLOV**


*The dawn came up in greying patches.*
*Sweat-smells from saddlecloth were shed.*
*The rider, with Robespierre's despatches,*
*Stood in his stirrups and stared ahead.*

*Day on his native Provence broke*
*Through thick clouds of cannon-smoke.*

*Through Brittany he hurried riding.*
*The anxious province faced its fate,*
*Waiting an order for providing*
*Fodder and food before too late.*

*In the sky-waste the great sun is flaming—*
*So the Incorruptible on earth!*
*The dearth of bread and oats is maiming*
*His great ideas at their birth.*

*The rider brandished his new musket,*
*He rived the vast steppes with his track.*
*Some fifteen Louises lay dusty,*
*Flat in the wake of his broad back.*

*In Provence and Brittany hearts are rising*
*At the good news of fraternizing.*

*On sweat-streaked flank the spur now scratches,*
*The steed swings on with speed increased.*
*The rider, with Robespierre's despatches,*
*Stares steadily towards the east.*

*The prancing wild alarm is twirling*
*The dust beneath the hooves of haste.*
*The track, where streams of blood go swirling*
*Across a hundred years is traced.*

*The horse tears onward, snorting sickly,*
*Under the mortar's rumbling crashes. . . .*
*On tiptoes, watch it!*
*Up, Kolya, quickly—*
*See where, a star of speed, he flashes.*

*Look round on valley and plain, and see!*
*The battle-seals we set remain.*
*Each splendid anniversary*
*Sums the Red Army's triumphs again.*

*Recalling trials passed away,*
*Days that were stern and harshly sped,*
*Ho, the Red Rider*
*Again today*
*Stood in his stirrups and stared ahead.*

*The horse now takes the final stretches,*
*The hundred years' long track is passed. . . .*
*The rider, with Robespierre's despatches,*
*Handed the envelope up at last.*

*Out on the steppe-manoeuvers, snatch!*
*Open quicker the despatch!*

Translated by Jack Lindsay

*Rouget de Lisle Sings the "Marseillaise" for the first time—at the home of Dietrich, the Mayor of Strasbourg.* *Painting by Pils (Louvre)*

ALEXANDER ISBAKH

# Danton's Second Trial

## I

Deputy to the Convention Hérault de Séchelles interrupted Camille Desmoulins.

"Danton has gone down," he asserted. "Sleep has got the better of him. He leaves Paris at will, and is no longer heard at the National Convention. It is incomprehensible—the way he is behaving. Who has seen him lately? Where is he? What is he doing?"

Silence. No one spoke up. At that moment a monumental figure, a giant of a man, with the head of a bulldog, entered the room. It was Danton. He was accompanied by General Westermann. And once again the powerful voice made the vaults tremble.

. . . "Danton has taken to drink. Danton spends his time with girls. Danton is resting from his 'labors,' like Hercules, by engaging in others. . . ."

. . . Yes, that was a role. Vladislav Zakstelsky had shown what stuff he was made of. He was not Ivan Shlykov in *Red Dawn*, the play our local dramatist, Stepan Aly, had written; he *was* Danton.

Vladislav Zakstelsky, a handsome fair-haired young fellow who carried himself like a guardsman, made his appearance in our town during the February Revolution of 1917.

His debut in *Othello* won him instant popularity. However, he seldom appeared on the stage.

Politics took up most of his time. He was a member of the Socialist-Revolutionary Party, and the local branch used him as a decoy.

Zakstelsky's powerful voice rang magnificently at Socialist-Revolutionary meetings and at times it was not easy to tell where were his own words and where a monologue out of some classic melodrama he had memorized a long time ago.

Immediately after the October Revolution Zakstelsky joined the Soviet side and used to travel about to the villages, and to Red Army detachments, and act in special agitation-repertory plays.

Traveling about the country in those days was by no means safe. The situation in the region near the front was strained and dangerous.

No blood was shed in our town during the October Revolution

Even my greatest friend and schoolmate, Vanya Filkov, the son of our history teacher (who was the chairman of the Bolshevik Committee), only learned the very day the Soviet Government came into power that lawyer Shemshelevich was no longer a commissar of the Provisional Government, and that Vanya's father, Vasili Andreyevich Filkov, was now at the head of the town administration.

Still, the struggle was not over. Nikitin-Cherkassky, the former chief of the provincial militia and a Socialist-Revolutionary, organized a gang that made itself felt, for the most part, in our district. Nikitin's men, as they were called, set fire to whole villages, killed Communists, and robbed the peasants. Stories were told of the cruel punishment meted out to Red Army men taken prisoner by them.

It was clear that the members of the Nikitin gang had good contacts in the town itself; all attempts to surround and catch the bandits proved of no avail.

That year Vanya Filkov and I were particularly keen on the theater. The regisseur of the local theater was Andrei Andreyevich Barkov, who belonged to a group of innovators, preached the new Leftist ideas, and once even gave a public lecture in which he advocated doing away altogether with the footlights.

All this was new and incomprehensible to us and therefore fascinating and wonderful. We sympathized with Barkov and he presented us with free tickets.

Since there were, as yet, no revolutionary plays, Ostrovsky and Schiller were produced. We went to see *Love and Guile* about a dozen times and were head over heels in love with the leading actress, Valentina Felixovna Draso. We dreamed of winning her favor, but she, remote and beautiful, did not even notice us, although we were the leaders of the Soviet of Schoolchildren's Deputies.

In the course of his search for revolutionary plays, Andrei Andreyevich Barkov happened to light on Romain Rolland's *Danton*.

He read it several times, feverishly. . . . Yes. This was the very thing! Barkov resolved to try out all his Left theatrical ideas in the production of this play.

His *Danton* was to overthrow all the canons of the old theater and bring him fame and laurels.

Andrei Andreyevich's preparations for the production were like those of a man preparing for battle.

## II

The role of Danton was allotted to the company's leading actor, Vladislav Zakstelsky.

It was very much to his taste. Here he could shine. The part of Danton was a great deal more attractive to Zakstelsky than his previous part—Ivan Shlykov in *Red Dawn*.

Barkov decided to produce Rolland's play in an entirely new fashion. He would do away with this footlight business and draw the public into taking part in the play.

During the scene of the trial, both the counsel for the prosecution and the counsel for the defense were to come forward from among the audience. The public was to select, as well, the jurymen who decided Danton's fate.

It was new, daring and original. Barkov had confided his plans to us and we were consumed with impatience to see the play.

The town was living in the atmosphere of strain common to all towns in the vicinity of the front. On the very eve of the new production the chairman of the district branch of the Cheka, a sailor named

Zubov, fell into the hands of the Nikitin gang and was brutally tortured to death.

Vanya Filkov seldom saw his father these days. Vasili Andreyevich was kept busy day and night in the District Revolutionary Committee or traveled about the country. It so happened, however, that he had a fairly free evening and he came with us to the performance.

The old theater was packed. While waiting for the curtain to rise people were discussing the topics of the day; the activities of the Nikitin gang, the taxes, the sugar shortage and the treachery of Gorokhov, the Red commander, who had gone over to Denikin.

Finally, the curtain rose upon the stern and splendid days of the French Revolution. 1789. . . . Here were beautiful Lucile Desmoulins—Valentina Draso—and effeminate Camille, weak, restless, full of contradictions; and General Westermann (dressed in a military tunic and riding-breeches like a cavalryman's—with stripes down the sides), and the incorruptible Maximilien Robespierre, and the strong-willed Saint-Just.

We held our breath. Every word was full of meaning for us. It was as if we were looking on at the events of our own day. The century and a quarter separating us from that grim period had vanished.

Zakstelsky was, of course, the moving spirit of the play. The theater trembled when Danton delivered his speeches. There were frequent outbursts of applause from different parts of the hall. The audience was an extremely mixed one—workers, employees, petty tradesmen, teachers, schoolchildren, lawyers, and Red Army men.

"Public opinion is a harlot!" Zakstelsky thundered, "honor is sheer nonsense, posterity—a cesspool."

"In the name of our country, Robespierre," he exclaimed, shaking his enormous fists, "in the name of the country we both love with the same fiery devotion and to which we have given all we had, let us declare a general amnesty for all who love France—be they friends or enemies!"

The days of Danton were already numbered. Vanya and I knew this. We had learned about the French Revolution in our modern history class. Filkov had told us about Danton, Marat, and Robespierre. But to the majority of those present at the performance, Danton's fate was still unknown. No less than half the theater was occupied by Red Army men, who breathlessly followed the historic dispute between Robespierre and Danton. In the beginning they were undecided as to who was in the right.

Danton-Zakstelsky's thunderous speeches stunned and confused them. But now young Saint-Just appeared on the scene. He came directly from the front, from the firing-line. The sympathy of the Red Army men in the theater was immediately assured to this stern and resolute man, who was little more than a youth.

His part was played by a friend of ours, Benjamin Lurye, a member of the Young Communist League. We knew that he had spent a great deal of time and trouble preparing for this part, had dug up no end of books in the public library, and even contrived to drag Filkov away from his work on the Revolutionary Committee to advise him.

His speeches were not declamatory like Danton's. He spoke of the honor of the Revolution, of virtue, of the people and their enemies.

He spoke against susceptibility. He branded traitors and renegades.

"A conspiracy organized abroad has been discovered in the Republic," declared Saint-Just, "and the purpose of it is to hinder, by means

of bribery and corruption, the establishment of liberty."

He said this simply, too simply, and as naturally as if he were not on the stage and not repeating a part he had learned, but as if Benjamin Lurye the Young Communist League member were giving evidence at a Revolutionary Tribunal of our own day.

Pointing to the bar, he continued:

"Danton"—and he hardly raised his voice—"you were the accomplice of Mirabeau, of d'Orleans and Brissot. You have betrayed the Republic! Your policy has come to light at last. You were the link, the point of contact, and the reflection of the Dumouriez plot, the Girondists and the Orléanists."

He turned to the audience, and we did not recognize in this stern associate of the incorruptible Robespierre, our lighthearted, freckled Benjamin Lurye. Now his voice rang out harsh and resolute:

"We decided to dally no longer with the accused. We have declared that we shall do away with all conspiracies. Otherwise they may gather strength anew and threaten us again. The time is ripe to destroy them.

"If your friend is corrupt and corrupts the Republic, I say—cut him off from the Republic!"—Saint-Just demanded. "If your own brother is corrupt and corrupts the Republic—cut him off from the Republic. The Republic must be clean! . . ."

Danton's doom was sealed. But half the audience was not yet aware of this.

By the time the last act—the session of the Revolutionary Tribunal—came on, the audience was worked up to a terrific pitch of excitement. No century and a quarter divided us from the scene; Danton's fate was to be decided right here and now.

In the interval a letter was brought to Filkov from the Cheka. He read it rapidly and his eyes lit up. Glancing towards the adjoining box, where Danton-Zakstelsky was talking to some of his women admirers, he gave a little chuckle and asked us:

"Well, boys, how do you like Saint-Just?"

But we were aesthetes who knew what was what in theater art.

"Why, how can you compare Benjy Lurye to Zakstelsky, father?"

Filkov only chuckled again, and drummed on the edge of the box.

## III

The climax came in the third act. Before the curtain went up, Barkov came out and explained to the public the idea of doing away with the footlights. He then asked the people to choose from among themselves a prosecutor, a counsel for the defense and six jurymen.

These suggestions were received sympathetically. Shemshelevich, the lawyer, offered to defend Danton. This lawyer, a member of the Jewish Bund, was the guiding spirit of the Menshevik organizations in our town. He regarded himself as an old Social-Democrat and loved to talk about his meeting with Karl Kautsky himself, a long time ago at a foreign health resort. At the mere mention of Kautsky's name, Shemshelevich would raise his eyebrows significantly, giving one to understand the immense importance of this historic event.

His rich Social-Democratic past did not, however, prevent Shemshelevich from attending the synagogue regularly right up to the time of the February Revolution, nor from putting on a gleaming satin *tallith* and reading the Torah from a high place on holidays.

After the February Revolution he had no time for god. He became

a local political leader at once. He spoke at innumerable meetings. Instead of his long black coat he wore a smart tunic with some sort of a badge over the left pocket. He had been appointed Commissar of Justice, and even had his hair cut after the fashion of Kerensky, the Petrograd lawyer.

. . . But now the days of Shemshelevich's glory were over. He had resumed his private practice, changed the historic haircut for an ordinary one with a parting, and only rarely wrote choleric articles for the Menshevik press.

This, then, was Danton's counsel for the defense. And who should come forward as counsel for the prosecution but Filkov, the chairman of the District Revolutionary Committee! Our amazement was beyond bounds.

The curtain went up. The examining magistrate (this part was played by Barkov, the stage-manager) sternly questioned the accused.

In this scene Zakstelsky played for all he was worth. Yes, that was an actor. He roared with such abandon that the seats quivered under us, and a carelessly-stuck-on beard flew off the chin of the court superintendent.

"Prisoner at the bar," Danton-Zakstelsky was asked, "state your name, surname, age, calling, and place of abode."

"My place of abode," the accused replied, "will soon be oblivion. My name is inscribed in the Pantheon. . . ."

Many people applauded, and Zakstelsky reveled in his success. Yes, it was an enviable role.

"Danton," the examining magistrate went on, "the National Convention accuses you of being in conspiracy with Mirabeau and Dumouriez, of being aware of their plans for the strangling of liberty and of supporting them in secret."

Zakstelsky rose. This speech was to be his crowning triumph.

He laughed; the laugh had a sinister sound. Then he struck the velvet-upholstered balustrade with his fist. The balustrade was old and rickety; it splintered and crashed to the floor, covering the court with a cloud of dust.

"Liberty," said Danton, "in a plot against liberty! Danton plotting the downfall of Danton. Villains! Look me in the face. Liberty is here!" (He clutched his head with both hands.) "It is here—in this mask, modeled in her austere mould, in these eyes that glow with her volcanic flame, in this voice whose echoes made the courts of tyrants shudder to their very foundations. Take my head and nail it to the shield of the Republic. Alike to Medusa, the very sight of it will turn the enemies of liberty to stone."

It was powerfully said. And although, in my study of history, my sympathies had been all on the side of Saint-Just and Robespierre, I could hardly keep from applauding Zakstelsky, as many of his admirers did.

I looked at Filkov. He was watching the actor and there was an ironical expression on his face. But a blue vein quivered in his temple, and I sensed that Filkov was deeply moved, that for him, too, the hundred and twenty-five years no longer existed, that it was a living Danton of our own time he was about to accuse.

Zakstelsky's bass rang out again and again. I did not miss a single word. His power was astounding; I was swept away by it.

And now the act was drawing to an end. Danton stood up to reply to Westermann's proposal to raise the people to revolt, and, indicating the audience with a sweeping gesture, said:

"This rabble? Nonsense! . . .

This is a public for comedians! They are entertained by the sight we afford them. They are here to applaud the victors. They have grown too well-accustomed that I take action for them. . . ."

Oh, the contempt with which the actor uttered these words! Had he—Georges Jacques Danton—really hated his people so bitterly? It was hard to tell where the part of Danton ended and that of Zakstelsky himself began.

The speeches for the prosecution and the defense were not in Rolland's play. Barkov had put them in himself.

Filkov came out to the front of the stage. The Red Army men all knew him and applauded.

Danton-Zakstelsky, resting his great head on the balustrade, watched the prosecutor scornfully, expectantly.

Filkov's speech was brief and to the point. In a few words he described the part played by Danton in the Revolution, and his treachery, and quoted facts to prove that he was a traitor.

"Danton has made many fine speeches both here in court and at other times, but he has associated himself with General Dumouriez, he has betrayed the Republic.

"Citizen Saint-Just was right," Filkov continued, keeping to his part and pointing at Benjamin Lurye, "when he said: 'Woe betide him who has betrayed the cause of the people!' Citizen Robespierre was right when he declared at the National Convention: 'Those who make war against the people, against liberty, against the rights of man, must be punished not merely as foes, but as murderers, scoundrels and traitors!'

"Citizens of the jury—" Filkov turned to us. We were sitting on the stage by this time and I was feeling inordinately proud imagining myself Deputy to the National Convention at the very least, and taking furtive glances at the audience to see if Nina Golding (the latest object of my devotion) was present.

"Citizens of the jury, do not give way to sentimentality. Genuine humanism" (here now for the first time I heard this wonderful but vague term) does not demand of you to spare the life of a traitor; it demands that, in order to save the lives of hundreds and thousands, you should destroy that traitor.

"In the name of the happiness of all mankind," concluded Filkov, in his agitation departing a little from his role, to Barkov's disgust, "we are going to destroy all bandits and traitors as relentlessly as we have just destroyed the bandit Nikitin!"

This would never do; it had no bearing whatever on the French Revolution. Filkov caught himself in time, however.

"Citizens of the jury, I demand the execution of Citizen Danton and his fellow-conspirators. . . ."

The whole theater was agog, what with the news about Nikitin, and Filkov's concluding sentence. Danton gave a start and staggered a little.

What an actor he was, Zakstelsky! It was all so real, just like life.

Then Shemshelevich, the counsel for the defense, spoke. He was very pale, this fount of eloquence, and he hiccoughed with excitement. He enumerated Danton's services, he talked of cruelty, and of the seas of blood, shed to no purpose. He demanded compassion.

"Look, citizen magistrate, and you, citizens of the jury, look!" cried Shemshelevich, pointing in the direction of the wings. "The writing on the wall: *'Mene, mene, tekel, upharsin!'*—'Thou hast been weighed in the balance and found wanting.' Beware! In condemning

Danton to death, you condemn the Republic and democracy."

He was quoting from today's leader in the Menshevik paper. But that had been addressed to the Bolsheviks, and this was addressed to us—six members of the jury.

"The Republic is no more!" shouted Shemshelevich. "This is a soldiers' dictatorship. Tyranny. It is impossible to breathe. . . ."

He was almost hysterical. Where did he get the courage? Did he, perhaps, imagine that a hundred and twenty-five years actually lay between him and the events of today?

Barkov, embarrassed and alarmed, handed him a glass of water from the carafe on the table before him. Everything was now mixed up on the stage, and it was impossible to distinguish history from actuality.

And so this was what they called in the theatrical world "doing away with the footlights. . . ."

"Citizens of the jury, I demand the release of Georges Jacques Danton," Shemshelevich concluded very quietly, and left the stage, exhausted

The court adjourned.

## IV

Never before had there been such an extraordinary assembly of jurymen. The fate of a Frenchman from Arcis-sur-Aube, Citizen Georges Jacques Danton, Minister of Justice and Deputy to the National Convention, now residing in the Rue des Cordeliers, Paris, was to be decided by: Citizen Solomon Rosenblum, formerly a contractor, an elder of the synagogue and the chairman of the local Zionist organization, now superintendent of works for the State Buildings Committee; Citizens Pavel Sepp, teacher of penmanship and singing, exchief of the local "black hundred"; Citizen Stepan Voinarovich, poet and journalist (writing under the pseudonym of Stepan Aly, the Red-Dawn Poet); Citizen Arnstam, druggist; Citizen Vasili Snegirev, of the Red Army, and I—Alexander Stein, a high-school boy and secretary of the Soviet of Schoolchildren's Deputies.

We were all assembled in Danton-Zakstelsky's dressing-room. The mirrors on the walls reflected our dull everyday figures; beards and gaudy stage costumes, a sword and Othello's black curly wig were scattered about on the chairs. A juror, Rosenblum, sat on a tube of theatrical varnish, and it required our united efforts to get him unstuck.

The people, the whole theater, awaited our decision. According to Barkov's arrangement of the play, the jury was to adjourn for no more than three minutes. Things turned out differently, however.

"I suggest," said Pavel Ivanovich Sepp, who had been chosen our leader, "that we should acquit him. Danton is not guilty. This is the clearest head in the Republic. If Danton had lived, the Republic would not have died. Citizens of the jury, we must be humane."

It was the second time that evening I had heard the word. But Sepp used it in a different sense from Filkov.

These were moments of torment for me. I doubted the necessity of sentencing Danton. I felt sorry for him. After all, Zakstelsky's acting had had a great effect on me. Perhaps Danton was mistaken. But still he was a hero. How could one compare him with Benjamin Lurye or with Bachinsky, who played Robespierre with so little expression?

Solomon Rosenblum supported Sepp. I vaguely understood that in justifying Danton, who had been condemned by his people and by history, they were challenging Fil-

kov and the Bolsheviks. I understood that I too (for I thought myself a representative of the Bolsheviks at that extraordinary meeting), I, too, should have sought to secure Danton's death sentence.

But I could not bring myself to send that remarkable man to the guillotine.

And now Stepan Aly, prompted by motives of humanity and a friendly feeling for his boon companion, Zakstelsky, joined Sepp's side.

Arnstam the chemist was already demanding to know who was for Danton's acquittal.

There was no time to spare; they were knocking at the door and asking us not to forget that this was a theater, after all, and the audience was waiting.

And what about Vasili Snegirev, the unknown Red Army man in the big sheepskin cap? He stood up, gave a tug to his tunic and fingered his red mustaches.

"Comrades," he said roughly, "I mean to say—citizens. It's not right. I look at it this way: Comrade Filkov has proved it to us as plain as plain can be that Danton had dealings with a White general. . . . That's to say, sold his own side. Well, if that's the case, there can't be any mercy for him. And as for his talking so grand and all that, it's just a pack of nonsense. I say that Danton should be shot." And, with a gesture of dismissal, he sat down heavily in his place.

Sepp's face wore an ironic expression as he whispered something to Rosenblum.

Now they were waiting for me to speak, and I longed to make a big political speech and show off my knowledge of the history of the French Revolution. But they were knocking at the door again. Sepp was urging me to be quick. I could not come to any decision. My fevered brain was in a muddle. Humanism. Cruelty. Beautiful Lucile Desmoulins. Vasili Andreyevich Filkov. Benjamin Lurye. Danton-Zakstelsky. . . . "Liberty in a plot against liberty." The responsibility laid upon my youthful shoulders by history proved too heavy for me. I could not kill Danton.

"I—I—reserve my opinion—" I stammered, despising myself utterly at that moment.

Snegirev, the Red Army man, looked at me with distress, and I suddenly realized that I had committed an unforgivable error. But it was now too late.

"Well," said Sepp, chuckling, "it's four to one, and one reserves his opinion. Citizen Danton is acquitted."

Solomon Rosenblum clapped softly. The rest kept silence. Thus, after a century and a quarter, Danton was restored to life. In the wings I saw Saint-Just, pale and weary. When he heard the verdict, he looked me over scornfully from head to foot and walked away.

We went out on the stage. I was confused and discouraged and looked about for Filkov.

It seemed to me that I was a miserable traitor. Filkov would never forgive me. But Filkov was nowhere to be seen.

The audience had thinned out considerably. It was three o'clock in the morning. Danton was pacing irritably up and down the stage; the verdict seemed to interest him very little, at least, he received the announcement that his life had been spared with cold indifference.

When the performance was over I went straight to the headquarters of the Revolutionary Committee. I wanted to see Filkov, and tell him all about the verdict and repent and ask him how I could go on living now.

I bumped into him in the door-

way. He was just leaving; there was a car waiting.

"Ah, is that you?" he stopped to say, though he was evidently in a great hurry. "Well, what about it? Did you acquit Danton? You seem quite upset about it, and jumpy. . . ." (He did not know as yet of what had happened.) "Now don't get downhearted, Sasha. . . . The trial is not yet over."

He gave me a keen look and then laughed.

"We're going to finish the play right now—this same play about Danton. . . ."

Two days later we learned from the newspapers that by order of the Military Tribunal Vladislav Zakstelsky, the actor, who had played the part of Georges Jacques Danton of Arcis-sur-Aube, had been arrested and shot as a leading member of the gang organized by Nikitin, the Socialist-Revolutionary.


*"Long Live the NKVD (People's Commissariat for Internal Affairs)—the Vigilant Guardian of the Revolution, the Heathed Sword of the Proletariat."*

*A poster by Deni and Dolgorukov*

# Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin on the French Revolution of 1789

History knows striking analogies. The Jacobins of 1793 became the Communists of our days.

*From speech by KARL MARX*

In 1648 the bourgeoisie, in alliance with the new nobility, fought against the monarchy, the feudal nobility and the ruling church.

In 1789 the bourgeoisie, in alliance with the people, fought against the monarchy, the nobility and the ruling church.

The only prototype of the 1789 revolution (at any rate in Europe) was the revolution of 1648, while the revolution of 1648 had only the rising of the Netherlanders against Spain as the prototype. Each of these revolutions was a century ahead of its prototype, not only chronologically but also in substance.

In both of them the bourgeoisie was the class really leading the movement. The proletariat and the elements of the urban population not belonging to the bourgeoisie, either had as yet no interests apart from the bourgeoisie, or did not constitute independently developed classes or class sections. And so when they opposed the bourgeoisie, as in 1793-94 in France, they only fought for the realization of the interests of the bourgeoisie, even if they did it in a manner different from that of the bourgeoisie. The whole of French terrorism was nothing but the plebeian manner of dealing with the foes of the bourgeoisie—absolutism, feudalism and philistinism.

The revolutions of 1648 and 1789 were not merely an English and a French revolution: they were revolutions on a European scale. They represented, not the victory of one class of society over the old political order, they proclaimed the political order of the new European society. The bourgeoisie was victorious in them; but at that time the victory of the bourgeoisie signified the victory of a new social order, the victory of bourgeois over feudal property, of the nation over provincialism, of competition over the guild system, of the division of property over the right of primogeniture, of the owner dominating his land over the land dominating its owner, of enlightenment over superstition, of the family over the family name, of industry over idleness, of bourgeois law over medieval privileges.

The revolution of 1648 was the victory of the seventeenth century over the sixteenth; the revolution of 1789, that of the eighteenth century over the seventeenth. These revolutions expressed the requirements of the world of that day to an even greater extent than those of the parts of the world in which they took place, *i.e.*, England and France.

*KARL MARX AND FRIEDRICH ENGELS*
*The Bourgeoisie and the Counter-Revolution*

While the Great French Revolution was undergoing defeat in the conquest of Europe, England was revolutionizing society through the steam engine, conquering world markets, crowding off the stage all classes which had become historically obsolete, and preparing the way for a great and decisive struggle between the industrial capitalists and the industrial workers. The fact that Napoleon failed to send from Boulogne to Folkstone an army of 150,000 men, and, with the aid of the veterans of the Republican army, to conquer England, was of the utmost significance for the whole of European development.

*KARL MARX AND FRIEDRICH ENGELS*
*Articles on England*

. . . The Revolution of 1789 to 1814 draped itself alternately as the Roman Republic and the Roman Empire. . . .

. . . Camille Desmoulins, Danton, Robespierre, Saint-Just, Napoleon, the heroes as well as the parties and the masses of the old French Revolution, performed the task of their time in Roman costume and with Roman phrases, the task of releasing and setting up modern *bourgeois* society. The first ones knocked the feudal land to pieces and mowed off the feudal heads which had grown from it.

*KARL MARX*
*The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*

The social revolution of the nineteenth century cannot draw its poetry from the past, but only from the future. It cannot begin with itself, before it has stripped of all superstition in regard to the past. Earlier revolutions required world-historical recollections in order to drug themselves concerning their own content. In order to arrive at its content, the revolution of the nineteenth century must let the dead bury their dead. There the phrase went beyond the content; here the content goes beyond the phrase.

*Ibid.*

Bourgeois revolutions, like those of the eighteenth century, storm more swiftly from success to success; their dramatic effects outdo each other; men and things seem set in sparkling brilliants . . . but they are short lived; soon they have attained their zenith. . . . Proletarian revolutions, on the other hand . . . criticize themselves constantly, interrupt themselves continually in their own course, come back to the apparently accomplished in order to begin it afresh, deride with unmerciful thoroughness the inadequacies, weaknesses and paltrinesses of their first attempts. . . .

*Ibid.*

. . . the French army in 1794 must on no account be regarded as a sort of coarse and noisy rabble of volunteers, "inspired with the idea of dying for the Republic," but as a very fair army, unquestionably equal to the enemy's. In 1794 the French generals were decidedly superior to the enemy's. . . . The guillotine ensured unity of command and the coordination of operations, leaving aside a few exceptional cases in which the representatives of the Convention perpetrated stupidities on their own initiative. *Le noble Saint-Just en fit plusieurs.* (The noble Saint-Just contributed not a few.)

*KARL MARX AND FRIEDRICH ENGELS*
*The Holy Alliance Against France in 1852*

From the commencement of the titanic American strife the workingmen of Europe felt instinctively that the star-spangled banner carried the destiny of their class. . . .

. . . when on the very spots where hardly a century ago the idea of one great democratic republic had first sprung up, whence the first Declaration of the Rights of Man was issued, and the first impulse given to the European revolution of the eighteenth century. . . .

*From the Address of the International Workingmen's Association to Abraham Lincoln*

The workingmen of Europe feel sure that, as the American War of Independence initiated a new era of ascendancy for the middle class, so the American anti-slavery war will do for the working classes.

*Ibid.*

It is highly characteristic of Robespierre that, at a time when to be "constitutional" in the spirit of the Assembly of 1789 was regarded as criminal and deserving the guillotine, all the laws laid down by that Assembly *against the workers* remained in force.

*From a Letter by KARL MARX to Engels*

The great men who in France were clearing the minds of men for the coming revolution themselves acted in an extremely revolutionary fashion. . . . Religion, conceptions of nature, society, political systems, everything was subjected to the most merciless criticism; everything had to justify its existence at the bar of reason or renounce all claim to existence. The reasoning intellect was applied to everything as the sole measure. . . .

We know today that this kingdom of reason was nothing more than the idealized kingdom of the bourgeoisie . . . equality reduced itself to bourgeois equality before the law; that bourgeois property was proclaimed as one of the essential rights of man; and that the government of reason, the Social Contract of Rousseau, came into existence and could only come into existence as a bourgeois democratic republic.

*FRIEDRICH ENGELS*
*Herr Eugen Dühring's Revolution in Science (Anti-Dühring)*

With the French Revolution came for Germany also and for the German peasant the dawn of a better day. No sooner had the armies of the Revolution conquered the left bank of the Rhine, than all the old rubbish vanished, as at the stroke of an enchanter's wand—corvée service, rent dues of every kind to the lord, together with the noble lord himself.

*FRIEDRICH ENGELS*
*The Mark*

Ever since, all revolutions have been revolutions for the protection of one kind of property against another kind of property. They cannot protect one kind without violating another. In the Great French Revolution the feudal property was sacrificed for the sake of saving bourgeois property.

*FRIEDRICH ENGELS*
*The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State*

In 1789 the French monarchy had become so unreal, that is to say, it had been so robbed of all necessity, so non-rational, that it had to be

destroyed by the Great Revolution—of which Hegel always speaks with the great enthusiasm.

*FRIEDRICH ENGELS*
*Ludwig Feuerbach*

The defeat of Napoleon was the victory of the European monarchies over the French Revolution, the last phase of which was the Napoleonic Empire. . . .

*KARL MARX AND FRIEDRICH ENGELS*
*Foreign Policy of Russian Tsarism*

Curiously enough, in all the three great bourgeois risings, the peasantry furnishes the army that has to do the fighting; and the peasantry is just the class that, the victory once gained, is most surely ruined by the economic consequences of that victory. A hundred years after Cromwell, the yeomanry of England had almost disappeared. Anyhow, had it not been for that yeomanry and for the *plebeian* element in the towns, the bourgeoisie alone would never have fought the matter out to the bitter end, and would never have brought Charles I to the scaffold. In order to secure even those conquests of the bourgeoisie that were ripe for gathering at the time, the revolution had to be carried considerably further—exactly as in 1793 in France and 1848 in Germany. This seems, in fact, to be one of the laws of evolution of bourgeois society.

*FRIEDRICH ENGELS*
*Socialism, Utopian and Scientific*

The Spanish people, endeavoring to get back their independence, while fighting against foreign invasion and Napoleon's tyranny, were forced, at the same time, to fight against the French Revolution.

*Letter from FRIEDRICH ENGELS to Spanish Workers*

A Jacobin who is inseparably linked with the *organization* of the proletariat which is *conscious* of its class interests, is a *revolutionary Social-Democrat*. A Girondist . . . afraid of the dictatorship of the proletariat and sighing about the absolute value of democratic demands, is an *opportunist*.

*V. LENIN*
*One Step Forward, Two Steps Back*

. . . Were the Girondists traitors to the cause of the Great French Revolution? No! But they were inconsistent, irresolute, opportunist defenders of that cause. *And that is why* they were fought by the Jacobins, who defended the interests of the advanced class of the eighteenth century, just as consistently as the revolutionary Social-Democrats defended the interests of the advanced class of the twentieth century. That is why the Girondists were supported and defended against the attacks of the Jacobins by the out-and-out traitors to the cause of the Great Revolution, the monarchists, the priest-constitutionalists, etc.

*V. LENIN*
*The "Osvobozhdenie" People and the "New Iskra" People, Monarchists and Girondists*

The Jacobins of contemporary Social-Democracy—the Bolsheviks . . . wish by their slogans to raise the revolutionary and republican petty bourgeoisie, and especially the peasantry, to the level of the consistent democracy of the proletariat, which fully preserves its class individuality. . . .

This, of course, does not mean that we necessarily propose to imitate the Jacobins of 1793, to adopt their views, program, slogans and methods of action. Nothing of the kind. Our program is not an old one, it is a new one. . . . We have a new slogan: the revolutionary-democratic dictatorship of the proletariat and the peasantry. We shall also have, if we live to see a real victory of the revolution, new methods of action, corresponding to the character and aims of the working class party that is striving for a complete Socialist revolution.

*V. LENIN*
***Two Tactics of Social-Democracy in the Democratic Revolution***

Marx, who placed such a high value on revolutionary traditions, unmercifully castigated a renegade or philistine attitude towards them and at the same time demanded that revolutionaries should learn to *think*, learn to *analyze* the conditions for the application of old methods of struggle, and not simply to repeat certain slogans. The "national souvenirs of 1792" in France will, perhaps, remain for ever a *model* of certain revolutionary methods of struggle, but this did not prevent Marx in 1870, in the famous "Address" of the International, from warning the French proletariat against wrongly transferring those conditions to the conditions of a different epoch.

*V. LENIN*
***Against the Boycott***

. . . unlike the Cadets . . . the present-day Social-Democrats value the great fruits of the French Revolution, despite all restorations.

*V. LENIN*
***Agrarian Program of the Social-Democrats in the First Russian Revolution***

The idea of patriotism has its origin in the great Revolution of the eighteenth century. . . .

*V. LENIN*
***Lessons of the Commune***

. . . reference is made to the completion of the *bourgeois-democratic* revolution. . . .

Generally speaking, this term may be taken to mean two things. If used in its broad sense, it means the fulfillment of the objective historical tasks of the bourgeois revolution, its "completion," *i.e.*, the removal of the very soil capable of generating a bourgeois revolution, the completion of the *entire cycle* of bourgeois revolutions. In this sense the bourgeois-democratic revolution, for example, in France was *completed* only in 1871 (though begun in 1789). But if the term is used in its narrow sense, it means a particular revolution, one of the bourgeois revolutions, one of the "waves," if you like, which batter the old regime but do not destroy it altogether, do not remove the soil that may generate subsequent bourgeois revolutions. In this sense the Revolution of 1848 in Germany was "completed" in 1850 or the 'fifties, but it did not in the least thereby remove the soil for the revolutionary revival in the 'sixties. The Revolution of 1789 in France was "completed," let us say, in 1794, without, however, thereby removing the soil for the revolutions of 1830 and 1848.

*V. LENIN*
***Notes of a Publicist***

. . . It was precisely "Left bloc tactics," the union of the urban "plebs" (the proletariat of the day) with the democratic peasantry, that gave scope and force to the English Revolution of the seventeenth century, and the French Revolution of the eighteenth century. Marx and Engels mentioned this many times and that not only in 1848, but also much later.

*V. LENIN*
*Questions of Principle in the Election Campaign*

One cannot be a Marxist without entertaining the deepest respect for the great bourgeois revolutionaries who had a world-historic right to speak in the name of bourgeois "fatherlands," who roused tens of millions of people of new nations to civilized life in the struggle against feudalism.

*V. LENIN*
*Collapse of the Second International*

A new epoch in the history of mankind was opened by the Great French Revolution. From that time down to the Paris Commune, *i.e.*, from 1789 to 1871, some of the wars had a bourgeois progressive character, being waged for national liberation.

*V. LENIN*
*Socialism and War*

. . . the wars of the Great French Revolution began as national wars and were such. These wars were revolutionary: the defense of the Great French Revolution against a coalition of counter-revolutionary monarchies. But when Napoleon created the French Empire with the enslavement of a number of long-established, large, healthy, national states in Europe, the national wars of France became imperialist wars, giving birth *in their turn* to national-emancipatory wars *against* Napoleon's imperialism.

*V. LENIN*
*On the Junius' Pamphlet*

The historical greatness of the true "Jacobins," the Jacobins of 1793, consists in the fact that they were "Jacobins with the people," with the revolutionary *majority* of the people, the *revolutionary* advanced class of *their* time.

The "Jacobins without the people," those who only pretend to be Jacobins, those who *fear* to come out clearly, definitely, before the world, to denounce as enemies of the people the exploiters and oppressors of the people, the servants of monarchy in all countries, the supporters of the landlords in all countries, cut ridiculous and pitiful figures.

*V. LENIN*
*The Counter-Revolution Assumes the Offensive*

The example of the Jacobins is instructive. It has not lost its force in our day; it only has to be applied to the revolutionary class of the twentieth century, the workers and semi-proletarians.

*V. LENIN*
*About Enemies of the People*

The bourgeois historians see in Jacobinism a downfall (to "sink"). The proletarian historians regard Jacobinism as the *greatest expression* of an oppressed class in its struggle for liberation. The Jacobins gave France the best models of a democratic revolution; they repelled in an exemplary

fashion the coalition of monarchs formed against the republic. The Jacobins were not destined to win a complete victory, chiefly because eighteenth-century France was surrounded on the Continent by countries that were too backward, and also because France itself was not possessed of the material requisites for Socialism, since there were no banks, no capitalist syndicates, no machine industry, no railroads.

*V. LENIN*
*Can Jacobinism Frighten the Working Class?*

. . . the great bourgeois revolutionaries in France one hundred and twenty-five years ago made their revolution a great revolution by exercising *terror* against all exploiters, both landlords and capitalists.

*V. LENIN*
*The Impending Catastrophe and How to Avert It*

. . . The French of 1793 . . . were full, not of despair, but of faith in victory.

*V. LENIN*
*Strange and Monstrous*

. . . we are infinitely more fortunate than the leaders of the French Revolution, which was defeated by an alliance of monarchist and backward countries, which continued for a year with the lower strata of the then bourgeoisie in power, which did not immediately evoke a similar movement in other countries, and which nevertheless did so much for the bourgeoisie, for the bourgeois bureaucracy, that the entire development of civilized humanity during the whole of the nineteenth century—everything—comes from the Great French Revolution, everything is indebted to it.

*V. LENIN*
*Report to the Second All-Russian Trade Union Congress*

When France was making her great bourgeois revolution and rousing the whole continent of Europe to a historically new life, England was at the head of the counter-revolutionary coalition, although she was capitalistically much more developed than France.

*V. LENIN*
*Third International, Its Place in History*

When . . . the great bourgeois revolutionaries in England (1649) and in France (1792-93) accomplished their revolution, they did not give the monarchists freedom of assembly. The French Revolution is called "great" because it had none of the flabbiness, half-heartedness and phrase-mongering that characterized many of the revolutions of 1848, but was a practical revolution, which, having overthrown the monarchists, crushed them to the last.

*V. LENIN*
*The First All-Russian Congress on Adult Education*

Great revolutions, even when they began peacefully, like the Great French Revolution, always ended in furious wars, launched by the counter-revolutionary bourgeoisie.

*Ibid.*

Take the Great French Revolution: not for nothing do we call it "great"! It did so much for its own class, for the bourgeoisie—the class for which

it worked—that the whole of the nineteenth century, the century which gave civilization and culture to the whole of humanity, was marked by the effects of the French Revolution. . . .

. . . The French Revolution, though it was crushed, was nevertheless victorious, because it gave to the whole world such foundations for bourgeois democracy, for bourgeois liberty, as could no longer be destroyed.

*Ibid.*

In 1789 the petty bourgeois could still be great revolutionaries; in 1848 they were ridiculous and pitiful; the real role they are playing in 1917-21 is that of repulsive accomplices of reaction, the cringing servitors of reaction, no matter whether their names are Chernov and Martov, or Kautsky, MacDonald, and so on and so forth.

*V. LENIN*
*The Food Tax*

The workers and peasants of France managed to wage a legitimate, just, revolutionary war against their feudal lords when the latter attempted to crush the Great French Revolution of the eighteenth century.

*V. LENIN*
*Theses on the Agrarian Question in the French Communist Party*

The Russian bourgeois-democratic revolution (1905) proceeded under conditions that differed from those prevailing in the West during revolutionary upheavals, for example, in France and Germany. Whereas the revolution in the West took place in the conditions of the period of manufacture and of undeveloped class struggle, when the proletariat was weak and numerically small and did not have its own party able to formulate its demands, while the bourgeoisie was sufficiently revolutionary to be able to fill the workers and peasants with confidence in it and to bring them out for struggle against the aristocracy—in Russia, on the contrary, the revolution (1905) began in the conditions of the machine period and of developed class struggle, when the Russian proletariat, relatively numerous and rendered compact by capitalism, had already waged a number of battles against the bourgeoisie, had its own party, which was more compact than the bourgeois party, had its own class demands, while the Russian bourgoeisie, which, in addition, was thriving on the contracts it received from the government, was sufficiently scared by the revolutionary temper of the proletariat into seeking alliance with the government and the landlords against the workers and peasants.

*J. STALIN*
*Lenin as Organizer and Leader of the Russian Communist Party*

. . . the English bourgeoisie doesn't like to wage war with its own hands. It has always preferred to have other people do its fighting for it. . . . This was what happened during the Great French Revolution, when the English bourgeoisie succeeded in forming an alliance of European states against revolutionary France.

*J. STALIN*
*From a Speech, 1927*

Revolutions in the past usually ended in changing one group of exploiters at the helm of the ship of state for another such group. The exploiters

would change, while exploitation remained. . . . Such was the case during the period of the well-known "great" revolutions in England, France and Germany. I do not refer to the Paris Commune which was the first glorious, heroic and yet unsuccessful attempt on the part of the proletariat to turn history against capitalism.

*J. STALIN*
*The International Character of the October Revolution*

*Ludwig*: Is the October Revolution in any sense at all the continuation and the culmination of the Great French Revolution?

*Stalin*: The October Revolution is neither the continuation nor the culmination of the Great French Revolution. The purpose of the French Revolution was to put an end to feudalism and establish capitalism. The aim of the October Revolution is to put an end to capitalism and to establish Socialism.

*J. STALIN*
*An Interview with the German Author Emil Ludwig*

. . . take France at the end of the eighteenth century. Long before 1789 it was clear to many how rotten the royal power and feudal order had become. But it was impossible to avoid a national rising, the conflict of classes.

What is the reason? The reason is that the classes destined to leave the historical scene are the last to realize that their role is over. It is impossible to convince them of this. They think that the cracks in the rotten building of the old order can be mended, that the tottering edifice of the old system can be repaired and preserved. That is why decaying classes take up arms and begin to defend their existence as the ruling class by every means.

*Wells:* But there were plenty of lawyers at the head of the Great French Revolution.

*Stalin:* But surely you don't deny the role of the intelligentsia in revolutionary movements! Was the Great French Revolution a lawyers' revolution, and not a people's revolution—a revolution which triumphed because it raised the vast popular masses against feudalism and defended the interests of the third estate? And did the lawyers among the leaders of the Great French Revolution act according to the laws of the old order? Did they not introduce a new, bourgeois, revolutionary law?

*J. STALIN*
*Problems of Leninism*

In view of the fact that modern history, which is richest in content, is saturated with events, and also in view of the fact that the principal element in modern history of bourgeois countries, if we are to bear in mind the period up to the October Revolution in Russia, is the victory of the French Revolution and the consolidation of capitalism in Europe and America, we believe that it would have been better for the textbook of modern history to start with a chapter on the French Revolution. . . .

The chief defect of the synopsis we believe to be the fact that it does not emphasize sufficiently sharply the entire depth of the difference and contrast between the French Revolution (the bourgeois revolution) and the October Revolution in Russia (the Socialist Revolution). The main axis of the textbook on modern history must be precisely the idea of this contrast between a bourgeois revolution and a Socialist one. To show that the French (and any other) bourgeois revolution, while liberating the people

from the chains of feudalism and absolutism, placed them in new chains, chains of capitalism and bourgeois democracy, while the Socialist Revolution in Russia has smashed all and every chain and has liberated the people from all forms of exploitation—such must be the line throughout the textbook on modern history.

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

*J. STALIN, S. KIROV, A. ZHDANOV*
*Remarks on the Conspectus of the Textbook "Modern History"*

Our proletarian revolution is the only revolution in the world which had the opportunity of showing the people not only its political results but also material results. . . . Our revolution is the only one which not only smashed the fetters of capitalism and brought people freedom, but also succeeded in creating for the people the material conditions for a prosperous life. Therein lies the strength and invincibility of our revolution.

*J. STALIN*
*Speech at the First All-Union Conference of Stakhanovites*

*"The Declaration of Rights,"* *by Niquet le Jeune*

MAURICE THOREZ

# ROBESPIERRE — a Great Figure of the French Revolution

From a Speech Delivered at Arras, March 4, 1939

(Maurice Thorez begins with a warm recollection of the time when as a young militant in the ranks of the workers' organizations of Pas-de-Calais he first took up arms against reaction. Recalling the attitude of the Communist Party during the crisis of September last, he continues as follows:)

The reactionaries nurse a feeling of deep hatred for us. They slander and attack us. But we are only proud of it!

For isn't it a fact that to this day reaction loathes the memory of the greatest of our countrymen, the Jacobin Maximilien Robespierre, who was born in this city Arras in the year 1758? Speaking of Robespierre, Lenin wrote: "It is natural for the bourgeoisie to hate Jacobinism."

The Incorruptible, the man who justly enjoyed the greatest popularity in his days, has never ceased being the butt of the vilest slanders of all the enemies of progress and justice, past and present. Yes, comrades, with the exception of Arras, with the exception of the town of Ivry, which I have the honor of representing in parliament, with the exception of the town of Montreuil, of which Comrade Jacques Duclos is deputy, and with the exception of a small village of our Pas-de-Calais district—all of which have Communist municipalities—you would be looking in vain for the name of Robespierre on plates designating the names of streets and squares anywhere in France.

All the more am I happy, here in Robespierre's native town, to be able, in the name of the French Communist Party, to pay to Maximilien Robespierre the homage due to him, on the occasion of the one hundred and fiftieth anniversary of the French Revolution.

Robespierre was the son of an ordinary lawyer. He lost his mother at the age of six, and his father abandoned him when he was only eight. At first the orphan was placed in a religious institution maintained by the Saint-Waast Abbey of Arras, but later, thanks to his good work and personal merits, he was given a scholarship at the Lycée Louis-le-Grand in Paris.

He was an exceptionally capable, intelligent and altogether remarkable pupil. Jean-Jacques Rousseau, whom he had met, made upon him a profound impression. On this subject Robespierre wrote the following:

"You have taught me to know myself. While still young, you made me appreciate the dignity of man, you made me ponder on the great problems of the social order."

Upon his return to Arras in 1781 Robespierre became a lawyer

for the poor, for the unhappy. He pleaded the case of the maid of the great Carnot, whom dishonest relatives wanted to rob of her inheritance. He successfully handled another case, which at that time had reverberated throughout France. The aldermen of the city—who were much less enlightened than the present mayor of your city, who accorded us the honor of receiving us at his city hall—had passed judgment against an Arras gentleman demanding that he remove the lightning rod which had been placed on the roof of his house. Robespierre appeared before the eyes of France as a champion of science and progress against the forces of darkness and reaction. His popularity spread beyond our Artois.

It was during that period that he wrote the following:

"The arts and sciences are the finest present which heaven has bestowed upon man; the ignorant scorn the sciences; the frivolous look upon them from the point of view of convenience only; but the thinking man sees in them a source of happiness to mankind and of greatness to the country."

In the year 1786, at the age of twenty-eight, he became director of the Academy des Rosati, where the elite of the Arras intellectuals congregated. In 1789 he was elected to the Estates General as deputy of the Arras Third Estate. At the Constituent Assembly, at the Jacobin Club, and later at the Convention, to which he was elected by his department of Pas-de-Calais and by the city of Paris which had adopted him, Robespierre was one of the most outstanding figures. In 1793 he was the soul of the Committee of Public Safety. All his activity was inspired solely by his concern for the welfare of the people, for the triumph of liberty and for a reign of justice.

It is impossible, of course, within the limits of my speech, to enumerate all his actions, to quote all the admirable expressions which we owe to Robespierre's clear and lofty mind. Still, I should like to recall to you some of his best pages, especially those in which Jaurès rightly discovered the Socialist tendencies of the great Jacobin. Listen to what Robespierre, speaking at the Convention in the course of a discussion on the draft of the constitution, in April 1793, had to say on *property*:

"Ask that dealer in human flesh what is property. He will point to the large coffin which he calls a ship, which he has packed with chained people who seem to be alive, and he will tell you: *Here is my property: I bought them at so much per head.*

"Ask the nobleman who owns land and vassals, or the one who thinks that the world is coming to an end ever since he has lost his, and their replies on the subject of property will be about the same."

Then Robespierre went on ironically:

"Ask the august members of the Capet Dynasty and they will tell you that the most sacred of all property rights is, no doubt, the hereditary right, which they have enjoyed since time immemorial, of legally and monarchically oppressing, vilifying and squeezing according to their whims the twenty-five million people inhabiting the territory of our France.

"In the eyes of all these persons, property does not involve any moral principle whatsoever. In defining liberty as the principal treasure of man, as the most sacred right given to him by nature, you have said quite rightly that it is limited by the rights of others;

why have you not applied this principle to property, with the result that your declaration might seem as if it had been made, not for the poor but for the rich, the hoarders, the speculators and the tyrants?"

Bear in mind, that this statement was made one hundred and fifty years ago! Surely, the idea expressed by Robespierre implies the defense of private property, but as a social institution bound up with the progress of society and not as something immutable, eternal. Here we find a condemnation of capitalist property, a condemnation of big finance companies, of the trusts which have expropriated the great mass of small individual producers, artisans and peasants, and forced them into the ranks of the industrial proletariat.

"Society is obliged to provide for the subsistence of all its members, whether by providing work for them or by assuring the means of existence for those who are unable to work." (Article 10 of the Draft Constitution.)

This principle of Robespierre and the Jacobins has since then been written into a constitution, the Stalin Constitution of the Soviet Union. *(Applause.)*

The Soviet Constitution guarantees to all those who live on the territory of the Soviet Union the possibility of a dignified and happy existence by providing work and by caring for those who can work no more, who have given everything to society—their strength, their years of youth and struggle.

Were Robespierre alive today, with what force would he support the fight for real social insurance! How he would lead the struggle for a satisfactory pension for our aged! How he, the Jacobin, would burn with indignation at those who consider a pension of 3,200 francs for an old worker and one of 4,300 francs for a family excessive! *(Applause.)*

And here is Article 12 of the Draft Constitution, as proposed by Robespierre:

"Those of the citizens whose income does not exceed what is necessary for their subsistence, are exempt from contributing to state expenses; it is the others who have to cover these expenses, progressively, according to the size of their fortune."

Is it not our slogan: "Make the rich pay"?

As far back as 1793 Robespierre saw the solution of the financial problems in a struggle against the profiteers, against the hoarders and against those who for a century and a half have kept on crushing and exploiting our people with impunity.

And listen to this statement: "If the wealthy tax collectors prefer to be nothing but the leeches of the people, then we shall deliver them to the people themselves. If we find too many obstacles in dealing out justice to the traitors, the conspirators and the hoarders, we shall tell the people to take justice into their own hands."

What wonderful revolutionary energy! What a mighty spirit in the thoughts of the man who was determined to fight with all his heart and with all his strength at the head of his people, in order to assure their happiness!

And here is the way Robespierre posed the question of defending the Republic against its internal enemies:

"The danger from within is caused by the bourgeoisie; in order to overcome the bourgeoisie we must rally the people. Everything has been arranged to place the people under the yoke of the bour-

*Robespierre (bronze medal)*

geois and to have the defenders of the Republic perish on the block. They have triumphed at Marseilles, Bordeaux and Lyon, and they would have triumphed in Paris as well, but for the present rising. The present rising, the rising of the people must be kept up until the measures necessary to save the Republic have been taken. The people must ally themselves with the Convention and the Convention must ally itself with the people. The uprising must spread from place to place according to a single plan, and the *sans-culottes* must be paid to remain in the cities; we must provide them with arms, keep up their anger and enlighten them. We must raise the republican enthusiasm by all means possible."

Surely Robespierre would not have set free the *cagoulards* in order to imprison in their place the militants of the working class who declared a strike on November 30, 1938, in order to protest against a policy which is absolutely opposed to the will of the people as it was expressed in the general elections of May 1936.

Jaurès once wrote: "Robespierre's strength lies in the fact that wishing for the revolution he accepts all its consequences and conditions." When Lenin wanted to express his highest praise for the fighters of October 1917, he called them the Jacobins of the proletarian revolution.

Let us see what was Robespierre's attitude to the problem of the struggle for peace, for the honor, the dignity and territorial integrity of France, a problem which is still so actual today.

At the risk of becoming unpopular, he, together with Marat, denounced the war policy of the Gironde. He stated—and we are in complete agreement with him on that score—that "Liberty cannot be carried on the points of bayonets." He wanted peace and fought for it. But when the coalition of the kings and tyrants forced war on the people of France, when the aristocrats, the feudal lords who had been deprived of their privileges by the Revolution, crossed the Rhine and placed themselves at the service of the Marshal of Brunswick and the king of Prussia, against revolutionary France, Robespierre, the man who stood for peace, called for struggle and led the people to victory. At the same time, however, he appealed to the other peoples as well.

Here is what Robespierre said in April 1793 from the tribune of the Convention:

"You have entirely forgotten to call attention to the duties of fraternity, which unite all men and all nations, and their right to mutual assistance. You seem to have ignored the foundations of the eternal alliance of the peoples against the tyrants. One might think that

your Declaration of Rights was framed for a small herd of creatures somewhere in a remote corner of the globe and not for the immense family to whom nature has given the world in possession.

"I propose that you remedy this defect by the insertion of four articles, which cannot fail to earn the respect of the peoples for you. It is true that they involve the inconvenience of setting you at odds with the kings. I confess, however, that this inconvenience does not scare me; it cannot scare those who do not want to reconcile themselves with the kings.

"1) The men of all lands are brothers. The different peoples must help each other according to their power in the same way as citizens of one and the same state must help one another.

"2) Any man who oppresses a nation thereby becomes the enemy of all the nations.

"3) Those who attack a nation and wage war against it, in order to prevent the progress of liberty and to annul the rights of man, must be fought by all the nations, and not as ordinary enemies, but as murderers and rebellious brigands."

No, comrades, Robespierre would not have invented non-intervention!

"4) Kings, aristocrats, tyrants—no matter who and where they happen to be—are slaves in revolt against the master of the world, the human race."

A spirit of internationalism permeates these vibrant words, a spirit which is not only not in contradiction to the most ardent and enlightened patriotism, but quite the contrary.

It is the cry of the Great French Revolution:

"Peace to the peoples, to all the peoples! And war upon the tyrants, upon all the tyrants!" (*Applause.*)

There is no room in this doctrine, in this idea for the humiliating formula launched by certain people who dare to refer to Jaurès: "Better slavery than death." No, this doctrine is in line with the heroic will which Pasionaria expressed when she coined the formula: "We prefer to die standing up rather than to live kneeling down." (*Prolonged applause.*)

There is no room here for the spirit of capitulation, for the spirit of Munich. No room here for the spirit which leads to so-called non-intervention, to an agreement with the rebels, with a Franco and his treacherous generals hired by international fascism to fight their own country! On the contrary, this doctrine stands for the determination to defend to the last the national heritage, with its universal values of progress and liberty. In the term of "mutual assistance" we find again the conception of the defense of everyone by all, the conception of solidarity

*Saint-Just*

among nations, which forms the foundation of the covenant of the League of Nations, which also serves as the basis of the People's Front programs and which prevailed at the conclusion of the Franco-Soviet Pact. It is against these principles that the fascist dictators, who dream of subjugating Europe and the entire world, have been raging and fuming, and with good reason.

It is sufficient to recall these few statements by Robespierre to understand the reasons for the plot perpetrated against him by the counter-revolution.

The Ninth of Thermidore was the signal for reaction and regression. The road was then opened for Bonapartism, for the Empire, for oppression and for the war which bled France and Europe white and which at the end of twenty years left our country smaller and powerless.

We also understand why the bourgeoisie continues to hate the memory of Robespierre, whose life serves as a profound and still actual lesson to our people.

And, lastly, we understand why the fascist dictators are up in arms against the spirit of the French Revolution. Mussolini said: "We represent the antithesis of the principles of the Great French Revolution." And he added insolently: "Tomorrow Europe will be fascist."

Goebbels, the shrimp in charge of Hitler's propaganda, proclaimed: "The year 1789 will be erased from history." He forgot the words of Goethe, the greatest German poet, who on the night of the battle of September 20, 1792, at Valmy, said: "From this day and from this place begins a new era in the history of the world."

Let Mussolini and Hitler keep on pretending that they frighten us, but we, the sons of the French Revolution, shall answer them calmly: "No, Europe shall not become fascist."

We are ready to tell them what our forefathers told the Spaniards here in Arras, long ago, when, in reply to an insolent slogan, which the Spaniards had written on our city gate, they stated: "The French will surrender Arras when mice will be eating cats."

Hitler and Mussolini will turn France into fascist territory when mice will be eating cats.

No, they shall not extinguish the torch of 1789.

Despite the policy of non-intervention with its terrible consequences for our people and for Republican Spain; despite Munich, despite all desertion and treason, the French people will not give up their historic mission of progress, liberty and peace.

**ROMAIN ROLLAND**

# V a l m y

Illustrations by Jean Trubert

History is not a collection of anecdotes and tales of romance. It is the sum total of human experience, the exact knowledge of which illuminates not only the past, but also the present, and serves to guide our steps.

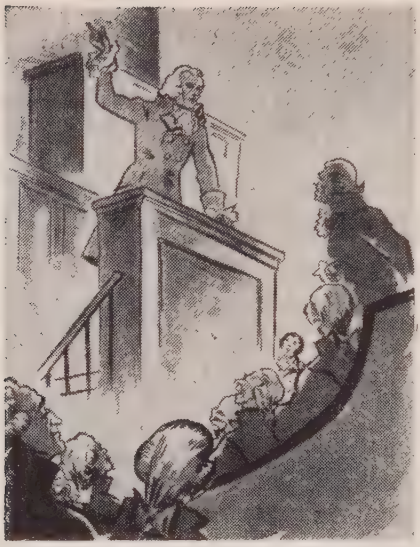
The history of France during the French Revolution has a great deal in common with that of France, Russia and Spain today. May it instruct and inspire us!

The revolutionary explosion reverberated throughout the world. It made the other peoples throb with enthusiasm and it threw the princes and the kings into a state of alarm. The three largest monarchist states of Europe, Austria, Prussia and Russia, were eyeing France with hostility, watching for an opportune moment to intervene. They might, however, have postponed their intervention in the hope that France could be weakened by internal dissensions and revolutionary anarchy; but the King and Queen of France insistently appealed to them for help against the people.

There have been attempts to make us feel sorry for the tragic fate of Louis XVI and Marie-Antoinette, whom the Convention later on condemned to death. Surely, the penalty was a severe one, and they paid it. But they deserved their sentence a hundred times. The King and the Queen of France had betrayed the country in a most criminal fashion, for they had appealed to her enemies and unleashed against her war and foreign invasion.

The king and queen wrote to the various powers, and their secret agents, with Baron de Breteuil and the Swede Fersen at their head, were busy stirring up trouble against France in every court of Europe. The queen, an Austrian by birth, relied upon her brother, the Austrian Emperor, who was quite vehement in hurling threats when Louis XVI and Marie-Antoinette had failed in their attempt to escape from France across the Rhine and take charge of the armies that were to invade France.

The entire nobility of France was gathered around Coblenz and Mayence, under the command of the king's two brothers and of two Marshals of France, Broglie and Castries. The entire retinue of the king, musketeers, light cavalry, grenadiers on horse and gendarmes, all the so-called "cavaliers of the crown," the aristocracy of the provinces of Languedoc, Auvergne and Bretagne, in which Chateaubriand served, three regiments of the line, a number of squadrons, with the white flag aloft, the most aristocratic names of France—all these formed a circle around the frontiers of France, mad with rage and desire



*Robespierre did not yield to the general excitement*

for revenge, like a pack of wolves, waiting for the moment to pounce upon the country. They had sworn to destroy everything with fire and sword. And, in the words of an eye-witness, had they been given the chance, "France would soon have been turned into a vast cemetery." Their frenzy horrified even the Prussians who had enough sense to keep them behind their army. And the commander-in-chief, the Duke of Brunswick, did not conceal the contempt which he felt for the traitors.

The White armies have always and everywhere been the same.

Attempts have been made, and are still made, in our inner controversies, to exploit Robespierre's opinion to disapprove of the war which revolutionary France waged against the monarchies of Europe. It is true that at that time Robespierre did not yield to the general excitement. But the meaning of his attitude has been twisted beyond recognition. In his great speech on December 18, 1791, to the Society of Friends of the Constitution, Robespierre never said that he was opposed to war. All he said was that war was not to be declared "*at the moment*" (and he underlined the words). In his opinion the nation was not prepared; and while recognizing the mortal danger presented by the expected invasion and by the army of emigrés at Coblenz, he said: "Before rushing to Coblenz, get yourself in shape to conduct war!" He saw clearly that the court of France and the enemies of the Revolution speculated upon the war, in order to grab all the power and to undermine the Revolution. He demanded that the Revolution should begin by indicting the government of the court and by disarming the enemies within the country. He condemned every war of conquest, but he hailed all the more "a salutary and violent outburst of indignation on the part of the French people at the attack upon its territory."

Now, in the spring of 1792, this attack became inevitable. The Austrian troops were concentrating at the frontiers. When Dumouriez, the French Foreign Minister, demanded that Austria should abstain from mixing into the inner affairs of France, the Austrian court replied on April 7, that it would continue to make common cause with the other monarchies, "as long as a bloodthirsty faction in France is aiming to reduce the freedom of the king and to make an attempt against the monarchy." On April 3 the Emperor of Austria put the Duke of Brunswick at the head of the forces which were supposed to "save France and Europe from anarchy."

Thus, France had no other choice but war; and her government could be reproached only for having declared it before it was sufficiently prepared. It is true that King Louis XVI, who on April 20 pro-

posed to the Assembly that war be declared, was speculating on the French army suffering certain defeat. His secret agents notified the enemy that, once war was declared, he would have on his side seven-eighths of the bourgeoisie, two-thirds of the National Guard, all of the cavalry and the Swiss Guard. But the Gironde deputies at the Assembly, who also wanted war, intended to make sure that it would result in a victory, and permit them to overthrow the monarchy.

At the beginning of the campaign it seemed as if the king were succeeding with his plans of treason. The French army fled at the first engagements in Belgium, and the soldiers in panic killed their chiefs. Nor could it be otherwise. Treason was rampant in the army. Of nine thousand officers of the standing army, six thousand went over to the enemy. Those who remained were suspected, and with good reason, by the soldiers under their command. The fortresses were dismantled. The volunteers were insufficiently clad and armed. In the absence of rifles, they manufactured lances. It seemed impossible to withstand the old armies of Austria and Prussia—the latter of which was the most famous in Europe and until that time reputed to be invincible.

But it so happened that France possessed moral forces which neither the enemies nor the French themselves suspected. The bourgeois class, which rose to power, was brimming with talent and energy, hitherto kept in restraint by the old regime and never having had a chance to be displayed. The emigration itself, as a result of which the army got rid of the conceited, ignorant and disobedient aristocrats, brought it about that hundreds of petty officers came to the fore and showed that they possessed both ardor and genius. It is enough to recall that among the chiefs elected by the volunteers of 1791, were almost all the future generals of the Revolution and of the Empire: Marceau, Davout, Jourdan, Moreau, Lecourbe, Suchet, Oudinot, Soult, Brune, Masséna, Lannes, Desaix, Gouvion-Saint-Cyr, Lefebvre, Haxo, Bessières, Victor, Friant, Belliard, Championnet. Hoche was made lieutenant on June 24, 1792; Bonaparte was raised to the rank of captain on September 11, 1792. These volunteers had no more than eight or ten months for training. They were merged with the three small standing armies which France still possessed; and all together they formed an army which, according to Dumouriez, "was animated with courage, civil spirit and, most of all, with the spirit of fraternity."

This army was fortunate in having found generals who knew how to create a new strategy adapted to its energy and to its very weaknesses: its formation was mobile, as opposed to the geometrical rigidity of the old armies of Frederic II; it made use of fire curtains laid by independent and scattered sharpshooters, and of horse-drawn artillery; it systematically avoided battles in the open field, and harassed the enemy with numerous small, isolated engagements and well-prepared pitched battles.

The Prussian invasion was heralded by an act of unheard-of provocation which aroused the indignation of all France: the impudent manifesto of July 25, known as Brunswick's Manifesto. In this manifesto the Duke of Brunswick called upon the French army to submit to the king at once, and demanded that the National Guard look out for the king's safety; he announced that all the members of the Assembly, the department directories and municipalities, would be held res-

ponsible for any attempt against the royal person or against the members of the royal family, and threatened them with military reprisals. He announced that in case the royal palace of Tuileries were forced or attacked, military punishment would be wreaked on Paris and utter destruction wrought in that city. The same would happen to any town in France which committed any act of insubordination to the king. All the Frenchmen who dared defend themselves against the invading troops would be treated like rebels and their homes burned to the ground.

Never before had such insolent and preposterous threats been hurled at a great nation. And the most incredible part of it was that they were signed by the Duke of Brunswick, a wise old man respected in all of Europe and even in France, a great philosopher who was able to understand the new ideas and who at heart disapproved of the anti-Jacobin crusade. But he was a man of weak character and a vassal of the King of Prussia who, with light-minded eagerness, had placed himself at the head of the crusade. In fact the manifesto was drawn up by the French emigrés, its contents having been dictated by the princes and agents of the French court. The king and the queen had suggested and pressed for its publication. These fools imagined that they would strike terror into the hearts of the people of France and bring them down to the feet of their sovereigns! None of these kings, of these princes and these noblemen had the slightest conception of the pride of the French people!

A burst of anger swept through all of France. "The nation offended, rose like one and armed a million men." The manifesto precipitated the fall of the monarchy. In vain did Louis XVI, on August 3, try to disavow it. His deception was too flagrant, he was denounced by the whole of France. Seven days later the royal palace of Tuileries was stormed, and the king deposed from his throne.

The enemies realized their error. But it was too late. To the end of his days Brunswick deeply felt the disgrace attached to his name through the signing of the manifesto.

But the invasion had been launched, and the news of the Paris insurrection of August 10 precipitated matters. The invaders were in a hurry to save, if still possible, the royal family.

On August 19, 1792, the Prussians entered France in the neighborhood of the village of Redange. On that day a sharp November wind began to blow; the sky seemed as if it had split in two, rain began pouring and never stopped for two months, drenching the forces of the invaders in their camps, drowning them in a fetid and cold mire, spreading disease among the men. It was as if the elements had taken a hand in the fight, and a Moses had stricken the enemy with the plagues of Egypt.

Yet the beginning was disastrous for France. Longwy surrendered on August 23, without offering any resistance. Then, on September 2, Verdun surrendered, in spite of Marceau and Beaurepaire who committed suicide. A traitor, the Marquis of Bouille, former commandant of the city of Metz, had mapped out for the Prussians a plan of attack and march against Paris. And the best French general, the commander of the northern army, La Fayette, had tried after the events of August 10 to rouse his troops against Paris; but having been rejected by his men, he crossed the frontier with his entire staff on the very day the Prussians entered France.

It was a tragic hour indeed. France and the Revolution were in

danger. It was then that a man appeared who was going to save both. His name was Dumouriez.

There was nothing of a republican hero about him, nothing of a Hoche, of a Desaix or of a Marceau. This short, swarthy man, ugly, very lively, with flaming eyes, was an old adventurer, fifty-three years of age, of mixed Provence and Flanders blood, who had seen the world as a condottiere or secret agent. He was very brave, full of spirit and with a spark of genius, but intriguing and ambitious; he had tried at first to join hands with the king, but when he became convinced that the king was bound to lose the game, he began to sport a red cap, embraced Robespierre in the Jacobin club and proposed to overthrow the king. He was appointed commander-in-chief of the northern army, in the place of La Fayette. Within a few days he brought about unity of command on the entire front; he became the sole chief, exercising a diplomatic and military dictatorship, without paying attention to the instructions which came from Paris. It might have been the ruination of France, but it turned out to be her salvation.

In the course of forty days the fate of Dumouriez was identical with that of the Revolution; and this man, who later on ignominiously betrayed France, was, during August and September 1792, the living expression of the genius of the Revolution in the armies. He possessed a light-mindedness, which in some hours of extreme danger adopted the form of utmost fearlessness. He feared no responsibility. He was ready lightheartedly to lead his young, inexperienced troops into battle against the veterans of Frederick II. Due to the defection of La Fayette the troops had lost their spirit. But in the course of a few days he re-animated

*"We must save the tree without paying attention to its branches."*

them by his enthusiasm, his fire and his gaiety. He radiated a confidence in victory all around him.

He had been dreaming of conquering the Netherlands. Having been forced to abandon Flanders by the speed of the invasion, he made up his mind on September 1; he abandoned Montmedy, Sedan and Mézières to their fate, in order to bar the road to Paris. "We must save the tree," he said, "without paying attention to its branches."

It was important to seize at once the passes of the Argonne, whose wooded plateaus divide the basin of the river Meuse from the valley of the river Aisne. Dumouriez marched fearlessly on Grandpré, and there, on September 3, he broke camp between the rivers Aire and Aisne. A part of his vanguard was in charge of the creole Miranda of Caracas, who later on wanted to become the liberator of Spanish America. The capitulation of Verdun and the scattering of its garrison which spread a panic among the troops, who were sent to help him, nearly disorganized the army. But Dumouriez put the army into shape

again. He wrote to the Assembly that he was holding the Thermopyles of France in his hands and that he would have better luck than Leonidas.

But the Thermopyles were smashed. Brunswick succeeded in deceiving Dumouriez as to his movements and broke through into the Argonne mountains by the pass of Croix-aux-Bois. Dumouriez, who was almost surrounded at Grandpré, executed a remarkable retreat beyond the Aisne during the night of September 15. But while the Girondists at Paris became scared and spoke of moving the government to the city of Tours and even to Auvergne and further still,[1] and despite ministerial instructions bidding him retreat towards the river Marne, Dumouriez refused to retreat; fearlessly he established himself in front of Sainte-Menehould, placing a guard on the left shore of the Aisne and on the Châlons road. Here he made an appointment with Beurnonville and Kellerman, the first of whom was in charge of the Flanders reinforcements and the second of the central army. For a long time they lent no ear to his words; they maintained that Dumouriez was courting disaster and that he wanted to pull them along. They joined him only in the last hour, on the very eve of Valmy. It was necessary to use force in order to make Kellerman do so, only to crown him with glory which later on brought him the title of the Duke of Valmy.

Kellerman represented a perfect contrast to Dumouriez. Large, of athletic build, loud, full of braggadocio, eager for petty glory and very ignorant,—but as brave as Dumouriez, active and devoted to his duty, an ardent patriot and a Jacobin, he took pride in calling himself "the first general with the heart of a *sans-culotte*."

He established himself on the hill of Valmy, which at that time was known as Mill Hill—a narrow and steep crest, surmounted by a windmill, beyond the river Auve. Dumouriez occupied a second line of hills, parallel to and separated from the first line by marshes; from Yvron Mountain his excellent artillery, with D'Aboville in charge, flanked Kellerman's troops. Down below was the main road leading from Sainte-Menehould to Châlons, rising towards the plateau of La Lune, where, during the night, the Prussians had taken up position, facing Valmy. A dark night. A raging wind was sweeping over the open spaces of Champagne, forbidding, immense and sullen. The march of the enemy had been carried out under the protection of the night and fog; the Prussians, however, were unable to see the French army which they were surrounding; and they thought that their appearance would throw the French into confusion and rout them.

It was September 20, 1792. Midday. The morning had been spent in marching and artillery contests under the cover of a heavy fog. Suddenly the fog lifted. A violent wind had torn it to shreds. The King of Prussia, the Duke of Brunswick and the officers of the enemy staff eagerly stepped forward in order to find out the position of their adversary. They were dumbfounded by what they saw. . . .

On either side of the Valmy hills which dominated the entire territory, they saw the French troops ranged in the most perfect order, absolutely calm, waiting for them,—the two wings of the army bent

[1] Barbaroux, Servan and Roland spoke of abandoning Northern France to the victorious king and founding a Southern republic. Barbaroux proposed to retreat gradually to the mountains of Yelay, to Cevannes and even to Corsica! It took the indignation of Danton to hinder the departure. In this he was joined by Petion, Vergniaud and by Condorcet.

towards the center and the cavalry in front. . . .

The moral blow sustained by the King of Prussia and by Brunswick at this sight was so great that for an hour they could not reach any decision, despite the furious egging on by the emigrés.

Finally the king gave orders to attack. It was one o'clock in the afternoon. The Prussian army proceeded in two rows, to the beating of the drum, in parade order. The clouds had disappeared, and the sun was blazing in the sky.

Up on the hill Kellerman had formed his troops into three columns; he ordered them to wait without firing a shot, until the enemy had scaled the hill, and only then to charge with their bayonets. He put his large plumed hat with three-colored cockade on the point of his saber and shouted: "Long live the nation!" The entire army caught up the shout, the soldiers also putting their caps on the points of their bayonets.

A distance of no more than 2,200 meters separated the two armies. The French cannons from Ivron Mountain ravaged the front lines of the Prussian regiments. Kellerman's soldiers still stood motionless, waiting for the signal and singing *Ca ira!* . . . Confusion began to creep into the Prussian army. . . . Who were these armed people, who had been represented to them as being ready to take to their heels or surrender at the first shot? Here they stood like a solid wall, flaunting into the enemy's face their song of defiance, like a savage laughter. And the mountain resounded, from top to bottom, with their clamor in honor of the nation. . . . The Prussian army discovered the Revolution at last! . . .

The Duke of Brunswick shouted: "Halt!" The regiments of Frederic II, having advanced two hundred steps, stopped. . . . The invasion was halted.

There really was no battle. Merely an artillery contest which lasted till dusk, ravaging the two motionless armies, endangering the lives of equally fearless chiefs on both sides: here Kellerman and Dumouriez, there the King and royal prince of Prussia, and with them the great poet Goethe, whose clear eyes took in the entire scene. It was much more than a battle: it was two worlds facing each other. And the old world, seized with a stupor, heard an inner voice saying: "Thou shalt not go further!" It was conquered without having been beaten.

Between five and six o'clock the last shots rang out. No sooner did the shooting stop than a terrific thunderstorm broke loose. (Nature continued to take part in the epocial event.) The Prussian army retreated towards the plateau of La Lune. A torrential rain and an icy wind completed its demoralization during the night. The disorder was complete, like after a smashing defeat. Brunswick, in low spirits, spent the night in bitter meditation. There was consternation everywhere, and nobody understood what had happened. But Goethe said: "From this day and from this place begins a new era in the history of the world."

The losers felt it more keenly than the winners. The strange thing was that the winners did not know they had won. Kellerman was worried and abandoned Valmy with his army during the night, in order to get closer to Dumouriez. He was afraid that on the next day the road to Paris might be cut off. Dumouriez, too, expected to be attacked the next morning. I have a letter from Dumouriez to Kellerman, written at dawn on September 21, inviting the latter to

join him. "It is now your turn to come to see my battle and to help me."

But the enemy thought no more of attacking. His moral force was broken. He remained in the same place for another week, without being able to act. And on September 30, lacking everything, sick, full of anguish and exhausted, the enemy retreated towards the Rhine, dotting the road with dying men. Not a single man would have escaped, had not Dumouriez, for reasons much too complicated to explain here, preferred to allow the enemy to depart.

In the meantime, during those days, when the old world was shattered against Mill Hill at Valmy, the National Convention opened its session in Paris. As Monge put it, the Assembly "legalized the will of all the Frenchmen by freeing them from the yoke of royalty." And Danton, in his thunderous voice, flung at the world the threatening declaration that the nation, in electing the new Assembly, "had created a great Committee for the general insurrection of the peoples."

Sons of the Revolution, you of today, are you still able to listen without fear and without confusion to the proud echoes of the cannonade of Valmy?

JEAN CASSOU

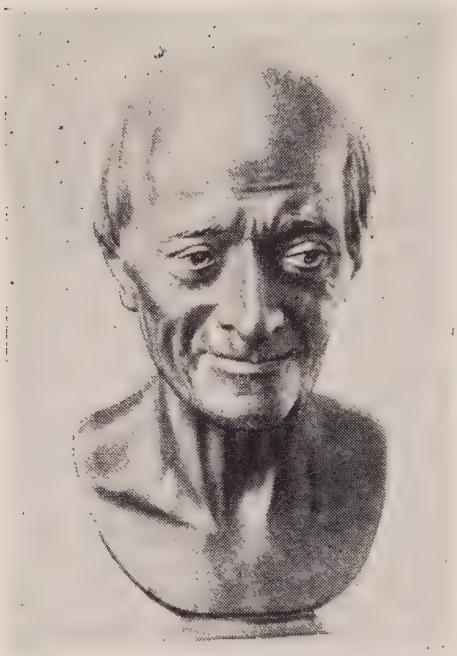
# The Revolutionary Tradition in French Literature

It was La Bruyère,[1] perhaps, who originated the idea of the social power of the writer, of the conception of a revolutionary writer. The writer became aware of the fact that by means of words he could reveal reality, discover unknown things, arouse men's hearts, lead them to revolt. One simple page, the now famous page about the "strange animals" which one meets in the fields, accomplished this miracle. At the present time, whenever the writer or the artist reverts to reality, to this concealed and terrible form of reality, he accomplishes a revolutionary act. In the Romantic period certain painters who turned their backs on the studios of Paris, the academies and drawing-room successes and took refuge in the forest of Fontainebleau, returned to the reality which nature and loneliness constitute. But their work was transformed into action when one of their number, Jean-François Millet, reintroduced man into the landscape. And what man? "The beast of burden of La Bruyère. The animal bowed to earth." That is how Baudelaire expresses it, rediscovering in Millet the stinging accusations of La Bruyère.

The return to nature, the desire to study man's social condition and reveal its misery and horror, the desire to state the things which should be *natural* to man, his normal and harmonious relation to the world, the desire to criticize the present state of these relations, as they appeared in a badly ordered society, all these elements are expressed at given phases of the history of culture, and each time this happens it implies the existence of a revolutionary spirit. The naturalism of Jean-Jacques Rousseau culminated in the French Revolution. The naturalism of the school of Barbizon culminated in the Socialism of Millet and Courbet. The naturalism of Flaubert culminated in the social and revolutionary epics of Zola. Whoever pronounces the name of nature proclaims a heresy, formulates a criticism and announces a revolt. The whole of the French Revolution was accomplished under the sign of nature, and the entire Romantic movement of the nineteenth century was impregnated with the violent perfume of this formidable idea.

The revelation of nature is accompanied by the revelation of the people. La Bruyère witnessed the appearance in the countryside of that strange creature, the bowed animal. The French Revolution wit-

[1] Jean de La Bruyère, French author of the seventeenth century (1639-1693). In his famous *Characters* La Bruyère courageously contrasted the poverty and suffering of the peasants under feudalism with the luxurious life of the aristocratic parasites to whom the peasant was only "a horrible beast of burden." — *Ed.*



*Voltaire*

nessed the entry of this new creature into history. Over and beyond the wars and treaties, the annals of the courts and the combinations of princes and ministers, one discovers the existence of the people, of their feelings and aspirations. From now on the people play the leading role in the great theater of the world. And literature acclaims them as heroes. This was the great achievement of the Romantic nineteenth century. Michelet and Quinet were to make the people the principal element in their historical research. Georges Sand was to choose men of the people as the main characters of her novels. The epic genius, Victor Hugo, interpreted the collective spirit of people and peoples, seeing humanity as a whole united in a collective effort. People and peoples are the heroes of the myths which he invents. And one of his last works, one of his legacies is the novel *'Ninety-Three*. This novel is the source to which one must always return, once one has felt the prodigious novelty of this fact, of the people becoming conscious of their power and appearing in history for the purpose of asserting their will and establishing their regime.

Victor Hugo's mythology and his epic are founded on the principle that the people are right, that they are the supreme reality, that they are nature, that they are god. Behind the metaphysical axioms formulated by the imperious Voyant is revealed the historic testimony of a people becoming conscious of itself. And this explains the antithetical system of Victor Hugo, the system for which he is often criticized and which has been the target of so much ridicule because it seemed simultaneously so oversimplified and so emphatic. But Victor Hugo's antitheses possess profound reality. Hugo, the poet and prophet, the epic and mythical genius, has discovered the *revelation* and *revolution* of the people, their historic effort, their will to expression

*Denis Diderot*

In the face of this will, he also perceives the contrary will, resistance, opposition, that is to say, that which the eighteenth century revolutionaries, the Encyclopaedists, Voltaire, Diderot, Rousseau, termed despotism and superstition, the tyrants and priests, and their tool, the executioner. All of Victor Hugo's thinking is based on this same antithesis, and his rare epic genius directs its stormy tirades against fanaticism, evil, usurpation, kings and popes, Brumaire and December,[1] Torquemada.

Counter-revolutionary criticism has derided this literature, and it is undeniable that its success among a pedantic and coarsely anti-clerical shopkeeping petty bourgeoisie often assumed a comic aspect, an aspect which is personified in the character of M. Homais.[2] Another section of the petty bourgeoisie, with skeptical and aristocratic pretences, thought it was smart to follow these doctrines. But the doctrines themselves, in spite of all, imply an inexorable revolutionary reality. They are the profound expression of this fact—the French people, born in the suburbs of big cities, grow aware of their condition, run to the assault of the Bastille and the Tuileries,

*Jean-Jacques Rousseau*

assume power with Robespierre, and, crushed by Thermidor, reappear on the barricades of July 1830, February and June 1848, March 1871, during the crises in the Romantic nineteenth century.

This fact, this apparition, this revelation and this presence cannot fail to leave their marks on literature and art. And in this sense all profound nineteenth century thought springs from the French Revolution. Henceforth, there appeared in our literature and our art a permanent Romanticism, a pathetic and critical Romanticism, which continues the prodigious upheaval. And in the contemporary mind the French Revolution recommences and its traditions continue to live.

[1] On Brumaire 18 (November 9, 1799), Napoleon overthrew the Directorium and proclaimed himself First Consul. On December 2, 1851, a change of government took place in France, which led to the establishment of the Second Empire under Napoleon III. — *Ed.*

[2] The druggist Homais, one of the characters of Flaubert's *Madame Bovary*.—*Ed.*

# Russian Writers on the French Revolution

**KONDRATI RYLEYEV**

1. My name is Kondrati the son of Fyodor; I am thirty years of age.

2. I belong to the Orthodox Greek-Russian Church. I attend confession and holy communion every year.

3. I have not yet taken the oath of allegiance to the reigning Sovereign.

4. I received my education in the First Cadet Corps School.

5. In general I have applied myself to all the liberal arts; during the latter years I devoted more time to the study of law and the history of various peoples.

6. I have attended no special courses.

7. I first became infected with freethinking during the campaigns of 1814 and 1815 in France. Subsequently this acquired a stronger hold upon me under the influence of the reading of various contemporary publicists such as Bignon, Benjamin Constant, and others; finally, from the day when I became a member of the society and for three years held conversations almost daily with people of the same way of thinking and continued to read the afore-mentioned authors, these criminal thoughts became à settled frame of mind. No one in particular is responsible for inculcating them and, to tell the truth, I have only myself to blame for everything.

*Evidence given by Ryleyev to Benkendorf*

**ALEXANDER PUSHKIN**

Voltaire's influence was incredibly great. The last traces of *le grand siècle*, as the French called the reign of Louis XIV, were disappearing. Poetry, exhausted now, had degenerated into petty witticisms. The novel had become either a dull and sermonizing tract or gallery of seductive pictures.

All elevated minds followed Voltaire. Pensive Rousseau declared himself his pupil; fiery Diderot became the most zealous of his disciples. In the persons of Hume, Gibbon and Walpole, England welcomed the Encyclopedia. Catherine started a friendly correspondence with him. Frederick quarreled and made peace with him; he had conquered society. Europe journeyed to Ferney to pay its respects to him. And at last Voltaire died, rapturously blessing Franklin's grandson and praising the New World in words hitherto unheard of. . . .

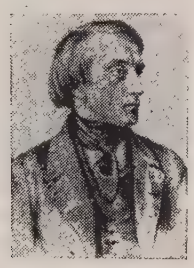
The death of Voltaire did not stem the flood. All that had been regarded as inviolable was dragged out on the stage, stripped naked and rent to pieces by Beaumarchais. The ministers of Louis XVI descended into the arena with

the writers. The aged monarchy laughed uproariously and appplauded.

Society was ripe for a great upheaval. All was calm, but the voice of the young Mirabeau was already audible, like the rumbling of a distant storm, from the depths of the dungeons where he wandered. . . .

*From the poet's notebooks and rough drafts*

**VISSARION BELINSKY**



. . . I am beginning to love mankind in Marat's fashion: to secure the happiness of the smallest proportion of it, I would, I believe, destroy the rest by fire and sword.

*From a letter to V. P. Botkin, St. Petersburg, 1841*

. . . I have at last understood the French Revolution and its Roman pomp, which formerly I ridiculed. I have understood Marat's sanguinary love for freedom, his sanguinary hatred of all that desired to keep aloof from brotherhood with mankind even by a carriage emblazoned with a coat of arms.

Negation is my god. My heroes in history are those who overthrew the old—Luther, Voltaire, the Encyclopedists, the Terrorists, Byron with his *Cain* and so on. Reason I now place above reasonableness (I mean, of course, spontaneous); that is why the blasphemies of Voltaire give me more consolation that the acknowledgement of the authority of religion, society, or of anything else! I know that the Middle Ages were great, I understand the holiness, the poetry, the grandeur of the religiousness of the Middle Ages; but the eighteenth century—the era of religious decay—is pleasanter to me: in the Middle Ages heretics, freethinkers and sorcerers were burnt at the stake; in the eighteenth century the heads of aristocrats, priests and other enemies of god, reason and humanity fell under the guillotine.

*From a letter to V. P. Botkin, 1841*

But one of them (Rousseau) rose above them all in greatness of soul, and was the worthy heralder of immortal truths. A preceptor of mankind, he harassed tyranny with such sincerity, he proclaimed divinity with such enthusiasm; his powerful eloquence depicted the beauties of virtue in glowing colors. He spread a doctrine that supported and strengthened man. And this same purity of his doctrine, proceeding as it did from a profound hatred of vice, and his scorn of the intriguing sophists who abused the name of philosophy, drew down upon his head the wrath and persecution of his rivals, of his false friends. O, if only he had lived to witness that revolution of which he was the forerunner—with what love, with what abandon he would have defended the cause of justice and equality.

There is nothing to explain here: it is clear that Robespierre was not limited, not an intriguer, not a villain, not a rhetorician, and that the millenium would not be

established on earth by the honeyed and exalted phrases of the idealistic and high-minded Gironde, but by the Terrorists, the two-edged sword of the words and deeds of the Robespierres and the Saint-Justs.

*From a letter to V. Botkin, 1842*

**ALEXANDER HERTZEN**

With the word "Paris" we are accustomed to associate memories of great events, great masses, great people, the years 1789 and 1793; memories of a colossal struggle for thought, for rights, for human dignity, a struggle that after it was over on the squares and streets, continued, now on the field of battle, now in parliamentary debate. The name of Paris is closely linked with the highest hopes of modern man; I approached it with flutterings of the heart; with the awe that people used to feel when appproaching Rome. And what did I find?—The Paris described in the *Imbes* of Barbier, in the novels of Sue and nothing more. I was astonished, grieved; I was frightened, for there remained nothing more for me to do but to board ship at Havre and sail for New York, or Texas. Veiled as it was by the showy stage-scenery of artificial serenity and wealth, the invisible Paris of the secret societies, the workers, the martyrs to ideas and the martyrs to life, did not exist for the foreigner. Visible Paris presented a picture of moral depravity, of soul-weariness, emptiness, and pettiness; complete indifference to anything outside the narrow circle of trivial daily questions prevailed in society.

*From a letter, Paris, 1848*

The Terror of 1793 was magnificent in its stern relentlessness. The whole of Europe burst into France to punish the Revolution; the country was in very real danger. The Convention had temporarily veiled the statue of liberty and set up the guillotine as the defender of the "Rights of Man." Europe watched the volcano in horror and retreated before its savage, all-powerful energy; the Terror wanted to save France, and instead of that it conquered Europe.

*From a letter, Paris, 1848*

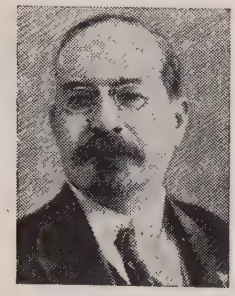
Everything is changed and one can no longer be seriously a revolutionary, either by two or three phrases and speeches or even by noble reminiscences of former battles; or by building and defending barricades. Neither personal bravery, nor a valiant character can make a revolutionary out of a man if he is not a revolutionary *in the sense understood by the contemporary epoch.*

The revolutionaries of the eighteenth century were great and strong because they understood so well in what way they ought to be revolutionaries and, once having understood this, they pursued their way fearlessly and relentlessly. To be a revolutionary nowadays in the sense understood by the Convention would be something the same as being a Huguenot at the Convention. In the eighteenth century it was

sufficient to be a republican in order to be a revolutionary; nowadays it is very easy to be both a republican and a hidebound conservative. The Socialist of our day cannot but be a revolutionary.

*From a letter, Paris, 1849*

**ANATOLI LUNACHARSKY**



The founder and forerunner of the movement to which Robespierre, Saint-Just and the other Montagnards belonged, was Jean-Jacques Rousseau.

. . . Rousseau had many prejudices, a great deal of inner incongruity, many inner contradictions; nevertheless his is the figure of the first messenger from strata much deeper down than those from which Voltaire and Diderot came. He spoke with a voice that went to the heart. The others talked of cleansing the monarchy, of improving it, of possibly exchanging it for a republic of the rich, caring for the enlightenment of the people so that they would work better, but always preserving a proper distance between the various strata of society. They never dreamed of breaking up society. Rousseau wanted to tear down everything and establish social equality; he rose against the things the bourgeoisie held most sacred. Learning creates wealth and inequality, he declared,—down with it! Art is a prostitute in the service of the rich—we have no use for her in that form. He was ready to fling away everything that served the upper classes, and not the lower middle classes. And, just as Babeuf burst through the narrow confines of middle class society and, in defending a republic of equals, arrived at the idea of Communism, so there is something communistic in Rousseau as well.

. . . Diderot was a man of immense vision and rare genius. Suffice it to say that the fundamentals of Darwinism are already to be found in Diderot's works. He took the formulas of materialism much deeper than Helvétius and Holbach, and in his formulas of the conception of matter as an active principle he approached those that were later arrived at by Marx and Dietzgen.

There is great intuitive depth in Diderot's approach to every phenomenon and his expression of it is strikingly true. Those who heard him speak said that his real power lay not in his writing but in his living words. He spoke like a prophet inspired. An evening spent with him could often bring about a thorough change in a person.

He was full of extraordinary energy. Working in the most terrible conditions he forged ahead with the *Encyclopedia* and brought it to completion.

Diderot was a remarkable figure in *belles lettres* as well and brought about a revolution in French literature by directing it towards realism.

. . . It may be said with certainty that had Robespierre and Marat lived in our day, they, too, would have been with us.

. . . Among the Montagnards we see the first great figure of practical Communism—Gracchus Babeuf. He was a Jacobin. It is difficult to say who was most in the right—Saint-Just or Babeuf. Our sympa-

thies are, of course, with Babeuf. Saint-Just was an extreme bourgeois democrat; he demanded equality "in so far as it was possible." His ideal did not go beyond equality in land tenure. He wanted to secure the rights of the poor, the industrious poor, viewed the well-to-do classes with the greatest suspicion and regarded their oppression as a necessary measure, since, in his opinion, they could not but be traitors in a republic of the honest and hardworking. But he stood for the preservation of private property. In Saint-Just's opinion, no other course was possible. He could not conceive of anything else. His virtuous peasant and artisan, who possessed their own tools and made an honest living, are part of a petty bourgeois ideal that, far from leading society onwards, drives it backward. If Saint-Just had carried out his idea to the end, he would have had to take away the big mills from the owners and distribute the means of production among the handicraftsmen; that is, the organization of production would have had to turn back to a stage it had passed.

. . . Babeuf understood politically that no matter what division of property took place, it would not lead to anything, that the old ways would be restored. The hydra of wealth and inequality had to be extirpated, the head had to be burnt out. Babeuf then arrived at the following conclusion: all the land and the implements of production must be declared as belonging to the state; private property-owners would no longer exist, but everyone would earn his living on the state-owned land and with the state-owned implements of production; all that he earned would be contributed to the common fund, from which each would receive all that he required. Thus did Babeuf evolve the idea of a Communist society.

He was a political utopian. Only a group of extreme utopians could support him. There still was no trace of a proletariat of mills and factories, a proletariat that had gone through the hard school of strikes, of a trade union movement, the school of the discipline of the machine. Babeuf, therefore, like Saint-Just, was a utopian.

*The History of Western European Literature at Its Most Important Stages*

**MAXIM GORKY**

. . . I walked through the streets of great Paris the day that the hired soldiers—the dogs of an old and greedy hag—held the city captive with their bayonets and cannon. I saw the French at the street corners: like the faithful watch-dogs of truth and freedom, they were silently calculating the strength of their foes, and preparing to wash with their own blood the shameful filth from the face of the Republic. . . . I felt that the spirit of old France was being born and was growing and strengthening in their hearts, the spirit of France, the great mother of Voltaire and Hugo, the France that had sown the flowers of freedom everywhere, wherever the voices of her children—the

poets and the fighters—penetrated.

As I walked through the streets of Paris my heart sang a hymn to France with whom I had spoken in the dark tomb.

Who has not loved thee with all his heart in the morning of his days?

In youth, when the soul of a man bows down before the goddesses of Beauty and Liberty, thou alone, O great France, wast to the heart the shining temple of these divinities!

France! To all who are honest and daring that dear word has sounded like the name of a passionately-loved bride. How many great days there are in thy past! Thy battles were the grandest festivals of peoples, and thy sufferings—great lessons for them.

How much of beauty and power there was in thy quest for justice, how much honorable blood was shed by thee in battle that freedom might triumph! Has it then ceased forever to flow?

France! Thou wast that campanile of the world from the height of which the bell of justice once tolled three times and resounded throughout the earth, from which the three calls that roused the nations from their age-long sleep rang out—Liberty, Equality, Fraternity!

Thy son Voltaire, the man with the face of a devil, fought like a Titan all his life against banality. Strong was the poison of his wise laughter! Even to the priests who had devoured thousands of books without upsetting their stomachs, a single page of Voltaire was deadly poison; even the kings, the defenders of falsehood, he forced to respect truth. Powerful and daring were the blows he struck at falsehood. France! Thou shouldst mourn that he is no more: he would have struck thee in the face today! Take no offence! A blow in the face from so great a son as he was is an honor for so corrupt a mother as thou. . . .

Thy son Hugo was one of the brightest jewels in thy crown of glory. Tribune and poet, he thundered like a storm over the world, awaking to life all that is finest in the soul of man. He created heroes everywhere, yea, created no fewer through his books than thou, in that time when thou, France, wast marching at the head of the peoples with the banner of freedom in thy hand, with a radiant smile on thy splendid countenance, with the hope of the victory of truth and goodness in thine honest eyes. He taught all to love life, beauty, truth and France. It is well for thee that he is dead now: were he alive, he would forgive not the baseness dominating the France he loved with the love of a youth, even when his hair was white. . . .

Nor would Flaubert, the high priest of beauty, the Hellene of the nineteenth century who taught the writers of all countries to respect the power of the pen and comprehend its beauty, he, the wizard of the word, impartial as the sun that sheds its light with equal generosity on the mud of the street and on priceless lace—nor would even he, for whom truth was in beauty and beauty in truth, have forgiven thee thy greed, but would have turned from thee in scorn!

All the best of thy children are not with thee. And those who learned from thee how to die for honor and liberty will no longer understand thee and will turn from thee with an aching heart.

*La Belle France, 1906*

The foregoing opinions expressed on the French bourgeois revolution by some of the foremost figures in Russian literature by no means exhaust, of course, the store

of material on the subject, since what we give here is but a selection of the outspoken statements of Russian writers and publicists on the subject.

The Western reader may be surprised to see so few comments from contemporaries of the events of 1789 and the generations immediately following, but he must not conclude that this was due to any lack of interest on the part of Russian writers in one of the most important events in the history of the world. On the contrary, the fate of revolutionary France, her public men, her ideas, the consequences of that cleansing thunderstorm that swept over feudal Europe at the end of the eighteenth century, aroused acute, prolonged and profound interest in Russian writers. The reasons why Russian literature did not and could not leave us a single work of importance on the subject of the French Revolution are clear when we recall the strictness of the censorship at the close of the eighteenth century.

It was, in fact, as a result of the events in France that the repressive measures taken by the Russian government with regard to literature increased in severity. Catherine II, fearful of the "French infection" spreading to Russia, meted out heavy punishment to A. Radishchev and N. Novikov, the two most advanced writers of the day, and fought against the onset of the ideas of the left Enlightenment movement and the Encyclopedists by publishing pamphlets, "exposing" Rousseau, Voltaire and others. While these conditions prevailed, and even much later—for many a score of years, in fact—there could be no thought of showing sympathy with the French Revolution. That is why the views expressed by Russian writers on the France of the end of the eighteenth century are laconic, fragmentary and often, of necessity, vague. Our first revolutionary writer, Alexander Radishchev, who may be justly called the Russian tribune of the eighteenth century, the heir of the French materialists and educationalists (but a successor who went much further in his radical conclusions than his teachers) was sentenced to death—a sentence later commuted to exile in Siberia—for his book. Naturally, in a state of things like this, there was practically no other course open to the Russian writer than to adopt the Aesop fable mode of reaching his readers or to refrain from writing.

The influence of French revolutionary and educational ideas on Russian literature was much more profound than might be judged from the *directly* expressed views of one or another author. It was not confined to the opinions quoted above. Beginning from Radishchev, it is possible to trace an organic tradition of close ties with the ideas inspired by the people of France in their struggle for their own freedom and that of all mankind.

*The Storming of the Bastille* *by Ermenef*

# "The Marseillaise"
# A French Film on the Soviet Screen

In connection with the hundred and fiftieth anniversary of the French Revolution, the French film, *The Marseillaise*, is now being demonstrated on the Soviet screen. The film was produced by Jean Renoir, well-known cinema regisseur, on funds collected by the People's Front organizations in France.

The picture opens with the outbreak in 1789 of the Revolution in Marseilles, showing how the Third Estate took possession of the royal port, stormed the jails and liberated the prisoners. We further see the birth of the *Marseillaise*, that militant song which the people of Marseilles sang as they marched through France from Marseilles to the revolutionary Paris. The triumphant meeting of the people of Marseilles and the Parisians is one of the highlights of the picture.

The producer's love for old Paris is felt in the fine shots of ancient historical corners of that beautiful city. Other scenes show the royalist camp with the malevolent emigré nobles, and the palace of Louis XVI when the Tuileries was stormed by the people. The film ends as the men of Marseilles march off to the front to defend France from traitors and interventionists.

Below we publish the opinions on this film expressed by Soviet writers and historians, including the authors Victor Fink and Lev Nikulin who wrote the Russian titles for the picture.

**VICTOR FINK**

*Soviet publicist and writer who is best known for his novel based on personal experience, "The Foreign Legion"*

The film *The Marseillaise* portrays the striving of the French people for peace and democracy, and their readiness to fight for them. I have a personal interest in this film for I am a "shareholder" in the firm which produced it, having bought some shares in Paris where I happened to have spent the summer of 1937 when the film was in the making.

It is pleasant to recall the tremendous enthusiasm which Jean Renoir's undertaking evoked among the public at large. I doubt whether French cinematography, or any other

bourgeois film industry, for that matter, ever experienced anything like it. I remember one occasion when Renoir found that he required three thousand persons for one of his mass scenes, and sure enough three thousand volunteered to take part without remuneration. This is something absolutely without precedent in Paris, for if a cameraman who shoots views of the city should chance to photograph the chimney of some house, its owner will be bound to demand remuneration.

A great deal of thought and deep, warm feeling have gone into the making of this film. No wonder Jean Renoir occupies such a place of honor in the French cinema. Nor is it surprising that a man of his caliber should undertake to produce films dealing with social conflicts. I saw many fine films in France, films in which composition, plot, acting and technique were beyond reproach. But the themes of these films were usually so trivial that they fly right out of one's head the moment he leaves the cinema theater. Such films have technique but they lack art. They are cold.

But the subject of Renoir's pictures, and especially *The Marseillaise*, is deeply moving, and has great social significance. That is why their warmth is transmitted to the audience.

**LEV NIKULIN**

*Noted Soviet author and playwright*

*The Marseillaise* is one of those Western films that are the most comprehensible and meaningful to the Soviet audience. This is because the hero of the film is the people, the masses, the common folk.

From what we have seen of Renoir's earlier work we had reason to feel confident that his latest film would have much in store for us as to form, originality and boldness of interpetation.

However, on undertaking to produce this film, Renoir was aware of its peculiar significance and saw clearly the goal to which the producer of a mass film on such a theme must aspire, if his film was to be understood and appreciated by millions. Hence he develops his theme realistically, comprehensibly, with epic simplicity. That is why its heroes do not merely act; they live, love, hate, make merry and suffer, and yet throughout they are the very center of great historical events.

The audience feels at one with Baumer, that merry good-natured bricklayer from

Marseilles. The spectator marches with him and his comrades through all of France to Paris, is with them when they storm the Tuileries on August 10.

The death of his beloved hero saddens the spectator, but then he watches the battle of Valmy and marches shoulder to shoulder with the soldiers of the Revolutionary army to smash old feudal Europe.

One of the virtues of the film is the truthful and realistic portrayal it gives of the enemies of the Revolution. The acting of Pierre Renoir as Louis XVI is excellent. Without the slightest attempt at exaggeration he shows us the meanness and colorlessness of the man who "by divine right" governed the destinies of the people. The monarchists are depicted as dangerous and heartless enemies, and yet they are not melodramatic villains by any means. They are people of flesh and blood whom the feudal system and their absolute power made mean and cruel.

**CONSTANTIN FEDIN**

*One of the foremost Soviet writers, best known for his "Cities and Years"*

I am convinced that *The Marseillaise* will win the hearts of its audiences wherever it will have the permission to be demonstrated. Its significance is in that it identifies the Revolution with patriotism, the revolt of the people against their tyrants with the love of the people for their native land. Having taken the royal palace by storm, the people march off to defend France against her enemies. This merging of the revolutionary spirit with profound loyalty to the fatherland Renoir has presented with great passion and conviction.

Although the film is little more than a chronicle of actual events, it is as thrilling to behold as any invented plot. The life of the eighteenth century is vividly revived, its swiftly changing scenes hold the spectator and imprint themselves on his memory.

The scenes in the palace and among the emigré nobles in Coblence are excellent. But the mass scenes, the thunderous battle episodes and the marching of the glorious men of Marseilles to Paris are no less impressive.

The acting both in the leading roles and in minor parts is most praiseworthy. The Frenchwoman Jenny Hellya who addresses the crowd of volunteers is magnificent. Only the genuine passion of this actress keeps the spectator's interest keyed to high pitch throughout this rather long and static scene. All that takes place is a speech deliv-

ered by a woman. But in her words you hear the voice of the people, the voice of history, the voice of the Revolution.

**NIKOLAI VIRTA**

*One of the most talented Soviet writers of the younger set, author of "Loneliness"*

In capitalist countries where the class struggle is tense in the extreme, where a maddened fascism is drowning in blood all that is progressive, all genuine culture, the advent of such a film, one that so truthfully reveals the historical essence of events, is in itself a fact meriting the greatest respect and admiration. The task entrusted to the producer by the People's Front which initiated and inspired this film may be said to have been fulfilled.

Artistically this film is of outstanding merit, attaining in parts great depth. One of the most powerful scenes in the film is that showing the Swiss Guard, "a hireling of the first water," who kills a revolutionary merely because it is immaterial to him who he kills, so long as he is paid for it. This brief, terse episode has an extremely contemporary flavor.

I particularly liked the scene showing the flight of the royal family from the Tuileries to the National Assembly. This scene is expressive, laconic and full of genuine drama. It is completely void of the false sentimentality which is somewhat characteristic of historical films produced by certain Soviet regisseurs. The palace scenes are done with much tact and with that aura of solemnity which brings home the dependence of the monarchy on the nobility, a class which fiercely resisted the Revolution.

I liked the mass scenes as well. The encounter between the men of Marseilles and the arsenal guards when the fiery southerners appeal to their Parisian brothers to join them, is extremely convincing and powerful, and it has been well conceived from the point of view of composition.

At the same time there is much in the film that is rather primitive, as for example the barrel incident during the storming of the Marseilles port when just a cry by one of the revolutionaries was enough to make the royal guards join them without hesitation. This in my opinion is extremely naive.

There is likewise some ambiguity about many things taking place in the film and a lack of conviction in the presentation of some of the characters.

**SERGEI KAHN**

*Teacher at the Moscow Institute of History, Philosophy and Literature.*

The splendid acting is the most outstanding feature of *The Marseillaise*. The characters live, even in the most insignificant episodes. Notwithstanding the vast number of *dramatis personae*, at least twenty of them, not counting Renoir's superb portrayal of Louis XVI, will remain in my memory for a long time to come. One can learn a great deal from Renoir about the art of portraying the enemy.

The scenes showing the emigrés in Coblence are excellent. It is clear to everyone that this is a hostile, alien world, a world thoroughly rotten, one that must be destroyed. Yet this conclusion is brought home not by schematic outlines but through characters which come to life on the screen.

The spectator understands the epoch and the juxtaposition of the aristocracy and the people. The spectator enjoys the peculiarly French flavor of the film even if it is somewhat primitive and sentimental at times.

I consider it necessary to point out a number of defects pertaining chiefly to the historical "exposition" of the events. The sharp dividing line between the two camps—the aristocracy and the people—is quite legitimate for the year 1789, but the action of the film carries us through to 1792, up to the war, and by this time there was a definite conflict between the various estates. The bourgeoisie at this time was split up into three camps and the party of the Girondists had already assumed definite organizational forms.

From this standpoint Renoir's film is rather vague and the correlation of forces is not clear. But what the film lacks as material for a study of the history of the French Revolution, it makes up for in emotional power, in its presentation of the French Revolution as a people's revolution.

# New Books on the French Revolution

## A BOOK ABOUT COBLENCE

The Paris publishing house, "Editions Sociales Internationales," has just published a book by H. Chassagne, under the title of *Coblence—1789-1792*. The subtitle of the book, *Frenchmen in the Service of Foreign Countries*, indicates its actuality, for in the image of the traitors of Coblence we recognize the predecessors of the traitors of today, of the Cagoulards of all kinds,—the direct and indirect agents of Hitler and Mussolini. The actuality of the subject and the passion displayed by the author do not, however, detract from the scientific objectivity of the book.

The book gives much more than its title would imply. It is really a history of the French counter-revolution of the years 1789-92. A large introductory chapter entitled "Nobility" (*Noblesse*), gives a vivid picture of the economic position and legal standing of the French aristocracy, both lay and clerical, on the eve of the Revolution. The author dwells in some detail on the beginning of the fusion of interests between a part of the nobility, both in France and its colonies, and the industrial and trading bourgeoisie. Thus, Count d'Artois owned iron smelting works at Ruelle and a chemical factory at Javel. Sègur, Montmorency and others were stockholders of a mirror manufacturing enterprise. This pre-revolutionary period also marked the beginning of the industrial career and financial power of the de Wendel family, which was the mainstay of reaction during the years of the Revolution and has remained "true" to this tradition to this very day. This economic union between a part of the feudal nobility and the rising large industrial bourgeoisie played its role in the process of development of the counter-revolution and in the organization of intervention.

Chassagne gives us a good idea as to what the French aristocracy understood under the word fatherland. To the feudal lords and the court nobility the idea of state, nation and fatherland meant just one thing: "privileges." Here is a very characteristic opinion expressed by d'Antraigues, one of the most active counter-revolutionaries:

"Fatherland is nothing but an empty sound, unless the word stands for all the laws under which we lived: this is the thing that forms a fatherland. . . . To me France without a king is a dead corpse, and the only thing we like about the dead is their memory."

Chassagne acquaints the reader with the class structure of the French aristocracy and then goes on to relate the outstanding facts of its counter-revolutionary treasonable activity. He shows that the flight of the aristocrats from France began in the very first days of the Revolution. The aristocrats were assisted in their flight, as well as in the removal of enormous quantities of valuables, by many politicians who hated the people and the Revolution but concealed their hatred under a mask of loyalty, a fact which rendered them all the more dangerous. One of the first to flee the country upon the advice of the king was Count d'Artois, who took along a retinue of fifteen people and left behind debts to the amount of twenty-one million livres. He was followed soon after by Prince Condé, his son, the Duke of Bourbon, and his grandson, the Duke of Enghien, the Duke and Duchess of Polignac, Marshal Broglie, commander-in-chief of the army, and a number of other prominent representatives of the nobility, all of whom emigrated abroad. They were the vanguard of the emigration and they started to act at once. In Turin, the capital of Piedmont, they formed an "Emigration Committee," among the members of which were d'Artois, the two Condés, and a number of others, including the Abbot Marie. Emissaries of this "committee" went from castle to castle, organizing the forces of counter-revolution. Regular contact with

France and with the king were established at once. The author says:

"The intrigues began; they were soon followed by an appeal to foreign countries. Here is what Carnot rightly wrote about these early emigrés:

"'It was not the fear of the Revolution that caused these first emigrés to flee. It was their hatred of reforms, and their flight . . . was just a natural vanishing on their part from the land of liberty.' "

In the meantime the number of emigrés kept on growing. In September 1789 Necker complained of having had to issue in a fortnight over six thousand passports to the "richest inhabitants" going to Geneva, Lausanne and Chambèry.

Chassagne relates the details of the preparations for intervention, which became most intense in 1791, after the unsuccessful attempt made by the king and queen to flee, and of the counter-revolutionary intrigues within the country.

Among the most interesting pages of the book is the description of the situation in the camp of the fugitive aristocrats at Coblence.

A very illuminating picture of the intrigues and the moral and political decay among the emigrés is given by an anonymous writer in a letter addressed to the emigré Bengy de Penvallé, stating in part:

"I expected to find here a court with an atmosphere which befits people who have had two years of misfortune, that is, an atmosphere of dignity, which misfortunes cannot down, of seriousness in outward appearance, of wise counsel and mature designs . . . but all I saw was lightmindedness and lack of seriousness, exaggerated pretensions, frivolous manners, everybody concerned with himself only, nobody caring for the common cause, ambitions out of proportion, a squabble for rank, authority divided among many, an atmosphere of favoritism and intrigue. . . . Either I am mistaken or they live from hand to mouth, without any method or plan, placing their faith in chimeras."

This emigré, aristocratic mob, which hated the French people profoundly and which in turn was hated by the French people, was ready to destroy France in order to re-establish its power, its privileges and wealth. Count de Contade wrote in his *Memoirs* that "the majority of the emigrants wanted to return to France to kill everything that still remained." Others were dreaming of turning the cities and villages into ruins, for, said they, "We prefer a desert to a rebellious people."

Here we may quote Romain Rolland, who said in his *Valmy* that the frenzy of the French emigrés "horrified even the Prussians, who had enough sense to keep them behind their army. And the commander-in-chief, the Duke of Brunswick, did not conceal the contempt which he felt for the traitors."

Their fury was so great that the Prussians had to moderate the bloodthirstiness of the emigrés!

Chassagne gives a very interesting picture of the development of the counter-revolution, especially outside of France, and it is only to be regretted that the description of the revolutionary events which went on simultaneously is given in too cursory a manner. It is true that Chassagne's book is not a treatise on the history of the French Revolution, but the author should have given a fuller description of the popular movement against intervention. The extent of this movement may be judged from the following passage in Chassagne's book.

"The peasants of Champagne and Lorraine participated in the defense, cutting the roads and carrying on a guerilla warfare. It may be mentioned that in the month of 1790, a noble officer of the Queen's Cavalry, M. de Saint-Sauveur, who wanted to sound out the situation, started a rumor to the effect that Austrian troops had entered France with the permission of the king; upon this twenty thousand peasants took up arms at once and marched on Stenay."

The deeply patriotic sentiments of the masses of the people were expressed by the tinsmith Pierrot, in the following plain words addressed to a Prussian officer who was carrying on propaganda for the king:

"Never again will France become a land of slaves. . . . Bear this in mind. It is just as impossible for the King of Prussia to restore Louis XVI as to rule over France."

These courageous words spoken by a French proletarian a hundred and fifty years ago are just as convincing, strong and truthful today as then, sounding as a warning to the Coblencers of our own day.

*ILYA ELVIN*

## THE ARMY IN THE PERIOD OF THE FRENCH REVOLUTION

Of the books that have appeared in France in connection with the hundred and fiftieth anniversary of the French Revolution, Jules Leverrier's *The Birth of the National Army*[1] deserves particular attention.

It is by no means accidental that Leverrier dedicates his book to the soldiers of Republican Spain, that in the last part of the book he dwells in detail on the Red Army of the U.S.S.R. and on the experience of the people's armies of Spain and China. Leverrier does not treat the history of the army apart from the history of France at the time of the Revolution; he shows why the victory of the poorly-armed and poorly trained army of the people over the splendidly drilled interventionist armies was logical and inevitable from the historical point of view. Step by step the author leads his reader to the conclusion that, "all other conditions, with regard to material and technical forces, being equal, victory in the future war will be on the side of those states which practice the greatest degree of social justice."

The very first events of 1789 revealed the tendency that characterized the entire period of Revolution, namely, the striving of the people to arm themselves, to form their own armed forces.

And that, Leverrier points out, was why "on the very day the Bastille was stormed, the uppermost concern in the minds of the bourgeoisie became the disarming of the people."

It was to achieve this end that a civil militia, later the National Guard, was formed. Leverrier describes in detail the motley, heterogeneous composition of the National Guard and its relations with the regular army. The main aim of the National Guard—to disarm the people—turned out to be by no means easy of accomplishment.

In October 1789, when reaction reared its head and intensified its drive against the Revolution, and when the National Guard led by Lafayette multiplied its efforts to disarm the people, flooding the streets with its patrols (" 'Patrolism' is ousting patriotism," in the words of a saying of that period), the Flander Regiment, notorious for its reactionary sentiments, was called out to Versailles. But the people of Paris charged Versailles, that stronghold of the counter-revolutionaries, sweeping away all obstacles in their path. The Flander Regiment fell back before this onslaught; the soldiers themselves began to hand out arms to the crowds.

The threat of foreign intervention forced the Constituent Assembly to discuss the question of the army. Already in December 1789 the former musketeer Dubois de Crancé had pointed out that mercenary armies had outlived their day, that it was necessary to form armies of "armed citizens." Defending his thesis, Crancé uttered the famous words: "It is the right of all Frenchmen to serve their country. . . . Each citizen should be a soldier, each soldier a citizen."

These words evoked a storm of indignation among the reactionaries, whose arguments, Leverrier points out, bear a striking resemblance to those of the contemporary "Nationalists" and fascists, who describe the French Revolution as "Masonic and Jewish."

The National Assembly did not accept Dubois de Crancé's proposal; the time had not yet come for the birth of a national army.

At the beginning of 1791 the heightened counter-revolutionary activity of the emigrés and the threat of aggression from without compelled the National Assembly to return to the question of the army, which at that time was in a very poor condition, numbering but 120,000 men in all. The unsatisfactory situation with regard to the army was aggravated by the treachery of the officers. "In whose hands are the arms and munitions?" asked one of the newspapers of the period, and answered: "In the hands of traitors!" And this was the truth. The officers in a number of branches of the service remained at their posts on direct orders from Coblence. The almost complete absence of desertion among the artillery officers was to be explained by the injunction of the traitor Bouillé to maintain counter-revolutionary cadres in the artillery as long as possible.

It is not surprising, therefore, that early in June 1791 the Jacobins raised the question of discharging all the officers. The Assembly did not agree to this; instead it proposed to the officers that they give their word of honor not to take part in conspiracies. (How like the attitude towards the future rebel generals in Spain in 1936!) Robespierre vehemently opposed this "decision."

Indecisiveness and wavering soon bore their fruit. The king made an attempt to flee France. Coblence began to act. War loomed ominously on the horizon.

It was then that the national army of the Revolution began to be formed. The

[1] Jules Leverrier, *La Naissance de l'Armée Nationale (The Birth of the National Army)* Paris, Editions Sociales Internationales, 1939.

rift between the people and Lafayette's National Guard widened. The leaders of the National Guard sounded the alarm, because "spears opposed the rifles." On June 20, 1792, the National Guard "was surrounded by a forest of spears." Guardsmen from the Paris suburbs joined the "spears."

At this period the court established close contact with Prussia and Austria. The agents of the king and Marie Antoinette made promises right and left to cede large portions of French territory. The Girondists lulled the people with high-flown declarations.

In Paris itself emissaries of Coblence conducted criminal, defeatist propaganda. The Jacobins alone evaluated the situation soberly.

In April 1792, when war was declared, France did not yet possess a real army, but an army was forming confidently and quickly, despite the howls and hoots of the monarchist press.

The war began with defeats for France. A few army units went over to the side of the enemy, some of the old royal units, principally light cavalry and musketeers, were re-formed in Coblence.

"Treachery and the enemy invasion would have triumphed," Leverrier writes, "were it not for the mighty popular movement which dashed all the calculations of the counter-revolutionaries. . . . In a period of a few months the revolutionary storm led to the fall of the monarchy, on the one hand, and to the defeat of the enemy, to the victories at Valmy and Jemappes, on the other."

Foreign legions—the international brigades of the French Revolution—came to the aid of the Republic. Belgian, Savoy-Swiss, Dutch and German legions fought on the side of the Revolution.

The national army gained victories which amazed the world, notwithstanding the fact that many of its generals turned out to be traitors and, as Dumouriez, one of the traitors, expressed it, "wept at its successes." Leverrier gives a full account of the universal mobilization successfully conducted by the revolutionary people, which was the first universal mobilization in history. He describes the efforts of the people, who founded their own small munitions and arms shops and worked in them with enthusiasm.

"We, the contemporaries of the victorious Socialist Revolution," he writes, "we, witnesses of the great achievements of the Soviet working people, are filled with emotion as we listen to those distant voices which sing of the joy and pride of emancipated labor."

Further Leverrier describes the institute of military commissars established by the Revolution. One of the finest representatives of the commissars was Saint-Just.

A very interesting section of the book is that dealing with the new military tactics and strategy of the revolutionary army, which combined two principles: running fire by scattered rifle groups and attacks *en masse*. The new army put an end to the large, unwieldy and expensive staffs, and reorganized the provisions department. It fought and marched with maximum speed, efficiency and accuracy. The French Revolution created the foundations of a new art of warfare, later developed and consolidated by Napoleon.

But this very same French army began to deteriorate when, under Napoleon, instead of waging a war in the defense of French independence, it shifted to wars of plunder and seizure, which gave birth to national patriotic movements of resistance in all countries.

The closing chapter of the book, "Historical Comparisons," treats of contemporary army problems. In dealing with the disintegration of the tsarist army and the rise of the Red Army, Leverrier points out that it was in the U.S.S.R. that "universal armament of the people and disarmament of the propertied classes was accomplished for the first time in history."

Leverrier spikes the theory of "a lightning war" and points out the tremendous significance of the man-power of an army. He considers the defeat of the fascist armies in the future war inevitable from every point of view.

*The Birth of the National Army* is beyond doubt a valuable contribution to the literature on the French Revolution.

*VLADIMIR RUBIN*

# EXHIBIT OF PAINTINGS BY FRENCH ARTISTS

Eight rooms of the State Museum of Modern Western Art in Moscow are given over to a current exhibit of French landscape painters of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The lyric landscapes of the Barbizon school are well represented, with masterpieces by Rousseau, Troyon, Corot, Daubigny, Michel, Delacroix, Dupré, Renoir and Courbet. One of the most interesting is Michel's «Landscape with Mill» from the Hermitage collection, and an early work of Rousseau's «Environs of Granville», accounted one of the most remarkable works of western European art of the nineteenth century.

The exhibition also contains a good representation of the most famous impressionists, Monet, Pissarro, Sisley, Gauguin and Cezanne.

A conference on French nineteenth century landscape painting and its significance for the present-day artist was held during the exhibition. It was opened by A. Leonov, director of the Museum, and addressed by Professors A. Alpatov and K. Sitnik.

*Boulevard de Montmartre in Paris* *by Camille Pissarro*

*A Village on the Seine*

*by Alfred Sysley*

*Vesuvius*

*by Albert Marquet*

GEORGES DAVID

# My Grandfather Casimir

I

He was a wagon maker by trade and his name was Casimir.

I can still see him, with his black brawny arms, forging eight-inch wheel rims, amid acrid smoke and flame, under the grape arbor. I see him together with my father as the two of them, grimy and sweating, with their tongs lugged the heavy hoops of incandescent iron across the yard to the cooling trough, frightening into silence my grandmother's chickens which huddled beneath the sill of the low window where my grandmother sat interminably knitting red leggings.

I see him afterwards strolling on Sunday, one hand behind his back, his wagon maker's back that sometimes ached so badly. His gaunt face was shaven. His keen eyes flashed beneath locks of hair, black and shiny as that of a young bridegroom. He was always togged out like a dandy, my grandmother Florence used to say, with his frock-coat, his almost foppish hat and his flat-heeled, broad-laced low shoes.

"Give me my low shoes, Florence," he would order my grandmother Sunday morning.

My grandmother would chide him for his vanity, but she'd let him have his low shoes.

After vespers he would stroll beneath the high Louis XIII facade of the church built by Nicholas Mercier, architect to Armand Duplessis, once master of the town. Or else he would go for a bit of bowling at the "Silk Stocking Society," an organization said to date from the time of the Cardinal, in which grandpa Casimir was a sort of senior president. As he passed through the Chatellerault Gate he cut quite a figure, jauntily swinging his cane in spite of his backaches and keen-eyed for all of his eighty years.

A steady working man, well-educated for his time, grandpa Casimir was the personification of duty.

He had traveled over France in his younger days, after serving in the army for seven years. With the knapsack of a trooper of King Philippe (Louis Philippe) he had tramped from Marseilles to Lille in Flanders, and from Lille in Flanders to Sarreguemines, and from Sarreguemines to Bordeaux or elsewhere.

He had read much—a good deal of Beranger, but also Aurore Dupin, Baron Dudevant, and Chateaubriand. His copy of *The Memoire of Beyond the Grave*, cut out of some ancient number of the *Moniteur*, was, upon my word, well-thumbed.

But grandpa Casimir had a preference for Beranger, Dupin and Baron Dudevant, and for the mellow wines from his own vineyards,

which one drank out of flat bottomed bottles of black glass that held two good full liters, if not three.

Grandpa Casimir was a splendid singer. He could have entertained folk for weeks at a time. Rather late in life, he had even begun to compose songs. He had quite a reputation in the canton. All the words were entirely his own. The "tunes" were made up of fragments and snatches from here, there and everywhere.

The rhymes were not quite so plentiful as the good commonsense and, above all, the malice they contained. There were couplets which made fun of this and took sly digs at that and made you laugh.

After a bottle of grandpa's good Breton wine the late M. Arillard, the physician, declared he knew of no better cure for a heap of ailments.

At his niece's wedding, at the christening of his grandson, and especially at the banquet of the "Silk Stocking Society" and even during social functions of lesser import, people would say to grandpa Casimir;

"Come on, come on, don't hang back."

And grandpa Casimir, who had had no intention of hanging back, would get up, much to my grandmother's annoyance. He'd push his chair under the table in front of him and prop his cigar (two for three sous) on the edge of his plate.

Out of politeness he would begin with Beranger but immediately afterwards he switched to his own composition *Inauguration of the Railway.*

*The shepherd told his sweetheart,*
*"Forget about the train'e.*
*And sing this gay refrain. . . ."*

And the whole audience striking their glasses with their knives would chime in the gay refrain.

Next would come the *Complaint of the Curate of Faye-la-Vineuse* who had been unfrocked and was quite a ladies' beau. He was in fact a rather questionable member of the clergy. Grandpa would tap his heels and sing.

*The Archbishop gave me the gate.*
*The Archbishop gave me the gate.*

It was usually at this point that my grandmother Florence, with her china-blue eyes and rosy cheeks framed in her ruffled bonnet, would begin calling my grandfather an old fool, under her breath.

But Florence's annoyance would not end with the *Complaint of the Curate of Faye-la-Vineuse.* This would be followed by other comic complaints and love songs. And when the function warranted it my grandfather would make it his duty to finish his little recital with an Alsatian waltz, a memento of the time he served with the garrison of Sarreguemines.

But the greatest act of them all was for my grandfather to sing this ditty in three-four time not only while waltzing which was an easy matter for him—at eighty he pirouetted like a ballerina—but waltzing on a marble table top, a cafe table top the size of a cart wheel.

Many a time grandpa Casimir had performed this perilous feat in jolly company, but never in front of my grandmother. No, he would never have risked it in the presence of Florence.

One day nevertheless . . . but we shall return to this later.

## II

Whereas grandpa Casimir met all of life's adversities with a smile of his wholesome teeth, grandmother Florence complained and lamented throughout her life.

She always retained the expression of a woman who had just lost "fourteen loaves in a single oven."

"Florence and I," my grandfather used to say, "have always paired up like two shoes for the same foot."

Their first quarrel took place, so history reports, on the morrow of their wedding day.

My grandfather had married a daughter of sheep merchants in Ferriere-Larçon behind Ligueil, which is on the other side of Grand-Pressigny. He brought his young bride to Richelieu in a new buggy hitched to a dappled gray horse which went like the wind.

"Like the wind, merciful heavens!" my grandmother shuddered.

They passed through Les Ormes just at the time of the fair. The whole village was drinking and prancing about to the strains of a fiddle. Whoa! my grandfather pretended that his dapple gray horse was thirsty and that furthermore it would be a terrible insult to the inhabitants of Ormes to pass through their town on fair day without tarrying to laugh a bit, to eat a roast pullet, toss off a tumbler and dance a jig.

My grandmother did not share this view, not in the least. Very much shocked, she declared that it was lack of deference to her for him to take part in these festivities; that they had only been married the day before, that marriage was something holy (my grandmother was most devout), something sacred, and so on and so on.

"Deference?" my grandfather rebutted, while unharnessing his dappled gray horse. "Something holy? Something sacred? Why sure, why of course. But listen to this fiddle."

And without more ado Casimir dragged Florence into the dance; after which Florence proceeded to weep like a Magdaline.

Ever after that fair at Ormes she cried daily, so she asserted. "The things he made me go through, the things I had to put up with! I used to pray to god to make him less headstrong."

And of all the trials and tribulations for which my grandfather Casimir was blamed, '48 had always remained for Florence among the very worst.

'48! The revolution? Yes, exactly, '48.

You will doubtless recall that grandfather Casimir was a former soldier of King Philipp. . . . He was to be sure, but he also was a workingman. You may well imagine, I say, that grandfather Casimir did not pass up any occasion for speechmaking, his velvet breeches properly draped with a red sash, or to have a glass with all and sundry. But above all he enjoyed singing at the top of his lungs, in honor of liberty, equality and fraternity.

Life was one round of sprees at the town hall and open-air banquets on the Promenade at the headquarters of the "Silk Stocking Society," founded in the time of Armand Duplessis, Cardinal of Richelieu. This in those days did not prevent the "Silk Stocking Society" from organizing banquets.

And Florence would say disconsolately:

"He has not been in the shop at all for three days. An established workman has his business to look after; people come to ask about their buggies and their wagons and nothing is ever ready."

She sought refuge in her beads, her noonday church services and Stations of the Cross on the way to Church. My grandfather, who was a believer, but no bigot, did not argue with her on this point. He merely said:

"If one placed end to end all the beads which Florence has told since we've been living together,

they would make a string long enough to stretch from Marseilles to Lille in Flanders."

"By way of Sarreguemines, father Casimir!"

"Yes, by way of Sarreguemines."

## III

The truth is that my grandmother Florence was terribly devout. Year in and year out, an hour before dawn, accompanied by Celeste, the aged president of the Children of Mary, who wore a white muslin robe for the procession of the Feast of God, my grandmother Florence wrapped in her shawl sat on the church steps waiting for the sacristan to come and to open the door.

And in the evening after the benediction, when the same sacristan put everyone out without further ceremony, my grandmother Florence was the last to take holy water and to shuffle slowly away.

One day—the memory of it is still vivid in my mind—a mission came to evangelize the good town of the Cardinal-Duke which apparently was badly in need of it. A Capucian or Franciscan Father comprised the whole mission. He preached like an apostle. The huge Louis XIII Church built by Nicholas Mercier was constantly filled to overflowing. Naturally, Florence was one of the most assudious. This was her turn to stay away from the shop for days at a time. This was her '48.

The diet of the wagon makers suffered badly. They ate at odd moments, if at all. It was the height of the season for repairs and wheel casting, work which would fell an ox. Nevertheless, my grandfather sang "Glory, Glory for ever to the golden vintage of good Rabelais" or else "That is why I am a republican." But his companions were wasting away before his eyes. They grew thin as herrings and you could count their ribs.

It was high time to do something, father Casimir decided. So one fine evening he pushed back the door of the church which was packed like Easter Sunday right up to the chancel, with all the candles burning. The Children of Mary in their best surplices with old Celeste at their head, had just concluded chanting.

*Come you faithful people.*
*Come to the mission,*
*To the lord who summons you,*
*Ask for your conversion.*

The Franciscan Father who flapped his voluminous sleeves beneath the golden dove that hung in the chancel, seemed in the transports of holy wrath.

He roared and thundered against the faithful who had been summoned by the loud strains of the previous chant and who were only half-hearted in their faith. He railed against the goats among the sheep. "My kingdom is not of this world," was the text he had chosen for his sermon.

"And you faithless servants, what will you answer when you are asked: 'How did you spend the days which the lord apportioned you for the sole purpose of singing his praises?' Undoubtedly you will seek refuge by saying that you mended your shoes, that you kept house, that you cooked the meals. Yes, yes, creatures of little faith, you mended your shoes, and what did the lord do in the meantime?"

And the good monk shook his bald head sadly, folding and unfolding his arms. Between the flashes of his anger which were like the powerful trumpeting of Jehosaphat, there reigned a fearful silence, broken only by the creaking of the chair of Celeste, president of the

Children of Mary, who could never "endure in patience."

My grandfather thrust open the church door, grizzled and black as coal and clad in his workclothes —he had just been pulling the rims on eight-inch cart wheels. In his right hand he held an enormous soup cauldron, the largest he could find in the house. Under his right arm he carried a huge cabbage. Thus equipped he proceeded to push his way through the crowd of worshippers who were packed like sardines and who gasped for breath. It was no easy matter. There were cries of "Look out! You're stepping on my toes," and "Where is he going with his cooking utensils?" and above all shouts of "It's that damned Casimir!"

The monk, who neither saw nor heard anything of this difficult progress (difficult for my grandfather) continued to shake his locks at the bad Christians who were deaf as lampposts to the lord's appeal. He did not mince words in telling these parishioners the naked truth.

Father Casimir in the meantime went on with his journey, making his way as best he could. With alternate thrusts of the cabbage and the cauldron, tacking and zigzagging through the huge nave, he did so well that he finally reached the chancel.

When he had found Florence where he knew he would find her— in the first pew near the altar, cloaked, in her Sunday bonnet with silver and black velvet trimming, he stopped.

The monk also stopped, his mouth open and one finger suspended in mid-air.

"I was telling you my dear brethren that as you are you are scarcely worth the rope to hang . . ."

My grandfather, calm as John the Baptist, deposited the cauldron and cabbage on Florence's chair.

"Here you are," he murmured, "go ahead and fix the soup now. Stay where you are. I will go and light the oven."

Then he turned and went out the way he had come.

The monk laughed softly without restraint. His enormous stomach, much larger than the stomachs of wagon makers, shook beneath his folded hands. The holy man was deeply flattered that people should prepare their meals in the very shadow of the altar.

The good Franciscan was overjoyed. The audience, too, was amused. The plumed hat and the cane of the drum major, the baton of Ferdinand the Swiss waved agitatedly in all directions as he vainly attempted to restore order. People shoved each other and climbed up on their chairs for a better view of my grandmother Florence, fleeing on the heels of Casimir, carrying her cabbage and cauldron.

But suddenly, as though by a charm, order was restored in the holy place without the help of the plumed hat or of the drum major's cane. In the chancel beneath the golden dove, the good monk had ceased his mirth.

Of a sudden he had completely changed the direction of his fire and without a shadow of hesitancy, he passed over, as it were, to my grandfather's camp.

Again his exhortations caused the windows to shake. Now he directed his fire against those housewives who rushed off to church at all times of day and night to bother the lord with their complaints, and completely forgot the cabbage soup. He poured out his invective against the church lice— those were the very words he used— who left the cupboard bare, the men without shoes and the children without shirts. "Shame on these women! Thrice shame!" he proclaimed. They were far from

the lord, and the devil would roast their ribs.

He caught his breath, dabbing his forehead with flourishing strokes of his checkered handkerchief, and continued. Yes, the devil would roast their ribs. He meant all those whose cabbage soup, when they did make it, was either burnt or undercooked, and who prepared the bed with two jerks and a couple of kicks. Yes, the devil would roast the ribs of these ne'er-do-wells who, when they cleaned house, which usually happened once in a month of Sundays, swept only in the middle of the room and let the corners take care of themselves.

Coming half way down the chancel, his sleeves flapping, the monk seemed to be pushing people aside by his gestures, his invective and sarcasm, he seemed to be thrusting my poor grandmother out of the church, while she for her part was making for the exit as fast as she could.

## IV

I heard the story from grandpa Casimir one New Year's morning in the cheery light of a great fire. He mimicked the monk, munching all the time an enormous piece of stuffed goose neck, sandwiched between half a pound of bread.

"Florence felt, my children, that half of the monk's sermon or even a quarter of it would have been more than enough."

On New Year's day the entire family assembled at grandpa Casimir's house around a rabbit stew (half rabbit, half pork), a stuffed goose neck and five or six bottles of his homegrown wine, the famous flat bottomed bottles that held two full liters. We called this ceremony "The White Wine of the New Year."

A timbered room with two carved wardrobes crowned with apples and cheeses made of goat's milk. And the flickering fire—large enough to roast a donkey—was reflected on the doors of the wardrobe and the huge red floor tiles which were so clean one could have eaten soup off them—whatever the sharp-tongued monk might have said in former years.

Clusters of muscate grapes hung from the whitewashed rafters.

No one sat down to this feast. You took some of the stew or stuffed goose neck on a piece of bread and, brandishing your knife, you strolled through the enormous room under the clusters of grapes or you listened to grandpa Casimir as he stood before the fire telling stories about Lille or Flanders or Sarreguemines. You put down your glass anywhere, between two brass chandeliers on the mantlepiece, or on the small shelf which served as a library, beside *The Miller of Angibault*, by George Sand.

It was really a buffet lunch. Fashionable folk have invented nothing original.

When my grandmother Florence put enough chicory in her coffee, she called us "queer little ducks." The door of one of the wardrobes would creak and my grandmother, who even on this day of rejoicing, retained her air of having lost all the loaves in her oven, rummaged in a box which had once contained laundry starch, and all of us, my sister, my brother and all the cousins held out our little hands. Each received a forty-sou piece, stamped with the effigy of King Philippe, and a rosy apple. My elder cousin, an artillery brigadier, whose leather trousers seat shone like a mirror, was entitled to a piece of a hundred sous. He was also entitled to coffee and a piece of pastry, just as the grown ups. We, the "queer little ducks," had to be satisfied with a modest piece of candy. I sucked my candy

standing in front of the book shelf with its *Songs of Beranger*, *Miller of Angibault*, *Memories of Beyond the Grave*, cut from an old number of the Moniteur, a bible of Royaumont, magnificently bound, and a *Gargantua* that was completely falling to pieces.

A huge key hung from a nail over the *Gargantua*. It was the key to the cellar. Father Casimir had always felt that in his house the cellar was in some way part of the library.

## V

At the end of his career father Casimir gave a terrific shock to my grandmother, yes, a terrific shock, by executing in her presence an exploit which she had never witnessed before, the acrobatics of the waltz of Sarraguemines. It was his last exploit. It happened at the annual banquet of the "Silk Stocking Society" at the Hotel Pheasant, an occasion which could give indigestion to anyone, what with roasted partridge and 1874 Bretonne wine. After repeated complaints of the Curate of Faye-la-Vineuse, they respectfully requested grandpa Casimir, senior president of the honorable Society, to sing the waltz of Sarreguemines.

"Of course," my grandfather said, "I cannot refuse. Only close the door tight on account of Florence."

But a practical joker sent a message to Florence that grandpa Casimir was very very tired and needed her to look after him.

And my grandmother, who as one might have guessed was in church, arrived with drums beating and her cape flying in the wind, just in time to see Casimir up on the table singing his ballad and spinning like a top, tightly clasping a chair instead of a partner, since the hotel maid had refused to risk a broken neck.

Florence swooned. They had to send for M. Orillard, the physician.

But Florence was not the first to leave this world. Less than two weeks after this famous "Silk Stocking" banquet, my poor grandfather died and, incredible as it may seem, grandfather Casimir died of sorrow. Yes, this man who laughed and sang throughout his life and who poked fun at life's adversities, remarked on his death bed, still trying to pass it off with a smile:

"I was caught on the rebound."

Doing the work of four men, and never wasting a penny, he had invested a good many louis d'or "in the Panama." And he had deposited many hundred sou pieces, bearing the effigy of King Philippe, with M. Bertrand, a banker at Chinon, rue de la Lamproie, near the rue de la Rabelais, whom father Casimir regarded as the Lord and the Prophets.

One evil day the Panama went bankrupt and M. Bertrand along with it. Had Casimir been younger he would have composed a song on the subject and would have gone back to shodding eight inch wheels. But he was eighty-five years old and it broke him to see his good money stolen by scoundrels.

He left us with dignity. I was there as a child with my arms propped on the bed frame. My mother and aunts dressed the corpse with the calm and tenderness proper to all women at such times.

I will never forget this fine face, etched like a medal above the carefully folded sheet, his wholesome teeth and carefully combed black hair, a bronze Christ in his workman's hands.

At his feet hidden by her shawl and telling her eternal beads my grandmother Florence wept silently. She wept for her dear "beloved friend" who had caused her so

much suffering since the fair at Ormes.

Brave hearts! Brave hearts! Who despite their quarrels, despite the miles of beads and the endless songs, still found the means to raise their families properly, to buy vineyards and to invest good money in the Panama and with M. Bertrand of the rue de la Lamproie, at Shinon, in the country of Rabelais.

**MARIE COLMONT**


One of our rooms being vacant, my aunt, with the consent of the janitor, put up a "to let" sign outside of the window.

All kinds of people came. My aunt did not want them—now it was a working girl who did not appear serious enough, now it was an old employee, because he was dirty ("did you notice the collar on his coat, all covered with dandruff") and now it was a student who might exert a bad influence over me.

"Well, auntie," I said, "you will never let your room, you are much too particular. What you need is a very unusual tenant, a white elephant. . . ."

"Leave it to me," auntie muttered into her double chin.

I admired the assurance which she manifested in everything. I was only fifteen, and already scared of life.

Well, the white elephant did come at last.

One day, when my aunt was out shopping, the bell rang. It was on a Thursday, I was struggling with a difficult Latin translation and did not open the door at once. Or, rather, I was not sure whether I really heard the first sound of the bell, for, while struggling with my lesson, I had been observing my neighbors who lived in an attic in the center of the roof directly across the street. There lived a painter with his girl friend. I saw damn well that they did not eat every day, for la rue de Buci was not so wide. But on that day they had a fried herring between the two of them, and they took turns at taking a bite of it, this being accompanied by such arguments, making faces at each other, and fighting, as to make one laugh. The young woman was dressed rather untidily.

Our thin bell timidly rang for the second time, and I went to open the door.

"Excuse me, mademoiselle, I am coming about the room. . . ."

"Oh," said I with embarrass-

ment, "my aunt is not in just now, but she will not be long. . . ."

Then after a minute's reflection, I added:

"Won't you take a seat? . . ."

The white elephant sat down on the edge of the chair, apologizing.

She was an old spinster, thin and black, of a humble demeanor, and her whole person was permeated with a deep propriety. She wore gloves and held a kind of a leather traveling bag, rather new, on her lap.

"Aunt will accept this tenant," I said to myself. "She looks like decency itself."

Decency, that was the word. Perhaps a person of good upbringing, who had had some bad luck . . . an old high-class servant with a tiny income . . . an old retired shopkeeper . . . she probably would be as quiet as a mouse.

She cast a glance around her and then her eyes rested on the roofs and sky which could be seen through the window, and in this position I could observe her freely. Her eyes were very strange, light and grave, almost restless, as if she had been praying while not being quite sure that it was worth while doing so.

The key turned in the lock, and my aunt appeared, carrying a large box of scallions on her arm.

I went over to her and whispered in her ear:

"She is here about the room. . . . She looks very decent. . . ."

My opinion did not count much with auntie, I could see it once more from the way she addressed the applicant.

It was a regular examination. The old lady rose and replied with a polite dignity; she showed her documents at the first request. I learned that her name was Hermance; her last name I shall not tell.

Then they discussed conditions: so much per week, a pair of sheets and four towels per month, etc. Mademoiselle Hermance kept on nodding her head, agreeing to everything; the tenant was to take care of the room and prepare her own meals; she also promised not to pour any dirty water anywhere else but in the toilet. . . . All she said was "is there gas in the room?"—with an air of anxiety.

My aunt frowned. Yes, there was a gas outlet, but she had to advise mademoiselle that the meter was locked up regularly at nine in the evening. No all-night cooking or laundering was to be tolerated.

Blushing violently and smiling timidly, the lady explained apologetically:

"No, it is not a matter of cooking all night. But I have a small hotplate, and in the evening, don't you see, I have such a poor appetite, that often I have nothing but a cup of tea at night for dinner. . . ."

Why did she blush? Did she think that she was the only one in Paris who could not afford more than one meal a day?

She took the room, paid a week's rent in advance and began to establish herself. That did not take long, for it seemed that all her earthly belongings were in that traveling bag. First she produced the hotplate, a small round thing of blue enamel with a brand new pipe; then some linen and few of those little things which women like to drag along with them, some boxes and pictures.

For three days she lived quietly with us. She ate her breakfast outside, or rather, she would leave the house at breakfast time. In the evening she went to bed early, putting out the lamp. Did she keep on looking at the sky with her uncertain eyes, during the long winter nights? We did not hear her. I said to my aunt:

"You *did* find her at last, didn't you? Your white elephant, your unusual tenant!"

But she, always distrustful, would grumble: "Wait and see."

On the third day, which was a Saturday, Mademoiselle Hermance borrowed a needle and thread from my aunt, in order to sew a button on her night gown. In a short while she promptly returned both, the needle sticking neatly in the label of the roll.

It was beautiful weather the following morning, and my aunt declared that we were going out; it was a matter of going to some concert in a popular hall, so that we were to return in the evening only. We walked for the sake of exercise, but it began to rain before we got half way to the place, and we returned in an hour.

"Let us make no noise," auntie said, "I am curious to know how the old lady spends her Sunday."

She turned the key in the lock so quietly that there was not the slightest click, and we entered like two thieves, listening intently, our hearts beating faster.

"I wonder," aunt breathed, "whether she is in. . . ."

We sat down in the dining room and listened. There was no noise in the apartment, not the slightest noise.

Suddenly auntie raised her head, smelled the air and bit her lips. What odor was that?

She went into the kitchen. Fat as she was, she was remarkably agile when it came to playing the police dog. In the kitchen the smell was weaker than here. All of a sudden she exclaimed:

"Ah, the bitch!"

And mindless of the noise she made, she made a rush for the room, which was not locked, and pushed it open.

Yes, it was here, all right; the gas cock was wide open, the pipe removed, and on her bed was Mademoiselle Hermance, awaiting death, her hands folded over her black, clean dress.

The poor soul rose, embarrassed, as soon as we entered; she expected to be alone till the evening. But the vile poison had not had the time to take effect. I rushed towards the window and threw it open wide. On the table lay a clean night gown with the recently sewn button and on it a sheet of paper with the following message:

"I have no more work, I have no means to live on, I prefer to go.

"I have spent my last pennies to pay for this room, so as to make an end of it quietly. Excuse me if I have caused you trouble."

"Come on," my aunt said, her voice raucous with anger. "Get all your stuff together and clear out of here! The mean idea! To come to my house for this!"

She shook Mademoiselle Hermance so violently she almost threw her off the bed. What could I do? I had no money of my own, not a penny, and depended completely on my aunt.

In no time everything was packed in the bag: night gown, hotplate, pipe, and the note. And all this, bag and poor old woman, was thrown out of the house.

I followed her, looking out of the window. She went, her head low, her feet shuffling, her plan for a quiet little suicide frustrated.

What was she going to do now? She must be thinking over other means of suicide. Poison? Revolver? These things must be bought, and she had no more money. The metro? The autobus? The Seine? Such a noise, so many people around. . . !

With her wretched smile, her haunted eyes, black coat pressed against her flat chest, she no doubt must have been asking herself in desperation, what can one do in Paris, pennyless, in order to die in a proper, discreet fashion. .

SUI YU

# NEW TASK

According to the lunar calendar it was March but in North Shensi the night was as cold as though it were early winter.

Tonight the moon was particularly beautiful. Full and round, it hung smiling in the serene, clear sky and flooded the earth with silvery light. All the old, deserted hills and fields bathed in the glistening light looked miraculously younger—like virgin land whose budding life was expressed in a shy, mysterious smile.

The walls of Yenan, the city that first secured freedom in our fatherland and that has now become a chief artery of the liberation movement, undulated from the bank of the river up the rolling hill—their contours zigzaging in the moonlight. Below, the shadow of the wall fell on the babbling Yen River and obscured the glistening ripples which shone on the other side.

Fine Peak and Cool Hill stood resolutely north and south of Yenan. It was as though their points guarded the sleeping city which lay between them. The nine-storied pagoda on Fine Peak rose in majestic splendor far above the walls and seemed to be on watch against any attack.

It was nearly eleven o'clock. The lights in the caves dug in the hillsides had long since been put out and all the peasants were wrapped in sleep.

But in the barracks, about a mile east of the city, here and there a light still glittered through the windows. Along the level parade ground two long buildings stretched—large enough to house a regiment. Most of the soldiers were deep in their dreams and the stillness which wrapped the entire valley prevailed here too.

Then from the political department dormitory a human shadow emerged—breaking the stillness of the night. But what a small shadow! This was no warrior—this was a "little devil"—an orderly.[1]

Back and forth he walked—now hurrying impatiently, now pacing dubiously. He walked, his arms folded across his breast, and turned his head from side to side as though some problem greatly confused him.

"Hai . . . hai . . ." he sighed occasionally.

"Hey! Little-Ox Chang! . . . Why don't you go to bed? . . ."

Another "little devil," his head buried in the long collar of his padded cotton coat, had rushed out of the orderlies' dormitory on his way to the water closet. Seeing Little-Ox philosophically pacing back and forth he called through his nose in the heavy North Shensi dialect.

"Go to the devil! What business is it of yours?" Little-Ox Chang impatiently threw over his shoulder in his Hunan speech.

"Haven't you got the meaning of the director's words yet? You are an ox indeed, you blockhead!" The "little devil" flung out this

[1] In the Eighth Route Army "little devil" is a widely used term of endearment for all boy orderlies.

last to show his superior intelligence, as he neared the lavatory.

"You little dog!" Little-Ox Chang cast a look of contempt on the other's back and sniffed through his nose. "Count the years of your own history—you joined the Red Army only last year! What could you understand, you little dog! But I—hmmmm—five years! An 'old revolutionary.' "

It was true that Little-Ox Chang was an "old revolutionary." Whenever he quarreled with his colleagues or was punished by his superior officers and wanted to justify himself, he used to strike his breast, look hard at his opponent and say:

"Comrade! Am I a good-for-nothing who only consumes rice? I don't boast when I say that I can be called an 'old revolutionary'! I joined the Red Army when I was eight and now I'm thirteen. Hmmmm, I don't recite many of the deeds I have done—I just mention the Long March. I too scaled the snowy mountains, crossed the vast, deserted steppes and now I am here still working as the others! Comrade! Please look over the list of names in the headquarters or ask General Chu Teh!—"

That's the sort of boy he was.

But what convinced Little-Ox Chang that he was an "old revolutionary" was the battle of Lochuan. It had taken place in the summer and it was very hot then. And he was ill with malaria. One day as he lay in a *laopaihsin's* house, covered with thick blankets to increase the perspiration, his regiment made a strategical retreat. The enemy troops swept into the village and dragged him from his bed. They stripped him so that he looked like a skinned rabbit, and tore the five-pointed red star from his cap.

"You little turtle's egg—what are you doing here?" A pale-faced red-eyed officer brandished a horsewhip and questioned him in a voice as hoarse as a village clown singer's.

"What kind of a person am I?—Well—I am a Pioneer of the land revolution in Liuyang in Hunan Province and I am an old Red soldier!"

He had held his head erect, his eyes wide open and had answered the question firmly like a man—this boy with the smooth face of a child!

"Good! The commander will cut off your melon-like head himself!" The officer glared at him wrathfully.

"Hahahaha!" Little-Ox Chang burst into laughter. "That's an old joke. If I feared being cut or mutilated I should not have become a Red soldier."

But the officer had not killed him. He whipped him till he tired of the sport, threw him some rags to cover his sores and sent him to the prison in Sian.

After the Sian Incident he was released; but whenever people asked him about the Military Reformatory Prison he would put a hand on his thigh and say in anger:

"Devil take them! They tore my clothes off."

At that time an officer in the Northeastern Army grew fond of Chang and gave him a home. He bought a new, well-fitting uniform for him, gave him a pair of good shoes and asked him to be his son. But Little-Ox Chang replied:

"Now we are all revolutionary comrades—no more 'father' and 'son.' All this is done away with."

One day he cried out suddenly to an officer:

"Comrade! I cannot get used to the life here. It is true I'm fed well and dressed well, yet you have no work for me to do. Our political director has told us that those who don't work have no right to

eat. Well—I think you'd better send me back to the Red District!"

Three days later they saw him off on a bus for Sanyuan where the vanguard of the Red Army was stationed. Since then he certainly deserved to be called an "old revolutionary"!

Yet there were many doubts in his mind about the new policies. These questions caused him much worry and made the "old revolutionary" restless and troubled.

The silvery splendor of the night increased as the moon soared higher through the heavens. From a far-off village the night watchman's wooden drum rang far and wide. The echoes resounded through the peaceful valley.

The sentry at the door, in order to drive off sleep, whistled softly the song that women in the former Soviet districts used to sing.

*You go with the Red Army,*
*my dear man,*
*Don't worry about the family.*
*We'll do all the work in the rear,*
*Oh, my dear man, my beloved husband.*

A gust of wind set the branches of the willow swaying and the paper windows creaking drily in the cold.

Three hours before, the director had puzzled this "old revolutionary" and the other orderlies with an incomprehensible remark.

"Comrades! Now the Nanking Government has accepted our proposal to fight the Japanese. Our Soviet District will have to be changed into a special region and instead of the red star on our soldiers' caps we will wear a twelve-pointed white sun."

"What?" Little-Ox Chang was greatly confused, hardly believing his ears.

"We've to change the name of our army? We must change the cap with the red star? Why?" The "old revolutionary" jumped up, his back stiff and his little mouth closed tight.

*Chinese Guerilla Fighter. Drawing by the Chinese Artist Jack Chen*

"Cannot you understand this one simple reason? We must change our cap because we are all unified. We are all united in one army to fight Japanese imperialism."

The director's words were always short and concise—he often made the mistake of over-estimating the intelligence and intuition of his pupils. He thought that everyone could hear a simple statement and draw all the conclusions. When he was asked questions he would say:

"This is this and that is that. How is it that I understand and that you don't?"

But Little-Ox Chang was not satisfied by this vague statement. To change the name of the Red Army! What a grave problem. Con-

fused, he pensively plodded back and forth.

"They really mean to do it—alas!"

Finally he decided to question the political director.

"Yes, I must ask him."

But when Chang reached the director's room he found that he had gone to bed and his snoring sounded through the door. He started to push the door open but suddenly stopped. He thought:

"Isn't it more proper to ask him tomorrow? He is sleeping so soundly . . . and now that I'm an 'old revolutionary,' I must first think it over thoroughly myself."

Again he walked up and down across the parade ground. The moonlight clearly showed his footprints in the sandy ground. And his step was so full of strength! He had marched five thousand *li*, crossed snow-covered mountains and deserted steppes, passed through forests and thickets of thorn. The soles of his feet were very well developed—big and thick like those of a man. What an odd contrast to his short and small body. The cold night air chilled him and he wrapped himself tighter in the cotton-wadded uniform. The old worry returned and he pulled off his cap.

"Oh, my cap with the five-pointed star," he stared at it in the moonlight, "how wonderful it is! My papa gave his life for it and I—I've fought five years for it. Now people want to change it for another sign. May the devil take them!"

Now his head was occupied with a memory—the memory of the death of his father, formerly a poor farmhand. At that time Chang was a member of the Children's Storm Group in Suiking, the capital of the Chinese Soviet Republic in the province of Kiangsi. His father was one of the soldiers defending the district during the Fifth Campaign of the Kuomintang troops against the Soviet districts. A flying bullet had hit the old man. As he lay dying, he made his will.

"Give my rifle to my son—let him fight for the Soviet.—Defend our Soviet."

Thinking of his dead father, the "little devil" sobbed, tears filled his eyes, and his small shoulders shook. Again he looked at his cap—stared childishly at the red star, tears rolling down his face. He caressed the star softly as though he were wiping off a speck of dust to keep it clean and shiny as he had always done. Now the red star grew larger—glowed wonderfully bright in the moonlight and this troubled him so much that he could no longer stand the gnawing at his heart.

"I must—I must question the political director."

He had made his decision. Putting the cap hastily on his head he marched with quick angry steps across the ground and into the director's room. He looked a fighting cock going out to do battle, the red star on his head a scarlet crest.

"Political director!" he shouted as he entered the room.

"Yes—who's that?"

The political director was awake at once. Through long years of struggle he had trained himself to spring from his bed wide-awake. He jumped down from the earthen *k'ang* and stared at Little-Ox Chang in the light of his flashlight. At the sight of the tears clinging to his cheeks he asked in a worried voice:

"Aya! Who has wronged you, my 'little devil'?"

"No. No one." Little-Ox Chang stood very still. "I want to ask you a . . . eh . . . political director . . . a question. . . . You said that our Red Army has to change its name. Even the cap has to be changed. Is this true?"

"Well. . . ." The political director could hardly grasp Little-Ox Chang's meaning and sat down, deeply immersed in thought. Complete silence reigned in the room. Moonlight slipped in through the window and spread across the floor. A long pause. Then:

"Yes. It is true that we have to change the name."

"Eh!" Little-Ox Chang choked, caught his breath. "You are doing things flippantly! I believe you are going contrary to the policy of the International! Very soon the International will . . . will object! Are you not afraid of the punishment they will give you, not to mention what we shall say!"

"Ha ha ha . . . hahahaha." The political director burst into laughter.

"You! You rascal! When I'm talking seriously with you you laugh like that. I . . . I . . ." Little-Ox Chang clenched his fist in anger—"I'll knock you down!"

"Aya. You 'little devil'! My 'little devil' is a one hundred per cent 'old revolutionary'! Well now, let me ask you one question. Do you know what the present policy of the International is?" The political director looked earnestly into the boy's eyes, trying not to laugh.

"You shall not make a fool out of me! I know. I know—the present policy of the International is . . . well . . . is . . ." The "old revolutionary" suddenly stopped stammering—at a complete loss to answer the question. After a long pause he recalled a line from a song and proudly repeated:

"Let the red flag fly over the whole world!"

"Little comrade!" the political director took his hands. "How is it your hands are so cold? Well, let me tell you about this change—we have been faithfully following the policy of the International. Today the most pressing task is to save China. In order to save our country, all our people must unite and stay together. So does it matter if we change the name of our army or even the sign on our caps? Our Red Army has always been as solid and as strong as steel. Will the change in a name weaken it? You, my boy, being a poor peasant's son, know only about the land revolution. You should study the national revolution, too!"

Then the political director explained to Chang all the conditions and guarantees for the cooperation with the Kuomintang. And he quoted some tales and anecdotes from Chinese folklore, such as that of the brothers who had been enemies but who united against their common foe.

"This problem is a very serious one," the political director added, "our Party headquarters have been discussing it for a long time."

"Since this is the case," Little-Ox Chang asked with great concern, "then why doesn't our chairman, Comrade Mao Tse-tung, explain it to us ?"

"Comrade Mao will report on the matter to us before long, comrade."

"Good! Comrade Mao has never made any mistakes. We want only his one word, then we will . . ."

But Little-Ox Chang did not finish his sentence. The political director jumped to his feet and lifted the boy in his arms.

"Little comrade, who in our Party would betray the revolution? Yes, even though you are a boy, who can cheat you?"

"I . . ." Little-Ox Chang was tired, and he was embarrassed by the director's sweeping emotion, "I'm very sleepy, I must go back."

He walked across the parade ground, his eyelids drooping and his breath calm and free, for all his doubts were now settled.

LU HSIEN

# AN INSIGNIFICANT INCIDENT

Although six years have passed since I left the village for the capital, it seems like but a moment. If I were to recall important things which have happened in our country, it might appear that I have heard and seen a great deal. When I scan the past my gloom increases and, in all truth, each day finds me despising people more and more.

But there is one incident, full of profound significance, which has remained indelibly impressed on my memory and chases away my gloom whenever I recall it.

It happened one day in the Sixth Winter of the Republic. I had to be at work particularly early, and dawn had hardly broken when I left my home. A cold north wind was blowing heavily, and not a soul was in sight. With great difficulty I located a *ricksha* and asked to be taken to the South Gate. Soon after we started the wind slackened somewhat, allowing the dust to settle and we quickly rolled along the dull white road.

As we were nearing the South Gate the shaft of the *ricksha* suddenly grazed someone who then slowly sank to the ground. It was a woman, grey-haired and very shabby. Unexpectedly she had darted into the road, blocking our path. The coolie had tried to let her pass but her torn blouse flung open by the wind had caught onto the shaft. Fortunately the coolie had slackened his pace or he would have not only thrown her down but most likely have seriously injured her.

She lay motionless. The coolie stopped instantly. It seemed to me that the woman was not hurt; besides, no one had seen the accident. The man's anxiety surprised me. Instead of continuing his way he not only detained me but risked becoming involved in an unpleasant affair.

"It's nothing," I said, "go ahead."

The coolie paid no attention to my words. Perhaps he did not even hear me. Dropping the *ricksha* shafts, he gently helped the woman to her feet and supporting her he asked:

"Are you all right?"

"I am hurt."

I thought to myself:

"I have seen you fall slowly. How could you have been hurt? You are shamming and that is contemptible. The curiosity of the coolie will lead to no good. Now let him get out of it himself. . . ."

But the coolie, upon hearing the woman's words, made up his mind immediately. Still holding her under the arm he carefully directed her steps and, frankly, I was surprised to see ahead of us a police station.

The wind had quieted down, but the street was deserted still. Only the coolie, supporting the old woman, could be seen heading straight for the main entrance of the police station.

Suddenly I had a strange vision. The dusty figure of the coolie grew before my eyes. The further he went the bigger he seemed. I had to lift my head to take him all in. This slowly moving figure impressed upon me my worthlessness buried under a fur coat. Life seemed to pause as I sat motionless, my mind a blank until a policeman appeared at my side. I got down from the *ricksha*. "Find another

*ricksha*, this one will not take you any farther," said the policeman.

Without a moment's thought I pulled a handful of coppers from my pocket and said, handing them to the policeman: "Give these to him."

I walked through the quiet empty streets as if afraid to think about myself. But this soon passed, and it was then I thought: Why the few coppers? What is it—a reward? Dare I judge the coolie or reward him? I could find no answer.

And to this day I often recall this incident. And whenever I think of it I am miserable. It is painful to think of myself. I cannot remember well the political and military struggles of the last few years; I cannot remember a word of ancient literature which I studied in my childhood. Only this insignificant incident remains in my memory, and each time it comes back to me I feel ashamed but simultaneously it awakens within me new emotions, strengthens my courage and my faith in people.

*The Death of a Ricksha* *by N. Rusakov*

# Modern English Poetry

Among writers and critics of English poetry today there are some who believe that it is on the eve of a renaissance and others who assert that the art is as good as buried. To understand these extremes of hope and of despair it is necessary to go back a little in history.

We should remember, first of all, that since the end of the Elizabethan period the "great names" in English poetry have been the names of writers who have written for more or less well-defined social classes. Since the time when the Puritans closed the theaters, there has been no great popular poetry in England. But it would not be true to say that since that time the audience for poetry has decreased from year to year. Indeed it is probably true that during the Victorian period the poets Tennyson and Browning were more widely read than had been any poets in the preceding periods. For this time was, or rather appeared to be, the triumphant era of liberalism. The old feudal bonds were being broken one by one, and men did not perceive that in their place new fetters (indeed "the cash-nexus") were being laid upon them. In spite of the obvious losses and the frightful suffering of the time, there was a comfortable and not wholly unwarrented belief that civilization was on the right track, that life held promise, that with a little patience, a little more hard work, the millennium might be peacefully expected

In this social mood of confidence and optimism literature certainly throve. The new proletariat, driven off the land into factories, had—it is true—no time for poetry: but the growth of the proletariat was matched by the growth of the middle class, and of the bureaucracy: and for these culture was both desirable and necessary. Poets, still from the "upper" class, satisfied the demand and did not for some time observe that anything was wrong: for poets are not necessarily, or at all times, acute political theorists or accurate observers. It was the Victorian prose-writers, Dickens, Ruskin and Carlyle, who first began to open the eyes of the "cultured" to the real world of hypocrisy and cruelty which developing capitalism was constructing behind the facade of "liberalism" and "progress."

The age of optimism was disappearing as quickly as it had arisen. Poets now began to see clearly that the liberty which had been won by bourgeois liberalism was merely a substitution of the cash-nexus for the more human, even if servile, bonds that had previously connected man with man. As money became the measure for more and more qualities that previously had been valued otherwise, so the gulf between the poet and the public began to widen. Poets had for centuries been supported and honored by a governing class. The new governing class showed less and less interest in what could not be sold at a profit. And so poets in

disgust began to withdraw from the world, to abandon finally what Shelley had declared to be their function—that of the "unknown legislators." The great poets at the beginning of the twentieth century (Yeats and Hardy) are consciously isolated and consciously pessimistic.

Yeats, perhaps the greatest poet who has lived within our memory, died in February of this year, and his death marks the close of a period. In his youth he had attempted to extract from the old fairytales and historical legends of Ireland poetic material and inspiration which he found lacking in the world of English capitalist imperialism. Yet this return to the past did not satisfy him. Unable even to make terms with the historical process of the world, he seems in his later years to have steeled himself to look hard upon and hate what he could not accept. He writes as the last aristocrat in the world might write, knowing that he is doomed, even glad of it.

*It is time that I made my will;*
*I choose upstanding men*
*That climb the streams until*
*The fountain leap, and at dawn*
*Drop their cast at the side*
*Of dripping stone: I declare*
*They shall inherit my pride,*
*The pride of people that were*
*Bound neither to cause nor to State,*
*Neither to slaves that were spat on,*
*Nor to the tyrants that spat,*
*The people of Burke and Grattan*
*That gave, though free to refuse—*
*Pride like that of the morn,*
*When the headlong light is loose,*
*Or that of the fabulous horn,*
*Or that of the sudden shower*
*When all the streams are dry,*
*Or that of the hour*
*When the swan must fix his eye*
*Upon a fading gleam,*
*Float out upon a long*
*Last reach of glittering stream*
*And there sing his last song.*

For Yeats there is nothing left but poetry, a collection of valuable and antique objects, the pride of the independent individual who, for some inexplicable reason, is having the very basis of his life cut away from beneath his feet. One might demand from him more political understanding: one cannot demand finer poetry.

His fear of anarchy, his despair at the drowning of "the ceremony of innocence" (which for him meant the ideal of feudalism as he saw it surviving in the way of life of the Anglo-Irish landowner) are perhaps best shown in his poem *The Second Coming.*

*Things fall apart; the center cannot hold;*
*Mere anarchy is loosed upon the world,*
*The blood-dimmed tide is loosed, and everywhere*
*The ceremony of innocence is drowned;*
*The best lack all conviction, while the worst*
*Are full of passionate intensity . . .*

The magnificent wild vision of something certainly to be born, with which this poem ends—

*The darkness drops again; but now I know*
*That twenty centuries of stony sleep*
*Were vexed to nightmare by a rocking cradle,*
*And what rough beast, its hour come round at last,*
*Slouches towards Bethlehem to be born?*

—is the vision of a poet who cannot imagine other circles of nobility than the one he remembers and has read of, and of which, as is evident, "the center cannot hold." Perhaps with a less rigid, even a

less artificial system of values, Yeats would not have been so fine a poet. As it is, he is one of our very best.

No doubt the Great War of 1914-18 was not without its effect on the change in Yeats' style and manner which we have noticed. Certainly the war finally shattered what remained of the edifice of Victorian optimism. A new feeling, also, began to spread among the intellectuals; for now it was no longer a question of revolting against the vulgarity of a plutocratic regime, the gradual lowering of the standards of culture, the undisguised philistinism of the ruling classes. The war had made another thing plain—that English and European social organization was not even efficient; that, whether open-eyed or blindly, society was most certainly on the wrong course.

One had only to open one's eyes to perceive this, and to this obvious sight the poets seem to have reacted in two ways. There have been some who, in manifest horror, have turned away from a world that has appeared to them as mad and growing madder. They have given up any attempt to stem the tide which has seemed to them, as it did to Yeats, necessarily evil: and they have escaped by devious or direct routes from the wrath to come. None of them, I think, has shown himself, as Yeats did, fully conscious of his position and stoical there. There have been many modes of escape, of which the commonest is a concentration on "technique," a revival—in modern terminology—of the already exploded "art-for-art's sake" slogan. No poet in his senses has ever questioned the importance of technique: but schools of poetry founded on the word are, as a rule, suspect.

Another form of contemporary poetic escape is into the realm of scholarship. Here Ezra Pound easily leads the field, although his scholarship, at least in Latin, is of a very low order. More foreign words are to be found in Ezra Pound's poems than have been incorporated in the whole body of English poetry from Chaucer till today.

During the years immediately before the Great War, a less respectable form of escape had arisen—the so-called "Georgian School," one of whose leaders, John Squire, received a knighthood. This school achieved a leveling-down of poetry, an easy aimless flow of second-rate emotion in second-hand forms. Against this sort of stuff, the "technical" and "scholarly" escapists certainly did good work. But it remained true that, while the Georgians made a bid for a fairly wide audience of tasteless and over-comfortable "poetry-lovers," the "technicians" (such as the Sitwells and the Imagist School of poets) and the scholars (like Pound) appealed to hardly anyone at all except a small committee of experts who turned out to be, as often as not, their personal friends. It has thus become the conviction of many of the people that "poetry is dying out."

Instead, what is certainly dying out is the traditional audience for English poetry, a leisured and cultured aristocracy, even a large middle class with trained literary tastes. This fact has been present to the minds of that group of younger English poets who have rejected the tried avenues of escape and, while accepting the truth that their world is, for poetry, out of joint, have yet consciously attempted to share in and influence by their work the minds of those who are not poets, scholars or experts.

Of this group the best known members are Cecil Day Lewis, W. H. Auden and Stephen Spender. But if, as I shall have to do, I write

in this article almost exclusively of these three poets, I should point out first that the group to which they belong is a large one, certainly the nearest thing to a "school" of poetry that has existed for some time. There will not be space here to mention other members of this "school," but it should not be forgotten that the methods and ideals of these three poets are shared by many others.

C. Day Lewis, in his book *A Hope For Poetry*, mentions three modern poets whose work has profoundly influenced himself and his friends. These poets are Gerard Manly Hopkins, Wilfrid Owen, and T. S. Eliot. Before considering in detail the work of Auden, Spender and Day Lewis, something should be said of these admitted influences.

Gerard Manly Hopkins was a Jesuit priest. His work reflects the extreme tension between his own sensuous nature and the assumed discipline of his religion. His influence on the poets of the generation which followed him is perhaps chiefly technical. His verse is called irregular and obscure, but what is significant here is that his "irregularity" is strictly disciplined and his "obscurity" often the result of a deliberate attempt to substitute the actual rhythms of ordinary speech for the rhythms of conventional poetic diction.

Wilfrid Owen is often spoken of, also, as a technical innovator, but to me his innovations seem small and unimportant. His influence has been moral rather than technical. He is one of the very few war poets whom the post-war generation could feel to be sincere. "The poetry is in the pity," he says himself, and in his work what has influenced his successors has been a quality that is as much moral as poetical, a sincere and passionate pity and indignation for those whom, in the war, he saw uselessly dead and wounded.

T. S. Eliot, though he must have been, as all were, profoundly affected by the war, seems to us to belong rather to the post-war period. His best-known work, *The Waste Land*, expresses not a mood but a conviction of despair, and it is the intellectual honesty of this conviction that makes Eliot representative and important. In spite of his leanings towards catholicism, there is a puritanical fervor in his refusal to associate his poetry with what appear to him as the plainly exploded lies of romance. Though very consciously a traditionalist, he yet finds that in these days the tradition will not work. Somewhat pathetically now, he harks back to a past of royalism and catholicism, a past with which he, an American from New England, has had, unlike Yeats, no vital connection. With all his sincerity and his technical excellence, his work has been to bring about in poetry a *reductio*, not *ad absurdum*, but *ad desperandum*.

It was, indeed, impossible to go further along the path which Eliot had chosen for himself: and what was immediately noticeable in the work of Day Lewis, Auden and Spender was that these poets, influenced as they certainly were by Eliot, were still striking out a new path. They admitted the collapse of their world, the world of bourgeois liberalism, but were not buried in the ruins. Except for the great tradition of English poetry, they seem to have accepted as little as possible from the past, but, acknowledging the evil of the present, to have given their sympathy to it, and in so doing, to have regarded the future as not hopeless. They are not, as we have seen, the first to realize that bourgeois culture is decaying: but they are the first to have seen in this

decay a possibility for new life. Consequently it is not surprising that these poets have become, much more than the elder generation of poets, associated with politics. They mark a complete change from the conventional position of the early twentieth century English poet, who wrote, however ably, of metaphysics, nature and love, in isolation from the crowd. It is significant that in a recently published collection of poems on the Spanish War no less than twenty-eight English poets collaborated.

How far this preoccupation with politics is, as the critics say, "good" or "bad" for poetry, is, it seems to me, a question of academic interest only. However imperfectly equipped for politics any particular poet may be, he will be unable to close his eyes to the fact that his audience is dwindling, his art less respected than in the past, the values by which he works being replaced by values that can be expressed in terms of money. It is impossible for a poet not to feel dissatisfaction with such a world: but dissatisfaction, as we have seen, is not enough. The position of an arbiter between two worlds is no longer tenable. Day Lewis writes—

*Yet living here,*
*As one between two massing powers*
*I live,*
*Whom neutrality cannot save*
*Nor occupation cheer.*

*None such shall be left alive:*
*The innocent wing is soon shot down,*
*And private stars fade in the blood-*
*red dawn*
*Where two worlds strive.*

*The red advance of life*
*Contracts pride, calls out the*
*common blood,*
*Beats song into a single blade,*
*Makes a depth-charge of grief.*
*Move then with new desires,*
*For where we used to build and love*
*Is no-man's land, and only ghost can*
*live*
*Between two fires.*

So these poets have consciously rejected the position in no-man's-land and have entered into vital relations with men. The bourgeois world of isolated "individuals," all with money, seems now pathetic or disgusting. Spender writes as follows of an ideal future:—

*Readers of this strange language,*
*We have come at last to a country*
*Where light equal, like the shine from*
*snow, strikes all faces,*
*Here you may wonder*
*How it was that works, money,*
*interest, building, could ever hide*
*The palpable and obvious love of*
*man for man.*

And the closing lines of Auden and Isherwood's recent play, *On the Frontier*, express in even simpler language and with greater restraint the same ideal.

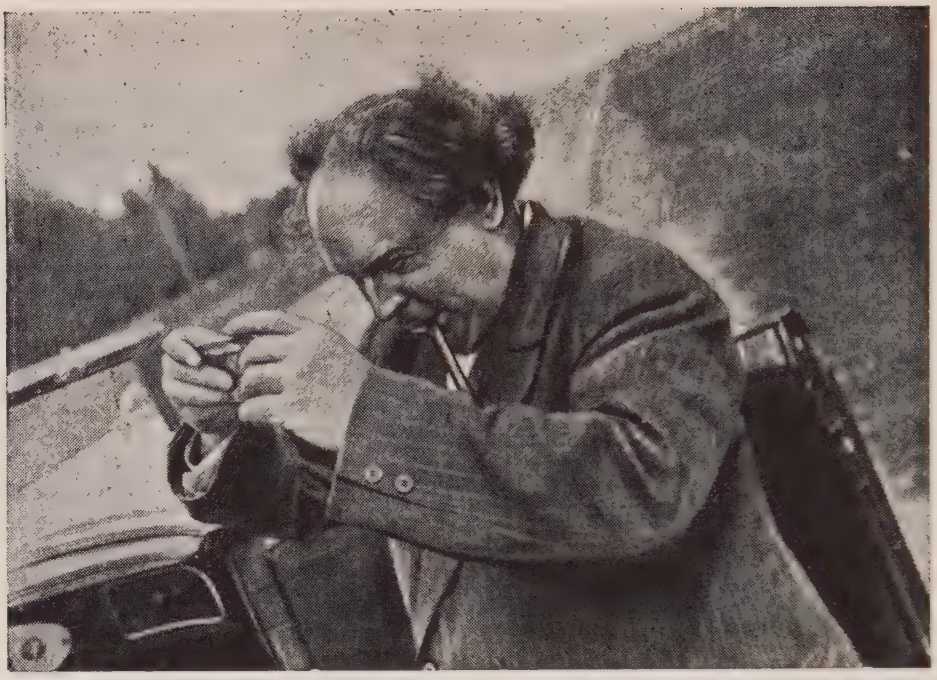
*ERIC: Open the closing eyes,*
*Summon the failing breath,*
*With our last look we bless*
*The turning maternal earth.*
*ANNA: Europe lies in the dark,*
*City and flood and tree;*
*Thousands have worked and work*
*To master necessity.*
*ERIC: To build the city where*
*The will of love is done*
*And brought to its full flower*
*The dignity of man.*
*ANNA: Pardon them their mistakes,*
*The impatient and wavering will.*
*They suffer for our sakes,*
*Honor, honor them all.*
*ERIC: Dry their imperfect dust,*
*The wind blows it back and forth.*
*They die to make men just*
*And worthy of the earth.*

Now it should be said in conclusion that the mere possession of high

ideals, the mere sympathy with and love for men and women do not make a poet. Still less does the accurate appreciation of a correct political line. And perhaps the more strongly a particular and immediate ideal is held, the more difficult it is for this ideal to be expressed in good poetry. These problems, the problems of technique and of the relation between poetry and propaganda have been untouched in this article. Indeed I have not thought it necessary to amplify so obvious a truth as that a poet is, in the first place, a manipulator of words. In emphasizing what Day Lewis, Spender and Auden have in common I have omitted to call attention to the differences of style and thought which separate them. Nor have I attempted any ranking of these and other poets in order of importance.

But, although an orthodox literary critic would certainly object to an article such as this, in which attention has been focused rather on the morality than the technique of modern poets, nevertheless I feel the method justified, for it is just this morality that is the most significant common factor in the group which I have described. The aristocratic circle for which poets in the past have written, for which Yeats wrote, has finally disintegrated. Now, the poet must either write unintelligibly or else make contact with wider groups and plainer people than those who have composed his traditional audience in England for the last four hundred years. The difficulties are, of course, immense. No one is optimistic enough to suppose that we are on the verge of an age like that of Shakespeare, when poetry was the delight of the whole people. For such an age a new and different social order is necessary. What is new today is that this necessity is generally recognized, and it is this fact, rather than any striking achievements in technique or revelations of science, that entitles us to suppose that there is a hope for poetry.

*REX WARNER*



# A Standard Bearer of Progress—Martin Andersen-Nexö

"We are traveling the path of progress, and the wind is with us," wrote Martin Andersen-Nexö recently. These words express Nexö's optimism, his unshakable faith in the triumph of justice, in the victory of "the progressive forces of humanity." For Nexö, the path of progress has long been identified with the path of the development of the proletariat, with the struggle of its foremost representatives for the emancipation of all mankind. History—"the wind that is with us"—is a true ally in the fight for this just cause. Nexö, whose work is an exultant affirmation of the belief in the future, knows this well. This exultant affirmation is to no small extent a result of the fact that Nexö himself came from the thick of the masses. All the threads of his life bind him to the masses who, in his own words, are "the bearers of the future." Their creative powers are inexhaustible. We are indebted to them for Gorky, we are indebted to them to Nexö.

The life of Nexö—the son of a smith, the life of Nexö—the shepherd, shoemaker, bricklayer, of Nexö—the proletarian writer and fighter for democracy and peace—these seventy years are a wonderful mirror reflecting the life of his people. In his novel, *Pelle the Conqueror*, which was the first social novel in Danish literature, Nexö presented a picture of profound social significance: it is the story of the awakening of the Danish people, the story of the workers' movement during the eighties of the past century. Nexö himself participated in this movement. Here, as well as in his later works we perceive that unfailing sense of life, which is a characteristic of Nexö. He did not shut himself within the narrow confines of literary circles; his literary work did not prevent him from keeping in close touch with life. He himself wrote with justifiable pride: "I can say that I have not slumbered my life away; day always found me ready to discern

life in all its diversity." (From his autobiographical novel, *The Youngster*.)

It is exactly this sense of life, the intimate ties with it, that enabled Nexö the fighter to accomplish his task as an artist, namely—to embody in full-blooded characters that of which the writer Morren dreams in *Pelle the Conqueror*. "It's high time we brought the under-dog out into broad daylight and took a good look at him, since he is becoming the master of the future."

In the "under-dog," in the Danish proletariat of the 'eighties, poisoned by alcohol, and in the impoverished and oppressed peasant son of the era of industrial capitalism, Martin Andersen-Nexö sees the master of the future. Nexö tells of these people in the novel, *The Youngster*: "Almost from birth we came to understand the significance of the words 'police station,' and as for the meaning of such expressions as 'Entrance Forbidden' or 'Beware: Dogs Unleashed', they were among the first things we had occasion to learn."

Nexö introduced into Danish and, later, into international revolutionary literature the figures of suffering, struggling, oppressed people from the social "lower strata." In describing some of these figures, in certain episodes in the novels, *Pelle the Conqueror*, *The Youngster*, *Children of Humanity*, he writes with passionate wrath against the oppressors, with love of man and with realistic mastery reminiscent of Gorky. That is why Nexö's work knows no language and territorial barriers. He is published and read everywhere beyond the borders of Denmark.

Nexö's works are well known to the Soviet reader, who has realized Nexö's dream about the proletariat as "master of the future," the Soviet reader, who is the master of a new reality, of a new world. The friendship between the Soviet reader and Nexö is of long standing. It has been strengthened by mutual understanding, respect and love. Nexö knows the Soviet Union, has visited it frequently, and has written two books about it, which incidentally made him the target of attacks by the reactionary press. Nexö, however, remained true to his convictions and staunchly repulsed the maligners and enemies of the cause of peace and progress. A humanist and democrat, Nexö has a sense of life that will not fail him. He well knows where real truth is to be found and will always remain a firm champion of this truth of social justice. His love for man, his profound feeling for life, his understanding of the laws of historic development are the pledge of his eternal youth as an artist and as a fighter in the cause of peace and freedom. A great artist, he subordinates his work to the service of man, reaffirming his faith in the future:

"The eye of the genuine artist is fixed on the future and not on the past. For me personally, literature does not have any value which is sufficient in itself. In my opinion it acquires weight and significance only when it is harnessed to the chariot which advances humanity."

Andersen-Nexö is a great artist. His work looks to the future, and in this we have a pledge of the unfailing youth of his art. May our friend Martin Andersen-Nexö preserve his creative youth, and in wishing him this we say in his own words:

"The wind is with us!"

# Soviet Critics Review Recent French Books

A new aspect of Romain Rolland's many-sided genius has revealed itself to the Soviet reader in several of his works which appeared in Russian translation during 1938-39, such as *Fellow-Travelers*, *Beethoven* and *Valmy*.

The Soviet reader not only admires Romain Rolland as a great artist, but sees in him a great, devoted friend as well. A friend all the more dear and close, since his road "into the ranks of the U.S.S.R." (Rolland's words), was a long, tortuous, hard climb upward which has brought him to the summit. *Fellow-Travelers* is a remarkable collection of essays written and published during different periods of the writer's life (there is an interval of thirty-five years between the first and the last essay in the volume); it not only unreels before us the long road traveled by Romain Rolland before he found himself, it also shows us his profound creative kinship to Shakespeare, Goethe, Hugo, Coster, Renan, Spitteler and Tolstoy, to whom Romain Rolland himself referred as to his fellow-travelers.

In an article entitled *Romain Rolland and World Culture*, which has been published (first in the Russian edition of *International Literature*), as a foreword to the Russian edition of *Fellow-Travelers*, Ivan Anisimov, the critic, wrote as follows:

"Through all his trials the great writer carried intact the fire of courageous faith in man, the radiant conviction of a better future." The motto of Rolland's creative activity is expressed in the words of the foreword: "We are not quite ready to win or to die, unless our optimistic impulse is based on a desperate will not to turn back under any circumstances, not to reconcile ourselves to a hideous life forced upon us by defeat, and not to become reconciled to the past."

"Back in his days of youth, in his *Diaries* of 1895-97, Rolland said that as he was grasping the truth of Socialism boundless joy was descending upon him. He wrote at the time: 'If there is any hope at all of avoiding the catastrophe which threatens contemporary Europe, its society and its art, that hope is held out by Socialism. In it only do I see the beginning of life. . . . In the course of a hundred years Europe will either become Socialist or cease to exist.' "

Although these words were written by Rolland forty years ago, it took a long historical period to turn Rolland into a fully convinced Socialist. As Anisimov writes: "To overcome the illusions of an abstract humanism turned out to be a rather difficult problem, especially in view of the fact that Rolland's Socialist horizon was overshadowed by Guesde and Jaurès. . . . Rolland's first attempt to break through to Socialism ended in a victory for the prejudices of abstract humanism, which caused grave contradictions to arise in the development of the writer. The force of his hatred for capitalistic barbarity and the intensity of his dream of the emancipation of mankind did not fit into the framework of abstract humanism. Rolland's entire creative activity represents a sequence of heroic attempts to get rid of this duality and to acquire what Rolland himself termed 'harmony,'—a blending of dream and action. In this struggle Rolland called upon the geniuses of the past for assistance,—and his *Fellow-Travelers* indicate that Rolland was scanning the pages of Shakespeare and Goethe in quest of an answer to the most vital, important questions."

The critic goes on to analyze in detail Rolland's brilliant essays on these fellow-travelers, particularly his famous four essays on Shakespeare.

It is most significant that Romain Rolland winds up his volume, which "has taken shape not according to a prearranged plan" (Rolland's words), his majestic panorama of world culture, which nursed and brought up the author of *Jean Christophe* and *The Soul Enchanted*, with a remarkable and profound essay on Lenin—*Lenin: Art and Action*—in which he shows how "Lenin's thought, limpid and sharp as a sword," helped him to get a thorough insight into the connection between art and revolutionary action. Written in the beginning of 1934, *i.e.*, during the significant period of the great writer's "farewell to the past,"

during the years of cleared-up doubts, the above essay forms the highlight of the book, its culmination; it is a great and penetrating confession of faith.

The Leninist conception of history permeates Romain Rolland's last book containing the short essay on the battle of Valmy in September 1792, when for the first time in history the armies of two worlds—those of monarchist Austria and Prussia on the one side, and the army of the French Revolution on the other—met face to face in decisive battle. Remarkable for its extreme clarity of thought, for its profound penetration into the historic background of the period, and for its laconic and concise style, *Valmy* appeared during the lamentable Munich days, ringing out like a crushing indictment of the Munich capitulators.

"Romain Rolland," writes S. Claire in the magazine *Communist International*, "uses the story of the battle of Valmy to reveal the struggle between the forces of war and the forces of peace in modern France. Romain Rolland presents the story of Valmy not merely as an episode in the majestic epic of the struggle of revolutionary France at the end of the eighteenth century against the united forces of European reaction. He shows Valmy as the starting point of *the just, defensive, national war of liberation* waged by the French people in 1792-93. *Valmy* is a heroic poem about the victory of a people in arms in its just war against an unjust predatory war of seizure and plunder, and that is why *Valmy* evokes courage for the struggle against fascism, enhances the confidence of the French people in their own strength, calls for resistance and unmasks the spirit of capitulation to fascism."

S. Claire further dwells on an extremely important point. He refers to the attempt made by the so-called "pacifists" in France to invoke the name of Romain Rolland, the creator of *Jean Christophe* and the great champion of the cause of peace, in justification of their shameful capitulation. But these speculators with the name of Rolland failed in their attempt. "*Romain Rolland,*" S. Claire writes, "*fully grasped the meaning of Lenin's words unmasking pacifism as one of the forms of fooling the working class. The living history of our times showed Romain Rolland that the only correct conception of war and peace is the one taught by Lenin and Stalin. Valmy* is a slap in the face of those who, in their dirty 'pacifist' game, tried to cover themselves with the name of Romain Rolland; it is an appeal to the best traditions of the French people and the French proletariat, an appeal to raise the banner of Valmy, the banner of a just war against fascism and of a decisive struggle against the reactionary French bourgeoisie which is selling out and betraying Spain and France."

Romain Rolland writes about France of the year 1792, when its enemies, including the entire French nobility, having congregated at Coblence and Mayence, "formed a circle around the frontiers of France, mad with rage and desire for revenge, like a pack of wolves, waiting for the moment to pounce upon the country. They" Rolland wrote, "had sworn to destroy everything with fire and sword. And in the words of an eyewitness, had they been given the chance, France would soon have been turned into a vast cemetery."

All this is replete with profound actuality, ringing like a warning to the French people today. That is why Romain Rolland adds right then and there: "The White armies have always and everywhere been the same."

And that is why there is so much appeal and inspiration in the concluding lines of this exceptionally powerful work, in the words of the great anti-fascist, addressed to the French people:

"Sons of the Revolution, you of today, are you still able to listen without fear and without confusion to the proud echoes of the cannonade of Valmy? . . ."

*Spain's Valmy*—this is how one of the heroes of André Malraux's *Hope* characterizes the victory of the Spanish Republican troops over the Italian expeditionary corps at Guadalajara. Soviet critics point out that while this parallel is conditional, like any other historical parallel, it is unquestionably very instructive. The Guadalajara battle, early in 1937, signified a turning point in the war of the Spanish people against the fascist rebels and interventionists. The crushing defeat dealt the Italian troops at Guadalajara was an event that lent considerable force to the continued heroic resistance which Republican Spain maintained for another two years in the face of the superior, united forces of European reaction. If not for the fact that as a result of the policy of so-called "non-intervention" the Spanish Republic found itself actually blockaded, this struggle would have resulted in a complete victory for the Spanish people and the designs of the fascist Fifth Column—a part of the Spanish Coblence—would have failed. Yet, despite the temporary defeat suffered by the Spanish people, their great war for national emancipation is not over; the Spanish people will never be subdued.

The battle in the Guadalajara sector closes Malraux's *Hope* which deals with the first stage of the war in Spain. The book has been unanimously recognized by the Soviet critics as one of the best works on the struggle of the Spanish people. N. Rykova, in the *Literary Contemporary*, writes of *Hope* as "one of the best, most vivid and dramatic books."

The critics detect in *Hope* new creative *motifs* and a new attitude towards reality. In Malraux's earlier books, *Man's Fate* and *Days of Wrath*, the heroes were indifferent to the outcome of the struggle; to them "victory lay in the supreme tension of heroic feelings, regardless of whether the struggle would end in victory or death." (E. Galperina in *Literary Review*). In Malraux's new work we find an endeavor to solve problems not "of the heroism of death," but "of the heroism of victory." As N. Rykova puts it, "it is no longer a matter of sacrifice and doom, but a matter of the ability to organize and create."

In the magazine *Books and the Proletarian Revolution* N. Kozyura writes: "Malraux shows here the enormous organizing role of the Communists, and in some scenes he achieves an almost epic power of depiction." As an illustration, the critic quotes the episode in the novel where the author describes how the panic-stricken crowd of refugees rushed forth from Toledo, which was sacked by the fascists. "Into the chaos of this frantic crowd entered the Communists—the movie operator Manuel and the sculptor Lopez. The realization that it was necessary at all costs to stem the living tide of the crowd, to transform it into fighting units capable of resisting the advance of the enemy, gave these people strength to accomplish the impossible. In the course of a single night the crowd became an organized fighting unit, manifesting revolutionary initiative and consciousness."

The critic A. Deutsch, writing for the journal *What to Read*, points out another outstanding feature of the novel in the fact that Malraux "has shown with great cogency how pacifists and bourgeois humanists are becoming re-educated in the course of revolutionary battles, how they learn to hate the enemy in the name of love for man, in the name of the defense of human dignity."

This aspect touches directly on the problem of morals which is dealt with in the book, and which the author is solving not in an abstract and speculatively theoretical spirit, but in close connection with the problems of the national emancipation war. Malraux is trying to solve this problem in a new way, in the story of the tragic fate of the Republican commander Hernandez who, out of an abstract feeling of "magnanimity," agreed during a moment of truce to carry out the request of the fascist colonel Moscardo to deliver a letter to the latter's wife in Madrid. Subsequently Hernandez is captured by the fascists and sentenced to be shot. He sees in the end that his abstract conception of magnanimity made him commit treason.

In commenting on this episode Galperina says in the *Literary Review*: "The case of Hernandez which Malraux enlarges upon by several dialogues on the subject of 'to be and to act' embodies the tragedy of the intelligentsia prejudices which now hamper the fight against fascism."

In the light of the events of 1939 in Spain, in the light of the treachery of the Caballerites, Trotskyites and Anarchists, the unreservedness with which Malraux exposes and condemns the false and rotten morality of the Hernandezes, on the one hand, and individualistic anarchism which renounces organization of any kind, on the other, becomes particularly graphic and stirring.

While Malraux tells of what he saw during the first months of the war in Republican Spain, another French writer, George Bernanos, a writer from a different camp, a royalist and Catholic, describes in his exceptionally powerful pamphlet entitled *Great Cemeteries in the Moonlight* (extracts of which appeared in *International Literature*, No. 12, 1938) what he saw and heard during the same period in the fascist zone of Spain, particularly on the Island of Majorca, which was occupied by rebels and Italians. This is, indeed, a terrible document by an eye witness of the bloody crimes of fascism, an eye witness, moreover, who can by no means be suspected of prejudice in favour of Republican Spain.

In a brief editorial foreword to the extracts from the book, printed in the Russian edition of *International Literature*, we read the following:

"The book by Bernanos is not merely a true report on Spain, it is an outstanding work of political and polemical journalism. . . . Bernanos continually interrupts his description of actual events on the Island of Majorca with sharp polemic satires directed at the French reactionaries of every shade. Bernanos lashes out at the bourgeois nationalists, at the French supporters of Mussolini and Hitler who speculate on the lofty ideas of fatherland and national dignity. As opposed to them, he holds up high the image of France, linking it with the image of the French people."

L. Borovoy, writing in the magazine *Literary Review*, stresses the profound symptomatic significance of the fact that the royalist and Catholic Bernanos, who, "as distinguished from very many, even outstanding bourgeois writers, really had a point of view . . . understood that by its very nature fascism . . . is hostile to the people, to each and every people, to the people of its own country as well as of others."

Jean Cassou is one of the most progressive writers of France. His novel about the Commune, *The Massacres of Paris*, is imbued with the spirit of the close tie existing between the intelligentsia and the people. "Cassou is not the first writer to turn to the period of the French Commune," we read in *Books and the Proletarian Revolution*, "but he is the first to show the downfall of the Paris Commune not as a tragic episode, but as a brilliant demonstration of the invincible urge to fight for the emancipation of the people. . . . All liberty-loving, honest and brave people take up the defense of the Paris Commune. Among the fighters in the ranks of the National Guard there is Quiche (the chief hero of the novel) with his friends. Without pausing to think Quiche rushes headlong into the revolutionary struggle. 'I welcomed the revolution because I saw in it a way out, a chance to get out of the circle which horrified me. . . . The revolution came, and I wanted it to be strong and full, for revolution makes people free and happy.' Thus spoke Quiche even after the defeat of the Commune, after having passed through the savage mockery of Thiers' soldiers, and having been exiled to a penal servitude camp in Caledonia."

Théodore Quiche is a type of a new hero, heretofore unknown to the literature of the past, which at best told "how man floundered in the mire of senseless, drab life, how the daily worries and the struggle for a place in life, mangled talented, outstanding people, turning them into moral cripples, into drab money-making machines. The classic literature of the nineteenth century gives a good picture of the doom of man in bourgeois society. . . . However, the heroes of the novels of the nineteenth century never had to rise and fight for a new life, together with the people." (*Ibid.*)

Contrary to this type of hero of classic literature, Théodore Quiche, the son of an impoverished small manufacturer, grew up in an atmosphere of inaction and day-dreaming, imbibing the ideas in the books he found in his father's library, books written "by the greatest freethinkers of the past century and by the most important of writers of our time"; under the influence of the family of Sifrolin, a worker who took part in the Revolution of 1848, and of a group of young men who were carried away by an enthusiasm for a new life, he entered the road of active struggle.

The critics are of the opinion that the author stresses too much the state of ecstasy in which Quiche finds himself, that he endows him with too many "absurdities" and "madnesses," and that he is too lavish with "enlivening emotions" of a romantic order. "But, in spite of all this, Théodore Quiche is the image of that really new positive hero, whom Western European literature has not known for a long time."

The idea which caused Cassou to search the revolutionary *past* of the French people for *motifs* which inspire for the struggle *today*, also penetrates the very original and interesting work, *The Stones of Paris*, by the late Guy de la Batut, a talented French writer and scientist and active member of the People's Front.

N. Krashenninikova writes in *Literary Review*:

"Guy de la Batut, with his splendid knowledge of history, wrote a book about the streets of Paris, in order to remind the French people of their glorious revolutionary traditions. In his book history literally lives again, history as it was witnessed by such buildings as the Pantheon, the Louvre, the Tuileries, and streets and squares like Place Vendome, Montmartre, Transnonin, etc. The author strove to remind his contemporaries of the glorious events 'of the four revolutions' (1789, 1830, 1848 and the Paris Commune), to teach them to read the history of the past in the grey 'stones of Paris' and to become inspired by the heroic past for the struggle today."

Guy de la Batut opposes his work to the writings of those of the French reactionary historians who for narrow political party purposes falsify the past of the French people, trying to deny the rebellious spirit of revolutionary Paris. In opposition to these tendencious writers who falsify history, Batut, in his own words (in the preface to the book), wants to recall the past not in order to erect a barrier between it and the present, but, on the contrary, to continue it into the present, for which it should serve as an example: may it daily say to the free, honest and disinterested citizen: 'Remember what these stones which you touch have seen, remember it in order to act *now*.' "

And in order to lend more actuality to this connection between the past and

the present, Batut tells what the historical places saw in 1934-37, when the streets and squares of Paris saw the great demonstrations of the People's Front.

The Soviet critics stress the fact that this peculiar guide to revolutionary Paris stirs the hearts not only of Parisians, not only of Frenchmen. For, "in the same way as names like Smolny, Winter Palace and Red Square are firmly interwoven with the history of the Russian Revolution, so the squares and streets of Paris are full of memories of the great past of revolutionary France. . . . Moreover, these names of streets and squares have become part of the revolutionary traditions of the entire democratic world." (Russian edition of *International Literature*.)

*The Great Struggle*, a novel by the outstanding French writer, Tristan Remi, which has been translated into Russian, tells us of the struggle of the working masses in the Paris of today. Tristan Remi's novel tells about the well-known strike of the Paris metal workers in 1935. The author depicts this struggle as it took place at the Mitonnet Bros. factory, which was considered "backward." The workers display exceptional unity in the strike. The victory for which the workers fought hard is celebrated in an impressive street demonstration. *Literary Review* points out that "the book contains portraits of interesting people. Such is Louise, the wife of Picard, who endures unemployment and poverty without uttering a complaint and is always ready to support her husband in his struggle; such is Lobier, an old office employee of Mitonnet Bros., a former Socialist who secretly reads the *L'Humanité* and helps the workers; such is Simonin, who leaves for Spain, in order to continue the struggle, arms in hand."

At the same time the critics point out the shortcomings of the novel, of which the biggest is its inadequate portrayal of character. "We can only guess their human value. Even the main character of the book, Eugene Picard, is a schematic and colorless figure. The heroes of *The Great Struggle* are not yet living images of people, and therefore the book fails to be an artistic work in the full sense of the word. It is rather a sketch in the form of fiction, telling truthfully and honestly of characteristic episodes of the strikes and struggles of the French proletariat. But even such a story is no doubt of value and interest to the Soviet reader."

At about the same time Remi's book papeared, there also appeard an interesting book *Steel*, by André Philippe, a young French metal worker. The book was awarded the annual "Cement" premium of the "Editions Sociales Internationales" for the best French novel depicting the life of workers.

In his review of *Steel* V. Rubin writes in the *International Literature* (No. 5, 1938):

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

Pointing out these shortcomings and expressing the hope that the author will not allow his head to be turned by the immoderate praise lavished by some French critics who compare *Steel* to Zola's *Germinal*, and that he will work hard to master the literary art, *International Literature* concludes as follows: "But we welcome this newcomer to French literature as a talented son of labor, indissolubly linked with the people."

A unique place in French literature of the last few years is occupied by the book *Son of the People*, the autobiography of the Secretary-General of the French Communist Party, Maurice Thorez. Over one hundred thousand copies of this remarkable book were sold in France in a short time. This enormous success of the book is to be ascribed not only to the outstanding personality of the author, and to the considerable literary merits of the book, but also to the fact that, in the words of E. Knipovich in the Russian edition of *International Literature*, the "history of the thirty-seven year old fighter for Communism, Maurice Thorez, is also the history of the Communist Party of France, the history of the French working class, the history of the French people." This does not mean that "from the pages of *Son of the People* there arises before us the image of a sort of an abstract 'man-mass.' No, Thorez's rich and colorful individuality does not dissolve or disappear in the life of the Party and of the working class. But it is so organically interwoven with this life that every page of the history of the Communist party is also a page of Thorez's biography."

The autobiography of Thorez reveals to the reader the crowded life of a fighter, a son of a miner, who at the age of twelve descended into the mines, in the workers' town of Noyelles-Goudault, and who since that day has linked his fate forever with that of the "modest, courageous, irreproachable and faithful" fighters. Later on, while working as a farm hand, Thorez learned "the virtues of the French peasant, his stubbornness, energy and strong common sense," and he understood that "the peasant is the worker's brother, a brother just as robbed, exploited and oppressed." Thorez saw the war, and this played a great role in the further formation of the revolutionary fighter. Since 1921 Thorez has been a professional revolutionary. More than once did he see the inside of French prisons, which to him were additional "universities." The problems of culture and of the cultural heritage occupy much space in Thorez's book.

"The entire book," Knipovich writes, "is permeated with the proud realization of the unquestionable right of the proletariat to all the great values of the past, with the proud certitude that the victorious proletariat will create still greater values." Thorez comes out sharply against national nihilism. "The revolutionary patriotism of the French Communist, the revolutionary patriotism of Thorez himself, is as natural as breathing. . . . The revolutionary patriots of contemporary France are the heirs of those cobblers and tailors who won the battle of Valmy and shouted 'Long live the nation!'—they are the heirs of the fighters of bleeding Paris of 1871. Just as the revolutionary masses in the past fought the armies of the interventionists who made common cause with the enemies of the French people, with the feudal and bourgeois parasites, so the revolutionary patriots of France today are ready to fight against fascism, foreign and French alike, for a free and happy France, for a France of the people." *(Ibid.)*

But this revolutionary patriotism is organically linked with the spirit of internationalism which permeates Thorez's book, a book full of love for the heroic people of Spain and of fraternal sympathy for the German people oppressed by fascism; a book full of a feeling of boundless admiration for the Soviet Union and for the Soviet people who are creating a Communist society under the guidance of the great Stalin.

In 1938, an important collective work—*Russian Culture and France*—was published in Moscow, in two special volumes of the Literary Heritage series. The contents of this monumental work are extremely rich and varied. It is sufficient to enumerate some of the principal works appearing in the volumes: a large work two hundred pages long, by Leonid Grossman, *Balzac in Russia*, dedicated mostly to the theme of Balzac and Eveline Ganskaya; an essay by M. P. Alexeyev, *Victor Hugo and his Russian Friends;* by S. Durylin, *Alexander Dumas (Père) and Russia*; by Andre Mason, *Prince Elim*, on the activity of the romantic poet Elim Mescherski, an undeservedly forgotten talented poet who lived in France and who was one of the first and best translators of Pushkin into French; by B. Tomashevsky, *Pushkin and French Literature*; by M. Chistyakova, *Leo Tolstoy and France*; numerous, interesting documents—letters exchanged between Jean Richepin and Zagulyayev, between Emile Zola and his Russian correspondents, between Turgenev and Ducanne, Flaubert and Vyazemsky, and a number of others.

The Soviet press notes the important political significance of the publication of the volumes, *Russian Culture and France*, especially now when fascist barbarity and aggression is directed against peace-loving nations. N. Rostov writes in the newspaper *Izvestia* as follows:

"The volumes on Russian culture and France are of a great value. At a time when a number of countries are dominated by fascist barbarity and zoological nationalism, the great work, the fruit of labors of Russian and French men of letters, bears testimony to the fact that the attempts to tear the international cultural ties are doomed to failure."

# NEWS AND VIEWS

*U.S.S.R.*

## MEETINGS OF THE SOVIET INTELLIGENTSIA

Meetings devoted to a discussion of the decisions of the Eighteenth Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union and the tasks of the Soviet intelligentsia in the Communist education of the people have been held by writers, artists, actors, composers and scientists throughout the Soviet Union. These meetings have once again shown how profound is the unity of the new Soviet intelligentsia sprung from the people, how intimate and organic are its ties with the Bolshevik Party.

The reports and speeches stressed the tremendous part played by the Soviet intelligentsia in the struggle for the triumph of Communism, its role of front-rank fighters against survivals of capitalism in the consciousness of people, of guiding spirit in the active development of a Communist outlook.

All those present at the Moscow meeting of writers heartily supported the words of Alexander Fadeyev, the well-known author, who said:

"For a real, serious worker in the arts, there is no life outside work in his own field, especially when it is a matter of an art like the art of Socialism. This is art to which one may devote all his strength. We must train workers in the arts who will devote themselves as passionately and completely to work in their fields as Maxim Gorky did in literature, Ivan Pavlov in science, K. Stanislavsky in the theater. Only such devotion to one's work can create the great and universal art of Communist society."

## BOOKS IN THE U.S.S.R.

In the twenty-two years of Soviet power, more than 7,000,000,000 copies of books have been published in all languages of the peoples of the Soviet Union. This is considerably more than were issued in pre-revolutionary Russia in the 354 years following the introduction of printing. In the output of books, the U.S.S.R. has long held first place in the world.

The output of books grew with particular rapidity during the period of the Stalinist Five-Year Plans. In 1927, 226,600,000 copies were published; in 1932, at the end of the First Five-Year Plan, the figure had risen to 548,600,000 copies; in 1937, the last year of the Second Five-Year Plan, the total reached 673,500,000 copies, or 722 per cent of the 1913 figure.

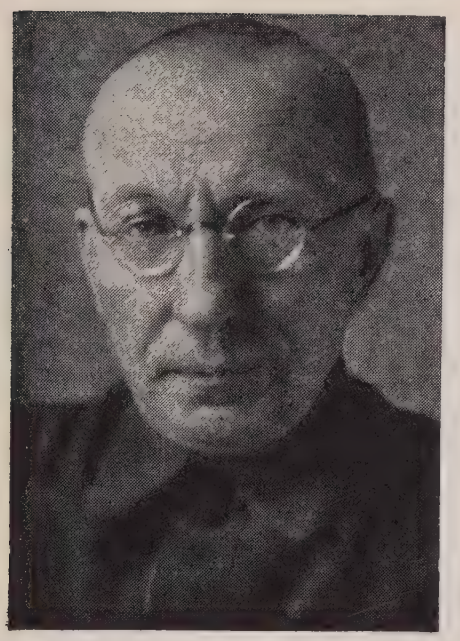
A total of 192,000,000 copies of the works of the classics of Marxism-Leninism were issued during the Second Five-Year Plan period. That great historic document, the Stalin Constitution, has been published in tens of millions of copies, and the *History of the C.P.S.U.(B.)—Short Course* has already run through editions totaling 12,000,000.

The expansion of the Soviet library network has kept pace with the growth of book publishing. There are now tens of thousands of public, trade union, collective farm, Red Army, children's and factory libraries distributed throughout the country. The Soviet Union's two largest libraries—the Lenin Library in Moscow and the Saltykov-Shchedrin Library in Leningrad—each with some ten million volumes, are among the greatest libraries in the world. Regional and district libraries have also grown considerably, as may be illustrated by the example of the Herzen Library in the city of Kirov, whose collection has grown from 18,000 volumes in 1912 to 700,000 at present. There are many factories that have good-sized libraries. The library of the Sickle and Hammer Iron and Steel Works in Moscow totals 60,000 volumes, while the First State Ball-Bearing Plant lends 400,000 books a year.

## U.S.S.R. MOURNS WRITER, ANTON MAKARENKO

Author of one of the most remarkable works of Soviet literature, *Road to Life*, Anton Makarenko, who died in April, combined the professions of teacher and writer.

His famous book, which is based on his own experiences as head of one of the first schools for homeless waifs, has been translated into almost all the European languages. It is dedicated to the cause of the Communist education of youth and



is imbued with the spirit of love for man. It is a portrayal of courage and the power of Socialist humanism which educates and remolds people.

In its tribute to the memory of Makarenko the Presidium of the Union of Soviet Writers stresses that "he won his way to every line of his productions; every word was backed by his whole life, the whole of his heroic work. He put his whole heart into everything he wrote, the great heart of a patriot, fighter, teacher and artist. To the last days, he combined literary with pedagogic work; he was a leading spirit, an innovator and a genuine revolutionary in both fields. His writings and his pedagogical system are permeated with the idea that all we see around us, the whole life of the land of triumphant Socialism is replete with elements that have a tremendous educative power, and that Soviet pedagogics must be based on the principles of Communist morality."

Heart failure cut short Makarenko's fruitful career. He had been engaged on the second part of his new work, *Book for Parents*, and was devoting much time to helping and advising beginning authors. For his distinguished services in the field of literature he was recently decorated by the Government with the Order of the Red Banner of Labor.

## SOVIET READERS AND STENDHAL

Renewed evidence of Soviet readers' interest in Stendhal, whose works have been published in the Soviet Union in some half million copies and whose collected works are soon to appear in a new and greatly improved translation, is furnished by the publication of Anatoli Vinogradov's *Stendhal and His Times*, his third book devoted to this French author.

Vinogradov has spent twenty-five years in a study of the great French writer. His previous works dealing with Stendhal's life were *The Lost Glove* and *Three Colors of Time*. His latest work contains many new facts and documents, particularly those relating to Stendhal's connections with Russian friends. Stendhal's striking and many-sided personality is here portrayed against the historic background of his times. The writer's analysis of the social environment in which Stendhal grew up and was educated shows that the French author's ideals were those of the young bourgeoisie as it stormed the fortresses of feudalism. Stendhal did not recant; as the bourgeoisie began to backslide from its advanced ideas, he remained in opposition not only to feudal reaction, but to bourgeois counter-revolutionary liberalism.

## LITERARY FUND OF THE U.S.S.R.

A recently published report reveals the extensive and varied help which the Literary Fund of the Soviet Union gives to writers and their families. Serving 2,286 literary people, the Literary Fund maintains an extensive network of homes for creative work, kindergartens, summer cottages, rest homes and sanatoriums. Last year 3,000 writers and members of writers' families spent their vacations at rest homes and sanatoriums in the Crimea, the Caucasus, the Ukraine and the north of Russia at the expense of the Fund. In the same period, 561,000 rubles was expended for medical aid. About 10,000,000 rubles were used to provide improved living conditions and cultural services for writers, to purchase summer cottages and build new apartment houses.

New clubs, homes for creative work, kindergartens, rest homes and libraries founded in the Ukraine, Byelorussia, Georgia, Armenia and Azerbaijan illustrate the attention paid to the writers of the national republics. Some 1,500,000 rubles were spent for the maintenance of writers' clubs in various cities.

The income of the Fund is made up of state appropriations and a fixed percentage which publishing houses are required by law to pay on every work they put out. In the last four years this income has amounted to 40,000,000 rubles.

*Illustration to "David of Sasun." by A. Shota Mamajanyan*

## THOUSANDTH ANNIVERSARY OF ARMENIAN EPIC

Extensive preparations are in progress in the Soviet Union for the celebration of the thousandth anniversary of the great Armenian popular epic, *David of Sasun.*

According to I. Orbeli, chairman of the Armenian Republic's jubilee committee, the poem mirrors the culture of the Armenian people. Just as one cannot know Georgian culture without studying Shota Rust'hveli, so one cannot know Armenian culture without a profound study of *David of Sasun.* This monumental work of literature gives striking expression to the people's conception of the way in which man subdues nature.

There are some seventy variants in Armenian of the text of the great poem. Research workers of the Armenian branch of the Academy of Sciences of the U.S.S.R. have done a great deal of work on the text in order to prepare a definitive edition. In Armenia itself the poem is to be published in Armenian and Russian, while a Russian edition of 100,000 copies is to be published in Moscow. Writers' organizations in Armenia are issuing a collective volume of scholarly articles on the epic and another collection entitled *Armenian Writers on "David of Sasun."*

## DEATH OF I. M. GUBKIN, NOTED SOVIET GEOLOGIST

With the death of Academician Ivan Gubkin, Vice-President of the Academy of Sciences of the U.S.S.R., the Soviet Union has lost one of its outstanding scientists and public men. His death followed a long and severe illness.

An energetic and tireless investigator, he was one of the many Soviet scientists whose labors have won world-wide recognition. He was a daring innovator and revolutionary in his field of geology and played a great role in linking his science with practical endeavor.

Academician Gubkin was justly recognized as the organizer and leader of Soviet geology; he headed the work of the many groups of oil geologists who have been carrying out the task set by the Soviet Government of creating and developing a new oil base for the U.S.S.R. At the same time he carried on extensive pedagogical and public activity, heading the Moscow Mining Academy and serving as a deputy to the Supreme Soviet of the U.S.S.R.

His was an eventful career. Son of a poor peasant, he rose from the occupation of village teacher to become an academician whose scientific and practical contributions are held in high esteem by the whole world of geology. He was chairman of the Soviet delegation to the Sixteenth International Geological Congress in Washington in 1933 and Chairman of the Seventeenth International Geological Congress in Moscow in 1937.

## TRAINING ACTORS FOR 790 THEATERS

The extensive system of training young actors in the Soviet Union and the interest in this question are quite understandable in view of the fact that the country now has a total of 790 legitimate theaters, many of which are in localities that till recently had no conception of what a theater was. Among the theaters established in national republics and regions, some cater to peoples who before the Revolution did not possess a written language; there are hundreds of traveling theaters for collective farm localities; and these young dramatic groups are appearing in plays by Shakespeare, Molière, Schiller, Goldoni, Gorky and Chekhov, as well as in contemporary Soviet pieces.

State theatrical institutes in Moscow and Kiev and fourty-four other theatrical schools have an enrollment of four thousand. Besides this, many famous theaters have their own educational studios.

Of particular interest are the ten national studios of the Lunacharsky State Institute of Theatrical Art, which, in addition to training actors for the Russian stage, also prepares personnel for the Adyghei, Kalmyk, Checheno-Ingush, Balkarian, Kara-Kalpak, Kabardinian, Tajik, Turkmenian, Kirghiz and Komi theaters. Whole troupes of young theater workers from the republics are trained in the Institute and return to found theaters among their own people. Osetian, Kazakh and Yakut dramatic theaters have been founded in this way.

The thousands of young aspirants to a stage career who come to such educational institutions every autumn are carefully selected. Their training courses include a general education and social and political sciences in addition to special theatrical disciplines, with special libraries, museums, art galleries and frequent visits to the country's best theaters at their service. All of them receive stipends and are provided with living quarters.

The question of the education of young actors was dealt with in a recent article in the newspaper *Izvestia* by L. Leonidov, famous actor of the Moscow Art Theater.

"No little effort," wrote Leonidov, "must be expended to inculcate in young actors the ability to interpret with all profundity and artistic truth the works of the great dramatists and convey their conceptions and ideas to the spectator."

Stressing the cultural background necessary to act the characters of Shakespeare or Molière, Leonidov laid emphasis on the work done by veteran masters of the stage to transmit their experience to the younger generation. For actors of Stanislavsky's school, he stated, the training of future actors in deportment on and off the stage seemed of particular significance; without discipline and modesty, even great gifts would not come to fruition.

"The contemporary Soviet actor is above all a public-spirited citizen of the Soviet state, a person of all-round culture and education, who constantly improves his knowledge," the veteran actor continued. He stressed the need to interpret roles from the point of view of the Soviet citizen; even when portraying such a character as Othello, the actor must strive to make his interpretation understandable to the Soviet audience; he must strive to make the audience perceive the truth of his portrayal. Leonidov emphasized the importance for actors young and old of mastering Marxist-Leninist theory. "Without a complete mastery of that treasure of human experience, it is difficult, it is impossible for a Soviet artist to work."

## FAMOUS FAMILY ONE HUNDRED YEARS ON STAGE

Prov Sadovsky who came to the stage of the Maly Theater in Moscow in 1839, founded a theatrical dynasty which has made stage history ever since. The Soviet press and public recently marked the hundredth anniversary of this famous family's connection with the Maly Theater and their contribution to theatrical art.

Closely associated with the famous Russian dramatist, A. N. Ostrovsky, the first Prov Sadovsky won fame as an interpreter of that playwright's characters drawn from the real life of Russia of his day.

His son, Mikhail, and the latter's wife, Olga, continued the tradition and both became the exponents of the realistic school on the Russian stage. Mikhail made his debut in 1869 in an Ostrovsky play, supporting his father. The musical Russian speech of the three Sadovskys was one of the chief attractions of their acting.

The present representative of the family on the stage of the Maly Theater is Mikhail's son, People's Artist of the U.S.S.R. Prov M. Sadovsky. Continuing the family tradition of splendid realistic action and classic diction, he has shown exceptional talent for bringing out the social traits of the characters he portrays and is famous for his interpretations of the deceitfulness of the English King Charles, the falsity of Alexander I, the nobility and pathos of Brutus in *Julius Caesar* and the stern and self-sacrificing devotion of a Bolshevik during Civil War days in *Lyubov Yarovaya*.

On the occasion of the hundredth anniversary, *Pravda*, leading Soviet newspaper, remarked:

"Prov Sadovsky is a People's Artist of the U.S.S.R. But when you think of the hundred-year history of the Sadovsky family in the Maly Theater, you want to say that the whole family was made up of People's Artists. This has been a family of great artists who could not conceive of their creative work except in connection with the people, who filled their work with ardent love for their fatherland and tried in the theater to reflect Russian life with the greatest completeness and truth. The labors through one hundred years of three generations of the Sadovsky family, three generations of people's artists and patriots, is a precious contribution to the culture of the Russian people."

## NEW SOVIET FILMS

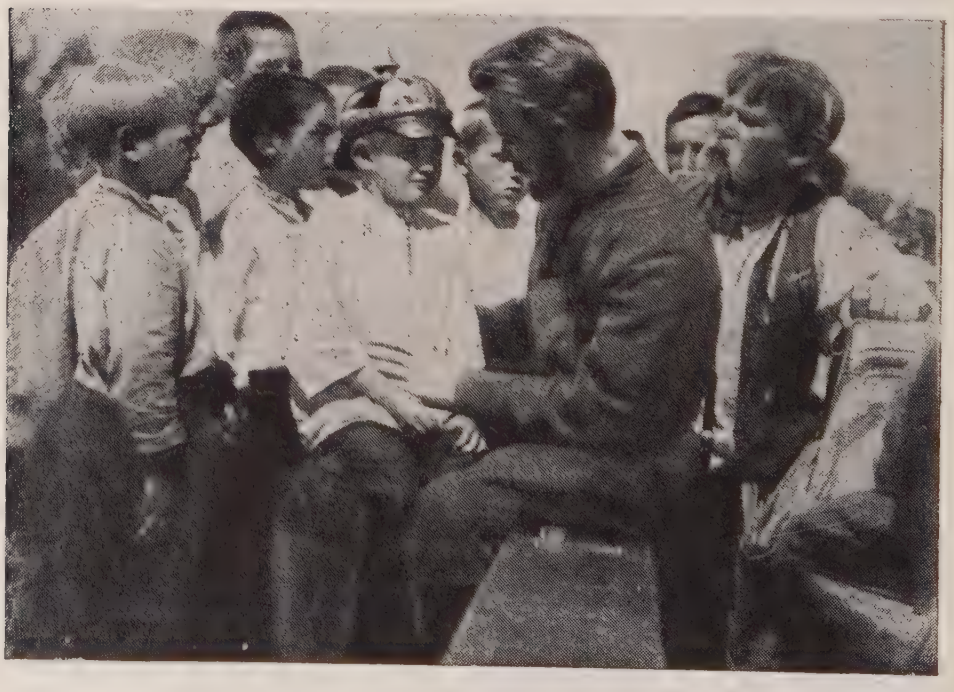
Directed by A. Dovzhenko, the new Soviet film, *Shchors*, presents a great historical canvas of the grim and unforgettable events of 1918-19. It deals with the exploits of the Ukrainian popular hero and Civil War commander, Nikolai Shchors, and shows how the people of the Ukraine rose to resist the German invaders. Organization of partisan detachments, echoes of the revolution in Germany, fraternization between German and Russian soldiers, scenes in German staff headquarters, the hetman's palace, a Polish castle follow one another.

Vsevolod Vishnevsky, Soviet writer, stresses the originality and artistic power of the picture, with its beautiful panoramas of the Ukrainian landscape.

"Fogs hang over the backwaters of the Chernigov region, and grim, silent partisans appear out of the water. Their passports are welts and stripes raised on their backs by the blows of German ramrods. These are men who have made their way to us, to Soviet territory. The sun rises and the sky is extraordinarily blue, as Nikolai Shchors comes to meet these men. . . .

"But these are not only the memorable events of 1919. They are a stern, firm reminder to our foes of what power we possess, what our people can do in war, what historic traditions we have."

Film directors G. Kozintsev and L. Trauberg, who made the famous Maxim trilogy (*The Youth of Maxim*, *The Return of Maxim* and *New Horizons*), are now at work on a picture about Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, the founders of scientific Socialism.



*A still from "Shchors"*

Soviet cinema people have long been attracted by the idea of such a film, the two directors pointed out in a press statement, and the series of great pictures turned out in recent years by film workers here have paved the way for this attempt. The correspondence of Marx and Engels and the reminiscences of friends furnish rich factual material.

"We must reproduce on the screen the epoch in which the creators of scientific Socialism lived and worked," Kozintsev and Trauberg stated. "Along with Marx and Engels, we intend to bring to the screen their intimates and friends, Jenny Marx, Lafargue, Marx's daughters and others and also the people against whom Marx had to stuggle."

## NOTES

On the occasion of the twentieth anniversary of the State Jewish Theater, the Soviet Government bestowed the title of People's Artist of the U.S.S.R. on its director, Semyon Michoels, and awarded him the Order of Lenin. A number of other members of the troupe likewise received awards.

A song and dance ensemble made up of miners and their wives and directed by the well-known composer, Isaac Dunayevsky, was well received during recent Moscow concerts. Among its outstanding performers are a telephone operator, a worker at the coal mine, a mule driver and a machinist.

The 290 collective farm theaters of the U.S.S.R. are now competing for the honor of appearing in Moscow this summer in the All-Union Festival of Collective Farm Theaters. Performances will be given on the grounds of the Agricultural Exposition which will open on August 1, 1939.

Marshal of the Soviet Union Semyon Budyonny has issued a special order commending the work of the Grekov Studio of Graphic Arts of the Red Army. The studio has trained more than two hundred talented artists from the ranks of the Red Army.

A memorial museum to the Decembrist Alexander Bestuzhev (Marlinsky) has been established in Novo-Selenginsk by the Council of People's Commissars of the Buryat-Mongolian A.S.S.R. Bestuzhev, whose tales, sketches and critical articles attracted wide attention, was exiled to Siberia for his part in the Decembrist uprising against Nicholas I in 1825, and spent several years at Novo-Selenginsk. Transferred as a plain soldier to the Caucasus in 1829, he was killed there in a battle with Circassians in 1837.



## *FRANCE*

### REMINISCENCES ABOUT ANATOLE FRANCE

Reminiscences about France by his friend Georges Renard, a former Communard, are contained in the Anatole France So ciety's bulletin, published in Paris. Three years younger than the writer, Renard (1847-1930) outlived his friend by six years. After participation in the Paris Commune in 1871, he fled to Switzerland to escape persecution; for the last fifty years of his life he was a professor of the College de France.

In his youth when he was still working in the Senate library, Anatole France was conservative, according to Renard who met the writer frequently in the offices of the *Nouvelle Revue* magazine. At that time they had in common only their hatred for clericalism. The Dreyfuss case brought an abrupt change in Anatole France's social and political views. Renard tells of meeting France at a luncheon given by Jaurès, where the writer revealed himself as an ardent supporter of Socialism.

The same thought was expressed by Claud Aveline in a speech to the Union of German Writers in Paris. Progressive circles can find support for their fight against reaction in the works of great writers of the past, including Anatole France, he stated, and cited unpublished documents showing that France from the Dreyfuss case till his death in 1924 courageously defended the cause of the people. Aveline's speech is greeted by the antifascist press as "helping to destroy the legend of Anatole France as a skeptic and egoist and restore the truth, which is that France was a great writer closely linked with his people."

On the occasion of the fifteenth anniversary of the death of Anatole France a literary museum devoted to the great writer is to be opened at La Bechellerie near Tours, in the house where he spent the last years of his life.

### NEW BOOK EXPOSES FASCIST AGGRESSION

A powerful and well-timed work of political pamphleteering is *Mémorial de la Guerre Blanche* by Georges Duhamel,

issued by the *Mercure de France* publishers. Purporting to be extracts from a diary kept in 1945, the book tells of the demands Hitler makes to the United States after the Third Reich has already annexed Switzerland, Holland, Belgium, the Scandinavian countries and northern Italy as far as Milan.

Hitler next demands autonomy for Germans living in New York and the introduction of German police in all American cities with two per cent of Germans among the population. At the same time he begins to worry about the 267 German "Aryans" in Australia.

Luc Durtain, reviewing the book in *Ce Soir*, writes: "Do you know what 'white war' is? It is war without the roar of cannon, war that hypocritically assumes a peaceful aspect, but one that forces people to blench and tremble. This is the war that France faced in the summer of last year and lost on Sept. 30. . . .You will read these twenty-six chapters attentively, for every one of them brands some instance of the stupidity or cowardice of those who kneel to fascism."

## WHAT DO FRENCH YOUTH READ?

Fascist contacts with publishing houses specializing in trashy literature for the young have been exposed in a series of articles by Bertrand Gautier in the newspaper *Avantguard*. The Faillard publishing firm, for instance, has close ties with the fascist newspaper *Action Française* and the notorious Chiappe: it publishes such books for youth as *Delphine's Crime*, *Artful Loletta* and *The Secret Guillotine*. Another cheap publishing house, the so-called *Cinema Library*, puts out trash of the worst sort to distract young people from the labor movement and revolutionary struggle. These books frequently attack "inciters of strikes."

One of Gautier's articles tells of many letters he has received from young readers complaining that hardships and the struggle for existence prevent them from reading a great deal. One complains that he is so overworked "that he can scarcely read twenty pages without fatigue" and a young railway worker says that the monotony of everyday life leads him to seek stories of adventure and fantastic romance.

## FATE OF A WORKER-WRITER IN FRANCE

"What a tremendous difference between the worker-writer in the U.S.S.R. and the French proletarian who dares to take up the pen!" says Georges David, French writer, in a letter to the editors of *International Literature*. "All doors are closed to the worker-writer in France. In the U.S.S.R. he is given every encouragement and support. I know of the large editions which are published in the U.S.S.R.

"How difficult the situation of our worker-writers! Even if they succeed in having their works published, they must be satisfied with a few well-wishing readers and remember Montaigne's words, 'For me a few are enough, for me one is enough, for me none is enough.' Stendhal also said that he wished to write for the few. But Stendhal exaggerated; everyone, whether plowman, autobus conductor or member of the French Institute, writes to be read; and this is a quite understandable and purely human feeling.

"People read comparatively little in France and at that they read principally the books of bourgeois authors. A mediocre novel published by a 'well-intentioned' firm has more chance to be circulated than a really valuable work issued by a proletarian publishing house; moreover, the mediocre novel has far more chance to get some kind of literary prize at the end of the year.

"I know that in the U.S.S.R. a worker-poet does not forsake his own environment; he is able to combine the writing of poetry with his professional work. Here in France, if a worker-writer wants to achieve success, he must conceal the fact that he is a worker.

"Son of a worker, I was a baker's apprentice at thirteen. At fifteen I began to write and sent my poems to cheap popular magazines selling for ten centimes a copy. Had I been the darling of a bourgeois family and at fifteen had begun to send my verses to de luxe publications, I should probably have been a member of the Academy by now and as rich as Croesus.

"I am not an academician and not rich. But I do not complain. I am one of those who have succeeded at least partially in breaking through the barrier. I can permit myself the joy of writing and sometimes force others to listen to my voice; in spite of everything, I live in hope that in my country, too, the day will come when all my brave worker comrades may, as in the U.S.S.R., speak out freely."

## LITERARY PRIZES IN FRANCE

The inside story of French literary prizes and the role they play in the world of literature and publishing is

told by R. Pierreville, French writer, in an article in the current Russian edition of *International Literature*. The following excerpts are the most interesting passages in his article:

"I was at the French Academy recently. I was received by the secretary-general of the Academy, who was somewhat surprised to learn that I was not a candidate for a prize and did not intend to become one. He was still more surprised when I said that I wanted to acquaint myself with the history of the Academy's literary prizes; he could add nothing to the information in the Annual of the Academy, which contains a complete list of all prizes, academicians and correspondents of the Academy. In looking over that list of more than two hundred names, I must admit that I did not find ten writers among them who are known even in France. However, this is not surprising. Great writers and scientists have always created something new, revolutionary, both in literature and in science. The prizes established by the Academy are not to encourage new ideas and trends to innovation, but to preserve the ideas and forms which the Academy adopted for all time three hundred years ago.

"However, the secretary turned out to be quite a loquacious fellow, and I learned much about the Academy in an hour's interview.

"Who are the members of the French Academy, one of the five academies which make up the French Institute as a whole? Forty writers, called 'immortals.' These are 'writers,' however, of a very original sort: generals who have never written a word, bishops and cardinals like Monsignor Bodriar, arrant reactionaries like Charles Morras, head of the Camelots de Roi and some thirty literary men whose works no one reads. Not a single truly great writer bears the title of 'immortal.' Romain Rolland, for instance, did not get into the Academy.

"Let us, however, return to the question of literary prizes. Prizes are bestowed partly from state funds (the 'literature prize' and the 'novel prize'), but chiefly from the funds of private contributors. In most cases the amount of the prizes is not great, from five hundred francs up, although certain prizes are as large as fifty thousand francs. The Academy is supposed to keep an eye on the purity of literary language and the irreproachability of the contents. And since the judges are members of the Academy, the majority of whom are talentless but well educated and with opinions which keep within the limits allowed by bourgeois morality, the prizes are given only to authors who avoid originality, brilliance and novelty and write like the 'best pupils' in the classroom—correctly and with intolerable dullness. Like the names of most of the Academy's members, the names of its prize-winners are forgotten by the history of literature. Is it necessary to add that such writers as Rolland, Henri Barbusse and André Malraux have never received a single prize from the French Academy?

"All kinds of intrigues among the candidates and the members of the Academy themselves accompany the bestowal of prizes. Incidentally, intrigues of this kind are carried on during elections of members of the Academy. Candidates must assiduously court the favor of the academicians, abase themselves, pay their respects, call on them at their homes, ask for the support of influential politicians.

"At the end of the nineteenth century, in opposition to the Academy, guardian of stagnation and routine, the well-known French writers, the brothers Goncourt, founded their own Goncourt Academy for literature, whose prizes carry far more literary and public weight in France. Unlike the French Academy, the Goncourt Academy does not accept applications from candidates. There are no candidates for this prize, for the academicians themselves announce the prizes for literary works that have appeared during the previous year.

"To whom is the Goncourt prize awarded? Sometimes to mediocrities, sometimes to talented writers. The first Goncourt prize in 1903 was awarded to the little-known writer Naud. Like the French Academy, the Goncourt Academy has never given a prize to Romain Rolland, who, by the way, has never received a French literary award. Henri Barbusse got the prize in 1916. Among prize-winners of the subsequent period are men whose literary significance is widely varying. Among them are Duhamel, Marcel Proust, the reactionary pamphleteer Henri Beyraut, Lucien Fabre, Maurice Genevois, Thierry Sandre and others who have written nothing brilliant since.

"In 1921 the Goncourt Academy again took a revolutionary step (the first had been the award to Barbusse) and gave a prize to Rene Maran, Negro writer, for his *Batuala*, a novel of life among the Negroes in the French colonies. Maran is now a member of the International Association of Writers for the Defense of Culture. Of even greater significance was the award in 1933 of the prize to André Malraux for *Man's Fate*. These are perhaps the only Gon-

court prize-winners now to be found in the progressive camp.

"A word about the 1938 prizes. The Goncourt prize was given by a small majority to Henri Trouaille for his novel *The Spider*. Lonet received the Theophrast Renodaut prize for a novel *Blessed Leonie*; he is from the staff of the bourgeois newspaper, *Paris Soir*. The 'interjury' prize awarded to journalists was given to Paul Nizan for *The Conspiracy*.

"The prizes were awarded in December 1938. In February I went into a book store to buy the novels which had received the best-known prizes. Except for two or three prize-winners, the bookseller could not remember the names of any of the writers who had gotten awards.

"Besides the prizes of the French Academy and the Goncourt Academy, I have counted eighty-two other various literary awards in France, whose very existence often is known only to members of the jury and the recipients of the awards. Even the names of these prizes arouse only perplexity at best. For instance, there is a prize founded by some god-fearing widow which is awarded to authors of the best works about the holy virgin. There is the prize of the Society for Prevention of Cruelty to Animals for the best animal story. There is the prize of the Football Association for a novel about football players. There are the 'French vineyards' prize, the 'best French fruits' prize, the 'fine quail' prize, the prize of the magazine *Echo des Modes* for novels on corresponding subjects.

"To make clear the reason for such a multiplication of prizes, it is necessary to say a few words about the state of the literary market in France. For many years this market has been in a condition of complete stagnation. A beginning author in France at present can scarcely find a publisher. The authors of scientific works, except the best known, must publish at their own expense. Usually literary critics hardly read the books sent them for review unless the authors are well known. In the book stores you can buy at half price novels issued ten days before, with their leaves uncut and often even the author's note to the critic. Critics simply sell them to the stores without even opening them.

"Small publishers are being ruined one after another and bought up by Hachette which controls the French book and newspaper market. There are 7,000 book stores in France, yet the majority of books are printed in editions of 1,500 to 3,000, or even less. The publisher cannot distribute a book to all booksellers, since postage expenses are very high. So he turns over the whole edition to Hachette which distributes it to the booksellers. The accounts with Hachette are very complicated; although the firm receives the lion's share of the profits, payment of money to the publishers is always delayed; but obviously the small publisher cannot check up on Hachette or engage in a struggle against him. In other words, when the publisher puts his money into a book, he never knows when his outlay will be recovered even partially.

"All these prizes, I repeat, are nothing more than one of the methods of attracting the reader's attention to a new book.

"In recent years a number of literary and even political newspapers have founded their own prizes. Several years ago *L'Humanité* ran a contest for the best story by a proletarian writer. The Editions Sociales Internationales has established the 'cement' prize for the best novel about workers' lives. In 1937 it was awarded to the worker-writer Philippe for his novel *Steel*."

## NOTES

New books timed for the hundred and fiftieth anniversary of the French Revolution have appeared on the Paris market.

Armand Colain has published a complete file of Camille Desmoulins' newspaper, *Le Vieux Cordelier*, which was founded in December 1793 and continued with great success till March of the following year. The republished file constitutes one volume in the series *Classics of the French Revolution*.

Well-documented, Jean Robiquet's *La Vie Quotidienne sous la Revolution* deals with everyday life in Paris in the stirring days of the French Revolution.

The Comédie Française has revived Beaumarchais' *Marriage of Figaro*, written in 1778, for the anniversary of the Revolution. Due to opposition of Louis XVI, the play was first put on the stage only in 1784. According to *Ce Soir*, this production was in its way a "storming of the Bastille on the stage of the French theater."

The "Peace and Freedom" Society, the chairman of which is Francis Jourdain, has organized a popular course of lectures, to be read by well-known schol-

ars, on the history of the French Revolution. The following Left writers and scholars are to speak in Paris: L. Marten Chauffier on *How the Revolution Was Born;* Jacques Doudel on *Marat, Friend of the People;* Paul Boutonnier on *Robespierre and the Jacobins;* A. Ribard on *Fatherland in Danger.*

A Union of French Intellectuals for the Defense of Justice, Liberty and Peace has been organized in Paris. The organization bureau includes Professor Cotton, president of the Academy of Sciences; Professors Paul Langevin and Irene Joliot-Curie; the writers Louis Aragon, Julien Benda and others. "The union of the French intelligentsia," writes the magazine *Commune*, "will prove to the whole world that France has not eenounced the ideals of democracy and freedom which she proclaimed and put into practice; devotion to these ideals continues to link her history with the history of human progress."

The *Nouvelle Revue Française* has published a new book by Jean Cassou, *The Year 1848*, a study of the revolution of that period. It deals with the events from February to June 1848 and introduces prominent figures of the time, including Victor Hugo and Georges Sand.

A rate copy of *Mireio* by the Provençal poet Mistrale, with a dedication to Victor Hugo, brought 14,500 francs at a Paris auction. A manuscript of one of Balzac's stories fetched 10,000 francs. Manuscripts left by Charles Louis Montesquieu, the great eighteenth century political writer, were recently auctioned at a sale which brought a total of 600,000 francs. One manuscript was bought for 400,000 francs by the National Library.

*Chinese Professor Li Yu-ying and Jean Lurcat, the French artist, at the Paris Exhibition of Battle Pictures by Chinese painters of the younger set*

# About Our Contributors

*MIKHAIL SVETLOV.* Soviet poet, author of several volumes of poetry and a play in verse, *Fairy Tale.*

*ALEXANDER ISBAKH.* Soviet writer of short stories chiefly about Red Army life. One of the editors of the literary monthly *Znamya (The Banner).*

*MAURICE THOREZ.* The Secretary-General of the French Communist Party. Recently published an autobiographical book, *Son of the People.*

*JEAN CASSOU.* The eminent French writer and critic, an authority on the history of Spanish culture. One of the leaders of the People's Front. Editor in chief of the *Europe.*

*GEORGES DAVID.* French writer well known for his stories of small town and village people and life. Author of the novels *Two Thousand Inhabitants, The Aristocrat,* etc.

*MARIE COLMONT.* French author who died recently. Her stories appeared in *Commune* and other French publications.

*LU HSIEN.* The celebrated Chinese writer, known as "China's Gorky." Died in 1936.

*REX WARNER.* Well known English poet and novelist.

**Associate Editor TIMOFEI ROKOTOV**