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ON THE LIBERATED LAND

Numerous representatives of Soviet art and literature have hastened to the Western Ukraine and Western Byelorussia, after the liberation of these regions by the Red Army. They went, in order, by means of their art, to link up the masses of people in those districts, only yesterday oppressed, with the cultural achievements of the great Soviet Union. Met joyfully by the population, the Soviet writers and poets, singers and musicians performed at hundreds of meetings and concerts in the bigger towns, the hamlets and villages of the Western Ukraine and Western Byelorussia. In addition to this the writers and journalists conveyed what they had seen and experienced in numerous articles and letters to the daily press.

VALENTINE KATAYEV gives his first impressions of Poland:

Stolbtsi is the first Polish frontier town and, therefore, a kind of "visiting-card" of the former realm of Poland at its eastern doors. When you have scanned this card you can get a pretty good idea of the person presenting it, and of the house you have entered. It is enough to glance at the hamlet of Stolbtsi, the Polish 'visiting-card' to see at once what the *pans*[1] of Poland were like.

The superficially bright appearance, the side dressed up for show, alongside of which exists the misery and poverty of the actual state of affairs in Poland—this is what strikes one immediately.

The shiny red paint of the letter-boxes, the whitewashed fences, the hotels, the confectioners, the hairdressers, all this is as good as can be found "in the best families." But side by side is the market place, with its broken-down country nags, basket-work carts, bare-footed men and women from the villages, and children blue with cold and hunger.

Aristocratic Poland's love of fine clothes gave birth to many oddities. In Stolbtsi, for instance, I was struck by a most militaristic looking old general in full parade uniform, standing before some gate or other.

A cap with an enormous peak, outlined with pure gold, incredible boots with fantastic spurs, a tunic sprinkled with gleaming buttons, ribbons, orders, medals, stars, all sorts of distinctions, a fierce dyed mustache with upturned ends, a choking collar. The whole appearance terrifying and unnatural.

"What are you doing here?" I exclaimed, almost in horror. Then the ancient courteously applied his trembling hand in its doe-skin glove to the gigantic peak, made his spurs ring and, his face breaking into doughy excrescences, lisped:

"I, Mister Comrade, am the senior member of the Count Ponyatovsky municipal fire-brigade."

In the press we read of the poverty in which the masses of the Western Ukraine and Western Byelorussia were sunk, of their utter ack of political or social rights, of national oppression. P. BELYAVSKI, special correspondent of *Izvestia*, writes:

[1] Gentry.

We had read much, we knew about the poverty of the peasantry in the Western Ukraine, our neighbors, our brothers in blood. And now this incredible poverty has become visible to us in all its wretchedness. An old peasant woman is standing against a fence, holding one box of matches in her hands. Lively bargaining is going on. The peasants approach the old woman and she sells them the matches from her box, one customer purchases three matches, another, five. The purchasers wrap their matches up carefully in a rag which they thrust into the front of their shirts.

We drive past poverty-stricken peasant holdings, and land parceled out by hedges. And every now and then the peasant holdings are broken up by wide stretches of land. These are the fields of the so-called "settlers," the Polish colonizers, Pilsudski's proteges, to whom the land was given by the government.

In the Tarnopolsk district, over which we were driving, "settlers," landed proprietors and monasteries, composing two per cent of the whole agricultural population, had seized half of the arable land. The other half was given to the remaining 98 per cent of the peasant population ("swine," as the Polish aristocrats dubbed them).

Land-hunger, hopeless poverty, the absence of political and national rights, gave rise more than once to sudden rebellions among the peasantry in these localities. And each time they were mercilessly suppressed. For the 1,902 villages in Tarnopolsk district there were 2,719 police officials and 219 police stations. When the Red Army arrived it found the police stations and prisons crammed with political prisoners.

According to the last census only 53 per cent of the peasantry were able to read. From the same census we learn that there were over a thousand churches in Tarnopolsk district.

Poverty and no promise for the future were the lot of the vast majority of the urban populations. The writer E. GABRILOVICH gives a description of Volkoviska—a typical town in Western Byelorussia, with its absurd, crippled economic system:

In the poorer streets are the houses of Byelorussian and Jewish craftsmen, a huddle of mean hovels jostling one another, and children playing in the gutters. Each hut is more wretched than the other. At last we come to the end hovel, the last shop (a jumble of yeast, electrical accessories, boot-polish), to a post bearing the name of the town and the Polish crest, and then a rusty autumnal wood, fields and ravines....

At discussions during impromptu meetings, excited and unexpected questions are put:

"May I ask you something, Comrade? Who am I? H'm. . . . My business is rather delicate . . . I'm a marriage-broker, I get people betrothed and wed. Church, carriages. . . . What work will there be for me in the future?"

Here are all sorts of people "living on air," people professing all sorts of odd trades long forgotten in our country. They are worried over what is to happen to them. How are they to adapt themselves to new conditions?

There are still greater numbers of those who, owing to unemployment, have been unable to make use of their education.

You will meet a doctor working as a waiter in a filthy eating house, rejoicing in the name of "The Atlantic Ocean Restaurant"; a dentist, selling horse-collars in a shop called "Paris"; a lawyer, selling *kvass*—bread-cider—in a den with "Bar Argentina" on its sign.

There are a great number of craftsmen. The things they hear of the land of the Soviets rouse them

Ostrina, a settlement near Grodno, decorated to meet the Red Army. On the photo—a green arch with the words "Long Live the Red Army!" on it

to ardent enthusiasm. Everything which we take for granted, as the most natural thing in the world, excites veritable wonder here: free schooling, labor legislation, national equality. A fortnight's or month's holiday annually? Nobody knows what holidays mean here! Free education, stipends for students? Here, in order to get into high school, a sum far greater than the earnings of artisans or small tradesmen must be paid. National equality? The Byelorussians and the Jews were *pariahs*: they were not allowed into the schools or universities, they were beaten up in the streets.

Before us lie scores of leaflets distributed by Polish aristocratic organizations, demanding reprisals against Byelorussians and Jews.

"Don't beat them with sticks, they don't feel it! Soak them in kerosene, and set fire to them!"

"Every Jewish child is a future Jew. Why wait till he grows up? Twist his neck at birth."

It is not hard to understand the hatred for aristocratic Poland nourished bythe oppressed nationalities.

An excellent illustration of the position of the intellectuals in Poland, and especially among the so-called "national minorities," is furnished by the following dialogue, recorded by the same writer:

A tiny store, one of those wretched little halfpenny stores to be found in tiny townlets, selling everything from headache powders to boot-polish. On the signboard: "Rosa Skorohod, groceries."

And here is Rosa herself! She is over sixty and suffers from palpitations, her heart is affected. Weighing out bread for us she asks us on what funds old people live in the Soviet Republic. We tell her about the clause in our Constitution which mentions old age insurance.

Rosa Skorohod nods joyfully.

The accursed days have come to an end. There is nothing more for her to worry about. Her heart is calm. Already now her heart is quite calm.

But no, her heart is not calm! Her heart aches for her son, Lazar.

What's wrong with Lazar?

Rosa Skorohod nods mournfully. Lazar is a failure. Instead of following his brother's path—going in for shopkeeping, he took the path of learning, and got into the university. Living on bread and water he graduated brilliantly, despite the persecution and even the beatings of the prosperous Polish students. Now he is a lawyer. As if she had no trouble as it is.

"But where is the trouble?"

Rosa Skorohod looked at me indignantly.

"Trouble?" she repeated. "You don't understand, then?"

At last things are cleared up. The trouble is that lawyer Lazar has been unable to find work for two years and is dependent on his mother. How long can this dependence continue? Perhaps for the rest of his life. No! Rosa is too old to feed and clothe a twenty-five year old son all her life!

I remembered that the president of the provisional administration of the town had mentioned today the lack of legal workers in the town. I told Rosa Skorohod of this. She looked at me incredulously.

"D'you mean Lazar might be needed?"

I confirmed this supposition.

She shook her head.

"You're not making fun of me?"

I assured her that this was not the case. For a moment extraordinary joy gleamed in her eyes, but was quenched immediately.

"Perhaps you're mistaken, perhaps it isn't lawyers they want?"

Is there any wonder that the population of the Western Ukraine and Western Byelorussia should have met the fraternal Red Army as their saviors from the twenty-year heavy yoke of Polish occupation? The joy of the population expressed itself in enthusiastic, moving

Children in Molodechno cheering the marching Red Army units

Workers' detachments on the streets of Vladimir-Volynsky, a city in the Western Ukraine

receptions and scenes all along the victorious path of the Soviet troops, in villages and in towns, on the roads and in the fields. The playwright ALEXANDER KORNEICHUK writes from Lvov:

The divisions of our glorious Red Army moved along the road from Tarnopol to Lvov. I have seen plenty of parades in the Red Square of Moscow, and Kiev. These parades, showing the force and power of our army, have always moved me profoundly, but what I saw on the road from Tarnopol to Lvov shook me to the depths of my being.

Those land-dreadnoughts, those giants, thousands of fighting machines, artillery of every calibre. . . . "The Red Armada is a hurricane!" as a peasant admirably expressed it. Yes, our army is like a hurricane.

The powerful tanks, the huge motor-lorries, the great guns move with difficulty over the narrow road. But in the villages it is hardest of all.

One might live one's whole life and go all round the world, but if one has witnessed the meeting of the Red Army with the peasants of the Western Ukraine, nothing can ever excite or astonish one again!

The citizens of Lvov moved in long lines along the streets of the town all day, singing the same song —the "Internationale" in Ukrainian and Polish. The Soviet anthem was frequently interrupted by the shouting of slogans by workers and intellectuals: "Long live Stalin!" "Long live Molotov!" "Long live Voroshilov!" "Long live the Red Army!"

The columns proceeded to the theater square. The troops greeted the citizens of Lvov with applause in front of the theater.

The next day the demonstration continued. In every word, in every mile, could be detected joyous emotion, the emotion of people entering upon a new, peaceful, bright life.

For the Red Army appeared not as a conqueror in a strange land but as a pow-

erful bearer of new truth, new, bright life.

The scene described by the correspondent of *Izvestia* EVGUENI KRIEGER testifies to this with extraordinary, touching power and simplicity:

In the twilight I observed a group of from 150 to 200 soldiers approaching the hamlet of Zhuravtso, at which an armored-tank division of the Red Army had called a few minutes' halt. Regimental commissar Zuyev, a deputy to the Supreme Soviet of the Ukrainian S.S.R., went up to them.

"Come here!" he shouted. "Nearer! Nearer! Closer! That's right! Sit down and let's have a talk! Are any of you armed? You've surrendered your arms? Splendid! Where are you going? Home? Good! Tell me honestly, did you plunder along the way? No? I believe you! And you don't intend to? Are there peasants and workers among you? Most of you? Have you seen our army? It's a powerful army? That's right! But it's our Red Army, the true friend of the toiling people, the peasantry, the workers. It only fights the aristocrats, the landowners, the corrupt generals and ministers. D'you understand? Those who don't let the people live in peace and happiness."

One of the soldiers, astonished, smiling, not yet having overcome

"Move on, pans, our fatherland is in danger."
"Know nothing about yours, but ours is quite safe by now."
By K. Eliseyev

Courtesy of *Crocodile*

Alexander Dovzhenko, noted Soviet cinema-producer, speaking to a peasant meeting in the village of Dobrushin in the Western Ukraine

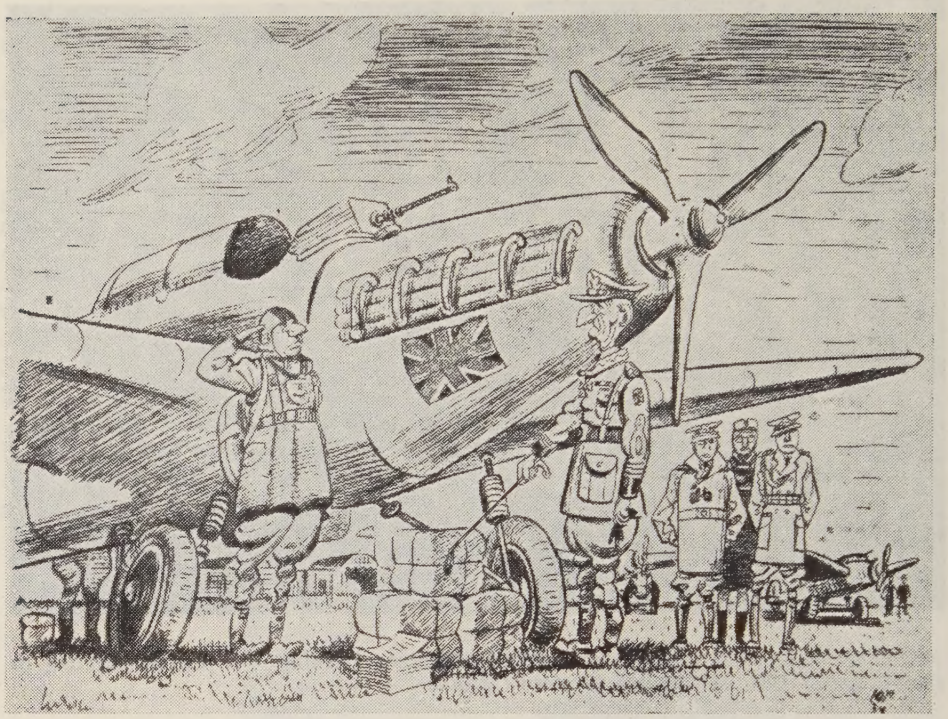
his wonder and delight, rapidly translated the commissar's words. These words produced such an impression on the prisoners that, exchanging glances, thumping each other's backs, embracing, they began to cheer with all their might, shouting and thanking—giving vent to the instinctive expression of gratitude. Another minute, and they would have embraced the commissar. But he was in a hurry, the division had moved on. Keeping the initiative in his hands, he again gained the attention of the soldiers.

"Well, so long as we understand one another, everything's all right. What are you going to tell them at home, your wives, your old people, your neighbors? Tell them what really happened. Tell them that the Red Army and the whole Soviet nation are bringing liberty to the working people of all nationalities living on the territory of the Western Ukraine and Western Byelorussia. Tell them that none of us set out to fight you, soldiers, that we let you go home, that everyone can now take up his own occupation, on the land, in the factories, everywhere where work awaits honest, industrious people."

The soldiers leapt to their feet. In the eyes of many shone tears. They were overcome by all that had happened, by all that they had just heard. It was hard for the witness of this scene not to shed tears also, at the sight of the enormous, all-enveloping joy written on the faces of the soldiers. Those who only yesterday had been forced by their officers to shoot were now cheering and shouting "Hurrah!"

Regimental commissar Zuyev cast a glance at the darkening sky and the soldiers crowding round him, and said:

"You can go home now. But I advise you to stay here till tomorrow. Night is falling. The front is ahead. I shouldn't like any of



Courtesy of *Crocodile*

Be careful, sir, not to throw the bags with leaflets unpacked. You might hurt an enemy, God save us. *By Yuri Ganf*

you to be killed by a stray bullet. Go into that garden and settle down for the night. That's all, brothers. Goodbye, good luck!"

Once more cheers and shouts: "'Long live the Red Army!" and the soldiers, drunk with joy, pushed in a crowd towards their night bivouac. The tank division had disappeared into the dusk, onward, onward!

The immense spiritual uplift, the enthusiasm evoked by the happy change in their lives, began to be transferred to the sphere of active and friendly creative work of the population under the new leadership.

From the very first days, the peasantry began to enter the domains of the private estates. Everywhere arose committees for the distribution of the landowners' fields among the poorer peasantry, making scrupulous inventories of property, creating order in the glorious business of the reconstruction of the villages along new principles.

J. TSVETOV, special correspondent of *Pravda*, describes the work of one such committee in the village of Berezhani, in the Western Ukraine:

People are going through the lists of those in need of help in plowing and sowing. One of these was Philip Bobko, who had no implements for working a holding of three-quarters of an acre, others were Garpina Yakubiv, and the widow Olga Galas. Garpina Yakubiv's hut was so rickety that it threatened to collapse at any moment. Now they will help her to repair it and fetch fuel from the landed estate nearby.

The peasants' committee has only been organized here a few days ago but the new order is already making itself felt in Kovizka. Mikhailo Stefanyuk, president of the peasants' committee, opens an exercise book. In it figures are neatly entered. All the property on the estate has

been catalogued. Stefanyuk is full of cares and worries. He is anxious at all costs to open the school in two days' time. He is looking for a teacher. A teacher turns up. He is Vasili Nesterovich who had been unemployed for five years, for there were many teachers with nothing to do in Poland and, moreover, Vasili is an Ukrainian and there was no work for Ukrainians. And Vasili had had to go into the theater. He had sung and danced and played and somehow kept himself alive. Now Vasili will be an Ukrainian teacher.

The peasants' committee is also planning a village hospital so that it will no longer be necessary to carry sick persons several miles to Berezhani. I went over the ground with Stefanyuk. Stefanyuk's plans are those of an alert interested owner.

"This was the landlord's stable. We shall have to paint it. And look, there's a well, we'll repair it. We'll put the road in order in a few days."

The president has yet another care. He needs a gardener to look after the landlord's gardens. Day and night the peasant militia keeps watch over the treasures of the estate, accumulated by the labor and sweat of the local peasantry. Now these treasures are in safe hands.

Life in townlets and towns is also throbbing. The provisional administration, consisting of representatives of workers and intellectuals, is ever gaining authority over the population, and organizing the economic, administrative and cultural life of the towns.

PHILLIPENKO, special correspondent of *Izvestia*, gives a picture of a day in the life of the president of the provisional administration in the town of Slonim:

Day begins early in the provisional administration. The first to come to the office of Comrade Kolotov, the president of the administration, are workers' guards. They have rifles slung over their shoulders and red stripes on their coats. These youths have been on duty all night in the streets of Slonim. They inform the president: a sus-

At a placard announcing the demonstration of the Soviet film "New Horizons"

picious character has been detained in the marshes at the edge of the woods. It has been established at the commandant's office that he is the disguised son of Count Mostsitski, a participant in a Jewish pogrom in the townlet of Mir.

A knock at the door.

"Come in!"

A man of about forty enters. His name is Kastus Mahonya and he speaks Byelorussian.

"I have twenty-two questions to ask, comrades. Don't smile! I've got them all written down. They're not my own questions. I have been sent here by the whole village. Please let me have the answers."

All the questions are about one subject: how to live in the future.

"We've got a library," says Mahonya. "And there's all sorts of books in it, but there's no book by the man who gave us happiness—Stalin. Where can we get the works of Comrade Stalin?"

Kastus Mahonya receives satisfactory replies to his questions. He shakes hands with the commanders of the Red Army and the president, and ends up by saying:

"With the money we were forced to collect for the Polish army before its destruction, we think of building a school. Bricks were brought yesterday, and today we shall have timber. We should like to get an instructor from you to build a school that is new in every way."

The telephone rings. It is lumberworker Dragobichev announcing the opening of the town club. Comrade Kolotov, leaving his assistant in charge of the office, goes to the club.

Here are assembled the intellectuals of the town—doctors, teachers, employees in the newly reorganized offices, seven hundred and fifty altogether. The stage is adorned with branches and flowers. In the center are portraits of Lenin and Stalin. On the walls—slogans and posters. At the entry—a huge banner: "We are proud of the glorious Red Army, liberator of the oppressed Byelorussian people from the yoke of the *pans*."

For the first time in the existence of Slonim the meeting discussed with business-like detail the questions of the opening of a club, of schools and hospitals, of wood for the town, of bakeries, of postal organization. They parted firmly confident of the morrow, encouraged by a warm word, having solved a series of vital problems.

After the meeting a course for members of peasant committees was inaugurated in the same building. Over 600 persons came from 45 villages situated within the radius of activities of the provisional administration.

The president of the provisional administration attended the session, answered questions and helped to draw up a program of work for the next few days.

After the session the president and some of the members of the committees made a tour of inspection of the town. Trade was proceeding normally. They inspected menus in public dining rooms and restaurants. They advised the keepers of these institutions to vary the bills of fare and improve the quality of dinners, especially as more and more meat was now coming on to the market. There was a wide selection of fruit and vegetables at the market, and the bread shops were working uninterruptedly.

Late in the evening the president again went to the club, where the young people were dancing to the strains of an accordion. Seeing Comrade Kolotov the young men and girls asked his advice as to the organization of a Byelorussian song-and-dance ensemble, and a dramatic circle.

The provisional administration is quietly but firmly breaking down all attempts at sabotage. The writer BORIS LEVIN gives an interesting account of a meeting of industrialists at Belostok, the industrial center of Western Byelorussia. He writes:

The other day we attended a meeting of the manufacturers. The president of the provisional administration of the town, Comrade Gaisin, gathered together the factory owners in a great hall.

About 200 industrialists came to the meeting. The provisional administration turned up in full force, including the military representatives and the deputies from the workers of Belostok—a mill-hand, Maria Ivanovna Dyachuk (Byelorussian) and Mashivatsky, a teacher at the Jewish school.

Comrade Gaisin told the meeting that it was necessary to start running immediately all works and factories required to serve the population. The factories must start working the next day.

The owners spoke one after another. They quite agreed with the words of the respected president, Mister...

"Not Mister, but citizen," came the correction from the presidium.

"Excuse me, excuse me," the industrialist apologized at length and went on to say that economic life is a very complicated thing. Moreover, his factory produced blankets and cloth and he didn't know if these would be wanted just now. And so couldn't they wait a bit?

But wait they could not.

"Remember!" warned the president of the provisional administration, "from tomorrow on you will have to pay wages to your workers whether the factory is working or not. The workers must not suffer because of your bad organization."

"Fuchs!" came the cry from all sides. "Fuchs! Let Fuchs speak!"

Cloth manufacturer Fuchs, a middle-aged, well-preserved man, ascended the platform. He spoke on behalf of all manufacturers present. He spoke in high-flown phrases. "*Volens nolens*, we are being asked to perform the impossible.... Of course, if necessary, we'll let out steam and smoke, but it will be Don Quixotism," continued Fuchs. "A factory is no simple matter, and not everyone understands management."

"But we do," retorts the president, Comrade Gaisin. "In the Soviet Union I managed a factory, with 8,000 workers in it. That's a bit bigger than yours."

Comrade Gaisin again and again explained to the owners that the factories would have to be working the next day, there was no alternative. If any of the manufacturers refused to start their works, the provisional administration would be forced to inflict fines.

"I want you to understand me," said the president.

They began to understand him.

"But what are we to do?" asked an elderly gentleman. "We can start our factories of course, but the owners have gone away and we don't know where they are. How can we work without the owner?"

"Why not? It can easily be done," answered Comrade Gaisin. "Are you the representative of this factory? Are you an engineer?"

"No, I'm just a relation."

"All the better! Order the factory to be started." The next day the factories were working.

Overcoming the resistance of open and secret foes, the masses of the liberated peoples of the Western Ukraine and Western Byelorussia are building up their life anew.

A DAMNING INDICTMENT

WHO RULED POLAND?

What will Polish literature tell future generations of the past twenty dark years in Polish history which were boastfully and falsely styled "Poland's new era of regeneration"?

Even during the honeymoon of the fictitious marriage of a "regenerated" Poland to liberty, even before the triumphant sounds of the trumpets had died down, the melancholy strains of funeral music could be discerned in the jolly wedding marches.

The sobering down came quickly. From the very beginning the workers clearly realized that the new masters of the land would rule in the name of their own interests, against the interests of the working people. The peasants saw themselves surrounded by the death-dealing ring of the three-faced boa-constrictor: they were set upon by "their own" Polish landlord, "their own" Polish gendarme and "their own" Polish priest. A wave of disillusion swept over the majority of the Polish intelligentsia—those who had believed that a new era was being ushered in when they fought in Pilsudski's legions and who numbered in their ranks people like Baginski and Wieczorkiewicz, brave fighters who were killed in a treacherous, infamous manner by the Polish gendarmes. This profound and bitter disillusionment could not fail to affect also those of the Polish bourgeois writers who sometimes were honest enough not to close their eyes to the actual state of affairs in Poland.

Andrei Strug is a writer who had managed thoroughly to forget the revolutionary ardor of his youth. In his novels he cast aspersions at the Great Socialist Revolution in the U.S.S.R. and slandered the Russian proletariat. But the things he saw in "regenerated" Poland filled him with disgust and indignation.

Here is how he characterized the first period of the Polish State in his novel *The Generation of Mark Swida:*

"Once in a while Janka would come to Warsaw for news. . . . It was impossible to understand what was going on in Poland. . . . She was astonished at the gloomy appearance of the city and its people. Was that the capital of a state in its first historical year of liberty? Horrible stories of theft, treason, meanness, graft and corruption in every institution were told everywhere. . . . People would say: 'No, nothing will come of this! The power should be turned over to the French! No, to the Americans! . . . If we could get the Bolsheviks over here, if only for three months!' "

"Janka," we read further, "brought a great number of alarming stories from Warsaw. The situation was fraught with danger, there was no guiding idea. Decent people were just snowed under by the philistines and profiteers who were in charge of everything. Nothing but filth, intrigues and scandals! Everything was in a state of decay, even the youth!"

Mark Swida, the hero of the novel, was full of naive though honest faith. He was really outraged at the cynical "theory" expounded by his schoolmate Marian Plochinski on the principles by which the new power was to be guided. "A scoundrel," Plochinski maintained, "is a creative personality. . . . A scoundrel possesses fighting qualities: he has the daring to run risks, even to the point of committing a crime, he has impetuosity and persistence. . . . Nowadays, he said, one cannot make a single step in the most respectable business without the help of a scoundrel, because the scoundrel has ability, brains, a flair and above all, will."

Soon enough Mark Swida came to realize that this "theory" was not just an invention of Plochinski's, that it was taken from real life, and that its principles were widely applied in practice. At every step Mark Swida saw that the scoundrels had taken possession of his fatherland. The sight of the Sejm at work disgusted him. "All of the deputies looked

as if they were ashamed of each other, as if they were utterly disgusted with themselves, as if they were sick and tired of everything. . . . Everything seemed sullied, as if covered by stale dust, or mildew, or the residue of myriads of empty words spoken in this hall, of all the hours wasted in fruitless debates, or all the intrigues and swindles."

Now it was not his friend Marian Plochinski who embittered him but the scoundrels who held his fatherland in their hands. And glancing back at his life, Mark could not help asking himself the question: "Is this what I spent my life on?" And the reply would be: "No, life was not worth living."

Was it possible that death was the only way out for the disillusioned Polish petty-bourgeois youth? Strug did not dare to follow up his idea to its logical conclusions. This was done by *Stefan Zeromski*, a writer kindred in spirit to Andrei Strug, in his novel *Early Spring*. The hero of this novel, Cezar Baryka, witnessed the October Revolution in Russia. He disliked it (and so did the author). He trusted his father who had fought in Pilsudski's legions, and who assured him that people in the New Poland would live in crystal palaces, free of all worries and care. And so he returned home.

But where were the "crystal palaces"? Instead, he found dismal barracks and filthy hovels, nests of poverty and gloom. The capital struck him with the hideous slums inhabited by the poverty-stricken Jews. At a Communist meeting he heard how the working people were treated and what misery they had to endure, he heard about unspeakable tortures, bestiality, murders. He still defended his father's ideas and he left the meeting in a state of anger and confusion. He went to a café. From its large window he could observe the following sight: A grim looking policeman in a new uniform was pacing up and down the long stone elevation in the middle of the street. Right near him an old man was struggling hard in an effort to pry loose a heavily loaded handcart, the wheels of which were wedged in a rut in the pavement. "Get out of here quick!" the policeman yelled at the old man; and Baryka was visibly moved by the look of grief and despair which the living corpse of an old man cast at the policeman. He did not return to the meeting. Instead, he went to his old friend and teacher Gajewiec, a man who gave utterance to all the delusions and illusions of the nationalistic Polish intelligentsia. Yet the things he had heard at the Communist meeting had already taken root in his heart and soul. No longer could he agree with Gajewiec's groundless and sterile dreams and he hurled bitter accusations in his teacher's face:

"My mother died of nostalgia for Poland. And my father. . . . And you, wise rulers, what have you made of this yearning? A torture chamber. . . . A policeman armed with every instrument of torture—that's the foundation of Poland. . . . You lack the strength to break the nobility which has brought Poland to the verge of ruin more than once. You dare not uproot the gentry's rule of violence and turn this country into a workers' land. . . . For your entire wisdom is the policeman and the soldier . . . We need reforms so that the people inhabiting the borderlands may turn toward Poland and not toward Russia. But you are petty cowards. . . . People in the villages are starving, in the factories they are breaking down with fatigue. In the suburbs they lead a miserable existence. How are you going to improve the conditions of the Jews who are suffering in their ghetto? You don't know a thing, you have no ideas, no plans. . . . Your ideas are the old slogans of decrepit people who have more than once been the cause of Poland's ruin." . . .

And further:

"Have you anything like Lenin's courage to start a great cause, to destroy the old and create the new?"

The reactionary writers violently attacked Zeromski's *Early Spring*. Then the author "explained" that he did not mean to make propaganda for Communism; that all he wanted was to "sound a warning." In his book, however, he remained true to the iron logic of reality and he shows his hero as a leader of a demonstration marching to the Belvedere, the residence of Poland's rulers, shoulder to shoulder with the Communist Lulek who said even then: "If only we succeed in holding out until this so-called 'independence' blows over, we may still see some real life."

In another novel, *From Day to Day* by *Ferdinand Getel*, the hero is shown returning from Russia to "liberated" Poland—just like Cezar Baryka in Zeromski's book. He too disliked the Russian Revolution and cherished rosy hopes for a new life in Poland. But Getel, too, had to admit that from its very inception the Polish state was on the road to decay and ruin. "The peasants are desperate and ready for anything, the officials are highly disappointed, the intellectuals are at their wits' end, trade and industry are almost at a standstill, and the proletariat is extremely discontented. . . ." And the hero of Ferdinand Getel's novel denounces conditions still more severely than Zeromski's hero: "I see you wandering among people who are

strangers to you. . . . Consumed by poverty and pride you will be choking with the bitter food of humiliation and wandering in solitude, you will fall a hundred times into the trap from which the reptile of yesterday escapes through the door of nonentity on to the arena of life."

Sofia Nalkowska, an old Polish author, was mostly concerned in her writings with the refined emotions of an aristocratic soul. When the new type of politician, crooked and unscrupulous, appeared in the salons of the aristocracy, she wrote a novel, *The Romance of Theresa Gennert*, depicting these "newly formed aristocrats." Josef Gennert, the hero of the novel, until recently a salesman behind the counter, married in consideration of a small dowry which his wife received as hush money from her lover. During the war "he had no position whatsoever and no office of his own; he was doing nothing in particular, just making money. . . . But now a vice-minister or a secretary of state is a nobody compared to him. . . . Everybody knows that Gennert is the real boss in the ministry and that everything depends on him." Sofia Nalkowska gave a realistic portrait of the new hero of the Polish state, who cleverly manipulated stocks, mistresses and even his own wife; she showed this world of grafters, thieves and profiteers in well-tailored ministerial frocks and brilliant officers' uniforms.

IN THE POLISH VILLAGES

Polish literature depicted the ugly face of the rulers of Poland and the unsavory deeds of these gentlemen who doomed millions of people to poverty and starvation, who kept millions of people in a state of darkness and ignorance. Polish literature has often dealt with the shocking and criminal treatment meted out by the Polish gentry to the enslaved peasantry, which represent three quarters of the population of that country.

Among the Polish writers who gave us an insight into the life of suffering which was the lot of the Polish peasants the first place belongs to *Wanda Wasilewska*. Her novel *Fatherland* is dedicated to the life of the Polish farm laborers. The story begins in 1905. It depicts the gloomy barracks in which entire families of farm laborers were herded together, hungry and ragged, feeding on potato peel; when given to pigs the peel was washed first, but these people were expected to eat it unwashed.

Old Krzyziak stands waist-deep in the water, catching fat, golden carp for his master. How wonderful would it be if he could bring one home for Magda, his wife! And unnoticed by the gamekeepers he slips a fish into his trouser pocket. But here the trouble begins, for the fish wriggles and betrays him. As a result he is given a severe beating, but he does not complain; "We know it from our fathers and grandfathers that peasants have always been beaten; such is the custom. Perhaps, when God created the world he determined that this was to be the peasant's lot." Thus thought Krzyziak.

The Russian Revolution of 1905 aroused new hopes among the farm laborers. Workers from the brick works began to visit the farm hands in their barracks. They roused them to the fight, and old Krzyziak, who had never known a bright moment in his life, fully realized the meaning of life, the joy of living, when he marched against the gendarmes, when he helped the city people to destroy the hated rulers.

But soon after that things again went on as before; again gloom and hopelessness prevailed. Then the war came and with it the "liberation" of Poland. Now, Krzyziak thought, the hour had struck, the bright and alluring dreams would come true; the old was no more—a new and better life was going to begin. And Wanda Wasilewska gives a vivid and convincing account of how these illusions were dashed.

"Staszek, who had been driving horses for thirty years, was killed in the legions. Outside of this, nothing had really changed. The landlord's house still stood in its old place; and the barracks, and the church. Same as thirty years ago. True, there was now the fatherland. Krzyziak sat up on his plow and peered into this fatherland of his. Here it lay in that flat strip of meagre potato field; it breathed the dampness of the pond; it rose in the form of a long line of barracks. . . . The fatherland was the endless farm laborer's day; the shouts of the manager; the mold that covers the damp barrack walls; the bow legs and pimpled necks of the children; the potato peel which was used to make soup; the plank beds on which the rotten straw rustled. Nothing had changed. . . ."

Krzyziak's wife would look through the window of the barrack at the village situated nearby and it seemed to her that there life was more gay; "the poorest of the poor had his own hut which belonged to him, even though the autumn rain would drip through the roof."

But as if wishing to dissipate the wrong idea that anything in the village at all could be called human life, Wanda Wasilewska wrote her novel *Earth in Bondage*, a terrible story dealing with the village and the Polish peasant, the one "who owned his hut."

The "agrarian reform" of the Polish

gentry has been unmasked by the writer in a series of horrible facts from the life of the peasants. Here is Matus the peasant, a victim of that deception. When the peasants were given land for which they had to pay in installments, during a period of forty years, he bought twenty-five *morgs*. He thought that the land would feed him and that he would be able to pay his debt and call it his own. But the land turned out to be nothing but sand on which vegetation hardly grew, and the interest alone on the loan was more than he could afford to pay. Poverty and starvation—that was what the "agrarian reform" of the Polish gentry meant to the peasants.

A full stomach was a rare thing. Hunger was the rule. When the pig fell ill, Matus' wife borrowed some milk for it and promised to work off its worth. The pig, however, refused to drink it. "Wladek (her son) looked around and, seeing that mother was not about, reached out for the dish. He looked warily at the pig. It made no protest. The boy put the earthen pot to his lips and emptied it greedily, choking, gulping and dipping his lips in the white liquid. When he finished he quickly returned the pot to its place, under the pig's snout."

Wanda Wasilewska shows to what lengths of cruelty the landlords and their hirelings could go in their mockery and persecution of the peasants. Radziuk, a poor man who was starving, dared to place a trap in the woods which belonged to his landlord, Count Ostrzhenski. The count in person, a descendant of a long line of ancestors famous in Poland's sad history, tracked down the unhappy Radziuk and offered him the "noble" choice: either to go to court or to be punished on the spot. The miserable hut in which Radziuk's sick wife and five children live pass before the culprit's mind and he knows in advance that the court of the gentry would not be on his side; so he chooses to be punished on the spot. Two hundred strokes with soft nut-tree branches was the punishment administered by the caretaker Stanik to the unhappy man lying on the cold snow.

Stefan Zelinski, a young fellow, had the temerity of taking a dip in the count's pond. They drove him out of the pond, set the dogs on him, stoned him to death and threw his dead body into the water.[1]

The reader may ask himself: aren't all these facts the fruit of the author's imagination? The author, of course, may "invent" facts, but the truthfulness of the portrayal depends on how far such facts are typical and true to life.

Here it must be stated that the cruel murder of Stefan Zelinski which Wanda Wasilewska described in her novel, actually happened. In 1937, before she wrote the novel, Wanda Wasilewska printed in the Warsaw newspaper *Robotnik* an account of her trip to the place where the outrageous murder had taken place.

"I was told," she wrote, "that a peasant had been killed by forest guards in the village of Sawice, rural district of Wygozhenby in the district of Sokolov-Podlanski. The details of that murder were so unbelievable that I thought the whole story greatly exaggerated, and I decided to verify the facts on the spot."

Similar facts are not rare. Wanda Wasilewska writes in the same article:

"In the village of Chapla, Korezew district, a forest guard killed a peasant. The criminal was not even indicted for his crime.

"Omelyanchuk, a forest guard, shot to death Kazimir Bujalski of the village Menzenin. He was 'punished' by being transferred temporarily to work in Draznjew. Soon he was back on his old job.

"In the same village forest guards set their dogs on a pregnant woman; there was a miscarriage and the woman died soon after.

"Some forest guards attacked several women who were picking berries in the landlord's woods, beat them severely, broke their jars and tore up their receipts for payment for the right to pick berries.

"Such facts are numerous. There are any number of stories of dead bodies, corpses of peasants, which fertilize the landlords' land, and swell his income.

"All these forest guards are hired people. They remained on their jobs although their hands were tainted with human blood. The beastly murder at Bartkow is merely one link in the chain of the existing system."

Wanda Wasilewska had to admit the complete bankruptcy of the Polish bourgeois-landlord regime. She wrote:

"Normal relations cannot exist where a household owning two-three hectares of land is situated right next to fifty buildings belonging to a single person.

"There can be no normal life where distilleries, sawmills and other plants belonging to one person may be seen from the low windows of dilapidated, rickety huts; where the pauperized peasants who gather dry branches for fuel hear the constant rustle of the vast forest which belongs to one man."

This article, which gives a vivid picture of the sufferings of the Polish peasantry, also confirms the crying truth-

[1] This chapter from Wasilewska's book was published in № 8-9 of our magazine.

fulness of the facts and events portrayed in the novels of this Polish writer.

Unlike many other Polish writers, Wanda Wasilewska heard not only the groans which arose from the Polish villages, not only the melancholy popular songs which express the despair of the people, but also heard the subdued murmur of dissatisfaction, the ever louder shouts of indignation, and the voices which called for battle.

She saw not only the despair of Krzyziak when he arrived at the conclusion that "nothing had changed" in thirty years; she saw something else besides: "When he (Krzyziak) looked into the eyes of his growing son, full of the fire of hatred, he knew that the change was already on its way."

Wanda Wasilewska failed to give a full picture of the struggle against the landlords which was going on in the Polish countryside and which led to mass peasant strikes. But even that which she has shown us is enough to indicate that the peasants were cooperating with each other more and more and that a united front was in the process of formation, sending shivers down the spines of the oppressors.

The peasants' revolts were not always successful; the enemies were still much too strong for them: they had the landlord, the authorities and the church against them. The peasants, however, were losing their fear of them.

Wanda Wasilewska wrote an exciting chapter of the terrible autumn when the soil bore no fruit, when not only was there no hope for a crop but even for water, since the count had appropriated the lake which fed the people and had forbidden them to fish in it. And she goes on to relate: " 'Only one thing will help us,' Zacharczuk said in a gloomy, ominous voice. A hush fell over the crowd. 'What do you mean?' 'It's either us or they.' 'Well said,' Banicha shouted and the women raised a wild racket: 'What are we waiting for? Why beat about the bush? Come on, let's march on Ostrzen!' " And some time later, when the local official passed through the village, "the doors of the huts stood wide open, no man remained in the village, with the exception of the old and infirm, and even many women were away. Soon a thin column of smoke rose over the blue rim of the forest, where Ostrzen stood; it rose higher and higher towards the blue, transparent sky." The women stood praying, just like on that night when Brzegi was on fire, "but this time no fear was felt in their prayer. The words sounded grim and full of force and meaning. Their faces were pale and forbidding, their prayer almost ominous. Something fateful was taking place and the hillside did not ring with a prayer for mercy."

This elemental flare-up of popular wrath is not depicted as a peasant victory by Wanda Wasilewska. The smoke of the fire was still rising when Skurzak's cart, returning from Ostrzen, came down loaded with the dead bodies of those who had given their lives for the peasants' cause, while rushing up the road which led to the village came trucks carrying those who defended the shameful law of peasant oppression. The story as a whole, however, leaves no doubt as to the imminence of the hour when the Polish gentry will pay for all the peasants' sufferings.

In her writings Wasilewska shows the spread of the fighting spirit among the peasants against their masters. She gives a remarkable portrait of Anna, a woman with a wonderful soul which was crippled by ignorance and village prejudices; still she marched with the men against the landlords and lost her life in the struggle. Wasilewska shows how the best among the village intellectuals joined in the struggle. Vincent, the teacher, is shown at the beginning of the novel languishing in the drabness of his life in the village, despairing of the possibility of changing it and feeling unable to carry a ray of light into this kingdom of darkness where starvation and poverty reigned supreme. He envied his friend, Staska, who not only taught, but cured people and organized a cooperative society besides. But towards the end of the story, when he saw how the people formed a wall against the approaching lorries carrying the punitive detachment, "he stepped into their close ranks, shoulder to shoulder with them, facing the road from which clouds of dust were coming nearer every instant."

Wanda Wasilewska's writings form an epopee of the sufferings of the Polish people which they endured under the yoke of their "own" oppressors; a horrifying account of the crimes committed by the last generation of the Polish gentry against the cowed peasant for whom "there was no room in his new fatherland."

Another outstanding book dealing with the situation of the peasants in Poland is *Plowed Fields on the Hillside*, a novel by *Jan Victor*. Jan Victor is well acquainted with the life of the countryside, he knows the peasant's sorrows and complaints and tells of them in simple, truthful language.

There is a characteristic episode that takes place in a village store. The storekeeper complained that the lone kilo of sugar has been lying in the store for months; once in a great while a woman would buy a few grams to still her child's

cough. " 'Ha, ha, ha,' a peasant laughed out aloud. 'We fought it out for Poland, but we are unable to fight it out for a lump of sugar for a child.' " And the author, Jan Victor, adds on his part: "He laughed long and sincerely; his laugh oppressed me, for it sounded like a curse, like an indictment."

Each true word which tells of the sufferings and tortures of the Polish peasantry rings like a curse and an indictment of the Polish gentry. And Jan Victor's *Plowed Fields on the Hillside* also sounds like a severe indictment.

In his novel Jan Victor gives a powerful picture of the hopeless darkness, the starvation and poverty of the Polish peasantry. A peasant, Bel, harnessed his pregnant wife to the plow; he starved his children, beat them mercilessly and made them work beyond their strength. There is also something human in Bel, only it lies concealed deep under a thick crust of a greed for some property which would enable him to keep soul and body together. He starved his children so that he would have something to eat; he harnessed his wife in the plow so as not to hire a laborer and save money to buy an additional patch of land.

Despite all that he is human. When he talks to the teacher one feels that good aspirations and intentions are not alien to him, only they are kept down by the monstrously dismal life of the peasant.

The horrible truth about life in the Polish countryside is to be found in the works of other bourgeois writers as well. In the novel entitled *Grippe Rages in Naprawa*, by *Jalu Kurek*, we come across unforgettable facts recorded in words which burn like fire. He relates:

"Already in April the village begins to starve. Here and there the millstones are still grinding some rye flour for Easter pancakes, but the poor and the landless, which make up nearly the entire population of Naprawa, have nothing to eat. . . ."

"A quarter of the population has never been in a train; half the population has never tasted coffee or tea, and three quarters of the village population have never been farther than ten kilometers from their village. None of them knows what sugar tastes like and only once a year a few permit themselves the luxury of a tiny pinch of saccharine. . . .

"They are paupers, and they keep on their stubborn struggle with the soil. A horse would have croaked of such a life, but human beings stand it. They struggle with their miserable patches of land, their 'eighths' and 'quarters' of rocky land, fertilizing it with manure in the hope of wresting, sucking or praying something out of it. And all the while they live like dogs, feeding on a watery soup with sour bread. . . .

"No lights are lit. The windows are dark, for there is no kerosene, no money with which to buy it. For more than a week now a pot of salt water in which they put the potatoes has been standing in Gvizdz's house. The precious liquid must not be spilled out, for it will be used many times to boil potatoes in. . .

"Janek has decided not to send his ten year old girl to school any more. 'There is no time for such luxury—the girl must tend the cattle,' he said. . .

"Half the children do not go to school at all. The older children are busy in the field and the younger have nothing to put on; nor have they books, paper or pencils. . . .

" 'We have always been beaten and we shall continue to be beaten,' said Wojtek. 'The masters beat us in the past and they are beating us now.' "

"Naprawa kept on sinking deeper and deeper in darkness, poverty and filth. By the evening an expression of melancholy settles firmly on the faces of the people. In the morning they rise with difficulty and unwillingly, for there is nothing to rise for. The wet clay and the rocky sands are dismal to behold. The cold north-eastern wind is blowing through the torn roofs, where the cover is gone or the thatch has rotted away. Crows fly gloomily from one silent place to the other. Strangers carefully avoid Naprawa, but the tax collector always finds his way to it. What can he take here? But he takes the pig from its sty or the only breadwinner, the cow, from the barn. . ."

Of course, Polish literature has not fully exhausted the blood-stained list of crimes committed by the Polish gentry against the millions of peasants, although we could enumerate many more books dealing with life in the Polish countryside. But even that which the coming generations will be able to read in these novels and stories will be sufficient to show the enormity of the crime committed by the oppressors of the Polish people, the readers of the future generation will understand the trials, the suffering and the torture sustained by the peasants under the yoke of the Polish gentry, and they will feel how the land moaned under this yoke, how great was the wrath and how grim the complaint of the oppressed.

OUTCASTS AMONG OUTCASTS

But all this was not the limit of the crimes committed by those who oppressed Poland for twenty years. There

were also the outcasts among the outcasts—Ukrainians, Byelorussians and Jews—who bore the brunt of the Polish yoke. It is to be regretted that this subject has not been dealt with sufficiently in Polish literature.

There is a remarkable book—not a novel—just a collection of simple tales told by peasant folk. It is entitled *Polish Peasants Tell of Their Life*. It has been published by the Warsaw Institute of Social Economics, which concealed a great deal of what the peasants had really told. But even that which we find in this book is characteristic and vivid. This refers chiefly to the stories told by peasants who lived in the eastern borderlands of Poland.

A young peasant, working in his father's household in the Vilno district (no names are mentioned in the book), writes: "Life is nothing but a prison. I am always depressed and my work does not satisfy me. I have no books to read, no relaxation whatsoever." And he goes on to tell of the degrading poverty, of the cruel exploitation of the peasants by the landlords and priests, of their darkness and ignorance, and of the stupid and joyless "merry-making" of the peasants on holidays.

Reading this book it is easy to see why he compares life to a prison. Everybody tried to cheat, to rob, to bend and cripple whatever humanity still remained in people.

The peasant winds up his story of the disfranchisement of the Byelorussians and the arbitrary rule of the Polish gentry and officials with a wish that somebody would paint a picture immortalizing the Byelorussian village under the yoke of the Polish landlords. The picture is visualized as follows:

"The painting should be in drab-gray colors. A middle sized peasant in shaftless boots should be shown in the foreground. A suit worn to shreds should cloak his bent body. Next to him should stand his wife—younger than he, barefooted, hollow-cheeked and with blue rings under her eyes. Then come many children of all ages, unkempt and dirty. In the background should stand their miserable hovel looking like a ruin: a thatched roof full of holes and disheveled by the wind, rotten walls, tiny windows with rags instead of window panes. The hut small and low, the chimney made of wood and crowned by a bottomless pail. Dirt and mud everywhere. A distance cloaked in a haze and never a ray of sunshine. Chickens and pigs parading inside the hut. A large stove in the corner and a ceiling black with smoke."

Polish painters never painted this gloomy, grey picture. Polish writers have failed to immortalize for posterity the want and the poverty, the darkness and the oppression which the Polish gentry foisted on the eastern part of the country. Perhaps, they thought the material dealing with village life in Central Poland sufficient. Perhaps it was because the Polish censorship, that formidable obstacle to the development of Polish literature, was hardest when dealing with matters concerning the eastern borderlands of the country. Be it as it may, Polish literature never told us, for instance, that the peasants of the Unizh village (Gorodetz district, Western Ukraine) had to work thirty-five days for their landlord for the right to pasture their cows on his meadow; or that all of Western Ukraine had only five Ukrainian high schools; or that only 0.02 per cent of the children in Volhynia, Polessye and the Cholm districts received instruction in their native language, etc., etc.

Neither is there any mention in Polish literature of the bloody terror which reigned in Western Ukraine and Western Byelorussia, and of which we are able to learn something from the interpellations in the Polish Sejm. There is a fitting subject for a writer in the story told by Egor Zimnich of Kozhangrudok. It is a story of how he with his family and his comrades Luzhchik, Antonovich and others, were arrested; how cartridges were placed between their fingers and their hands were broken, how their fingers were put between doors and the doors slammed. Or of how sixty-year old Karp Iskra of Pruzhany was thrown like a ball from one corner of the room to another, from one gendarme to another; of how he was beaten several hours on end until he fainted; of how they poured water over him and how when he revived they again threw him down on the floor and beat him on his heels with sticks, shouting: "Lick your blood with your tongue!" Or how the peasant Shcherbinski was forced to drink a full bottle of a mixture of water and kerosene which he was made to prepare, and when his stomach became swollen, a policeman amused himself by bouncing on it and shouting: "one-two, one-two."

All these themes are still waiting for a writer. However, we find in many works at least a partial reflection of the inhuman treatment accorded the people who lived in the eastern borderlands of Poland; and always life there appears infinitely worse than in the central provinces. These scattered, small depositions present a terrible picture. They are a grim but unshakable indictment.

In his novel *Early Spring*, Stepan Zeromski mentions the fierce terror in Wes-

tern Ukraine and Western Byelorussia. At the Communist meeting, Cezar Baryka hears a speaker tell horrible tales that shake him deeply, but which he still refuses to believe. And here is what he learns: "Prisoners were tortured with an electric current; Nikifor Bartnichuk was stripped and tortured in this manner by the policeman Kajdan. . . . Kozlowski, a blacksmith residing in the Wolkowysk district, had his arms tied and an iron bar pushed between arms and knees; two policemen held the bar, lifted Kozlowski up and dashed him against the wall from which he recoiled like a ball and fell to the floor. This procedure lasted fifteen minutes, and three days later he died in terrible agony. Several pregnant women were flogged to death in the Dedovo village of the Nowominsk district." All this is not a product of some writer's morbid imagination, but facts related by Left deputies in the Sejm.

It is characteristic that the writer *Dolenga Mostowicz* in depicting the rise of his hero Dyzma, a crook and a scoundrel, shows him obtaining an estate in the eastern part of Poland, in the Grodno district. Here his talents of an exploiter and oppressor can be brought into full play. Here one could talk to one's servants and employees in the following manner:

" 'No sentimentalizing with me . . . I have no intentions of paying good money to loafers. Understand? Idlers will be kicked out of the house with broken mugs. And if, God forbid, I catch any one of you doing something crooked, if I find out that anyone of you is not quite honest, let him look out! He'll go to jail at once! No joking with me! Understand?'

"And he struck the table with his fist.

" 'Nowadays,' he went on, 'one cannot trust his own brother. Therefore I have decided as follows: should anyone of you notice that something is under way —you understand?—and report it to me, he'll be given five thousand zloty and a raise in pay. . . . That's all. You may return to work.'

"Someone muttered something against the mean proposals of the master. Then the latter continued:

" 'If there's anyone who does not like it he may go to the four winds. Get some fresh air! I am not holding anybody, but I advise him to think first. It is not so easy to find employment nowadays, and he'll get a reference which won't take him far. And don't forget, I have plenty of connections. . . .' "

This is not a chance episode; it shows the attitude towards the workers, a system which was legalized by the Polish political régime and applied most ruthlessly in the eastern part of the country.

Such was the life of the toiling masses in that part of Poland even according to the testimony of bourgeois writers. It was in Western Ukraine and Western Byelorussia that such types of rulers as Dyzma blossomed best. It was there that unlimited arbitrary rule and cruelty could be exercised with impunity more than anywhere else in the country.

The Polish ruling clique did everything it could to throttle the culture of the peoples which inhabited Poland. Their censorship and gendarmes were throttling Polish literature as well. But the truth found its way into Polish literature nevertheless. These pages will tell the future generations of the regime of violence and oppression maintained by the Polish bourgeois and landlord system, and throughout the ages they will ring out like a severe indictment and condemnation.

MARK ZHIVOV

BENJAMIN RISKIND

It happened a long way from Moscow, not so far from Kiev and in fact right at the frontier . . . Here the border had cut a little Jewish town in half. On one side of the town there were a village Soviet and *Osoaviakhim* (Society for Air and Chemical Defense). In the other half of the town there was no village Soviet and no *Osoaviakhim*. . . .

On one side of the town there was a roomy school, with great shining windows and a door that faced that part of the town which had no school. True, in that half, too, there was a door and it opened into a *cheder*, where the *rabbi* gave instructions to the Jewish children; but that door was so crooked, so low, so rickety that it was hard to say whether the door supported the *cheder*, or the *cheder* the door.

The Jewish children in one half of the little town were Young Pioneers, makers of airplane and glider models, mathematicians and biologists. On the other side were no airplane model makers and no Young Pioneers; from morning till night the children sat in the *cheder*, huddled closely together.

Gaunt childish faces, clever eye in these gaunt faces and an end less succession of days of semi-starvation eternally facing these eyes.

On one side there was a teacher for every subject, a strong cheerful person; but on the other side there was one *rabbi* for all subjects, one sick old man to whom a smile was as painful as the sun to his weak eyes, for sunlight "blinded" him. And, finally, in our half, was our army, Red Army men and border guards, the friends of our children, friends of their mothers and fathers; and on the opposite side, a different army of silent soldiers, feared both by the children and their parents.

Now once, over there where the *cheder* stood instead of a school, the *Bar-Mitsvah*[1] of a thirteen year old boy was being celebrated. If the boy had had a decent suit, and if his parents had made any kind of an appearance, perhaps the celebration would have been like a celebration. . . .

But as it was that day was dis-

[1]Bar-Mitsvah—a Jewish rite to mark the religious maturity of the boy when he reaches the age of thirteen.

tinguished from all other days only by the fact that the boy had put on his father's trousers, and had put them on, not because they were new, but simply because they were different from his own.

All this, it seems to me, leaves no doubt as to the appearance the father and the son made at this celebration. There remains the mother. . . . But how much does a mother need to be happy? Two or three happy days, in a lifetime, and no more. The first day is when she bears her son. The second day is his *Bar-Mitsvah*, when he reaches the age of thirteen. And if she lives till the day her son marries, then indeed she is at quits with God and makes formal acknowledgement that she has received the full portion of happiness that God owed her.

And so, full of pride, she gazes at her son with his slanting eyes, in his trousers. O mothers! How little you require for happiness and how much happiness you fail to collect from those who owe it to you!

The celebration was held in the *cheder*. The hero of the day stood on a little platform—a tedious business. As if it were not enough that he had lived to be thirteen, the guests expected something more, they expected him to know something: to recite a chapter of the bible by heart or to wind a *tfilin* on his left hand, in short, to do what Jews do every morning of their lives. But our hero did not know how to wind a *tfilin* on his left hand, nor was he able to chant a chapter from the holy scriptures by memory.

"Not very bright in the head," said the *rabbi*, when the fruits of his instruction became quite evident, and he himself muttered all the prayers that the boy was supposed to read.

"Not very bright in the head," he repeated and mumbled all the more furiously, forgetting his pupil, who was staring at the single platter of cold meats on the table.

"At least sing something, empty-pate," the *rabbi* commanded after he had chanted a whole chapter from the holy scriptures.

At that the lad's glassy eyes seemed to brighten, and a light came into them. That he knew how to do! And he began to sing. But what do you think he sang?

Over valleys, over mountains,
The division marched ahead . . .

The guests shuddered. Fear distorted their faces when the children caught up the chorus:

To storm the Maritime Province,
Stronghold of the White army!

People ran out of the *cheder* as if escaping from a fire; as they fled, they looked to all sides, apparently to make sure that no one had noticed them.

Falling upon the culprit of the celebration, the *rabbi* struck him so hard over the head with his fist that the lad ceased not only to sing, but even to breathe for a while.

"Where did you get that rubbish, you little ruffians? Where did you learn that song?"

"From their school," the children answered. "We heard them sing it in their school."

"A lie!" the *rabbi* said. "Why didn't I hear the singing in their school?"

"You didn't," the children retorted, "but we always do."

"I'll get to the root of this," the *rabbi* shrieked. "Where is it, ruffians, the root of our destruction?"

But now let us switch to something else—do you know Berchik"?

When Berchik's name is mentioned, people sigh, but not because they are sorry for him; they sigh because Berchik pities no one. His business is to make people cry.

Berchik does not beg for alms; he has a violin and the violin earns

him a living. Berchik knows many sad melodies, but if necessary he will play for you a polka, mazurka or waltz. And although he is only twelve, you forget that when he begins to play. Everything turns indistinct, fades away and disappears —Berchik's tender years, and the lad himself and his submissive face—when he lays his violin against his cheek and closes his eyes.

The children know the songs of the other side because Berchik knows them.

Among the rushes there is a secret place to which Berchik comes and to which the children steal their way from the *cheder*. Berchik plays for them the songs which have floated over from the other side, plays so softly he can hardly be heard, but with all the modulations, all the pauses, just as if he had been over there on that side. The children repeat the words and the melody after him, repeat barely audibly, but if the *rabbi* knew how quickly they memorize all these songs, he would be very much insulted. As a matter of fact, his sense of injury continued to smolder and never died out. Hunchbacked old men are stubborn. The *rabbi* kept searching till he found the secret place in the rushes and the culprit, Berchik. But where did Berchik learn the songs?

The boy had to give an answer to this question, not at the *cheder* but at the district police station. Everybody at the station saw at once that Berchik was the most obedient lad on earth.

The station superintendent, struck with pity, gave him something to eat. Berchik ate. Then the superintendent asked him to play his violin. Berchik played, first a polka, then a mazurka, then a waltz.

"And what else do you know?" asked the superintendent. And Berchik played a Jewish *sher* for him, a Jewish *hopka*, a Jewish lament.

"Something else?" asked the police officer.

"That's all," Berchik answered.

"What about *Kakhovka*?"

"What kind of waltz is *Kakhovka*?" the boy asked.

"That's a waltz," the superintendent answered, "for which people get their heads broken."

"Most illustrious *pan*, it hurts a person when his head gets broken. . ."

"Well, and if his violin gets broken?" the superintendent asked.

"Then he dies, most illustrious *pan*."

But no, Berchik's death was not what the officer wanted.

He did not break the lad's head, nor smash his violin. He kicked Berchik in the stomach and began all over again; he invited Berchik to eat, but the lad could no longer eat; he asked Berchik to play, but the boy could no longer play.

Then they let the lad go or, rather, carried him out; Berchik spent the night where he was thrown.

At dawn he awoke.

"Only live people wake up," Berchik decided, opening his eyes. "My violin is whole, my head is whole and the sun is round and untouched overhead. . . ."

"A waltz," he laughed. "God send you a life like that waltz *Kakhovka*, most illustrious superintendent."

He got to his feet; his knees trembled.

"My child," said the *rabbi*, passing by, "suppose you don't want to tell me; but why not tell God who taught you such sinful songs?"

"God knows all," Berchik answered. "Why speak to God about things he already knows?"

"Scoundrel!" hissed the *rabbi*. "I'll break your arms and legs for you. . . ."

But Berchik did not stir from his place. "After that most illustrious *pan*," he said, "you don't seem like much of a brute to me, *rabbi*. . ."

"Well, how about it?" the *rabbi* was asked at the police station.

"Bad!" he answered. "Very bad. . . . And what's worse, the parents of my ragamuffins aren't above listening to those songs themselves—may they go deaf before the children begin to sing and the older ones to listen!"

"Hold on!" frowned the superintendent. "The children are in the *cheder* all day."

"In the *cheder* all day and at home all night," the *rabbi* agreed. "Man is a kind of animal, sirs, that sings best at night . . ."

And that was a night the little town will long remember, a calm and clear night full of silken rustlings.

Beside the boy stood Stakh, the last sentinel on the Polish border. Stakh was twice as tall as his gun and the gun was twice as tall as the boy. And so the Polish soldier Stakh stood beside Berchik: everything is possible on a night like that. . . .

"They're celebrating over there now," Stakh whispered. "They'll sing all night tonight. I already know when they are going to have a holiday."

"I too know when they are going to have a holiday," Berchik answered.

"The children over on that side are finishing school today," Stakh said. "Tomorrow they'll be going to their cities, their universities and academies. They're going to become what they want to be. Not the way it is with us, Berchik."

At that moment a song was struck up on the other side. The people on that side sing all night long when they have a holiday. . . .

It was good to stand behind Stakh, with the gun alongside. No one could see Berchik—and the song came very clear from the other side.

Berchik's eyes were closed and the violin lay against his cheek. But, though his eyes were closed, he watched how the new melody came closer and closer to his violin, how it hovered above the instrument like a night bird, blind and fluttering, like the birth of a new being. Berchik did not play yet, or perhaps something inaudible was playing inside him. A smile appeared on his narrow, bluish face. And then Stakh knew that everything was going well.

"In the bag, Berchik?"

"In the bag, Stasik." And the first sounds came from the violin.

He lay 'neath the hill,
All covered with furze,
The partisan, sailor Zheleznak.

"Got it, Berchik?" asked Stakh, trembling with impatience.

"Got it, Stasik," and the lad played, keeping time with his head.

At that the soldier could not restrain himself and bent over to look at the boy. He bent over—and his blood ran cold.

On the border, when eyes look out of the bushes, these are the eyes of death. Stakh straightened so as to shield the lad with his body.

"Run, Berchik. Run to their school."

"And you, Stakh?"

A shot.

"In the bag," answered Stakh, his eyes following the running Berchik.

He stood motionless as becomes a soldier, even after he has been shot. Then the blood gushed from his throat and he fell.

The dying soldier was carried through the whole of the little town. And the Jewish women, looking at the stretcher with the wounded Stakh, could think of nothing else to do but put some questions to God.

"You can do miracles, Lord," they began their first question. "Why did you not make the frontier run behind our part of the town instead of in front of us?"

"And how much would you lose

if there had been a village Soviet on our side, like the one over across the border?"

And the third question—well, what would Jewish women end up by asking?

"Why have the children on that side deserved more happiness from you than our children?" the third question ran.

* * *

A long way from Moscow, not so far from Kiev and in fact right at the frontier stands a little Jewish town. On one side there is a village Soviet, on the other side none. But the same moon shines down on them, whenever there is a moon. . . .

A POLISH SOLDIER'S DAY

My third day in the barracks. . . .

Before I had time to put on my uniform, or blouse, rather—I don't know yet just what they're called—I heard heels clicking behind me. Corporal Shramko stood at attention, and said:

"Put your belt on. What? Where is your belt? Well, hide it somewhere, and go to the horses without your belt, do you hear? You have a sly face. Just you wait. I'll . . ."

I found my belt, and wondered where to hide it. They keep stealing belts here. I put it on under my uniform, or blouse, or whatever it's called. Well and good. But before I went to the stable, I thought I better brush my teeth at the well. I hadn't brushed them since I arrived here. I got my tooth-brush and tooth-powder from my suitcase, and went out of the empty barrack. The sun had risen. The yard was empty too, and the air was dry and frosty. I went around the barrack, the well being on the other side. All of a sudden I heard a terribly unpleasant voice:

"Hey—you. Halt!"

I ran. But I heard the voice again. Only this time it called down curses on the head of my mother. I looked, and recognized the dried-up figure of Captain Gulky, who only yesterday was described to me as a monstrosity. He was standing still, like a chicken bone stuck into the ground, and gravied with sunlight.

"Hey, you, ape! I'm talking to you, and not to the sun. Don't you see there is no one around? Come here, fast."

He stood there with his hands behind him—in his army greatcoat made out of stiff cloth, and his boots creased around the ankle.

"Listen. I saw you walk. A soldier doesn't walk like that, like the last prostitute on a rainy night."

Captain Gulka spoke quietly, did not stir, and looked down, repulsive.

"What have you got in your hands,—let's see."

"I beg your pardon. In my left hand I have tooth-powder. In my right hand a tooth-brush. For several days I haven't brushed my teeth, and I'm not used to it. I was on my way to the well to brush my teeth."

"That's incredible. Wandering around, blinking at the sun, and

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We print, in abridged form, a sketch on Polish army life by the Polish writer Z. Unilovsky, who served as a common soldier. The sketch was published in the Polish weekly, *Viadomosci Literazkie.*

talking about hygiene. Say, where are you from?"

"I was born and live in Warsaw."

"So—a petty bourgeois,—an untouchable—and an intellectual, are you? Well, I was born in Posnan, and that's why I'm a good soldier; you spoiled cosmopolitan from the capital,—you will never be as much. Do you know, that in battle, I am worth a hundred times more than right now? You can go. Go to Corporal Sonchek and tell him I ordered you to sweep up the stable with your tooth-brush. Get a move on, now."

I turned about, and went off at a good pace in the direction of the well. . . . I turned the handle of the pump, got some water in my mouth, and then in spite of myself, I looked at Captain Gulka. I saw his narrow shoulders. He stood, his legs apart, bending his trunk around in every direction. I thought Captain Gulka was about to vomit. Suddenly he shook his head violently, one might have thought he went blind. Then he yelled out in my direction:

"Yes, there's no doubt about it. I am in a fix! All night long. . . . So what? Ah, idiot. If you had seen. If you had only. . . . Get the hell out of here, before I dust you off."

I spat the water out of my mouth, stuck my tooth-brush in my booth, and ran off to the stable.

I stayed between two rows of stalls. Then Corporal Sonchek saw me, and ran up to me.

"Where the hell have you been, the devil take you. Get a broom, and sweep up. Go to the next stable, and get a manure pail. Run!"

"But, Mr. Corporal, Captain Gulka ordered me to sweep up the stable with my tooth-brush. My tooth-brush is here."

"Clear out and get that pail, or I'll knock you off in your tracks, you boor!"

I went out of the dark stable into the frosty air. Everything I did astonished me by its senselessness.

I went to work with a shovel. My ears burned with invectives.

The square was empty. Only every now and then a little soldier ran by, his shoulders bent. Doing the work, I brooded over my situation. Since I had joined the regiment, they had not stopped telling me about my bestiality, idiocy, stupidity, and of the frivolous deportment of my mother.

Corporal Borek was very fond of scandals, provided he wasn't involved. On the way to the kitchen he yelled to us several times that we walk like a flock of sheep. In front of the kitchen he ordered us to stand in line. He and Quartermaster-Sergeant Savitsky went inside the building. The recruits began pushing each other, someone hit someone else on the head with his kettle, everyone was in a state of excitement.

I watched the recruits of the other batteries. They were eating their dinners in the yard, standing up, or sitting on piles of logs.

We moved up toward the kitchen slowly. Suddenly Corporal Borek came running out without his hat, and obviously frightened. A kettle came flying after him, and the Corporal's back was doused with potato soup. Corporal Borek landed at full length on the ground. Sergeant Savitsky ran out of the kitchen, jumped on Borek's back, and began beating him over the head with a spoon.

These military cooks are a cheerful lot, with a great sense of humor. These white-coated bulls have their own little jokes.

They seem always to be in a hurry. They always dish out hot soup in such a way as to spill it on your fingers. They dump out *kasha* in such a way as to splash some on your face. I approached the cook with fear, screwed up my eyes, and stretched out my hand. He splashed

the soup, and flopped the *kasha*. Over with this. Now I can go somewhere, to some corner, and eat it like a dog. Only I mustn't forget to clean the spots on my uniform.

". . . Well. Now we're sure to go to the guns. Finally, we're going to get some real soldier's work."

Corporal Shramko, hearing my last words, said:

"What guns? I have better work for you. Where is Borek? Ah, that damn. . . ."

Corporal Shramko added a few words so well chosen that I began to feel rather uneasy. Then he turned to me.

"Go find Corporal Borek, and remind him you are alive. Hurry."

I saw Corporal Borek from a distance, standing alone on the square. I waved to him, and he ran to meet me. I repeated what I had been told.

"And have you a shovel, or a broom?"

"No."

"Well, go try and find one or the other, somewhere. Beat it to the stable."

In the stable I put the shovel and the broom in a corner, and began to brush the snow off my clothes. How terribly stupid everything seemed. I must spend a year and a half here, doing senseless and disgusting things. Everyone tries to make a fool out of you, instead of attempting to teach you something.

Still covered with snow, I ran off to my barrack. It smelled disgustingly of filthy human bodies. The recruits were gathered together in a bunch between the beds, crawling over one another like cockroaches. Some smoky lamps, hung from the ceiling, covered the scene with limpid yellow light, which made the men look wretched, doomed.

Z. UNILOVSKY

VLADKA'S FIRST TRIP

The wheels spun faster and the fields rushed past the windows. They were patchy fields now, for here and there through the snow, rusty clods of bare earth showed.

The chimneys of the smelting furnaces that had ceased to cast their lurid glow on the sky after the commencement of the strike, were already hidden from view, the tears on the cheeks of the travelers had long since dried, and the eyes that had shed those doleful tears were now eagerly examining every novelty the journey could offer.

Unnoticeably, each of the occupants of the railway carriages was making a detailed survey of the others, and what they were wearing and what they were taking with them. At the same time they were all extremely anxious about their own things, afraid to take their eyes off them for a single instant, knowing how hard it had been to collect them, recalling the care and trouble their mothers had taken to get them ready and pack them the last few days and nights. How hard they had tried, those mothers, to make their children, the sons and daughters of the strikers from the metal works, presentable for their visit to a strange town, to the strangers who had expressed their willingness to shelter them during the hard times. And how proud the children themselves were to be going so far away, and to have

their own belongings with them in baskets and cardboard boxes, and—but these were few—traveling-bags.

Some of the children had attended the same school, and they formed into little groups at once. Others knew each other by sight. But the majority did not know each other at all. By degrees the silent survey gave way to lively conversations.

"Where are you from? What school do you go to?"

"Where does your father work?"

"Have you got a lot of luggage with you?"

"Well, I've got a wooden box and a basket. What have you got?"

"I've got a valise," one of them boasted.

"I have two sets of underclothes with me," one little girl confided to another. "These clothes I've got on, this sweater, you see, and then another dress, my very best. What have you brought?"

"The same as you. And two towels. And some pink tooth-powder. And a brand-new tooth-brush with a bright red handle."

"Oh, my tooth-powder's white, and so is my tooth-brush, and I have a white comb—all to match, you know."

"My brother's written everything down on paper, so that I won't lose anything, and he's pasted the list inside the lid of my box."

"My things are all marked with my initials 'E. S.' in red thread."

"And mine are 'Vl. M.' My auntie embroidered them for me last night, while I was asleep; she hadn't time before, there was such a lot to do, getting me ready to go away."

"What does 'Vl.' stand for?"

"For Vladislava."

"Wouldn't 'V' have been enough?"

Vladislava was at a loss for an answer. "Of course it would but this is really better," she replied, after a moment's thought. "And look, she's given me a brooch for the collar of my dress," she added, showing them something carefully wrapped in paper.

"Let's see, oh, let's see," and eager hands stretched out for the precious brooch. "But why do you keep it in your hand instead of packing it together with the rest of your things?"

"Because Auntie only gave it to me on the station. She kept it to the last as a surprise for me."

The tiny dark iron elephant passed from hand to hand; everybody admired it, everybody wanted to hold it for a second.

Vladislava — Vladka for short — looked on at her elephant's success with pride and a touch of anxiety. She had taken a fancy to that little elephant from the very first; it had struck her at once as something unusual, something mysterious, and she somehow liked to think that its possessor could never come to any harm, even at the very end of the world, even in an unfamiliar city, so far away from her mother.

So Vladka had loved her little elephant right from the start; he would be a comfort to her when she was feeling sad and lonely, she said to herself, he would be a link with home.

Vladka was fond of such things. At one time she used to keep a little heart made of green glass in her pocket and she would never, never part with it. But the elephant was heaps better, of course. She looked anxious; it was a long way off now, right at the other end of the car. Everybody liked it, of course, but Vladka would have been better pleased if they had liked it less, because she heard one boy say that he would just love to have a little elephant like this one and he wouldn't give it back to Vladka. He even fastened it on his jacket.

It was only a joke, as Vladka knew very well, but she didn't care for jokes of that kind. No, they didn't amuse her at all. She breathed a

sigh of relief when the little elephant found its way back to her hands.

Now that they had done with the elephant, the question of provisions came up. Everybody wanted to see what the others had brought to eat on the way. Should they pool all they had, or content themselves with exchanging a lump of sausage for a hard-boiled egg? A roll for a twist, and so on? So little groups formed and laid their stores out on paper and divided them up. . . . And what stores they were! To look at them you would think they had been meant for travelers to distant parts. There was ham, and salted bacon-fat, rolls, bread and butter, bottles of tea and coffee; some could boast a few sweets and one—an orange. . . . But ah, to think of the frugal meals, the people at home would sit down to now that the children were gone. There would be nothing but potatoes, very likely, and it would be so cheerless, and fathers and mothers would be feeling so downhearted. . . . The children knew this, and the thought of it made some of them sad. But how can children be sad for long, when the whole world lies before them and there are such a number of new and interesting things to be seen, when they are going on such a long journey just like important grown-ups, with luggage of their very own to be looked after!

Then somebody suggested that they should all sing. For a long time no one summoned up courage to begin. They were shy and kept trying to persuade each other to start, and asking each other: "Do you know this song?"—and then humming a few bars of it and stopping in confusion when the others seemed to be listening. . . . Finally, they all made up their minds and started a song that most of them had learned at school. The voices were timid and quavering at first but, as more joined in, they gained courage and their voices rang out stronger.

Where the stream flowed swift and clear,
Down by the pool and the ford we know,
The ice was thick at the close of the year,
And the stream lay still and dark below;
Wondering if the Spring were nigh,
When ice must break and rivers are high

"Look!" a woman whispered, pointing out of the window. They were passing a river. Dark and turbid beneath under its burden of floating ice, it wound between the pussy-willows on the muddy, bedraggled banks, lightened here and there by patches of snow. The sky was as clear and bright as if spring had arrived in good earnest. And the little girls smiled happily and, without breaking off their singing, pointed out the river to their companions.

And once more the brightness of their mood was overclouded, for a fir-tree brought back memories of home. Then someone suggested having a general snack again and dividing up the orange so that everyone in their compartment should get a share.

Meanwhile, a stir was created by someone from another compartment who whispered something to one of the girls; it became known at once that a certain little boy called Yasya had no provisions at all with him, that things were very bad at his home, and that his sick mother had not been able to get him ready for the journey.

Well, they were not girls if they couldn't take care of a case like this. They looked about them and in a trice a bag of provisions was made up for Yasya: three rolls, some sausage, an egg—and the whole orange, because he was the youngest and because his mother was ill and because he had seen plenty of trouble a

home, poor little chap. . . . What a good thing they hadn't had time to eat the orange before they found out about Yasya. . . .

It was discovered that Yasya had holes in his stockings, great big holes, that the elbows of his jacket sleeves were worn through and his pockets were torn. There was nothing surprising about it, for his mother had been laid up for three weeks. But metal workers' children couldn't appear like that before strangers, could they? So it ended in Yasya's sitting on the seat with his feet tucked up under him and covered with somebody's coat, and somebody' else's sweater over his shoulders and on top of that a fur collar belonging to the woman who was traveling with them, while the girls sat round him sewing and darning and even telling stories, so he wouldn't feel the time hang heavy. How splendid that one of them happened to have a needle and thread with her, and another some brown darning thread. . . .

Dusk was falling over the fields that glided past the windows. Soon the lights of a station glimmered; the train was slowing down.

"When will we get to the city, please?" What a long time it seemed since they had got into the train in the morning. . . .

"Can you tell us, please, if we'll soon get to the city?" they kept asking.

Little Yasya, his jacket mended, his stockings darned, his stomach nice and full, was dozing off to sleep against the arm of one of the elder girls. In his hands he still clasped tightly the orange he had thought it a pity to eat.

"He's taking it to the children where he's going to stay," one girl whispered to another.

The conductor came in to light the lamps.

"Will we soon be in the city?" they asked him.

"I'll tell you what, children," said the woman who was taking them to the city. "If you want to make the time pass quicker you ought to recite something, some good verses."

A boy not much bigger than Yasya climbed on to a seat and began, slowly and with a great deal of expression, to recite the following:

We're children still—so people say,
(And, of course, we're not very old)
Yet we know what's going on in the world today,
And that higher than all—if the truth be told—
Is toil. And the world we must build anew. . . .

The children repeated the verses after him in a chorus. Then there was silence again for awhile. Outside the windows night had set in. From another compartment came the rich tones of a rather deep boyish voice, reciting something, and the little girls crowded in the doorway to listen:

The world is rich and this is, as we know,
Because our fathers' toil has made it so.
Because these buildings vast,
Machines and the bridges they thunder over,
Bread and all things that life sustain
Without our fathers' toil the world could never gain.[1]

Vladka listened admiringly and with a feeling of pride. It was queer but she had never thought of it like that before. She had learned of it for the first time from these verses. . . .

"But does he mean to say that father makes things that are needed on the railway, for the trains?"—she asked in an excited whisper of the girl next to her.

[1] From *City Children*, by Eva Schelburg Zarembina.

The girl could not say exactly. They started a discussion. They were all anxious to prove that everything had to be made at their metal works. Feeling ran high.

"Why, don't you know what they do in the rolling mill?" the boy who had just been reciting exclaimed. "Don't you know how rails are made? Haven't you ever seen a steam hammer working? They take a block of iron and make it red hot. Then the steam hammer beats it out flat, then they bore holes in it and the lump of iron has been turned into wheels, the same kind of wheels as this train runs on. Well, and how do you think you could go by train if it had no wheels? And what about the parts for bridges?"

Somehow, after this the very sound of the wheels had something friendly and familiar about it. But the boys teased the girls for being so ignorant of what went on in the place where their fathers worked.

Vladka ran back to her compartment, climbed on the seat and started to search for something in her cardboard box. It took her some time but at last she found it. Then she asked the boy to dictate the poem to her; she had some paper and a pencil they had given her to write letters home.

The boy gave up the teasing then and started to dictate. He had to shout every word in her ear, because the noise in the compartment was terrific. . . . At first they had been shy of reciting, but now each insisted on repeating as much as he or she remembered, and even if they didn't repeat it at the top of their voices, but only in an undertone to two or three of their neighbors, still the general effect was incredible noise.

They were all astonished when the woman who accompanied them said they had better be getting ready because they would soon arrive.

"Are we there already?" some of them exclaimed. Vladka suddenly remembered that she had forgotten to tie up her box again after taking out the paper. She hurried back to her own compartment, and found a great commotion there already.

The conductor came along the corridor at that moment.

"We're nearly there. Stopping at Factory Station."

And now they were in a big room. It was almost empty except for benches along the walls, which were painted in some sort of queer curly designs.

When the children "from the metallurgical works" came in with the woman who had brought them, a great many people were waiting, and took some of them away as soon as the man at the desk in the little room adjoining had written down the address of each and made a note of the things they had with them.

The handful that was left melted rapidly: every other minute there came a ring at the door and someone would come in and take away another of the children who had remained.

And every time the bell rang Vladka was ready to die of fear that it was for her; the next minute she was ready to die of fear that it was not for her, and that nobody would ever come for her. What would happen to her if nobody came? Oh, why had she ever gone away from her own home and her father and mother? She had actually been glad to go! If she were only at home now, she would soon be going off to sleep in her mother's bed, in the corner she knew so well, over by the wall. And here she was, standing in the middle of an empty room, and goodness knows what would become of her!

The doorbell rang once more, but by this time Vladka was so desperate she no longer expected anything. A young fellow with a sports cap in his hand came in. His blue eyes

took in the group of children at a glance, but he did not look at Vladka. He went straight up to the man at the desk, bowed, and asked if there was anyone of the name of Vladislava Markovskaya here. So he must have come specially for her after all!

Extraordinary, the way despair can change to curiosity in such a short time!

The man at the desk glanced at his papers and asked the boy his name.

"My name is Adam Stanchak, and I live at number eighty-two Radvonsky Street."

"And what's your father called?"

"Mechislav Stanchak. He works for Scheibler."

The man at the desk got up then and, taking Vladka by the hand, led her up to the lad. There they stood, Vladka and Adam Stanchak, and they didn't know what on earth to say to each other.

At last it occurred to them to shake hands and Adam asked her if she had any luggage with her. Vladka felt embarrassed as she pointed to her cardboard box, tied up with a string. He picked it up as if it weighed nothing at all, and they went out. Only at the door they remembered that they ought to say goodbye to the others, and turned back.

The streets were lit up, and there were a lot of people about, and the trams made a terrible noise.

"Is this the first time you've been in our city?" Adam asked, just to make conversation. He knew perfectly well, of course, that she had never been here before.

Then he said he was sure she must be tired after the journey, but Vladka said no, not a bit.

At that moment she would have given anything in the whole world to be safe at home again, to see her mother for an instant, only for a single instant; or even her auntie. She thrust her dirty, frozen little hand inside her coat for a minute to feel for the little iron elephant brooch.

The strange boy's voice came to her from a long way off, as if in a dream.

"Is it a big town—are there trams where you live?"

"Yes, there's a tram at Katowitzi, but we live at the works."

"I see . . ." They were going along a narrow, quiet street now, closed in like a prison by the high walls of the factories with their huge, brilliantly-lighted windows.

"They're working still?" Vladka asked in amazement.

"Yes, they work in two shifts, and some even in three. My father is in the third. And when does yours work?"

"My father isn't working at all now because of the strike," she replied sadly, and then she remembered that that was why she was here.

Adam was vexed with himself for asking such a stupid question.

"My mother works here, in this factory," he said, as they passed a big gate in the wall.

Vladka looked about her curiously, not knowing why. She asked him if they still had far to go.

No, he told her, it wasn't very much further now. Soon after that they turned into a yard, and then into a long dark corridor. It was all she could do to keep up with him, for he strode on ahead briskly now.

"It's the door on the right," he explained, but before they reached it, the door was flung open. Light streamed out into the corridor, and warmth, and the cheerful smell of home.

The sudden blaze of light after the darkness blinded the weary traveler and she entered the room in a daze, seeing nothing.

"Well, how are you, Vladka? Did you have to wait a long time for our

Adam?" the boy's mother asked her.

She seemed to be a youngish woman with a fine sweet face, but she looked pale and worn.

Vladka thought the apartment simply splendid, though after the first glance she noticed that there was only one rather small room with a kitchen range and an iron stove with a great pipe leading out of it. The room was furnished with fine, dark furniture. The one light spot was a wicker-work bed in the corner.

"No, I didn't have to wait very long, only a minute or two," Vladka answered politely. Then she noticed that there was someone asleep and snoring in the big bed.

"Sabina could hardly wait till you came. Come, Sabina, here's Vladka at last."

Sabina took a step forward. She was surprised, just as Adam had been, to see how small Vladka was; she was much smaller than Sabina and so thin.

They shook hands and kissed—all very stiffly and awkwardly. At first they could find nothing to say to each other.

"Don't put that box down on the bed, I've just put clean bedclothes on it," the mother said to Adam, who was looking for a place for Vladka's box.

Vladka suddenly felt terribly uncomfortable.

Just at that moment the snores from the big bed ceased, and a cheerful voice asked from under the quilt:

"Oh, have they come already? And is our little guest here?" Vladka would have immediately known it was Adam's father if she had met him anywhere, because they were so much alike.

Then she remembered something very important, something that had slipped her memory until now.

"My parents send their kindest regards to you. They are very grateful to you for your kindness in taking me to live with you while the strike is on." It sounded very much like a lesson she had learnt, but she had got it off her mind, anyway.

And only now she realized how very, very tired she was. . . . She washed her hands. Then she sat down on the edge of a chair and tried to swallow a few mouthfuls of the rye-coffee they pressed on her and eat a bit of bread with salted bacon-fat.

That night, after they had all gone to bed, she cried bitterly lying on the spotlessly clean sheets of the little wicker bed. . . .

BELLES-LETTRES

LEONID LENCH AND BORIS VOITEKHOV

Fourth scene of the third act of the popular Soviet play as staged by the Theater of the Revolution, Moscow

The two young Soviet playwrights whose play, *Pavel Grekov*, we publish herewith, are Boris Voitekhov, a functionary of the Young Communist League, and the writer Leonid Lench. Both young men are making their debut as playwrights.

It would be perfectly logical to ask why the editors of *International Literature*, with all the riches of the Soviet drama to choose from, have selected a play by two beginning authors for presentation to the foreign readers of our magazine. There are no few serious artistic defects in *Pavel Grekov*; character development is insufficiently profound and well-rounded; quite often the authors have failed to find the exact words, the right shades, to make the spectator feel the complex experiences of the personages on the stage. Nevertheless, the play is well worth reading, especially for those who wish to acquaint themselves better with the stern struggle our people have waged in the last few years against their enemies, against the Trotskyite-Bukharinite bandits and their bourgeois-nationalist accomplices.

One of the best devices employed by these enemies of the people was to slander honest Soviet functionaries, in order to ruin the people most devoted to the Soviet fatherland and the Party. Voitekhov and Lench have written a play which exposes these enemy wiles and, presenting as an example the story of its main character, the young Party worker, Pavel Grekov, shows how the true nature of base plotters can be recognized, no matter under what mask they hide.

Pavel Grekov, first produced at the Theater of the Revolution in Moscow, was taken up by dozens of the country's largest theaters and has now become a permanent feature in the repertoire of a great number of theaters both in the capital and in outlying regions. It has proved to be a great success with audiences everywhere. An interesting incident took place at a performance in Rostov, during the scene of the Party committee meeting, when the secretary of the committee puts to a vote the question of expelling Grekov from the Party; at this point hands were raised against his expulsion, not only by

the two members of the Party committee who were called upon to do so by the script, but also by hundreds of people in the audience, who were carried away by anxiety for Grekov's fate and felt themselves responsible for the outcome of his case. Repeatedly in the same scene, when Ridai, the secretary, demanded that Grekov give up his Party card, the audience shouted, "Don't give it to him!" "You have no right to take his card," and the like.

There could hardly be a more convincing proof of the extent to which the play captivated audiences, who were often so carried away by what was happening on the stage that they forgot they were witnessing not real life, but a play. The hero of the piece has become a favorite with Soviet theater goers and his struggle—the struggle of an honest patriot and fighter, devoted to the ideals of the Party of Lenin-Stalin—has stirred and inspired them. Watching the action on the stage, they are seized with a desire to interfere and help Grekov. Great is the power of art when a talented writer deals with burning questions of the day.

There are faults in the work of the two young playwrights. In addition, many nuances could hardly be conveyed by a translation. We believe, however, that *Pavel Grekov* will be of interest to our readers, for it will acquaint them in vivid and exciting form with episodes of the fight carried on by the Soviet people and their punitive organizations against the hostile gangs whose aim was the restoration of capitalism in the U.S.S.R. Spectator and reader will see in the destruction of those bands and in Pavel Grekov's triumph the logical outcome of the victory of truth over falsehood, the victory of light over darkness, of the ideas of Socialism over capitalism.

ACT I

SCENE 1

Office of secretary of a frontier district Communist Party committee in Central Asia. Unpainted, roughcast walls. Plain desk. Another table has been brought up to it, covered with red cloth. On walls, portraits of political leaders. Next to them a saddle harness. Map of the U.S.S.R. On table big colored tea-pots, cups, saucers with cheap candies. Paper lying about, and a pencil.

The frames of the portraits have mouldering bushes of last year's cotton stuck into them. A radio receiving set. In a conspicuous place a big notice: "Let us conduct the first Bolshevik sowing campaign in a fighting spirit!" and "For the cotton independence of the Soviet Union!"

Kovalev, the Secretary of the Party Committee, a man of middle age, sits at a desk. In a corner dozes Sobir, the messenger of the Committee, a sixteen year old lad. Kovalev's head droops wearily. A moment of quiet and rest. Somewhere far away an oriental song and the sounds of metal bells come through the window. Again quiet. It was a camel caravan. Shaking himself, Kovalev goes to the window.

KOVALEV: It must be Suleiman. He's always singing. . . . The old fellow's furious. Just think of it—for forty years he carried silk, tea, contraband goods, on his camels, and now, if you please, petrol tins for the sowings! Why, you're asleep, Sobir!

SOBIR: I was just resting. Do you mind?

KOVALEV: It's all right! Go on!

Enter Chizhova, technical secretary of the Committee, carrying various papers.

CHIZHOVA: Will you sign the minutes, Ivan Romanovich?

KOVALEV: Why are you so pale, Comrade Chizhova?

CHIZHOVA: I'm tired. When will I go on my vacation, Ivan Romanovich?

KOVALEV: You'll go, Lydia Fyodorovna, I assure you, you'll go! Just let's get the cotton in and I'll let you go in peace and your stay at the health resort all paid for. Till then, go on taking quinine. Have you got any?

CHIZHOVA: I'm sick and tired of your quinine.

KOVALEV: But you must take it. Wait, I'll go to the boys and

get some quinine, and you shall take it in my presence. And while I am at it I'll ginger myself up too, even if I have to pour a pail of water over myself. It certainly is warm. Don't go, Lydia Fyodorovna, someone might call up. *(Exit.)*

CHIZHOVA: What's the good of quinine? I'm simply worn out by this ghastly heat.

SOBIR: You must be ill, Comrade Chizhova.

CHIZHOVA: I've got to have a vacation. I'm sick of living in this town of clay, seven thousand kilometers from Moscow!

SOBIR: Don't say that, Comrade Chizhova. Ours is a swell town. It's a district center. It's on the map.

CHIZHOVA: Sure, it's a swell town, Sobir. Don't be cross. Only it's so beastly hot.

SOBIR: You're not used to it yet, that's all.

CHIZHOVA: The bureau of the district committee has finished its sittings, and now it will be as quiet as the grave again, and everyone will go back to his village. I don't like this stillness, Sobir. And then the endless rains will begin and all the delegates and agronomists will creep into their clay holes and make up for the missed meals and exhaustion and filth of nine months of inhuman, unimaginable work. Splendid people. But oh, Sobir! There's snow and skis and frost patterns on the windows now in Moscow. Have you ever seen snow, Sobir?

SOBIR: Is it as white as cotton?

CHIZHOVA: Yes, but it's thick and cold. Who's that outside? Go and see, Sobir.

SOBIR: It's a stranger!

Enter Grekov, a functionary of the Young Communist League, 22 years old.

GREKOV: Is this the district committee?

SOBIR: That's right!

GREKOV: How do you do, comrades! What a good thing I found someone in the district committee. The *cha'khana* [1] is closed and the whole town is asleep.

SOBIR: Our district center is not asleep. Everybody's in the fields, sowing.

CHIZHOVA: Have you come from Tashkent, comrade?

GREKOV: No, from Moscow.

CHIZHOVA: From Moscow? Really?

GREKOV: Yes, really from Moscow.

CHIZHOVA: Sobir, tea! Have you come to us for the sowing campaign?

GREKOV: Not only for the sowing campaign. I've come to you for good. I hope you don't object, comrades. I suppose you're the technical secretary.

CHIZHOVA: Let me introduce myself—Lydia Fyodorovna.

GREKOV: Pavel Grekov.

CHIZHOVA: Take a seat, Comrade Grekov, and have some tea.

GREKOV: Where's Comrade Kovalev, Lydia Fyodorovna?

CHIZHOVA: He'll be here in a minute.

SOBIR: Sit down and rest while you're waiting. You'd like tea and a cookie, wouldn't you?

GREKOV: Of course I would.

SOBIR: Is Moscow a very big town? How much bigger than our district center is it?

GREKOV: Thousands of times.

SOBIR: Oy, oy, oy! And have you ever spoken to Stalin?

GREKOV: No, I haven't!

SOBIR: What a pity!

GREKOV: And what's your work here, comrade?

SOBIR: I'm responsible messenger to the district committee.

Enter Kovalev.

KOVALEV: Here you are, Lydia Fyodorovna! From today on you will be taking quinine in my presence.

[1] Tea-room.

First scene from the Kazan Dramatic Theater's production of "Pavel Grekov"

CHIZHOVA: Comrade Grekov has come to see you from Moscow.

KOVALEV: How do you do, comrade! Pleased to see you! From what district?

GREKOV: Krassnaya Presnya.

KOVALEV: Then we're neighbors. How's old Krassnaya Presnya getting on? But we'll have a separate and detailed report on Moscow later. Oh, I was almost forgetting—get me a trunk-call to Tashkent, Lydia Fyodorovna. And the sooner the better!

CHIZHOVA: All right. *(Exit.)*

KOVALEV: Take a seat. May I see your instructions? What are your qualifications?

GREKOV: I worked at a factory and graduated from a workers' faculty. I had been sent to complete my education, but so far it's come to nothing.

KOVALEV: Why?

GREKOV: I was drafted. They wanted me to stay in a republican capital, but I refused.

KOVALEV: Why?

GREKOV: I asked to be sent to the frontier.

KOVALEV: Well done! You'll get a double university course here, my boy! Do you know the language and customs of the people here?

GREKOV: No!

KOVALEV: You'll have to pick it up as you go on. Married?

GREKOV: No, bachelor.

KOVALEV: Why?

GREKOV: No time! I'm still only a candidate to the Party.

KOVALEV: That's, of course, a serious obstacle! No Party penalties?

GREKOV: No, never had any!

KOVALEV: Why?

GREKOV: How d'you mean, "why"?

KOVALEV: Oh, hell! Wait a bit. . . . I'm tired today! Let me think. *(Takes thermos flask from table.)* Green tea, our only salvation from the heat! Have some! . . . Well, splendid! We will appoint you under-secretary of the district committee of the Young Communist League—we've sent the secretary himself away for a cure.

Enter Narzulayev, an important official of a Central Asian Republic, Mir Akhmetova (a woman), chairman of the local Soviet, and Sorokin, member of the presidium of the local Soviet.

NARZULAYEV: After all, every-

one knows about these achievements, *Ohir!* [1] Take our capital, for instance!

SOROKIN: Well? What about it?

NARZULAYEV: *Solom*[2], *Rafik* Kovalev!

KOVALEV: Greetings, Comrade Narzulayev!

NARZULAYEV: Only lately it was a tiny, absolutely unknown prosperous eastern *kishlak*. [3]

KOVALEV: Sobir, tea!

SOROKIN: Well, and now?

NARZULAYEV: Now it's a big, lively Russ — I mean European town. But we were speaking of cotton.

KOVALEV: What are your impressions as to the sowing, Comrade Narzulayev?

NARZULAYEV: I will give you the same answer as I gave to a very important official in the capital of the R.S.F.S.R.—I mean the Union—Moscow. When he asked when our republic was going to yield cotton I told him plainly, without beating about the bush, that there will not be any cotton in 1930.

KOVALEV: What's that you say?

NARZULAYEV: Just as there was none last year! I told him there wouldn't be any so long as Moscow sends to our ancient eastern land agronomists from Saratov and Leningrad, who know, perhaps, how to grow cucumbers and turnips, but know nothing about cotton. That seems to surprise you, *Ohir!*

KOVALEV: Nothing surprises us.

NARZULAYEV: Do you know what your Russian agronomists have done? They have prepared for the sowing tons and tons of absolutely useless Egyptian cotton seed, which I have had to condemn.

MIR AKHMETOVA: In my opinion the seed was all right.

NARZULAYEV: I have forbidden the sowing of this seed.

KOVALEV: And what do you intend to sow?

NARZULAYEV: Two camel caravans with seed from the selecting station arrived yesterday. That is scientific, suitable seed. That's what you are going to sow.

KOVALEV: All right. I'll agree to the change of seed, if we get the necessary instructions from headquarters.

NARZULAYEV: What d'you want with headquarters? I give you the instructions.

KOVALEV: You or headquarters?

NARZULAYEV: I am headquarters. I work at headquarters.

KOVALEV: But still we'll do as I say and ask headquarters.

Enter Satorov, the head of the frontier guards.

SATOROV: How d'you do? I have urgent business with you.

KOVALEV: Let me introduce Comrade Narzulayev.

NARZULAYEV: Are you the head of the border guards here?

SATOROV: I am.

NARZULAYEV: Your name?

SATOROV: Satorov Salim.

NARZULAYEV: Nationality?

SATOROV: Tajik.

NARZULAYEV: *Solom, Rafik* Satorov! Good!

KOVALEV: Take a seat.

NARZULAYEV: I must tell you, Comrade Kovalev, that you are committing grave political errors in regard to our splendid peasantry.

KOVALEV: What errors?

NARZULAYEV: You have arrested innocent peasants, left women and children homeless, and if my duty as a Communist to look after these unfortunates is regarded by you as nationalism, call it that, but I shall have every ground for suspecting you of Great-Russian chauvinism.

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[1] Term of respect
[2] Greetings
[3] A village

MIR AKHMETOVA: Why do you call them peasants? A set of *kulaks?*

NARZULAYEV: Oh, Comrade Mir Akhmetova, the silence of a fool is better than the speech of a wise woman.

MIR AKHMETOVA: Nobody ever saw you hold your tongue.

NARZULAYEV: *Too mor man medakam*[1]! Of course I don't know all the prisoners personally, but *mana intaurki*[2] that ninety per cent of them will be released this very day, in the name of the supreme authority of the republic. That's how we must begin the campaign for cotton.

SOROKIN: And after you go we shall have to put them into prison again, if by that time they haven't gone over to Salim-bek and his *Basmachi*.[3]

NARZULAYEV: These *Basmachi* exist only in your imagination, *Ohir.* There aren't any *Basmachi*. It's all panic-mongering which interferes with the peaceful sowing of the cotton.

SATOROV: Comrade Narzulayev, I have no right to carry out such an order.

NARZULAYEV: In my republic I have a right to do what I like.

GREKOV: What d'you mean, your republic? It isn't your republic!

NARZULAYEV: And who do you think you are? I've never seen you before!

GREKOV: Nor have I seen you, but . . .

KOVALEV: Keep cool, Grekov! No one will be released from custody.

NARZULAYEV: We'll see about that. You've been sent here to sow cotton, and you sow panic, discontent, indignation, in fact, everything to prevent the sowing of cotton. I'm not going to keep silent about this. I will raise the question of your activities, Comrade Kovalev, before the regional committee of our Party. *(Exit, greatly incensed.)*

SOROKIN: Look here, Ivan Romanovich, you mustn't be so brusque. After all, this is the East. You and I must allow for the people we have to work with and the conditions we have to work in. Our policy in the national republics requires great flexibility.

MIR AKHMETOVA: I propose that we ask the Republican Central Party Committee to take Narzulayev away from us. We shall ruin the sowing campaign with special delegates of that sort!

KOVALEV: Whatever the circumstances, we shall give the country cotton, despite Narzulayev and no matter what Narzulayev does; and we will not only ask, we will insist, Comrade Mir Akhmetova, on his being subjected to a strict Party inquiry. What d'you say, comrades, shall we succeed? I think we shall! Comrade Satorov, report on the military situation at the frontier. Grekov, you may remain.

SATOROV: Kuri-Ortika bands are fifteen kilometers from the town—here's the report. The *Basmachi* have crossed the Pyandj on pontoons. However it may turn out, you'll have to mobilize all the Communists and send them to us ready for any emergency.

KOVALEV: Lydia Fyodorovna, take down, please: Comrade Mir Akhmetova to be entrusted to mobilize immediately all members and candidates of the Communist Party and send them to be at the disposal of the head of the frontier troops for special purposes. Got that? To

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[1] I know you are a snake.

[2] I assure you.

[3] *Basmachi* — groups of counter-revolutionary bandits in Turkestan, who were organized by whiteguards, *kulaks* (peasant exploiters), the local clergy and the wealthy nationalist bourgeoisie in their attempt to struggle against the achievements of the Socialist Revolution.

be confirmed by a resolution of the bureau. How many Communists are there in the town?

SOROKIN: We can get together about fifty. Not more.

MIR AKHMETOVA: I can't get them all in one night, *Rafik* Kovalev. The wives will raise a row.

KOVALEV: You quietly and tactfully explain to the wives the cause of your visit, and there won't be any rows. They're not just wives, they're the wives of Communists. Go on, go on, Mir Akhmetova, get to it!

Exit Mir Akhmetova.

SATOROV: I have information that Kuri-Ortika's spies are in the town.

KOVALEV: You better stop Mir Akhmetova and give her one of your lads. She can't be allowed out alone now.

SATOROV: It shall be done! I implore you to be cautious! Well, I'll go to join my unit. *(Exit hastily.)*

Lensky's aria from "Eugene Onegin" is heard over the radio.

KOVALEV: A beautiful song, beautiful. *Hub-mailis*,[1] only one thing wrong, not a word about cotton in it, not a word about the *Basmachi!*

Enter Sobir, rushing in.

SOBIR: Ivan Romanovich, a great misfortune!

KOVALEV: What's up now?

SOBIR: A barge carrying gasoline and spare parts has gone down.

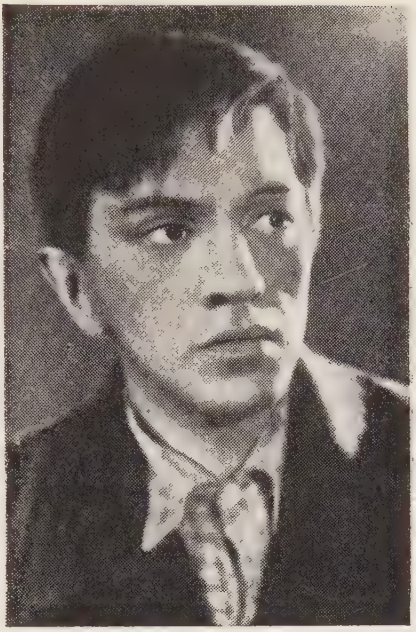
KOVALEV: Where?

SOBIR: Right near the landing.

KOVALEV: The beasts! That's today's greatest misfortune! You understand what it means, Sorokin! The whole of the sowing campaign goes up into the air.

SOROKIN: Yes, that's worse than the *Basmachi!*

KOVALEV: You'll have to go



Mikhail Astangov in the title role of "Pavel Grekov" at the Theater of the Revolution, Moscow

immediately to Klenov at the state farm. Implore Klenov to give us all the gasoline he can spare. Tell him we'll give it back later. Mobilize all machines right away. Take whatever you find and from any department you can. Satorov will help you.

Exit Sorokin, speaking as he goes out.

SOROKIN: Don't you worry! I'll get them! I'll take your car.

KOVALEV: All right, but be here by the morning. *(Goes to telephone on wall bracket and lifts receiver.)* Give me the state farm. State farm? Klenov! What? Not there? Tell him Kovalev rang him up on very important business. Well, lad, that's what you are up against at the frontier.

SOBIR: Ivan Romanovich, may I go too?

KOVALEV: What for?

SOBIR: I would help.

KOVALEV: And how'll I get on

[1] Good.

without you? Who will help me? Responsible messenger to the district committee, have you forgotten all about me? *Tu ma'e faro mush-kardi*,[1] Sobir?

SOBIR: *Na faro mush kakardim!*[2]

KOVALEV: Stay where you are, brother. *(Telephone.)* Yes! Yes! Kovalev! Oh, Lobikov! The plowing's being ruined? That's pleasant news! Your mechanic's sick? I can't hear! Who's a rotter? The mechanic? You just said he was sick! Oh! Sick *and* a rotter! I see—a sick man gets better, but a rotter never recovers. What? No organizer? I'll send you an organizer tomorrow, and he's a splendid tractor mechanic into the bargain. From Moscow. Yes, he built all the tractor works in the Union. Yes, with his own hands. When will I let you go? When we get the cotton in. And when did you think? Goodbye, goodbye! *(To Grekov.)* Well, then, we'll make you under-secretary of the district committee of the Young Communist League, but you'll also have to function for quite some time in the capacity of chief mechanic of the tractor brigade. You'll go, old boy, to our remotest district.

GREKOV: But, Comrade Kovalev, I know nothing about tractors! What sort of mechanic shall I make?

KOVALEV: Didn't you say you graduated from a workers' faculty? What did they teach you there?

GREKOV: Mathematics, history, geography . . .

KOVALEV: Splendid! A tractor brigade mechanic ought to know geography, and he must be able to think for himself. Didn't they teach you that at the workers' faculty?

GREKOV: To think? I learned to think for myself.

KOVALEV: I see you'll be a splendid mechanic! Not another word—there are no mechanics in the district. In the brigade you're going to, we let a gentleman out of prison to do the work; it was a crime, and now we must put him back. You say you've worked in a factory. So you must know something about mechanics. You'll have to get into harness.

GREKOV: Well, since you're so short of workers. . . . All right, I'll be a mechanic.

KOVALEV: Now, there's one thing you must remember. I forbid the sowing of Narzulayev's seed. They have Egyptian cotton seed in the brigade, sow that. It's the best, and we have instructions from headquarters to use it.

GREKOV: Who is Narzulayev?

KOVALEV: Narzulayev's a great man from the center of the republic.

GREKOV: D'you know that when he spoke about *his* republic I felt mad? How dare he!

KOVALEV: Why shouldn't he dare? He knows he'll always be backed up by his pals, who are all Nationalists, like himself. So remember, I forbid you to sow Narzulayev's seed.

GREKOV: All right! But how will I know which is which?

Enter Masha Krilova, an agronomist, member of the Young Communist League.

KRILOVA: "The dawn finds me at your feet!"[1] How d'you do, Ivan Romanovich. Sobir, tea!

KOVALEV: Mashenka! The Terror of the Locusts! Meet the just appointed chief mechanic of the tractor brigade, and your new chief, for he is also under-secretary of the district committee of the Young Communist League.

KRILOVA: Krilova!

GREKOV: Grekov!

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[1] Have you forgotten all about me?
[2] No, I have not forgotten you.

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[1] A line from Griboyedov's famous play *Wit Works Woe*.

KOVALEV: She'll help you. What's wrong in your part of the world?

KRILOVA: We've discovered huge deposits of locust eggs, left by the ones that came from Afghanistan last year.

KOVALEV: What is the zone of infection?

Krilova goes over to map and shows him.

KRILOVA: The zone of infection covers the territory of two village Soviets.

KOVALEV: Same as last year!

KRILOVA: The infected territory must be cleaned up before the plowing, Ivan Romanovich. If this is not done in two days it will be too late.

KOVALEV: We will take measures. Comrade Krilova, I've wanted to ask you for a long time: aren't you afraid roaming about in our parts alone on horseback?

KRILOVA: You forget, Ivan Romanovich, that I'm a Young Communist League member.

KOVALEV: Yes, of course! Look here, Comrade Krilova, you'll have to investigate the tractor brigade area too, and help Comrade Grekov at first with the sorting of the seeds.

KRILOVA: All right, I will.

KOVALEV: And you, Grekov, go over to my place. You'll spend the night there. You can talk to my mother about Moscow. The old woman's homesick.

GREKOV: Where do you live, Comrade Kovalev?

KOVALEV: After you've crossed the yard of the machine and tractor station . . .

KRILOVA: I'll tell him.

KOVALEV: She'll tell you.

KRILOVA: You go straight across the yard of the machine and tractor station, go up as far as the irrigation ditch, and keep on the left bank till you get to a little hill, and from the hill go straight down to a ravine, and keep along the ravine till you get to a cotton-works path. And from there straight to the landing-place, where there's lots of rushes . . .

GREKOV: Rather a stiff address.

KOVALEV: Yes, it's not Plushchikha Street, 18, flat 3. Sobir, will you show him the way! Have you got a gun, Grekov?

GREKOV: Yes. So, rushes, and rushes, and then an irrigation ditch? Goodbye, Ivan Romanovich!

KRILOVA: Goodbye! Don't get lost!

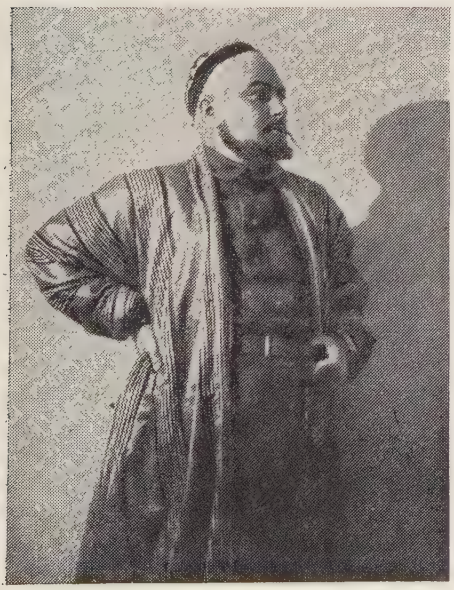
GREKOV: I'll try not to! (*Exit.*)

KOVALEV: Oh, Mashenka, when I look at you I wish I too were only twenty.

KRILOVA: And what would you do?

KOVALEV: Well . . . I would not worry about what to say to you, I'd just say it.

KRILOVA: For goodness' sake,



Y. Chernov as Narzulayev in the Kursk Dramatic Theater's production of "Pavel Grekov."

you don't mean you're going to propose to me?

KOVALEV: I suppose you think an old fellow like me doesn't even know how to propose!

KRILOVA: Why not? I can quite imagine how you would do it!

KOVALEV: Can you?

KRILOVA: You would take the object of your passion by the hand and say: on the basis of a resolution of my heart I inform you that, after the cotton is sown, the tractors repaired, and fodder for the cattle put away, and in the absence of any sudden disaster in the district, I will be in a position to discuss the question of our life together, beloved comrade.

KOVALEV: All right, but why such fine language? I would simply appeal to Alexander Sergeyevich Puskhin for help and say: "I remember the wonderful moment when I saw Thee, first."

Enter Chizhova.

CHIZHOVA: The line's clear, Ivan Romanovich. They're expecting you at the telegraph office.

KOVALEV: So much for Comrade Pushkin! Goodbye, Terror of the Locusts! Owing to sudden disaster in the district our conversation is indefinitely postponed.

KRILOVA: All right, Comrade Kovalev! I shall be waiting!

Exit Kovalev.

CHIZHOVA: Oh, Mashenka. You'll have to wait a long time. By then the locusts will have eaten up everything.

KRILOVA: Yes, I think so too. I won't wait. I'll go home and take a nap. Goodbye, Lydia Fyodorovna!

Exit Krilova. Chizhova sits in front of radio set and tunes in to Moscow.

CHIZHOVA: Listen, Sobir! Moscow! The Red Square. . . .

From the radio can be heard the noise of the Red Square, motor horns, the clock on the Kremlin striking the hour.

SOBIR: What a noisy town Moscow must be. . . .

SCENE 2

Camp of tractor brigade working on cotton fields in a remote corner of Tajikistan.

On the shore of an irrigation ditch at the foot of a mountain range, the tops of which are covered with eternal snow, the camp lies in the shade of huge plane trees.

Empty petrol barrels. A rickety tent. A broken tractor. In a shelter at the dam of the ditch are two Red Army men, frontier guards, with a machine gun: they are guarding the camp from the Basmachi.

Pavel Grekov is working on this brigade as mechanic and organizer.

He is not getting on well.

Levitsky, former mechanic in the brigade, an ex-officer under the tsar, a hardened cynic and adventurer, is demoralizing people and spoiling machinery. He is sarcastic, facetious, sings cheap songs. Now he is whispering in a suspicious manner with the tractor driver Gusseinov, a somber Tajik in a ragged gown.

Grekov realizes that he must get rid of Levitsky as soon as possible.

GREKOV: Levitsky, you're to go to town tomorrow!

LEVITSKY: Allow me to assure you that till this *Basmachi* band is liquidated I will not move anywhere beyond the ditch. Excuse me, but life is life. Why the hell should I perish from the curved saber of a Mohammedan, I'm not Griboyedov,[1] am I? "I want to live, in order to think and to suffer."[2] And anyhow there won't be an escort tomorrow.

GREKOV: Why d'you think so?

[1] A famous Russian writer, who was killed in Persia in 1829.

[2] From a well-known poem by Pushkin.

LEVITSKY: Because the ferry has been carried away by the floods. We are cut off from the town.

GREKOV: How is it you always know such things before anybody else, Levitsky?

LEVITSKY: "The book of the stars was open to him and the sea-wave spoke with him."[1] People don't get ten years for nothing, my young friend.

GREKOV: Ten years, plus purposely damaged tractors, ten years plus wrecking activities during the sowing season in a frontier district—that's not ten years, Citizen Levitsky. You can't count. That's a sentence to be shot.

LEVITSKY: To be shot is of course unpleasant. I might go so far as to say that its only advantage is that it can happen only once in a lifetime.

Enter Lobikov, member of the Communist Party, but a ridiculous creature and a frantic coward. He was drafted by the district committee of the Party and sent here for the sowing of the cotton, three months ago. His only desire is to get out of the tractor brigade as soon as possible, for he feels extremely wretched in it.

LOBIKOV: Comrade Grekov, when will you let me go away from here?

GREKOV: We'll finish the sowing, and then you can go.

LOBIKOV: I've been hearing that for three months. I have a family, you know.

GREKOV: Look here, Lobikov, I can't send you to the town if only because we are surrounded by *Basmachi*.

LOBIKOV: Surrounded? Oh, how bad I feel! Let me go. . . . I'll put on a gown and veil and go to the town on foot. I have practically a woman's figure, nobody will know me.

[1] From a poem by Baratinsky on Goethe's death.

GREKOV: Stop talking nonsense. Take the megaphone and call the tractor drivers.

LOBIKOV: My god, I'm about fed up with this Mayne-Reid stuff.

The brigade has plowed the virgin lands. The work has been finished in record time at the cost of superhuman efforts. But the seed has not sprouted. And this is Pavel Grekov's chief worry.

GREKOV: What's to be done? What am I to say to Kovalev? Such work to be wasted!

MASHA: Are you sure you've checked up on the fields?

GREKOV: Better than you have the seeds! Abdulla and I have been over all the ground on our hands and feet. Not a sign!

MASHA: How can you say "better" or "worse," when you don't know a thing about seed?

GREKOV: Now when I see they're not sprouting I begin to understand something. Can it be that Narzulayev was right? But whether he is right or wrong I'm not going to change over to his seed.

MASHA: Just think how much energy has been wasted and all for nothing!

GREKOV: No, not for nothing! We'll plow all over again and sow the seed again. Will we be in time?

MASHA: What! All over again from the very beginning?

GREKOV: I ask you: will there be time?

MASHA: Even if we had the strength we should only have three days to do it in, at the most.

GREKOV: Very well! We'll begin! I don't want to offend you, but I must ask you not to interfere in agronomical affairs now. I've had enough of it.

MASHA: You don't have to tell me what I've got to do.

GREKOV: Where are you going to?

MASHA: That's none of your business. (*Runs off along edge of ditch.*)

Grekov calls general meeting of tractor drivers and tells them the sad news that the seed is not sprouting. They react in various ways to this information.

Those who have come only in search of easy earnings and kulaks who have run away from collectivization raise a row and demand their pay. The honest tractor drivers declare that they will not leave the fields till the cotton begins to show.

Tractor driver Gusseinov who is really a Basmach spy blames Grekov for everything and delivers a counter-revolutionary provocatory speech.

A quarrel breaks out between Gusseinov and the Young Communist tractor driver Tajiyev. The quarrel develops into fisticuffs.

Grekov separates the fighters. Suddenly the hum of an airplane is heard overhead. It is about to land. Kovalev and Narzulayev are in it.

While the tractor drivers are unloading the petrol cans from the plane, Kovalev has a "heart-to-heart" talk with Grekov, and Narzulayev with Gusseinov, who has already been given notice to quit the brigade by Grekov.

Narzulayev demands that Grekov be immediately removed from the brigade for sabotaging the sowing and for "Great-Russian chauvinism" shown by attacks on the "poor peasant," the Tajik Gusseinov.

Kovalev decides to leave Grekov in the brigade giving him six days to "make good." The infuriated Narzulayev goes away to the airplane. The plane takes off. An anxious night awaits Grekov and the tractor drivers. A Basmach attack is expected. Grekov orders Stetsenko, a frontier guard, to place extra sentries. Suddenly a dark figure appears on the edge of the ditch: it is Masha Krilova, obviously excited.

GREKOV: Where have you been? Kovalev took me to task on account of you.

MASHA: And right he was. You have deserved to be taken to task on account of me, and sent packing on account of the cotton.

GREKOV: That's just what Narzulayev is after.

MASHA: Pity he didn't succeed.

GREKOV: Why, what's up?

MASHA: Cotton is up, that's what.

GREKOV: Sprouting?

DZHURAYEV (*an old Tajik*): Yes, yes, sprouting.

MASHA: And you couldn't find it. Look!

GREKOV: D'you call those sprouts?

MASHA: You probably think that a cotton plant grows into a plane tree all of a sudden.

GREKOV (*enthusiastically*): Mashenka, darling . . .

MASHA: Don't darling me!

GREKOV: If those are sprouts, you are a darling. Where did you find them?

MASHA: In the third plot, where you didn't go. Look, is it swelling? (*Shows Grekov a clod of earth with a cotton seedling in it.*)

GREKOV: It is!

MASHA: Has it burst?

GREKOV: It has!

MASHA: Can you see the stalk?

GREKOV: I can.

MASHA: Is it like a little green torch?

GREKOV: Yes, yes, yes. . . .

MASHA: Yes, yes, yes! Well, stupid, that's a sprout!

Grekov calls the tractor drivers. The clot of earth with the seedling goes from hand to hand. Unshaven, after three sleepless nights, the tattered men rejoice like children. They sing, dance, utter broken cries, Victory, victory!

Just then Gusseinov, to whom Levitsky makes a sign, gives the signal to the Basmachi with a lantern.

In the production of "Pavel Grekov" at the Theater of the Revolution, the part of Mir Akhmetova is played by Vera Yenutina (left), Kovalev by Dmitri Orlov (center) and Zvonkova by Nina Ugryumova (right)

Shots are heard. The lantern is shattered. From far away comes the warlike bloodcurdling cry: Allah! Allah! *It is the Basmachi coming to the attack.*

Levitsky and Gusseinov run away. At Grekov's command the tractor drivers seize their rifles and throw themselves down on the edge of the ditch. The cries of the Basmachi come nearer and nearer.

Fire at the old canal, *commands Grekov.*

A salvo.

SCENE 3

1934. Sleeping car of express train Central Asia-Moscow. Two passengers in the compartment: a man with a yellow face in the grip of malaria and a fresh-faced young woman. They are Pavel Grekov and his wife Masha Krilova. They are going to Moscow to new work.

Farewell, Central Asia! *cries Grekov, looking through the window at the desolate sands speeding by. There is a slight wistfulness in his voice.*

The attendant ushers a passenger into the compartment. It turns out to be Sorokin.

Embraces. Kisses. An unexpected but joyful meeting.

Grekov goes out into the corridor to smoke. Another unexpected meeting—Levitsky comes straight towards him along the corridor. The former mechanic is a transformed man. His rags and tatters have been substituted by a well-cut fashionable suit, he wears horn-rimmed spectacles and a felt hat. He is posing as a foreign tourist. Grekov seizes him and he endeavors to tear himself from Grekov's grasp. Grekov calls Sorokin to his aid. Sorokin seizes Levitsky firmly, saying to Grekov: You go for the chief of the train and I'll hang on to him!

Grekov hurries off and then a strange thing occurs: Sorokin lets go of Levitsky, who jumps off the train at full speed, Sorokin falling on to the floor as if struck by a blow from a fist.

Grekov comes back, and Masha with a towel over her shoulder comes in a fright out of the washroom.

The bastard got away from me! *cries Sorokin.*

Night. The express train Central Asia-Moscow rushes over the desert sands. In the compartment all are asleep. The wheels thunder. At dawn Sorokin cautiously lets himself down from the upper berth and silently searches in the pocket of Grekov's coat. Finding Grekov's Party card he puts it in his own pocket.

CURTAIN

ACT II

SCENE 1

A construction site. Night shift.

SENKA *(from shaft):* Klasha!

KLASHA: Hullo!

MISHKA (*crane driver*): Damn it, it's stopped again, Klasha! Where's the dispatcher?

KLASHA: Dunno!

MISHKA: Go and find him!

KLASHA: In a minute!

Sorokin and Karas, a member of the Party committee, appear.

SOROKIN: Remember, Ivan Nikolayevich, that Grekov mustn't know that you and I are acquaintances.

KARAS: Of course not!

SOROKIN: Where is he, by the way?

KARAS: Somewhere in the excavations. Learning the trade.

SOROKIN: I'll go and look for him.

Enter Glinsky, chief engineer.

GLINSKY: How d'you do!

SOROKIN: How d'you do! D'you know where Grekov is?

GLINSKY: Somewhere in the excavations. (*Exit Sorokin.*) Ivan Nikolayevich, I've come to you for advice. What's to be done? Grekov is inquiring about the foundations. He's calling a conference . . .

KARAS: Cheer up, Lev Arkadyevich!

GLINSKY: It's all very well for you to say "cheer up". (*Exit.*)

Enter Grekov and Sorokin.

GREKOV: How you've changed, Sorokin! You've aged!

SOROKIN: I've had a beastly time of it lately.

GREKOV: What's wrong?

SOROKIN: I told you. I've been working in appalling places. And I'm in a rotten mood. Nothing makes me happy and I know that really the cause is in myself. If it weren't for the feeling that I'm a Communist, that there's the Party, I'd put an end to everything.

GREKOV: But what's the matter? Tell me.

SOROKIN: Everyone must have some joy in his life, Pavel, and everything's gone wrong with me. My wife left me, and in such an unpleasant way. I've got the child. I was so miserable that I left the place. And the kid got sick. The doctors advised change of climate. They recommended the Moscow climate. I asked for work here. They told me: "If you can get a lodging we'll have you." And here I am. . . .

GREKOV: Yes, a muddle. And how are your Party affairs? Everything in order?

SOROKIN: Why do you ask me that? They've always been in order.

GREKOV: I just asked you, that's all. Oh, by the way, here's Ivan Nikolayevich, the manager of the personnel department.

Karas comes up to Grekov and Sorokin.

GREKOV: Ivan Nikolayevich, this is Comrade Sorokin.

KARAS: How do you do, comrade. (*They shake hands.*)

GREKOV: Comrade Karas, have a talk with Comrade Sorokin about work. I knew him in Central Asia.

SOROKIN: We fought the *Basmachi* together.

KARAS: That'll be all right, Comrade Sorokin. Let's go to my office.

GREKOV: Well, good luck to you! Drop in on me this evening! We'll have some *pilaf!*

Exit Karas and Sorokin.

GREKOV (*to a young engineer Polukhin*): Well, Victor, what did you find out?

POLUKHIN: It's as we thought.

GREKOV: You mean our fears about the foundation have been confirmed? You've tested it thoroughly. You're sure there's no mistake?

POLUKHIN: There can't be.

GREKOV: All right, we'll start in ten minutes.

Exit Grekov. The tunnellers climb out of the shaft to the surface.

KLASHA: The old fellows have beaten you again, Senka.

SENKA: The old fellows have all the luck, Klasha. The soil is so soft on their section, you only have to dig into it, and it breaks up of itself. And our lime is as hard as granite.

OLD TUNNELLER: Granite, is it? Oh, you young fellows! I watched Buganok working. He breaks up the soil from inside. You can only dig garbage-pits like that.

BUGANOK: You've been working on buildings like this all your life, old man. You're smart, aren't you? From inside! You try and get lime out any other way. We'll see who'll be in front after dinner.

OLD TUNNELLER (*good-humoredly*): Keep your hair on, giraffe! Grekov'll be coming, and he'll find out who's in front. I'm trying to teach you, you fathead.

BUGANOK: You must have an engine inside you, Trofimich! We often look at you and marvel.

OLD TUNNELLER: You look and marvel, and I work. That's why you'll never catch up with me!

Enter Grekov.

GREKOV: Well, how's the competition with the old ones going on, Senya?

SENKA: They're in front, Pasha. But look at their soil! As soft as butter. And we have that cursed lime.

OLD TUNNELLER: Butter, butter! Have you tried spreading it on bread?

GREKOV: Keep cool, Senya. As soon as I get a minute I'll see what sort of soils you're all working in. Klasha and I will go into everything. She's very impartial, Klasha is.

Exit tunnellers.

GREKOV (*to Klasha*): Just a minute. (*Exit.*)

Engineers assemble at one of props.

ENGINEER: What's the matter, Lev Arkadyevich? What's the conference for?

GLINSKY: I know as much about it as you do. Just one of Grekov's little whims.

ENGINEER: Why do you allow him to butt in everywhere? Tell him to mind his own business.

GLINSKY: Just you try and tell him!

GREKOV (*entering*): Excuse me, comrades, I won't keep you long! I just want to get at the root of this matter.

GLINSKY: At your service, Pavel Nikolayevich!

GREKOV: Just tell me again, Lev Arkadyevich, the basic measurements of the props. According to the blueprints, of course.

ENGINEER: Such figures should always be remembered, Comrade Grekov. Even by Party organizers.

GREKOV: Well, I've forgotten. Tell me them, Lev Arkadyevich.

GLINSKY: Which ones in particular do you want to know?

GREKOV: Say, the width.

GLINSKY: Width—nine meters.

GREKOV: And the length?

ENGINEER: Eleven meters.

GLINSKY: Quite right—eleven meters.

GREKOV: Victor, you measure the width, and I'll measure the length. *(They measure the foundations.)*

POLUKHIN: Width, 8.65.

GLINSKY: How much?

POLUKHIN: 8.65.

GREKOV: Length, 10.70.

GLINSKY: Impossible!

ENGINEER: There's something wrong. *(Makes measurements himself.)*

GLINSKY: Give me the measure. Quite right! 8.65 by 10.70.

GREKOV: What does this mean, Victor?

POLUKHIN: It means that the prop won't bear the weight for which it was intended.

GREKOV: In other words—disaster!

POLUKHIN: Yes.

GREKOV: How could such a thing come about, Lev Arkadyevich?

GLINSKY: Can't imagine!

ENGINEER: A good thing it was discovered in time. Fortunately, this is only the first prop.

GLINSKY: Comrade Polukhin, let me see the blueprints. *(Takes print and looks at it.)* Width, nine, length, eleven. All correct. And my signature. The surveyors must have made a muddle.

GREKOV: I don't know who's made a muddle yet, but whoever it is, you, as chief engineer, will be held responsible.

GLINSKY: It's disgraceful! It must be looked into.

GREKOV: A very costly disgrace. As for looking into it, I agree with you. And look into it we will.

GLINSKY: I can't think what it can be!

POLUKHIN: Don't you worry, Lev Arkadyevich. . . . Others will think for you.

GLINSKY: What do you mean by that?

POLUKHIN: Someone must have misled you.

GREKOV: Lev Arkadyevich, I will ask you and Comrade Polukhin to report this to the chief of construction. In my opinion we shall have to stop work till the underpinning is put right. Agreed?

GLINSKY: Yes, Pavel Nikolayevich, I agree. We'll report to Proshin.

Exit all. Enter Klasha. She goes up to shaft humming: "All the Comsomols were leaving."[1] Bye-bye, Mishka. *Descends shaft still singing. Grekov reappears.*

GREKOV: Klasha, where are you?

KLASHA (*from shaft*): Here. The steps are slippery, don't fall.

Grekov descends shaft. Enter unknown person in overalls. Looking round he picks up huge lump of earth and throws it down shaft. Sound of falling stones. Terrible cry. Unknown disappears. From cabin of crane Mishka comes down. Runs to shaft.

MISHKA: Klasha! Grekov! A cave-in! Comrades, to the rescue. A cave-in! *(Several workers run up.)*

ALL: A cave-in! To the rescue!

GREKOV (*appearing at surface*): Klasha Timofeyeva has been killed.

SCENE 2

Office of secretary of Party committee at the construction. Desk, chairs. For visitors, rickety sofa in corner. Ridai, secretary of committee, sits at desk. He is a small fragile man with a crest of hair and angry eyes. On sofa and chairs sit the

[1] From a popular song.

members of the committee: Petrov, Karas, Semkin, reading a document.

RIDAI: Who would have dreamed of such a thing?

SEMKIN: A lesson in watchfulness!

RIDAI: This business must be a lesson to us.

KARAS: Yes, an extraordinary business. You're right, Ridai. The Party committee must decide today—yes, or no. I'm with you in that.

RIDAI: What d'you mean—yes or no? No such thing! Is Proshin an enemy? He is. Has the Stakhanovite Timofeyeva been killed? She has. The question is clear. We must decide.

PETROV: D'you mean he killed her?

RIDAI: That's not the way to put it, Comrade Petrov. You and I didn't see who killed her. But she was killed, wasn't she? And there's an investigation. When I looked through the evidence I thought to myself: Good god, who've we been working with all this time? If we don't expel him, the district committee will do it for us.

SEMKIN: The district committee's sure to expel him.

RIDAI: That's a fact, comrades, the district committee will expel him. And we'll get it in the neck for rotten liberalism . . .

PETROV: Don't preach to us! We'll look into it!

RIDAI: Mark my word, he's going to be put on trial one of these days.

Enter Popova, also a member of the committee.

POPOVA: How do you do! *(To Semkin.)* We've met already. *(To Petrov.)* How do you do!

RIDAI: And is he to be allowed to be placed in the dock with his Party ticket in his pocket?

Enter Grekov and Baranov, another member of the committee.

GREKOV: How do you do, comrades. I've only just heard that you are calling an emergency meeting of the Party committee. What's the question?

RIDAI: The question is about you.

GREKOV: Me? I don't understand!

RIDAI: You will, soon! Sit down for the moment.

GREKOV: What's up, Ridai? What's the play-acting about?

RIDAI: A meeting of the Party committee isn't play-acting, Comrade Grekov. This affair of yours has come as a surprise to us, but I won't let it drag. It is connected with the murder of Klasha Timofeyeva, the arrest of Proshin and your former activities in Central Asia. You see, all this is known to you, so it's no good looking surprised. Tell us the whole truth, as a Communist should. That's right, isn't it, comrades, a Communist ought to speak the truth.

GREKOV: What truth? What are you talking about, anyhow? Have you any material? Let's have a look at it!

SEMKIN: No, Comrade Grekov. Why should you see our material? You'd better tell us what you know, and we'll compare it with the facts we have. That's how we'll get at the truth. Come, Comrade Grekov, are you afraid of telling the members of the Party committee the truth?

GREKOV: I categorically demand that I should be told plainly what I'm accused of!

RIDAI: In a minute! Comrades, is everyone here? I declare the meeting of the Party committee open.

Enter Sorokin.

SOROKIN: Did you send for me?

RIDAI: Yes, take a seat. Comrades, you all know the situation which has come about at our construction. Grave situation. Why

grave? Proshin has been arrested. One. The Stakhanovite Timofeyeva has been killed. Two.

PETROV: You sound as if you were adding up accounts.

RIDAI: Something new about Grekov, three. It's true, isn't it, comrades, that the Stakhanovite Timofeyeva was killed in mysterious circumstances when there was no one but herself and Grekov in the shaft?

GREKOV: According to you, it was I who killed Timofeyeva?

RIDAI: The investigation will show who killed her. We're not the investigation authorities, comrades, but we are dialecticians. We're dialecticians, aren't we? So far it doesn't concern us whether you killed her or you did not. But who you are, Comrade Grekov, where you come from, what sort of a figure you are in the political sense of the word, that we are bound to clear up. And that we have cleared up!

POPOVA: Stick to the subject, Comrade Ridai.

RIDAI: Just a minute. *(Reads letter.)* "When in Central Asia Grekov insinuated himself into leading political work on the frontier. . . ."

GREKOV: What d'you mean "insinuated"? Have you gone off your head, Ridai?

RIDAI: That's what it says here in the document. *(Goes on reading.)* "He showed himself to be a rabid Great-Russian chauvinist. . . . Drove out of the tractor brigade the best driver, the poor peasant Gusseinov. . . ." Those are all facts, aren't they, comrades?

POPOVA: Go on, go on!

RIDAI: " . . . confiscated the camels of poor peasants, ostensibly for plowing. Under the excuse of protecting the brigade from the *Basmachi* organized provocatory machine-gun fire, rousing the local population against the Soviet power."

GREKOV: What baseness!

RIDAI *(goes on reading):* "Sabotaged the sowing of cotton, so that it did not sprout. . . . On the day of Grekov's arrival in the district a barge of petrol and spare-parts sank in extremely suspicious circumstances. The wrecking activities of Grekov in the district were hushed up by the secretary of the district committee, Kovalev, afterwards found to be an enemy of the people. Individual members of the district committee tried to raise their voices against Grekov, but Kovalev always cut them short." And now you see, comrades members of the Party committee, who Pavel Grekov really is!

GREKOV: Who wrote that?

RIDAI: That doesn't matter! Will you speak?

GREKOV: Yes. I'll begin with the most important thing. You suspect me of the murder of Timofeyeva. Yes, we were alone in the shaft. Yes, Klasha was murdered. Brutally. By a lump of earth. But don't you see that, in accusing me of such a thing, you are taking on yourselves no less responsibility? But for filthy suspicions, you have, and can have, no proofs that I, with my own hands, stopped her young life.

SEMKIN: Our proof is your doubtful past.

GREKOV: Shut up, you! You hope to build up your petty career on this filthy anti-Party business!

Excitement among members of the Party committee.

SEMKIN: It's unheard of to abuse a member of the Party committee like that!

GREKOV: I call things by their right names.

SEMKIN: I demand that this should be entered in the minutes.

GREKOV: As for my past, I have a right to be proud of it. There's been nothing extraordinary in it. But it has been an honest life.

KARAS: Never mind your past! Many here present have shed their blood for the cause of Socialism, in their time, and are not bleating about it. Modesty, Comrade Grekov, modesty!

GREKOV: Shed their blood! Better let the enemy shed his blood! And everything that Ridai has read is scurrilous lying and backbiting! I deny it all!

RIDAI: And what else can you say in your justification?

GREKOV: In my justification I will hold my tongue, till a general Party meeting.

PETROV: Don't make light of this, Pavel! You are accused of serious things.

POPOVA: Stick to the point, Comrade Grekov, stick to the point!

RIDAI: Well, Comrade Grekov, you say it's all a lie?

GREKOV: A bare-faced lie!

RIDAI: We have evidence. We are not accusing you without evidence. I ask you for the last time—do you admit the accusation?

GREKOV: No, I don't!

RIDAI: All right, Comrade Semkin, ask Comrade Narzulayev to come in.

GREKOV: Narzulayev here? Now I understand!

Enter Narzulayev.

GREKOV: Still a member of the Party, Narzulayev?

SEMKIN: Comrades, I must ask that this be also entered in the minutes! Comrade Narzulayev is a representative of a Soviet fraternal national republic.

NARZULAYEV *(well-dressed, in European clothes, but with an embroidered skull-cap on his head. Behaves with exaggerated modesty):* It's all right, *Ohir!* He was always like that! A rather violent temper.

RIDAI: What can you tell us about this statement, Comrade Narzulayev?

NARZULAYEV: In the first place I must say beforehand that Comrade Grekov will tell you I am a Nationalist, and so on. Well, I used to have nationalist tendencies at one time. And I was severely criticized for them. But the Party, our Party, corrected me and helped me to overcome them. I justified the confidence of the Party and now occupy a worthy post in our permanent mission. You must have seen it. A beautiful house, with big glass windows. And now, *Ohir*, I'm coming to the point. It's all true. He arrested poor peasants on the excuse that they were *beys*.[1] In spite of my instructions as to the unsuitability of Egyptian cotton seed in the conditions then prevailing, he sowed it by way of sabotage. As a result they didn't strike root.

GREKOV: Liar! They did! We got cotton! Sorokin, you know we did!

SOROKIN: I don't think I was in the district at the time.

NARZULAYEV: No, he wasn't. And there was some shooting along the roads, from machine-guns. . . . The peasants were in a state of ferment. This comrade brought much harm to our wonderful country. I need not dwell much on his Great-Russian chauvinism. Everybody knew about it. I'm only rather surprised, *Ohir*, that Comrade Grekov concealed these facts from his Party organization.

RIDAI: These facts have simply stunned us, Comrade Narzulayev. You may remain at the meeting of the Party committee. *(To Grekov.)* Were you associated with Proshin?

GREKOV *(to Ridai)*: You know yourself how I was associated!

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[1] Kulaks.

A. Gusev in the title role of Pavel Grekov in the Kazan Dramatic Theater's production of the play

Didn't I send you two statements pointing out that Proshin must be dealt with by the Party organization for wrecking the work and sabotage in laying the foundations?

RIDAI: Your statements were just a smoke-screen. All double-dealers do that.

GREKOV *(rising indignantly)*: What's that you say?

RIDAI: You wrote about the foundations, but you didn't say anything about drinking with Proshin at Kiselyova's.

POPOVA: Did he visit Kiselyova?

BARANOV: How could you, Grekov?

PETROV: What's going on! I simply don't understand!

SEMKIN: A typical double-dealer, comrades.

RIDAI: Do you know who Kiselyova is?

GREKOV: Now I do!

RIDAI: Did you visit her?

GREKOV: I visited her in her apartment with Karas, when she was ill. We went to see how she was.

RIDAI: And were you there with Proshin?

GREKOV: Never!

RIDAI: Or by yourself?

GREKOV: Never!

RIDAI: Comrade Semkin, call Comrade Zvonkova. . . . You're very obstinate, Grekov. We've been deceived in you!

Enter Zvonkova, dressed with cheap smartness.

ZVONKOVA: How do you do!

RIDAI: Comrade Zvonkova, do you know this citizen?

ZVONKOVA: A weeny bit!

SEMKIN: What do you mean, a weeny bit?

ZVONKOVA: Why, just a weeny bit! He was at Kiselyova's. It was when I went to see her when she was ill. I remember it as if it was yesterday.

RIDAI: And what else?

ZVONKOVA: Another time I came up to Kiselyova's apartment and the front door was ajar, and I saw them sitting there. And the door into the other room was a weeny bit open and a drunk comrade was singing something, about: "Thank you, heart, that you can love like this."[1] I remember it as if it was yesterday. And Kiselyova wouldn't let me come in. She said: "Nelly, come tomorrow, Proshin is here, drunk." I went the next day, Proshin was drunk again, and this one wasn't there. I remember it as if it was yesterday.

GREKOV: Did you meet Proshin only at Kiselyova's?

[1] A line from a popular song.

ZVONKOVA: What?

GREKOV: Did you meet Proshin only at Kiselyova's?

ZVONKOVA: I didn't have any relations with Comrade Proshin, I mean with Ivan Vasilyevich, I mean with . . . that enemy of the people. And . . . and . . . I never had any relations with . . . him. . . . You can ask anybody!

RIDAI: Thank you, Comrade Zvonkova! You can go.

ZVONKOVA: So long! *(Exit.)*

RIDAI (*to Grekov*): Do you still deny it?

GREKOV: I do.

RIDAI: And what about your connections with Kovalev? Do you admit them?

GREKOV: That I admit. I had close connections with him. I admit that I love that man as a real Bolshevik, as an elder brother. I don't believe Kovalev is an enemy. Where's the proof? *(To Narzulayev.)* If they told me *you* were an enemy I'd believe it with pleasure.

NARZULAYEV: I don't doubt it! You don't seem to like people of the national minorities, *Ohir*.

GREKOV: Not when they're like you!

RIDAI: You are authoritatively informed that Kovalev is an enemy. It is mentioned in an official document.

GREKOV: It's not enough that it's mentioned.

KARAS: How can you trust people so, Grekov? And in such times.

GREKOV (*rising, energetically*): It's exactly in such times that we must trust people like Kovalev! I declare again: I don't believe Kovalev is an enemy!

SOROKIN: Pavel, you haven't seen him for four years. Anything might happen in such a time.

GREKOV: Time has nothing to do with it.

RIDAI (*to Grekov*): I see you're a slippery customer. Tell us where your Party card is.

GREKOV: I've got it on me.

RIDAI: That's not what I'm asking you. Where's the old one?

GREKOV: You know about the old one. I lost it four years ago.

RIDAI: In mysterious circumstances.

GREKOV: The fact that I still don't know whose hands my Party card is in, is my fault before the Party. I admitted and admit it.

RIDAI: You admit it.

SEMKIN: Typical maneuver.

NARZULAYEV: So the card lost itself!

RIDAI: Who wants to speak, comrades?

A pause.

SOROKIN: May I? Comrades! It's very hard for me to speak about the case of Grekov. You know he has done a lot for me. When I was passing through a difficult psychological crisis, Grekov was the first to stretch out a hand in aid. He helped me to get work, he got me a room. And, finally, when my son was seriously ill, he helped to save him. And he did all this although we were never particularly intimate. In his relations with me Grekov displayed extraordinary humanity and Party feeling. Of course, I don't believe in the truth of the criminal part of the accusation. I even brush it aside and state categorically: Grekov is not capable of it. But Comrade Ridai has just read a document which has made me ashamed of my own credulity, credulity which is unfortunately still common to many of us. I repent! I myself formerly treated lightly Grekov's errors in Central Asia. I attributed them to youth, to hot temper, but it turns out that it was something else. Facts are against you, Comrade Grekov! Believe me, comrades, the very thought that

he is not what we have hitherto believed him to be horrifies me.

RIDAI: Have you finished?

SOROKIN: Yes, I have.

RIDAI: Who else wants to speak?

SEMKIN: May I? Comrades, we have before us a typical enemy, the typical enemy, with all the subtle cunning of an impostor. You have heard Sorokin. Grekov helps him to get work! Grekov helps him to cure his child! Oh, comrades, these are just the subtle kindly ways employed by the enemy! But it's not so easy to take us in! No one can circumvent Bolshevik boldness and directness! And it is time, Sorokin, that you learned to recognize an enemy! We must be vigilant! We must learn unmercifully to unmask the enemies of the people! And none of us will allow criminals to take shelter in the Party. That's how the question must be put. *(Sits down.)*

RIDAI: Who else wants to speak?

PETROV: This beats everything! Let me have the floor, Ridai!

RIDAI: Go ahead!

PETROV: We know Pavel better than the comrade witnesses. Why, every worker on the construction site knows him. And they don't only know him, they love him! He's the best Party organizer. Why do they love him? Because Pavel is heart and soul in his work. And you know that, too, Ridai!

RIDAI: Stick to the point, can't you?

PETROV: There's any amount of accusations brought up here—*Basmachi*, firing on the peasants, with something about cotton seed, and his association with Proshin.

SEMKIN: But these are all facts, Petrov, facts!

PETROV: We'll look into them, don't worry! It's a fact, too, that Pavel has always adopted the proper line at the construction. Who discovered the wrecking work about the foundations? Grekov. Who raised the question of expelling Proshin from the Party? Grekov. Who works hardest of all, never sparing his strength?

SEMKIN: Pavel Grekov?

PETROV: Pavel Grekov! Whose section is the best? Grekov's. Who, finally, has criticized your work, Ridai, more than any one? Party organizer Grekov. Who is now interested in depriving Pavel Grekov of his Party ticket—the Party or its enemies? I think—its enemies.

BARANOV *(to Petrov)*: What do you propose?

PETROV: I propose that an authoritative commission be appointed.

BARANOV: Another commission!

PETROV: Let it look into everything, investigate and report to the Party committee.

KARAS: That's right. After all, Grekov's still young.

SEMKIN: In political questions there's no allowance for youth.

GREKOV: And I'm not asking you for any.

POPOVA *(very calmly)*: Don't get excited, Pavel. We're not going to make any hasty decisions. I believe, comrades, that we must never lose our heads.

RIDAI: That's right!

POPOVA: Especially the secretary of the Party committee. Think what they'll say in the district when they hear that the secretary of the Party committee has no head! What a disgrace that will be! . . . Now as to the question under discussion. If you think, Ridai, that you can find out the whole life of a man in twenty minutes at a rush conference you are not only mistaken, you are committing a crime, brother!

RIDAI: A crime?

POPOVA: Yes, a crime against

the Party. And crimes against the Party are severely punished, Comrade Ridai! This is a question of the fate of a man, of his political life or death. How can you expect us to take everything on trust that has been said here, and pronounce sentence against Pavel Grekov?

SEMKIN: What do you mean, on trust? We have heard the testimony of trustworthy witnesses.

POPOVA: Such as Zvonkova! For shame, Comrade Semkin, to let a cheap little thing like that decide the fate of a Communist at the meeting of our Party committee!

PETROV: You are right.

POPOVA: I also demand that a commission be appointed. The question of Grekov to be decided after the commission's report.

RIDAI: Are you through?

POPOVA: Yes.

SEMKIN: Typical opportunist!

RIDAI: I ask you for the last time, Grekov—the Party asks you—will you speak the truth?

PETROV: What makes you think you're the Party? He *(nods towards Grekov)*... he's the Party too.

GREKOV *(rising)*: I am not guilty before the Party. I know that it's not the Party that wants me to be pelted with filth here. There are people who want to get rid of me. And they're making you their catspaw, Ridai! I'll prove to the commission that every item in the accusation leveled against me is a base lie. Some scoundrel is trying to make a scoundrel and a careerist of me. But I'll find out who is the enemy trying to make an enemy out of me. I'll find him, whatever the mask he wears. D'you hear me, Narzulayev?

RIDAI: You can't frighten us! The case is quite clear. We must decide.

BARANOV: What do you propose?

RIDAI: Expulsion, of course.

BARANOV: What for?

RIDAI: For loss of Party card, for concealing facts of anti-Party activities in Central Asia, for connections with enemies of the people, Proshin and Kovalev.

POPOVA: Wait a bit, and what about our motion?

RIDAI: I'll speak to you later, Popova.

POPOVA: All right, we'll have a talk, but not here.

RIDAI: All in favor of expulsion, raise your hands! Only members of the Party committee may vote. *(Ridai, Semkin and, after some hesitation, Baranov, raise hands.)* All opposed? *(Petrov and Popova raise their hands. Karas turns aside.)* Do you abstain, Karas?

KARAS: Yes, I abstain, for the time being.

RIDAI *(to Grekov)*: Your Party ticket! Hand over your Party ticket, citizen Grekov.

GREKOV: You have no right to take it without a decision of a general Party meeting.

RIDAI: Comrade members of the Party committee, take his Party ticket from him!

SEMKIN: Come on, no resistance! *(Approaches Grekov.)*

GREKOV: Keep off! *(To Ridai.)* You, don't you understand what my Party ticket means to me?

RIDAI: Comrades, all go out. *(All exit. Ridai approaches Grekov.)* What's the fuss about? D'you think I like taking away your Party ticket? Of course I don't! You know how things are! I think the district committee will reinstate you. Just appeal, they'll reinstate you. Come on now, hand over your Party ticket.

GREKOV: And you dare to call yourself a leading Party member! What a scoundrel you are, Ridai! *(Exit.)*

CURTAIN

ACT III

SCENE 1

Zvonkova's room. Tawdry luxury. Peeling grand piano. On the wall a guitar with a sky-blue bow on the handle.

LIDA: Why are they all so late?

ZVONKOVA: Never mind, let them be late. I'm not ready yet. I'll come and help you in a minute, Lidochka. The wine-glasses are in the sideboard.

LIDA: Nelly, did you invite, you-know-who, that one, don't you remember, in Sochi? He used to go around in yellow pajamas there.

ZVONKOVA: Oh, I know! *(Goes to telephone and dials a number.)* May I speak to Arnold Borisovich? *(Covers mouth of receiver with hand. Whispers.)* His wife answered! *(Aloud.)* Plast-Mass-Trust speaking! Ask Arnold Borisovich to ring up Plast-Mass when he comes back. What mass? He knows what mass! *(Two rings at door.)* That's for us!

Enter Karas with flowers.

ZVONKOVA: Howdy do, beloved!

KARAS: Dear witness, allow me to congratulate you! You were admirable!

ZVONKOVA: Have you really expelled him from the Party?

KARAS: Of course!

ZVONKOVA: What a shame. . . . Let me introduce you to Lidochka! He was terribly upset, poor pet! . . . I was sorry for him. So young! And so good-looking! I don't believe Kisa Kiselyova was after him. She was after Proshin.

LIDA: You're not to mention his name. . . . And for goodness sake let's stop this boring talk about who's been expelled and who's been reinstated. Who cares?

KARAS: Quite right! Let's change the subject!

ZVONKOVA: I quite forgot about the dumplings. We haven't made them! Come on, Lidochka!

KARAS: Mind you make Siberian dumplings. They're delicious! Do you like dumplings?

ZVONKOVA: Come on, Lidochka!

Exeunt girls. Enter the chief engineer Glinsky and Sorokin.

GLINSKY: Where are the ladies?

KARAS: Making dumplings.

SOROKIN: Who else have you asked?

KARAS: Narzulayev.

GLINSKY: An important worker, though a national. And quite a hit at a party! What marvelous *pilaf* he makes!

SOROKIN: *Pilaf* he can make. But he muffs everything else! Whatever he takes up is sure to come down with a bang.

Enter Narzulayev.

NARZULAYEV: *Solom rafikon.*[1] Whatever who takes up, *Ohir?* *(Drops parcels on to floor.)*

SOROKIN: Who? You, respected Narzulayev!

NARZULAYEV: What are you hinting at?

GLINSKY: Don't talk so loud, we may be overheard. *(Goes to piano and begins picking out a tune.)*

KARAS: Yes! Not so loud!

NARZULAYEV: Still I want to know, *Ohir*, what I have let come down with a bang.

SOROKIN: You want to know? With pleasure! Did you mess up the Central Asia business? You did! And how!

NARZULAYEV: I'm not obliged to account to you for what I do; and what I did in Central Asia is well known where it ought to be. Let's be frank! You, *Ohir*, seem to suffer from rather a poor memory. What about my work with the settlers—you didn't count that?

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[1] Greetings!

SOROKIN: Well, after all, what *did* you do? All right—say you sent a few thousand *muzhiks* to a waterless desert!

NARZULAYEV: And the line about cotton as the single crop to be grown?

GLINSKY: For god's sake, not so loud! *(Plays on piano.)*

NARZULAYEV: That's right, you play! You know what it means to make our peasants, used to juicy melons, wheat, fruit and vegetables, grow nothing but cotton.

SOROKIN: Well, and what came of it?

GLINSKY: For god's sake, not so loud. Look here, why not stop this argument? This isn't the place for it.

NARZULAYEV: What are you getting so excited about? And, finally, *Ohir*, what about our important work in the matter of seed selection? *(Lev Arkadyevich plays.)*

SOROKIN: No thanks to you! It wasn't you personally who sent infected seed to the cotton districts.

NARZULAYEV: Not personally, but it was under my direction. And then a matter of such paramount importance as preserving our forces, keeping our workers together, promoting them. D'you think it was easy for me to maintain you, for instance, in Kovalev's district?

SOROKIN: But still, Kovalev got me sacked, in the end.

NARZULAYEV: And then we got him sacked.

SOROKIN: As if that's how forces are preserved! Everyone knows that very valuable people for us—emir's officials and so on—were forced to leave this country. And it was your duty to keep them here.

KARAS *(to Narzulayev):* I'm an impartial person. You must understand, Narzulayev, this is not a time when money is given for just talk.

GLINSKY: It's not a matter of money. You're too cynical, Ivan Nikolayevich.

KARAS: Of course spoiling foundations isn't cynical. You are still living, dear Lev Arkadyevich, on the long-dead illusions of finicky hatred. Sorokin's a practical man. And he's right. Just look how we are being beaten! Mercilessly beaten! *They* don't just talk!

SOROKIN: What's the good of all our talking, if the principal aim set by headquarters—to leave the country without raw material, without cotton—has been defeated? If the hope of restoration has been defeated? If you yourselves have been defeated?

NARZULAYEV: You make me laugh, *Ohir!* You nag at me as if the Soviet power remained only in Central Asia and that owing to Narzulayev's lack of ingenuity. And as if here, thanks to your brilliant ability, of course, capitalism was in full bloom.

KARAS: But what *is* the reason of your failure?

NARZULAYEV: First let me put a question to you: what are you to do with people who, without water, sometimes without bread, under the bullets of the *Basmachi*, on the hardest, most barren soil, with infected seed, against all the laws of agricultural science, manage to grow splendid cotton and gather an unprecedented harvest? What can you do when you're up against such people?

Telephone.

SOROKIN *(lifts receiver):* Yes, me! What is it? Oh, all right! *(Puts back receiver.)* You're a fool, Karas! You ought to be a tsar-killer. Throwing bombs at the emperors' carriages.

KARAS: What's up?

SOROKIN: Why the hell did you want to get messed up with an unknown *kulak*, without special permission? I told you the time was not ripe for a terrorist attempt on Grekov.

KARAS: I couldn't delay after the business about the foundations. I am sure of that *kulak*.

First scene of the third act of "Pavel Grekov" at the Kazan Dramatic Theater

SOROKIN: Oh, are you? Well, an hour ago they arrested him, your little pal!

GLINSKY: Arrested him? Ai, ai, ai! You'll ruin us all, Ivan Nikolayevich!

NARZULAYEV: Devil take it. Grekov again! That's my mistake which I admit. He shouldn't have been allowed to leave Central Asia alive.

SOROKIN: Why did you need that thick-headed killer, a *kulak* who's got no training whatever, who, at the first hint of pressure brought to bear on him—by the investigator—it's not Proshin, you know—will say that you . . . incited him to murder? The *kulak* is of course useful, but why did you have to use him just now, when we have at hand a precious fool like Ridai, who doesn't mind whom he strikes at... his own lot, or anyone else? What did you need Grekov dead for? Alive, the very fact that he is out of the Party is more useful than a hundred corpses.

NARZULAYEV: Yes, *Ohir* Karas. It was a mistake. You know I almost came to grief over a similar business in Central Asia.

SOROKIN: Lev Arkadyevich!

GLINSKY: What do you want?

SOROKIN: Have you been asked to explain about the foundations yet?

GLINSKY: What do you mean? I don't understand.

SOROKIN: Come on, you're not a kid. Haven't you been called up about it?

GLINSKY: Not yet! And what for, anyhow? On account of that scoundrel Grekov we didn't have time to do much, except with the first prop.

SOROKIN: The way you work here—so naive and clumsy! One of you gets messed up with an unknown *kulak*! Another gets involved in open wrecking activities! Do you really think you won't be caught?

GLINSKY: You all talk so loud. I'm going away!

Puts on coat and starts going out.

SOROKIN: No, you're not! It's too late to run away now!

Lev Arkadyevich turns back.

NARZULAYEV: But Grekov, it seems, did succeed in getting wind of what was going on!

SOROKIN: Grekov, Grekov! We've knocked him off his feet, but we haven't got him down. We've got to finish him, and that's what I am going to do.

KARAS: I hear the girls coming. Let's drink and forget all unpleasantness!

Enter Zvonkova and Lida.

ZVONKOVA: Tired of waiting? Sorry, sorry! These Siberian dumplings are torture to make.

NARZULAYEV: Delicious torture! How do you do, Lidochka. I haven't seen you for ages!

They seat themselves round the table. Laughter. Exclamations. Ring at door. Zvonkova goes to open it and returns much upset.

ZVONKOVA: It's Grekov! What shall we do?

NARZULAYEV: Grekov? I think, *Ohir*, we'd better go.

ZVONKOVA: Hide!

She runs out. Narzulayev, Glinsky, Sorokin, Karas, Lida, get behind the curtain.

Enter Grekov and Zvonkova.

ZVONKOVA: Come in, please! Comrade Grekov, I'm simply astonished to see you in my room, you can't think! Take a seat, please! Have some dumplings.

GREKOV: I'm sorry I have come at such a late hour. I only managed to get your address an hour ago.

ZVONKOVA: Do sit down!

GREKOV: I've come to find out what made you tell such lies at the Party committee yesterday.

ZVONKOVA: Sh! Why do you shout! You can shout at your wife, not at me!

GREKOV: Who told you to write that statement against me?

ZVONKOVA: Comrade Grekov, everything I had to say I said yesterday.

GREKOV: Who put you up to it? You can't have had any reason yourself. Who was it, tell me!

ZVONKOVA: Why can't you leave me alone? Nobody!

GREKOV *(his eyes falling on Narzulayev's skull cap on the sofa, takes it in his hands, looks attentively at Zvonkova):* Nobody? *(Exit.)*

SCENE 2

Grekov is alone in his room. He seems sad and depressed. He has been expelled from the Party and out of work a month. Many of his friends are turning a cold shoulder on him. A minute ago Lobikov who was with him in Central Asia rang up and learning that Grekov was still not reinstated immediately hung up.

Moreover, just for safety's sake he had not called from home, for fear "something might come of it."

Grekov is suffocating. He needs warm human sympathy. Nastasya Petrovna, a neighbor, a simple, kindly woman, comes in. Grekov asks her to stay with him. He tries to teach her to play chess, but nothing comes of it. They play cards—beggar my neighbor. But when Grekov tries to cover a queen with a seven the old woman lays her hand on his shoulder and says:

I see you're not thinking about the cards. I know what's on your mind! They've expelled you from the Communists, and you don't want to say so! And you're miserable. Don't you worry! You're a good man, they'll see you righted. If anyone wants to know anything about your home affairs, let them ask me, your neighbor!

No, Grekov is not alone. Here comes Senka Abramov, Young Communist organizer of the young tunnellers' shift, and his friend and rival brigadier of the old fellows' shift, Trofimich. They have news for Grekov. Sorokin has been made assistant chief of construction. Masha, Grekov's

wife, comes home from the election campaign headquarters. She has a surprise for her husband: a poster is needed for the children's room. Grekov is delighted. Trofimich, thinking Grekov may be in need, offers him a loan. Grekov pushes back his hand.

GREKOV: Why, Trofimich. I just do it for fun. I have nothing to do. I can't live without work!

Exeunt Trofimich and Senka. Grekov goes out with them to get Indian ink for the poster. Masha is left alone. A ring at the telephone. Masha lifts the receiver and hears the voice of Sorokin. She is astonished.

MASHA: Sorokin wants to see me! And alone! What can it mean?

Enter Sorokin a few minutes later. He has come here to carry out his plan—to "finish" Grekov.

SOROKIN: May I sit down?

MASHA: Of course!

SOROKIN: I know you love Pavel, and how it makes it difficult for you to realize all that has happened.

MASHA: All what? Speak out!

SOROKIN: You mustn't misunderstand me, Maria Alexandrovna! You and I are members of political organizations—I of the Party, you of the Young Communist League. We will both be held answerable for our friendship with Grekov. You, more than I. But it is harder for you to form the conclusion to which I have arrived. Pavel Grekov is a ruined man. Painful as it may be when one who has been near to us is shown to be really far from us, a political solution of this tragic question is the only right one. Make up your mind before it is too late! Do you realize what awaits you? It may be tomorrow, it may be in an hour. Maria Alexandrovna, Mashenka! Believe me, love must not be blind.

MASHA: Tell me, what did you come here for, Sorokin? What are your motives for wanting to "save" me? Do you consider that one should only love a man till the first time he gets a Party reprimand?

SOROKIN: I'm sorry for you! My feelings for you are warm and tender. I come to you as if you were my daughter. And in the name of this feeling I consider it my duty to open your eyes to the terrible truth.

MASHA: I don't understand you!

SOROKIN: You don't understand me? Read this! *(Hands a document to Masha.)*

MASHA *(reads):* "The Olginsk District Committee of the Party has received information that P. Grekov, Party member, date of birth 1907, birthplace Taganrog, has been working with you since 1934. We hereby inform you that we have been looking for the above Grekov since, on July 22, 1934, a fire broke out in the night in the Party archives of the Olginsk district committee. During the fire secret Party documents were destroyed. Investigations established that P. Grekov, Party member, had been to the keeper of the records during the day asking for various references, and left the hotel on the same day. Suspicion rests upon Grekov."... Arson? Pavel? No, it can't be. Why, he was in a sanatorium at Sebastopol then!

SOROKIN: Were you with him at the time?

MASHA: No, I wasn't!

SOROKIN: Maria Alexandrovna, once more I beg you to ask yourself why you, a young Soviet woman, with an independent life, why you should risk everything for the sake of the political errors and crimes of Pavel Grekov? *(Takes the document from Masha's hands.)*

MASHA: What am I to do?

SOROKIN: You must immediately send a statement to the Party committee that you are breaking off with Grekov.

MASHA: It's all very well to say that! But to whom am I to write that I have loved this man five

Second scene of the third act of "Pavel Grekov" as produced by the Travelling Theater of the Far Eastern Railway. The title role is played by S. A. Glyater and Masha by V. M. Pavlova

years—five years? Can you give me the address to write to?

Exit Sorokin. Masha throws herself in despair on the sofa, crying. Enter Grekov. He sees tears in his wife's eyes. They have a talk. She does not tell him of Sorokin's visit. She only asks her husband to tell her why he is so confident about his fate. Grekov answers her with fiery strength.

GREKOV: Yes, I am confident! I am confident, because I know the Party will not turn from a man if he is right. They are sure to reinstate me, for I am right and the Party will give me the opportunity to prove myself right. It's hard to say exactly when this is going to happen, but happen it will, it's as sure as that I will bring you a big bunch of flowers on that day. Oh, Masha, we will invite our friends, our true friends, and buy some wine and have a good party.

MASHA: I wish that day would come soon.

GREKOV *(embracing her)*: Oh, you Terror of the Locusts!

SCENE 3

Waiting room of office of secretary of the district Party committee. Visitors sitting waiting. No one in the office. Enter Grekov.

GREKOV: How do you do, comrades! Is the secretary of the district committee receiving?

MIRONOV: Not the secretary, but the acting-secretary.

GREKOV: Where's the secretary himself?

MIRONOV: Ousted for shirking his duty.

GREKOV: And who's the acting-secretary?

NEKOVIRIN: No one's seen him yet. It's his first day today.

GREKOV: Must we register?

MIRONOV: You might as well.

STROGACH: Have you been expelled, comrade?

GREKOV: What's it to do with you?

MIRONOV *(to Strogach):* Why do you keep nagging at people?

STROGACH: Expelled persons are received first.

GREKOV: Have you been waiting long?

STROGACH: About half an hour.

From secretary's office comes Chizhova and looks through list of visitors.

CHIZHOVA: Grekov! Which of you is Grekov, comrades? *(Sees Grekov.)* Pavel! You?

GREKOV: This is one place where I didn't expect to meet you, Lydia Fyodorovna.

CHIZHOVA: What's the matter with you? How you've changed! *(Takes his hand.)* Come in here!

GREKOV: Where are you taking me?

CHIZHOVA: Come on! I'm awfully glad to see you!

They go into office.

STROGACH: See that? There's waiting for your turn!

MIRONOV: Stop it! Remember where you are!

Enter Kovalev.

KOVALEV: How do you do! Have you been waiting long?

MIRONOV: We're waiting, dearie, we're waiting. Sit you down!

KOVALEV: What's your business?

STROGACH: You see, they want to pass a strict censure on me.

KOVALEV: What for?

STROGACH: Vigilance.

KOVALEV: Vigilance? In what way did you display it?

STROGACH: I handed in five reports. It wasn't appreciated. They said I was a slanderer.

KOVALEV: What were your reports about?

STROGACH: Well, look! *(Draws bundle of paper out of briefcase.)* Here, for instance, is one who even gave his own baby an anti-Soviet name. Edward! Only think. . . .

KOVALEV: Is Edward an anti-Soviet name?

STROGACH: Wasn't there an English king named Edward?

NEKOVIRIN: Oh, stop it, for heaven's sake!

KOVALEV *(to Nekovirin):* Have you come to register, comrade?

NEKOVIRIN: No, I've come about the secretary of our Party committee. The question has been raised about my expulsion for lack of vigilance.

KOVALEV: What's the matter?

NEKOVIRIN: It's about my brother. I don't protest about him. I understand it was necessary.

KOVALEV: Were you in touch with your brother?

NEKOVIRIN: No, I wasn't. The Party committee looked into it.

KOVALEV: Then why does the secretary of the Party committee want to expel you?

NEKOVIRIN: I'll tell you why. Listen *(reads)*: —"Resolved to expel Nekovirin from the Party for failing to be in touch with his brother, owing to which the latter, lacking Communist influence from his brother, deteriorated politically, and fell into the enemy's snares."

KOVALEV: Who's the secretary of your Party committee?

NEKOVIRIN: Ridai. At the construction.

KOVALEV *(to Strogach):* I can't say, of course, what the district committee will decide. But in my opinion matters will not end for you with a strict censure. What d'you

think yourself, comrade? I think they won't. *(To Nekovirin.)* As to you, in my opinion, it was wrong to raise the question of your expulsion.

STROGACH: Who d'you think you are? This is right, that is wrong. Tell us, instead, what you were expelled for, yourself?

KOVALEV: I haven't been expelled. I'm the secretary of the district committee.

Enter Popova. Strogach quickly goes to the door.

KOVALEV *(to Mironov)*: What's wrong with you, dad?

MIRONOV: They won't let me go! I want to go away and they say: "You stay here."

KOVALEV *(calling after Strogach)*: What's your name? *(To Mironov.)* Perhaps they're right. At your age . . .

MIRONOV: That's just what I say! At my age it's time I settled down. And I can't: my sons are there, and I'm here.

KOVALEV: Who are your sons?

MIRONOV: Lieutenants. The brothers Mironov. They're posted on the River Amur. In the Young Town.

KOVALEV: Komsomolsk? Well, why not? Take a vacation and go and see them.

MIRONOV: I don't want to go for a vacation, I've decided to go to them for good. And the works won't let me go. You're a good worker, they say, we don't want to spoil the wall by taking your portrait down. But I think old experienced workers are wanted in the Young Town too, comrade secretary of the district committee. And they'll hang up my portrait there. I'm sure I'll deserve it.

KOVALEV: Well, I think you ought to go. I'll speak to your Party committee. You'll go, Comrade Mironov. You'll go. And they needn't spoil the wall by taking your portrait down. Good luck to you, Comrade Mironov.

MIRONOV: Let it stay there! Thanks! *(Goes.)*

POPOVA: Comrade secretary! I'm a member of the Party committee at the construction. They've expelled a Communist. I don't agree with the decision of the Party meeting. So I've come to see you.

KOVALEV: Your name?

POPOVA: Popova. This is my statement.

KOVALEV: Comrades Nekovirin and Popova. I'll look through your cases today, and have a talk with you both tomorrow. Come tomorrow, I'll receive you out of turn.

POPOVA: All right.

NEKOVIRIN: All right! *(Kovalev goes into his office.)*

SCENE 4

Kovalev's office. Kovalev, at his desk, looking through papers. Rings. Enter Chizhova from another door.

CHIZHOVA: Ivan Romanovich, I have news! Guess what could cause one joy and sorrow at the same time.

KOVALEV: Lydia Fyodorovna, I have no time for guessing riddles. Have you notified the Party committee secretaries?

CHIZHOVA: Yes, Ivan Romanovich!

KOVALEV: Then give me the material from the Party committee at the construction.

CHIZHOVA: In a minute, Ivan Romanovich. Ivan Romanovich!

Enter Grekov.

KOVALEV: Grekov! So that was your news! How are you, mechanic, this is a treat, indeed. Hell, what could be pleasanter than meeting an old friend?

GREKOV: Expelled from the Party.

KOVALEV: What nonsense is that?

GREKOV: Unfortunately it's not nonsense, Ivan Romanovich.

KOVALEV: Sit down!

GREKOV *(showing the cover of his Party ticket):* See this—it's empty.

KOVALEV: Empty?

GREKOV: Why did they take away my Party ticket, what for?

KOVALEV: What d'you mean, took it away? Didn't you give it up?

GREKOV: I wouldn't give it up at the Party committee. But at the general meeting I couldn't help myself.

KOVALEV: Well?

GREKOV: If I could have thought for a moment that the Party would send you here, I would never have come.

KOVALEV: What is there extraordinary in the Party sending me here?

GREKOV: I didn't mean that. I meant who could have thought that you would be the one to investigate my case?

KOVALEV: You've remained your old self! They haven't tamed you yet. You mean you're afraid of someone saying or thinking that Kovalev reinstated Grekov in the Party out of friendship. Isn't that what you mean? Why, I would be the first to insist on your expulsion from the Party if you had gone wrong. I shouldn't have let you leave the frontier so soon! What's the matter? Tell me!

GREKOV: I won't tell you!

KOVALEV: Where do you think you are?

GREKOV: In the district committee.

KOVALEV: And whom did you come to see here? The secretary of the district committee?

GREKOV: The secretary, but not Kovalev! I want my innocence to be clear to you without your doing anything.

KOVALEV: Let's have your statement!

GREKOV: I won't give it to you! I'm going away. *(Moves to door.)*

KOVALEV: Pavel, come back!. . . Now then, look me in the eyes! Tell me, Grekov, are you clean?

GREKOV: Ivan Romanovich, I haven't done anything! Why did they expel me? What for? Don't try to help me! Let me go!

KOVALEV: Sit down! Don't you understand that if you're guilty, no one's going to reinstate you, however influential your friends may be? You must understand, Pavel, that the Party, only the Party, only its wise laws, can reinstate you in its ranks! And the Party, Comrade Grekov, is not just your Party committee, not just our district committee!

GREKOV: I know that!

KOVALEV: You know, and yet you seem to have lost your head. Suppose the Party committee, in deciding the question of your expulsion, made a mistake! But this decision, its right or wrong, will be investigated, it will be put before the Central Committee if necessary, before the congress even, where your case will be decided by the best people in the Party.

GREKOV: It's hard for me, you see.

KOVALEV: Of course it's hard! I was ill with typhoid fever in an armored train. And that was hard too! Narzulayev got me sacked. That was still harder! *(Takes thermos flask from table.)* Green tea, have some! It's true I haven't been in your position, but I'm a Communist and a human being. I can understand great personal sorrow. And I do understand you! It's a question of life and death, brother! *(Telephone bell.)*

KOVALEV: Hello! Yes, Kovalev! You congratulate me on my appointment? Thanks. You are in a hurry. . . . Where are you working, Sorokin? H'm. When can you come and see me? What for? I'll come to see you. I've heard about

Other characters from "Pavel Grekov" at the Moscow Theater of the Revolution. Left to right: Sorokin played by Mikhail Mishin; Masha, Grekov's wife, by Tamara Belayeva; Levitsky by Sergei Martinson

it. My opinion? I'll look into the case, and you shall have my opinion. So long! *(To Grekov.)* We were speaking of Party authorities. We, the district committee, before deciding your Party destiny, ask you: Comrade Grekov, on finding yourself expelled from the Party, did you continue the struggle against our enemies, or did you lay down your arms?

GREKOV: I have never ceased the struggle. You mustn't think that I've lost heart. . . .

KOVALEV: Then why didn't you tell me anything about your construction? Sorokin has dug himself in there, and then there's the secretary of the Party committee, what's his name, Ridai, he seems a pitiful figure. The lads working at the construction have been to see me about a decision of his. Why, it's unbelievable—the things that are going on there. If you are innocent, and still they have expelled you from the Party, it means somebody wants to profit by this. Who? I ask you, Comrade Grekov, who? Perhaps another Narzulayev has turned up!

GREKOV: Not another, but Narzulayev himself. He acted as witness against me at the Party committee.

KOVALEV: Then how dare you say nothing about this? Do you think your expulsion from the Party is only your own private affair? It isn't just a question of your reinstatement. We must dig out, expose and break up the whole gang of open and secret enemies who have entrenched themselves around the construction.

GREKOV: Why do you think, Ivan Romanovich, that I haven't been doing anything? We have gathered such material about them that they won't wriggle out. Here it is, read this! You can keep it, if you like! But I'll give my statement to the second secretary.

KOVALEV: Just as you like. How's the Terror of the Locusts? You've probably been through a lot since then, both of you? Can I come and see you? Will the first secretary be a welcome guest?

GREKOV: Of course you can!

KOVALEV: Greetings to Masha!

Exit Grekov.

KOVALEV: He's been through it, poor chap!

Enter Chizhova.

KOVALEV: Lydia Fyodorovna, collect all the material connected with the expulsion of Grekov from the Party.

CHIZHOVA: Is that all?

KOVALEV: No, it's not. The chief thing is to get the minutes of the general Party meeting. I wonder what they said about him there!

CHIZHOVA: Is that all?

KOVALEV: No, it's not. Immediately, this very minute, find out where Narzulayev is working, and what his Party organization is.

CHIZHOVA: Is Narzulayev in Moscow?

KOVALEV: Yes, he is. Put me in touch with the secretary of the Party committee of the works where that old man, that Mironov, who wants to go to the Young Town, works. . . . Tomorrow Comrades Popova and Nekovirin from the construction will be here, send them in to me as soon as they come.

CHIZHOVA: Is that all?

KOVALEV: That's all.

CHIZHOVA: Ivan Romanovich, I didn't want to ask you in front of Grekov. When shall I get my vacation, Ivan Romanovich?

KOVALEV: You'll get it, Lydia Fyodorovna, you'll get it. Just let me get hold of these cases and I'll let you go in peace.

CHIZHOVA: And with my stay at a health resort paid for?

KOVALEV: Yes, it will be paid for.

CHIZHOVA: Ivan Romanovich, you've been telling me this for the last five years.

KOVALEV: Well, did I ever refuse you?

CURTAIN

ACT IV

SCENE 1

Grekov's room. Empty. No one on the stage. Telephone bell. Nastasya Petrovna comes to answer it and just then the door bell rings.

NASTASYA PETROVNA *(impatiently)*: Ringing everywhere at once!

She puts down receiver and goes to open door. Enter black-haired, well-dressed young woman. It is Mir Akhmetova, the former chairman of the Soviet in the Central Asian town of clay. She is dressed in smart European clothes.

Enter Masha. At first she doesn't recognize her old friend. Then recognition, embraces, kisses. It appears that Mir Akhmetova is no longer chairman of a local Soviet but Assistant People's Commissar of the Republic. She has come to Moscow to help Pavel Grekov to get back into the Party and to expose Narzulayev.

MASHA: Did you really throw up your work and come to Moscow for that?

MIR AKHMETOVA: That's no slight reason for coming, Maria. If any misfortune happened to me he would have come to me, wouldn't he? We have neither written nor met for four years, but our friendship doesn't depend on that. When I got Pavel's letter everything came back to me! Our fight against Narzulayev, our hard but marvelous life in the brigades and villages, our struggle against the *Basmachi!* I remembered the Russian lad who had given to my native land the best years of his life, and I immediately threw up everything and came. My desire is now to be present when Pavel Grekov, your husband and my friend, gets back his Party ticket. I'm not too late, am I, Maria?

MASHA: Do you know that Pa-

vel's fate is perhaps being decided this very minute.

MIR AKHMETOVA: How?

MASHA: At the suggestion of the district committee the question is being taken up again at a general meeting.

Ring at door. Masha rushes to open it. But it is not Grekov. It is Lobikov. Now he has come to see Grekov, because he has himself been expelled from the Party as a coward and mere hanger-on.

Pavel Nikolayevich and I are now non-Party comrades in misfortune, *he says, to explain his visit.*

Another ring. Again it is not Grekov. It is Trofimich, the old tunneller; unable to stay quietly at home he has come to find out Grekov's fate.

At last Grekov himself comes. With him is Senka Abramov hiding a huge bunch of flowers behind his back.

MASHA: Pavel!

GREKOV: Mir Akhmetova! What brings you here? I'm so glad to see you! Trofimich! Lobikov!

MIR AKHMETOVA: Well, how are things, Pavel?

GREKOV *(taking out Party ticket and reading with solemn enthusiasm)*: "All-Union Communist Party (Bolsheviks). Workers of all countries, unite! Party ticket No. 0365570. Name Grekov. First name and patronymic, Pavel Nikolayevich. Joined the Party in 1931."

General rejoicings. All embrace and congratulate Grekov. Senka presents Masha with the flowers.

Enter Nastasya Petrovna. Wiping away her tears, she gives Grekov a motherly kiss and says:

It was bound to end like this.

Another ring. Enter Karas. This slippery and dangerous man has also come to congratulate Grekov. He presses his hand hypocritically and pats him on the back. Everyone is about to sit down to table when there is another ring and a lieutenant of the People's Commissariat of Internal Affairs enters the room.

LIEUTENANT: Excuse me for disturbing you. Which of you is Pavel Nikolayevich Grekov?

GREKOV: I am.

LOBIKOV *(in horror)*: He's done for!

GREKOV: One minute! *(Reads paper handed him by lieutenant.)* Comrades, I must go. Goodbye everybody! Masha, don't worry!

Exeunt. Consternation on all faces.

LOBIKOV: So that's how he's been reinstated!

SCENE 2

Office of Department Chief in the People's Commissariat of Internal Affairs. Big desk, leather armchairs. In one sits Sorokin. The head of the department is chatting easily with him.

DEPARTMENT CHIEF: So you assert that all the activities of Pavel Grekov were directed against the Soviet power?

SOROKIN: I assert that all the work of Grekov, both in Central Asia and here at the construction, represents an uninterrupted chain of counter-revolutionary crimes. *(Head of department rings, messenger enters.)*

DEPARTMENT CHIEF: Ask Grekov to come in. *(Exit messenger.)*

SOROKIN: I can go, I suppose.

DEPARTMENT CHIEF: Let's have a talk all together! You're not in a great hurry, are you?

SOROKIN: No, of course not! Just as you like!

Enter Grekov

DEPARTMENT CHIEF: You know one another, I think.

GREKOV: Yes, we know each other well.

DEPARTMENT CHIEF: Take a seat, please. Well, it's getting late,

let's start. *(To Sorokin.)* You begin!

SOROKIN: But I've told you everything. We are in the presence of an enemy. Young in years, but extremely active in deeds!

DEPARTMENT CHIEF: For example?

SOROKIN: You know the facts. I would like to dwell only on the cause of the departure, or rather flight, of Grekov from Central Asia. He gave as the reason the necessity for a change of climate. But actually he felt that I was beginning to smell a rat. I was not able to expose him just then, because the secretary of the district committee, Kovalev, prevented me from doing it. Yes, yes! That very Kovalev who helped you to get back into the Party just now! Anxious to expose Grekov I came to Moscow and got work on the construction.

DEPARTMENT CHIEF: With whose help?

SOROKIN: With the help of Grekov.

DEPARTMENT CHIEF: With the help of Grekov, against Grekov?

SOROKIN: All's fair in war!

DEPARTMENT CHIEF: Aha!

SOROKIN: And I repeat again that it was Grekov and none other who burned the Party records of the Olginsk district committee.

DEPARTMENT CHIEF: You are referring to this document?

SOROKIN: Yes.

DEPARTMENT CHIEF *(to Grekov)*: Read it!

SOROKIN: Why was it necessary for him to burn Party documents? Such things are not done out of love for fireworks.

DEPARTMENT CHIEF: Quite so!

SOROKIN: Fearing exposure of his counter-revolutionary Trotskyite activities, he reduced to ashes the clues which might at any moment have exposed him.

DEPARTMENT CHIEF: Is that all you have to say?

Last scene from "Pavel Grekov" as staged by the Kursk Dramatic Theater

SOROKIN: That's all!

DEPARTMENT CHIEF: What have you to say for yourself, Grekov?

GREKOV: I've never been in Olginsk in my life! At that time I was in a sanatorium at Sebastopol, that can be proved. Every word said here by Sorokin is a lie! I only acknowledge one misdeed—I helped Sorokin to get work!

SOROKIN: You see! May I go? For, frankly . . .

DEPARTMENT CHIEF: Let's just hear Grekov! And besides, I have a few questions to put to you. Tell me, what prevented you from exposing Grekov, with our help, earlier?

SOROKIN: In the first place, Grekov's ability to mask his identity. In the second place, the protection of Kovalev. And, last but not least, Grekov's extraordinary capacity of doing everything without witnesses. So far, as you see, I have had to find out everything by intuition. And this is not always a convincing argument for the organs of the People's Commissariat of Internal Affairs. Unfortunately there were no witnesses.

DEPARTMENT CHIEF: That's where you're mistaken! There is a witness! *(Presses bell. Enter messenger.)* Bring in witness under arrest.

Enter Levitsky.

DEPARTMENT CHIEF: Levitsky, do you know these people?

LEVITSKY: Long, long ago, we used to meet.

DEPARTMENT CHIEF: Both of them?

LEVITSKY: Both of them.

SOROKIN: I don't know this man!

GREKOV: That's a lie!

DEPARTMENT CHIEF: Have you never seen him before?

SOROKIN: Never!

DEPARTMENT CHIEF: So you don't know him?

SOROKIN: I've never seen him before, of course, I don't know him!

LEVITSKY: There's a human comedy for you! Honoré de Balzac!

DEPARTMENT CHIEF: Levitsky!

LEVITSKY: At your service!

DEPARTMENT CHIEF: What do you know of the activities of citizen Sorokin, who does not know you?

LEVITSKY: I've told you already. This mysterious stranger directed my practical activities in Central Asia, as to which I have already had the honor to give you my evidence more than once. Volume five, page two hundred and three of my case.

SOROKIN: I once again assert that I do not know this person!

DEPARTMENT CHIEF: Grekov, did you ever lose your Party ticket?

GREKOV: Yes, I did.

DEPARTMENT CHIEF: Is this it?

GREKOV: It is! It's my Party ticket!

DEPARTMENT CHIEF. Levitsky, did you continue your practical activities in Central Asia with the aid of this document?

LEVITSKY: Yes, I did, and not only in Central Asia.

DEPARTMENT CHIEF: Who gave you this Party ticket?

LEVITSKY: Sorokin!

DEPARTMENT CHIEF *(to Sorokin)*: You, of course, deny this?

SOROKIN: I repeat again that I know nothing of this adventurer!

DEPARTMENT CHIEF: Grekov, where did you lose your Party ticket?

GREKOV: I discovered the loss in Moscow.

DEPARTMENT CHIEF: In what year?

GREKOV: 1934.

DEPARTMENT CHIEF: Who was in the compartment with you when you were coming back from Central Asia?

GREKOV: My wife, and . . . Sorokin.

DEPARTMENT CHIEF: That's right, Sorokin. Levitsky, tell us why you needed to burn the Party records of the Olginsk district committee?

LEVITSKY: Me? I didn't need it personally. Sorokin needed it. At the dawn of his cloudy youth he bore the name of Smirnov. For some reason he did not wish the biography of this Smirnov to become public property. And so . . .

DEPARTMENT CHIEF: Facts, please! What documents did you burn?

LEVITSKY: I'm afraid I did not have time to study them at the time. I was in a great hurry. But, as far as I could understand from Sorokin, it was a question of the minutes of his Trotskyite speeches and of other material, no less piquant.

DEPARTMENT CHIEF: Citizen Sorokin-Smirnov, what have you to say? *(Sorokin keeps silence, lowering his head.)* You have nothing to say? You are arrested. *(Enter two Red army men and messenger.)* Take away the prisoners.

LEVITSKY *(to Sorokin)*: Come on! *(Slowly, stumbling, Sorokin departs followed by Levitsky.)*

DEPARTMENT CHIEF: We are very grateful to you for your material, Grekov, it helped us to expose Narzulayev and the rest. No wonder that gang was so anxious for your blood. The *kulak* who killed Klasha Timofeyeva has confessed that the mass of stone was meant for you.

GREKOV: For me?

DEPARTMENT CHIEF: Yes. And do you know who incited him to this terrorist act? The Trotskyite Karas, a member of your Party committee!

GREKOV: Karas! Only today he congratulated me on my reinstatement in the Party.

DEPARTMENT CHIEF: There is a logic of its own in all this. *(Looks at clock.)* I do not think he will ever congratulate you on anything again. I am not going to lay down the law to you, but I would advise you in the future to heed to your first instincts of distrust and suspicion, either in your work or your personal life. Check up on your feeling, study the man who inspires distrust. Don't let the enemy beat you! Beat him yourself the moment he raises his hand against you. Be merciless to the enemies, therein lies true humanism!

CURTAIN

THE FIFTIETH ANNIVERSARY OF CHERNYSHEVSKY'S DEATH

Great Russian Scholar and Critic

Chernyshevsky's biography is an uneventful one. It can be best presented as an account of a complex inner life, of powerful spiritual growth, of the unwavering staunchness of a revolutionary genius, striking out new paths in science and literature. His biographer would have to dwell most of all on the historic events that influenced the evolution of Chernyshevsky's outlook; on the unintermittent creative work that never ceased even when he was imprisoned in the fortress, and subsequently, during penal servitude and exile to the Far North, where he lived in complete spiritual isolation. In what may be accounted stirring events, however, Chernyshevsky's private life is by no means rich.

He was born in 1828, the son of a priest, in the town of Saratov on the Volga River. His father had a comparatively large library and here Chernyshevsky, in early childhood, became acquainted with historical works, and both Russian and foreign literature. He stated in his autobiographical notes that while still a child he became a "bookworm," eagerly devouring books on all subjects. At fourteen years of age his book-learning astonished everyone. When he entered the religious seminary in 1842, he knew—according to the accounts of his school fellows—Latin, Greek, Hebrew, French, German, Polish, and English.

In some of his old exercise-books we find notes in Arabic, Tatar, and Persian. During lessons Chernyshevsky was always making notes from dictionaries.

"He would be sitting writing and the teacher would ask him a question—once; there was no need to repeat it; Chernyshevsky would stand up and begin: 'On this subject this German writer says so-and-so, that English writer so-and-so.' And listening to him," the writer of the memoirs continues, "you would wonder where the boy could have collected so much information."

Chernyshevsky graduated with distinction from the religious seminary, but decided against entering the church and departed for St. Petersburg to continue his studies at the university.

It is said that when the inspector of the seminary heard of this, he remarked to Chernyshevsky's mother: "It is a pity you are taking your son away from us; he might have become one of the great luminaries among the Orthodox clergy."

But Chernyshevsky was destined to become a great luminary in another sphere.

He was accepted into the university in 1846, and spent there four years at a time when the gloomy, reactionary atmosphere prevailing during Nicholas I's reign was at its worst. Oppression increased after the revolutionary events of 1848 in Europe,

when the Russian government, fearing that their influence might spread, strove to crush every sign of free thought. Enlightenment, science and literature were regarded as the seat of "sedition" and were, therefore, subjected to persecution. They were forced into the service of "Orthodoxy, Autocracy, and Nationalism" [for "nationalism" read "chauvinism"] the notorious formula drawn up by the Minister of Education, Uvarov.

On entering the university, Chernyshevsky plunged heart and soul into his studies, with the intention of devoting himself to science in the future. He read a great deal and attended lectures; philology greatly interested him, and he prepared himself for a scholarly career. Many years later he spoke ironically of the purely scholastic nature of university studies of that time and of his early absorption with Slavonic philology, as never having risen above the level of mere pedantry.

His thoughts and sympathies were already at this time reaching out beyond the confines of the university.

It was during these years that the building up of the sound, materialistic philosophy and socio-political convictions of the future educationalist, critic, and revolutionary fighter, took place.

The European revolution of 1848 was a factor of immense importance in the formation of Chernyshevsky's political views. His diary shows that he followed eagerly every stage, every turn in that struggle. He read the French newspapers and carefully analysed the distribution of forces on the historical arena of 1848. Commenting on the events in France, Chernyshevsky, in his diary, defined his views as follows: "With respect to the ultimate aims of mankind, I have become a partisan of the Socialists, Communists, and extreme Republicans, a decided Montagnard." He was attracted by early nineteenth century utopian writers like Fourier, and this further encouraged the development of the views he confesses to in his diary.

It was about this time that a rift appeared in his general philosophic outlook. Nurtured in a religious family, he had in his youth been imbued with religious traditions to which he was sincerely devoted. On reading Feuerbach's *The Essence of Christianity* in 1849, Chernyshevsky was led to make a thorough revision of the foundations of his philosophy. The book was for him, as it was for Marx, Engels and Hertzen,[1] a liberating influence. In 1850 he records in his diary: "Skepticism in religious matters has developed in me to such a pitch that I am almost converted to Feuerbach's teaching." This state was not brought about all at once, but only arrived at after a painful inward struggle and a crisis that culminated in the religious-minded youth giving up his beliefs once and for all and adhering to the materialistic philosophy.

By the time he was ready to graduate in 1850, Chernyshevsky was firmly and irrevocably set in his revolutionary radical frame of mind. Now he no longer spoke of his *inclination* to Socialism, arising from the perusal of other people's opinions, but of a burning faith in it, of a resolution to take the boldest, maddest, most desperate steps in the struggle. He felt like "a personal enemy, a traitor," he felt "like a conspirator, as a general must feel towards an enemy general with whom he is to do battle on the morrow."

[1] Hertzen, Alexander (1812-1870). Distinguished Russian writer, topical essayist and revolutionary, who championed the emancipation of the peasantry.

Thus he wrote on May 15, 1850. From that time on Socialism became his life work.

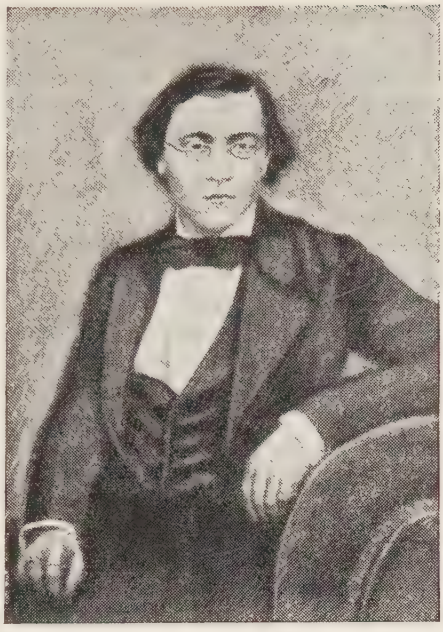
Historical circumstances did not permit this born political fighter to engage in *practical* revolutionary activity. He dreamed of heading an extreme Left political party in Russia. He longed to do great deeds for the serfs, he wanted to instill the revolutionary spirit into the masses.

The only weapon to his hand, under the conditions then prevailing, was his pen. But the tsarist censorship placed at every step almost insuperable obstacles to the expression of revolutionary thought in either a scholarly or publicistic form.

Chernyshevsky showed consummate agility in avoiding the aforementioned obstacles; this was particularly noted by Marx and Lenin.

In the court verdict pronounced on Chernyshevsky (as it was stated in a copy given by Lopatin[1] to Marx) Marx has underlined the assertion that Chernyshevsky "preserved in his works a form invulnerable from a legal standpoint, while openly pouring poison into them." In 1901 Lenin wrote about "the mighty teaching of Chernyshevsky, who could train true *revolutionaries* even in articles that had to be submitted to censorship."

On graduating from the university Chernyshevsky was engaged for some time as a teacher in his native town, Saratov. Some trouble arose as a result of denunciations made by local reactionaries, and he was obliged to give up his position as a teacher in the gymnasium. In 1853 he returned to St. Petersburg and very shortly began to work on periodicals. He began with reviews and translations. His translation of a novel by Charles James Lever—*The Dodd Family Abroad*—was published in 1854, in *Otechestvenny Zapiski (Homeland Notes)*. At the same time he was preparing a thesis on *The Esthetic Relations of Art to Reality*, for his Master of Arts degree. This was his first work of importance.



Portrait of Chernyshevsky as a young man. From a daguerreotype taken in 1853.

In his studies he may be said to have been guided by the requirements of social development, rather than by his own personal tastes and inclinations. And this bore witness to his "historic consciousness." Maxim Gorky dwelt on it when he opposed his own social optimism to the "cosmic pessimism" and anarchy of ideas evident in the works of Leonid Andreyev[1] (Russian writer well-known at the beginning of the twentieth century).

[1] Lopatin, Herman (1845-1918). Russian revolutionary, member of the Will-of-the-People Party.

[1] *Sashka Jiguleff* by Leonid Andreyev. With an introduction by Maxim Gorky. New York, 1925.

Historic consciousness consisted chiefly in the writer's clear conception of his purpose, in his efforts to solve the problems of his day. This has distinguished all really great writers—the clear realization of the task before them—and it was present in Chernyshevsky to a very high degree. In his monograph on Lessing he shows that the born philosopher, that Lessing was, "kept silence about philosophy, because the time had not yet arrived for it to become the focal point of German intellectual life. . . . Minds were ready to be revived by poetry, but they were not ripe for philosophy, and Lessing wrote plays and talked about poetry."

These words might be applied, to a certain degree, to Chernyshevsky himself; he had started out on his scholarly and literary activities with an examination of what would seem a most abstract question—that of the esthetic relation of art to actuality. In this lay his peculiar genius: no matter how vague and abstract, at the first glance, the questions he treated might appear, he could so illumine them that they would show up in startling relief as questions of the moment. Whether he wrote on esthetics, on Aristotle or on the Russian translations of Schiller he was always able, without deviating in the slightest degree from his subject, to connect it with burning questions of the day.

Chernyshevsky's plan for his paper on esthetics called for a much greater scope than the censorship conditions would permit. He desired to show the process by which the materialistic doctrine of Feuerbach had come to take the place of idealistic philosophy and the system of political and social views connected with it. But he had no chance to do this, for the tsarist censorship would not allow him even to utter Feuerbach's name, and the university authorities deleted also the name of Hegel from his thesis. It was precisely the impossibility of giving broad treatment to questions of general philosophy that obliged Chernyshevsky to confine himself to esthetics.

He himself always asserted with great modesty that his part was merely that of an exponent of Feuerbach's ideas as applied to art. But this was far from being the actual case. Chernyshevsky had to build anew a theory of materialistic esthetics which, though akin to Feuerbach's teaching in spirit, was in many respects quite independent of it.

The impossibility of using Hegel's name obliged Chernyshevsky to choose as the object of his argument works on esthetics by the Hegelian, Fischer, instead of Hegel's own three-volume work on the subject. Thus he contrived to evade the formal impediments thrown in his way, for the main purpose of his treatise lay, not in the criticism of particularities of this or that system, but, in general, in the substitution of a new outlook, based on the conclusions of materialistic philosophy, for antiquated metaphysical views. Point by point, he disputed and broke down the basic theses of idealistic esthetics, which, from the time of the ancient philosophers down to Kant and Hegel, had been founded on the religious interpretation of the idea of the beautiful.

According to Feuerbach, the problem that confronted science and philosophy was the rehabilitation of actuality, the expulsion of invention and abstraction from our conceptions and understanding. Such, too, was the primary task of the esthetics founded on Feuerbach's philosophy. The central question, the principal theme of the treatise, as is obvious from its title, was the esthetic relation of art to actual-

ity. Idealistic esthetics had seen in art one of the media of perceiving, and expressing the "absolute idea," and set beauty in art above beauty in nature. In connection with the premises of Feuerbach's philosophy, which opposed nature—the only reality—to the absolute spirit, Chernyshevsky defended the opposite theory—that of the supremacy of beauty in actuality over beauty in art.

In conformity with the essentials of Feuerbach's doctrine, Chernyshevsky advanced, in place of idealistic abstractions, the definition: "Beauty is life." Here beauty is not treated as the embodiment of the "absolute idea" in "ultimate forms," it is given in objective nature and life. Beauty is an attribute of actuality, and there can be nothing in works of art that is not given in actuality.

This definition of the beautiful resulted from a true understanding of the relation between the actual world and the imagined, and it led to a true perception of the source of art and its purpose.

Like the famous Russian critic Vissarion Belinsky, Chernyshevsky held that "the sphere of art is not bounded by beauty alone and by what we may call its factors, but embraces all that interests man in actuality (that is, in nature and life) . . . that which is universally interesting—this is what art consists of." Chernyshevsky did not confine himself to asserting the superiority of actuality over art, nor to bringing art down into the sphere of real life; he also asserted that the conception of beauty was comparative, and not the same for everyone, and he defined art as one of the instruments for the transformation of actuality.

His thesis played a tremendous part in the struggle with idealistic esthetics. It was the first attempt to create systematic scientific esthetics from a materialistic point of view. In many respects the treatise has retained its value for us today.

Basing his esthetics on a passionate exaltation of actuality, life and nature, Chernyshevsky thus laid the foundations of *realistic* esthetics. This aspect of his theory is closely akin to our Soviet literature. His attitude to an art that was detached from life and addicted to representing the phantom figures of a sterile imagination, was, like his attitude to the hothouse blooms of an "art for art's sake," one of negation. He appealed to artists to reproduce life in all its infinite variety. But this was to be no passive reproduction, he warned. He sought in art "an interpretation of life." "It is not sufficient to be an artist alone. The poet worthy of the name usually desires to transmit to us, through his medium of expression—his thoughts, his views, and his feelings, and not exclusively the beauty he has created." Furthermore, Chernyshevsky held that one of the necessary conditions of any great work of art was to respond to contemporary demands, "because a real artist always bases his work on contemporary ideas."

A genuine writer must go into the thick of life, he cannot help but be stirred by questions arising out of actuality and then, "consciously or unconsciously, his works will reveal his efforts to state his conclusion, his living verdict on the phenomena that interest him (and his contemporaries, for, of course, no thinking man can meditate on unimportant questions that interest none but himself)." Then "his works will be, if one may express it that way, essays on themes suggested by life itself . . . then the artist will become a thinker."

False trends in art, of which

we are striving in every possible way to rid ourselves—formalism and naturalism—were severely censured by Chernyshevsky. Strictly speaking, criticism of formalism and naturalism founded on philosophy is given for the first time in Chernyshevsky's thesis. Formalism as we understand it begins at the point where art, according to Chernyshevsky's definition, passes into artificiality. Formalism is to be found wherever "there is stippling and meticulous finishing of details, the object of which is not to bring them into harmony with the spirit of the whole, but only to render each of them individually more interesting or more beautiful—almost invariably at the cost of the general impression of the work, its verisimilitude and naturalness." Formalism is to be found there "where a petty straining after effect is observed—in the choice of words, certain phrases, and whole episodes; the tinting of characters and events in colors that are not quite natural, but startling."

Are not these the signs by which we define works of art of a formalistic tendency today? It is extremely important to note that many of Chernyshevsky's objections to formalistic artifices were directed simultaneously against meaningless, uninspired copying, where the finicky reproduction of separate features and endless small details led the artist into the labyrinths of naturalism. Naturalism or "lifeless copying," or "daguerreotype copying," aimless imitation, as Chernyshevsky would have expressed it, is a result of that passive reproduction of actuality against which he warns us in his esthetics.

The publication of his *Esthetic Relations Between Art and Actuality* was of importance not only because it raised the theory of art, which had become degraded after Belinsky's death, to lofty heights, and not only because it paved the way for realistic esthetics, but also because, taking the theory of art as an example, it revealed to the reader a general picture of the downfall of idealistic philosophy in the West.

The account of the way in which Chernyshevsky got his degree is highly instructive. His case clearly shows how painstakingly the devotees of learning of that time strove to prevent the introduction of vital revolutionary thought. Failing to find any formal reason for not admitting Chernyshevsky to the degree examinations and to the reading of his thesis, the professors and council of the university did everything possible and everything that depended upon them to prevent him from carrying out his intention. Suffice it to say that eighteen months elapsed between the writing of the paper in 1853 and its confirmation by the council in 1855. After the defense of the thesis was over, Chernyshevsky's degree was only conferred on him three years later, when he had lost interest in scientific studies at the university.

It was during this period that he became a close collaborator of the staff of the *Sovremenik (Contemporary)* the most advanced journal of the time, edited by the famous Russian poet, Nikolai Nekrasov. With the advent of Chernyshevsky this periodical became the center of the revolutionary-democratic forces and he soon occupied a leading position on it. He was critic, literary historian, publicist, economist, philosopher and historian.

This brief but extraordinarily intensive spell of work on the *Sovremenik* marked an important stage in his life and his career as

The Civil Execution of Chernyshevsky, May 19, 1864; drawing by an unknown artist. "It was a dull lowering morning. A fine rain was falling. After a fairly long wait a carriage appeared and drove through the square to the scaffold. There was a stir in the crowd; people thought it was Chernyshevsky, but two executioners alighted from the vehicle and mounted the scaffold. A few minutes passed. Another carriage came in sight, surrounded by mounted gendarmes and preceded by an officer. This carriage also drove into the square, and we soon saw N. G. Chernyshevsky, in a round cap and a coat with a fur collar, ascend the scaffold. He was followed by an official in a three-cornered hat and uniform who was, so far as I remember, accompanied by two civilians. . . . The official stood facing us, but Chernyshevsky had his back to us. A hush descended on the public square as the sentence was read out. Only a word here and there reached our ears. When the reading was at an end, the executioner took Chernyshevsky by the shoulder, led him up to the pillory and thrust his hands through the ring of the chain. Thus, with his arms folded across his chest, Chernyshevsky stood for about a quarter of an hour. . . . Then the executioner drew the prisoner's hands out of the chain, set him in the middle of the platform, tore off his cap roughly, threw it down on the ground and forced Chernyshevsky to his knees. Then he took a sword, broke it above Chernyshevsky's head and flung the pieces away in opposite directions. After this Chernyshevsky rose to his feet, picked up his hat and put it on. The executioners then took him by the arms and led him away from the scaffold. . . ." (Written down from the account of an eye-witness, by Vladimir Korolenko.)

In No. 186 of "Kolokol" (The Tocsin) for 1864, Hertzen wrote: "Will none of the Russian artists paint the portrait of Chernyshevsky at the pillory? This accusing canvas would serve as something for future generations to look up to, and immortalize the rascality of stupid rogues who pillory human thought like criminals and make it the companion of the cross."

a writer. From the very first he was discovered to be a critic of remarkable ability and depth. In strong contrast to the mild and unoriginal criticism of the day, Chernyshevsky's articles contained bold and decided opinions on the productions of contemporary writers; in this respect

he continued the work Belinsky had begun. He condemned mediocre books in no uncertain terms, even if they came from the pen of writers of some renown.

He flung down not a few false gods, and on the other hand, restored to their rightful place those who had been undeservedly forgotten. He fought pseudo-scholarly pedantry and its beaten tracks as passionately as "fiery Vissarion" himself, as Belinsky was called.

Chernyshevsky's most important critical works were *The Gogol Period in Russian Literature*, and *Lessing, His Time, Life and Activities*. The former gives a comprehensive detailed analysis of the trend of Russian social thought from the eighteen-twenties to the eighteen-forties. Once again he was faced with what appeared to be insuperable difficulties: there were occasions when it was impossible for him to refer by name to those about whom he wrote in the book—Hertzen, Belinsky, Bakunin and others. He contrived, however, by suggestion and allegory, to give a masterly account of their inner development.

Contemporary criticism exhibited an esthetic tendency; it attacked what was known as the "Gogol" satirical trend in literature and appealed for a return to the traditions of "pure art." Chernyshevsky's criticism took exactly the opposite point of view. He regarded Nikolai Gogol as the greatest of the Russian writers, the head of "the only school of which Russian literature might be justly proud." Gogol's works, in which the social contradictions of the time were exposed with extraordinary power and an unsparing hand, seemed to Chernyshevsky to answer the demands of his day more fully than any other, and he took up the cudgels in defense of the "natural" school of Ivan Goncharov, Ivan Turgenev, Grigorovich and other Russian writers who followed in the footsteps of Gogol.

His articles on Turgenev and Saltykov-Shchedrin, *On Sincerity in Criticism*, are brilliant examples of revolutionary-publicist criticism. Chernyshevsky regarded literature as of incalculable importance; in his opinion, Byron, possibly, meant more in the history of mankind than Napoleon.

In the conditions of the time, when social and political activities in Russia were out of the question, literature was, as Hertzen has said, a vital matter. It acquired universal importance. While solving its own problems, it had often to take upon itself the solution of those that would otherwise have belonged exclusively to the fields of science, philosophy and social work.

On the death of Nicholas I the severity of the censorship became a little milder and less cruelly oppressive. There was a marked growth in social consciousness after the Crimean War of 1855, and the growth of revolutionary crisis before the peasant reforms[1] was reflected also in literature.

Chernyshevsky decided that the time had come for him to devote all his powers to writing on social questions, political economy, and national politics, and as soon as he encountered a worthy successor in the youthful Dobrolyubov, he gave up his position as literary critic on the magazine.

The time for the liberation of the serfs was approaching. The peasant question was foremost now. Controversies raged in the periodicals around the questions of land reforms and the liberation of the serfs. Chernyshevsky wrote a series of articles on the peasant question, in which, like a true revolutionary democrat, he expos-

[1] Peasant reforms—emancipation of peasantry from serfdom, February 19, 1861.

ed the political and moral flabbiness and cowardliness of the Russian liberals. The articles were of the nature of a political manifesto; he condemned the faint-heartedness of the moderate liberal intelligentsia, drawn from the ranks of the gentry, who trembled and faltered at the prospect of decisive class conflicts; he reminded them constantly of the inevitability of the approaching revolution.

This was the time when he translated John Stuart Mill's *Political Economy*, supplementing it with an ample commentary of his own, explaining the inconsistency of bourgeois political economy. Karl Marx highly appreciated this work of Chernyshevsky's; it became the manual of the Russian revolutionaries. With a view to raising the level of theoretical knowledge among the new-born Russian democracy, Chernyshevsky wrote a brilliant article on *The Anthropological Principle in Philosophy*, in which he laid down the fundamental theses of materialism.

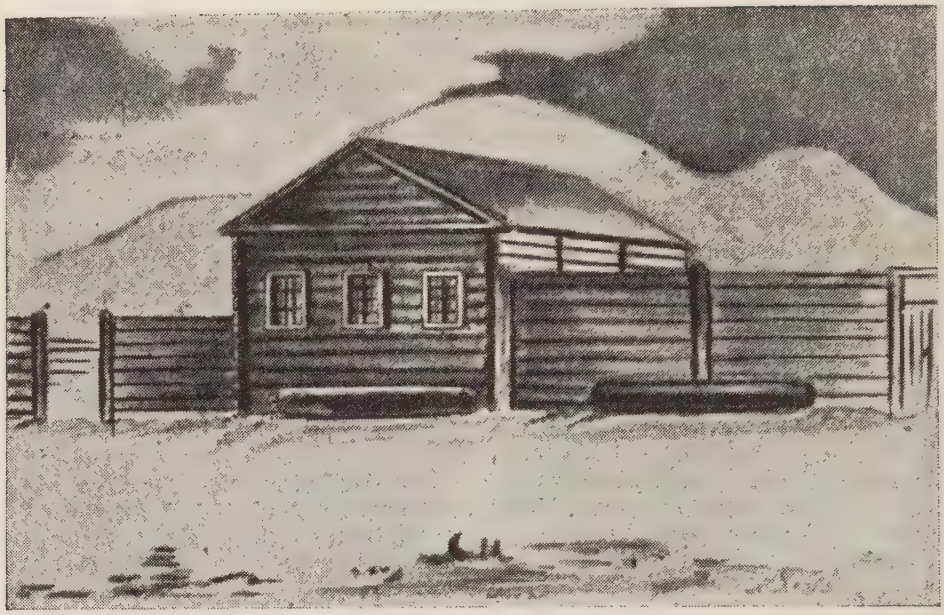
His influence increased by leaps and bounds. He had now a great many warm admirers among the middle-class, revolutionary-minded intelligentsia. His work contributed largely to the formation of the outlook of entire social strata. Every article of his was eagerly read and passed from hand to hand. But he had many enemies among the serf-owners and liberals, whose position he had uncompromisingly and consistently criticized. Outwardly restrained, but inwardly fervid, Chernyshevsky's journalistic work now occupied the whole of his time right up to his arrest.

The ruling circles soon realized that in Chernyshevsky they had a dangerous foe.

His persistent articles on the subject of the liberation of the serfs and his militant social attitude drove the government to the expedient of finding some urgent excuse for isolating the leader of the revolutionary democrats. The excuse was not far to seek.

At the end of June, 1862, the agents of the government seized a letter sent by Hertzen, who was then in London, to N. A. Serno-Solovyevich. Hertzen mentioned Chernyshevsky's name and suggested that the publication of the *Sovremenik* be transferred to London.

This proved sufficient to warrant Chernyshevsky's arrest, which occurred on July 7, 1862, at his home. He was conveyed at once to the most important state prison, the Alexeyev redoubt of the Peter and Paul Fortress. Here, while awaiting the decision of the committee of investigation, Chernyshevsky occupied himself with the translation of various historians, such as Gervinus, Schlosser, Macaulay, and Neumann, and the writing of fiction. P. E. Shchegolev, who made a study of the everyday life of many of those confined in the tsarist prisons, tells us that there is nothing to compare with the scale and intensity of Chernyshevsky's intellectual activity in confinement. The government had forbidden him the pen of a publicist, but had not been able to break his will. A passionate revolutionary, he never ceased his labors, no matter what the conditions in which he was placed. He now chose fiction as his medium, because it allowed him to give voice to his political creed in a disguised form. One of the most important things he wrote in prison was his novel *What Is To Be Done?* in which he portrayed the "new people." It was published in the *Sovremenik*, but was soon afterwards confiscated. It not only described the "new people," but suggested what they ought to be like and what they ought to do. He had, as a matter of fact, aimed at showing a revolutionary type in



View of Kadai, where Chernyshevsky was sent to penal servitude. From a drawing reproduced in "Chernyshevsky in Siberia. Family Letters."

"Exiled first to Kadai on the Mongolian frontier, and subsequently to the Nerchinsk mines, Chernyshevsky lived at one time with a party of Poles. There was the yard with its fence of sharpened stakes, within wooden buildings of the plainest possible style of architecture, the guard-room for the soldiers, the striped sentry-box at the gate, and beyond the fence the misty mountains of the Trans-Baikal. The Poles were for the most part working people who were obliged to go out to work every day. Then all was quiet in the empty, fenced in yard and the grey houses with barred windows; only Chernyshevsky sat in his cell reading his books." (Vladimir Korolenko, "Reminiscences of Chernyshevsky.")

the novel. Rakhmetov, the "unusual person," the conspirator, represents this type. In him Chernyshevsky foresaw some of the traits that were to appear in members of the Will-of-the-People Party in the 'seventies.

It is difficult nowadays to conceive the impression made by this novel on the reader of that time. Plekhanov said that, from the day when the printing press was first introduced into Russia, no other printed work enjoyed the success of *What Is To Be Done?*

It produced, in the first place, an impression that had a practical effect on the revolutionary strata of the 'sixties; those were the people who sought to apply the principles laid down by Chernyshevsky in his book.

One of his contemporaries says that "producers' and consumers' associations, communes and hostels, began to be set up everywhere. Fictitious marriages, contracted for the purpose of gaining freedom from the yoke of family despotism, after the example set by Lopukhov and Vera Pavlovna in the novel, became everyday occurrences."

The women's movement of the time developed under the banner of *What Is To Be Done?* Not only that, but the image of Rakhmetov gained a powerful hold over the imagination of many of the revolutionaries of the 'sixties and 'seventies, and led them to follow his example both in their private lives and in the struggle for the reconstruction of society. The novel aroused a storm of controversy

in literature, resulted in violent polemics, and became the subject of innumerable articles and reviews. The obscurantists and reactionaries greeted it with indignation. The revolutionary intelligentsia of the 'sixties regarded it as their gospel.

While the controversies aroused by his novel were at their height, the author, after two years' imprisonment in the fortress, was deprived by decision of the Senate of all rights and sentenced, first to penal servitude, and subsequently to exile in Siberia. Since the government had no direct evidence of his guilt, they resorted to disgraceful forgeries in order to provide material for the farce of the trial. On May 19, 1864, Chernyshevsky was forced to go through the humiliating ceremony of "civil execution" in Mytnin Square, St. Petersburg, and at the end of the year he arrived at Kadai, in the Trans-Baikal. Three years later he was moved to Alexandrovsky Zavod, and when his term of penal servitude was over, was sent to live in a remote town, Vilyuisk. In Siberia he worked as perseveringly and as untiringly as ever, though the scope of his literary labors was necessarily narrowed and was confined to the writing of fiction in various genres—tales, novels, stories and poems. The few books he had were insufficient for serious scholarly work. He attempted to write on political economy, on history—he told a fellow-exile that he wanted to write on the Renaissance, the Reformation, the times of the early Christians, and particularly on the beginnings of constitutionalism on the Continent. But all these attempts had to be given up for lack of the necessary reference books.

At first Chernyshevsky hoped that he would be able, in spite of everything, to earn sufficient by his literary labors to support his family, and that the fiction he wrote under an assumed name might find a place on the pages of one or other of the magazines. To make it easier for the editors to publish his work, he intended to write on subjects other than Russian, under a pseudonym, which, to make it all still more convincing, was to be an English one—Denzil Elliot. "It cannot be pleasant for anyone," he wrote to the publisher of a periodical, "to have anything to do with Chernyshevsky. But you will have nothing whatever to do with him. You will only have to deal with Mr. Denzil Elliot, the author of *Hymn to the Maid of Heaven.* This is a little poem. The Russian public is well aware that Chernyshevsky has never published a single verse. So Denzil Elliot shall make his debut with a poem." Chernyshevsky tried to get into print by writing songs and verses even in English. He began by compiling an English rhyming dictionary. "Here is the opening verse of the first song; it is written in honor of the agreement reached between England and America over the *Alabama* incident. . . .

We all who sing this song of love
We all are of the same great nation
Our blood is one, our language one,
The same our feelings' inclination.

and more of these patriotic English and American sentiments. . . . Was it easy, do you think, to compile the rhyming dictionary? Was it easy for one who knows nothing of English pronunciation to write English verse? There was no need for it. But I write. So from this you may conclude that I have set my heart on what I want; to do my duty as a family man. And I hope no one will venture to hinder me from doing it. I shall continue writing Russian verses as well, so as to keep up appearances as to Den-

zil Elliot, who is fond of writing verses, a weakness to which Chernyshevsky, as every educated person in Russia knows, was never subject." The above is an extract from a letter dated May 3, 1875.

But Chernyshevsky's hopes were doomed to disappointment. There was now no chance whatever of publishing his works in Russia, even under a pen-name. The government never let the captive out of sight for a moment; the strictest watch was kept on his communications with the outer world.

In Siberia he had to work under the most trying conditions and it is not at all surprising, therefore, that a great deal remained unfinished; sometimes his writing breaks off in the middle of a word; a great deal was burnt, projects died out, almost as soon as they were born, came to life again in a new form, only to perish once more. Endowed with an unusual talent for improvisation, Chernyshevsky would often, without any preparation, tell his fellow-prisoners stories and extracts from novels.

He did this, as a rule, holding an open note-book before him, as if he were reading from it. Once it so happened that some members of his audience looked at it, and found that its pages were blank. A great deal of what he related was never written down, or was destroyed by him after he had written it.

But one of the best of his Siberian works has been preserved, and was published abroad during his lifetime. This was *The Prologue*, a novel that takes us straight into the thick of the political struggle raging at the end of the eighteen-fifties around the so-called "peasant reforms" that were carried out in 1861.

The Prologue is in many respects a model of the true social novel, though Chernyshevsky, calculating on its publication in Russia, endeavored to disguise somewhat its real contents and its strongly-marked tendency. But his hatred of tsarism and serfdom, his scorn of the idle chatter of the liberal "emancipators" who showed themselves in their true colors when the time came for the "peasant reforms" to be carried out, overflowed in this book, which so reflects the period. Referring to the place in *The Prologue* where the hero, Volgin, is trying to convince his friend of the absence of any essential difference between "Progressists" and landowners, Lenin wrote: "It needed precisely the genius of a Chernyshevsky to understand with such clarity, just at the very time when the peasant reforms were being carried out (and when even in the West they were not yet properly illuminated) their fundamentally bourgeois nature."

When Chernyshevsky's term of penal servitude was over, he was sent to live in the remote little town of Vilyuisk, where he was completely cut off from the rest of the world. Now he was deprived of his last audience and comrades. He was in the midst of the forests, the taiga, swamps and marshes. The population of Vilyuisk was made up of poverty-stricken, cowed Yakuts, who stared in wonder at the newcomer. Here, for twelve long years, he lived in complete spiritual isolation, in a prison, though he was allowed to walk "at liberty" at a little distance from the gaol, under the surveillance of the Cossack guards.

The great nobility and steadfastness of his soul is seen in letters to his wife and children, in which not a single word of complaint is to be found. On the contrary, he strove to represent his terrible existence as a perfectly well-ordered and almost comfortable life.

From dreary, icy wastes, where a cruel eight months' winter reigned,

he wrote to his wife begging her to go for a holiday to Italy. He searched the encyclopaedia for descriptions of the most picturesque spots in Italy, where he thought she ought to go, instead of spending the winter in St. Petersburg.

After casting Chernyshevsky away on the edge of the world, the government still felt uneasy, fearing that he might be forcibly set free by his followers. And, as a matter of fact, certain daring souls did entertain some such projects. Mention was made in the Karakozov[1] case of a plan to rescue Chernyshevsky. Unsuccessful attempts were made also by Herman Lopatin and later by Hippolyte Myshkin. The latter acted without first coming to an agreement with Chernyshevsky and his attempt was an example of ill-judged boldness. In July 1875 he appeared in Vilyuisk in the guise of an officer of the gendarmerie, calling himself Meshcherinov. He presented to the police an order, purporting to be from the governor-general of Irkutsk, and demanding that Chernyshevsky should be sent under Meshcherinov's escort, to Blagoveshchensk.

The district police officer smelled a rat. He noticed certain deviations from the official style in the order and declared that unless he received orders direct from his superiors—that is, from Yakutsk—he would not hand over Chernyshevsky to the officer. Myshkin-Meshcherinov expressed his readiness to start for Yakutsk. The police officer made provision for his journey, sending two Cossacks with him, ostensibly for protection, but actually to convey a report of the matter to headquarters. On the way, Myshkin took the first opportunity of escape and fired at the Cossacks, one of whom he wounded. He fled to the forest. Soon, however, he was discovered and arrested. Subsequently he was sent for trial, exiled, then transferred to Schlüsselburg,[1] where he was executed after a conflict with the superintendent.

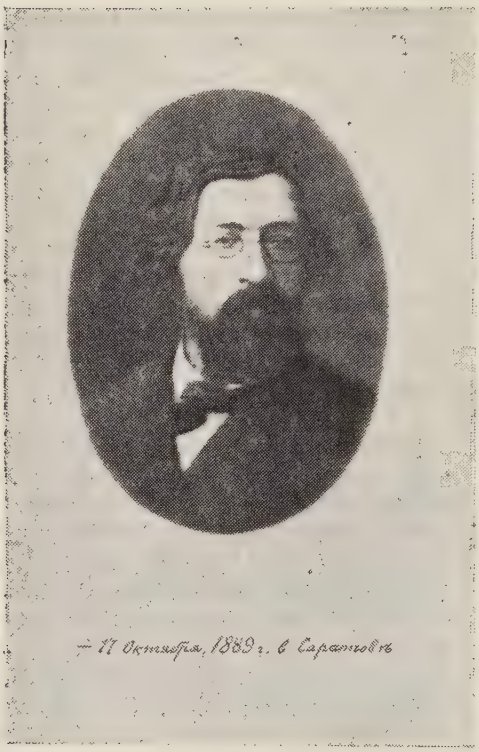
After this, Chernyshevsky wrote an open letter, in which he exhorted his well-wishers to make no further attempts to release him. The letter was published in the foreign press in the 'seventies.

During the long years that Chernyshevsky spent in Vilyuisk, his relatives (without his knowledge) wrote many petitions to the tsar for pardon. But it was not until 1883, after the coronation of Alexander III, that he was allowed to return to Russia to live, under police surveillance, in Astrakhan. "Secret Criminal No. 5," as he was called, started out on the long journey back to Russia in the autumn of 1883. A sick and broken man, he still retained his old eagerness for work. He brought with him big plans for scientific and literary work, but all sorts of obstacles were thrown in his way. The authorities made it a condition of his literary activities that he should write under a pseudonym and submit all he wrote to preliminary censorship. Publishers hesitated to invite him to do independent work on their periodicals. His only course was to earn a living by translating. He translated Spencer's *First Principles*, eleven volumes of George Weber's *Universal History*, Schröder's *Comparative Linguistics*, Carpenter's *Energy in Nature* and many other books.

He did not set a very high value on authors like Weber, Schröder and Carpenter, and was almost

[1] Karakozov case—trial of the revolutionaries arrested after Karakozov's unsuccessful attempt to assassinate Alexander II on April 4, 1866.

[1] Schlüsselburg—a fortress and ill-famed prison near St. Petersburg.



Portrait of Chernyshevsky in the eighteen-sixties. From Lenin's album, with an inscription in Lenin's handwriting: "October 17, 1889, Saratov." "There was hardly anyone whom Vladimir Ilyich Lenin loved so well as Chernyshevsky. That was a man, with whom he felt a kind of direct intimacy and he had an extraordinarily high respect for him." (Nadezhda Konstantinovna Krupskaya as quoted in an article by Lunacharsky, "The Ethics and Esthetics of Chernyshevsky in the Judgment of his Contemporaries.")

ashamed that he was obliged to cooperate in the publication of books that had no real scientific worth. But he had no choice.

In 1889 Chernyshevsky was permitted to return to his native Saratov, where, after a short illness, he died on the night of October 17.

It is difficult to find a single word by which to define Chernyshevsky's place in the development of Russian social thought and literature. The scope and range of his interests included philosophy, economics, history, social questions, literary criticism and fiction.

And though penal servitude and exile deprived him of twenty years of life, he, the possessor of truly encyclopaedic knowledge and universal talent, has left us a valuable legacy in every one of those fields of art and science. Karl Marx spoke of him as "the great Russian scholar and critic" and remarked more than once that of all the contemporary economists "Chernyshevsky was the only original thinker, and his political death (that is, his exile to Siberia) is a loss to the scholarly world, not only of Russia, but of Europe as well."

In one of his letters Engels calls Chernyshevsky and his follower and friend Dobrolyubov "the Socialist Lessing."

Chernyshevsky's revolutionary role has been clearly defined by Lenin, who was extremely fond of his books, and, we are told by Nadezhda Konstantinovna Krupskaya, felt a kind of close intimacy with him. "Chernyshevsky," Lenin wrote, "was a Socialist-Utopian, who dreamed that we could pass to Socialism through the old semi-feudal peasant community, who did not and could not see, during the 'sixties of last century, that only the development of capitalism and the proletariat were capable of creating the material conditions and the social force necessary for the realization of Socialism. But Chernyshevsky was not only a Socialist-Utopian; he was also a revolutionary democrat; he was able to influence, in the revolutionary spirit, all the political events of his time, to maintain through all the impediments and obstacles of the censorship the idea of a peasant revolution, the idea of the struggle of the masses for the overthrow of all the old authorities."

NIKOLAI BOGOSLOVSKY

NIKOLAI CHERNYSHEVSKY

"The Newcomes" by W. M. Thackeray

Thackeray is a writer of stupendous talent. With the sole exception of Dickens, none of the European writers of the present day is worthy to be placed beside or above the author of *Vanity Fair*. *The Newcomes* is one of the novels that provide a dazzling revelation of the immense scope of his genius. And yet, if the truth were told, *The Newcomes* is a work not fully deserving of its author. It is strange—this contradiction between the degree of talent revealed in the book and the degree of worth in the book itself. So strange, indeed, that we would hardly have ventured to present it so harshly—fearing that the impression produced on us by our perusal of Thackeray's latest novel might be a mistaken one—had we not learned that it has affected other readers in the same way. Amazement at the author's talent and, at the same time, dissatisfaction with the novel itself, were felt almost by all who had the patience to read it attentively to the end; but there were many whose patience was not proof against such a test. We know of admirers of Thackeray's who actually skipped tens of pages in his last novel, although they were perfectly sure that every one of those carelessly-turned pages was admirably well written. The author's gifts arouse wonder, while a work from that gifted pen awakens only indifferent contempt. This ought to serve as a good lesson to Thackeray, who, of course, can read Russian and is keenly interested in the success his books may have among Russian readers. The author of *The Newcomes* is no doubt waiting to hear what the Russian magazines have to say about his latest novel, and to make use of their remarks. It may be supposed that other English novelists as well will find it interesting and perhaps not altogether useless to read Russian opinions on the author they have taken as their model. With sincere wishes for the success of English literature, then, we candidly express the thoughts aroused by the regrettable inconsistency between the insignificant subject matter and the charming narrative of *The Newcomes*.

We are writing, as we have explained, not for the Russian reader but for Thackeray himself, who, naturally, remembers his own novel so well that there is no need for me to recall it. Most of our regular readers will very likely have read, or, at least, skimmed through *The Newcomes*, and, consequently, our article will be comprehensible to them, too. Then let us go straight to the point the impressions produced by Thackeray's latest novel.

The narrative is, as we have already said, wonderful. Since we are writing this article for the express purpose of its being read by Mr. Thackeray himself, we shall in the first place sing the praises of the novel's good points, in order to take some of the sting out of the sharp reproof we intend, and also to prevent Mr. Thackeray from calling the reviewer "a Muscovite bear without the slightest notion of the laws of elegance, demanding nothing from art save crude utility."

The Newcomes enforces our admiration of your talent, Mr. Thackeray. From the prologue, which consists of a number of charmingly interwoven fables and fairy tales, to the epilogue in which the author makes a graceful allusion to the prologue and apostrophizes his fantasy and the characters he has created with warmth and sincerity—every episode, every scene in your novel is such as could have been written by none but a poet of genius like Mr. Thackeray. All the characters are living people, magnificently drawn. We are not going to praise the enchanting M. de Florac, this authentic Frenchman, this youth—forty years of age, who sheds tears when he thinks how his profligacy must grieve his adored mother—this character has already been appraised by the English journals, and the opinions expressed have long since been read, of course, by Mr. Thackeray. But Ethel Newcome and the Colonel win still greater admiration. It is in the drawing of these two that the hand of a first-class artist is seen. Ethel is a sweet and perfectly charming girl. No one with a spark of poetry in him

can help but love her. And yet this girl gradually cools towards the man she has sincerely loved, cools for the simple reason that to marry him would mean that she was marrying "beneath her." To become the wife of the painter, Clive Newcome, when she might become the wife of Lord Farintosh—why, what a tremendous sacrifice to make! So Ethel is betrothed to Lord Farintosh. Only a writer of more than ordinary gifts could show the alteration in her without destroying her charm and nobility, only great writers can understand and represent this combination of fine and of petty things in one human heart. Only Thackeray could remain true to life in his presentation of this situation, and enable us to "understand and forgive" in one of the characters in a novel, what in a living person of the everyday world could only be understood and excused by the most experienced, penetrating students of life and the human heart. And then this really wonderful creation, Colonel Newcome, the ideal of kindness, love, nobility, who in his old age still keeps the tenderness, purity and impulsive self-denial of his youth—with what consummate mastery has this type been wrought! If Mr. Thackeray had written nothing else except the scenes in which the Colonel appears, these alone would be sufficient to warrant his being termed a great poet by those who genuinely appreciate art. But the reader must not imagine that we are carried away by our enthusiasm; no, we are speaking coldly and without bias; Colonel Newcome is a creation worthy of Shakespeare, who knew how to represent an ideal type not as a colorless, abstract conception, not as mere rhetoric and bloodless perfection, but as a living creature whose cheeks are flushed with warm blood. This is a feat to be accomplished only by a few chosen geniuses, this is the highest peak of art. Yes, even Shakespeare might have envied Thackeray for giving us Colonel Newcome. We are not going to speak, after this, of the perfection with which the secondary characters in the novel are drawn, of Fred Bayham, Honeyman and his sister, of the Colonel's other relatives, from his stern, honest, business-like grandmother down to the scoundrel Barnes; we shall not dwell on Lady Kew, nor on M. de Florac, nor on Clive's first wife, Rosie, nor her mother—the "dragoon in petticoats"; all these are delightful and worthy of the pen of a great artist; we duly admire them; but the creation of Colonel Newcome is an achievement almost equal to the creation of Desdemona or Ophelia.

We may be accused of going into raptures; nevertheless we maintain that the creator of Colonel Newcome is a writer of colossal talent. And with what a noble, sympathetic nature must he be endowed who could create the character of the Colonel! Talent is mighty and exalted only when it is allied to a strong and noble nature. It is possible to lie fairly plausibly in prose, but in poetry it is impossible—here a lie sounds like labored and absurd rhetoric: what does not exist in the author's soul cannot appear in his creations. And see—how Thackeray's stories are warm and glowing with love! There is not a single cold, indifferent page, not a single lifeless word. He is in cheerful sympathy with everything living and beautiful. And what charm this broad, warm sympathy imparts to his narrative! When you open *The Newcomes*, you do not feel that you are reading a book, but that you are chatting pleasantly with a friend about his friends and your own; and he, this noble Thackeray himself, whom you cannot help but love in the character of Pendennis, is anxious about them, is grieved or gladdened by them; and your friendly talk is enlivened and hallowed by the presence of his sweet wife, Laura; when he speaks of them, he speaks of her, for she loved them, she was the angel who brought them consolation; and something of the radiance of his own lasting and eternally-blissful love is shed on the conversation, and his blushing wife presses his hand. . . .

Heavens! What good people there are in the world after all! How much love and happiness, how much light and warmth is to be found!

But . . . but why is it that this pleasant conversation with the friend who talks so well and whom I love so dearly, cloys me?

Why is it that when I have read the book through, I am glad that I have finished it at last?

Let us be plain and straightforward; the conversation was all of unimportant things, the book was—empty.

After all we have said concerning the characters and narrative of *The Newcomes*, we can hardly be accused of attempting to depreciate the merits of the book, and whoever remains unconvinced by this, may at least believe that we would not have translated this ponderous work for our journal had we not regarded it in spite of all its shortcomings as one of the finest productions of modern literature. It is undoubtedly extraordinarily well written—all our readers will agree with us on this point. In speaking of its merits we could not, although we

tried, avoid being carried away by our enthusiasm, and we have by no means said all we would like to have said about those merits; every reader will easily be able to add new praises, just as well-deserved and significant as ours. Not only are the characters in the novel imagined very true to life, and drawn clearly and firmly, not only is the narrative warmed by genuine inspiration, but, no matter what purely formal literary standards you may apply to it, you will find that according to each the work is practically irreproachable. How easy and natural the dialogue is! It never smells of perspiration—the repellent, but familiar odor that emanates from so many artistically "worked-up" productions; there is no sign of pretentiousness on the author's side, the intolerable claims of overweening self-love, the toying and showing-off of the writer's grace and facility and knowledge of life, or his intellect, or his olympian majesty: ah, how very few of the poets are fortunate enough to succeed in hiding those red legs that disfigure the conceited peacock! What a knowledge of the human heart, what scope and truth in everyday life, what rich and varied observation, what a wise and unprejudiced, what a broad and loving, what a noble and tolerant view of life, what uncompromising truth in the narrative! And, if we must speak of the author's manner, what a delicate and charming humor, what light-hearted and at the same time biting irony!

But we are allowing ourselves to be carried away again and dropping into the exclamatory style. It is, as a matter of fact, practically impossible to speak calmly of Thackeray's gifts and the merits of Thackeray's novels—so numerous and so great are they, and in *The Newcomes* these qualities are displayed no less brilliantly than in *Vanity Fair* or *Pendennis*. We cannot stop at admiration, however; we must not overlook the edifying fact that the Russian public, which is more inclined to be prejudiced in Thackeray's favor than to be harsh in its judgment of him, and at all events is perfectly well able to appreciate his merits—has remained unmoved by *The Newcomes* and is, in general, very evidently preparing to say: "If you are going to write like this, Mr. Thackeray, we may retain our proper respect for your great gifts, but pardon us if we get out of the habit of reading your novels."

This threat will not, of course, upset Mr. Thackeray very much: in his simplicity he never suspects, poor fellow, how many admirers he has in Russia and how many of the said admirers are ready to desert him. But it would be well if this experience, which has nothing to do with any of us and therefore hurts nobody's feelings, should draw the attention of Russian writers; it would be well if they would think of this lesson and see if it cannot be applied with advantage to themselves.

Why, when you come to think of it, should the Russian public, even by rubbing their drooping eyelids vigorously, scarcely have been able to keep awake through *The Newcomes* and will certainly not be able to get through another of Thackeray's novels of that kind? Why is it that all the perfections of the novel—perfections of which it is impossible to speak without genuine enthusiasm, if we speak only of them—have proved of no avail in the case of *The Newcomes*?

Now, do not think of saying that the book is too long. This is an explanation that can easily be suggested by its tremendous length, but it is quite beside the point; in the first place, it is not quite fair, and in the second, it would not explain anything even if it were.

If anything, we are not, of course, defenders of lengthiness, the epidemic to which almost all the narratives of our day have fallen victim. Compactness is the primary condition of strength. Many esthetes regard drama as the highest form of art mainly because of its strictly limited length. Every unnecessary episode, no matter how beautiful it may be in itself, disfigures a work of art. Say only that which you cannot avoid saying without actually interfering with the general sense of the work. This is true, and we would be prepared to place our worthy Koshansky among the seven wise Greeks for his golden rule: "Every unnecessary word is a burden to the reader." But *The Newcomes*, if it errs against this rule, and it does err very flagrantly, errs no more, and, in fact, even less than almost all the rest of the contemporary novels and tales. Do not deceive yourselves by imagining that it is all because our translation occupies 1,042 pages of our magazine—a truly awe-inspiring number. And we do not doubt that if, instead of 1,042 pages, Thackeray had written only 142—that is, a seventh part of what he has written—the novel would have been seven times better; as to why we think so, we shall explain later. At present we want to say that as the novel is, you cannot skip five or six pages of it without losing the thread of the narrative; you have to turn back and read the pages you have skipped. In another age than ours this would not have done particular honor to the

author, but in these days of endless watering-down of the homeopathic doses of novel-material, even this is something to be wondered at. There was a time when the reviewer, worried beyond all bearing by the reproaches of the many refined connoisseurs of the elegant in art for not having read the notorious *Dame aux Camélias*, took up the book, read about ten pages, and, finding it dull, skipped fifty to see if it would prove more interesting after sixty pages or so; to his great satisfaction, he discovered that he had missed nothing by this leap, for the same situation was to be found on page sixty (or perhaps it was a different situation, but at any rate it exactly resembled that on page ten). After reading two or three more pages, he skipped thirty, only to find the same thing; and so on and so forth, on the same system; and it all went as smoothly, and as connectedly as if the skipped pages had never been written. Yet the book is not such a very big one, is it? But that is what may be truly called lengthiness.

Now Thackeray cannot be read in this way—so how can he be accused of lengthiness? He has a vast store of observations and ideas, he is fertile, his style is fluent and abundant, and that is why his novels are so long; but this is not such a great fault, in comparison with others. "But still—1,042 pages! It's frightful!" "No, you cannot determine the lawful compass of a work by the number of pages." *Tom Jones* and *The Posthumous Papers of the Pickwick Club* are just as long as *The Newcomes*, yet these lengthy chronicles are as easy to read as the shortest tale. The whole point is that the length of the work should correspond to the breadth and richness of its content.

But let *The Newcomes* be called a lengthy narrative, the word in itself does not account for anything, it merely indicates the necessity for another explanation, and obliges us to go into the question—not of whether it is right for a novel to stretch over 1,042 pages of magazine size, for after all, nothing definite can be said as to this; why should a novel not cover 1,042 pages, if the subject matter demands so much scope? No, the question that has to be gone into is that of the content of the novel and whether it can hold the reader's attention for more than a quarter of an hour. A serious subject may be discussed for several days or even several weeks if it is very complicated. but if a trifling matter is dragged out into a long story, then surely it is better to give it up? The game is not worth the candle; if trifles cannot be dealt with in five minutes, surely it would be better to leave their settlement in the hands of fate, so as to avoid troubling one's head for nothing.

This is the sense in which it would be better for *The Newcomes* to contain 142 pages instead of 1,042. Unfortunately, Thackeray decided to carry on too long a conversation (clever, and charming though it may be—it is nevertheless too long) about trifles.

We shall first try to prove this from a literary point of view, and then from the average reader's point of view, that of common sense.

In expressing our admiration for all the characters in the book, from the second to the last, we made no mention of the leading character, the hero, Colonel Newcome's son, Clive. It is well known that the novelist rarely succeeds in his drawing of the leading character, the hero is invariably insipid. Poor Clive suffers from the same drawback; compared with the others, each of whom is so vivid, he looks rather pale. This fault, though important from the standpoint of art, can easily be forgiven him by readers, who are accustomed to making allowances for all characters of first importance, even those in novels. They are least exacting of all to the hero, precisely because he is the hero; let him be but the center around which people and events are grouped, and we will, very likely, be satisfied. But then let him not claim most of our attention; Clive has this drawback; he comes with his miserable fate and his thin, meager sensations and draws our attention away from other really interesting characters in the novel. He wants to be not only the center, but the moving spirit of the novel. But this is beyond his strength, and the novel moves on, I would not say slowly—that would not be so bad—but heavily, towards goals that are far from interesting. Clive wishes to set the key for the whole chorus, and the chorus, in a lifeless but correct tone, sings rather trifling airs. All that Colonel Newcome does is to take pains that his son's future shall be assured. He tries to accumulate wealth in order that dear Clive may have leisure to paint his sweet pictures (Clive, you see, wants to be an artist), and he tries to bring about his marriage with Ethel, whom Clive loves. Well, this is all very praiseworthy on the Colonel's part but what is it to us, whether there is one mediocre painter the more or the less, or whether Mr. Clive is to be moderately happy or not with his dear Ethel? We know that the poor youth will neither shoot himself nor drown himself when Ethel refuses to be his wife. Shoot himself, indeed!—he will

not even take an extra glass of sherry to drown his grief; we cannot be certain that he will tear even one hair out of his beautiful locks. He will weep—that is his affair, but we know that tears are but water for natures like his. Will Clive marry Ethel? The question arouses only a faint interest. The love of a man like this must be pleasant enough, if you like, and why should we not wish a nice girl a mild and loving husband; God send her every happiness! But, in our opinion, Miss Ethel would have shown herself in a very unfavorable light if she had gone crazy with despair after refusing Clive, or been in the seventh heaven of delight on attaining at long last the bliss of being his wife. Fortunately, she does none of these things. It seems to us that the Colonel himself holds greater sway over her thoughts than his son with the beautiful curls, whom, by the way, we love with all our heart, as a downright good fellow. We have, indeed, no reason for not loving him. Only it seems to us that Ethel feels for him an affection no stronger than ours.

Thackeray decided to work up a stronger feeling for him. This is a mistake on the part of Mr. Pendennis; we pass now from the literary standpoint to ordinary considerations of common sense; regular devotees of discussion on art may call these considerations unnecessary and out of place, but we must confess that for us they are more important and more interesting than any other subjects; we will go so far as to say that they are the main purpose of our review; all the foregoing has been written in order that we may not incur Thackeray's reproaches for slighting artistic perfection and conventions, a "contempt worthy of the Muscovite bear, who possesses neither feeling for artistic beauty, nor any notion of its conventions."

From a literary point of view, *The Newcomes* has been ruined by Clive; and from an ordinary point of view, the novel has been ruined by Thackeray's idea that a great artist may speak seriously of anything he pleases, even of things like the life and adventures of Mr. Clive Newcome. The whole point is, you see, to tell the tale well, and then whatever you may be telling us will be good. Whether it is good or not, we will not go into that now; we want to consider whether your tale is necessary or interesting to anyone.

You like to tell us about Mr. Clive Newcome because you are fond of him. But to me he is a stranger, an outsider; take the trouble to consider whether there is any objective interest in your narrative, whether your tales can be of any interest to one of the crowd, like myself. Mr. Clive is in raptures when he finds he has a gift for painting—am I expected to be interested? It would be a different matter if Clive's love of painting were bound up with some real and serious interest that would be comprehensible to all; if you had made it a question of earning a living, or the struggle of genius with circumstances, of vocation with prejudice; then that would be quite different: pictures and painting would have afforded you an occasion for speaking of human life, of the forces that direct it, of the everyday life of people. But your Mr. Clive simply took up for want of something else to do, the practice of painting pictures that no one wants (because they are bad) and that are useless even to him (because he lives in comfort, first at his father's expense, and then at his wife's). This is how you have put it: "Listen to me and you will hear how Mr. Clive made up his mind to become a painter, for want of something else to do." But what is there to listen to? Further on, Mr. Clive learns to love Miss Ethel; very fine; but was this a genuine passion? You say yes. Let us see: "Give up this silly painting of yours," says Miss Ethel to Clive, "and be an officer in the army, or a barrister, a merchant, a banker, a member of Parliament—anything you like, except an artist, and I will marry you, because you are a good man; but you must agree with me that up to now you have no position whatsoever in society: I do not care to be the wife of a nobody, an insignificant person." "I cannot give up my painting," says he. "I am going to keep on painting these pictures, pictures that are so bad that they will not be accepted for exhibition." Now, is his passion for Ethel very profound? Situations and passions like these may be all very well in vaudeville, or for a tale written in the vaudeville style, but if you are going to treat such nonsense seriously, who will care to listen to your narrative!

True, you may choose any subject you like, but if the subject is a trifling, frivolous one, it should be redeemed by the richness of the setting. Let Clive's adventures and feelings serve as the frame holding together episodes of a graver character and then the real subject of the novel would have lain, not in Clive's adventures, but in episodes foreign to this frivolous subject though linked by it externally. But no: Thackeray wanted to make Clive the subject of his novel—Clive and his adventures and his feelings that are of no earthly interest to anybody. No one with impunity may waste talent on such trifles.

And Thackeray's punishment has been that *The Newcomes* has added nothing to his fame—we are speaking, of course, of his fame in England.

Why was this novel written?—one asks oneself, after having finished it. For no reason, apparently, unless it was because Thackeray resolved to create a novel out of nothing. It has no subject and that is what kills it.

"What do you mean by saying it has no subject? Does it not contain many finely conceived and beautifully-drawn characters?" And a great many other splendid. things besides these? The astonishing knowledge of life, etc., etc., aforementioned. It is precisely because of all these beautiful things that it is vexing to read. They are all to no purpose, and therefore they are good for nothing. What use are all these beautifully drawn characters? They are there that you may know the exact relation in which they stood to the hero and the principal events of the novel; but the hero and the events are paltry, and therefore the role of each of the actors is paltry. Take, for example, Colonel Newcome: he is a splendid fellow: well, what of it? Nothing, he is a splendid fellow. Well, we are very glad that he is a splendid fellow, but we are very sorry that he has never had a chance to do anything splendid in the novel; we hope that he did a great deal of good in his lifetime, but Thackeray never thought it worth while to show us the situations and conflicts in which the Colonel shone.

It is a pity about the poor old Colonel, it is a pity about all the other characters in the book; beautifully drawn as they are, they appeared before us without any purpose, and, like those whom we do not want, they are obliged to plead for our favor and attention and regard themselves as fortunate if, with reluctance and insulting contempt, we permit them to remain in our presence; poor things, they were in a nervous flutter, expecting every minute that the reader, growing weary of their chatter, would exclaim: "Be good enough to leave my room—you have no business with me and I have no business with you." A pitiful fate! In what a strange and unenviable situation has the absence of a sensible idea placed these people, who might have been for us such interesting and welcome guests, if they had had anything to do or to say that was worthy of attention.

In what a lamentable position the author places himself when he appears before the reader with idle chatter. . . . He is desirous of interesting the public in his words, and in that case he is confronted with the inevitable choice of two courses: if a man has no right to say: "You must listen to me, because what I am going to speak about is necessary and important for you," then he has to court the idle attention of the audience, endeavor to amuse them by telling them tales, and jesting—and the role of a jester is by no means an enviable one.

It is vexing to see great powers wasted in a healthy and clever man. Surely it would be better for him to do nothing at all if he does not want to do anything useful? But no, he must go painting the lily, cutting pretty little horses and sheep and trees and even little mannequins out of pretty colored paper, and drawing intricate and pleasant arabesques.

"That is the caprice of genius." But what use is caprice to anybody? "That is freedom in creative art." Does freedom consist, then, in idle chatter? "It is a pleasure to me." It is a pity you cannot find any other source of pleasure than trifles unworthy of attention. "I do not need your attention." Then why do you ask for it by exhibiting your book in the bookshop window?

Thus are the consequences evident in *The Newcomes* of mistakes that arose either through pride, or the prejudice that said: "A talent like mine does not stand in need either of ideas or of sensible subject matter. It is well done, the narrative is good, what more can be required of me? The novel will, of course, be a good one."

And the novel proved to have very little merit, even artistic merit. Its splendid form is in awkward contrast to its poverty of subject; it is like a poor landscape in a rich frame. There is no unity in it, because it lacks an idea that would link people and events; there is no life in the novel, because the thought is absent that would have enlivened it.

We recommend *The Newcomes* to those who think that subject is not important in a novel, if the writing is brilliant and the narrative well told. Of the necessity for talent there is no need to speak; there is no need to point out that a feeble workman is no workman, that a blind man is no painter, that a lame man is no dancer, that a man without poetic gifts is no poet. But talent gives only the chance to act. The actual worth of the activity will depend upon its meaning and content. If Raphael had painted nothing but arabesques, birds and flowers, though a stupendous genius would have been visible in these arabesques, birds and flowers, would you have stood in wonder and awe before those flowers and birds, would the contemplation of those pretty

toys have elevated and purified your soul? But why speak of you, let us speak of Raphael himself; would he have been so great and renowned if he had painted paltry things? Would it not have been said of him, on the contrary, with vexation, almost with indignation, that he wasted his talent?

None of the European writers of the present day, with the exception of Dickens, is so gifted as Thackeray. What creative richness, what fine and precise observation, what knowledge of life and the human heart, what a luminous and noble power of love, what mastery he shows in his humor, what high relief and accuracy in presentation, what charm in the narrative! Yes, this is a colossal talent and it is brilliantly expressed at the height of its powers in *The Newcomes*. And what is the result? Will this novel live? Has it produced a powerful impression on the public? Has it even earned the approval of those inveterate connoisseurs of the elegant in art, who demand from poetic works only artistic perfection? No, nothing of the kind. They have said: "The novel reveals a stupendous talent, but in itself it will not bear literary criticism." Some of the reading public read it and remained indifferent, some did not finish it. It will not go down in history and, as far as Thackeray's reputation is concerned, he might never have written *The Newcomes* at all.

Monument to Chernyshevsky in Saratov

Chernyshevsky on English Writers

SHAKESPEARE

Ought we not to treat Shakespeare without false humility? It was natural for Lessing to place him above all other poets on earth and acknowledge his tragedies as the Herculean pillars of art. But now, when we have Lessing himself, Goethe, Schiller, and Byron, when the reason for revolt against the too painstaking imitators of the French writers no longer exists, then perhaps it is not so natural to yield to Shakespeare unlimited sway over our esthetic convictions, and to quote his tragedy as the supreme example of all that is beautiful, and find nothing but what is beautiful in it. Why, Goethe himself admits that *Hamlet* needs to be rewritten. . . .

The Poetics of Aristotle

. . . all good writers—both of the present and the future—are the disciples of this great man. . . .

The Gogol Period in Russian Literature

What he (Shakespeare) has done for the development of pure art is incalculable: the artistic perfection and psychological profundity of his works have had an immense and a beneficial influence on the destiny of art and through it, indirectly, on the development of mankind—in England, of course, as in Germany, France and Russia.

Ibid.

BYRON

. . . no matter how highly we estimate the importance of literature, we still do not estimate it highly enough. It is immeasurably greater than almost everything that is set above it. In the history of mankind Byron is, if anything, more important than Napoleon, and Byron's influence on the development of mankind is by no means as important as that of other writers. It is a long time since a writer has appeared in the world as important to his people as Gogol was to Russia. . . .

The Gogol Period in Russian Literature

Aeschylus, Sophocles and Euripides each wrote about a hundred tragedies, Aristophanes—more than sixty comedies, and all these men spent more time in the public places than in their rooms, working. After two thousand years, we find the same phenomenon: Voltaire, Walter Scott, and Goethe have each written several score volumes. Even Byron and Schiller, who died so young, have written so much that one is astonished at the number of their works. Probably these people had no time for matching pearls; one is forced to suppose that poetic gems, if they are but native, are not faceted by such prolonged polishing as those found in the Brazilian prairie.

Pushkin's Works

BYRON, SCOTT AND DICKENS

The share taken by foreign literature in the development of our self-knowledge fell for the most part to pure translation. The only exception

is the Byronic trend, which found worthy followers in Pushkin and Lermontov. Byron himself we knew very little. It may also be added that the school of Walter Scott had here many representatives who gained a place in the affections of the public. Yet his novels were much more widely read than original works in the same vein, which were fully deserving of attention. With respect to the rest of the foreign writers, it must be asserted that if they had any influence upon us, it was direct, not indirect; they influenced us only through translations of their works and had no worthy followers here. Montesquieu, Voltaire, Rousseau, Schiller, Goethe, and Dickens—all these had, or have, a share in our intellectual life only through translations.

Translations of foreign writers have a tremendous importance for us. Until Pushkin's day they were incomparably more important than original works. And even now it is difficult to decide whether original writing has gained the upper hand or not. No matter how highly we value Gogol, we are undecided as to whether George Sand and Dickens had less influence on the development of literary thought in Russian society than the creator of *Inspector-General* and *Dead Souls*.

Schiller in the Translations of Russian Poets

DICKENS AND THACKERAY

The works of Beranger, George Sand, Heine, Dickens and Thackeray are imbued with ideas of humanity and the improvement of the lot of mankind. And gifted men whose works are not imbued with these ideas and aims have either awakened no response or have acquired an unfavorable reputation, never having published anything deserving of renown.

The Gogol Period in Russian Literature

. . . Whoever has read and been able to appreciate Dickens and George Sand, will not understand literature in the same way as an admirer of Walter Scott and Fenimore Cooper, not to mention Lamartine and Victor Hugo . . .

Ibid.

ROBERT SOUTHEY

Southey's ballads, translated by Zhukovsky, are an English version of German romanticism. The main source of German romanticism was on the one hand the falsely-interpreted ideas of Fichte and, on the other, an exaggerated reaction to the influence of eighteenth-century French literature; a curious mixture, indeed, of a striving for sincerity, of the warmth of feeling natural to the German character with the so-called Teutonomania, devotion to the Middle Ages, and wild adoration of everything that distinguishes the Middle Ages from modern times, of all that was vague and in startling contrast to the clear outlook of modern civilization, a blind worship of all the prejudices and absurdities of the time.

The Gogol Period in Russian Literature

Epic of the Armenian People

Among the world's great epics, in which the histories of whole peoples unroll before us in splendid pageantry, are such classics as the Russian *Tale of Igor's Regiment*, the Iranian *Shah Nameh*, and the Georgian *Knight in the Tiger's Skin*, all dealing with the exploits of popular heroes and telling of man's striving for a fuller and happier life.

"The people not only constitute the force which has created all material values," wrote Maxim Gorky. "In them we see the sole, the inexhaustible source of all spiritual values; the first philosopher and poet in point of time, beauty and creative genius, the creator of all great poems, all tragedies and the history of world culture which is made up of these things."

The profound truth of these words becomes clear whenever we turn to the basic content and structure of great art in all periods. We find there that the creative impact always comes from the masses and expresses the emotions of a deepening union. We can trace from the earliest times the formations resulting from the mass impact. In the most primitive levels they appear in communal dance and ritual, in stories and in the devisings of technique; and the basic note is always to be found in imagery of Renewal and Transformation. Through all the insufficiencies and errors resulting from a low level of productivity there continually burst the communal efforts towards a new life, a deeper and wider mastery of nature.

When classes arise after the advent of agriculture, there is no longer a direct flow between individual and community; and the mass themes have to express themselves in new forms.

In ancient Egypt, where the heavy burden of serf economy lay hopelessly on the masses, the indomitable spirit of which Gorky speaks was not defeated. It expressed itself through the Osirian ritual, and devised a drama of judgment, through which the communal conscience spoke and exerted powerful pressure on the masters of the world.

The dramatic structure thus created in the Osirian ritual by mass impact on the state forms of

Egypt was of the utmost importance to culture; for, as scholars such as Professor Gilbert Murray have shown, the whole structure of Greek tragedy was a reflection of the structural bases of consciousness as laid down by the Osirian mass ritual.

Epic is another creative form which at every point springs from an upflow of mass emotion. The great epics will be found to express a communal sense of union defeating the war ethic of the irresponsible chieftain and flowing into a new subtlety of group compact.

A great epic, which claims its place in the roll of world poetry, is the Armenian popular epic, *David of Sasun*, the thousandth anniversary of which was recently celebrated by the Soviet peoples and their friends throughout the world.

The people of Armenia, who played an important part in the culture of the ancient world, underwent many hardships and trials in the course of their history. From the seventh to the ninth centuries Arab caliphs invaded and devastated the country, exacting tribute and reducing the people to poverty and slavery. The response was an ardent defense of national freedom by the Armenians, who repeatedly rose against the oppressors. Crushed in the unequal struggle, they rebelled once more with steadfast confidence in the ultimate victory, and at last won the day.

Weaving the events of the war for liberation into their songs, the people's bards embodied the virtues, the high courage and hopes of the united folk, in imagery of great beauty and power. Tales of the half-legendary hero, David of Sasun, were handed down from mouth to mouth, from generation to generation for a thousand years. The historical events were thus partially merged with the folktales which in Armenia, as elsewhere throughout the world, enshrined in symbolic forms the laboring class' desire to transform life and bring about a mastery of nature together with a rule of true justice. Without losing the historical core, the epic was thus tinged with the hues of vivid folk poetry. These Armenian songs retain their power of evocation today; their colors are still warm and fresh, the emotions from which they derive and to which they speak have lost nothing of their urgency.

On account of the continued misfortunes of Armenia, *David of Sasun* could not evolve into a single and finally coherent form as did the Greek folk songs which evolved into Homer's epic. The epical songs told the tale of the life and deeds of four generations of heroes of Sasun; and they were known not only in the Sasun region but also throughout the various principalities into which Armenia was split for ten centuries. As the tale was told and retold, the separate areas made their additions according to their own traditional songs of the people's struggle for liberation; and thus some seventy variants of the epic have come down to us. On the basis of these versions, a unified text of *David of Sasun* has now been prepared, consisting of four parts with a total of eleven thousand lines.

The first part of the poem tells of two brothers, Sanasar and Bagdasar, who unsheathed their swords and fought against the invaders; and of their mother, Tsovinar-khanum, the beautiful daughter of the Armenian king:

There lives a maiden of shining beauty.
She seems to say to the sun, "Why rise?
"I shall go forth." So beautiful,
so beautiful in men's eyes,
She was like the two-weeks moon above
the seven Mountains, in the skies...

Sacrificing herself to save the Armenian people from subjugation, Tsovinar consents to marry the

caliph. She bids farewell to her country and goes out for a walk; she comes to the seashore and feels herself tormented with thirst. There is no fresh water anywhere near. So she cries out:

"Lord, show the way and save me, make
the fresh spring bubble here."
And the lord so willed, and the surf fell back—
sweet water fountained near.
She looked around. Beside the shore
a great crag had its base,
And out of the crag a fountain rippled
and slid down the rock face.
No one, while clothed, could reach and drink
the waters of that place.

She slipped the fine clothes off. Beside
that spring she took her stand,
And in the source of immortal powers
she leaned and dipped her hand.
She drank one handful, then half another,
the water dripped away,
And those two handfuls of water she drank
got her with child that day.

This episode is in typical folk-fantasy. In such fantasy the world of animals and of the elements always typifies the realm of freedom; the rule of "nature" stands in antithesis to the existing human society with its basis in discord and privileges of power. Throughout legend and myth the mass hero, the folk savior, is born in some such way as are the children of Tsovinar. Usually the liberator in folk fantasy is even brought up in a forest, by a hermit or the nymphs, so that he may finally emerge as the full antagonist of the existing rule of things in the human sphere. He is also often reared by shepherds. It is also extremely common for the liberator to appear in dual form—as twins. Romulus and Remus, the legendary founders of Rome, are one example; and hundreds of other examples could be given. The reason is that the twin heroes form a direct link with the totemic clan with its essentially dual organization and its twin culture heroes. The twin fighters are thus, in terms of folk-symbolism, the liberators who will bring back the balance of equality and reciprocity of clan-days.

Tsovinar bears two sons, Sanasar and Bagdasar. The caliph orders her and her children to be beheaded; but she puts off the day of execution by every possible resource of ingenuity, and the children grow up. When the executioner does come at last, he is killed by Sanasar, who chops off his head with one mighty blow. Then the brothers defeat the troops sent against them by the caliph, and escape to their native land.

In the mountains they build the stronghold of Sasun, city of refuge, where they take the lead in the war of the people against the infidel ruler. They obtain their horses from the waves of the sea and their swords from the lightning. They kill the caliph and free their mother; and the people, hearing of their valor, flock to Sasun.

Then Sanasar and Bagdasar marry daughters of King Kajei, and to Sanasar are born four sons, Vergo, Dzenov, Ogan, and Mger. It is with Mger and his exploits that the second part of the epic deals.

This hero is defined as a magnificent embodiment of the creative powers of the producing masses, their inexhaustible resources of resistance and their invincible devotion. He performs wonders to save his countrymen from slavery and affliction; but as in all true folk-art the wonders are not rootless imaginings, they are images vitally springing from the powers of "transformation" inherent in the produc-

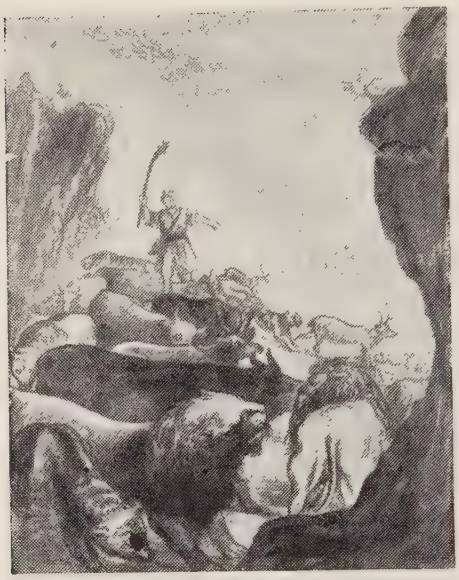
Illustration to "David of Sasun" by the Armenian artist B. Mesropyan

tive energies of the masses. To rescue the inhabitants of a city from flood, Mger moves a tremendous cliff and changes the course of a river. While still a youth he kills a giant lion that bars the way to other countries and condemns the people to starvation. Several years later he engages the caliph Melik in single combat, defeats his adversary in a three-day battle, and frees his country from the tyrant. After Mger's death, however, Melik again conquers Armenia.

Next, come the principal parts of the epic, dealing with Mger's son, David. When still a baby, David is carried off to the palace of the caliph, Melik of Msyra. For three days and three nights the child refuses to suckle at the breasts of a strange woman, Melik's mother. He can eat nothing but the fruits of his native land.

Melik suspects that the child will grow to be his adversary and resolves to kill him. But David succeeds in escaping.

Sent by Ogan, his uncle, to be a shepherd, David learns at first hand of the people's sorrows and oppressions under the yoke of the Arab caliph. He falls into a rage, beats tax collectors, and frees women and girls who are being carried off into shameful slavery in the Arab harems. But he is magnanimous to his enemies; he releases the tax collectors and orders them to tell Melik that Sasun will no longer be subject to the caliph and will pay him no tribute.



Drawing by B. Mesropyan

The caliph, on receiving this message, is infuriated. He levies a horde of soldiers and prepares to march against Sasun. Here is the war song on the point of departure:

"On swift horses gallop the men without fear,
a hundred thousand strong, they have come!
And the bold ones, the black-mustached, quickly are here,
a hundred thousand strong, they have come!
The fighters with red curls are here in array,
a hundred thousand strong, they have come!
And here are fathers whose heads have gone grey,
a hundred thousand strong, they have come!
The trumpeters scund, the brave trumpeters sound,
a hundred thousand strong, they have come!
And the thunder of drums rolls rumbling around,
Seven kings have come clanging down seven ways—
My aiders in merciless warfare they're found.
See, Melik, your servants: The war cry we raise!"

Foot and horses, they darkened the distance,
the vanguard came to a riverbank,
The vanguard stopped to water their horses
and down the shallowing river sank.
The main body dried up the whole river
and not a trickle was left to crawl.
The rearguard licked the stones at the bottom,
the rearguard had no water at all.
Lo, they encamped on the fields of Msyra.
"Who is the foe we come to strike dead?
Melik, on whom shall we swing spear and sabre?"
"David, in Sasun Mountains," he said.
"David has killed our people too often,
David is my foe.
Therefore I call upon you to help me,
To conquer him I must go."

The inhabitants of Sasun are terror-stricken, but David urges them not to lose heart. He girds himself with his father's sword of lightning, mounts his steed, Jalili, and hurries off to meet the enemy. The Arabs are asleep in their camp, but David wakes them with a thunderous shout and warns them to prepare for battle.

"Never of David later say
That he came like a thief and stole slyly away."

Then he charges into battle, cutting the enemy down with his sword and trampling them under his horse, and the river is filled with blood and corpses.

But even in this grim fight he is magnanimous. When an old Arab comes to him and pleads that the

fighting men are poor and needy, forced into service, and that Caliph Melik is the real enemy of the Armenians, David rides fearlessly to Melik's tent, wakes him, and challenges him to single combat. He is confident of victory and can yield Melik the right of the first blow.

The caliph strikes three blows with his mace, at which the sun trembles and the dust rises in clouds. But the proud son of Sasun is invincible, as his people are invincible; he escapes unscathed to return his enemy's blows.

Springing on his horse, he rides far off and then comes galloping back at full tilt brandishing his sword of lightning. But Melik's mother intervenes to plead with David. "I suckled you, I reared you. Yield up this blow to me."

David lowered the sword, with a swing made it sing,
and then he kissed the blade,
Laid it against his brow, and "To you, Mother,
I yield this blow," he said.

Again he charges on his swift horse, but this time the blow is demanded by Melik's sister. He yields it to her; and then a third time he rides at Melik. Melik's mother commands all the maidens to play their trumpets, strike their tambourines, and dance a tender dance, so that David's attention may be distracted and the force of his blow weakened. But David is not to be diverted by the ruse.

And out the sword of lightning flashed,
Through all the forty millstones it smashed,
Through all the forty oxhides it slashed,
And Melik was slit in half with the hit,
The sword sliced from head to feet with its sweep,
And then plunged in the earth three fathoms deep
Down where the waters of darkness roll,
And if an angel hadn't stopped the hole
The waters would have flooded the world...
Then out of the pit Msramelik cried,
"Here alive I yet remain,
David, strike again."
"Shake yourself, Melik," David replied;
And Melik shook himself down in the pit
And into two halves he found himself split,
And he died.

The evil despot had perished. The balanced and lofty humanism of the poem is once more fully conscious in the words which David addresses to the Arab troops. "I have no desire for the goods of others. I do not strive to conquer the lands of others. Return to your homes and engage in honest labor." Thus the poem gives clear expression of the peace-loving nature of the Arme-

Drawing by B. Mesropyan

nian peoples, who never sought to conquer other lands.

David performs many more valorous deeds. Then comes the highly lyrical account of his love for the beautiful *khatun*, whose charms are sung by a minstrel.

Then the young minstrel rose up to sing,
Took the lyre in his hands and tuned each string,
And the praises of Khandut-khatun he sang:

"I shall sing of the tallness of her body,
forty ells tall is she—nay, more.
I shall sing of the lashes of her eyes,
two stork's wings there we see—nay, more.
I shall sing of the great heart in her body,
seven ells broad, I know—nay more.
I shall sing of the fairness of her body,
O fresh-fallen snow, whiter than snow.
I shall sing of the softness of her body,
no cotton-tufts such softness show."

David at length marries Khandut-khatun.

The fourth part of the epic tells of David's son, Mger the younger, who upholds the great tradition of his father's exploits. He punishes the foemen who dare to attack Sasun, beats off all invaders, and defeats treacherous priests and monks. In search of justice, Mger wanders all over the earth and everywhere sees the domination of evil. (Here we get the wandering theme, which has been a basic element in epic since the days of the ancient Sumerian *Epic of Gilgamesh*.) When Mger returns home, he calls upon the peasants to remake the world and revolts against "the laws ordained by god." God punishes him, condemning him to eternal torment chained to the wall of a cave in a high cliff. But Mger has one gleam of hope; he will be released when the old world is destroyed for the building of a new world.

Thus we see in these songs the powerful creative effort of the masses, absorbing the historical struggle for freedom and refashioning the actual events so as to make the story fully embody their aspirations and determinations. The greatness of the epic lies in the way in which the struggle for national liberation, after being strongly delineated, is transmuted into the further struggle for entire freedom. These songs celebrating the life and deeds of mythical heroes reveal to us the innermost springs of the life and struggles of the people. The fate of Mger, that second Prometheus, is the fate of a people who have never lost confidence in ultimate victory. And that confidence was verified when, on October 25, 1917, they together with all the peoples of the Russian empire destroyed the old world and set about creating the new life.

No poem shows us more clearly the truth of Gorky's words; here we see the dauntless spirit of the people creating basic forms of art, forms which can utter the deepest aspirations and express a great vision of social struggle and transformation. Now this beautiful and powerful work is being translated into many languages of the Soviet peoples. It is thus being made available for millions who will find in it further inspiration and cultural enrichment.

JACK LINDSAY and ARKADI DEYEV

Problems of the Soviet Theater

Let us start this article by a few facts and figures.

In the year 1914, in pre-revolutionary Russia, there were 153 theaters. In 1933 the U.S S.R. had 551 theaters and today has 800. During 1938, admissions totaled 76,000,000, and 240,000,000 rubles was contributed to the theaters by the state.

In the course of the Third Five-Year Plan the number of theaters in the U.S.S.R. is to increase considerably and by 1943 we shall have about 1,150. The state has assigned 270,000,000 rubles for the construction of 56 new theater buildings and 30,000,000 rubles for apartment houses for actors.

The number of professional regisseurs is growing in proportion, and has now reached more than 2,000. This is more than double the total five years ago, when there were some 1,100.

LESSING PLAYED AT A COLLECTIVE FARM THEATER

Conditions of work of the theaters outside the capital—which means in the majority of Soviet theaters—have changed considerably. This is a result of measures taken in the spring of 1938 to establish permanent theatrical groups in all outlying Soviet theaters.

Until then the staff of actors and regisseurs in each theater would change every year. When the regular theater season approached, the manager of the theater would engage new regisseurs and actors, and the company thus formed would begin its brief creative existence, only to fall apart once more in the spring. These temporary relations, on the basis of an agreement for the actors and the stage director of a given theater for one season only, naturally lowered the artistic value of the company. With such conditions prevailing in the outlying theaters, it was evidently quite impossible to think of welding the collective into a creative unit, establishing a single style of performance and consistently following up the creative education of the actor. When spring came along, the actor became a migrating bird.

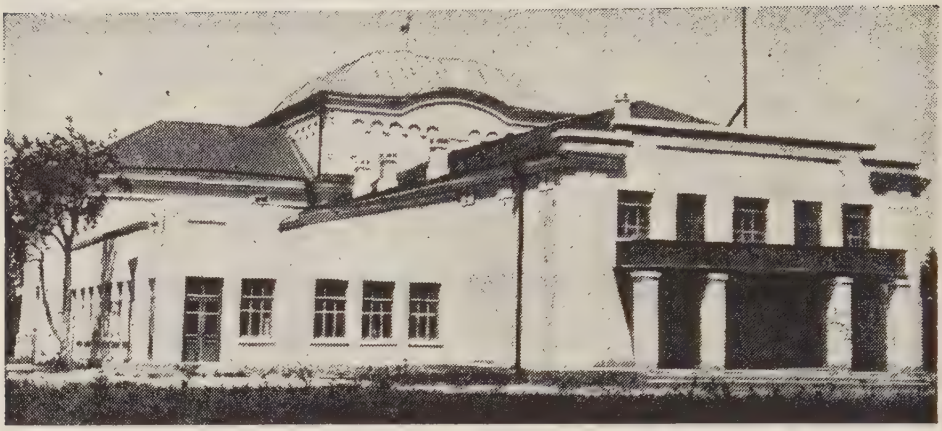
Establishment of permanent troupes, which gave the regisseur and the actors steady employment at a given theater, made it possible to convert every theater into a unified creative body, working steadily. The regisseur was enabled to make a more profound and comprehensive study of the artistic abilities of his actors, and the actor could become acquainted with the artistic views and creative principles maintained by his regisseur. In such a theater the regisseur could work not only on the current season's performances, but also on the future repertory of his theater, and its advance program. He also could pay more attention to the creative growth of a given actor. Thus his work acquired wider scope and deeper educational character.

It is certainly not by accident that this year, towards the end of the first "permanent" season, saw such performances as Lessing's *Emilia Galotti* staged by a collective farm theater in Moscow Province, or Karel Capek's *Mother* produced by the Sverdlovsk theater.

THE SCYLLA AND CHARYBDIS OF SOVIET STAGING

The organizational strengthening of the theaters by establishing permanent companies has permitted the Soviet workers of the stage to give deeper and closer attention to the solution of many problems of theory and principle which have confronted Soviet art for some time.

The fight against formalism particularly, which has occupied Soviet theaters in recent years, was taken up in a superficial and formal way by many. Some stage directors decided that a struggle against formalism meant refusal to search for any new, original form, meant denial of all innovation and experiment.



This theater seating 500 is located at the Kirov Collective Farm in the Ukraine

This gave rise to naturalistic tendencies in our theaters, to a cold copying of nature, a fear of theatrical conventions and a simplified representation of reality. Similar phenomena were also to be noticed in Soviet playwriting: obtrusive didacticism, glossing over of reality, schematic treatment, superficiality and melodramatic plots. Frequently both the playwright and the regisseur would refuse to take any bold creative step, fearing to become known as belated followers of formalism.

Another problem of principle which has remained unsolved until now is that of mutual creative relations between regisseur and actor. The formalistic tricks of some of the "ultra-Left" stage directors resulted in depriving the actor of individuality. He became an unthinking marionette, a blind instrument of the regisseur's will. The person who staged the play did not take into account the creative individuality of the performer.

On the other hand there were those who were overzealous in their interpretation of the Stanislavsky system, and frequently carried certain of the great master's points to a state of absurdity in practice, making a fetish of every remark of his. These stage directors would penetrate so deeply into the psychological analysis of every part, that the rehearsal would become a torturing, oversubtle procedure, when the actor was required, in the words of a certain critic, to know "what Hamlet did when he was ten years old," and "in what bank Yegor Bulychev kept his money." (The latter is a well-known character in Gorky's play of the same name.)

The correct solution of such problems as the method of educating young actors and regisseurs, a sharper definition of the role of the regisseur in the musical theater and his artistic relationship with the scene designer and the composer, are of no less importance to the further development of Soviet theatrical art.

One of the greatest Soviet actors, L. Leonidov, a veteran of the Art Theater and head of the Institute of Theatrical Art in Moscow, has been devoting much of his time and effort to the education of young actors for many years; recently he complained of a certain rationalistic over-emphasis in the creative formation of young Soviet stage directors, saying that "our young men know everything very well. For instance, they know how to fry an omelette; they know that they must take a frying pan, two eggs, that the eggs must be broken and poured on the pan, that salt must be added. All this they do, but no omelette results, because the frying pan, it turns out, is . . . cold."

The problem of the creative relationship of stage director, scenic artist and composer frequently is an acute one. Quite often the artist or the composer does not know how to capture the essence of the play and to employ the colors at his disposal to illuminate the world which the playwright has imagined and the regisseur and the actors recreate. In such cases the musical and artistic mounting of a play becomes nothing but a mechanical addition, a mere ornament, an "arabesque," as Stanislavsky used to call it.

All these tendencies, particularly vulgarizing directness and abstract ratiocination, were leading the Soviet theater away from Socialist realism. This was felt keenly by the leading representatives of Soviet art, but the situation

could not cause serious apprehension; for it was clear that all these phenomena were merely growing pains of the young Soviet theater.

A CONFERENCE OF SOVIET REGISSEURS

The tremendous opportunities of the Soviet theater were apparent, for instance, from the great all-Union conference of stage directors called in Moscow last summer by the government Committee on Art and by the All-Union Theatrical Society (a research and creative organization uniting actors and regisseurs). The conference lasted a whole week, and was attended by several hundred outstanding regisseurs from every part of the country; it dealt with the fundamental problems mentioned above.

The attention of the conference was focused on reports given by two widely known Soviet stage directors—Alexei Popov, who is heading the Central Theater of the Red Army in Moscow, and Solomon Michoels, the head of the Moscow State Jewish Theater. Popov dealt with the effort to give the theater a distinctive artistic character and the regisseur's work with the actor.

"Some regisseurs and actors," he said, "are of the opinion that the reason for artistic monotony in the theater is the fact that we are waging a hard fight against formalism. To certain regisseurs originality and daring in ideas mean a formalistic approach, whereas in realistic art originality and daring have always been a result of thorough understanding of the inner contents of one's material."

"FREE THE ACTOR'S IMAGINATION"

In his report Popov pointed out that in the struggle to give a theater its own creative individuality, the role and importance of the regisseur and artistic director become very significant. His is the leading role in this process. The regisseur leads the creative work of an entire collective body, he is in charge of the whole creative process of staging plays. But despotism from a regisseur, even an able one, is unacceptable in the Soviet theater. Equally unacceptable is a "herd-like" leading of the mass of actors, when the collective is considered something amoeba-like, lacking its own characteristics and initiative. The stage director must know how to learn from the collective with which he is working, to listen to the collective and to trust its taste more.

But the regisseur must know how to liberate and utilize the actor's creative imagination. It is necessary to inculcate in the actor a sense of duty, an awareness of his role in the play as part of the whole. Popov correctly emphasized that when working with the actor the regisseur is dealing with a very fine and delicate apparatus. One must therefore be able to find an individual approach to every performer and sometimes to use a ruse. "For instance," Popov said, "the actor does something wrong, but his eyes are aflame as he asks you, 'Was it good?' When you see that by a single turn of the lever you can put him on the right track, you should say: 'Very good, but just change this and this and do it so and so, and then it will be excellent.' He does what you have asked him to do as a trivial correction, and as a matter of fact he does something contrary to what he did five minutes ago, but he does it well and correctly. This is a pedagogical ruse, but without it one cannot get along."

Popov warmly contradicted those who call for the restoration in the Soviet theater of the old system of casting by type, which they consider the surest means of developing the actors' individuality. Popov correctly pointed out that it was necessary to find creative ways and means of bringing out the actor's individuality and not to establish a system of six or eight labels, under which the role of Othello was always played by a hero, the role of Hamlet by a heroic lover and that of Macbeth by a moralist. "In my young days," Popov said, "I saw such a Macbeth. And since moralists always were actors who lacked temperament and who knew nothing but how to moralize and to bore the people with their talk, I decided then and there that Macbeth was a very boring play . . ."

"YOU CANNOT MAKE YOURSELF ORIGINAL"

The speaker touched upon another problem which is causing much discussion in the Soviet theatrical world: the problem of whether the actor in working on his part should proceed "from himself" or "from the character." Popov is of the opinion that the question in itself is scholastic; the thing that mattered was that the actor's idea should correspond to his mental and physical abilities and that these abilities should grow. "Otherwise the actor may begin to walk about in scenic situations merely changing beards and costumes, meaning that he would play himself."

When the conflict between the character to be portrayed and the actor's "ego"

ends by the transfer of the subjective qualities, like temperament, rhythm of speech, the character of movements, gait and quality of voice, into new qualities which bring out the character on the stage, then the role is not a suit which fits loosely and is easily thrown off, but has become part of the actor's flesh and blood.

Coming to the slogan of daring, courage and originality in art Popov recalled the line spoken by Teterev in Gorky's play *Philistines:* "You cannot make yourself original. I tried it and failed."

It is not a matter of inventing some kind of a trick or other. This is a hopeless task, because there are more stage directors than tricks. The thing to worry and think about is our world outlook and equipment of ideas. The content of classical art is inexhaustible. Tolstoy's *War and Peace*, read at the ages of thirty, forty and sixty, is a new work each time, revealing different aspects of life to the same reader. Therefore,

Alexei Popov, chief regisseur of the Central Theater of the Red Army, speaking at the regisseurs' conference in Moscow

Hamlet staged by the same regisseur at the ages of thirty, forty and sixty, if he have a tendency to probe the depths of his material and not just glide over it, will be a different and original play each time and it will express the artist's individuality.

IMAGERY COMES FIRST

In a temperamental and fascinating report at the regisseurs' conference, Solomon Michoels maintained the idea of imagery in art. He was of the opinion that we have made our work "too rational and that in many cases we have lost the element known as the art of the regisseur and actor."

According to Michoels the peculiarity of art lies in its force of perception. But perception in art and the struggle for ideas in art have their own nature; they are concerned with imagery.

"What is this imaginative element which, alas!—we notice less and less of late and for which we substitute other things as, for instance, psychological analysis?" Michoels asked. "The work of every artist lies in the sphere of imagery. He must understand imagery. . . . This is what we often forget, in the same way as we forget what it is that we, above all, should find in our classics and in our people's creative art.

"Once a certain stage director proposed that I transfer the action of *King Lear* to . . . Palestine. Why to Palestine? He evidently considered my national origin, but he was wrong, for I have long been a citizen of my own fatherland, of the Soviet fatherland. Long ago, by right of the struggle and victory of the working class of our country, I have been given the opportunity, I have even felt it my duty to be the heir to all of the world's culture. To transfer the action of Shakespeare's tragedy to Palestine is a formalistic trick.

"What meaning has that regisseur found in *King Lear?* Nothing! And what should he have found in it? This seems to me the most important thing. Gloucester was blind when he had eyes. He was blind because he was unable to see that Edmund was obviously a traitor and Edgar a pious, devoted, true knight. Gloucester began to see when he lost his eyes. I do not want to say that Shakespeare was a bad oculist who would put out people's eyes to make them see. But there is no doubt that he did not trust the human sight. And this he revealed in the character of Gloucester.

"Once, at Zhitomir, I played the part of King Lear. A Russian, a Red Army

commander, was sitting in the front row. When Lear was dividing the kingdom and gave everything to the evident flatterers, Goneril and Regan, while Cordelia was driven from her father's home, the commander shouted: 'What a fool!'

"He, too, saw that Lear was blind despite the fact that outwardly Lear's sight appeared to be sound. Here the element of imagery consists in Lear's being a slave when his hands are free, and being absolutely free when he speaks his monologue:

'Come, let's away to prison
'We two alone will sing like birds i' the cage;
'. . . So we'll live, and pray and sing and tell old tales.

"At that moment the captive king is full of joy, it seems he has understood the whole meaning of life, although his arms are bound to those of Cordelia. This inner power of imagery, hidden in Shakespeare, has to be understood and brought out. Should we merely follow the path of psychological analysis, merely showing the motives for this or that act, we should get nowhere. . . .

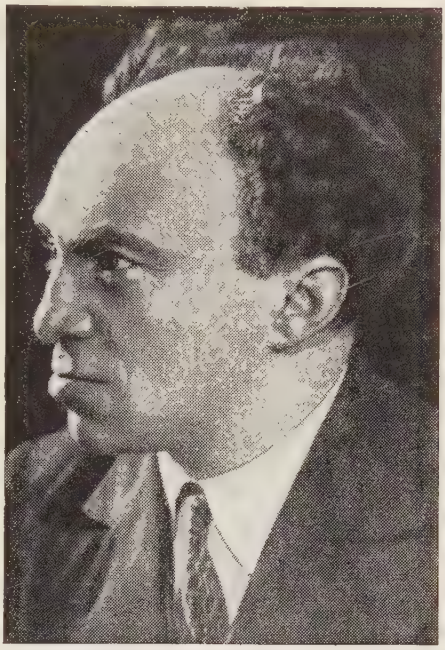
"Imagery is closely interwoven with ideas, there is no imagery apart from ideas, there is no art apart from ideas and nothing can be understood without a leading idea. That is why it is possible to take a simple idea, let us say the idea that money spoils people, and express it in much more impressive imagery. The Jewish poet Galkin puts it in the following way:

"'Here you have a pane of glass, it is transparent and clear, through it you can see the whole world with all its people—some of them are happy, some of them laugh and others cry. But it is enough for you to take a penny's worth of quicksilver and to spread it on one side of the glass to change it into a mirror from which the entire world disappears and, no matter how clear and transparent the mirror, from now on you may see only yourself in it.'

"This is the force of conviction by image, of penetrating into the very essence of things, a force which teaches us no less than any political and economic doctrine," Michoels said. The image helps us penetrate into the world, feel it and break through the wall separating it from us, so as to comprehend it. It is imagery which is an inalienable part and the fundamental nature of art.

"ONLY MOZART!"

Michoels recalls how the great Stanislavsky skillfully utilized images, and how among other things he solved the problem of space when he staged Gogol's *Inspector-General*. It would seem that the action takes place in ordinary rooms, a reception room and a sitting room. But in his way of staging the play, the first act in the house of the governor of the town took place on a very narrow strip, and as the action progressed the room became deeper and deeper until it finally took in the entire stage. This was by no means a formalistic trick, it was an excellent way of gradually penetrating into the world pictured by Gogol, which revealed itself to the audience step by step.



People's Artist of the R.S.F.S.R. Solomon Michoels

Another example taken from the same play is the way in which Stanislavsky renders the famous phrase spoken by the governor, "What are you laughing at? You are laughing at yourselves."

It was done this way: The mayor, leaving a petrified crowd on the stage, advanced directly towards the audience. At the same time candles and chandeliers were lit slowly, one by one, in the auditorium. The mayor, stepping out of his role pre-eminent, spoke straight ahead. "What are you laughing at? You are laughing at yourselves." After this he walked back as the lights went out in the auditorium.

It is this imagery, this imaginative

power of suspense in staging that Michoels wants us to learn. He says that this ability has to be inculcated in our young actors, but that we must always bear in mind what Sholom Aleichem said: "Talent is like money; those who have it, have it, and those who haven't it, just haven't it." But talent can be developed, and anybody having a penny may increase his capital. Capital may become effective, it may grow.

Of course, it is necessary to learn physical movement as well; this is just as valuable as playing scales for a violinist or acquiring technical skill for a pianist. Yet scales alone are not sufficient. Scales will not teach you to understand Mozart. A comprehension of Mozart is a gradual process. That is why Gounod wrote in one of his letters: "When I was twenty, I used to say, 'I.' When I was thirty, I said 'I and Mozart.' When I was forty, I had already begun to say 'Mozart and I.' But when I reached fifty, I said, 'Mozart only.'"

THE BURDEN OF THINKING

Speaking of the relations between regisseurs and actors, Michoels cleverly

S. Giatsintova in the title role of Nora ("A Doll's House") at the Theater of the Leninist Young Communist League

remarked that they reminded him of a legend about the Jewish philosopher Mendelsohn, the founder of the enlightenment movement.

He was an ugly hunchback. And one day, this thinker and ugly hunchback, this Quasimodo, came to the most beautiful, most charming and most wealthy German girl of Berlin. He asked her to become his wife and expected her to agree at once to give him her hand and heart. The girl, of course, was horrified, but Mendelsohn said: "I guess that this marriage does not appeal to you, but if you knew to whom you are obliged for your beauty, you probably would not be so adamant. The thing is very simple. As you know, the souls of people, before coming down to earth, appear before the judgment of god. And god told me: 'You will be more charming than anybody in the world, you will be handsome, well-built, brave, strong, but . . . stupid. Your wife, however, will be ugly, a hunchback, but exceptionally clever.' Then I implored god and said, 'I would rather take the hump and the ugliness if I only can get the intellect, which will be all I want. Let my wife be beautiful!"

"This is the way," Michoels continued jokingly, "the functions in our theater are frequently divided. Regisseurs have taken upon themselves the burden of thinking, allowing the actor to shine from the stage in all his glory."

Of course, Michoels is right when he considers this division wrong and unnatural. Actors are obliged to think and not be satisfied with "god having given them a sonorous voice, broad shoulders and beautiful eyes."

"Pedagogy," Michoels went on, "does not mean that the actor has to be taught how to play. This is nonsense. It is possible to teach a bear how to dance, but it is impossible to teach an actor how to play. But an actor can *learn* how to play. This process requires leadership. The stage director must be well acquainted not only with the physical and mental nature of the actor, but also the world of ideas and images in which he lives."

Michoels spoke quite as pointedly on the problem of cooperation between the stage director and the playwright.

"Quite often regisseurs interfere forcibly with the drama, writing entire scenes themselves; sometimes they rewrite the entire play together with the playwright. The writer of drama has his own world of ideas and images. The task of the regisseur is to find out what in this world of ideas and images is in harmony with his own ideas and images."

THE REGISSEUR'S ABC

The reports by Popov and Michoels aroused a lively discussion, lasting three days, in which Stanislavsky's last book, *The Actor's Work to Improve Himself*, occupied the center of attention. Contrary to the author's first work, *My Life in Art*, the new book is generally admitted to contain many unclear and inconsistent passages, and among Soviet theater people it has aroused considerable disagreement and differences of opinion. Arguments about the book at the regisseurs' conference assumed special interest, because many of those taking part in the discussion were regisseurs who had grown up and formed their talents in the Moscow Art Theater that Stanislavsky directed, and had personally watched Stanislavsky's work with actors. Among them were Ilya Sudakov, now artistic head of the Maly Theater; Ivan Bersenev, artistic head of the Leninist Young Communist League Theater; Serafima Birman, who is a regisseur and a famous actress; Boris Sushkevich, director of the Leningrad Theatrical Institute; regisseur Yuri Zavadsky and others.

"I had the good fortune and honor to be one of those who were working directly with Stanislavsky when the basic principles set forth in *The Actor's Work to Improve Himself* were taking shape," Sushkevich said. There is much in the book that Stanislavsky gave up in his later practical work. Stanislavsky's system was always profoundly productive, its separate propositions underwent change. But the book does contain that which must be regarded as the indispensable ABC for both actor and regisseur: it allows every artist to gain artistic mastery, adaptable to his own individuality, of the ABC of the realistic theater."

Sudakov refuted the widespread opinion that Stanislavsky's system, forsooth, analyzes everything and resolves a unified artistic fabric into its component elements.

"This opinion is incorrect," he asserted. "In Stanislavsky's system, analysis is not the be-all and end-all: after the analysis, after the period of 'conditioning' the role, follows the synthetic work of creating the role. And it is just here, in the synthesis, that all the creative joy lies for the actor and the regisseur."

"Like every big event," remarked Sergei Radlov, "Stanislavsky's book, *The Actor's Work to Improve Himself*, is very contradictory in its repercussions and influence. Any powerful and very beneficial drug may be a poison if introduced into the system wrongly or without measure. And one grows frightened when pedantic wiseacres of art believe that the answer to any question can be found on such and such a page, and undertake to teach young actors with exercises they have read up out of the book."

Yuri Zavadsky, too, spoke in support of this idea, saying that "Stanislavsky considered it the mission of his life to fight against making a trade of art. But to convert his system into a dogma, into a textbook, would mean to make it a guide to a trade."

CHERISHING THE ACTOR

Serafima Birman and Ivan Bersenev dwelt on the regisseur's work with the actors, Birman making the striking plea that every stage director be guided by a "motherly instinct" in dealing with the players. The regisseur must help the actor, she said, instruct him daily and lend an attentive and sympathetic ear to all his artistic problems and ambitions.

"I had the good fortune to study under Nemirovich-Danchenko and work with him," Bersenev recalled. "For me Nemirovich-Danchenko is the greatest of regisseurs in his ability to work with the actor, find the right approach to the actor, and in his solicitude for the actor and the actor's creative growth. Popov said in his report that one sometimes has to resort to a ruse in dealing with the actor; I would add that one must, above all, love the actor, and then one may at times resort to the kind of ruse a mother uses when she gives her child a healing, though bitter, medicine.

"It is not a matter," he said further, "of preparing the actor for the given role, the given performance. It is our duty to interest ourselves in the actor's growth from role to role, help him find new and colorful interpretations. Thereby we will be fighting against stereotyped acting."

AGAINST EXTREMES

Objection was made to some of Michoels' assertions by Lev Litvinov, regisseur of the State Jewish Theater of Byelorussia. He warned stage directors against an excessive infatuation with the imagery advocated by Michoels, and said that such an excess might drive the Soviet theater to the other extreme: inordinate fear of "rationalizing" might take the theater into the realm of the irrational and lead it astray from realistic art.

Michoels' report also seemed debatable to Boris Babochkin, known here and abroad for his performance in the title

Scene from A. Arbuzov's "Tanya" at the Theater of the Revolution, Moscow. Tanya, a young doctor (played by Maria Babanova) says good-bye to the parents of a child she has treated as she prepares to ski away

role of the famous film *Chapayev*, who is now artistic head of the Great Drama Theater in Leningrad. To him, he said, there was something "strange" in Michoels' expressed opinion that "unity, monolithic unity will come in the theater, when there is harmony of ideas, unity of ideas, and not merely of methodological devices."

"There is but one method in the Soviet theater," declared Babochkin. "It is Stanislavsky's method, the method of the realistic theater, in which is summed up a century's experience in the Russian theater. We have no other method.This is perhaps unfortunate—and perhaps it is fortunate . . ."

These objections, however, did not weaken the powerful impression of Michoels' speech at the conference. Partial corrections could not obscure his basic thought, which was supported by the whole conference—the idea that a fight must be waged against the stereotyped and schematic in art, while energetically maintaining the priority of artistic imagery.

In the near future the Soviet theater will witness a number of important artistic events, which can be depended upon to stimulate further advances in staging.

Among these events we may note the following: a review of young actors which is to take place in the autumn of 1939 in every theater of the Soviet Union; the impending festivals of national art of Armenia, Byelorussia and Uzbekistan to take place in Moscow at the end of 1939 and the beginning of 1940; a coming competition for the best Soviet play. From the coming theatrical season we have every right to expect new artistic achievements by Soviet regisseurs, the appearance of still more able masters of stagecraft, who can hold the banner of theatrical art in the land of Socialism still higher.

DMITRI KALM

Contemporary Poetry of Ecuador

The modern poetry of Ecuador takes its origin in the brilliant generation which sprang up between the years 1915 and 1925. Like Shelley and Keats they died young, some of them in their adolescence when their literary works just began to bear ripe fruit.

Under the influence of Edgar Allan Poe and Charles Baudelaire, of Paul Verlaine and Arthur Rimbaud they tried to create an artificial world. They were profoundly artistic, but they were ill. Living in a world of their own, remote from the authentic realities of Ecuador, failing to notice the tragedy of the Indian, of the middle class or of the workers, these typical introvert poets filled their inner world with strange images of fantastic beauty. Dreams were their nourishment. These artists had a lofty and pure lyrical temperament, and if they had had a healthier and more realistic perception, a closer contact with outside life, and a profounder feeling for social realities they would have lent a greater substance to their works.

Not only during the entire colonial period, but up to the beginning of our century, Ecuador was a literary colony of Spain. Her writers imitated the manner of the Golden Age, later the style of Zorrilla, Bécquer or Espronceda. The great revolution in lyrical poetry heralded by Ruben—a revolution which spread the influence of the modernistic school throughout the continent—had its effect upon the poets of Ecuador too. But the direct influence was not that of South American writers, such as Dario, or Chocano or Lugones. The new generation of poets followed in the footsteps of the masters of symbolism. In the course of a brief period Ecuador was the literary colony of France. That period gave rise to four distinguished poets.

One was Ernesto Noboa Caamaño, an aristocratic poet, whose brilliant youth was wasted in search of imaginery paradises—a great artist and a man of refined sensibility. His book, *Romance de las Horas (Romances of the Hour)*, is one of the finest productions of symbolistic poetry. It was the wonderful shadow of Verlaine that descended on the poet and accompanied him, lending his poetry its profound emotional quality.

Arturo Borja—an intimate and tender poet—was possessed of a cruel sorrow. The poignancy of his childish anguish is at times harrowing. Death took him away soon after he crossed the threshold of adolescence. His memory is perhaps the dearest to us. For he was a profound, delicate and pure artist. His poems must be read in a low voice. His is silent music, of the kind that leaves an intimate vibration. His *La Flauta de Onix (Onyx Flute)* is a book containing marvelous poems.

Medardo Angel Silva who ended his life by suicide kept away from reality. Like his friends he was ill with heartbreaking lyricism. Still his poems, sincere and sorrowfull, have reached the people, and are being recited everywhere. Here is a wonderful example of an artist who appeals to the emotions of the intellectuals and the masses alike.

Humberto Fierro is an alchemist of the word. Each verse of his is carefully executed. There is not an unnecessary word, not a false note. Like Flaubert he was obsessed by a mania for the perfection of form. Fierro's art is reminiscent of the Parnassians, but it is still more akin to that of the mystics of the Golden Age. When his book *El Laúd en el Valle (The Lute in the Valley)*, was first published, the Spanish critics compared him to San Juan de la Cruz. Yet the influence that was most profound with him was that of the symbolists and of the South American master, José Maria Eguren. In this rare group of lyric poets Fierro was probably the most artistic, and his form the most perfect. Those of us who were his friends and who felt such love for him wondered at his silent and taciturn attitude towards life. Fierro was a riddle. He

possessed such an intense inner reality that it kept him apart from actual life. We have so far been waiting in vain for the publication of his posthumous book, *Velada Palatina (The Palace Watch)*. It would doubtless be a masterpiece. He read to us some of his poems. Others were published in magazines. Death cut short his young life, before he could publish that book.

The theme of escape which found a magnificent expression in the works of these four poets was a consequence of the nearly-feudal economic system in Ecuador. But the present world crisis has affected Ecuador as well. The masses are starving. A spirit of a new social restlessness has pervaded the country. As a result a really national literature has arisen. Two great poets, Gonzalo Escudero and Jorge Carrera Andrade, form a bridge between the generation of Noboa, Silva, Borja and Fierro and the present generation.

Escudero was a great artist. The development of the Ecuadorian epic poetry owes a great deal to him. Escudero handles his images with exceptional skill. Every poem of his is a model of depth and perfection in execution.

Carrera Andrade is a constantly growing poet. The simple, modest and almost ingenuous poems of his early books have now been followed up by poems of social themes. Andrade occupies an outstanding place in South American literature. Benjamin Jarnes says that his poems, "like all real poetry, are an attempt at a return to the world's childhood. It is poetry that gives a new name to things."

With the present generation Ecuador has become, literarily speaking, independent of European influences. The works of the poets are of social significance and charged with profound human meaning. There are real poets among the young generation, genuine artists whose work is in full evolution and has already borne excellent fruit. Miguel Angel Leon, Aurora Estrada, Alejandro Carrion, Manuel Augustin Aguirre, Ignacio Lasso, Jose Alfredo Llerena, Humberto Vacas, G. Humberto Mata, Pedro Jorge Vera and Augusto Sacoto Arias have conquered for Ecuadorian poetry a foremost place in South American literature. However, it is in essays, short stories and above all in novels that our literature has been most successful. For the first time in our national history, with the exception, of course, of the extraordinary case of Montalvo, Ecuadorian books have had many editions abroad, and have been translated into many languages. In this profound spiritual and artistic transformation the most authoritative voice is that of Benjamin Carrion. The greatest prestige both inside and outside of the country is enjoyed by the realistic works of Jose de la Cuadra, Jorge Icaza, Demetrio Aguilera Malta, Alfredo Pareja Diez Canseco, Joaquin Gallegos Lara, Enrique Gil Gilbert, Alfonso Cuesta, and Jorge Fernandez. Few South American countries can boast of such completely modern and profound works. It is because the Ecuadorian artists have studied the realities of their country, feel the pain of the people as their own, express in a human and sincere voice the tragedy of the masses; it is because they have the restlessness of the man of science, and possess the creative arm of the worker and the clear voice of the humanist, that the new fine literature—like a miracle of art—has appeared. Without exaggerating, it may be affirmed that the Ecuadorian literature is now in its classical period.

UMBERTO SALVADOR

The All-Union Agricultural Exhibition

The Agricultural Exhibition which opened in Moscow in August is a tremendous success, with tens of thousands of visitors carefully inspecting its pavilions daily.

The Exhibition unreels before the visitor a majestic panorama of Socialist agriculture, the might of Soviet industry and the well-to-do life of the collective farm peasantry. The Exhibition grounds, spreading over an area of 136 hectares (a hectare is 2.47 acres), contain 250 buildings, among them 52 pavilions representing every zone of the country, and 28 livestock breeding pavilions, in addition to 22 buildings in the section *New Life of the Village*. There are 9,800 different fruit trees growing in the pavilions, the orchards and plantations; a nursery with 5,400 fruit trees has been planted, which makes a total of 15,200 fruit trees and berry bushes on the grounds of the orchard. In the 15,000-meter area assigned to industrial and grain crops 860 varieties of 52 different cultures are on view; there are three varieties of cotton plants, 13 varieties of rice, six of sugar beets, 75 of tobacco and so on. Large areas have been assigned for medicinal herbs, vegetables, ether- and oil-bearing plants and fodder crops. Decorative plants on the Exhibition grounds number 110,000, flower beds occupy 66,000 sq. meters, and lawns 400,000 sq. meters. There are 400 different agricultural machines, tractors and automobiles, all Soviet made, on exhibition. The visitors to the Exhibition will also see the development of Soviet livestock and poultry breeding in the 2,468 prize animals and fowls.

The importance of the Exhibition is great. As V. M. Molotov, head of the Soviet Government, said at the opening: "Our Exhibition not only sums up the results of victories, but is also a mighty call for a further advance of agriculture, for new, glorious victories of Socialism."

Twenty-eight hundred excursion guides serve visitors to the Exhibition. Representatives of the Exhibition Committee are to be found at every Moscow railway station, river pier and airport; they meet excursionists sent from the provinces by various local organizations and take care of them during their stay in Moscow. The Press Department of the Exhibition has published 74 monographs, 496 booklets on the different branches of agriculture and 46 guides to the pavilions, a total number of 10,000,000 copies.

There are various entertainment enterprises on the territory of the Exhibition: a theater, cinemas, an open concert stage and a circus.

It would take many pages to describe the works of art which decorate the Exhibition. More than 2,000 painters, sculptors, architects, fresco specialists, decorators and the like worked on the exhibition under the guidance of its chief artist, V. Yakovlev. The various Union republics have sent their best native masters of art, and their work deserves to be shown at a separate Exhibition. The combined surface of paintings and pictures shown would total about 8,000 sq. meters. There are nearly 1,500 different sculptures, busts and reliefs.

In an article published in the *Pravda*, V. Yakovlev wrote that the Exhibition "shows the rise of culture in our Union, the friendship and unity of the peoples of the Union republics and the growth of national and folk art. It reveals the cultural characteristics of peoples of whose culture bourgeois historians often do not write a single word.

"Next to cabbage, cucumbers and tomatoes which came from the distant region beyond the Arctic circle, the visitor may see reliefs and statues made by the inhabitants of the extreme north of our Union.

"Byelorussians, Bashkirs, Tatars, Kir-

This "Fountain of Grain" is in the center of the lagoon at the All-Union Agricultural Exhibition

ghizians and Yakuts—every nationality has sent the finest products of its creative art to the Exhibition."

Right at the entrance to the main pavilion the visitor sees an enormous painting dealing with the first days of the Revolution, painted by the well known artist P. Sokolov-Skala. The entrance hall

is lined with statues of Heroes of the Soviet Union. All the nationalities of the U.S.S.R. are shown here, some of the Union republics being extremely well depicted. Labas and Plaksin have painted panoramas for the eleven republics with great taste and skill, and as the visitor passes through the hall, he feels as if he were traveling over the vast spaces of his wonderful country. By clever juxtaposition, the contrast between the old and the new in the village is shown. Here are the filthy grey threshing yard, the rickety peasant's hut, the hand flail of the pre-revolutionary Russian village; and next to it the visitor sees the rich collective farm fields with a combine at work. Among the paintings is the copy of Savitsky's famous *Quarrel at the Field Boundary*, over a small strip of land, and next to it a painting by Mashkevich depicting the solemn act of transferring the land to a collective farm for eternal use. There also is a copy of the well-known painting by S. Korovin, *The Meeting*, showing a rich *kulak* mocking a poor peasant; next to it is a picture entitled *Meeting of Active Collective Farm Workers*, a picture by Drozdov which is drenched in sunlight. Right there are several pictures showing the work of such distinguished Soviet scientists as Kablukov, by the artist Reshetnikov; Tsitsin, by F. Modorov; Lysenko, by I. Modorov and others.

The press comments favorably on the fine frescoes in the pavilion entitled *The New Village*, made after sketches by Deineka by a brigade of young painters under his direct supervision.

Pravda writes: "The Exhibition has inspired a great creative upsurge. A number of things prepared for it are not simply good, they are remarkable: such are Tomsky's statue, *Kirov;* a statue of Chkalov by the Kiev sculptor Ivanov, Plastov's painting, *A Feast on a Collective Farm*; also *Hippodrome* by G. Savitsky, the panel *Comrades Stalin, Orjonikidze and Kaganovich at the Acceptance Trials of a New Tractor* by A. Gerasimov, and a number of others; they all give a truthful picture of our times in the language of color and form. There are also portraits of the best farm workers, landscapes and paintings depicting various agricultural methods."

But it is not merely painting and sculpture that attract the attention of the visitor. It is the architecture which above all creates an impression of joyousness and light. The press describes the wealth of architectural design, of decorative imagination and artistic inventiveness put into all the Exhibition buildings. The eight-sided Square of

"Border Guard and Collective Farm Girl," a statue by Orlov, at the entrance of the Byelorussian Pavilion at the All-Union Agricultural Exhibition

Mechanization forms the heart of a great architectural ensemble. Here rises a gigantic statue of the man who inspired the great victories of Socialism—Stalin. Here is the hangar-like Mechanization Pavilion open at the ends, designed by architects Andreyev and Taranov. A web of steel, seemingly light and delicate, supports a transparent roof, under which ingenious and powerful machines, the implements used by mechanized agriculture, travel along a conveyor.

Here is another square—Collective Farm Square. "At the very entrance to this square," Professor D. Arkin writes, "the elegant, low pavilion of Uzbekistan forms a picturesque corner. This is an indisputable success for architect Polupanov. It is not the routine 'Eastern style,' lacking in individuality, which some of our architects do not mind parading as the genuine national culture of our eastern republics. And at the same time it is the East, the Soviet East whose songs and colors have been happily embodied in the architectural forms of the Uzbekistan Pavilion. It seems as if the hot southern sun were shedding its light on this graceful building; its tiny front yard is opened in a gesture of hospitality; its smooth and

almost windowless walls promise protection from the broiling sun; its flat roof recalls the type of dwelling characteristic of Central Asia; its restrained and fine ornament runs along the facade until it blends into the rich carvings adorning the unusual round arbor in front of the entrance. In this, as in the other national pavilions, architecture cooperates with national art. The remarkable results of this cooperation are evident. They are to be found in the wealth of ornamental carving after folk patterns, in the majolica, the mural paintings and in the depth of color and shades, in the flights of decorative imagination and in the unconstrained ease of architectural form.

"The left corner of Collective Farm Square is taken up by the pavilions of the three Transcaucasian republics. Georgia has put up a remarkable building, permeated with the light and air of the mountain tops. Thin columns tapering downwards lend the pavilion, designed by architects Kurdiani and Lezhava, an airy lightness and purity. Quite different is the pavilion of Armenia, the work of architects Alabyan and Safaryan, its tall portal glittering with a rich golden design against a background of cold blue. Through the foliage of a golden vine we get a glimpse of the transparent interior of this pavilion, as severely beautiful as a mountain landscape of Armenia. And finally, next to these, the colorful pavilion of Azerbaijan, by architects Dadashev and Useinov."

Most remarkable is the work done by masters of ornament from the national republics. Visitors to the Exhibition will always recall the beautiful work by Yuldashev and Batyrbekov which decorates the Tajik pavilion; Shamsi Gafura, the carver of *chancho* (plaster of paris) panels, who has demonstrated the beauty of Turkmenian ornament to Moscow; and the woman embroiderer Meshechek, who decorated the Byelorussia Pavilion. The Byelorussian collective farmer Orlov showed a remarkable perseverance and ingenuity in making a table of 185,000 pieces of wood, which he has presented to Stalin.

Film facilities at the All-Union Agricultural Exhibition include two cinema houses seating 1,400, eight portable projectors, four of which are suitable for daylight use, and projectors in many of the pavilions for special subjects.

About one hundred films have been prepared on various subjects relating to agriculture, technique, science and Socialist construction in the countryside. The Exhibition visitor after seeing exhibits of a collective farm may witness the farm's work on the screen. A number of films show the culture, life and resources of the national republics, as well as of the various territories and regions of the U.S.S.R.

Educational reels such as *Wheat*, *For a Big Crop*, *Artificial Insemination*, *Soviet Poultry Raising* give a popular demonstration of advanced farming methods.

The entire Soviet press is unanimous in stating that the All-Union Agricultural Exhibition is an important milestone in the development of Soviet art, especially of its monumental and decorative forms.

U.S.S.R.

IN MEMORY OF MAYAKOVSKY

At a meeting of the presidium of the Soviet Writers' Union the question under discussion was the immortalizing of the memory of the greatest and most gifted poet of Soviet times—Vladimir Mayakovsky, the tenth anniversary of whose death falls in April, 1940.

A resolution was passed to submit a petition to the Government to honor Mayakovsky's memory. The State Literary Publishing House is preparing to issue a complete edition of his works, in twelve volumes, next year. The same publishing house is intending also to produce a one-volume edition of selected works. The Soviet Writer Publishing House will issue an edition of fifteen small volumes of verse, each containing from 32 to 48 pages. N. Asseyev's well-known poem "*Mayakovsky Emerges*," parts of which have appeared in our pages (see No. 4-5), will come out in a separate edition. All these editions will be on a mass scale.

The Writers' Union has requested the *Iskusstvo* Publishing House to prepare a collection of the illustrations made at various times to the author's works; this is to be entitled simply: "To Mayakovsky from Soviet Artists."

His dramatic works and scenarios are to be staged and filmed during the coming year. A big exhibition of everything of interest connected with his life and work will be organized in April. The Writers' Union has also suggested that his biography should be written by well-known authors and critics, and a special biography for children prepared and published by the Publishing House for Children's Books. In addition, it has requested the People's Commissa-

Detail of a panel by artists Korotkova and Lukomsky in the Silk Culture Pavilion at the All-Union Agricultural Exhibition

riat of Communications of the U.S.S.R. to issue a Mayakovsky series of postage stamps.

NEW TOLSTOY MANUSCRIPTS TO BE PUBLISHED SOON

Unpublished manuscripts and letters by Lev Tolstoy are contained in two volumes of *Literaturnoye Nasledstvo* (*Literary Heritage*) scheduled to come off the press in the near future. Among the material which will here be published for the first time are manuscripts of great value not only from the scholarly, but also from the artistic point of view; there are variants of texts and whole chapters supplementing the final text. Among them are unpublished variants and chapters from *War and Peace*, *Anna Karenina*, *Hadji Murat* and *The Cossacks*.

Although a great many variants for various parts of *War and Peace* are known to have been lost, some ten thousand manuscript pages for this novel have been preserved, and part of them are now to be published. They throw a great deal of light on the creative processes involved in the writing of this great Russian novel.

Of particular interest are variants of the text of *Hadji Murat*, a historical tale on which Tolstoy worked for eight years when he was already an old man. When it was nearly complete, the author wrote, "Have decided not to publish it while I live." What prompted such a decision? The new material furnishes a clue which may be accepted as fairly correct.

The tale was written between 1896 and 1904, at a time when Tolstoy was specially occupied in preaching his religious-philosophical doctrines. At this period the figure of the legendary Hadji Murat chanced to flash into the mind of the great writer and stirred memories of his youth and the years he spent in the army in the Caucasus. While fired with these emotions he dashed off the first version of the tale at a great speed. As usual he was dissatisfied with much that he had written, added new chapters, laid the work aside and again returned to it. The final product was a brilliant story, historically faithful, that reads like a paean to Hadji Murat. But Hadji Murat, it will be remembered, symbolizes untiring, relentless struggle; this was in stark contradiction to Tolstoy's advocacy of "non-resistance to evil." It may therefore be assumed with reasonable certainty that Tolstoy resolved not to publish Hadji Murat while he lived, because he recognized this contradiction.

The new versions now brought to light

Lev Tolstoy and his wife, drawn by Ilya Repin

Illustration by E. Lanceray for Lev Tolstoy's "The Cossacks"

serve but to strengthen the impression created by the story. No one can fail to be moved by the fifth version of the tale with its scene where the rebellious mountaineers are made to run the gauntlet, and the ten-year-old Hadji Murat is filled with a lasting hatred for the enslavers of the mountain people. In this chapter Tolstoy's artistic realism attains outstanding brilliance.

Quite as powerful is the third version of the chapter that concerns Nicholas I. Tolstoy's characterization of this ruler and his associates is annihilating. "His whole life from the time of his accession to the throne was one of falsehood and murder. Falsehood led to murder, murder required falsehood for its concealment. So that falsehood and murder not only failed to decrease as Nicholas' might grew, or even to remain at the level they had reached, but constantly increased and increased."

Great interest attaches to those of Tolstoy's letters which are published here, containing, among other things, much new data about the publication of *Anna Karenina*. There are letters from Tolstoy to Grand Duke Nicholas, which tell of the writer's naive attempt to convince those in power voluntarily to give up their rights to the land for the benefit of the peasants, and so solve the land question in the spirit of Henry George's doctrines. This attempt, of course, led to nothing and ended in a fashion quite unexpected for Tolstoy's royal correspondent. On September 14, 1905, the writer addressed the following words to the Grand Duke: "I have been thinking about you and about my relations with you and want to tell you that there is something unnatural in these relations, and would it not be better to break them off? You are a Grand Duke, a rich man, a close relative of the tsar; I am a man who opposes and condemns the whole existing order and government, and says so openly."

The tragedy of Tolstoy's family life and his departure from his estate at Yasnaya Polyana have formed the subject of many articles and books in Russian literature. But all that has formerly appeared suffered from certain reservations; while the great writer's wife, Sophia, was alive, much was left unsaid. Now N. Gusev publishes entries from Sophia Tolstoy's diaries, and letters by her husband, which offer a complete picture of Tolstoy's position in his own family during the last decade and a half of his life. It appears that Tolstoy's domestic tragedy arose from his wife's infatuation with the composer S. Taneyev.

This infatuation of his wife's was a bitter experience for Tolstoy, but his admonitions and letters made no impression whatever on her. The writer set down one such conversation in the form of a dialogue on July 28, 1898, in which we find sufficient explanation of the cause of his future departure. The idea of such a step occurred to Tolstoy as early as 1897; on May 18 of that year he wrote to his wife: "Your association with T. is disgusting to me and I cannot bear it calmly. In continuing to live with you under these circumstances, I am shortening and poisoning my

life. . . . I cannot bear it any longer. Evidently, too, you cannot break it off; only one thing is left, to part. This I am firmly resolved to do. We must only consider how best to do it. I think that it would be best for me to go abroad. This is the hardest way out, but, nevertheless, possible and nevertheless a thousand times easier for me than to go on living as we have this last year."

Until 1910 all Tolstoy's attempts to put an end to this situation were unavailing. He continued to witness scenes the sight of which "is distressing and shameful not to me—to the children." He wrote to his wife: "I shall keep silent, as I have kept silent for some time past, waiting only for death, which alone can release us from this torment." It was in such circumstances that the great writer spent his last years.

Extensive commentaries accompany the manuscripts and letters published in these two volumes.

NEW BOOKS

Why Vladimir Mayakovsky said of himself, "In my work I am deliberately changing over to be a newspaper man," and to what extent these words were true, is shown in a new book by S. Tregub, *Mayakovsky, Newspaper Man.*

Tribune as well as poet, Mayakovsky burned with eagerness to maintain daily contact with his readers "with telegraphic and machine-gun speed," to inform and inspire them. It was he who most keenly and worthily expressed the thoughts and feelings of Soviet youth.

Cover design of "What I Saw"

Tregub gives a convincing and incontrovertible portrayal of the atmosphere of moral torment created around Mayakovsky by a gang of Trotskyites and Bukharinites in an effort to stifle the poet-agitator as he fought militantly at his Party post, armed with all the "hundred volumes of his Party books" as he said about his books in one of his poems. Those directly guilty of the murder of Mayakovsky—for it is thus that Tregub characterizes the poet's "suicide"—have been exposed and punished as they deserved. The biographer shows the base methods by which the enemies slandered and persecuted Mayakovsky, the poison stings and stabs in the back by which they eventually succeeded in pressing the revolver into the poet's hand.

Boris Zhitkov's *What I Saw* (for young children) is a "splendid book," according to numerous reviews in the Soviet press. "The book is a class by itself," writes the *Pravda* reviewer. "It has but 232 pages of text, but it should be read a whole year. Otherwise the reader will not master it. It tells a little about everything and is almost an encyclopedia for its readers. Here they will learn all about what is going on around them, what they may see on a journey, in the city, in the village; they will derive the most varied information relating to geography, botany, zoology and other sciences. The book is called *What I Saw* and is written for little children from three to six. At that age they themselves cannot read. They will have the book read to them by chapters, one or two chapters at a time.

"The book is very well written. The author, while remaining a well-informed adult, seems at the same time to have become the little boy Alyosha and to look at the world through his eyes. He knows extremely well what would attract the attention of a youngster, what would make him ask questions, what adventures might befall him. Nowhere in the book do we find baby-talk, false sentimentality or moral precepts—all those failings which unfortunately are so frequent in our literature for children.

"The author of the book, Boris Zhitkov, who quite recently died an untimely death, greatly loved youngsters, understood them very well and possessed the art of writing for them as but few authors in all the world literature for children. . . . For little tots the book is a splendid gift. It will be the first book introducing them to life."

The book is beautifully printed. Y. Sa-

This Technical School of Mines and Chemistry stands north of the Arctic Circle in the city of Kirovsk, on the Kola Peninsula

fonov's simple, clear and well-executed drawings appear on every page of the profusely-illustrated volume.

An interesting book by P. Bazhov, *The Malachite Casket*, containing samples of the folklore of workers in the Urals, has recently been published at Sverdlovsk. Like the veritable jewel casket its title suggests, the book contains a rich store of Urals words as fascinating as the precious and semiprecious stones of the region.

There is much that is fantastic in these stories from the picturesque mythology of the old Urals craftsmen, and their poetic flights are equal to anything in the fairy tale genre.

Russian folklore scholars studied the countryside above all; as a rule the old factory settlements were beyond their ken. Nevertheless, such settlements, too, had their marvelous language treasures, accumulated and handed down from generation to generation.

In beautiful language the Urals fairy tales tell of the difficult life of the miners and precious-stone cutters in the days when the mountains and their wealth belonged to the tsarist treasury and to capitalists and landlords. Here are superb tales of cruel bailiffs and how they punished rebellious workers, tales that reveal the history of the Urals; though the form is classic in its repose, the imagery has not lost fire and sharpness.

The local Urals speech is skillfully woven into the fabric of the literary language, which gives a special expressiveness to the book and enriches it with apt, colorful words.

Recently the State Literary Publishing House has issued two books by Americans in Russian translation: Richard Wright's *Uncle Tom's Children*, and a collection of Bret Harte's *Tales of California*.

The former book, by a Negro writer, includes four stories. The introduction is by Isidor Schneider.

Twenty-two of Harte's stories about prospectors are included in the second book, which has an introductory article by A. Startsev, *Bret Harte and the California Gold Seekers*.

SCIENTIFIC CENTER IN THE EAST OF THE U.S.S.R.

More than two hundred Siberian scientists, old and young, met recently in Tomsk for a conference devoted to the study of the productive resources of Siberia. Practical workers also attended the sessions, among them agronomists, collective farmers and other outstanding people in Socialist agriculture, who are applying the methods of scientific experiment in their work. The conference is regarded as the first significant step toward the planning of scientific progress in Siberia and a systematic effort to relate work in the scientific institutes to problems of the region's economy.

Dealing with problems of geology, livestock breeding and the development of such regions as the Kuznetsk Coal Basin, the Altai Mountain region, mountainous Shoria and the Kulunda steppes, the conference was very wide in scope. Professor F. Shakhov called attention to the fact that new, rare metals of great importance to science are constantly being discovered in the Altai region. Professor I. Bazhenkov spoke of the berillium in the Altai mountains, and Professor A. Bulynnikov dealt with recent discoveries of cobalt at Salair.

A young scientist, P. Verkholantsev, told the conference about the discovery of bismuth deposits in the Soviet Union. Animated sessions were held by the sections of the conference devoted to mining engineering, biology and the science of the soil.

"Centers for building up our engineering and technical forces," states a *Pravda* article on the conference, "are above all the universities, institutes and research institutions. Before the Stalinist Five-Year Plans such establishments in Siberia could have been counted on one's fingers, and what is more important, could hardly have been called scientific centers. The spark of scientific thought was kept alive at Tomsk and Irkutsk. Real scientific centers grew up in Siberia with the growth of new industrial cities; there are now a considerable number of them and their effectiveness is great. Tomsk has been turned into a city of science. Active research work is going on in the young city of Stalinsk. . . . The time has come to establish a leading scientific center for Siberia. . . . Among the decisions of the conference is a recommendation for opening a branch of the Academy of Sciences in Siberia. The immediate future of Siberia is bright and promising. Science has a tremendous opportunity to help in the transformation of this vast region."

IN THE NATIONAL REPUBLICS

Writers of Buryat-Mongolia

The Buryat-Mongolian writer, Khotsa Namsarayev, author of the outstanding poems *Alamzha Mergen* and *Khalatur Khan*, is also the most distinguished prose writer of his people, whose literature is developing by leaps and bounds despite the fact that they had no written literature before the Revolution.

Namsarayev's stories of the comparatively recent past are widely read and liked, and have greatly influenced the younger writers of Buryat-Mongolia. His works are marked by fine perception and observation, language full of color and content, and a gentle humor.

The writer turns to folklore for many of the elements that enrich his art, and in popular fairy tales finds material from which to shape his own stories. Among the things he has learned from the traditional story tellers of his people are emphasis on plot, mastery of dialogue and characterization, humorous situations, unexpected and funny endings that always show the poor laughing at their masters, and, finally, ability to show the human worth of those who are oppressed. In his stories of the past the artist shows the superiority of the common people to the native princes and *lamas*, and tells of their hard life, their sufferings, dreams and readiness for struggle. Love of freedom, his native land and his people pervades all his works.

Ivan Kuratov, Bard of the Komi People

Over a territory which would easily hold thirteen countries the size of modern Belgium, amid the primeval forests along the banks of a number of large and small streams in the North—the Pechora, the Izhma and the Sysola—stretch the settlements of a not very numerous people, the Komi.

For more than five hundred years the cross, the *knout* and vodka were used in combination to subject the Komi to Russian princes and tsars who invaded and conquered the territory. By the nineteenth century the people seemed to have been utterly crushed; yet the deathless creative spirit of the Komi people had not been quenched. It lived on in the folk tales, the songs, the wedding chants and all that body of word-of-mouth literature against which the tsarist satraps were powerless.

Ivan Kuratov, the first Komi poet, who was born one hundred years ago, drew heavily on the oral poetry of his people for inspiration. He came from a clerical family and was educated for the church; but the stern atmosphere of the seminary was repellent to the impressionable lad and while still there he began secretly to acquaint himself with "lay" literature, reading Pushkin and Gogol as well as other Russian writers.

Kuratov's own first works date from 1857, when he wrote two poems, *Komi Kyv (The Komi Language)*, and *Korvst i Kidem (The Old Man and Death)*. At this time he broke with his religious career and became a school teacher. Subsequent years were the most fruitful in all his brief life. He studied Latin, Greek, French and German, worked ardently on problems of his native tongue, occupied himself with folklore and wrote a great deal. His verses and songs began to be passed on by word of mouth from one village to another in his native region.

In 1865 Kuratov was appointed to a position in a military court in Central Asia, which was merely a subterfuge to exile him from his native haunts and separate him from a language in which he might go on spreading "harmful ideas." This was his punishment for writing revolutionary verses against Alexander II and the tsarist regime.

Long years of separation from the North, from the air of the *parma*, as the Komi call their forests, were directly responsible for Kuratov's death. He met his end at thirty-six, far from his native land. The tsarist lackeys who had sent him to Central Asia accomplished their purpose. But they could not destroy what was most important of all—Kuratov's creative work—which lives on and continues to serve the cause of the people.

In his verses we hear the voice of a man from the camp of the progressive intelligentsia, seeking to advance the culture of the Komi people. But it was only sixty years later that his dreams came true, and, indeed, it was not till 1932 that the Komi people could acquaint themselves with Kuratov's work as a whole, when a volume of his collected verse was issued. Somewhat symbolic at times, his poetry expresses disgust at the snobbery of his clerical surroundings and hatred of the regime that trampled live human thought underfoot.

Though Kuratov was a splendid linguist and knew Russian to perfection, he never wrote a line of verse in anything but his native Komi. How great must have been his devotion to his native tongue, to poetry, for him to write all his life knowing perfectly well that his works would not be printed while he lived! The hundredth anniversary of his birth is being widely celebrated by the Komi people, who are taking steps to acquaint other Soviet peoples with the works of the first Komi poet.

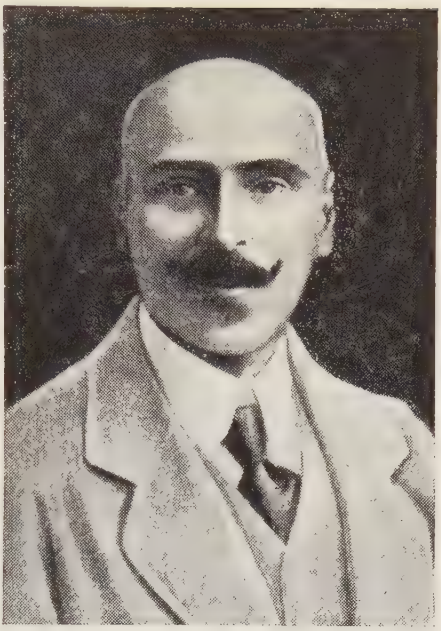
Mikhail Kotsyubinsky

The seventy-fifth anniversary of the birth of Mikhail Kotsyubinsky, Ukrainian writer and democrat, personal friend of Maxim Gorky, was celebrated in September. He is known in Ukrainian and world literature for his famous story *Fata Morgana*, which has been translated into many languages both in the Soviet Union and abroad.

Two Kotsyubinsky museums have been founded in the Ukraine, one at his birthplace, Vinnitsa, and the other at Chernigov, where he spent his last years and did some of his best work. The latter museum, in front of which stands a statue of the writer done by I. Ginzburg, contains Kotsyubinsky's manuscripts, notebooks, letters and personal library.

Kirghiz Art Show in Moscow

The exhibition of graphic art from the Kirghiz S.S.R. held recently in Moscow shows considerable achievements



Mikhail Kotsyubinsky, noted Ukrainian writer

in this field, despite the inexperience and shortcomings of some of the artists, according to a review in the newspaper *Sovietskoye Iskusstvo* (*Soviet Art*).

"The level of attainment in the paintings on view is not uniformly high," says the critic. "A considerable part are from the brushes of young, immature artists, pupils of studios or self-taught painters. Nevertheless the exhibition makes a good impression: almost all the works are stamped with sincerity; they are filled with love for the painters' native republic, for its natural beauty—and its people. These Kirghiz artists display a profound feeling for their subjects, not superficial impressions of them."

S. Chuikov, one of Kirghizia's outstanding painters, has seventy-five canvases on view, representing his last six years' work. Other exhibitors include Kirghiz art students in Moscow and some of the first Kirghiz painters who have had modern art training. Among pictures mentioned in the press are a city landscape by V. Tyurin, sketches by G. Cherenshchikov and the well-conceived but imperfectly executed *Uprising in 1916* by L. Deimant.

G. Aitiyev and S. Akylbekov are two artists who have attracted particular attention. Four years ago, after a brief course of study, Aitiyev painted an ex-

pressive and harmoniously colorful portrait of a young girl in bright folk attire; critics express regret that he has since produced but very few large canvases. Akylbekov has shown considerable progress since his early *Threshing on the Collective Farm*, a decorative panel poor in drawing and dull in coloring.

Auditorium of the new Palace of Culture in the city of Kuibyshev (formerly Samara)

Three years of study have given him a mastery of fundamentals; in his *Collective Farm Flock* he copes skillfully with problems of light and shade, conveying the parched air of the plains, the grass burned to a reddish brown, the characteristic figure of the shepherd.

The solid training given the Frunze Art Studio is witnessed by a number of paintings by its pupils shown in the exhibition.

NEW THEATERS IN THE U.S.S.R.

In various parts of the Soviet Union, forty new theaters are to be opened this year, part of the two hundred provided for under the Third Five-Year Plan. This year's new playhouses include six theaters in the mining districts, seventeen collective farm theaters, six drama theaters in cities, two opera theaters, two musical comedy theaters, a children's theater and seven puppet theaters. One theater for opera and another for musical comedy will serve the Kuznetsk Coal Basin in Siberia. In the Far East a theater will open in the Suchan mining district in the Maritime Province, and a collective farm theater has already been founded in the Amur region.

A considerable increase is noted in theaters in national republics, with collective farm theaters being established in the Crimean, Udmurt, Chechen-Ingush, Buryat-Mongolian and North Osetian Autonomous Republics. The first Bashkirian opera theater is now open at Ufa, and a new Tatar opera theater at Kazan. New puppet theaters will be launched in Kabardino-Balkaria, Bashkiria, the Crimea and other places.

Actors for the new theaters come mainly from graduates of theatrical training schools. The Amur collective farm theater troupe is made up chiefly of students of the Glazunov theater school in Moscow. Graduates of the Sverdlovsk school will form a miners' theater in that city. The troupe of the theater at Abakan, center of the Khakass Autonomous Region, is to be made up mostly of graduates of the Leningrad central theatrical school. Graduates of the Moscow theatrical school will go to a new theater in the Bodaibo gold fields far away on the Lena River. All these troupes will include a number of older, more experienced actors.

Construction of four large new theater buildings is to be finished this year: the Young Communist League Theater in Leningrad is to get a new home seating 1,600; Smolensk will have a theater seating 1,500; Ivanovo, textile center near Moscow, one seating 1,900; and the city of Kirov, one seating 1,100.

MUSIC IN THE COLLECTIVE FARMS

Some time ago collective farmers of Mednov District, Kalinin Region, wrote to a famous ex-villager from their part of the country, Honored Artist of the Republic S. Lemeshev, offspring of a poor peasant family, and invited him to come and visit them.

Lemeshev was not the only one to respond warmly. Among others were such distinguished musicians as I. Burlak, singer of the Bolshoi Theater, professors of the Moscow Conservatory and soloists of the Moscow Philharmonic. The visits of the Moscovites to collective farms of the district were followed by trips of the Kalinin symphony orchestra, a musical comedy group and individual singers. Within a few months the movement begun by the collective farmers of Kalinin region and the Moscow musicians spread throughout the Soviet Union.

As a result a music festival is now being held in collective farms under the auspices of the R.S.F.S.R. government Committee on Art. Among the series of scheduled concerts in rural clubs, district houses of culture, collective farm reading rooms and the like were symphonic and operatic selections, classical chamber music and the like. More than 1,500 concerts were given in the first period of the festival, to collective farm audiences totaling hundreds of thousands. Lumber camps and far-away fishing cooperatives were also visited by singers from the capital and other large cities.

Among those who participated in the festival programs were such outstanding figures of the concert stage as Valeria Barsova, David Oistrakh, Emil Hillels, Marina Kozolupova and Professor Alexander Goldenweiser. The Symphony Orchestra of the U.S.S.R., the State Chorus of the U.S.S.R., the Chorus of the Kiev Philharmonic and the Stanislavsky and Nemirovich-Danchenko Opera Theaters visited collective farms. In Byelorussia concerts were held in the open fields during the harvest season. This autumn concerts are being held in the Transcaucasian and Central Asian republics.

IN SOVIET FILM STUDIOS

The Moscow Film Studios have finished work on the historical picture *Stepan Razin*, adapted from A. Chapygin's novel of the same title and directed by Preobrazhenskaya and Pravov. It deals with the life of the famous Stepan Razin, who in the seventeenth century led a great peasant uprising against the Moscow *boyars* and the landlords.

Stepan Gevorkyan, young Armenian director, has just finished taking *Mountain March*, dealing with an episode of the Armenian people's fight for liberation in 1920. It shows the victory of the popular front, organized by the Communist Party and consisting of workers, peasants and intellectuals in their fight against the *Dashnaks*, bourgeois-nationalist hirelings of foreign imperialists.

NOTES

An idea of the scope of university education in the U.S.S.R. is given by the plan approved by the Council of People's Commissars for the number of students who will matriculate in higher educational institutions. Such institutions will take 165,380 new students for the 1939-40 school year; 2,965 will enter academies under various People's Commissariats and other special bodies; 5,758 will receive graduate teaching fellowships; 7,800 will be accepted by the evening departments of higher educational establishments and 79,000 by correspondence schools. Of the total, 38,010 will enter universities; 31,610 will enter teachers' institutes; 36,100 will study in technical colleges; 25,160 in medical colleges; 15,950 in agricultural colleges; 8,725 in transport and communications higher technical schools.

One of the fifteen volumes of a *World History* under preparation by the Historical Institute of the Academy of Sciences is now ready for the press. It deals with the French Bourgeois Revolution of the eighteenth century.

Plans are laid for a new botanical garden for Moscow, to occupy some 225 acres on the southern slopes of the Lenin Hills. Its seven sections will include grasses, trees and shrubs, vegetables and field plants, fruits and berries.

The Ethnographical Institute of the Academy of Sciences has compiled a large volume, *Ethnography of the Peoples of the U.S.S.R.*, containing data on more than one hundred and twenty peoples, tribes and ethnographic groups of the country.

The Tajik State Library has sent a number of very old manuscripts by Tajik writers to Leningrad for the use of compilers of a textbook on the literary works of peoples of the U.S.S.R. Among manuscripts of great historical interest are works by Suzani Khakima, who wrote in the twelfth century under the pen name of Shamsutdin Mukhamet. He was known in his day as a poet and satirist who ridiculed magistrates, *mullahs* and the ruling classes. There is also a manu-

script of the sixteenth century poet Mushfiki.

A brass cannon dating from the French Revolution, with "Liberty, Equality, Fraternity" engraved on its barrel, has been discovered in Leningrad. It is supposed to have been left behind by Napoleon's retreating army in 1812 and brought with other trophies to St. Petersburg. Additional inscriptions on the gun show it to have been made by one Bresaint on order from the government in the Second Year of the Revolution; its four-foot wheels and carriage are of wood incased in iron.

CHINA

CHINESE WRITERS AND THE WAR

From the very beginning of the Chinese people's war of liberation, progressive literary men have been active in the struggle, and the best works written recently deal with the fighting, with the life of the army and the partisans. Besides this, a great deal of work is done in the rear by writers, poets and playwrights, many of them are fighting in the ranks of the army or in partisan units.

Detachments of Literary Men accompany the fighting units and carry on extensive agitational work with stories and poems about Chinese heroes and episodes of the present struggle against the enemy. Writers in the actual fighting who have managed also to produce outstanding literary works include Hei Ting, author of ***Campaign in the Tai-Shan Mountains***, and Bi Ei, who wrote ***Night Battle at Hu Tu Hei.***

Such literary detachments have become the rallying centers for many cultural workers and have organized theatrical groups, choruses in the army units, and the publication of front-line newspapers. Plays like ***Mother of a Partisan*** by Hei Ting and Tsen Kei, and ***Little Town*** by Heng Shan-chen and Si Tsin-ya, have been well received by the men in the army.

The majority of the literary people in these detachments maintain contact with that outstanding literary and criti-

"On a Scouting Trip," a woodcut by the Chinese artist Yeh Li-ping

cal magazine, *The Literary Front*, which is edited by the writer Mao Tun. Their letters appear in every number. Among recent articles the magazine has printed dealing with the Chinese fight for liberation, the following are noteworthy: *Born Anew* by Chang Tian-i, *Troops of the Eastern Front* by Lo Ping-ki and *Before Dawn* by Si Tu-tsung.

The brutal killing of the poet Pu Feng by the Japanese is reported in a recent issue of the magazine.

A collection of *Front Line Songs*, compiled under the supervision of the woman writer Ting Ling, has just been published. It contains twenty-nine songs dealing with the action of the army and partisan detachments in north-western China.

AUSTRALIA

WRITER DESCRIBES LITERARY JOURNALS

Paucity of magazines devoted to literary themes, and the state of criticism in the Australian periodical press are dealt with in a letter from Katherine Susannah Prichard to the editors of *International Literature*.

"... in Australia... we have no magazines which deal entirely with topics of literary interests. Usually the weekly journals reserve a page of reviews, or on Saturday have a magazine page with some articles of a literary character—but the fare is very poor.

"The Sydney *Bulletin*, which we used to think was world famous, at one time, published on its Red page the reviews to which most writers attached a good deal of significance. But nowadays the *Bulletin* has become reactionary and im-imperialist.

"Of the other magazines, *The Australian Quarterly*, had been in existence for about two years. *The Australian National Review* is a new-comer, and I think not destined to last long. *Point*, which was a Left review, very promising, although slight, has ceased publication. *Bohemia*, I think also, will not live long. No regrets, on my part. Just as stupid and futile as the name. No writers of any importance associated with it.

"*Hayday* published by the Workers Art Guild of West Australia, though not a regular publication, is of interest I think, because it demonstrates the freshness and vitality which comes from stimulating thought and activity".

LATIN AMERICA

ANTHOLOGY OF LYRIC POETS OF COLOMBIA

Works of some thirty-six poets, each represented by ten or fifteen poems, are contained in a two-volume *Anthology of Lyric Poets of Colombia*, published under the editorship of Carlos Garcia Prado by the National Publishing House at Bogota. "This book should be widely distributed in all Latin American countries," writes the magazine *Nos Otros*. "The literature of Chile, Uruguay and Cuba is well known on our continent, which cannot be said of Colombian literature."

BRAZILIAN MAGAZINE RE-ESTABLISHED

Once quite popular, the *Magazine for All*, which was published from 1918 to 1932, has been re-established. Its success is felt to be assured by the strong staff of contributors, which is in line with the magazine's former policy. At that time the cinema and theater criticism was particularly well done and this department later became a separate magazine on cinema art.

ABOUT OUR CONTRIBUTORS

NIKOLAI BOGOSLOVSKY—Young Soviet writer and specialist on Russian classics and topical writing of the nineteenth century.

ARKADI DEYEV—Soviet journalist whose work lies in the field of national folklore. The article on *David of Sasun* was written in collaboration with *JACK LINDSAY*, the English poet whose verse translations have appeared in several issues of *International Literature*.

DMITRI KALM—Soviet journalist and art critic.

MARK ZHIVOV—Soviet critic and publicist, best known for his studies in contemporary Polish literature.

BENJAMIN RISKIND—Soviet short-story writer, a frequent contributor to Jewish literary periodicals.

ELENA BOGUSHEVSKA—Gifted Polish writer, author of many stories of workers' everyday life.

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