

**REVOLUTIONARY SOCIALISM
IN THEORY AND PRACTICE**

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F.R.S.*)

REVOLUTIONARY SOCIALISM

IN
THEORY & PRACTICE

BY
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To
CLAUD SCHUSTER

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INTRODUCTION

I

EVEN if Stalin were to be murdered tomorrow, and even if his successors were to repudiate Socialism, Socialism would not cease to be a danger, and the Russian Experiment, which has endured for more than twenty years in a country whose area equals one-fifth of the land surface of the earth, would still deserve the most careful study. The inexhaustible natural resources of Soviet Russia have provided her Rulers with a unique opportunity to prove the superiority of Socialism to Capitalism. It is therefore the duty not only of historians and economists, but of all who are concerned for the well-being of their fellow men, to study the history of the Russian experiment and to profit by the experience gained in the Russian laboratory.

We are assured by the disciples of Trotsky that Socialism in Russia has been destroyed by Stalin and that the evils of the present régime should be credited to Stalin and not to Socialism. This defence of the Russian fiasco will not impress those who study the history of world revolution from its beginnings in eighteenth-century Paris, and who can recognize in the evolution of Soviet Russia the phases through which socialistic revolutions are destined to pass.

The squalid failure of Soviet Russia is not due to its incidental iniquities. The Russian experiment should not be considered in isolation but as a phase, the most important phase, perhaps, of world revolutionary activity. In this book I am concerned only with social revolution and not with national uprisings, such as the American Revolution, or the Irish War of Independence, and when I use, in the pages that follow, the word "revolution" I use it in this more restricted sense. I have taken my illustrations and my evidence from five revolutions.

1. The French Revolution of the eighteenth century, the begetter of the world revolutionary movement, which is today fighting for supremacy in Spain.
2. The French Revolution of 1848, which began with the abdication of King Louis Philippe and which eventually enthroned, as the first French Revolution enthroned, a Napoleon as Emperor.
3. The French Commune of 1871, which seized control of Paris after Paris had surrendered to the Germans.
4. The Bolshevik Revolution in Russia.
5. The Spanish Revolution of 1931 and the Spanish Civil War which has yet to be decided.

There is a recurring pattern in the great revolutions, a pattern which is unaffected by the accidents of time or space. Whether the scene be Paris, Petrograd, or Madrid, whether the century be the eighteenth, nineteenth, or twentieth, the rhythm of insurrection is much the same. Democracy is invoked to justify and dictatorships to preserve such revolutions. It is impossible to arrest the irresistible movement toward the Left, for the Moderate Reformists, who provoke the revolution, prove themselves unable to control the violence they have exploited, and often end by following their victims to the guillotine or to the execution shed. Peace, which is promised in the manifestoes of revolution, is liquidated with other victims, as the class war within the frontiers of the revolutionary state evolves into international war. Architects of revolution are fervent in their proclamations of devotion to science, art and letters, but scientists, artists, and intellectuals are executed, and works of art are destroyed, as the revolution gathers momentum and as its true character is revealed, the character of a relentless war, not only against a particular class, but against the religion, philosophy and culture of Christian Europe.

State Socialism, as can be proved on the evidence of disillusioned Communists and Socialists, has been a tragic failure. The Russian proletariat is today, from the standard of food, clothing and housing, far worse off than in pre-revolutionary Russia.

If men could learn from experience, Socialism would no longer be a danger. Unfortunately revolutionaries are inspired not by reason, but by resentment; and the failure of Socialism, wherever Socialism has been attempted, is no deterrent to men who are ready to perish in the ruins of a catastrophe which they themselves have provoked, provided that those who have succeeded in the social order in which they have failed perish with them.

I am writing this introduction at the end of the year 1938. The prestige of Soviet Russia has been shattered by the widespread conviction that Soviet Russia would be unable to intervene effectively in a world war, a conviction reinforced by Colonel Lindbergh's contemptuous verdict on the Russian Air Force. The failure of Russia to save her protégés in Spain, her exclusion from the Munich Conference, and the collapse of the Popular Front in France, have had a discouraging effect upon Communists throughout the world. But it is the paradox of the present situation that, whereas Communism, which is only another name for Socialism, seems to be in retreat all along the lines, Socialism, which is merely a soothing label for Communism, is exercising an ever-increasing influence even on its opponents.

More than forty years have passed since a genial Victorian statesman remarked: "We are all Socialists today," a statement which was certainly an exaggeration in the eighteen-nineties, but which reads today like an intelligent prediction of the nineteen-forties. There are, indeed, few modern Conservatives who are not, to a greater or lesser degree, infected by that defeatist philosophy which accepts as inevitable the ever-increasing encroachment of the State in the domain of private enterprise.

Many Left Wing careerists who describe themselves as Socialists have no desire to destroy Capitalism. But the distinction between the sincere Socialist and the sincere Communist is artificial, as I shall show in Chapter IV ("The Technique of Confusion"), and is maintained solely for tactical purposes. Both Socialists and Communists desire the State ownership of all the means of production, and the disappearance of

Capitalism. No intelligent Communist genuinely believes in the practicability of the Communist Utopia in which every man will be paid "according to his needs." Even those who hope for the ultimate realization of this distant millennium admit that a long period of State Socialism is inevitable before Communism can be achieved. The immediate objective, therefore, both of the Communists and of the Socialists is the establishment of State Socialism, and as the two parties are admittedly both striving for the same objective, the Communist Party, as such, could be destroyed, with little effect on the cause of Communism, so long as the Socialists continued to gain ground.

Though Communism, under that name, has certainly suffered a set-back, State Socialism is making new converts every day. The uncritical faith in the virtue of State interference is the fruit of a violent reaction from that economic Liberalism of the early nineteenth century which condemned the intrusion of the State into finance and commerce. The Liberalism of the Manchester School is dead, for a State which refuses to interfere between rich and poor, employer and employee, in effect weights the scales heavily in favour of those who own the means of production; but there is surely a happy mean between the old-fashioned Liberalism which resented all State interference, and the new-fashioned Socialism which demands that the State should never cease to interfere. Our problem is to discover that just mean of State interference which will increase rather than diminish personal freedom.

"Nearly everywhere," writes Mr. Walter Lippmann, "the mark of a progressive is that he relies at last upon the increased power of officials to improve the condition of man." And for this reason, such progressives instinctively sympathize with the conception of a totalitarian State. The quarrel between those who believe in the State Socialism of Russia and those who believe in the National Socialism of Germany, though bitter, is relatively unimportant. The self-styled democrats, who defend Communism while attacking Nazism, are either muddle-headed or insincere.

There is, however, an unbridgeable gulf between those who

believe in free Democracy based on the widest possible distribution of private property, and those who believe in servile Democracy based on the widest possible distribution of public officials. The most stable Democracy in Europe is the Free Democracy of Switzerland, a Democracy uncontaminated by great cities and firmly anchored to peasant proprietorship.

Free Democracies evolve into servile Democracies in proportion as men owning their own businesses are transformed into employees of big business. Private property, widely distributed, and small businesses adequately protected by the State, are the foundation of freedom. If property is concentrated into a few hands, the Servile State is inevitable. And for this reason those of us who hope for the preservation of free Democracy expect no help and no sympathy from Socialism, whose objective is the introduction of the servile State.

II

"I do not think," writes Mr. J. L. Benevisti, in his book, *The Absent-Minded Revolution*, "that real Communism will ever come to England, for the simple reason that it is already there." A paradoxical over-statement is often the best method of conveying a salutary warning. I do not think that Mr. Benevisti expects us to accept without reserve his challenging summary of a disconcerting situation. Perhaps his real intention is to challenge the complacent view that Socialism has ceased to be a danger.

What are the chances of Communism in Great Britain? I shall give my reason for believing that those prospects are by no means hopeless, and I shall outline the plan of campaign whereby Communists hope to secure an electoral majority for a "Popular Front" controlled by the Communists. Communist strategy varies little from country to country, and I, therefore, hope that a detailed analysis of the Communist influence in Great Britain may also be of some value to other readers.

Socialism is the political creed of an urban civilization. Socialists have always despised what Marx called "the idiocy of rural life." And in England the neglect of the husbandman

is preparing the triumph of Socialism. Viscount Lymington in his book, *Famine in England*, restates the accepted axioms of the Europe which is slowly disintegrating, when he writes: "Exchangers are less important than producers, for among producers are those who till the soil, upon whom civilization is based, more than upon those who mine or manufacture," and he crystallizes the tragic revolution which has prepared the way for the servile state when he adds: "The standards of the speculator and mass manufacturer have taken the place of the standard of the husbandman."

"I spent last week," a friend of mine writes in a letter dated October 19th, 1938, "with my brother, and he is very depressing about the nationalisation of the land, which he expects very soon. He says he feels almost a civil servant now with all the forms and restrictions. He talks of emigrating to Canada with his cowman, who was there himself before he started working for my father. I get very depressed about England. I feel so sad about the things which are being swept away or allowed to decay." As far back as 1924 Dr. Nicholas Murray Butler, President of Columbia University in New York City, correctly predicted the decline of Democracy as a consequence of the development of officialdom. "Democracy," said Dr. Nicholas Murray Butler, "cannot possibly exist for any length of time with the Mob in control of its institutions and its policies. Despotism in some one of its familiar forms will speedily come to displace Democracy, and the Mob will acclaim that Despotism as its own familiar friend. History offers only too many illustrations of this fact." And Dr. Butler adds that Democracy is still further weakened by those who set up "administrative boards or commissions in a great variety of fields and then attempt by legislation to give them authority practically to control the administration of the major portion of the people's business. . . . The unfortunate fact relative to these unseen but persistent underminings of the Democratic principle is that they go forward so largely without any cognizance on the part of the general public. If this condition is permitted to continue, the day will come when American public opinion will awake to find that its form of government has been

changed, that its democracy has been destroyed, and yet that its constitution has not been amended."

III

In Great Britain the most sensational triumphs of Socialism have been in the sphere of foreign politics. Socialists, though in opposition, have exercised an immense influence on the foreign policy of Conservative governments. Many of those who are, like the Duchess of Atholl, Conservative in domestic politics, are Leftists in foreign affairs. A National Conservative may be an International Leftist. I shall, therefore, use the word "Leftist" to include not only mild Communists and Socialists, but all those who support their policy.

Communists are persuaded that a world war would be followed by world revolution, particularly if the war resulted in the defeat and in the ruin of Great Britain. The contrast between the comparatively high standard of living in Capitalistic Britain and the tragically low standard of living in Socialistic Russia is immensely damaging to the cause of Communism. The defeat of Great Britain would, therefore, be very welcome to the Communists. As *The Times* remarked in an editorial (May 3rd, 1938): "The Moscow Foreign Office welcomes the prospect of war because under the cloak of propaganda for peace or Democracy, it may be converted into a civil war of the classes."

In Great Britain the Leftist foreign policy has been shaped by leaders, most of whom are sincere both in their patriotism and in their love of peace. And yet the effect of their policy has been wholly disastrous, for it has increased not only the chance of war, but the chance of British defeat in war. There are few people today who would deny that the Versailles Treaty was unjust, in that it violated the principle of self-determination as a basis of the armistice terms which the Germans had accepted; and that it was unwise in that it handed over to Czech hegemony German, Hungarian and Slovak minorities who could not be expected indefinitely to resign themselves to the dominion of Prague.

The World War, however, which Moscow desires, was impossible so long as Germany remained weak, and improbable if the legitimate grievances of Germany were redressed. Our Leftists have adopted neither of the two policies which would have been logical, either of which would have preserved peace in our times. They might either have redressed German grievances and insisted that the Czechs should grant the widest possible measure of autonomy to the minorities, or alternatively, they might have maintained intact the coalition against Germany, preserved good relations with Italy, and insisted that Germany should not introduce conscription and should not occupy the demilitarized zone on the left bank of the Rhine. Had France invaded Germany on the day that Hitler declared for conscription, Hitler would have been forced to resign and the European crisis of 1938 would have been avoided.

Our Leftists adopted neither the first nor the second of these policies. The Labour Party, when in office, made no attempt to redress legitimate German grievances, but encouraged German hopes for revenge for Versailles by an idiotic policy of unilateral disarmament.

The League of Nations, which has been consistently under Leftist influence, and which condoned in servile silence the twelve wars of aggression which Soviet Russia has waged, awoke to feverish activity when Italy invaded Ethiopia. Communists, as usual, favoured a policy which would lead to war. And, as usual, had not the courage explicitly to demand war. Mussolini, we were assured, would climb down if Britain blockaded and closed the Suez Canal. Mussolini was bluffing. The policy of sanctions against Italy, enthusiastically approved by Leftists, broke the Stresa front (Britain, France and Italy), sentenced Austria to extinction, and Czechoslovakia to dismemberment, and rendered inevitable the German hegemony over Central Europe.

The Communists, having failed to provoke a world war over Italy, made a determined effort to involve Britain and France in a war of ideologies over Spain, and—when that failed—over Czechoslovakia. Many of those who have been most active in

calling for crusades against Fascism have done all in their power to insure that the Democracies shall be defeated in any war in which they may be involved. Not content with breaking the Stresa front, they have continued to scream for disarmament while, in effect, campaigning for war. On December 27th, 1929, French Communists and the majority of the French Radicals voted against that Maginot line which is today the hope of France if war breaks out against Germany. This, of course, was before Hitler came into power. The rise of Nazi Germany did not restore sanity to French Socialism. On March 15th, 1935, the extension of military service to two years was opposed by Blum the Socialist and by Thorez the Communist. "If the war breaks out," explained Thorez, "we shall transform the Imperialist war into a civil war of liberation. We are Leninists and revolutionary defeatists."

Paul Langevin, who, in the recent crisis, telegraphed to Mr. Chamberlain urging him to defend the integrity of Czechoslovakia, had—only a few weeks earlier—signed a manifesto placarded on the walls of Paris urging the population to ignore the instructions of the Government for anti-air raid drill.

The only consistent characteristic of Leftist foreign policy is its inconsistency. It is determined, not by reference to objective principles, but by the fluctuating needs of parliamentary opportunism. Self-determination is exploited or rejected according as it serves its party needs. In 1920, when Socialists were pro-German, many labour leaders in Great Britain were expressing their sympathy with the Sudeten Germans, but, unfortunately, the Labour Party made no effort to implement these fine sentiments when they came into power. In 1938 British Labour Leaders were outraged that Hitler should demand that self-determination for the Sudetens which British Labour Leaders had endorsed in 1920.

Sometimes the change of front takes place within a few weeks. Mr. Kingsley Martin, the brilliant editor of the *New Statesman*, speaks with two voices. As a realist, he insisted on August 27th, 1938, that if Lord Runciman could not reconcile the Sudetens to the existing frontiers "the question of frontier revision, difficult though it is, should at once be tackled. The

strategic value of the Bohemian frontier should not be made the occasion of a world war." In a letter to the *News Chronicle* of September 22nd, 1938, Mr. Martin, the ideologist, denounced Mr. Chamberlain for practising what Mr. Martin, the realist, had previously preached.

Mr. Kingsley Martin is not only a journalist of outstanding ability, but has travelled and seen the world, and, consequently, realism is always breaking through his ideological editorials. Far too many of our Leftists are insular jingoes masquerading as Internationalists. Few of them speak any language but English, and few of them have ever lived outside England. Their knowledge of Europe is derived from Left Wing propaganda; and when they cross the channel for international gatherings abroad, they continue to exchange Left Wing slogans, through an interpreter, with people as sectarian as themselves. Our Leftists, who vainly attempt to conceal that traditional British superiority-complex behind a veneer of internationalism, think of Hitler as an inferior kind of Boche, and of Mussolini as a Dago or Wop, a pretty pair who would crumple up at once the moment that the British Lion showed his teeth. Instead of trying to divide these dictators, the only realistic policy, these amiable ideologists have done all in their power to unite them in violent opposition to the insufferable arrogance of provincial progressives. "Have they fully faced the fact," wrote Mr. Strachey in 1938 of the Labour Party, "that the League and the Collective System cannot be rebuilt unless, for a start, the State members of the League give Italy and Germany, say, two weeks in which to withdraw their armed forces from Spain? To re-establish the League and the Collective System means today the coercion of Italy and Germany. And this must be a tough business, involving some risk of war."

"Some risk of war!" Does anybody, outside the ranks of the irresponsible Leftists, suppose that Germany and Italy would have accepted in 1938 an ultimatum of this description? Neither Hitler nor Mussolini could have survived so overwhelming a national humiliation. The personal pride of the dictators, and the national pride of their respective countries, would have rendered war inevitable, had Mr. Strachey's advice been

accepted. The Leftists are divided as to whether Mr. Chamberlain averted war by the Munich pact, or saved Hitler from an overwhelming defeat in the inevitable war between Democracy and Fascism. The *Daily Worker*, which, like the *Daily Worker* of New York, is the official organ of a section of the Communist Party, remarked in an editorial of October 8th, "But for the Munich agreement Europe would have been at war." A view which would probably be secretly endorsed by the majority of Socialists, as it would certainly be endorsed by the overwhelming majority of non-Socialists. The editor was subsequently censured by the Communist Party; the view which he expressed was regarded as inopportune.

Even if war could have been averted in September, 1938, without any modification of the old frontiers of Czechoslovakia, does anybody seriously suppose that Germany would have continued indefinitely to accept Czech hegemony over the Sudetens? Sooner or later this question would have been settled either by war, as the Communists desired, or by the peaceful revision of frontiers, which Mr. Chamberlain achieved.

The Munich agreement marked the end of an era. Communism has been exposed as the party of war. The League against Fascism and War has been revealed as a League for War against Fascism. The *Daily Worker* of New York denounced American isolation as the policy of the American reactionaries. "The Reactionaries fear," wrote this Communist periodical on October 4th, 1938, "that the revulsion of the American people will tear away the last shabby shred of isolation." Throughout the crisis Communists were campaigning for war, a war which, among other things, might have saved Republican Spain from defeat. During the battle for the sea in Spain in the spring of 1938 the retreating Republicans were encouraged by the hope that if only they could hold out for a few months more, Europe would be involved in a world war, a conflict in which France and Britain would be their allies against Franco, Germany and Italy. The one fact which emerges beyond dispute from the crisis, is the readiness of the Leftists to plunge the democratic countries, which they have

disarmed, into the maelstrom of a world war. As Sir Francis Lindley, former Ambassador in Madrid, pointed out in the course of a reply to a Left Wing Manifesto in *The Times*, October 5th, 1938:

“The distinguished signatories of the manifesto appearing in your paper today blame the foreign policy followed by his Majesty’s Government during the last six or seven years for the difficulties out of which the Prime Minister has so nobly extricated us.

“In assessing the value of this pronouncement it is well to bear in mind that few well-informed people doubt that, had the principal signatories directed our foreign policy, we should have had to fight three wars during the period concerned with no adequate forces for any of them.”

The Leftists have been exposed not only as irresponsible war-makers, but also as false prophets. Throughout the Spanish civil war they consistently denounced British and French supporters of General Franco as bad patriots who placed the interests of their class above the interests of their country. Franco, we were assured, would—in the event of a world war—ally himself with Germany and Italy against France. On October 1st, 1938, the *New Statesman* in an editorial remarked:

“Franco’s declaration of neutrality would not do him much good in the long run, since when it came to the point the anti-Fascist powers would almost certainly—and quite certainly should—take the Spanish Republic into alliance.”

Before the crisis we were told that Franco would fight France, and after the crisis that it would have been useless for Franco to declare neutrality since France would fight Franco.

Irresponsibility, tragic irresponsibility. What other verdict can one pass on men who vary their views, their predictions, and their verdicts, from month to month to suit the tactical exigencies of a kaleidoscopic policy determined not by any love of their country, but by an unthinking hatred of Fascism. Leftists who disarmed Britain and forced upon Britain a quarrel with Italy are largely responsible for the Munich Pact.

IV

The Leftist trend in our post-war foreign policy reflects the Leftist drift in post-war education. In France the disastrous experiment of the Popular Front would have been impossible but for the fact that a generation of young Frenchmen had been educated by Socialist teachers. In the English-speaking world the future triumph of Socialism is being diligently prepared in our schools and universities by Socialists and their sympathizers. A Radical would have been as rare in the Harrow of my youth as a supporter of General Franco in a modern American State University. In the pre-war Oxford Union Society Conservatives were always in a great majority, but today it is difficult for anybody but a Socialist to obtain the presidency of that famous debating society. "Of course, most of the younger dons are Reds," a distinguished Fellow of an Oxford College recently remarked to me. "One takes that for granted, but what irritates me about these people is that they can't discuss politics without losing their temper. They are so emotional. If you disagree with them, they assume that your blindness to truth is due to invincible class selfishness."

The influence of the Leftists, my Oxford friend had discovered, is disastrous to all reasonable discussion. Good-tempered discussion is easy between those who believe in reason and who accept objective standards, but is difficult for Marxists, since Marxism appeals not to the reason but to the emotions. In the exploitation of resentment and of envy the Marxists excel, but in debate, which they are wise to avoid, they are helpless; consequently, they have been forced to master the technique of the label, a convenient technique, for if you label your opponent a "Bourgeois" you need not bother to refute his arguments. Left Wing reviewers need not read the works of Right Wing authors, for their writings can be labelled "biased" or "mere propaganda."

It is, of course, foolish to denounce the Leftists for attempting to convert educationalists to their views. On the contrary, we should respect them for the energy with which they propagate their beliefs. It is easier to denounce Communists as

wicked than to expose them as muddle-minded, but it is silly to cherish a deep grievance against Socialists for acting as if they believed Socialism to be true. Our duty is to emulate their zeal, while avoiding the characteristic defects of Leftist propaganda. The informed enthusiasm of the Right must be opposed to the uncritical enthusiasm of the Left; uncritical, since incuriosity is the besetting weakness of the progressive mind. There may be Communists who have made an honest attempt to master the argument for any creed but their own; I have yet to meet them. A good controversialist, as Mr. Chesterton somewhere says, must be a good listener, but Communists seldom listen. Marx was, as I shall prove by the evidence of his own admirers, intolerant of criticism and impatient of discussion. And there are too many anti-Marxists who seem, in this respect, to have taken Marx as their model.

It is our duty to study Marxism before attempting to refute it. We may believe that Dialectical Materialism and the Labour Theory of Value represent a pretentious attempt to provide philosophic justification for class envy and class hatred, but we must justify this belief by evidence, for we cannot refute Marxism by labelling Marx. We must argue, where the Communist is content to shout; and we must prove, where the Communist is only ready to assert. It should be regarded as an integral part of a liberal education to master, if only in outline, the philosophy and economics of Marx, and the practical consequences of Marxism as revealed in the history of Soviet Russia.

In this book I have tried to include within one volume a survey of Socialism in practice and a criticism of Socialism in theory. Vague abuse of Soviet Russia is as unconvincing as equally vague abuse of Capitalism. There has been too much rhetoric in this particular controversy, and writers on both sides have forgotten that the test of good controversy is the ratio of facts to moral indignation. The controversialist no less than the historian is bound by the traditions of sound scholarship. He must document his case and must be discriminating in his choice of authorities. The critic of Soviet Russia has no temptation to deviate from these standards, for the tragic

failure of the Marxist experiment in Russia can be proved, as I shall prove it in the pages that follow, by quotations from official Soviet documents and by the evidence of a long array of disillusioned Communists whose passionate loyalty to Communism has been transformed by practical experience of Soviet Russia into unqualified hostility if not to Communism, at least to the rulers of Communist Russia.

V

Communists have so far failed in their principal objective, world revolution, but in one thing at least they have been astoundingly successful. They have imposed not only upon themselves and their supporters, but also upon many of their more artless opponents, the flattering self-portrait of the Communist as a disinterested idealist, waging chivalrous war against the champion of privilege and exploitation.

This belief in the altruism of the Left is the great illusion of our age. It is an immense asset to the revolutionary, for it absolves him from the harsh necessity of thought. He need not defend his case against reasoned criticism. In Russia he liquidates his opponent with a bullet, in England with a label. The opponent of Socialism is self-condemned as a reactionary, a fascist, and an exploiter of the poor. The great tradition of classic dialectics has few supporters in the modern world. Few of our modern controversialists are ready to meet impersonal arguments with impersonal arguments. Analysis of motives is of interest to the historian and to the psychologist, but is irrelevant as a contribution to economic controversy, for the economic case for Socialism would be no weaker if we could prove that all Socialists were ruthless egoists, and no stronger if all Socialists could be shown to be saints. Clearly, a dispassioned discussion of Socialism is impossible with people who are naïve enough to believe that their loyalty to Socialism has automatically promoted them into the category of selfless idealists.

I remember a self-satisfied young man who, having just come down from Oxford, proclaimed himself a Communist.

I tried in vain to entice him into a discussion of the Labour Theory of Value or of Dialectical Materialism. I soon discovered that, like most Communists, he had shrunk from the tedium of reading the Archpriest of his Faith.

"I do not feel," he said, "that discussion is profitable between people so far apart as we are. You see, I am an idealist, and as such I detest the exploitation of the proletariat in the interests of Capitalism."

My young friend, whose Eton and Oxford education had been provided by the surplus value extracted, on the Marxist theory, from the proletariat, had not as yet taken any active steps to liberate himself from the bondage of a system which continued to provide him with a pleasant income. Discreet enquiries elicited the fact that his sympathy with the oppressed was not represented by important entries on the debit side of his passbook. Nor had he availed himself of the many opportunities which Oxford missions and works of charity provide for first-hand experience of the poor and of their difficulties.

The illusion that Conservativists are necessarily selfish is as common as the illusion that Socialists are necessarily idealists.

A Spaniard, who spent many years in England and knew England well, attributed our immunity from social upheavals to the immense amount of disinterested public work undertaken as a matter of course by the upper classes, work which ranges from unpaid Justices of the Peace to district visiting. "I used to know a little colony of retired Anglo-Indian civilians," he added, "who are living on retired pay in small Riviera *pensions*. Many of these men had administered Provinces larger than most European states. Had they been corrupt they could have retired as millionaires, but this possibility never flashed across their minds as the most remote of temptations. The motive of their careers was a disinterested passion for public service, and their sons, seeing the straitened circumstances in which their fathers passed the evening of their days, asked nothing better than the chance to repeat their father's career.

"On my way back to my own hotel," my friend added, "I saw in the distance a magnificent *château* recently bought by a prominent French Radical. I thought of X"—he mentioned

a famous French Socialist—"with his house on the Riviera and a villa on Lake Geneva in case France gets too hot to hold him, with millions of francs, Swiss francs, of course, in a Swiss bank. It is reassuring to feel that a heart so sensitive to every grievance of the proletariat should be so well protected against any personal shocks."

I agreed that it was nice to feel that France was governed by Socialists who have hearts of gold.

The illusion that Socialists are necessarily more altruistic than Conservatives is responsible, among other things, for the readiness of Conservatives to concede the nobility of the Socialist ideal and to content themselves with disputing the practicability of attaining this ideal in a world of sinners. "Of course Socialism is a magnificent ideal, but Socialism could only work in a world of angels." That remark, in its many variations, is popular with the less intelligent Conservatives, few of whom suspect that they are, in effect, quoting Rousseau's* criticism of Democracy.

Socialism is a noble ideal if it be right and proper to surrender our lives to the control of bureaucrats. Socialism is a noble ideal if an economic system, which has failed wherever it has been attempted and which has been proved again and again to be wasteful and inefficient, represents the best that humanity can achieve in the way of production and distribution. Socialism is a noble ideal if servitude be noble and freedom disgraceful, for freedom is the crux of this ancient controversy. Socialists who surrender to the State the right to determine what should be produced and who should produce it ("From each according to his capacity") must necessarily acquiesce in a rigid and servile regimentation of life.

The emissaries of the Russian Comintern approach us with an offer like that made many years ago to certain Spartan nobles by the ambassador of a Persian king: "Men of Sparta, why will you not be friendly to the king? . . . the king knows how to do honour to good men. If you should serve him (for he believes you to be good men) each of you would

* "If there were a people of gods they would govern themselves democratically. A government so perfect is unsuitable for men."

be ruler of Greek lands given you by the king." To this the Spartans answered: "Your advice is one-sided, for it is based on your own experience and not on the things which you have not tried. You understand what it is to be a slave, but freedom you have not tasted, whether it be sweet or no. For if you made trial of it you would advise us to fight for it with axes as well as spears."

It is not difficult to translate this story into modern terms. "Men of Britain, why will you not be friendly to the great Stalin? Stalin knows how to honour good men. If you would serve him, each of you would be Commissars of British Dominions."

Will the British of tomorrow answer as the Spartans answered? I wonder. The omens are not propitious. We are approaching the final phase of a great culture cycle, the twilight of the Great City civilization. "I view great cities," said Thomas Jefferson, "as pestilential to the morals, the health and the liberties of men. The mobs of great cities add just so much to the support of pure government as sores do to the strength of the human body." Jefferson realized that the megalopolitan civilization is perilous to "the liberties of man," and his forebodings have been justified by events. The symptoms of a disintegrating civilization are all too apparent in the English-speaking world.

But what more oft in nations grown corrupt
And by their vices brought to servitude,
Than to love bondage more than liberty,
Bondage with ease than strenuous liberty.

The declining birthrate in the English-speaking world is a symptom and a warning. "Just as the birth of every great culture cycle," writes Herbert Agar in his brilliant book, *Land of the Free*, "is marked by a new affirmation of life, so the end is marked by a hospitality to death. Man lies down tired in the midst of his marvels. His numbers dwindle, his cities stand half-empty, and once again the beasts of the wilderness prowl among ruined buildings." Spengler cites a group of the late classical writers who tell "Of old renowned cities in which the streets have become lines of empty, crumbling shells, where

the cattle browse in forum and gymnasium, and the amphitheatre is a sown field, dotted with emergent statues and herms." The English-speaking race in the noonday of its greatness was a race of large families which sent its younger sons to people the New World. It was a race which preferred the perils of "strenuous liberty" to "bondage with ease," a race which was ready, not only to form committees in defence of, but also to fight for freedom.

If the love of liberty disappears in the twilight of the great cities, if our children ask nothing better from life than a safe job and a pension, if the flight from the country into the towns is not arrested, no ranting about democracy will save Britain or America from some form or other of the tyrant state.

VI

Is Marxism facing decline and eventual dissolution? Dr. Waldemar Gurian, an authority on this subject, answers in the affirmative and supports his thesis by a wealth of facts in his valuable book, *The Rise and Decline of Marxism*. Even Dr. Gurian admits the possibility that Marxism will, here and there, "gather what appears to be new strength, but a mass movement cannot suddenly disappear like a ship overtaken by some catastrophe."

It is certainly discouraging to note in the English-speaking world of today certain symptoms which always appear to characterize a social order infected by subversive activities and ripe for revolution, symptoms which recall the final phase of the pre-revolutionary régime in France, in Russia, and in Madrid. Such symptoms are the rising revolt against both the traditional creed and the traditional code, a general disintegration of morals and manners, a snobbish acceptance of the view that intelligence is proved by attacking tradition and stupidity by defending it.

In pre-revolutionary France, the revolt against tradition found expression in conversation, in dress, and in manners. Wigs were discarded and skirts were shortened. "These audacities of dress bore puerile witness to the universal aspiration towards liberty," writes Lenotre. "Everyone claimed the

right to follow his caprice, and as there was already an accepted licence to say exactly what one pleased, all that remained for those who desired to prove their independence was to display contempt for the yoke of good manners. People displayed their ingenuity by outbidding each other in impertinence. It was considered smart not to rise when a lady entered the room."

Capitalism, as Lenin remarked, creates its own gravediggers, and aristocracies develop their own executioners. Few men did more to bring about the French Revolution than the Duc d'Orleans, who perished miserably on the scaffold. The authors who attacked tradition were welcomed in the brilliant salons of "Mille jolies têtes poudrées," writes Gaxotte, "se grisant des théories qui les feront rouler dans le panier de Samson."*

Neither the French, Russian nor Spanish Revolutions would have been possible had not the Universities been largely under the influence of revolutionary thought. In pre-revolutionary France, as in modern England, the young writer had to choose between obscurity as the champion of tradition and the hope of fame as the apostle of revolution. "Will posterity believe," wrote Arthur Young, "that while the press has swarmed with inflammatory productions that tend to prove the blessings of theoretical confusion and speculative licentiousness, not one writer of talent has been employed to refute and confound the fashionable doctrines, nor the least care taken to disseminate works of another complexion?" Playfair, a contemporary of the French Revolutionaries, was horrified by the fantastic apathy of the ruling classes. "In this state of things," he wrote, "did the proprietors pay a single man of merit to plead their cause? No. If by chance a man of merit refuted their enemies, did they make a small sacrifice to give publicity to his work? No. He who pleaded the cause of murder and plunder saw his work distributed by the thousands and hundreds of thousands, and himself enriched; while he who endeavoured to support the cause of law, of order, and of the proprietor, had his bookseller to pay and saw his labours converted into waste paper."

* "Many pretty powdered heads became intoxicated with theories which were destined to make those heads roll into the basket of Samson [the executioner]."

The apathy of Conservatives is the greatest asset of Socialism. The complacent conviction—"It can't happen here"—is indeed the indispensable prerequisite of a successful revolution. The British are apt to regard social revolution as a queer form of national sport, popular in outlandish countries, such as Russia or Spain. "You'd never get that kind of thing in England," I have often been assured, "because the British working man is a genial person, incapable of real violence. The General Strike was almost like a family party."

All of which would be more convincing if Britain was inhabited exclusively by the British, but unfortunately many foreign Communists and agitators have taken refuge in Great Britain. Moreover, the fact that the overwhelming majority of the inhabitants of a country are opposed to violence is not necessarily an insurance against terrorism. Terroristic revolutions are made by minorities. There are degenerates in every country, pathological types, who revel in cruelty; such degenerates come to the surface in times of upheaval and are exploited by revolutionary leaders for their own end. The Red Terror, which Communists deliberately exploit as an instrument of power, would be impossible but for the fact that the overwhelming majority consisting of peaceable citizens are disunited, cowed and disorganized.

Nobody suggests that Communists will obtain a clear majority in a British General Election, or win a Presidential Election in the United States. Lenin captured Russia with a handful of disciplined followers. Mussolini and Hitler both represented minorities when they seized power. Communists, indeed, hope to achieve power not by means of an electoral majority, but as the controlling influence in a Popular Front. In Great Britain the Labour Party is still resisting Communist infiltration, and the Independent Labour Party is supporting them. Mr. John McGovern, M.P. of the Independent Labour Party, begs his followers not to be misled by the "cooing doves and bleating lambs who propagate Popular Front ideas, as the jungle beasts are cowering in the background ready to spring when they have used you to place them in power."

It is probable that the British Labour Party will successfully

resist the demand for a Popular Front, and it is unlikely that its members will be returned to power at the next election. If they are not returned, the National Government should remain in office until 1943 or 1944, by which time Conservatives will have been in power for more than twenty of the first twenty-five years of post-war Britain. The consistent failure of the Labour Party will render irresistible the demand for drastic changes. And it is not inconceivable that a Popular Front will be formed and perhaps returned to power in 1943 or 1944. During the election campaign such an alliance would, of course, profess an immense respect for democracy, but if it were to secure a majority there would be no further nonsense about the democratic rights. As, indeed, Mr. Strachey makes clear in his book, *What Are We To Do?*: "Thus correctly defined," he writes, "the doctrine of the dictatorship of the proletariat becomes the very linchpin or cornerstone of scientific Socialist theory."*

Mr. Strachey clearly indicates the pretext that will be used to destroy democracy. Much as he loves democracy, he fears that the wicked Capitalists will make it impossible for Mr. Strachey and his friends to maintain democratic institutions. "In no circumstances would such a Government deviate from constitutionalism unless it was subjected to unconstitutional sabotage and attack by the forces of reaction."† . . . The issue is simply this. Shall the British Labour Movement face the inevitability of capitalist resistance, that resistance being of many kinds, of which armed rebellion against a legally elected Labour or Progressive Government is only the ultimate one?‡

He then proceeds to summarize the various forms of "resistance" which will be exploited to justify the establishment of a Dictatorship. "The first of these is the precipitation of financial crisis." Now, Sir Stafford Cripps has already warned us that the return of a Socialist Government to power will mean a first-class financial crisis, and this crisis, which on their

* *What Are We To Do?* page 370.

† *What Are We To Do?* page 37.

‡ *What Are We To Do?* page 354.

own showing is inevitable if Socialists are returned to power, will be used as a pretext for destroying parliamentary democracy. "The second would probably be the use of the House of Lords (possibly in co-operation with the monarchy) to block all bills." The House of Lords has the constitutional right not to "block" but to delay for further discussion bills which have passed the Lower House. It would seem, then, that the exercise by the House of Lords of a constitutional right will be exploited to destroy the Constitution.

The extreme Socialists are too prudent to define exactly their plans for the destruction of democracy, but if we co-ordinate the discreet hints which are to be found in their writings, we can discern their strategy. The return of the Socialist Party to power, a party which will probably be described as "United Front" or "Democratic Front," will be followed by a financial crisis, and this crisis will be exploited to justify exceptional measures. "There are," as Mr. Strachey genially observes, "plenty of powers already on the Statute Book by which Government can put legislation through the House of Commons in a matter of days instead of months."* But such legislation cannot receive the Royal Assent until approved by the House of Lords, which, though it cannot indefinitely block, can at least delay revolutionary legislation. The Government will, therefore, invite the King to create five hundred new peers in order to insure a Socialist majority in the House of Lords, and thus to overcome all resistance. If the King refuses they will appeal to the Country on a *King versus People* issue; if again returned to power, they will attempt to abolish the Monarchy. By this time the financial crisis will produce its inevitable sequels, strikes and general disorders, all of which will provide Mr. John Strachey and his friends with a pretext for the establishment of a Red Dictatorship.

If Mr. Strachey has his way in Great Britain, and if Earl Browder succeeds in the United States, Communism and Fascism may be the only possible alternatives in the English-speaking world. But at the moment there is not the least

* *What Are We To Do?* page 336.

warrant for this favourite Communist propaganda trick of assuming that we must choose between two forms of anti-democratic dictatorship. Australian crows can count up to three. If five men enter a lonely house, the crows will wait for them to come out. If three men emerge and go away, the crows assume that the house is untenanted and approach it without fear. The Australian crow is a better mathematician than the average Communist, for at least he can count up to three, whereas the Communist stops at two, and admits no possibilities other than Communism or Fascism.

Now, there are situations in which the only effective choice is the choice between the Dictatorship of the Right and the Dictatorship of the Left. In Russia Lenin destroyed the democratic constitution, the creation of the Liberals who had forced the abdication of the Tsar. In Germany and in Italy Communists succeeded in making democratic governments impossible, and thus prepared the way for Fascism, which has nowhere emerged as a spontaneous movement, but which has everywhere been called into being as a bulwark against Communism. In Spain, as in Italy and as in Germany, Communism has killed democracy for generations.

It is, however, not only nonsense, but mischievous nonsense to suggest that Great Britain or America must choose between Fascism and Communism. If that choice is forced upon us, it will be forced upon us not by Fascists but by Communists. If a Popular Front, controlled by Communists, came into power in Great Britain, the inevitable reaction toward the Right might destroy democracy. It is always rash to predict the future vagaries of an electorate based on adult suffrage; almost anything might happen, either in Britain or in America, during or immediately after a great financial depression. The best insurance, however, against Communism is to recognize that Communism is still a danger. One does not necessarily believe that a world war is inevitable because one rearms, and one need not believe in the inevitability of world revolution because one insists on the necessity of that moral and intellectual rearmament which is the surest shield against revolution.

Communism is the fruit of a false philosophy. It is foolish to

hope that Communism can be fought solely with practical or with economic weapons. Europe is the battleground today of two rival philosophies, the first of which insists on the infinite importance of the individual, and the second on the infinite importance of a State. "Isolated the individual is nothing,"* writes Earl Browder. Communism teaches, in effect, that things are more than man, whereas Christianity, as Mr. Walter Lippmann, an American Liberal, reminds us, "celebrated in its central mysteries" the doctrine that men are more than things. "The influence of that gospel has been inexhaustible," Mr. Lippmann continues. "It anchored the rights of men in the structure of the universe. It set these rights where they were apart beyond human interference. Thus, the pretensions of despots become heretical. And since that revelation, though many despots have had the blessings of the clergy, no tyranny has possessed a clear title before the tribunal of the human conscience, no slave has had to feel that the hope of freedom was forever closed. For in the recognition that there is in each man a final essence—that is to say an immortal soul—which only God can judge, a limit was set upon the dominion of men over men." And it is, as Mr. Lippmann insists, no accident that the "only open challenge to the totalitarian state has come from men of deep religious faith."

If we regard Socialism as nothing more than a political or economic heresy and if we fight it exclusively with political and with economic weapons, we shall fail. Socialism is at once a criticism of and a protest against a Social Order which has refused to draw the logical conclusion from the religious premisses which are the foundation of Christian civilization. The intellectual case for Socialism must be met on the intellectual plane, and the political attempts of Socialists to seize power must be countered on the political plane, but only social justice can cure the malady of which agitation and revolution are but the symptoms. It is a duty to argue with bourgeois Leftists, but it is useless to argue with hungry and embittered men full of resentment against the social order from which they

* *Communism in the United States*, page 347.

have nothing to hope. In such cases, where logic is bound to fail, the corporal works of mercy may succeed.

We cannot afford to neglect either the moral or the intellectual argument, for we need today not only that moral rearmament of which we hear so much, but also an intellectual rearmament. Social justice is important, but a soft heart need not necessarily imply a soft head. We must neglect no method against Socialism. We must refute its errors and expose its record, but we must also insist on translating into action the social implication of that noble philosophy which laid the foundation of our Christian civilization.

REVOLUTIONARY SOCIALISM

CHAPTER I

THE TROJAN HORSE

In the autumn of 1937 I was invited to debate Communism with a distinguished professor of Stanford University, near San Francisco. When we met I asked him how long he had been a member of the Communist Party.

He affected mild surprise.

"I don't understand you. I am not a Communist, much less a member of the Communist Party."

It was my turn to look astonished.

"Surely we're debating Communism, aren't we?"

"Oh, no," replied the disarming professor, "at least, I'm not defending Communism. My object tonight is to persuade people that Communism isn't a real danger. There were only a few thousand votes cast for the Communists in the last Presidential election. The real danger today is Fascism."

He developed this theme in his opening address. He emphasized the scarcity of votes cast for an official Communist at a recent election on the West Coast. He spoke with alarm of the growing strength of Italy and Germany, and of the disappearance of democratic Government from one State after another on the Continent of Europe. He alluded with genial and airy contempt to timid folk who see the shadow of a skulking Communist behind every bush, and whose sleep is troubled by Muscovite nightmares. Even as a bogey, he suggested, the Bolshevik has been a little overworked, but as for Fascism . . . and here he really warmed to his task.

I accepted the professor's statement that he was not a member of the Communist Party, and I am prepared to believe that he is not a conscious tool of Moscow. The most useful allies of Moscow are those who disown all connection with the Comintern. Had the professor been a Communist

he would have been far less effective, for as a Communist he would have been unconvincing as a belittler of Communism. Indeed, the naïve sincerity of the professor's speech was an unconscious tribute to the astuteness of the new tactics officially adopted during the Congress of the Third International, which met in Moscow in August 1935. The Comintern believe that a rapid increase in the membership of Communist Parties is likely to produce a Fascist reaction. The present policy is therefore to restrict the number of professed Communists, but meanwhile to co-operate with non-Communists and to increase the number of actual Communists masquerading as Socialists. The army of revolution is to be officered by members of the Communist Party, whereas the rank and file are to be recruited from Socialists and advanced Radicals. In the United States the party membership is somewhere between 50,000 and 80,000,* but the League against Fascism and War, which is controlled by Communists, and which has never permitted any criticism of Moscow, numbers 3,000,000 members. In Great Britain the Labour Party, which is still trying to resist Communist infiltration, has published a very useful pamphlet on what they describe as "the Communist Solar System," a pamphlet which gives a list of innocuous sounding societies which are working in alliance with Communism.

"We may find it very necessary sometimes," said Mr. John Strachey, described in the *Left News* as "Marxist No. 1," "to outwit our opponents. This is relevant to drawing into the campaign such organisations as the Boy Scouts. It is most necessary to outwit our opponents, most necessary that we

* "We can obtain a rough measurement by a comparison of our position, in numbers and certain indices of the quality of our work, at the Eighth Convention in 1934 and today at the Ninth Convention.

"At the Eighth Convention the membership of the party was approximately 25,000; of the Young Communist League about 5,000, or a total of 30,000 organized Communists.

"Today at the Ninth Convention the party membership is around 40,000, the Y.C.L. about 11,000, or a total of over 50,000 organized Communists. This is an increase of 66 per cent in two years, or 500 per cent increase since 1929."

Earl Browder, General Secretary of the Communist Party, June 24th, 1936.

should fool them." (1) Mr. John Strachey, though the most brilliant champion of Communism in Great Britain, is not a member of the British Communist Party.

By drawing attention to the smallness of the Communist vote in recent American elections, the amiable professor of Stanford proved himself the perfect dupe. The Comintern attach very little importance to parliamentary representation, and have never hoped to win power through a parliamentary majority in democratic countries. "Not Parliament but Workers' Councils," said Lenin, "will be the way by which the proletariat will achieve its end." (2)

"Communist action takes place in the factory, on the farm, in the street, on barricades"; writes G. M. Godden, "but so little through the ballot-box that it is open to question whether the Parliamentary seats occasionally contested are anything more than a chosen means of establishing Communist 'Party Locals,' and organizations, in districts considered to be fertile, but unworked. This aim is very apparent in the comments on the Clay Cross by-election of 1933. The Communist candidate failed even to recover his deposit; but the official organ of the Comintern declared itself quite pleased with the result: 'The winning of 3,434 votes for Communism in the Clay Cross by-election is a considerable achievement for our Party . . . in the space of three short weeks we were able to break nearly three and a half thousand workers from the strangle-hold of reformism and win them for Communism . . . we have succeeded in establishing the Communist Party in the division. Communist "Locals" have been established in all centres. Thousands of workers have listened to our Communist message for the first time.'" (3)

It is natural that the reaction of the individual to Communism should often be determined by personal experience. Those who have always lived comfortable and sheltered lives in orderly and well-governed communities are often inclined to belittle the Communist danger. Few great cities are farther from Moscow than San Francisco, and the proportion of Parlour Communists in any community declines rapidly as one approaches the Russian frontier. During a

recent visit to Thalin—once called Reval—I was rash enough to mention Russia to an employee of the hotel in which I was staying. The expression on his face changed from professional passivity to unprofessional fanaticism as he gave me his views on the Communism which he had seen in action. There are very few Parlour Communists in Finland, for the Finns have known the Red terror.

Sweden is separated from Russia by Finland, and the Swedes are therefore rather more amenable to subversive propaganda than the Finns, but less amenable than the Norwegians; for the Norwegians, unlike the Finns, have had no first-hand experience of Communism in action. Norwegian Socialists are advanced in their views, and narrowly missed a clear majority in the last elections. They have succeeded in creating a schism in the world of sport by founding a Red athletic association. Even Holmenkollen, which is to the Norwegians what the Olympic Games were to the Greeks, has not escaped Communist interference. During the Holmenkollen races of 1930, which I followed as an interested spectator, the Norwegian Reds made a serious effort to ruin the classic long-distance ski race. The course had been set the previous evening. In the early morning the Reds removed the guiding ribbons from the branches and the direction flags from critical points along the course. But Norway is not the only country to enjoy the blessings of Red sport. Communists organized a sports festival in London in 1937, and among the prize-givers was that old-fashioned Christian, the Dean of Canterbury. (4)

People whose knowledge of Communism is confined to occasional references to Communist activity in the daily paper to which they subscribe have some excuse for underestimating its danger, but those whose views are based not only on intensive study, but also on personal contact with Communism in many countries, cannot fail to be impressed by the pervasive subtlety of Communist propaganda. I draw no conclusions from the dreary repetitiveness of the stock questions beloved by Red hecklers, nor from the patterned dullness of their debating technique, which is largely based on a refusal to

discuss Communism and a determination to show that the truth of Communism can be deduced from the evils of Fascism, as if one could justify one form of dictatorship by proving that another form of dictatorship is unjustifiable. One need not postulate directing control to explain the more commonplace forms of Communist propaganda, but there are other cases which can only be explained by regimented co-operation.

During a debate in the Middle West I quoted Lenin's famous dictum: "The scientific concept, dictatorship, means nothing more nor less than power which directly rests on violence, which is not limited by any laws or restricted by any absolute rules." (5) My opponent replied: "The quotation would be accurate but for the fact that Mr. Lunn has omitted the word 'not.' Lenin said 'does *not* mean power which directly rests on violence.'" Two weeks later, on the Far West Coast nearly two thousand miles away I quoted the same passage from Lenin, and a research student at the University of Washington (Seattle) rose and remarked that my quotation would be accurate but for a trifling detail. I had omitted the word 'not.' The coincidence was remarkable. This quotation from Lenin has an immediate effect on an American audience, and it may well be that Communists are instructed to challenge its authenticity and to gamble on the fact that few anti-Communist speakers bring with them to the platform a small library of reference books. I checked the quotation after the lecture, and found, as I expected, that I had quoted accurately. I thereupon wrote a letter for publication in the University paper. I explained that I had been publicly accused of what I consider to be a gross breach of controversial ethics, the distortion of a quotation, and, by implication, of deliberate distortion. I had the right to redress, and as a visiting faculty member of an American University, I had a very special right to be vindicated in the columns of an American University paper. I added that as an ex-editor of *The Isis*, the Oxford undergraduate weekly, I knew that I could count with confidence on the courtesy of publication. But in spite of the active intervention of sympathizers on the Faculty, the editor, a strong supporter of the Left, refused to publish my

letter. His action was consistent with the Communist conception of "Academic Freedom."

Coincidence may be invoked to explain the identical tactics of hecklers in towns separated by thousands of miles, but the exhibition of Communist propaganda which was held in Rome during the spring of 1938 provided coercive evidence of central control. The exhibition, which was housed in a large hall and two adjoining rooms, consisted of a representative collection of posters, newspapers, cartoons, books and pamphlets from every country in which Communist propaganda is still tolerated. Poisonous bacilli are invisible to the naked eye, and the bacilli which are spreading their infection throughout the world are not easily detected. Hence the value of the Rome exhibition. Simple Englishmen who misapply the legal maxim *De non apparentibus et non existentibus eadem est ratio*,* would be shocked into sense by this open display of things which are carefully guarded from English eyes. There is genius in the insight with which the Comintern adapt their propaganda to national idiosyncracies. England has so far been spared the fouler forms of Red propaganda. "The things I want my church to stand for," said the Dean of Canterbury, "lie behind what Russia has done," but the Dean has certainly never seen the Russian cartoons of the Trinity displayed in this exhibition, or *The Comic Life of Christ* (fully illustrated) which has been translated into French, but not as yet into English. I am sure that the Minister of Justice who was so kind to the Duchess of Atholl during one of the nine precious days which she spent in Red Spain did not show her the periodicals in which his more intimate speeches are reported. "Why punish prostitution when it should be legally organized? . . . Man comes, not from God, but from the beasts; that is why his reactions are those of a beast." (6)

More than a century has passed since the Haute Vente Romaine, the highest lodge of the Italian Carbonari, came to the conclusion that their objects could best be achieved by popularizing vice among the multitude. "Make vicious hearts

* About the non-apparent and the non-existent is the same rule.

and you will have no more Catholics." (7) Those who are determined to destroy Christian civilization exploit different organizations, Carbonari, Grand Orient, Communism or Anarchism, but there remains a certain monotony about their methods. The Rome exhibition demonstrated the importance which Moscow attaches to "popularizing vice among the multitudes."

"What was to be noticed at once," writes Robert Sencourt of the early phase of the Revolution which dethroned King Alfonso, "was the return of pornography to the bookstalls, and the flagrancy of prostitution." (8) One section of the Rome exhibition was reserved for pornographic literature and pictures, the weapons with which Spanish Communism sought to destroy all respect for the traditional morality of Christian Europe. I am sure that the Duchess of Atholl, who still dislikes Communism, was not allowed to see this particular phase of "anti-Fascist propaganda" during her visit to Madrid.

Only those who are completely insensitive to atmosphere could pass through these rooms without a sense of oppression. The very air seemed infected with evil. The concentration of Communist propaganda within four walls produces an entirely different effect upon the mind from that produced by those isolated specimens which are all that most people encounter. It is not a difference of degree but a difference of kind. The concerted attack upon the fundamental decencies of mankind is only apparent in some such world-wide survey.

A few weeks later I spent a few hours in a cemetery near Huesca in Spain, where the chapel had been turned into a barber's saloon and the walls covered with obscene drawings. At Huesca, as in the Rome exhibition, I felt as if I were in contact with an intelligence which is exploiting with satanic skill the weakness and vices of mankind.

It was curious to turn from the propaganda of filth and the blasphemies of the Russian cartoons in the exhibition to the donnish sobriety of the English section. The neat black lettering of the *Left News* was most disarming. The violence of the Spanish section recalled La Passionara screaming for the blood of Calvo Sotelo, but the British section, in its soporific

primness, reminded me of Mrs. Sidney Webb.

Perhaps the most sinister feature of this exhibition was the revelation of camouflage technique. The early issues of the British and American periodicals financed by Moscow carried the customary symbol of the Hammer and Sickle, but these symbols have gradually disappeared. The overwhelming majority of Communist publications disclose no evidence of Communist affiliation. The Secretary-General of the Comintern, George Dimitrov, has compared the Popular Front tactics to the methods of the Greeks who concealed themselves in the wooden horse. The Communists of today no longer proclaim their objectives. Concealed within the Trojan horse of the Popular Front, they penetrate into the citadel of Democratic Government. "Whom the gods would destroy," as Kuusinen explained, "they must first make blind." (9)

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- (3) & (4) G. M. Godden: *Communist Attack on Great Britain*, pp. 4, 35.
- (5) Lenin: *Collected Works*, Vol. XXV, p. 441, Russian edition, quoted with approval by Stalin: *Problems of Leninism*, International Publishers, New York, p. 25.
- (6) *El Diluvio*, January 1st, 1937.
- (7) J. Créteineau-Joly: *L'Eglise Romaine en face de la Révolution*, Vol. II, p. 147, quoted by Nesta H. Webster: *World Revolution*, Constable, p. 122.
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CHAPTER II

THE ORGANISATION OF COMMUNISM

THE Third Communist International was founded in Moscow in 1919, and is usually known as the Comintern. According to its Constitution, the Comintern is declared to be a "Union of Communist Parties in various countries." The local parties which are formed in different countries are described as "Sections." Thus the Communist Party of Great Britain has no independent existence, and no power of self-government; its duty is to carry out the instructions of its Masters in Moscow. At irregular intervals a World Congress of the Comintern is convened at Moscow, at which the Executive Committee, usually referred to as the E.C.C.I., is elected. The E.C.C.I. is the governing body of the Comintern in the interval between Congresses. It issues instructions to all the Sections of the Communist International, and controls their activities. According to the Constitution of the Comintern, "the decisions of the Executive Committee (E.C.C.I.) are obligatory for all Sections of the Communist International, and must be promptly carried out." Moreover, "the programmes of the various Sections of the Comintern must be endorsed by the E.C.C.I." The Madrid correspondent of *The Times* in a leading article (July 27th, 1931), described the Spanish Communists as "indistinguishable from Anarchists." "Their aim is the overthrowing of any government just because it is a government and their methods are disruption and havoc." Eight months later (March 28th, 1932) the Madrid correspondent of *The Times* reaffirmed the common outlook of Communists, Anarchists, Socialists, and Syndicalists. "Socialists and Syndicalists alike raise the Red Flag and use the hammer and sickle as emblems, as do the Communist groups. . . . The Iberian Federation of Anarchists hoist the black flag on

occasions, but without the piratical skull and cross-bones. During the recent rebellion in the Llobregat Valley in Catalonia red and black flags appeared side by side. Although in theory Communism and Anarchism are contradictory, and of Syndicalism there are many varieties, no very clear distinctions are drawn in Spain, and the partisans of divers groups follow their leaders rather than principles."

Whatever be the nationality of a Communist enrolled in his national Section of the Communist Party, he is, in effect, the docile agent of a Foreign Power committed to a policy of promoting civil war throughout the world. Such is the avowed object of the Comintern, which is controlled by, and acts in the interests of, Soviet Russia. In the nineteenth century, Parliamentary Democracy was in fashion, and Tsarist Russia was weakened in its imperial ambitions by the activity of Russian Liberals eager to replace Tsarism by a Parliament modelled on Westminster. Today Soviet Russia, more ambitious than the Russia of the Tsars, is determined to achieve world dominion, and has more hope of achieving her ambition, for whereas in the nineteenth century Russia was weakened by Russians under the influence of British Liberalism, today the democracies of the world are being undermined by citizens controlled by the Comintern.

It is difficult to understand why countries should tolerate in their Parliaments deputies who, by the published constitution of their Party, are the agents of a foreign Power. It is, for instance, astonishing that the French, who would be horrified by the existence of a French Nazi Party under instructions from Berlin, should accept with resignation in their Chamber of Deputies the presence of Communists whose votes are determined in Moscow. The same is, of course, true of the British Communists. The first rule of the Communist Party of Great Britain is that "the C.P.G.B. is a section of the Communist International and is bound by its decisions."

The Communist International is sometimes compared to the Roman Catholic Church, and the Trotskyites to the Protestants, but the comparison is misleading, for whereas the Comintern imposes the most rigid discipline on the national

Sections, the Vatican, while stating its own position, leaves Catholics in different countries free to take their own line in all matters which do not affect defined doctrine.

The Communist Party throughout the world bears the authoritative imprint imposed upon it by the masterful personality of Lenin. It was on this question of discipline that the break came in 1903 between the Mensheviks and the Bolsheviks. When the Second Congress of the Russian Social Democratic Party met in London in 1903, the Mensheviks (minority) desired a party modelled on the German Democratic Party which anybody might join. Lenin, on the other hand, wanted a party of picked men, admission to which should be difficult. "Far better," said Lenin, "to lose ten absolutely first-class revolutionaries than to allow one chatterbox in." "No political party," he insisted, "could educate the whole working class." (1) Lenin's ideas prevailed, with the result that the Communist Party is not a party in the ordinary sense of the term. No difficulties are placed in the way of those who wish to join the British Labour Party, the Radical Socialists in France, or corresponding parties in other countries, but no man can join the Communist Party merely by professing general sympathy with its aims.

"After wrestling with his soul," writes Joseph Freeman in *An American Testament*, "Nearing applied for membership in the Party. Earl Browder, then acting secretary, wrote him from Chicago that it was the practice of the Party to scrutinise carefully all applicants for membership who were non-proletarian and who were prominent in public life. The reason of this special care was obvious, Browder explained." (2)

Scott Nearing, as an American writer, was naturally asked questions a workman would not have been asked, and equally a workman would have been asked questions that an intellectual would not be asked. Nearing sent Browder his *credo*, which included the following expression of high ideals.

"Every effort should be made by the Communist Party 'to cultivate the highest standards of personal integrity—sound health, clean living; trained, vigorous and courageous thinking; honest, straight-forward dealing.'" (3)

Nearing's application for membership was rejected. Subsequently he became a member of the Party, but was expelled for writing a book at variance with the Party views. He later worked as a sympathizer outside its ranks. In this he was one of thousands who are active "sympathizers" with, but not members of, the Communist Party. Hence the absurdity of attempting to measure the influence of Communism by any comparison between the membership of the Communist and, say, the Labour Parties.

The relation of the Communist Party to Communism is analogous to that of a Religious Order to the Catholic Church. The ordinary Communist is not subjected to the iron discipline of the Party, and the ordinary Catholic does not take the religious vow of obedience. There are many odd resemblances between the Society of Jesus which Loyola founded, and the Society of anti-Jesus which Lenin brought into being. Loyola was a soldier, converted during his recovery from the effects of a leg broken by a cannon ball; Lenin was the directing genius of the Russian Civil War. Loyola determined that the General of the Order should possess powers even greater than those of the Generals under whom he had served; Lenin never disguised his intention of establishing a dictatorship. Loyola intended that the Jesuits should be the shock troops of the Counter-Reformation; Lenin planned that the Communist Party should be the disciplined élite that would leaven the formless proletarian lump. The Jesuit takes three vows, of chastity, poverty and obedience, and if Lenin, who was completely selfless, had had his way, members of the Communist Party would perhaps have accepted the obligation of poverty as they accepted, and still accept, the obligation of obedience.

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- (2) & (3) Joseph Freeman : *An American Testament*, Victor Gollancz, pp. 309, 313.

CHAPTER III

THE END JUSTIFIES THE MEANS

"What coincides with the interests of the Proletarian Revolution is ethical."—E. YAROSLAVSKY. (1)

"YE know how it is an unlawful thing for a man that is a Jew to keep company, or to come unto one of another nation; but God hath showed me that I should not call any man common or unclean."

With these engaging words St. Peter, the Jew, introduced himself to Cornelius, the Gentile.

It needed a divine vision to shatter St. Peter's conviction that the world is divided into the Chosen People and the unclean Gentiles. Marx retained the instinctive Jewish faith in the contrast between Jew and Gentile, but he translated the old Jewish dichotomy into economic terms. The Chosen People are transformed into the Proletariat, the Bourgeois into the Gentile, "common and unclean."

"Law, morality, religion," writes Marx, "are to him (the proletarian) so many bourgeois prejudices behind which lurk in ambush just as many bourgeois interests." (2)

"We say that our morality," writes Lenin, "is wholly subordinated to the interests of the class-struggle of the proletariat. . . . That is why we say that a morality taken from outside of human society does not exist for us; it is a fraud. For us morality is subordinated to the interests of the proletarian class-struggle." (3)

The relativity of morals implies the relativity of truth. What coincides with the interests of the proletarian revolution is true; what does not coincide with the interests of the proletarian revolution is false. Marxian morality is the key to much that would otherwise be perplexing. It helps, for instance, to explain the strange behaviour of Earl Browder.

"Earl" Browder is not an aristocratic recruit to Communism, and anti-Christian Moscow, unperturbed by his ambiguous Christian name, has honoured him with high rank in the new aristocracy of the Comintern. On July 25th, 1935, he acted as chairman of the Seventh Session of the Seventh Annual Congress of the International Communist Party, of which he is a Vice-President. It is, therefore, inconceivable that Earl Browder should be unaware of the fact that the Communist Party of America, of which he is the Secretary, is bound by its constitution to carry out without question the orders of the Comintern at Moscow. And yet Browder has stated in writing that "the Communist Party does not take its orders from Moscow." Americans detest foreign intervention in American politics, and Earl Browder's statement was therefore "true" because his reassuring falsehood "coincides with the interests of the proletarian revolution."

"Those who say we do not take orders from Moscow are against the proletarian state. It proves that they are allied to the bourgeoisie . . . and are the enemy of the proletarian class. . . . To receive orders from Moscow, as Dimitrov said, is to follow the example of Lenin and Stalin." (4)

My own relations with Earl Browder have reinforced my respect for his consistency as a prophet of the new morality. Browder stood as the Communist candidate in the last Presidential Election, and this gives him a status which no British Communist enjoys. As a representative figure in American life he was invited by the famous Community Forum of Pittsburgh to debate Communism. He accepted this invitation, and on learning that I was to be his opponent in Pittsburgh, he instructed a minor luminary in the planetary system which revolves round the Red Star to debate with me a few weeks earlier in Wisconsin.

I invited Earl Browder's lieutenant to defend the fact that children of twelve are liable to be executed for theft according to the provisions of the new Soviet Code. I also drew his attention to the following quotation from Earl Browder's writings :

"But soldiers and sailors come from the ranks of the workers.

They can be, and must be, won for the revolution. *All revolutions have been made with weapons which the overthrown rulers had relied on for their protection.*" (5)

Though the italics are Browder's his deputy seemed unwilling to emphasize this stirring incitement to mutiny. Nor did he enjoy my quotations from the Soviet Code. It is not easy to convince an American audience that their armed forces should be incited to mutiny, and even more difficult to defend the infliction of the death penalty on children. Even humanitarians have their shock point. My Communist opponent made a courageous attempt to allay uneasy doubts among the faithful by poking mild fun at my alarmist tendencies. "Mr. Lunn is really worrying himself unduly. *Very few children in Russia are executed for theft.*"

Browder's lieutenant no doubt reported his impressions of the debate to Earl Browder, who thereupon decided not to put in an appearance at Pittsburgh. He informed my agent that he was ill, and that he would send a substitute. I suspected that the illness was of that relative type which "coincides with the interests of the proletarian revolution," so I travelled a thousand miles to New York to make inquiries, as a result of which I availed myself of the services of a detective agency which specializes in the investigation of alleged malingering by those who are insured against accident and illness. A few hours before my debate with Browder's substitute I received the agent's report. Browder's attack of yellow fever had not prevented him from travelling to Washington on the day that he was alleged to be ill, and he had been in and out of his flat ever since. Incidentally, the agent's principal difficulty had been to discover Browder's private address. The jealous care with which this secret was guarded ceased to perplex him when he discovered the extremely comfortable flat in which this champion of the poor recuperates from his attacks on the rich.

The agent's report was front page news in the Pittsburgh evening papers, and I awaited with some anxiety the opening remarks of Browder's deputy. I had gambled on the accuracy of the detective's report, and I knew that my opponent had telephoned to Browder, but I was reassured by his opening

remarks, a wistful plea for sympathy. "Everybody who knows Earl Browder," said Browder's deputy, "knows that he is not a quitter," a statement which he supported by reminding his audience that Browder had successfully evaded conscription. Browder was a fighter because he refused to fight. I told the story in the columns of *America*, but there was no reaction from the ignoble Earl, and no indignant rebuttal supported by medical certificates.

In Browder's rather amateur efforts I miss the serene composure of the great masters of mendacity at Moscow. Perfection, as Samuel Butler asserts, is only achieved after long practice has transformed conscious actions into unconscious. Browder reminds me of a child painfully thumping out scales; the Moscow masters, of the expert whose fingers move with no conscience guidance across the keys. The perfect liar, says Butler, is unaware that he is lying.

Consider as an example the Moscow attitude to free speech. We know that freedom of speech is in Russia the monopoly of those who wish freely to confess their Trotskyite crimes. No censor restricts the prisoner who is anxious to demand the death penalty for himself and for his friends, but apart from this significant exception, there is no free speech and no free press in Russia. No fact in contemporary history is more certain than this. And yet Article 125 of the Constitution of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics reads as follows:

"In conformity with the interests of the toilers, and in order to strengthen the socialist system, the citizens of the U.S.S.R. are guaranteed by law:

- "(a) freedom of speech;
- "(b) freedom of the the press;
- "(c) freedom of assembly and of holding mass meetings;
- "(d) freedom of street processions and demonstrations."

It is not so much the mendacity of the Muscovites which displeases me as the gullibility of their English dupes. As a patriotic Englishman I am distressed to know that Moscow can count with such sunny confidence on the parrot-like docility of thousands of my fellow citizens. In one of our

advanced periodicals dedicated to the noble cause of government of the people by the intellectuals for the intellectuals, I have read a spirited attack on those elections in Nazi Germany in which docile citizens are offered the privileges of voting for a candidate selected by the Party. But Hitler at least is not a humbug; unlike our British Communists he does not pretend to admire democracy while campaigning for a dictatorship. In the very same paper the Soviet Constitution has been lauded as the most democratic constitution which this wicked world of ours has ever known. "Elections of deputies," says article 135, "are universal," whatever that may mean. Article 136 assures us that "Elections of deputies are equal," a statement which is doubtless clear to students of Dialectical Materialism. "Every citizen," Article 136 continues, "is entitled to one vote; all citizens participate in elections on an equal footing." Every citizen, in fact, has exactly the same chance of recording his approval of the candidate selected by Stalin, and runs exactly the same risk of being arrested as a Trotskyite if he fails to put in an appearance at the polling booth. I should add that Article 137 guarantees the same valuable rights to women. Elections in Russia are no more and no less farcical than in Germany, but our progressives who can see the funny side of Nazi methods still talk of Russia as a democracy.

I cannot help resenting the fact that Englishmen are not deemed worthy of the subtle flattery of an ingenious falsehood. Moscow trades with assurance on the fact that her dupes will remain unperturbed even by the most flagrant of contradictions, and will continue to denounce the dictatorship of Germany as hostile to democracy, and to applaud the Russian dictatorship as democratic.

There is nothing new about lying, but the old-fashioned liar never quite lost a faint respect for those who tell the truth. The Greeks were not easily perturbed by mendacity, and Homer openly admires the wily Odysseus, whose wiliness consisted very largely in his technique of deceit, and yet this same Homer makes Telemachus speak with awe of Nestor: "He is a very good man. He will not tell you a lie." Machiavelli

perfected a technique which Moscow has exploited today, but the word "machiavellian" was a term of reproach in Machiavelli's Europe. Catholics and Protestants have lied in defence of their respective Churches, but the accusations of lying have been met either by denying the charge, or by disowning those convicted of lying as unrepresentative members of the institutions to which they belonged. Even those few sixteenth-century Casuists who have been justly attacked for laxity, implicitly recognized the importance of truth by their misplaced attempt to preserve verbal truth in situations in which they assumed that deception might be condoned. Christians have often acted on the principle that faith need not be kept with heretics or with papists as the case might be, but both Catholics and Protestants indignantly deny that this principle is integral to their religion. A good Protestant keeps faith with papists, a good Catholic with heretics, but only a bad Communist will keep faith with a member of the bourgeoisie if he thereby renders a disservice to the proletarian cause. It is a question of opinion whether bad Jesuits have ever acted on the principle that the end justifies the means; it is a question of fact that this principle has been explicitly condemned by the Jesuits, and that no line that a Jesuit has written can be cited in support of a doctrine which undermines the very foundations of morality. It is a question not of opinion but of fact that Communists proclaim the principle which the Jesuits condemn. "Our morality," said Lenin, "is wholly subordinated to the interests of the class struggle of the proletariat." From which it follows that any means, however vile, are justified if they contribute to the end which Lenin had in view.

Nobody pretends that the average man normally practises what the loftiest moralists preach; most men find it easier to lie than to tell the truth, many men have double standards, and many of us are tempted to condemn in others what we condone in ourselves and in our friends, and some find it difficult not to use illegitimate means to attain legitimate ends. High standards of morality are not as effective as we could wish, but they are far from ineffective. Deterrents are valuable even if they do not completely abolish crime. Moscow, by its brazen con-

tempt for what Clough calls "the mere 'it was,'" makes it easier for liars to lie, and more difficult for those who are naturally truthful to tell the truth. It is disconcerting to reflect that thousands of young people are under the influence of teachers in elementary schools, secondary schools and universities, who hold up for their admiration a system of selective lying.

I remember a rather sad talk with an elderly lady married to an Italian, who had lived most of her life in Italy. The England which she loved was an England that is changing, an England which hated injustice and cruelty, an England which did not condone terrorism and concentration camps, an England which may yet be preserved if the rising generation can be recaptured for the old standards. "And above all," she said, "what makes me proud to be English is the fact that the word of an Englishman is still accepted abroad. I should be sorry to go on living in a world in which Englishmen ceased to tell the truth."

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- (3) Lenin : Third All-Russian Congress of Y.C.L., October, 1920.
- (4) *International Communist*, French edition, August 5th, 1935.
- (5) Earl Browder : *What is Communism?* p. 165 first edition, 126 second edition.

CHAPTER IV

THE TECHNIQUE OF CONFUSION

THE Comintern have exploited with consummate skill the readiness of unsophisticated "progressives" to accept with equal enthusiasm mutually exclusive pronouncements. The "Friends of Soviet Russia" are the most unexacting of friends. They applaud with benign impartiality the Comintern's policy of instigating civil war and the Comintern's programme for ensuring peace. They sing hosannas to the Comintern as the champion of democracy, and acquiesce no less readily in the Comintern's contempt for every principle of democratic Government.

Admittedly bourgeois politicians often preach what they have no intention of practising, but bourgeois statesmen are too timid to preach mutually exclusive doctrines. Lord Carson did not simultaneously assert that Ulster would fight and that Ulster would support a League against War and Sinn Fein. Mr. de Valera did not simultaneously demand independence for Ireland and declare his unshaken loyalty to the British Crown. Mr. Joseph Chamberlain did not demand tariffs in the sacred name of Free Trade.

There is nothing new in political inconsistency, but the Comintern deserve credit for being the first consciously to exploit the technique of confusion. The Comintern are the first to realise the full significance of the fact that by confusing the issue it is possible to provide every potential supporter with something to his taste. The pacifist is impressed by their praise of peace; the revolutionary by their promise of civil war. Their crusade against Fascism appeals to the democrat; their contempt for democracy to the Left Wing intellectual. No political party has exploited with more striking success and with more superb impudence the political possibilities of deliberate confusion.

For this purpose the Comintern employ two methods. Communists are encouraged to blur the distinctions between things that are different and to invent artificial distinctions between things that are the same. The title of Earl Browder's book, *Democracy or Fascism*, illustrates the technique of equating things which are different. The implication of this title is that Communism is democratic. Earl Browder, of course, knows better, for as Secretary of the Communist Party of the U.S.A. he is engaged on the task of undermining American democracy. Communists have been very successful in suppressing an important chapter in Russian history, a chapter which negates their claim to have saved Russia from Tsarism. It is only the well-informed minority who realize that Tsarism was destroyed by Russian democrats, and that it was democracy, not Tsarism, which was annihilated by Lenin. The first revolution, which was led by democrats, destroyed Tsarism, and replaced autocracy by the democratic Constituent Assembly. The second revolution destroyed democracy and substituted dictatorship. Trotsky records Lenin's complacent post mortem on the corpse of democracy. "The breaking-up of the Constituent Assembly by the Soviet power is the complete and public liquidation of formal democracy in the name of the revolutionary dictatorship. It will be a good lesson." (1) And Trotsky adds, "The further victorious development of the proletarian revolution after the simple, open, brutal breaking-up of the Constituent Assembly dealt formal democracy a finishing stroke from which it has never recovered." (2)

Of all varieties of Communist hypocrisy surely the most nauseating is this attempt to exploit democratic sentiment on behalf of the assassins of democracy. If Stalin loves democracy the kiss of Judas was sincere.

The effect of blurring the differences between things as different as democracy and Communism is less dangerous than the effect of tracing artificial distinctions between things that are similar. The armies of world revolution fight under different banners, but Communists, Anarchists, Syndicalists and Trotskyites, however much they may differ on minor points, agree in their hatred of Christian civilization. Theoretic-

cally, Communists and Anarchists represent extreme poles of political thought, for Anarchism is in revolt against all authority, whereas Communism advocates an extreme form of State authoritarianism, but Communists and Anarchists agree in their determination to destroy the existing civilization, and in their conviction that this common objective can best be obtained by terrorism, by violence and by the exploitation of resentment and hate.

"The scientific concept, dictatorship," said Lenin, "means nothing more nor less than power which directly rests on violence, which is not limited by any laws or restricted by any absolute rules."⁽³⁾ "I shall arm myself to the teeth against civilization," exclaimed Proudhon, the founder of modern Anarchism, "I shall begin a war that will end only with my life."⁽⁴⁾ Proudhon's disciple, Bakunin, the founder of Spanish Anarchism, was even more extreme. He insisted on the uselessness of killing *wicked* people. "If you kill an unjust judge, you may be understood to mean merely that you think judges ought to be just; but if you go out of your way to kill a just judge, it is clear that you object to judges altogether. If a son kills a bad father, the act, though meritorious in its humble way, does not take us much further. But if he kills a good father, it cuts at the root of all that pestilent system of family affection and loving-kindness and gratitude on which the present system is largely based."⁽⁵⁾

Syndicalism is an attempted compromise between State Socialism (or Communism) and Anarchism. The State as such must disappear, but its place is to be taken by a federation of trade unions. The organized workers are to control the instruments of production in their respective trades. Sorel, the founder of modern Syndicalism, is an attractive writer, and as the years passed the proportion of shrewd sense in his work steadily increased, with the result that shortly before he died Paris was full of rumours that he had moved over to the Right. His famous apology for violence is far less extreme than Lenin's, but like Lenin, he was convinced that "Socialism could not exist without an apology for violence." "Le rapprochement qui s'établit entre les grèves violentes et la guerre est fécond

en conséquences." (6) But he adds that he had never shared Jaurès' admiration for "la haine créatrice," perhaps because he was beginning to discover that hate creates nothing. Dimitrov, when he called for a "joint struggle of the Communist, Social Democratic, Anarcho-Syndicalist and other workers" implicitly recognized that the difference between revolutionaries are superficial, their agreement fundamental. (7)

The Comintern are now engaged in the attempt to form common fronts, variously described as "Popular," "Democratic," "United," or "Peace," but it is not amalgamation which the Comintern desire but a temporary alliance of revolutionary sects, each of which nominally retains its independence, and all of which are to be directed by the Communist nucleus. The complete fusion of these sects must be avoided until Communism has triumphed, for as long as these sects preserve their identity the Comintern can incite Anarchists to violence and disown their activities in propaganda designed for foreign consumption. The battle between Communists and Anarchists in the streets of Barcelona was exploited with consummate skill by the Comintern to encourage the illusion of a basic distinction between the different parties who were fighting for Republican Spain. The champions of Red Spain in democratic countries were glad to attribute to the Anarchists the sole responsibility for crimes which even British Socialists could not easily defend. To the luckless Whites in Red Spain these distinctions appeared less important. If my house is to be burnt over my head it matters little to me whether a temple to Bakunin the Anarchist or to Stalin the Communist is subsequently erected on the site of what was once my home.

The British Labour Party issued a manifesto on Party loyalty in January, 1938. In this manifesto the Executive Committee said: "The Communist Party claims to be 'a voluntary organization based on iron discipline' demanding 'unbounded loyalty to the party' as the chief characteristic of its membership. It takes not only its money but also its orders from Moscow, and must obey them slavishly. Mr. Harry Pollitt, at the 'unity campaign' meeting in London on April 3rd, stated: 'It is said I take my orders from Stalin. I plead guilty.'"

There are no doubt genuine differences of outlook between Communists and Anarchists, but the distinction between Communists and Socialists is artificial. The word "Socialist" is admittedly a loose label for many varieties of political thought, and it is therefore all the more important to define this elusive term. *The Concise Oxford Dictionary* defines "Socialism" as follows: "Principle that individual freedom should be completely subordinated to interests of community, with any deductions that may be correctly or incorrectly drawn from it, e.g. substitution of co-operative for competitive production, national ownership of land and capital, state distribution of produce, free education and feeding of children, and abolition of inheritance." From the same dictionary I take the following definition of Communism: "Vesting of property in the community, each member working according to his capacity and receiving according to his wants."

Socialists and Communists agree that property should be vested in the community, and that land and capital should be nationally owned, but whereas the governing principle of the Socialist State is "from every man according to his capacity to every man according to his *work*" (a principle which permits differential payment for different grades of work), the principle of a Communist society is "from every man according to his capacity to every man according to his *needs*." But this distinction is artificial. No Communist believes in the immediate approach of the Communist millennium. Marx and Lenin insisted that society would have to pass through a long period of Socialism which might last for centuries before the State had finally withered away, and before society could accept the simple criterion of needs as a basis for remuneration. No Communist maintains that Soviet Russia has achieved Communism. On the contrary, the orthodox Marxist insists that Soviet Russia is passing through the preliminary phase of State Socialism. The immediate objective of the Communist and of the Socialist is therefore identical: the destruction of Capitalism and the substitution of State Socialism.

Admittedly few British and few American Socialists, and even fewer French Radical Socialists, are Socialists in the

correct sense of the term. Our Conservative Trade Unionists certainly do not desire "the national ownership of land and capital." On the contrary, many of those who describe themselves as Socialists fervently hope that the evils of Capitalism will last out their time. Socialists in the English speaking world may be divided into an extremist minority who for tactical reasons prefer not to describe themselves as Communists, and a Conservative majority who for tactical reasons profess opinions more extreme than those which they sincerely hold. It is difficult for the Left Wing politician to resist the steady movement towards the Left, or to retain his position unless he placates the extremer elements in his constituency. Such men are attracted not by the principles of Socialism but by the political advantages of the Socialist label. The word "Socialist" covers every variety of Left Wing thought from the Conservative Trade Unionist anxious to conceal his Conservatism, to the revolutionary Communist anxious to conceal his revolutionary designs. The use or disuse of the word "Communism" has always been determined by purely tactical considerations.

The Communist Manifesto of 1848 "was called *Communist*," writes Emile Burns, "and not *Socialist* because, as Engels explains, the word Socialist was associated with the Utopians on the one hand, and on the other with 'the most multifarious social quacks, who by all manner of tinkering professed to redress, without any danger to capital and profit, all sorts of social grievances.' But 'whatever portion of the working class had become convinced of the insufficiency of mere political revolutions, and had proclaimed the necessity of a total social change, called itself Communist.'" (8)

The word "Communist" has now served its purpose, and is no longer an asset but a liability. The Seventh World Congress of the Comintern resolved that "the word 'Socialist' should be henceforth adopted for use in public in preference to the words 'Communist' or 'Bolshevik.'" (9) The Communist controlled Press is not only dropping the word "Communist," but is gradually shedding all Communist externals. I brought back from the West Coast of America a copy of the official paper of the Communist Party, *The Western Worker*, issued

during February, 1937. The hammer and sickle were conspicuous on the title page of the paper. Underneath were the words: "Western Organ of the Communist Party of the U.S.A. (Section of the Communist International)." Another copy of the paper, published in October, 1937, had dropped the hammer and sickle and all reference to the Communist International, and underneath there was a new sub-heading: "People's Champion of Liberty, Progress and Peace." In 1935 the *Daily Worker* openly declared itself to be the "organ of the Communist Party of Great Britain (section of the Communist International)." This caption was the first casualty, for it disappeared in 1937, but the Soviet hammer and sickle were still retained. In 1938 even the hammer and sickle have vanished. G. M. Godden gives a list of factory papers carrying on subversive propaganda. "These papers, circulating among workers grouped in Trade Unions, are generally careful to avoid the symbols of the Workers' Revolutionary Government, the hammer and sickle, and any open talk of social upheaval." (10) When Lenin started an English Communist paper he wrote: "We must be (in the beginning) very prudent. The paper must be *not too revolutionary* in the beginning. If you will have three editors at least one must be *non-communist*." (11)

The Left Book Club has been Stalin's consistent supporter in Great Britain. Its publications seldom deviate from the most rigid party line. I have yet to discover in them any hint of Trotskyite heresy. Its first publication was a book by Maurice Thorez, Secretary of the Communist Party of France, and Mr. Harry Pollitt, Secretary of the Communist Party of Great Britain, has praised the Left Book Club as a scheme "worthy of support." (12) Its membership exceeds 50,000, and its annual income is in the neighbourhood of £75,000. (13) The Selection Committee of the Left Book Club is controlled by Mr. Victor Gollancz, Professor Harold Laski and Mr. John Strachey. In reply to an enquiry Mr. Gollancz informed me that neither he nor his colleagues, Messrs. Laski and Strachey, are members of the Communist Party. A reviewer in the *Left News* for March, 1938, however, informs

us that Mr. Strachey deserves the title "Marxist No. 1." (14) In the same issue of the *Left News* Mr. Gollancz, the editor, sums up Mr. Strachey's views: A great mass labour movement cannot demand of all its members "daily self-dedication to the practical struggle. . . . Such dedication can in the nature of the case only be undertaken by a comparatively small corps of men." This group, so Mr. Strachey hopes, will "inevitably act as a kind of leaven," and Mr. Gollancz adds, "Mr. Strachey, rightly or wrongly, regards the Communist Party as the starting point of this smaller corps—precisely because it is Marxist." (15)

"Marxist No. 1" does not belong to the Communist Party. This is much as if the Pope, whom the *Left News* might describe as "Romanist No. 1," were not a member of the Catholic Church. In the 1935 General Election the votes cast for the Communist candidate in two constituencies exceeded in number the total membership of the Communist Party of Great Britain.

"The whole conception of a party of the new kind," writes Mr. John Strachey, "is so strange to most people in Britain and America that they easily become confused and suppose that, because, for example, there are only 12,500 members of the Communist Party in Britain, this means that only 12,500 people support Communism. How very far from the truth this is may be seen from the fact that in the two constituencies contested by the British Communist Party at the 1935 General Election (Rhondda East and West Fife) 13,655 and 13,462 people, respectively, voted for the Communist candidates. Thus in two small areas with a combined electorate of only 90,514, out of a total electorate of over thirty millions, nearly twice as many people voted Communist as belong to the Communist Party in the whole country." (16)

Mr. Strachey provided some entertaining evidence in support of the thesis of this chapter. He was refused entry into the United States on the ground that he was a Communist. Whereupon "Marxist No. 1" indignantly denied that he was a Communist. An interviewer gave the following report of Mr. Strachey's views in *The New York Times* for October 11th, 1938:—

"Mr. Strachey insisted that he was a Socialist. 'The only definition of a Communist,' he added, 'is a person who is a member of the Communist Party. Now that, of course, is what the whole case turns on. I am not a member of the Communist Party and I never have been. . . . Why even Russia is only beginning to be a Socialist society. It hasn't yet become a Communist society.'

" 'What is the difference?'

" 'Under Socialism, a man is paid according to what he does: under Communism according to what he needs,' said Mr. Strachey.

" 'Which do you prefer?'

" 'Like all Socialists I believe that the Socialist society evolves in time into the Communist society.'

According to Mr. Strachey every Socialist must regard Socialism as an interim phase on the road to that Communist Utopia which every Socialist must desire. But the ardent believer in Communism can remain outside the Communist Party and claim complete immunity from the pains and penalties attached to Communism on the ground that he is not yet a Communist but hopes that everybody will become a Communist in due course, and has every intention of converting the world to a creed to which he must not be accused of submitting.

It is easy to understand why "Marxists Nos. 1, 2, 3, etc.," do not belong to the official Party, and why the official Party cultivates a discreet anonymity. The Communist Party conceals the names of its members, but does not conceal its membership strength, for the *smallness* of the Party reassures apathetic anti-Socialists whose opposition will only become dangerous when the danger of Communism becomes apparent. The Communist Party of Great Britain is bound, as all sections of the Comintern are bound, to be prepared to create an illegal Communist organisation alongside that existing legally. The Comintern expressly forbid any deviation from this rule. (15) It is easy to understand why prominent supporters of Soviet Russia officially dissociate themselves from a Party, membership of which may be embarrassing when

England awakens to the danger of Communism, but their anomalous position might be illustrated by an imaginary parallel.

Let us assume that the Roman Catholics in England were suspected of ambitions similar to those to which the British Communist Party are by their constitution committed, that is, of plotting civil war in the interests of a foreign Power. Let us assume that Mr. Hilaire Belloc, Mr. Douglas Woodruff, the editor of the *Tablet*, Mr. Christopher Dawson and Mr. Christopher Hollis were not official members of the Roman Catholic Communion, but never wrote a line in criticism of the Vatican, and never ceased to praise the Roman Catholic Church, and let us further assume that the total number of Easter Communicants in a single county exceeded in number the total membership, officially admitted, of the Church in Great Britain. It would be easy to imagine the reactions of the British public to such uncandid methods. It is less easy to understand why the public should tolerate in the case of Moscow subterranean methods which neither the British public nor the Vatican would tolerate in the case of Rome.

Earl Browder is an expert virtuoso in the confusion of dissimilarities. He strives to represent Communism as "Twentieth Century Americanism." "We are the Americans," explains this lackey of Moscow, "and Communism is the Americanism of the twentieth century." (17) And we are asked to believe that the Fathers of the American Revolution, those sturdy champions of individual freedom and private property, are the spiritual ancestors of the Americans who are working for a dictatorship on the Russian model.

The founders of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics selected a name which would not need to be changed after Great Britain, the United States, Germany and other countries had been admitted into the planetary system of the Red Star. The extinction of Ukrainian and Georgian independence is a warning of the fate which other countries may expect if they accept "union" with Soviet Russia. If the U.S.A. were to adopt Earl Browder's advice, they would be subjected to the dictatorship of Moscow, and their position would be far

less free than their original status as colonies of the British Empire. The Declaration of Independence would be replaced by the most servile declaration of complete dependence on a foreign Power, and those who are working for this end have the impudence to describe themselves as apostles of "Twentieth Century Americanism."

The Spanish Civil War provides a classic example of the Technique of Confusion. The Comintern are aware that many British and American supporters of the Spanish Republicans still retain a faint prejudice against the pure milk of Communist doctrine. It was important, therefore, that the Prime Minister of the Republican Government should not be an official Communist, and that the numbers of official Communists in the Government should be kept as low as possible. This policy presented no difficulty since Spanish Communists and Spanish Socialists are, in effect, indistinguishable. It is simply a question of tactics whether a Spanish Red describes himself as a Communist or as a Socialist. In September, 1933, the representatives of Socialists and Communists met in Madrid and announced that "only a Marxist regime would satisfy them." (18) Caballero was never an official member of the Spanish Communist Party, but in an interview with Mr. Knoblauch which is quoted in Knoblauch's book *Correspondent in Spain*, he assured Knoblauch that Spain would be the next country to go Communist, and that he, Caballero, would be the Lenin of Spain. During the period of his premiership Caballero sent the following New Year's message to Soviet Russia, "The proletariat of Iberia will try to follow the example of your great country." (19) "What is the use of liberty?" exclaimed Caballero in 1934. "Is not the State by definition an absolute power? Certainly we Socialists and true republicans are not going to be foolish enough to grant liberty if at the first opportunity it undermines the foundations of Government." (20) This outburst of candour was for home consumption. It was not reported abroad, and therefore did not disturb the serenity of those innocent people for whom a Spanish Liberal is a Latin variety of Mr. Asquith and a Spanish Socialist an Iberian variant of Mr. Lansbury.

Caballero is not a Communist. He merely confessed that it was his ambition to be the Lenin of the Spanish Republic. He has never joined the Communist Party. He contented himself with expressing in telegrams to Russia the hope that Spain would follow the example of that great country. "The trick," wrote *La Vanguardia*, of Barcelona, "by which they (the Communist Party) do not appear in the Government with any greater preponderance than before is too naïve to deceive anyone." Sanguine *Vanguardia*! The trick succeeded all too well—in England. *The Times* correspondent was not so easily hoodwinked. "Madrid," he wrote, in an uncensored despatch on November 21st, 1936, "is inundated with Moscow posters to which the Spanish captions have been set, plastering the walls, while the cinemas give endless series of Communist films."

An outstanding example of deliberate confusion is the unreal distinction which Soviet Russia has attempted to establish between her own foreign policy and the policy of the Comintern, described in its official organ as "the general staff of world revolution." The Soviet Government have entered into many agreements with other countries in which they have undertaken in return for trade concessions to refrain from propaganda within the frontiers of the countries concerned. None of these pledges has been kept, and the routine answer of the Soviet in reply to complaints is to insist that the Comintern is an international body entirely distinct from the Soviet Government, whereas, of course, as Lord Snowden stated in *Reynolds Weekly* on March 13th, 1927, the Soviet Government, the Communist International and the Russian Trade Unions are a trinity, three in one and one in three.

The process of Communist infiltration is not confined to political bodies. Communists are worming their way into youth associations, athletic associations and even into the Christian Churches. The violence of their attack on religion is being damped down for the moment in order to entice Christians into their ranks. In the course of a debate at Windsor, Ontario, my opponent, a prominent local Communist, announced that he was a Catholic. "I don't want to

argue with Brother Lunn. I want to co-operate with Brother Lunn." But I do not want to co-operate with Brother Cain. There are times when "Non possumus" should be translated, "We are not Abel."

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CHAPTER V

LA MAIN TENDUE

COMMUNISTS persecute religion where they are in power, but in countries where Communism is weak great efforts are being made to entice Christians into a common front. In France Communists are endeavouring to secure Christian support by advocating "la main tendue," a modern variant of the kiss of Judas. In England the technique of confusion is being exploited by Christian Book Clubs under Left Wing control, and by the steady propagation of a specious travesty of historic Christianity. Christ is no longer reviled. He is patronized. He is no longer attacked as an impostor. He is praised as a man ahead of his age, the Proto-Lenin of Nazareth. Primitive Christianity, so we are assured, was communistic, and modern Communists are concerned to revive that essential Christianity which the ecclesiastical lackeys of the rich have buried beneath layers of superstitious dogma.

"The attack on the rear," to quote Kuusinen's phrase for the new tactics of Moscow, is proving very successful so far as the Churches are concerned. In the United States American Methodists who detest Communism have found it necessary to form a special organization to combat the infiltration of Communism into their Church. Even Christians who have no sympathy with Communism are often infected by an uneasy suspicion that official Christianity has reinterpreted the basic Communism of Christ in the interests of the rich. It is therefore important to examine the Communist misinterpretation of historic Christianity.

Before the War I read an article in *The New Age* in which Christ was attacked as a consistent supporter of the privileged classes. The author quoted from the parable of the talents: "Thou oughtest therefore to have put my money to the

exchangers, and then at my coming I should have received mine own with usury," and deduced that Christ approved of finance capitalism. He cited the parable of the unjust steward to prove that Christ agreed with the lord who commended the unjust steward for his wisdom in conciliating the mammon of unrighteousness. It would certainly be less difficult to prove that Christ supported the social system of the day than to discover the charter of Communism in the New Testament. But neither view is tenable. We are not entitled to assume that Christ approved of the existing social order merely because he nowhere explicitly condemns it. The argument from silence is never more misleading than in the case of one who said, "Render therefore unto Cæsar the things which be Cæsar's, and unto God the things which be God's," but who left Christians to discover which things are Cæsar's.

Christ did not incite the proletariat to liquidate the rich; he urged the rich to liquidate their own avarice. He did not call upon the State to destroy the profit motive; he warned Christians to control their own love of profit. He did not threaten the rich with a party programme of confiscation, but he did threaten them with the loss of eternal salvation. His sanctions were not of this world. He left men free to grow rich, and he left men free to go to Hell.

The motive power of revolutionary Christianity is love, of Communism, hate. "We must know how to hate," writes Lunacharsky, the Soviet Minister of Education, "for only at this price can we conquer the universe." We have travelled a long distance from Dante's "Love that moves the sun and the stars."

It is always dangerous to quote sentences or texts out of their context. "Sell that thou hast, and give to the poor," which is so often quoted as a commandment binding on all Christians, was addressed to a young man who was not only rich but complacent. "All these things have I kept from my youth up: what lack I yet?" And Jesus answered, "If thou wilt be perfect," a qualification seldom quoted, "go and sell that thou hast, and give to the poor." The rich young man denied his special vocation and "went away sorrowful," but

thousands have heard that call and taken the vow of poverty. (1)

All Christians are not called to a life of complete poverty, but none can escape the obligation of charity and self-sacrifice. The Church has always insisted that the rich man is a trustee for his wealth, which should be used in the interests of the community. I commend to the reader a penetrating study of the mediæval attitude to wealth from the pen of a distinguished Socialist. Professor Laski, an active member of the Left Book Club committee, in the opening chapter of a profound and brilliant book, *The Rise of European Liberalism*, attributes the rise of Liberalism to the hatred with which rich men regarded the restraints which Christianity attempted to impose on the accumulation of wealth.

“By the end of the fifteenth century,” writes Professor Laski, “the capitalist spirit began to attain a predominant hold over men’s minds. What does this imply? That the pursuit of wealth for its own sake became the chief motive of human activity. Whereas in the middle ages the idea of acquiring wealth was limited by a body of moral rules imposed under the sanction of religious authority, after 1500 those rules, and the institutions, habits and ideas to which they had given birth, were no longer deemed adequate. They were felt as constraint. They were evaded, criticized, abandoned, because it was felt that they interfered with the exploitation of the means of production. Now conceptions were needed to legitimize the new potentialities of wealth that men had discovered little by little in preceding ages. The liberal doctrine is the philosophic justification of the new practices. . . .

“The mediæval producer, whether in the realms of finance or commerce or manufacture, attained his individual end through an activity which, at every stage, bound him to rules of conduct which assumed the achievement of wealth to be justified only within a framework of ethical principle. He was entitled to sufficiency; but he must attain sufficiency by the use of means deemed morally adequate. He must not make value a mere function of demand. He must not pay only such wages as the labourer can exact. Hours of labour, quality of material,

method of sale, the character of his profit, all of these, to take examples only, are subject to a body of rules worked out, at their base, in terms of certain moral principles the observance of which is deemed to be essential to his heavenly salvation. The middle ages are permeated by the idea of a supreme end beyond this life to which all earthly conduct must conform. The pursuit of wealth for its own sake is deemed incompatible with that idea. Wealth was regarded as a fund of social significance and not of individual possession. The wealthy man did not enjoy it for its own sake; he was a steward on behalf of the community. He was therefore limited both in what he might acquire and in the means whereby he might acquire it. The whole social morality of the middle ages is built upon this doctrine. It is enforced both by the rules of the Church and by the civil law." (2)

The propaganda of Communism obscures the vital distinction between the voluntary surrender of one's own wealth and the compulsory expropriation of other people's property. The early Church at Jerusalem should be compared not to a Communist Society but to a Religious Order. Ananias and Sapphira were not punished because they refused to surrender their property but because they lied. "Whiles it remained, was it not thine own?" said St. Peter, "and after it was sold, was it not in thine own power?" (3) It would be difficult to affirm more explicitly the right to private property which Communists deny. "And distribution was made unto every man according as he had need." (4) The voluntary sharing of the Jerusalem Christians achieved what compulsory Communism with its formula, "To every man according to his needs," has never achieved. Ananias and Sapphira were punished not because they resisted Communism but because they did not practise what they preached. Like the parlour Communists of today, they professed to believe in a code which they had no intention of applying in their own lives.

There is no evidence that the Christians in Rome, Ephesus, Corinth or Philippi "had all things common." On the contrary, the available evidence suggests that their sense of property was far too strongly developed. They were inclined

to forget their obligations to the Apostles. The Philippians are singled out for very special thanks. "No church communicated with me as concerning giving and receiving," wrote St. Paul, "but ye only. For even in Thessalonica ye sent once and again unto my necessity." (5)

It is clear that the spirit of the Jerusalem community had not been transplanted to Corinth. "Who planteth a vineyard, and eateth not of the fruit thereof?" writes St. Paul to the Corinthians, "or who feedeth a flock, and eateth not of the milk of the flock? Say I these things as a man? or saith not the law the same also?" (6)

Nobody who reads the Gospels, or the Epistles of St. Paul, has the least excuse for helping to perpetrate the propaganda myth that Communists are merely seeking to revive the primitive Communism of the Early Church.

The policy of *la main tendue* has achieved a notable success in the alliance of the Left Book Club and the Christian Book Club. The exclusive publisher for both clubs is Mr. Victor Gollancz. The Christian Book Club, of which the General Editor is the Dean of Canterbury, Dr. Hewlett Johnson, will, we are assured, work in close association with the Left Book Club. Members of the Christian Book Club will have the privilege of obtaining practically the whole range of Left Book Club publications at the special Left Book Club price. First in the list of books recommended to the Christian Book Club is *Soviet Communism* by Sidney and Beatrice Webb.

This ill-assorted marriage of Communist and Christian Book Clubs recalls the eighteenth century attempt to undermine supernatural Christianity by means of literary societies. This method was first proposed by Dr. Adam Weishaupt, the founder of the Illuminati. The history of this secret society is related in two contemporary works, the first of which, by John Robison, was published in 1798, and the second, by the Abbé Barruel, in 1803. The Frenchman and the Englishman are in substantial accord, but I have confined myself to the account given by Robison, for the Abbé's judgments were coloured by tragic experiences in the Revolution which had

destroyed so much that he loved. Robison is a good witness, for he disliked with fine impartiality the Illuminati and the Catholic Church. He was, moreover, a prominent Freemason who had attained high rank in Scotch masonry, and was therefore not biased against secret societies as such. He attacked the Illuminati not because they were masonic in origin, but because they refused to respect the basic rule of the British lodges that "nothing touching religion or government shall ever be spoken of in the Lodge." Robison was a man of some position, a professor of Natural Philosophy and Secretary to the Royal Society of Edinburgh. He wrote under a strong sense of duty to warn his countrymen that "An association has been formed for the express purpose of rooting out all the religious establishments, and overturning all the existing governments of Europe." (7)

Adam Weishaupt was born on February 6th, 1748, and was educated by the Jesuits. Those who attach more importance to the influence of secret societies than the present writer is disposed to attach, stress the fact that Weishaupt founded his order on May 1st, 1776, and that May 1st was subsequently chosen as Labour Day. All members of the Illuminati assumed classical names, and here again significance is sometimes attached to the fact that Weishaupt assumed the name "Spartacus" after the slave who led an insurrection in ancient Rome, and that the German Communist leaders at the end of the War described themselves as "Spartacists."

Weishaupt founded the Illuminati in order "to keep down that slavish veneration for Princes which so much disgraces all nations," to abolish "Patriotism, as a narrow-minded principle when compared with true Cosmo-politism," and to undermine the belief in supernatural religion. Weishaupt formulated very careful instructions for the gradual initiation and training of adepts. The secret aims of Illuminism were to be concealed from the novice until he was ripe for initiation into the higher mysteries. Jesus Christ, at first, was to be spoken of with great respect. "No one," the novice should be informed, "paved so sure a way for liberty as our Grand Master Jesus of Nazareth, and if Christ exhorted his disciples to despise riches it was in

order to prepare the world for that community of goods that should do away with property."

This, of course, is the thesis of *la main tendue*. "The squeamish," wrote Weishaupt, "will start at the sight of religious or political novelties; and they must be prepared for them." "As I explain things, no man need be ashamed of being a Christian." Good news, this, for the Christian Book Club.

Weishaupt enjoyed a fair measure of success. "You can't imagine what respect and curiosity my priest-degree has raised; and, which is wonderful, a famous Protestant divine, who is now of the Order, is persuaded that the religion contained in it is the true sense of Christianity. O MAN, MAN! TO WHAT MAY'ST THOU NOT BE PERSUADED." The credulity of divines is apparently no new phenomenon.

The novice was not initiated into the secret motives of the Order until he had reached the higher stages. "You remember," says the Initiator in his discourse to the candidate for the grade of Illuminatus Major, "with what art, with what simulated respect we have spoken to you of Christ and of his gospel. . . . We have had many prejudices to overcome in you before being able to persuade you that the pretended religion of Christ was nothing else than the work of priests, of imposture and of tyranny." Weishaupt stressed the importance of secrecy. The adept was earnestly warned nowhere to disclose the fact that he was a member of the Illuminati.

Weishaupt was no obscure eccentric. He was Professor of Canon Law in the University of Ingolstadt, the prototype of the subversive professor whose influence on the young has proved such a decisive factor in preparing the ground for modern revolution. "He had acquired a high reputation in his profession . . . he brought numbers from the neighbouring states to this university, and gave a *ton* to the studies of the place." Inflated with success, he became less and less discreet, and finally his activities attracted the unfavourable attention of the Elector of Bavaria. In 1783 four Professors of the Marianen Academy, who had joined the Illuminati and subse-

quently resigned from the society, were examined by the Elector. As the result of their disclosures the Order was abolished, Weishaupt was deprived of his Chair, banished from the Bavarian States, and forced to take refuge in Regensburg "on the confines of Switzerland." In 1786 the Bavarian authorities searched the house of a certain Zwack, a member of the Illuminati, and seized documents in his possession. The following year a much larger collection of documents was discovered in the house of another member.

These papers included the project for a sisterhood. "It will be of great service, and procure us both much information *and money*, and will suit charmingly the taste of many of our truest members, who are lovers of the sex. It should consist of two classes, the virtuous and the freer hearted (i.e. those who fly out of the common track of prudish manners); they must not know of each other, and must be under the direction of men, but without knowing it. Proper books must be put into their hands, and such (but secretly) as are flattering to their passions."

In the same handwriting (Zwack's, a member of the Illuminati) were found receipts for aphrodisiacs, for procuring abortion, and for "a composition which blinds or kills when spurted in the face."

Weishaupt, from the security of exile, made no attempt to suggest that these papers had been forged, in spite of the fact that the discovery of "the dreadful medical apparatus" had provoked widespread indignation and horror, which was not assuaged by the lame defences put forward by the Illuminati. "It was said that the dreadful medical apparatus were with propriety in the hands of Counsellor Zwack, who was a judge of a criminal court, and whose duty it was therefore to know such things." "These things," said Weishaupt, "were not carried into effect—only spoken of, and are justifiable when taken in proper connection." His own ideas of what constituted "proper connection" for the use of such "medical apparatus" emerge from past correspondence. In a letter to "Marius" he confesses that he has seduced his sister-in-law, and finds himself in "the most embarrassing situation. . . ."

We have tried every method in our power to destroy the child; and I hope she is determined on every thing." "Spartacus" in a later letter defended the initial lapse and his proposals for eliminating the inconvenient consequences of his liaison. "He had become a public teacher, and was greatly followed; this example might have ruined many young men. The eyes of the Order also were fixed on him. The edifice rested on his credit; had he fallen, he could no longer have been in a condition to treat the matter of virtue so as to make a lasting impression." In the eighteenth century humanitarianism was not firmly established, and would have lost in public esteem by any overt association with "dreadful medical apparatus." "We must preach," wrote Weishaupt, "the warmest concern for humanity, and make people indifferent to all other relations." Weishaupt's indifference to his unborn relations is of less interest than his scheme for the destruction of western civilization by methods which have been either adapted or rediscovered by modern subversives.

"A Literary Society is the most proper form," he writes, "for the introduction of our Order into any state where we are yet strangers." "We must acquire the direction of education—of church management—of the professional chair, and of the pulpit. We must bring our opinions into fashion by every art—spread them among the people by the help of young writers."

Weishaupt explains with great care how Illuminism is to be presented as consistent with Christianity. This pretended resemblance is, of course, "only a cloak, to prevent squeamish people from starting back." "But I cannot but laugh," he writes, "when I think of the ready reception which all this has met with from the grave and learned divines of Germany and of England."

Weishaupt, like Marx, despised the poor, whose prejudices he none the less proposed to exploit. "We must win the common people in every corner. This will be obtained chiefly by means of the schools, and by open, hearty behaviour, show, condescension, popularity, and toleration of their prejudices, which we shall at leisure root out and dispel."

Weishaupt is right to insist on the importance of the schools. We are witnessing in France, and shall shortly witness in England, the effect of entrusting education to those who have been so largely influenced by subversive propaganda. Weishaupt was not the first revolutionary to realize the importance of converting the teaching profession to his views, but he showed real originality in his schemes for influencing the world through literature and through the Press. "We must take care," he writes, "that our writers be well puffed, and that the Reviewers do not depreciate them; therefore we must endeavour by every means to gain over the Reviewers and Journalists; and we must also try to gain the booksellers, who in time will see that it is their interest to side with us." "If a writer publishes anything that attracts notice, and is in itself just, but does not accord with our plan, we must endeavour to win him over, or decry him." "Painting and engraving are highly worth our care."

Weishaupt's plan crystallized in the proposal for "a general Association, which should act in concert over all Germany, and make a full communication of its numerous literary productions by forming societies for reading and instruction." "In every diocese will be established at least one Reading Society, of which near 800 are proposed." Mr. Gollancz's *Left News* announces in its issue for March, 1938, that the total number of Groups formed by the Left Book Club "is now 831." The *Left News*, however, has not yet achieved the objective of Weishaupt's *General Review* or *Gazette*, which was intended to "supplant every other Gazette."

The Left Book Club has been criticized by Left Wing publishers, who resent the monopoly which Mr. Gollancz has fairly earned by his brilliance and by his outstanding services to Socialism. Booksellers regard all book clubs as dangerous competitors. These difficulties were foreseen by Weishaupt. "That we shall speedily get the trade into our hands . . . is conceivable by this, that every writer who unites with us immediately acquires a triple number of readers, and finds friends in every place who promote the sale of his performance; so that his gain is increased manifold, and consequently all

will quit the booksellers, and accede to us by degrees. Had the above-named Association been constructed in this manner, it would, long ere now, have been the only shop in Germany." (8) By these means Weishaupt hoped to obtain complete control of contemporary literature.

"Let us only conceive what superstition will lose, and what instruction must gain by this; when, 1. In every Reading Society the books are selected by our Fraternity; 2. When we have confidential persons in every quarter, who will make it their serious concern to spread such performances as promote the enlightening of mankind, and to introduce them even into every cottage; 3. When we have the loud voice of the public on our side, and since we are able, either to banish into the shade all the fanatical writings which appear in the reviews that are commonly read, or to warn the public against them; and, on the other hand, to bring into notice and recommend those performances alone which give light to the human mind; 4. When we by degrees bring the whole trade of book-selling into our hands (as the good writers will send all their performances into the market through our means), we shall bring it about, that at last the writers who labour in the cause of superstition and restraint will have neither a publisher nor readers."

Many of Weishaupt's proposals have been adopted with great success in modern England. Defenders of tradition are finding it increasingly difficult to find publishers or readers. Daily, weekly and monthly periodicals which were Conservative in the Victorian age are today doing their best to conciliate Left Wing opinion. The reader who doubts this should examine the contemporary Press and ask himself how many papers can fairly be classified as convinced upholders of the traditions of western civilization.

The influence of secret societies is a subject of controversy. Mrs. Arthur Webster (Nesta H. Webster) is the leading exponent of the theory that occult forces, from the abolition of the Templars down to modern times, have directed the attack on western civilization. In support of her conclusions she has marshalled a formidable array of well-documented

facts. On the other hand, the authors of historical text-books used in our schools and universities are either ignorant or disdainful of the evidence on which Mrs. Webster relies. Historians in the Whig tradition who believe that revolutions against religious or monarchical authority are enlightened in their objectives, however regrettable the excesses which are their incidental accompaniment, will be indisposed to consider facts which suggest a universal plot against civilization. An Illuminatus intruded into the classic façade of Whig history would be as incongruous as a gargoyle on the Farnese in Rome. Moreover, an historian who concerns himself with secret societies risks a certain loss of professional prestige, for he risks being regarded as a sufferer from a conspiracy complex, but the question as to whether a particular conspiracy exists cannot be disposed of by proving that cranks have believed in non-existent conspiracies. I do not maintain that Mrs. Webster has proved her case, but I do contend not only that she has established a *prima facie* case for investigation, but also that the resolute refusal to discuss that case is not in accordance with the canons of scientific history. For though I am unpersuaded that secret societies have exercised the influence with which Mrs. Webster credits them, they have played a part, if only a small part, in the revolutionary movements from 1789 down to modern times. It would, for instance, be most misleading to omit from a study of contemporary French history all reference to the influence of the Grand Orient. On the other hand, I do not think that Mrs. Webster makes enough allowance for the incurable boy-scoutishness of the human species. Man might be defined as the only animal that invents ritual. The secrecy and ceremonies of secret societies appeal so irresistibly to so many different types of men that it is unnecessary to postulate occult motives to explain their popularity. "These lodges," writes Robison, "were frequented by persons of all ranks, and of every profession. The idle and the frivolous found amusement, and glittering things to tickle their satiated fancies." Again, it is not necessary to assume that Weishaupt seriously believed in the possibility of overthrowing contemporary civilization, for

the love of power can be gratified on a smaller scale than in the exercise of world domination. Robison indeed remarks, "Spartacus might tickle the fancy of his Order with the notion of ruling the world; but I imagine that his own immediate object was ruling the Order."

Again, it is unnecessary to credit all the Illuminati, even those of higher grades, with a detestation of Christian civilization as such. Kings and ecclesiastics are not divinely protected from such frailties of human nature as the abuse of power. The Illuminati, we may be sure, made many recruits among men who had a legitimate grievance against both Church and State, and who were anxious to reform rather than to abolish existing institutions. It is unhistorical not to distinguish between the different schools of revolutionary thought. The differences between Voltaire, Rousseau, Turgot and Helvetius were as marked as those which today divide Bernard Shaw, Aldous Huxley, Bertrand Russell and John Strachey. The Illuminati, moreover, attracted not only convinced critics of contemporary religious and state philosophy, but needy adventurers who believed that they could hardly fail to benefit from any radical change in the conduct of affairs. "Though the doctrines of universal liberty and equality," wrote Robison, "as imprescriptible rights of man, might sometimes startle those who possessed the advantage of fortune, there were thousands of younger sons, and men of talents without fortune, to whom these were agreeable sounds."

In the eighteenth century men joined political societies much as modern men join golf clubs. Politics provided, as sport now provides, a subject of all but universal interest. But whereas the golfer is not hampered by vigilant police, the eighteenth century equivalent of the modern sportsman was irritated by the intermittent vigilance of inefficient officials. Secret societies provided the politically unorthodox with a convenient venue for the discussion of their pet panaceas, but these societies were less the cause than a symptom of widespread unrest. If England were conquered and annexed by Germany the M.C.C. might assume the character of a secret society, and men might foregather in the pavilion to plot rebellion against

the Nazi rulers, but the M.C.C. would not be the cause of anti-Nazi unrest but a convenience for the organization of revolution.

Let us distinguish between facts and hypotheses. It is a fact that the methods which are now being exploited with some success by modern revolutionaries are similar to those advocated by Weishaupt in the eighteenth century; it is a hypothesis that the revolutionary movements of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, such as the Italian Carbonari, the First International, and the Comintern, are directly descended from the Illuminati. It is a hypothesis, not a fact, that the Illuminati are still in existence, and in secret control of the world revolutionary movement. I am unconvinced by the evidence which Mrs. Webster and others cite in support of these hypotheses, though I admit that many of their facts suggest these conclusions. The resemblances which I have noted between the tactics of the Left Book Club and the scheme for Literary Associations suggested by Weishaupt can be explained without invoking an apostolic succession from Weishaupt down to the modern leaders of world revolution. It is possible, perhaps probable, that some modern Socialists have studied Weishaupt's writings, but it is on the balance more probable that his ideas have been in the air since he died, and have influenced revolutionary leaders who have never heard of Weishaupt or his Order.

It is only fair, since I have stressed the resemblances between Weishaupt's proposed Literary Associations and the Left Book Club, to point out the points of difference. Weishaupt was an apostate Christian, whereas Mr. Victor Gollancz, a member of a very distinguished Jewish family, comes of a long line of Rabbis, and has an emotional, if not an intellectual, respect for religion. He holds a view, which is widely held among thinking Jews, that Jesus Christ was an inspired prophet, and that his message is the key to many of the world's social problems. He denies Christ's divine claims, and rejects supernatural Christianity, but it seems to me unreasonable to attack Mr. Gollancz for drawing logical conclusions from his premisses. It is his premisses rather than his

conclusions or methods which invite criticism and attack, and it is only fair to add that whereas Wishaupt advocated subterranean methods, Mr. Gollancz makes no attempt to conceal his advocacy of extreme Socialism or his ambition to transform old-fashioned Christians into members of the Christian Book Club. I do not believe that Mr. Gollancz is either enlightened or Illuminatus. On the contrary, I regard him as a brilliant advocate of an unenlightened and reactionary philosophy, and I regret his success in persuading Canterbury trippers to join his personally conducted tour to the shrine of a dictator in whom Chaucer would have seen a crude plagiarist of old-fashioned and pre-Christian tyrannies.

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CHAPTER VI

“PAS D'ENNEMIS À GAUCHE”

REVOLUTIONARY leaders must conform to this basic principle of revolutionary dynamics or follow their victims to the scaffold. The moderate reformist cannot defeat the reactionaries unless he accepts the alliance of genuine revolutionaries. The motive power of all social revolutions is derived partly from the just indignation of men with real grievances, and partly from the envy of those condemned by natural defects to inferiority. Revolutions are initiated by men whose attacks upon the privileges of a selfish minority are applauded by the moderately successful who hope to share those privileges, but no revolution can be arrested at the point where its chief architects have received the reward of their labours. There will always remain parties and classes whose status has not been improved. The extremist who has no enemies to the Left can always pose as the true champion of the dispossessed, and denounce the reformist, enthroned in the seats of the dispossessed reactionaries, as the secret enemy of the poor.

The reformist is often a genuine democrat with a naïve faith in his power to retain the confidence of the people. The revolutionary is more of a realist. He may, like Lenin, be sincere in his ambition to benefit the poor, and yet have no faith in their revolutionary fervour. Lenin, like the French revolutionaries, achieved power by the support of land-hungry peasants, but the peasant, once his land hunger is satisfied, soon reverts to his traditionally conservative outlook. Revolutionaries are therefore forced by the logic of revolt to destroy the democratic constitutions by the promise of which the reformists have attained power. No revolutionaries would be retained in power for long if they were so foolish as to hold

plebiscites. Mrs. Webster quotes a series of contemporary documents which prove that the revolutionary leaders of France were well aware of their own intense unpopularity within four years of seizing power. The Revolutionary emissaries, in their reports to Paris, record with regret the stubborn conservatism of the French.

"The labourer is estimable, but he is a very bad patriot in general"; and from Marseilles, "In spite of our efforts to republicanize the people . . . our trouble and fatigue are almost fruitless. . . . The mind of the public is still detestable amongst the proprietors, artisans, and day-labourers"; in Alsace "Republican sentiments are still in the cradle, fanaticism is extreme and unbelievable; the spirit of the inhabitants is in no way revolutionary." (1)

Buzot, the Girondist, a type of the democratic reformist, described the state of France after 1793 in words which could be applied with little change to modern Russia or to Republican Spain during the Civil War. "One must not dissemble . . . in the towns they pretend to be 'sans-culotte,' because those who are not are guillotined; in the country places they obey the most unjust summons to serve (in the army), because those who do not go are guillotined. The guillotine, that is the great reason for everything. . . . *This people is Republican by blows of the guillotine.* But look closely at things, penetrate into the homes of families, sound all hearts, and if they dare open themselves to you, you will read there hatred against the government that fear imposes on them, you will see that all their desires, all their hopes, tend towards the Constitution of 1791." (2)

The French Revolution proved that it is but a short step from power to the guillotine. During the first eight months of the movement two parties who helped to destroy the old régime disappeared, the "Parlementaires" who had demanded the convocation of the National Assembly, and the moderates who had controlled that Assembly for five months. The "Parlementaires" had been naïve enough to hope that they could dictate the decrees of the Assembly just as they had dictated the Royal decrees. They were soon to discover to their

cost, as Gaxotte remarks, that popular sovereignty is less tolerant than personal sovereignty. "Impoverished, without credit and without power, the moderates could only disappear and grumble." And Gaxotte adds in words which are as true of the Russian and Spanish as of the French Revolution, "These successive eliminations of the less violent by the more violent represent the basic law of the Revolution. . . ." (3)

The "Constituents," that is, the moderate reformists, "had appealed to the most turbulent elements in the capital against the Court and against the privileged. . . . From this moment they were the prisoners of the alliance, prisoners of the formula *pas d'ennemis à gauche*,* which they had tacitly but meekly accepted." (4)

The French Revolution produced in the Girondists the archetype of the anti-traditionalist reformer destined to perish in the Revolution which he has provoked. "They believed," writes Gaxotte, "that the truth had been revealed to them, and their fanaticism had no limits. But they were consistent and sincere. They had a horror of the *canaille*. They desired a Government constitutional and respected, a Government which should function according to revolutionary principles but which, once elected, should be protected from insurrection and from the *coup de main* of the Faubourg Saint-Antoine. . . . They objected to all intervention of the State in the realm of production and commerce. Respect for property, for Free Trade, and for the free circulation of agricultural products were the axioms of their economic policy. . . . They hoped that they could liberate themselves from the violence which had carried them to power and without which they would have been powerless. Against the Constitution and against the King they had, with no remorse, made use of Santerre" (the executioner) "and his men, 'contemptible instruments of a Revolution which is useful, glorious and necessary,' wrote Condorcet. But they were enraged by the reflection that their allies of yesterday were their masters of today. The law is sacred since they made it. After Mounier, Mirabeau and Barnave, it is their turn to say 'The Revolution ends with us.'

* No enemies to the left.

The Revolution was indeed to end one day, but only when it had developed its principles to their logical consequences. And they had not yet arrived at that point. The Parliamentary Radicalism of the Girondists was not a goal, but a stage towards that Communist dictatorship which appeared among the Montagnards." (5)

In the last days of October, 1793, the leading Girondists were charged before the Revolutionary Tribunal, and on October 31st the "Twenty-One" were executed in the Place de la Révolution.

"Forward from Liberalism!" exclaims Stephen Spender, a young man with a famous Liberal name. Gladstone and Asquith, these *were* thy gods, O Israel! But the caravan moves on, and all roads, save one, lead to Leningrad. "Le radicalisme parlementaire des Girondins n'est pas une fin, ce n'est qu'une étape vers le communisme dictatorial." (6) There is no new thing under the sun, and there is no new thing under the Red Star, for nobody is more reactionary than the advanced Progressive.

The recurring pattern can be traced in the French Revolution of 1848. The reformists had exploited against the King the defects of the electoral law, and had demanded universal suffrage as the panacea for all evils, but the first preoccupation of the revolutionary leaders, when they had dethroned the King, was to postpone the elections. Louis Blanc urged that it was in the interest of his party and of the extreme Left to postpone the elections *sine die*. "Knowing well," writes Jules Bertaut, "that the country was not Socialist, and that an election would result in a Constituent Assembly of a more moderate complexion, he was anxious to exploit the chance which had given him dictatorial powers, and retain his position as long as possible." (7) He accordingly passed round the word that "the country people were not ripe for universal suffrage, that it was necessary to *diriger* the elections." Louis Blanc was enthusiastically supported by the revolutionary clubs, who had suddenly discovered that the demand for universal suffrage, with which they had identified themselves while the King was on the throne, was a counter-revolutionary slogan. "La

réaction relève la tête!—Ajournement des élections!' furent les mots d'ordre lancés."* (8)

Meanwhile the poet-politician Lamartine, a moderate reformist at the head of a Revolution which he could no longer control, attempted to apply the revolutionary principle "Pas d'ennemis à gauche." "All his efforts," writes Bertaut, "were devoted to the task of detaching himself from moderate democracy in order to ensure his acceptance by the Red democracy. . . . (9) Perhaps Lamartine's unarrested drift towards the extreme Left may be interpreted as the effect of the fear by which he was obsessed, of being accused of compromising with the Right. It was the same attitude which in our days was discernible in a Raymond Poincaré, overwhelmed, almost terrified by the thought that the orthodoxy of his Republicanism might be questioned, and capable of every stupidity to ensure against being credited with such views." (10)

The democratic reformists were the architects of the first Russian Revolution which replaced Tsarism by a democratic Government, and it was this Russian democracy, not Russian Tsarism, that was destroyed by the Bolshevik Revolution. "In time of revolution," said Danton, "authority remains with the greatest scoundrels." The moderates who helped to bring the Spanish Popular Front into power in February, 1936, soon lost authority. The President, Alcalá Zamora, a Radical who helped to drive the King from the throne, yielded to the extremists and illegally dissolved the Cortes, only to learn that "in times of revolution authority rests with the greatest scoundrels." Writing in exile some weeks later he describes how "the mob seized the balloting papers with the result that false returns were sent in from many places . . . several members of minority groups were expelled from the Cortes . . . as soon as the support of that group was no longer required it became a mere puppet in the hands of the extremists." (11)

It is not only in revolutionary periods that reformists are forced towards the Left. The inescapable law of revolutionary

* They promulgated the words of command: "Reaction raises its head! Adjourn the elections!"

dynamics determines the evolution of Left Wing politicians. The American Federation of Labour, for instance, is similar in political complexion to the British Labour Party. It is reformist, democratic and hostile to violence, but its leaders, like Lamartine, are terrified of being accused of making terms with the Right. They detest the Communists and dread their influence, but they are forced to dissemble their hate. They find it difficult to avoid appearing on the same platform as Communists, for the Communists are expert at organizing meetings in support of causes which appeal not only to American Labour but to many American conservatives.

When Tom Mooney was convicted of a bomb outrage, the majority of Americans were far from satisfied that his guilt had been established beyond reasonable doubt, and were relieved when his death sentence was commuted to a life sentence. The agitation for his release, which was eventually crowned with success, was supported by men of all political parties. The Communists were not slow to exploit this opportunity for a "United Front" against oppression. Their concern for Tom Mooney would be more convincing but for their record in the case of Hendricks and Beal, proletarian champions who were sentenced to long terms of imprisonment after the Gastonia trials, who escaped to Soviet Russia and returned from the Workers' Paradise to face the chance of imprisonment in the States. That Hendricks and Beal should prefer an American prison cell to Soviet "freedom" was, of course, disconcerting, and it is not surprising that Hendricks should be "ignored and forgotten in his cell" by American Communists, but the *Daily Worker* of New York descended to the lowest depths of perfidy in its issue of January 12th, 1936.

"BEAL OUT OF JAIL

"But Beal is not in jail. At this very moment he is freely circulating somewhere between New York and California."

"'But Beal is not in jail,'" adds Fred Beal in his book *Proletarian Journey*, "is more than an open expression of regret. It is an invitation to the agents of capitalist justice in

North Carolina to do the Stalinist bidding. In this incredible denunciation of one of our leading 'artists in uniform' one can discern the disappointment over the inefficiency of the capitalist police as compared with the beloved OGPU." (12)

All of which suggests that the Communists were less interested in Tom Mooney himself than in his propaganda value to their cause. It was the American Federation of Labour which was supposed to be in charge of the Mooney protest meeting. "As one tried to enter the Civic Auditorium," writes Father Raymon Feely, S.J., "on the street outside, all of the literature being sold was Communist. This the Committee could not prohibit, as it was outside the auditorium. Inside, however, the book and pamphlet concession was granted to the Communist Book Shop of San Francisco. The song played this year, and sung last year, was 'Solidarity,' which is to be found on page 45 of the official book of Communist songs for America. The chairman announced that the ushers, or rather usherettes, were members of the 'Young Communist League,' and they received tremendous applause. Is it possible that if the A.F. of L. feels so strongly on the Mooney case it can't get American young men and women who believe in American labour principles to act as ushers? Why, in the name of all that the A.F. of L. stands for, do they permit young men and women who carry in their pockets a booklet binding them to the strictest party discipline of the Communist Party of Moscow to take up the collection at an A.F. of L. meeting?" (13)

Communists under party discipline on the West Coast turn up a hundred per cent strong to meetings which the more easy-going non-Communist workmen attend in smaller numbers. If the Communists cannot carry a pet scheme or donation to a Communist-controlled object such as the recreational centres in which sport is exploited as a means of transforming young athletes into Communists, they prolong the meeting until the opposition is reduced in numbers and postpone the vote until they can be sure of a majority. In wet weather the Communists turn up in force, the opposition stay at home. Moderate workmen are gradually accepting Communist leadership because "the Communists get results." "We don't care what

a man's politics are," they argue, "provided he is out for better wages and working conditions." The nature of the results achieved by Communists is seldom subject to the disquieting test of research. Their activity and propaganda is accepted as the equivalent of the objectives which they profess to achieve. Meanwhile, responsible leaders of American labour are being subjected to increasing pressure in favour of the United Front policy.

The same tactics are being employed to destroy the British Labour Party. The Independent Labour Party has recently published a pamphlet in which the "brutal gangsterdom" of the Communists in control of Barcelona is exposed by Mr. John McGovern, and the facts about the Stalin régime are gradually percolating through to the British working classes. But Labour is finding it increasingly difficult to resist infiltration.

The fate that awaits Great Britain if the Popular Front captures power may be deduced from Mr. G. D. H. Cole's pamphlet, *Socialist Control of Industry*. The Government is to be empowered to take over any patent "on terms of payment to be arranged subsequently." (14) An Emergency Powers Act is to be passed to give the Government wide powers for prompt action, including the establishment of a "Property Claims Tribunal." This body is to consist "of course" of Socialists, and it is to be unhampered by "a narrow contractual view of its functions." (15) "Our object," writes Mr. Cole, "is expropriation, not a mere change in the forms of claims to ownership." (16)

"The new Socialist Government," he writes, "will have far too much on its hands to find time in Parliament for the consideration of a number of detailed measures, dealing largely with secondary points. Parliament, however hard it worked, could not possibly cope with the stream of activity that any such method would thrust upon it. Moreover, the Socialist Government will not be able to spare several hundreds of its picked men to sit day after day in Parliament listening to one another talk, when it will need for vital administrative and pioneering work every competent Socialist on whom it can lay its hands. It will be best, as soon as Parliament has conferred

on the Government the necessary emergency powers, for it to meet only so often as it is needed for some clearly practical purpose, leaving the Socialist administrators to carry on with the minimum of day-to-day interference. There will be no time for debating while we are busy building the Socialist Commonwealth." (17)

The tradition of Anglo-Saxon democracy is based on respect for minorities and on faith in free discussion. Where this tradition disappears democracy is doomed, for where democracy is interpreted as the tyrannical right of a majority to impose its will on a silenced opposition, the result will be a Left Wing dictatorship or, as in Spain, civil war. Fascism is no danger in England where the true enemies of democracy are those who are most fervent in their protestations of loyalty to an institution which they have every intention of destroying.

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CHAPTER VII

THE FOUR STEPS

"LOUDLY as the Barcelona Government may denounce the unprovoked aggression of General Franco's rebels, their mentors in Moscow have already claimed the instigation of the civil war as a triumph of their own subversive diplomacy. For this is one of the essential stages of the desired revolution, which must, it is dogmatically asserted, follow the same course in every country. These steps to the compulsory millennium are four in number: the first is the 'United Front,' the second strikes and disorders, the third civil war, and the fourth Soviet government. . . . The purged Comintern may be expected to go forward with the ruthless efficiency of dictatorship, and there is no reason for England to expect immunity."

Leading Article in *The Times*, Tuesday, May 3rd, 1938.

"When the simple appeal of the Popular Front is made, remember that behind it are the gunmen, firing squads, machine guns, knuckle-dusters, leaded batons, bloody toe-plates of boots that have kicked men to death, steel cages, chains and handcuffs, a lying propaganda machine that destroys the characters of men and women, cemeteries of dead bodies in Spain and Russia, and a Russian espionage machine in each country, including Great Britain, that has yet to be unmasked."

John McGovern, M.P., in *Forward*, July 2nd, 1938.

In the Spanish War of Ideologies *The Times* has maintained its historic reputation for accurate and objective news, a reputation which does not imply a neutral editorial policy. It is the function of an editor to ensure that all the material evidence is presented in the news columns before summing up in the editorial. The famous Guernica story illustrates the policy of *The Times*. Mr. G. L. Steer, who was not a regular correspondent but a free-lance journalist with strong views on Fascism, offered *The Times* occasional contributions, among them his story of the alleged air bombing of Guernica. He was not an eye-witness of the events he described, but *The Times* published his account and followed it up with a telegram from its regular correspondent, who disputed Mr. Steer's conclusions, and asserted that the destruction in Guernica was caused not by bombs but by "exploding mines which were

unscientifically laid to cut roads." (1) The Guernica controversy, which has been analyzed by Mr. Robert Sencourt in one of the best books on the Spanish War, *Spain's Ordeal*, (2) is irrelevant to the theme of this book, and I only allude to it here to illustrate the impartiality of the news editor of *The Times*. The editorial policy of *The Times* has been criticized both in Nationalist and in Republican Spain. Its original bias in favour of the Republicans, the Government which Great Britain had recognized, was counteracted by the historic reports of its Madrid correspondent of terrorism and violence, and its subsequent slight prejudice in favour of Franco was neutralized by the Barcelona bombing, and by the unreadiness of General Franco to accept the British non-intervention proposals. In this book I am only concerned with the Spanish War as a phase of the struggle against Communism, and with the editorial attitude of *The Times* in so far as it helps us to assess the strength and to judge the policy of the Comintern. It would be unreasonable, even for those who disagree with the policy of *The Times*, not to attach considerable weight to its editorial verdict on issues which are matters not of opinion but of fact. The leading article from which I quote at the head of this chapter enforces the view of *The Times* correspondent in Madrid that "Madrid is the biggest experiment that Communism has ever raised in the West." (3) I therefore offer no apology for identifying myself with a view which *The Times* has endorsed, and for selecting as a classic example of Comintern tactics the events which led up to the Spanish Civil War.

In this book I am only concerned with the Spanish Revolution in so far as it illustrates what *The Times* in a leading article has described as four steps in the Comintern's advance to the compulsory millennium, the United Front, Strikes and Disorders, Civil War, and Soviet Government. (4) I can understand, though I do not endorse, the position of Englishmen who believe that British interests would be imperilled by a Franco victory, and I can allow for the prejudice in my country against the general who has been forced by Russian and French intervention to seek Italian and German

aid. Many democrats in our own war for democracy were embarrassed by the fact that they were the allies of Tsarist Russia, but in moments of urgent peril we cannot be too particular about our allies, and even the most anti-Communist of Englishmen would not have disdained an alliance with Soviet Russia had Mr. Chamberlain failed to avoid a war against Germany.

The question of General Franco's future relations with his present allies is a question of opinion on which reasonable men may differ; the question of Moscow's influence in Republican Spain is a question of fact on which *The Times*, the supporters of General Franco, and the Independent Labour Party of Great Britain are in agreement. The dominant rôle of the Comintern in Republican Spain is only denied either by extreme propagandists or by people whose judgment has been warped by their dread of Nazi Germany.* Illusions about Communism and contempt for the influence of the Comintern are more common among those who write from the security of comfortable British homes than among the working journalists within or near the frontier of Soviet Russia. On May 3rd, 1938, *The Times* gave prominence to a special article, *Design for World Revolution*, from the pen of its Riga correspondent, and endorsed his main conclusions in a remarkable leading article. The Riga correspondent summed up the situation in these words:

"A 'united front' had already been formally established in

* Such as the Duchess of Atholl in her book *Searchlight on Spain*.

I might illustrate her methods by her use of my own book. Five times she attributes to me statements which I did not make, and opinions which I do not hold. Three passages quoted from other authors are attributed to me by footnote references to my book. In no case does my own interpretation of these passages agree with the views which the Duchess attributes to me in her text, which is not surprising since in one such passage she has inserted two words of her own between the quotation marks which indicate an alleged quotation from *The Epic of the Alcazar*. The words inserted give to the passage quoted a meaning which the author, Major Geoffrey McNeill-Moss, indignantly disclaims. Elsewhere she has, as she now admits, attributed to me a statement which I did not make, and worst of all, she quotes my book as an authority for an insulting libel on the Nationalists without specifying the page of my book in the footnote. She now pleads "pressure of time" for her failure to give me a precise reference, a failure which is understandable since I made no such statement.

France. Now, with Paris as its *point d'appui*, the Comintern engineered the outbreak of civil war in Spain.

"No secret was made of this achievement in Russia. Spaniards were brought to Moscow in great numbers, trained in the art of civil war, then sent back as leaders to put their training into practice with the aid of non-Communist 'Socialists' under the banner of the 'united popular front.' One batch of more than thirty left Moscow in March, 1936, after a stay of about a year, and their intentions to carry out the programme of the Comintern were described in *Trud* of March 30th. Further efforts and successes in Spain were recorded at length in the Comintern's official journal Nos. 4 and 7 of 1936 as the work of the Comintern, special credit being given to Dimitroff and the Paris centre. . . .

"All the countries of Europe are treated individually, with the same prescription: the 'United Front'; strikes and disorders; civil war; Soviet government. None of these stages can be skipped."

On this *The Times* comments in a leading article in the same issue:

"It is characteristic of these ambiguous liberators that they are more dangerous to their allies than to their enemies. Against the established régimes of Italy, Germany, and Japan the campaign has been allowed to flag. . . . It is over the weakening of government in the countries with which the Moscow Foreign Office ostensibly makes common cause that its astral body, the Comintern, rejoices. Disorder in lands under 'bourgeois' rule is itself an omen of hope, and war is to be welcomed because, under the cloak of propaganda for peace or democracy, it may be converted into a civil war of classes."

(4)

I now propose to examine in detail the four steps on the road to Soviet power as defined in the leading article of *The Times* from which I have quoted, and as exemplified in the recent history of Spain. Spanish Marxism dates from 1869. The Marxists helped to bring about the revolution of 1873, and exploited to the full the opportunities which that Revolution provided for murder, arson and loot. In 1931 the King

abdicated after the Municipal Elections, which had given him a decisive majority in Spain, had revealed the fact that the great towns were strongly Republican. After the abdication of the King the revolutionary movement developed on traditional lines. The Spanish "Girdondists" proved as impotent as their French predecessors to control the rapid movement to the Left. The more moderate Republicans found themselves unable to control the more violent elements in the population, and were forced to pander to their vices in order to attain their support. "When I was in Madrid," writes Mr. Sencourt, "after the fall of the monarchy in 1931, I asked the Republican Minister for Justice and Worship about his programme of reform. 'One of the first,' he answered, 'is to abrogate the laws against carnal violence: for in a climate such as this, people should not be punished for outbreaks of passion.'" (5) Mr. Sencourt adds, "What was to be noticed at once was the return of pornography to the book-stalls, and the fragrance of prostitution." (6) *The Times* correspondent reported various acts of violence, and added, "the incidents, coupled with the mutiny in the Foreign Legion and the reported strongly worded protest of the Civil Guard at Barcelona against the flow of filth spewed forth from the foaming mouth of Communism are signs of a rising spirit of indiscipline—corroborated by the unusual series of robberies and other crimes during the last week." (7) The Minister of the Interior resigned after a weak and terrified Cabinet had forbidden him to take preventative measures against the burning of convents. The mob did not confine itself to the destruction of religious buildings. A gang of fifty youths burned a great engineering college and a library of periodicals in Madrid, and a school in a poor quarter with the words "Free Instruction" written over its portals. (8) At Malaga a storm of persecution broke out. "The Bishop's Palace was bombarded," wrote *The Times* correspondent, "and set alight with petrol. Its priceless archives were burnt and other valuables pillaged. Churches, convents and seminaries have been destroyed. . . . Martial law was declared, but there were no police to enforce it. With the exception of the Cathedral, the most important churches and convents

have been burning. Priceless carvings are being ruthlessly burnt. Silver and gold vessels, jewellery and damasks are being openly pillaged without interference on the part of the authorities." (9)

The Revolutionaries in power proved to be as contemptuous of democratic opinion as all other revolutionaries who profess democratic sentiments for propaganda purposes. Azaña openly proclaimed that he was going "to shock liberal opinion." (10) He was sanguine, for liberal opinion did nothing to suppress crime. He took no steps to defend churches and colleges from arson or priests and nuns from assault. Within a year of the establishment of the Republic the cautious *Times* correspondent admitted in a message from Madrid, "evidence continues to accumulate that the Spanish Republic is being made the victim of a vast conspiracy against law and order . . . in the background there is reason to believe the existence of clandestine and powerful forces." (11)

In October, 1932, the *Communist International* announced that "Revolution is taking place in Spain, and at the present time the mass movement is seething and showing tendencies to develop into an armed revolt of the people." In September, 1933, an important state in the formation of the Popular Front was achieved, for the Socialists and Communists announced their alliance, and representatives of both parties declared at a meeting in Madrid that "only a Marxist régime would satisfy them." (12)

Meanwhile the country was losing all confidence in the Government, with the result that the General Election of October, 1933, returned a Cortes in which the Right and Centre controlled the majority. Within a year the Communists instigated an armed rebellion against the Government as a protest against the constitutional decision of the Radical Premier to invite three Conservatives to join the Cabinet. The Premier, Lerroux, a Radical in politics, felt, as *The Times* correspondent said, that "he could not exclude the strongest Parliamentary group from a share in the government of the Republic in deference to a turbulent minority." (13)

The rebels, who were suppressed without difficulty in

Madrid, offered formidable resistance to the Government in the Asturias. The rising was marked by characteristic acts of Communist violence and vandalism. "The horrors of Oviedo," writes Mr. Sencourt, "were on so vast a scale, they were accompanied by such evidence not only of arson and wanton outrage, but of mutilation, torture, rape and murder, that they provided Spain with an example in comparison with which all former acts of violence were gentle." (14) The rebels burnt the cathedral with its beautiful Cámara Santa, the Institute of Education and the famous University Library. Pieck, a German Communist, in his report to the Seventh Congress of the Communist International, gave the Comintern credit for the Asturias rising. *The Communist International* (November 25th, 1934) sums up the Civil War in the Asturias in these words: "The workers of the Asturias fought for the Soviet power under the leadership of the Communists," and repeated this claim a month later. "The Soviet regime ruled in the Asturias. The Communists revealed themselves as the true vanguard of the fighting workers. The power of the Soviet was immediately established in the occupied areas. The confederation of workers and peasants was becoming the instrument of Soviet power. It dictated immediately a series of revolutionary measures and proceeded to carry them into effect." (15)

Two years before a German or Italian soldier landed in Spain, Russia had subsidized an armed rebellion against the legal Government of the day without provoking any protests from those British or American progressives who have bitterly denounced General Franco as a rebel for acting in 1936 as their Spanish friends acted in 1934. The Comintern, though defeated in Asturias, were by no means despondent, for they had achieved the first of four steps on the road to power. The United Front had been established.

On January 7th, 1936, the President, Alcalá Zamora, on the threat of another uprising, dissolved the Cortes rather than summon the Conservative leader, Gil Robles, to power. The so-called "legal Government" secured a majority by methods which Alcalá Zamora described in

damning terms. It is possible that the Radical President of the Spanish State might be better informed on the electoral methods of his own Party than British and American Radicals. He tells us that false returns were sent in from many places, and that candidates, "although they had been beaten, were proclaimed deputies." (16) The Popular Front, owing to the peculiarities of the Spanish electoral system, though they failed to gain a majority of votes, secured a majority of seats. The Comintern had reached the second of the four steps on the road to Soviet Power, the step which, as *The Times* explains, consists in fermenting strikes and disorders.

The Comintern rehearsed in Spain during the four months that followed the tragedy which will be re-enacted in Great Britain if Mr. Strachey's "Peace Front" obtains power at the next election.

"Work was proceeding smoothly," said Sir Auckland Geddes, Chairman of the Rio Tinto Company, "the trade prospects looked well. Then came the elections and the victory of the parties of the Left: what can I say of the situation now? For fifteen years we have avoided serious strikes and disturbances at the mines, for which I think we must distribute the credit between our staff and our workmen in Spain. Now we hardly know where we are. We have had men pushed back onto our pay-roll for whom we have no economic work, and within the last few days we have had an irritating stoppage, the result of demands for compensation for what amounts to accusation of wrongful dismissals of men who were in fact in prison for taking part in the revolutionary movement in October, 1934, and to whom, naturally, we did not pay wages while they were in gaol." (17)

During March, 1936, the revolutionary tempo accelerated. From all over Spain came reports of "rioting and arson." (18) "The police," reported *The Times*, "were doing nothing to interfere." And *The Times* correspondent added, "The censor is implacable with organs of Conservative opinion, but allows the extremists to carry on a campaign calculated to encourage their readers to carry on the so-called anti-Fascist campaign." (19)

The situation rapidly grew worse. Mobs began to "take possession of the trains, mines, properties, and there were murderous affrays with the police." (20)

During this period Mr. Arthur Bryant, the historian, travelled through Spain. "What I saw astonished and appalled me. Over the land lay a sense of brooding terror and tragedy. For many months past, the apostles of international Communism had been sowing the seeds of a creed of hatred in a rich soil of ignorance and destitution, long prepared by generations of misgovernment. Now the sins of the father were being visited upon the children. Government, as we know it in this fortunate country, had already ceased to exist in many parts, and peaceful and law-abiding folk were at the mercy of gangs of extremists and local roughs, and could look for no protection from the powers that were. Every sort of outrage was being committed, at first furtively and then with increasing openness by the poor degraded sub-human creatures who unhappily are to be found in all places in Spain. Anyone who was known to be religious or to have property, however little, or who had taken any part on the Conservative side in politics, was liable to attack." (21)

The Spanish Communists were proving apt disciples of their great master, Lenin. "After a series of conflicts," wrote Lenin, "and political and economic battles, increasingly numerous and violent, the class struggle becomes transformed inevitably into an armed struggle." (22)

The Spanish Communists were getting ready for the third step—Civil War.

On June 16th Gil Robles presented to the Cortes the balance sheet of Communist violence: 170 churches destroyed by fire; 251 people burnt to death; 269 murdered; 1,287 wounded; assaults of various kinds 205; assaults 38; attempted assaults 33; general strikes 113; partial strikes 218; newspaper offices burned 10; cases of attempted arson 33; clubs attacked and burned 69; other acts of violence 149. Robles' charges were neither denied nor refuted in the Cortes, and were published in the official Parliamentary records. Progressive opinion throughout the world condoned in silence the terrorism which

was making a farce of Parliamentary Government. "A country," exclaimed Gil Robles, "can live as a monarchy or as a republic, with a parliament or a president, under a dictator or a Soviet; but it cannot live in anarchy, and anarchy lives in Spain today. We ask you to bring to an end the condition in which Spain is living. This situation cannot go on." (23)

The intellectuals who had helped to bring the Popular Front into power were beginning to savour the bitter fruits of "tragic misapprehension." "Intellectuals," wrote *The Times*, "whose hopes were in the new regime now stare horror-stricken and desperate for portents of a saviour." (24)

In England the Leader of the Opposition is paid a salary of £2,000 a year, and treated with respect and consideration by the Government. In the Spain of the Popular Front pistols were brandished in the faces of the Opposition, they were howled down in the Cortes and threatened with personal violence. "Their uninterrupted presence in Parliament, and their bold and eloquent protests," writes the Marquis de Merry del Val, "should always be remembered as one of the finest records of moral and physical courage extant." (25) "You can deprive me of my life," said Sotelo, "but more you cannot do." "You have made your last speech," screamed La Passionaria. She was right. Those who did not wish Christian Spain to join the Union of Soviet Republics realized that the time for speeches was at an end. The murder of Sotelo by police in uniform was the spark which set fire to Spain. Franco's rising anticipated by a few days the second and third steps in the Comintern's campaign for the capture of Spain.

As far back as January, 1933, *The Times* correspondent reported an interview with Andres Nin, a leading Communist. "We undertook," said Nin, "to group the masses round the symbols of democracy, such symbols as they could understand to give the masses illusions." Charming, is it not? Mr. Strachey is engaged in the same good work in England. He too is grouping the subscribers of the Left Book Club "round the symbols of democracy," he too is providing the masses

with illusions. "We organized political juntas," continued Nin, "which in Spain have a traditional significance, and which at the right moment could be converted into Soviets." (26) An excellent example of what Communists describe as the advance by "partial slogans."

On 10th April, 1936, during a revolutionary meeting held in the Europa Cinema, Madrid, the Socialist leader, Largo Caballero, gave his support to the programme drawn up for Spain by the Comintern in Moscow in July, 1935. Señor Diaz, the Secretary of the Communist Party, followed, and this is what he said:

"Once the unification of the Trade Unions has been effected, we must see to the formation of the confederation of workers and peasants so that we may be able to use them to replace the Government the day we overthrow it. We must also constitute a united Militia of the proletariat which will be the embryo of the Red Army when the Revolution triumphs in Spain." (27)

The Nationalist Government have recently issued a summary of documents discovered in Spain shortly after the outbreak of the civil war. These documents strikingly confirm the details given in *The Times* of May 3rd, 1938, of the Comintern organization in Spain. The five documents which have been discovered are almost identical and were found in places as far apart as Majorca and Badajoz. An English journalist, Mr. Cecil Gerahty, discovered by chance in Triana, a working-class suburb of Seville, a circular which announced July 25th as "the day arranged for our vengeance." This date was exactly one week after the war broke out. Franco cut the margin of safety very fine. The documents which have been discovered open with a list of general countersigns ending with the countersign (I-I) for "execution of the people named on the black lists." Then followed an analysis of the Madrid organizations. "Madrid is divided into the following 'radios' (sections). . . ." Here follow the list of the sections. Next comes the "Plan to be followed in Madrid." "The signal for beginning the movement will be the bursting of five small bombs at nightfall. Immediately thereafter a pretended Fascist

attack on the Club of the C.N.T. (National Confederation of Labour) will be staged, a general strike will be declared, and the soldiers (*and officers*) implicated will rise in the barracks. The 'radios' (i.e. sections) will begin to act, the T.U.V. undertaking to seize the General Post and Telegraph Office, the Prime Minister's Office, and the Ministry of War. . . . The orders are for all anti-revolutionaries (*who are arrested*) to be immediately executed. The revolutionaries of the Popular Front will be called upon to second the movement and, should they refuse to do so, will be expelled from Spain."

Then follows Confidential Report No. 22 which gives the list of names of the projected National Soviet, headed by the President, Largo Caballero. The suggested Minister of Finance was Julio Alvarez del Vayo, who represented Republican Spain in the League of Nations. Among the documents discovered was a "secret report" of a meeting which took place in the Casa del Pueblo at Valencia on May 16th. This meeting was attended by the Delegate of the Third International, Ventura, and by three members of the Central Body of the Revolutionary Committee for Spain, who had just arrived from France where they had exchanged opinions with delegates of the French Communist Party. It had been jointly resolved to carry out a simultaneous revolutionary movement in France and Spain about the middle of June. (28)

The evidence for Communist control of Republican Spain has recently received remarkable confirmation from an unexpected source. The Independent Labour Party of Great Britain sent three delegates to Republican Spain to demand the release or trial of prisoners who had been arrested because they resented the influence of the Russian Cheka in Republican Spain. Armed with credentials from the Director of Prisons and the Minister of Justice, Mr. John McGovern, M.P., made his way to the Cheka Secret Prison in Barcelona, where he was refused entry. Next morning he informed the Minister of Justice by telephone of his failure, but the Minister was powerless to intervene. "The mask was off. We had torn aside the veil and shown where the real power lay. The Ministers were willing, but powerless. The Cheka was unwilling, and it had

the power. We realized that if we pressed further we ourselves would be in danger.

"Russia has bought her way into Spain. In return for Russian assistance in arms, Comintern has been given this tyrannical power and she uses it to imprison, torture and murder Socialists who do not accept the Communist line. . . .

"The Cheka first attempts to destroy the character of every decent working-class leader by slander. Then it proceeds with arrests, abductions, tortures and assassinations. The victims of this Murder Trust lie dead in Barcelona, Valencia and Madrid. Where is Andres Nin, Erwin Wolf, Mark Rhein, Georges Tioli and others? Where are the many good comrades who have disappeared from the cities of Spain?"

Mr. McGovern quotes from a letter from Bonita Pabon, "the famous Spanish lawyer," to the P.O.U.M. Executive. "Recently in anti-Fascist Spain a theory has been adopted more ridiculous than we ever imagined possible in the most despotic period of the Monarchy. This is the theory that a lawyer defending a case can for this reason be accused of complicity in the alleged acts of his clients. This was the explanation given to the arrest and imprisonment of certain well-known lawyers." (29)

"I will oppose the Popular Front," writes Mr. McGovern in *Forward*, "and unmask the Communists in spite of every threat or lie. Neither Workers' Front nor Popular Front can be successful where a section is under the control of the Comintern.

"Their subsidiary organisations are acting in Great Britain and other countries by getting simple and enthusiastic persons to get military and naval information for Russia and an exposure will take place one of these days. Neither honour nor loyalty to this country or needs of British workers count with these people. . . .

"Do not be misled by the cooing doves and bleating lambs who propagate Popular Front ideas, as the jungle beasts are cowering in the background ready to spring when they have used you to place them in power." (30)

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CHAPTER VIII

"A TRAGIC MISAPPREHENSION"

"O LIBERTÉ, comme on t'a jouée!" (1)

These, the last words of Madame Roland, were addressed to the new statue of Liberty which overlooked the platform of the guillotine on which she was to die.

Oh, Liberty, how you have been fooled! As a leader of the intelligentsia which had preached revolution, as the "soul of the Gironde," as the implacable enemy of poor Marie-Antoinette, Madame Roland had played a great part in the fooling of liberty—and herself.

There would be no great revolutionary movements if there were no intellectuals to crystallize and give expression to the formless resentment of the masses. Revolutions are never made from below, but the intellectuals who inspire them soon lose control of the movements which they provoke, and perish as the victims of the mob fury which they have unchained. Intellectuals who work for and welcome revolutionary movements are naïve enough to believe that scientists and artists will be the residuary legatees of movements professedly engineered in the interests of the proletariat. They are soon undeceived, for the aristocracy of intellect follows to the guillotine the aristocracies of birth and of wealth. "Science," said Robespierre, "is aristocratic. The Republic has no need of savants." And he sent Lavoisier, the greatest chemist of the age, to the guillotine. Nowhere has the persecution of scientists and intellectuals been more thorough and more bitter than in Soviet Russia. The Spanish Reds have destroyed with impartial enthusiasm: churches, libraries and observatories. Leningrad and Madrid echo down the ages the disillusioned cry of the disillusioned intellectual, "Oh, Liberty, how you have been fooled!"

Marañón, one of the greatest of Spanish scientists, a leader

of the Revolution which drove the King from his throne, was imprisoned under the dictatorship of Primo de Rivera, but was more fortunate than Madame Roland, for he escaped from the Terror which was the inevitable consequence of the subversive movement which he had helped to create. "I have been misled," he wrote, "I have been mistaken. Save for a few new-fangled Catholics who persist in their prejudice in favour of the Communists, all the intellectuals of Spain think as I do, speak as I do, and, like me, have had to flee from Republican Spain to save their lives. From the standpoint of a scientist one should recognize one's mistakes. *Peccavi!* The Revolution was brought about by us. We desired it and prepared it. . . . At bottom only one thing matters; and that is that Spain, Europe, and mankind should be freed from a system of bloodshed, an institution of murder, the advent of which we accuse ourselves of having prepared while labouring under a tragic misapprehension." (2)

There is a recurring pattern which runs through all great revolutionary movements, a pattern which is invisible to those intellectuals who live in a dream world divorced from history. "Those who cannot remember the past," said Santayana, "are condemned to repeat it." Intellectuals in Russia and Spain who could not remember the fate of their predecessors in France were too often condemned to repeat their tragedies.

Every revolution has numbered among its architects disinterested idealists in revolt against the abuses of a system which the revolution seeks to destroy, but the most powerful and most constant factor in that complex of interests which keeps revolutions in being is the resentment and envy of those who are condemned by nature to inescapable inferiority. Subversive leaders encourage the illusion of those condemned by nature to inferiority by the hope of a Utopia in which all inequalities will be levelled out. They conceal from their dupes the melancholy fact that everything which tends to even out the accidental advantages of birth or fortune only throws into sharper relief the inequalities of natural endowment, inequalities which are not basically affected by schemes for the physical and educational development of the proletariat.

Property can be redistributed, but no revolutionary tribunal can redistribute the birthrights of brains, of physique or of charm. Nature, that incurable reactionary, persists in awarding her prizes to the aristocrats of her own selection.

The inequalities of nature are more bitterly resented than those which society has the power to redress. The envy of the rich and well-born is less bitter than the envy of those whom nature has generously endowed with brains, personality or charm. Admittedly, envy is not universal either among the poor or the stupid; if it were, revolutions would be more frequent. Religion, described by Marx as the opium of the people, helps to allay the resentment which revolutionaries exploit. The hope of a reward infinitely greater than any which Nature or Society can bestow, and the knowledge that the values of this world are ephemeral, helps men to endure with resignation the injustice and inequalities of the social order, and therefore those whose hope of power is derived from the sullen hatred of inequality among men condemned by Nature to inferiority, resent the influence of those who preach the possibility of redress in the world to come. The reluctant realization that natural endowment can never be equalized is responsible for the demand that rewards shall be equalized. Hence the famous Communist slogan: "To every man according to his needs." It is easy to understand the appeal of this principle to those whose needs are great, and whose unaided power of satisfying them is extremely small.

Shakespeare gave us in Jack Cade a study of a type of which the world of Shakespeare had little experience, but which the modern world knows all too well. Shakespeare, with the insight of genius, divined that the true subversive hates the cultured even more intensely than he hates the rich or well-born. Compulsory equality is the theme of Jack Cade's appeal. "All the realm," he tells his followers, "shall be in common. . . . There shall be no money; all shall eat and drink on my score; and I will apparel them all in one livery that they may agree like brothers." *One livery . . . one uniform for the mind no less than for the body.* A clerk who confesses that he can read and write is brought to judgment

and condemned to be hanged "with his pen and ink horn about his neck." Cade is the prototype of all who wage war not only on the present but on the past. "Away!" he cries to the mob, "burn all the records of the realm: my mouth shall be the parliament of England." The spirit of Jack Cade lived on in the mob leaders who inspired the burning of the archives and libraries in Paris and in Oviedo.

In the French Revolution the King and the aristocracy were the first to suffer, but the demand for equality was not so easily sated. "The virtue of the holy guillotine," wrote Hébert, "will gradually deliver the Republic from the rich, the bourgeois, the spies, the fat farmers and the worthy tradesmen, as from the priests and aristocrats. They are all devourers of men." (3) Hébert omitted scientists from his list, but Robespierre, as we have seen, repaired this omission. During the destruction of Lyons, orators incited the mob to violence with an appeal to "sublime equality." Equality was declared to be "the vigorous principle of a warrior people to whom commerce and art should be unnecessary."

Like Jack Cade, Robespierre had a distrust of education. "All highly educated men were persecuted," said Fourcroy to the Convention, "it was enough to have some knowledge, to be a man of letters, in order to be arrested as an aristocrat. . . . Robespierre . . . with atrocious skill, rent, calumniated . . . all those who had given themselves up to great studies, all those who possessed wide knowledge . . . he felt that no educated man would ever bend the knee to him." (4)

Aristocracy, like a malignant weed, reappeared in unsuspected places long after it had been uprooted from its normal habitats. "Nowhere," says Taine, "are there so many suspects as amongst the people; the shop, the farm, and the workshops contain more aristocrats than the presbytery or the château. In fact, according to the Jacobins, the cultivators are nearly all aristocrats; all the tradesmen are essentially counter-revolutionary . . . the butchers and bakers . . . are of an insufferable aristocracy." (5)

The famous conspiracy of Babeuf, the last flickering outburst of the dying Terror, carried to its logical conclusion the

creed of compulsory equality. The possessing classes were to be exterminated, and even intellectual differences were to be discouraged in the reformed education lest "men might devote themselves to sciences and thereby grow vain and averse to manual labour." Equality, social, financial and intellectual, was the goal. "Perish if necessary all the arts provided that real equality is left to us." (6) We may regard Babeuf as an irresponsible lunatic, but it would be foolish on that account to underestimate his immense influence on the revolutionary movement. The Third International in its first manifesto acclaimed him as one of its spiritual fathers.

Babeuf's philosophy has been adopted with enthusiasm by the Anarchists in Spain. Marañón, whose *mea culpa* has been quoted above, speaks with horror of the "frenzied primitives who hate all science and intellect." To the true subversive the creations of the intellect are as detestable as the intellectuals who created them. A noble painting, a great observatory or a historic library are symbols of that aristocracy of the mind which the "frenzied primitive" detests. In the French Revolution proposals were brought forward to demolish Porte Saint-Denis, to destroy the rare animals in the Museum of Natural History, and to burn the Bibliothèque Nationale. This last named suggestion was endorsed by those who urged that all libraries should be burnt, for "only the history of the Revolution and its laws will be needed." Fortunately the France of Robespierre was still living on the capital of a great cultural tradition. The inherited spirit of reverence for noble art proved stronger than the newborn lust of destruction. It is instructive to contrast the immature Communism of 1792 with the maturer Communism of 1871. For three months after Paris surrendered to the Germans the capital was ruled by the "frenzied primitives" of the Commune who destroyed and burnt the Palais des Tuileries, the Palais de Justice and the Hôtel de Ville with its treasures of art and irreplaceable archives. The Tuileries, destroyed in 1871, narrowly escaped destruction in 1848. The Palace was sacked and looted, but as Jules Bertaut dryly remarks, "Heureusement les Français, toujours économes, se réservent quelque chose à détruire pour

les révolutions futures; les pillards ont raison des incendiaires et tout le monde ne se préoccupe plus que de remplir ses poches." (7) In October, 1934, the "First Soviet Republic in Spain" was set up in the Asturias as the result of an armed rebellion against the legal Government of Spain. During the course of the rebellion acts characteristic of mob vandalism resulted in the destruction of the world-famous Cámara Santa and the 40,000 volumes of the Oviedo University Library. In the Spanish Civil War the Reds did not confine themselves to the destruction of churches or of the works of art which were the glory of those churches. The superstition that the Catholic Church is the enemy of science forms part of the stock-in-trade of revolutionary propaganda. In the Spanish War the friends of science broke into the famous astronomical observatory at Tortosa, built and maintained by the Jesuits, and destroyed the observatory and its instruments.

Nowhere, indeed, has the persecution of scientists and intellectuals been more thorough and more bitter than in Soviet Russia. "I have seen educated men coming out of Russia," said Leo Pasvolosky, "their general appearance, and particularly the crushed hopelessness of their mental processes, is a nightmare that haunts me every once in a while. They are a living testimonial to the processes that are taking place in Russia. . . . Such an exodus of the educated and the intelligent as there has been out of Russia no country has ever seen, and certainly no country can ever afford. . . . The Intelligentsia has lost everything it had. It has lived to see every ideal it revered shattered, every aim it sought pushed away almost out of sight. . . . Embittered and hardened in exile, or crushed spiritually and physically under the present government, the tragedy of the Russian Intelligentsia is the most pathetic and poignant in human history." (8)

In a letter to *The Times* on April 24th, 1933, Sir Bernard Pares, Professor of Russian at the University of London, wrote as follows: "There is no doubt whatever as to the accuracy of Professor Tchernavin's account of his treatment in Russian prisons. He is a distinguished ichthyologist, and has been able to supply us with details as to the fate of numerous scholars,

some of whom are known to me, and some with European reputations, of whom we had lost track. Of the fifty-one in his own branch of science known to himself, twenty-five have been shot and twenty-six deported in three years (1930-1932). Among those whom he knew personally or met in prison his list includes six academicians and thirty-six other professors in various fields or custodians of museums."

Every culture is the product of a philosophy. The culture of Christian Europe is derived from the belief in the infinite value of every individual human soul. "Proletculture" is the flower of the Marxian faith that the individual is no more than an unimportant cog in the machinery of an omnipotent State, and that the object of life is to increase the efficiency of mass production. With this end in view "the reading books for the children are mechanized, and are designed to fix the child's attention on representations of technical objects; there are no pictures of flowers, animals, or such 'bourgeois idyllic' things. The mind of the child is to be directed to machinery. 'Processions of children,' wrote a visitor to Russia in October, 1931, 'are seen marching with banners bearing inscriptions such as "Give us technical power!"'" (9) Mr. W. H. Chamberlin in *Russia's Iron Age* cites a journal entitled *For Marxist-Leninist Natural Science* which campaigned enthusiastically "For Party Spirit in Mathematics," and "For Purity of Marxist-Leninist Theory in Surgery." (10) A leading champion of Proletculture in Russia was Lunacharsky who held the post of Commissar of Education. In his official organ, *Proletarskaia Kultura* he writes, "Our enemies, during the whole course of the revolutionary period, have not ceased crying about the ruin of culture. As if they did not know that in Russia, as well as everywhere, there is no united common human culture, but that there is only a *bourgeois* culture, an individual culture, debasing itself into a culture of Imperialism—covetous, bloodthirsty, ferocious. The revolutionary proletariat aspires to free itself from the path of a dying culture. It is working out its own class, proletarian culture. . . . During its dictatorship, the proletariat has realized that the strength of its revolution consists not alone

in a political and military dictatorship, but also in a cultural dictatorship." A contributor to Lunacharsky's journal gives poetic form to the new cultural creed.

"In the name of our Tomorrow we will burn Rafael,
 "Destroy museums, crush the flowers of art.
 "Maidens in the radiant kingdom of the Future
 "Will be more beautiful than Venus de Milo."

Astronomy is to be transformed, according to the same journal, into a "teaching of the orientation in space and time of the efforts of labour." (11)

André Gide, perhaps the most distinguished literary convert to Communism in France, lost all his illusions after his first visit to Russia. He resented the iron conformity imposed upon all aspects of Russian cultural life. "Chaque matin, la *Pravda* leur enseigne ce qu'il sied de savoir, de penser, de croire," he writes in *Retour de l'U.R.S.S.*, "Et il ne fait pas bon sortir de là! De sorte que, chaque fois que l'on converse avec un Russe, c'est comme si l'on conversait avec tous. . . . (12) Ce que l'on demande à l'artiste, à l'écrivain, c'est d'être conforme; et tout le reste lui sera donné par-dessus. . . . (13) Si tous les citoyens d'un Etat pensaient de même, ce serait sans aucun doute plus commode pour les gouvernants. Mais, devant cet appauvrissement, qui donc oserait encore parler de 'culture'? . . . (14) Et je doute qu'en aucun autre pays aujourd'hui, fût-ce dans l'Allemagne de Hitler, l'esprit soit moins libre, plus courbé, plus craintif (terrorisé), plus vassalisé." (15)

Gide's verdict on the cultural life of Russia is reinforced by another converted Communist, Victor Serge. Victor Serge served a sentence of five years in Belgium as a revolutionary, and took part in the revolutionary attempt by the Catalonians in 1917. He went to Russia in 1919, and was elected a member of the Executive Committee of the Communist International. Unlike so many Left Wing intellectuals, he did not content himself with organizing terrorism from the rear, but faced death in the front line trenches during the attack on Petrograd. His book, *Russia Twenty Years After*, a terrible indictment of

the system, is nowhere more outspoken than in its attack on "Managed Science and Literature."

"Geologists have been imprisoned," he writes, "for having interpreted subsoil qualities differently from what was wanted in high places : ignorance of the natural wealth of the country, hence sabotage, hence treason. . . . Others have been shot. Bacteriologists have been thrown into prison for obscure reasons. The most celebrated one died in a Leningrad prison hospital. But the further removed laboratory research is from social life and technique the more chances it has of being pursued without impediment and even with encouragement (grants, honours). All this still does not prevent the activity of the Secret Service. The subsidies generously allotted to the physiologist Pavlov for his researches into conditional reflexes did not prevent the arrest of his collaborators and friends. The encouragement given to the academician Yoffe for his researches into the structure of the atom did not prevent the deportation of his collaborators. The physicist Lazarev, after having been put in the very front rank of Soviet science, was imprisoned, deported, and then amnestied." (16)

Mr. Kurt London in his book, *The Seven Soviet Arts*, which was published by Faber and Faber in 1937, gives us the first comprehensive survey of artistic production in Soviet Russia. The author is not a Communist, but he is as complimentary as his artistic conscience permits. He is uninterested in politics and economics, and these subjects provide the raw material for a few listless compliments, but he is so indifferent to these conventional tributes that he cannot even be bothered to relate them to each other. Thus on page 71 he describes the Soviet Constitution as "one of the most imposing documents in the history of nations," and on page 79 he remarks that to differ from the views of the Politbureau is high treason, and naively adds, "Freedom of speech, which was guaranteed in the new Constitution, is a relative term, namely, a guarantee only within the framework of Socialist society." His anxiety to be pleasant makes his criticism of Soviet culture all the more damaging.

Mr. Kurt London assures us that the more extreme forms

of Proletculture are no longer modish, and to be just, the Russian Communists proved less destructive than the "frenzied primitives" of Spain. True, in 1926 the authorities instructed a hundred and twenty libraries in Leningrad to destroy all volumes of *belles-lettres* dating from before 1917, but the treasures of art have been far more mercifully handled in Russia than in Red Spain. Moreover, the attitude to intellectuals is changing. In the earlier phases of the revolution intellectuals could choose between starvation, imprisonment or a firing squad. Today things have so far improved that intellectuals are offered the attractive alternatives of liquidation or prostitution. The writer, artist or musician is offered every inducement to become a courtesan of culture. He can live in comfort provided that he writes, paints or composes, what the Government desires to be written, painted or composed. No country does more to ensure a pleasant life to the artist provided that the artist is prepared to conform, though solicitude for the artist's welfare is perhaps sincere rather than subtle. "By a Government decree," writes Mr. London, "a 'House of Composers' is being built in Moscow in which 145 composers are to be housed." (17)

Mr. Kurt London, who explicitly declares that he is a friend of Soviet Russia, sums up his verdict on this cultural prostitution in a passage all the more damning for its obvious restraint. "It must indeed be a terrible position," he writes, "for artists who have to wrestle with their artistic conscience because they do not share the Government's views on art policy. On the one hand, a carefree, pleasant and full life beckons them, if they are willing to sing to the tune called by Stalin. On the other hand, they would be outlawed, and become not only artistic but also social outcasts, if they follow the bent of their personality. What is more, they would lose the economic basis of their existence. The only course left to them is either to give up their profession or their conscience." (18)

Mr. Maurice Hindus, who was born in Russia, who has revisited Russia many times since the Revolution, and who writes as a sympathetic critic of Communism, paints a tragic picture of the intelligentsia in his book *Humanity Uprooted*.

The Revolution, he reminds us, was largely the creation of the Russian intellectuals. "Where would this much-vaunted proletarian, this roistering self-anointed master of Russia's destiny, be if the intellectual had not lavished on him his sympathies, his talents, his very soul?" Yet now that the revolution has triumphed, the intellectual is "not discarded but disowned." If he wishes to join the Communist Party he must serve a period of probation for two years, whereas the proletarian is only on probation for six months. School teachers in democratic countries who are naïve enough to hope that Communism would improve both their status and their income will learn from Mr. Hindus that "no intellectuals in Russia complain so vociferously of being underpaid as do teachers and physicians." The Russian intellectual of today lacks the social background of the old intelligentsia. "He has no soulfulness, no delicacy, no artistry. He has not even the competence of his predecessors. He is unkempt, uncouth, unshaven, with calloused hands, but with an insatiable knowledge and conquest." (19)

Communists, when confronted by the inescapable evidence for intellectual oppression in Soviet Russia, evade the issue by stressing the achievement of the Soviet in its campaign against illiteracy. The proportion of Russians who can read and write is probably higher than in Tsarist Russia, but I am unpersuaded that culture gains by increasing the number of those who can read while simultaneously depreciating both the quantity and quality of the available literature. André Gide subjects to a searching examination the Soviet claim to have reduced illiteracy and improved education. He cites Lunacharsky to prove that whereas there were 62,000 primary schools under the old regime, there were only 50,000 in 1924. He quotes Lunacharsky's statement that the salaries of rural teachers were often six months in arrears. He quotes from *Izvestia*, November 16th, 1936, an attack on the "surprising analphabetism* among the pupils." From the same journal he quotes the statement that 80,000 scholars had run

* "Illiteracy" is an ambiguous word, which need not necessarily imply, as "analphabétisme" implies, the inability to read and write.

away from school during the preceding three years. *Pravda*, January 11th, 1937, inveighed against the wretched quality of the text-books supplied to the schools. A geography text-book was enriched by a map in which Ireland was placed in the Sea of Aral, and "les Iles d'Ecosse" in the Caspian. A multiplication table contained the surprising statement that $8 \times 3 = 18$, $7 \times 6 = 72$, $5 \times 9 = 43$, etc. It would seem that the benefits of "alphabétisme" are of dubious value in Soviet Russia, excepting perhaps to officials anxious to show a profit on the Five Year Plan. Gide concludes in words addressed to the melancholy dupes of Communist propaganda, words which apply not only to education but to all aspects of Soviet life. "Je proteste lorsque votre aveuglement, ou votre mauvaise foi, cherche à nous présenter comme admirables des résultats nettement piteux." (20)

Eugene Lyons, whose faith in Communism was shaken by his experience in Russia, describes "the revolt against intelligence" in his striking book, *Assignment in Utopia*. "The roster of scientists, historians, Academicians, famous engineers, technical administrators, statisticians arrested at this time reads like an encyclopædia of contemporary Russian culture." (21) Lyons supports by documentary evidence the charge that history, anthropology, psychology, philosophy and science are forced to "goose-step on the policy line." (22) "Even in the natural sciences there was plenty of grotesquery about 'Leninist surgery' and 'Stalinist mathematics' and ideological deviations in biology. Intellectual life was depressed to a dead level of conformist mediocrity. Charlatanism and mental prostitution were the easiest paths to artistic success." (23) Mr. Lyons contrasts the liberty enjoyed by Voltaire and Diderot under the monarchy and Tolstoy and Turgenev under the Tsars with the oppression of the intellectuals in Soviet Russia. (24)

To modern progressives the Inquisition still symbolizes the ultimate horror of human intolerance, but compared with the Ogpu the Inquisition was both tolerant and humane. It is, as Mr. Lyons insists, "more dangerous to question dialectic materialism according to Stalin in present-day Moscow than

it had been to question the flatness of the earth in Rome of the Dark Ages." (25) Mr. Lyons forgets that the Copernican theory was first given to the world in a book written by a Canon of the Church, financed by two Cardinals, and dedicated to the Pope. The Holy Office blundered badly over Galileo, but his case is unique, for this was the only occasion on which a scientist was forced to retract a purely scientific proposition under compulsion from the Church. But there have been many Galileos condemned in Russia for "ideological deviations" in science.

Mr. Lyons points out that the Tsars did not interfere in every sphere of intellectual and æsthetic expression "like their successors in the Kremlin, so that there were a few sanctuaries for man as a thinker and an artist." (26) Authoritative régimes are not necessarily fatal to Art and Literature. Cervantes wrote his masterpiece in the Spain of the Inquisition, but the Spanish Inquisition, unlike the Russian Ogpu, did not concern itself with all aspects of life. Montaigne, the agnostic, wrote his Essays in a France in which heretics were intermittently burned. Catholic priests were tortured and racked under Elizabeth, but her authoritarian régime coincided with the most glorious epoch in English literature. Catholics, Protestants and agnostics have cited passages from Shakespeare to prove that Shakespeare was a Catholic, a Protestant or an agnostic, and there is perhaps a measure of truth in all three hypotheses. The statement that Shakespeare "died a papist" is disputed, but it may be true. It is undeniable that he conformed to the state religion during his life, and it is more than probable that his faith was disturbed by doubts. Be that as it may, he enjoyed a freedom of self-expression unknown in modern Russia, for Shakespearean detachment is impossible under the régime of Stalin. "To the Soviet censor," writes Mr. Lyons, "neutrality is one of the deadliest sins—every artist and scientist must show proof of active support of the official dogmas." (27) Had Queen Elizabeth been as ruthless as Stalin, Shakespeare would have ceased to write.

All branches of Russian Art have to submit to the dictatorship of mediocrity. Shostakovich's popular opera *And Quiet*

Flows the Don was widely praised by music critics in Soviet Russia until *Pravda* sniffed out ideological heresy in operatic formalism, whereupon the critics came to heel. Yuri Olesha, who had been an ardent admirer of Shostakovich's opera, promptly recanted. "If I do not agree with the articles in *Pravda* about art, I have no right to experience patriotic pleasure in apprehending these marvellous things, in apprehending the aroma of novelty, triumph, success, which means so much to me and which shows that the Soviet Union has its own distinctive life, that of a great power. If I do not agree with the party in a single point, the whole picture of life must be dimmed for me, because all parts, all details of this picture are bound together and arise one out of the other." (28) On April 10th, 1935, the artist Nikritin was summoned before the art commission which had taken exception to his painting, "Old and New," a symbolic picture of no great merit in which he represents a Venus of Milo, a young man and a young girl, workers in the Metro building, and an old man. "What we see here is a calumny," exclaimed one member of the commission. "It is a class-attack, inimical to the Soviet power. The picture must be removed and the appropriate organizational measures be taken." (29) The picture was removed, and no doubt appropriate organizational measures were taken.

It is instructive to compare the treatment of the artist Nikritin in Soviet Russia with the urbane attitude of the Venetian Inquisition to Veronese, whose irreverent painting of the Last Supper had caused considerable scandal. Here follows an extract from his examination.

Q. In this Supper of Our Lord have you painted any attendants?

A. Yes, my lord.

Q. What is the meaning of those men dressed in the German fashion, each with a halberd in his hand?

A. We painters take the same licence that is permitted to poets and jesters. I have placed these two halberdiers—the one eating and the other drinking—by the staircase, to be supposed ready to perform any duty that may be required of them; it appeared to me quite fitting that the master of

such a house, who was rich and great (as I have been told), should have such attendants.

Q. That person dressed like a buffoon, with a parrot on his wrist—for what purpose is he introduced into the canvas?

A. For ornament, as is usually done.

Q. Does it appear to you fitting that at Our Lord's Last Supper you should paint drunkards, buffoons, Germans, dwarfs, and similar indecencies?

A. No, my lord.

Q. Why, then, have you painted them?

A. I have done it because I supposed that these were not in the place where the supper was served from.

As a handsome concession to the Holy Office, Veronese appears to have removed a man bleeding from the nose, and a pair of soldiers in German costume "half drunk and in most questionable attitudes." But the painting was not destroyed, and may still be seen in the Accademia in Venice. Had the Venetian Inquisition been as intolerant as the Communists who condemned Nikitrin, the painting would have been destroyed and Veronese would perhaps have been liquidated for a gross deviation of Christian ideology.

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CHAPTER IX

"LA TRAHISON DES CLERCS."

THE humanitarianism of the Russian Communists has much in common with the humanitarianism of the Russian Nihilists of the nineteenth century. Bielinsky, a famous Russian Nihilist, professed a warm love of humanity, but his affection was selective. In a moment of candour he described it as "Marat's love." Marat, most ruthless and sadistic of the French Terrorists, represents, as Bielinsky divined, the logical development of the pitiless humanitarianism in which the love of Man is divorced from the love of God. Bielinsky was born out of due time, for he would have been happy as the Marat of the Russian Revolution. He cheerfully declared that he was ready "to cut off the heads of a large section of mankind to make the rest happy." "I am," he added in a mood of self-revelation, "a terrible man when some mystical folly gets into my head." (1)

Modern humanitarianism arises out of a feeling of compassion for humanity, and ends in a merciless attitude towards individual men. "For 'Marat's love' of mankind is always like that," writes Nicholas Berdyaev. "It begins by protesting against the 'universal' that oppresses and tortures personality, and ends up by proclaiming a new 'universal'—love of humanity; not, however, the love of living human persons, but love of the *idea* of humanity. . . . Compassion turns into cruelty, freedom into compulsion and violence; defence of personality against the tyranny of society leads to extreme social despotism." (2)

The Marats of our times would have less scope for their "love of humanity" if their crimes were not condoned by cowardly intellectuals. "La trahison des clercs" makes things easy for persecutors. Left Wing views are fashionable in

the literary and artistic worlds, and it requires courage to defy fashion. There are many careers and professions in which advancement is difficult for the champions of tradition, and easy for the apostles of subversive doctrines. Hence the sad contrast between the readiness of the intellectuals to denounce Hitler or Mussolini and their reluctance to denounce Stalin or Negrin. It is not only in Nazi Germany that intellectuals have come to heel.

"In the spring of 1935," writes Max Eastman, a convinced Marxian Communist, "Stalin's government issued a decree which made the death penalty for theft—adopted for adults three years before—applicable to minors from the age of twelve. When this fact was announced at a congress of the French Teachers' Federation in August of the same year, the Stalinists in the Federation indignantly denied it. Being shown a copy of *Izvestia* (April 8th, 1935) containing the decree, they lapsed into silence, but they were ready next day with the information that 'under socialism children are so precocious and well educated that they are fully responsible for their acts'! It is but a reflection of the manner in which this ideology is being stretched to cover every sadist thing in Russia." (3)

The squalid neutrality of intellectuals when confronted by Communist crimes is one of the saddest features of the day. The coarsening effect of ideological loyalties on well-intentioned people is evident in the 1,257 pages which Mr. and Mrs. Sidney Webb devote to *Soviet Communism*. The Webbs are decent and kindly folk who will be completely happy in heaven if they are given some population statistics to play with, and a cherubim or two to cross-index. They have lived on into the modern world as the symbols of the Fabian nineties. The atmosphere which they created was a curious blend of uplift, mutual improvement societies, high teas and advanced revolutionary ideals. It was the oddest freak of fate which deposited these mild apostles of "Gradualism" among the roccoco extravagances of Russian gangsterism. Of course they found much that they could conscientiously praise. Bureaucrats by passionate conviction, they were

fascinated by a State every aspect of which was controlled by an all-powerful bureaucracy. Unfortunately there were certain things which they did not like, horrible things which intruded into their discreetly selective research, and at long intervals the Webbs risk a gentle criticism. But the prim protests against terrorism are like pebbles in the bed of a strong-flowing torrent, a flood of uncritical panegyric which flows and flows and flows from the title page, with its sub-title: "A New Civilisation," to the last page of the Index, "White Sea Canal, works done by convict labour under socialist competition."

The sedate and guarded censures of the Webbs irresistibly suggests a school ma'am's report on a troublesome pupil. "*More invidious was the practice . . . of forcibly deporting kulaks and other recalcitrant peasants*" to North Sea islands where, so the Webbs assure us, "the miseries of a rigorous climate were aggravated by a cruel administration by brutal jailers, in which every kind of torment seems to have been employed." (4) The italics, by the way, are my own, for the Webbs never emphasize these disturbing aspects of what they describe on the title page as "a new civilisation."

"*More invidious was the practice of forcibly deporting Jews. . . .*" Few historians write like that about Torquemada.

"*It is, we think, an objectionable feature that this very terror has been and apparently still is a deliberately chosen means of deterrence.*" (5) The terror in question included, as the Webbs by implication admit, the threat of torture. It is easy to imagine the comments of the Left Wing reviewer on some apologist for the Spanish Inquisition who remarked, "It is, I think, an objectionable feature that the fear of torture apparently was a chosen means of deterrence."

The assassination of Kirov was made the pretext for trying opponents of Stalin's policy, such as Zinoviev and Kamenev, a decision which, as the Webbs innocently remark, "was open to misconstruction." And they add, "The arrest and summary execution, after a single murder, of a whole multitude of persons of diverse antecedents and conditions, spread over a wide area, and explained on different grounds, *could not but excite adverse comment.*" (6)

No, and the massacre of St. Bartholomew's Eve "could not but excite adverse comment."

Had a few millions been executed by firing squads it is possible that even the more servile lackeys of Stalin might have been faintly shocked. Stalin knows his friends. "Obsolete classes," he remarked, "don't voluntarily disappear," (7) but the technique of their forced disappearance must, in so far as is possible, be adjusted to the delicate susceptibilities of modern humanitarians. There are, however, few crimes for which wishful thinking cannot manufacture some excuse. The modern humanitarian is always ready to put the corpse in the dock, and to call the murderer as a witness for the prosecution. From the secure comfort of deaneries the priests and nuns who were killed by the thousand in Spain were accused of "unpopularity," as if the victims of persecution could ever be popular with their murderers. The disturbing ghosts of the millions who died in Russia because Stalin was determined to break the resistance of the peasants, are exorcised by the formula, "sullen resistance." "What was most difficult to cope with," wrote the Webbs, "was the deplorable general sullenness, in which many, and sometimes most, of the peasants had ceased to care whether or not the normal harvest was reaped." (8)

"One might as well blame draught animals for collapsing under the excessive load," remarks Eugene Lyons. "The paralyzing indifference of the Russian peasantry that brought the greatest crop of weeds in recorded history and left bread crops to rot while men and women starved was not a rebellious 'plot'—forty million people do not easily conspire together. None of it was by design. It was an expression of ultimate hopelessness, a natural catastrophe of the human spirit, a non-co-operation movement that was akin to mass suicide." (9)

Let us translate the Russian tragedy into Spanish terms. Let us suppose that General Franco, by forced requisitions and persistent persecution, had broken the spirit of the Spanish peasants in Nationalist territories. Let us further suppose that the peasants in despair had refused to sow more than the bare minimum required for their own needs, and that this pitiful

store had been further depleted by ruthless grain collectors, with the result that thousands had died of starvation. We may be sure that the Webbs would not have condemned the "deplorable sullenness" of the peasants, but gloried in their heroic refusal to comply with tyrannical requisitions. Nationalist Spain provides no parallel to Russia, and those who have passed, as I did in the spring of 1938, from territory controlled by the Nationalists since the outbreak of the war into territory which had only just been recaptured from the Republicans, could not fail to notice the contrast between the well-cared for appearance of Nationalist farms and fields, and the unkempt, neglected aspect of Republican territory. Socialism is breaking in Spain, as it is breaking in Russia, on the resistance of the peasant, sturdiest of individualists. "Il y enterre," writes de Tocqueville of the French peasant, "son coeur avec son grain. Ce petit coin du sol qui lui appartient en propre dans ce vaste univers le remplit d'orgueil et d'indépendance."* (10) In nobody is the sense of private property more strongly developed than in the peasant. And no class in the State pays its taxes with greater reluctance. Only urbanized sociologists with no roots in the earth, no instinct for ultimate realities, and no understanding of anything but statistics, could see in the resistance of a peasantry to collectivization and brutal requisitions an abnormal and disturbing phenomenon.

The Webbs admit that "the sum of human suffering involved" in the liquidation of the kulaks "is beyond all computation," (11) and they seem perplexed by the failure of the beneficent Stalin to provide his faithful apologists with a reasonable line of defence. "So far as we are aware," write the Webbs, "the Soviet Government has not deigned to reply to the numerous denunciations of the cruelty on a gigantic scale alleged to have been perpetrated by its agents; nor published any explanatory account of its proceedings in this summary 'liquidation' of so large a proportion of its citizens." (12)

* "He buries his heart with the grain. This little corner of the earth which belongs to him alone in this vast universe fills him with pride and independence."

"At all times," write the Webbs in the Preface, "and notably during our visits to the U.S.S.R., the soviet authorities have willingly answered our innumerable questions." (13) It is a pity that the "innumerable questions" did not include a mild query about the liquidation of the kulaks, but then one cannot be too tactful when one is an honoured visitor in a country whose rulers are Asiatic in their attitude not only to unwelcome kulaks but to unwelcome questions. It is pleasant to reflect that no indiscreet allusions to mass murder marred the social relations between the Webbs and the Commissars.

Some years later in their comfortable library these kindly humanitarians forgot their momentary reaction of qualified disapproval and relapsed without difficulty into the more familiar mood of Stalin worship. "Sidney Webb," writes Sorel, the French Syndicalist, "enjoys a reputation for competence which is greatly exaggerated. He has had the merit of compiling dossiers of little interest, and the patience to compose one of the most indigestible of compilations on the history of Trade Unionism; but his very limited intelligence could only impress people unaccustomed to solid thinking," and Sorel quotes Tarde's bewildered comment on the reputation of the Webbs, whom he compares to "un barbouilleur de papier," (14) a scribbler whose blotting paper is capable of absorbing an unlimited quantity of Stalin's Red ink.

"It can be inferred," write the Webbs, "that it was actually expected that to carry to completion this new agrarian revolution would involve the summary ejection, from their relatively successful holdings, of something like a million families. Strong must have been the faith and resolute the will of the men who, in the interest of what seemed to them the public good, could take so momentous a decision." (15) It is sad to think of all that Ghengis Khan and Nero have lost in public esteem through the accident of birth which delayed until the nineteenth century the appearance on this planet of these tactful and convincing apologists for "strong faith" and "resolute will."

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CHAPTER X

THE DECAY OF DIALECTICS

THE tragic consequences of Communism in Russia have deflected public attention from the disintegrating influence of Marxian philosophy on the great Democracies. The infiltration of Communist philosophy into our schools and universities is responsible for a rapid disintegration of intelligence and manners. The intellectual consequences of Marxism are those which we should expect from a philosophy that denies objective truth. The relativity of truth is a fatal doctrine, and leads, as we shall see, to the substitution of abuse for controversy, and to a universal lowering of intellectual standards in philosophy, economics and history.

A consistent Marxist should refuse to defend Dialectical Materialism, for if Marxism be true, the arguments of the Marxist can safely be disregarded. If, as Marx insists, a man's beliefs are wholly determined by his economic condition, Marxism is nothing more than the reflection of the *laissez-faire* Liberalism of the England in which Marx wrote *Das Kapital*. If, therefore, Marxism was "true" for Marx, it has ceased to be "true" today. Marxism, indeed, is open to the same fundamental objection as Freudianism. Freud maintains that our beliefs are determined by our hereditary, environment and sexual complexes. It is therefore foolish to waste time listening to the arguments whereby a man defends his beliefs, for those arguments are "rationalizations" invented to support beliefs which have been imposed on him not by reason but by instinct and environment. If you psycho-analyze a Christian you will discover why he defends Christianity. But this weapon of the Freudian is double-edged, and serves equally well to discredit Freudianism, for on the Freudian hypothesis it is clearly foolish to waste time analyzing the reasons with which Freud defends his beliefs. Psycho-analyze

Freud, and you will discover why Freud defends Freudianism. By parity of reasoning the true Marxist need not concern himself with the reasons with which Marx defends Marxism, for Marxism is the product of the economic processes and material conditions of the world into which Marx was born.

"If a man's economic situation," writes Mr. E. F. Carr, Fellow of University College, Oxford, "wholly, in the last resort, determines his beliefs about other matters, then clearly different men *must* in different situations have different beliefs about the same fact—mathematical, historical, economic—and all of these certainly cannot be true; nor is it easy to see how any should be. So reality would *not* be knowable. The attempts to meet this difficulty by Bukharin in *Historical Materialism* are weak. They are to the effect that dialectical materialism is the ideology of a class, like all other theories, but since it is the ideology of the proletariat, which is the winning class, it is truer, or at least (as Protagoras and the pragmatists would say) better than any other. This seems to be accepted by Mr. C. Dutt (*Labour Monthly*, February, 1933); and cf. Mirsky (*Ibid.*, October, 1931) 'Philosophy is always a matter of party politics, i.e. of class interests. This is obviously true, but only half the truth, for a philosophy consistent with the revolutionary interest of the proletariat is also consistent with objective truth.' " (1)

Despair is the root of all intellectual evil. The Marxist despairs of objective truth, and thereby abandons all hope of objective standards. From this first folly derive all subsequent intellectual derelictions. There is no room for Dialectics in Dialectical Materialism. Discussion is useless, for though you can liquidate or abuse your opponent, you cannot argue with a man whose beliefs are imposed upon him by economic conditions. No argument is possible, as St. Thomas Aquinas pointed out many years ago, between men who have no common premise, and there can be no common premise between a Marxist and his bourgeois opponent. There are no objective standards to which they can both appeal. Even the same words have different meanings according as their context is Marxist or non-Marxist.

“‘When *I* use a word,’ Humpty Dumpty said in rather a scornful tone, ‘it means just what I choose it to mean—neither more nor less.’

“‘The question is,’ said Alice, ‘whether you *can* make words mean so many different things.’

“‘The question is,’ said Humpty Dumpty, ‘which is to be master—that’s all.’”

And in Russia, where the Communists are masters, words mean what Marxists intend them to mean.

The dialecticians of an older tradition used words to clarify thought. The Marxist dialecticians use words as a substitute for thought. As Goethe says:

“Denn eben wo Begriffe fehlen
Da stellt ein Wort zur rechten Zeit sich ein

Mit Worten lässt sich trefflich streiten
Mit Worten ein System bereiten.”

No philosophy was less aptly named than Dialectical Materialism, for there is no place for Dialectics in the Marxist philosophy. You cannot discuss beliefs with a man whose beliefs are imposed upon him by economic conditions. Marx should have called his philosophy “Denunciatory Materialism.” Engels is even ruder to non-Marxist materialists than to Hegelian idealists; he describes them as “vulgarizing pedlars” (2); and Lenin quotes with approval Dietzgen’s amiable description of “modern bourgeois professors” as “graduated flunkies using their sham idealism to keep the people in ignorance.” (3) A favourite trick of Marxist writers is to dismiss all heretics, schismatics and infidels in some phrase of airy denigration, and then to document these indictments by a modest footnote naming, but not quoting from, one or two of their chief critics. Thus Mr. John Strachey sniffs at “brochures which have demonstrated merely their author’s profound conviction that it was unnecessary to acquaint themselves with the elements of the subject under discussion,” and supports this pompous remark with the footnote, “see for

example Professor Lindsay's *Marx's Capital* or Professor Joseph's *Karl Marx's Theory of Value*." (4) Mr. R. Page Arnot employs the same technique. "We can only hope," he writes, "that the present-day anatomists of Marxism, taught by experience, will not display the same profundity in ignorance as was exhibited by so many of their predecessors," to which he adds the footnote, "As when in 1920 Professor J. Shield Nicholson and J. R. Salter wrote books on Marxism—the only effect of which was to demonstrate their unfamiliarity with the works which they professed to elucidate." (5) Mr. Arnot tells us that the historical writings of Professor G. M. Trevelyan bear the same relation to those of Marx as barbarism to science. (6) Even obscure Marxists might with advantage borrow from eminent historians such as Professor G. M. Trevelyan the bourgeois habit of supporting denunciation with argument and fact.

The substitution of labels for argument is a growing tendency in modern controversy. The controversialists of the great tradition attempted to meet argument by argument, and attacked the folly of their opponents' case rather than the foolishness of their opponents. The modern controversialist prefers to label his opponent, and to criticize his work not by citations but by descriptive epithets such as "biased," "ignorant," "unscholarly," "bourgeois," etc. The tradition of scholarly reviewing is vanishing from the world of letters. The older school of reviewers could distinguish between form and content. They might dislike or disagree with the content, but they could still praise the book. A Conservative reviewer could praise the lucidity and skill with which Radical arguments were marshalled before proceeding to criticize the arguments in question. The technique of Marxist reviewers is either to ignore a hostile book, the most popular method, or to dismiss it with labels. The book is "biased" or "mere propaganda." The author is "a Fascist" or "a bourgeois." No conscientious reviewer would describe a book as biased without quoting at least one passage to prove bias, and the old tradition still survives in some papers. Mr. Strachey recently thanked the Editor of *The Tablet* for a long review of his book. "Of course we

disagree," said Mr. Strachey, "but at least you *reviewed* the book and its arguments." Mr. Strachey should introduce *The Tablet* tradition into Left Wing journals to which he contributes.

A distinguished biologist, Professor W. R. Thompson, F.R.S., recently drew attention to "one of the most admirable characteristics of the mediæval thinkers . . . their willingness, nay, their anxiety to collect and state, as forcefully as possible, the objections to their own particular views. The 'Summa Theologica' of St. Thomas Aquinas is in a sense a compendium of anti-Christian theses, many of which are still considered very useful by our contemporary opponents." (7) The *Summa* of St. Thomas is a compendium of anti-Christian arguments, but there are no anti-Marxist arguments in the *Summa* of Karl Marx. "The charges against Communism," he writes, "made from a religious, a philosophical, and, generally, from an ideological standpoint, are not deserving of serious examination." (8)

Marx not only ignored the arguments against Communism, but gives no hint of ever having glanced at those classic arguments for the existence of God which have satisfied intellects not inferior to his own. He started from the parochial assumption that man is the highest intelligence in the universe. Richet, a leading French scientist, was a sceptic, but he was an intelligent sceptic. "Why should there not be," he wrote, "intelligent and puissant beings distinct from those perceptible by our senses? By what right should we dare to affirm, on the basis of our limited senses, our defective intellect, and our scientific past as yet hardly three centuries old, that in the vast Cosmos man is the sole intelligent being, and that all mental reality always depends upon nerve-cells irrigated with oxygenated blood?" (9)

Dialectical Materialists are careful to evade the dialectical test of Dialectical Materialism. When Monsignor R. A. Knox was challenged by a non-Catholic to defend Catholicism in a series of letters for publication, he accepted the challenge with alacrity. When Professor C. E. M. Joad challenged a Christian, who subsequently became a Catholic, to defend

Christianity, the Christian also accepted the challenge, and to the second edition of that book Professor Joad and his opponent wrote a joint preface reaffirming their faith in reason and in dialectics as a means of arriving at truth. Professor J. B. S. Haldane, F.R.S., proved equally willing to submit his beliefs to the dialectical test. Those who realize subconsciously that their case is indefensible are fervent in maintaining their belief that such debates serve no useful purpose and only produce an exchange of debating points. I was therefore not surprised at my failure to persuade either the Communist Party of Great Britain or the Left Book Club to produce a Marxist to debate with me in writing or on the platform. A Communist in Birkenhead did indeed suggest a debate, but could obtain no official approval from his Party for this proposal. He subsequently informed me that the crimes of the Spanish Nationalists had "removed" the subject "from the realm of debate to denunciation."

The Marxist who declines to submit his views to the dialectical test deprives himself of the surest protection against writing nonsense, for the fear of the critic is the beginning of wisdom. I have been reading a collection of essays called *Aspects of Dialectical Materialism*, which arose out of a series of lectures and discussions organized by the Society for Cultural Relations. Well-known writers such as Professor H. Levy, Professor John Macmurray and Mr. E. F. Carr contribute essays, and the book may be accepted as a representative symposium. As a sample of the kind of thing which gets itself printed in a Marxist symposium, let me quote from Dr. J. D. Bernal's tribute to gunpowder and Galileo. "The Renaissance saw differently: armed with the invention of gunpowder, Leonardo and Galileo, and finally Newton, showed that the continuous effort of the prime mover was unnecessary, that, given an initial impulse and in the absence of retarding friction, the motion of a body could never be lost." (10)

You see the point? While men still fought with bows and arrows they naturally thought that the Prime Mover directly supervised all the movement that exists. But thanks to gunpowder, the Renaissance "and all that," we now know that the Prime Mover is allowed an occasional day off.

But we must not be too severe on Dr. J. D. Bernal. His philosophy (or lack of it) is not his own, for his mental processes are determined by the economic processes of the age. If you do not like Dr. Bernal's prose you must abolish chain stores and mass production.

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CHAPTER XI

COMMUNISM AND WAR

I

THERE is nothing new in the exploitation of pacifism as an instrument of civil and international war, for the germ of this idea can be traced back to the twelfth century. The Communist "League against Fascism and War" is a modern variant of the "Confrérie de la Paix" which was founded in 1185 with the double object of abolishing war and private property in land. The peace-loving founders of this League lost no time in organizing an armed attack on monasteries and châteaux, whereupon the wicked Fascists treacherously conspired to save their lives and their property, and thereby brought to an end this experiment in Communism and peace.

These mediæval pacifists merely provoked a local insurrection. Their eighteenth-century successors were more successful, for their devotion to peace was rewarded by more than twenty years of war. On May 22nd, 1790, Robespierre, amidst tumultuous applause, declared perpetual peace to the world. "Plus de diplomates! Plus d'armées! Plus d'intrigues! Plus de sang!" And he added that the French finally renounced wars of conquest, and would never again make use of force against the freedom of other nations. (1)

Within three weeks of renouncing annexation France invented the technique of territorial aggrandisement which has been exploited in modern times with conspicuous success by the Russians in Georgia and the Ukraine, and by Germany in Austria. The revolutionary technique for reconciling annexations with a policy of non-annexation was tried out with success in the Papal possessions of Avignon and the Comtat Venaissin.

A revolutionary minority, inspired by French propaganda, expelled the Papal Legate and demanded that Avignon should be annexed by France. There was, of course, no suggestion of a plebiscite, a bourgeois device which revolutionaries have always regarded with contempt. On June 12th, 1790, France welcomed these new citizens into the French family, a very different matter from annexing their territory. France, declared the revolutionaries, renounced conquests prepared by intrigue and accomplished by force, but she was ready to welcome populations which approached her spontaneously by virtue of the right of self-determination.

Revolutionary France and Soviet Russia "incorporated" territories by an appeal to ideological unity in Europe, which on this theory is divided into reactionaries and revolutionaries. The Germans annexed Austria by appealing not to ideological but to racial unity, and whereas it is possible that a majority of the Austrians genuinely desired to be incorporated, it is more than doubtful whether a plebiscite in Avignon would have favoured union with France, and it is as certain as anything can be that the Ukraine and Georgia would have rejected the overtures of Soviet Russia by overwhelming majorities.

Paris during the Revolution was the magnet for alien agitators who had been expelled from their own countries, and who incited the French to further conquests in the sacred cause of revolutionary self-determination. The French Revolution, like the Russian of today, was no longer a purely domestic upheaval. It had become, in the words of Pierre Gaxotte, "une entreprise cosmopolite, une religion universelle menaçant tous les Etats non seulement dans leur forme, mais même dans leur existence." (2)

In 1791 a shrewd observer, Count de la Marck, foretold the inevitable consequences of revolutionary pacifism. "France," he wrote, "will soon find herself in a state of war with all Governments. She threatens them incessantly with civil war" (as Russia does today) "and the insurrections thus provoked will result in their conquest by France. Rome dethroning the king when the people placed themselves under her protection employed the same system." (3)

And Moscow employs the same system today. Then as now revolutionaries sought refuge in war from the chaos which they themselves had provoked. "The Girondins," writes Gaxotte, "did not hesitate to provoke a European conflagration. They regarded war as a powerful instrument for the achievement of their domestic policy. By means of war they hoped to rekindle revolutionary enthusiasm, to transform measures of national defence into measures for the defence of Jacobinism, and thus to exploit in the interests of their party the forces which had been mobilized for their country." (4)

"La guerre sans risques," was the slogan with which Brissot sought to overcome the hesitations of Robespierre. "The dictators will collapse," is the modern variant of "la guerre sans risques." "Une grande nation doit être jalouse de sa gloire, doit punir sévèrement les téméraires qui osent lui manquer de respect." (5) They said that in 1791, and they said much the same thing in 1938 when Mr. Chamberlain refused to embroil England in war to avenge the motley collection of Russians, Greeks and Levantines who sailed under the British flag into the harbours of Red Spain.*

In Revolutionary France the pacifists were not in opposition as with us, but in power, and consequently they got their war. "The French nation," exclaimed Danton, "has appointed us as the great Committee for the general insurrection of all people against the kings of the universe." On April 20th, 1792, the pacifists declared war against the King of Hungary and Bohemia; twenty-three years later the militarists enforced peace after Waterloo. Bellicose pacifism reappeared in the French Revolution of 1848. Italian, German, Austrian and Belgian revolutionaries flocked to Paris, helped to man the barricades and demanded the appropriate rewards for their revolutionary zeal. They insisted that France should declare war on the world to liberate all people groaning under the oppressors' yoke. When the Republic was proclaimed these exalted revolutionaries trembled with joy. They had been promised the liberation of their countries; they demanded

* It is now admitted that only a minority of the "British" ships bombed in Valencia were manned by British crews.

that these promises should be fulfilled. Processions of foreign revolutionaries paraded before the Hotel de Ville.

Lamartine, the poet-politician, was discovering, as revolutionary intellectuals have discovered before and since, that it is easier to provoke a revolution than to control it. "He fought passionately for peace," writes Jules Bertaut, "against the madmen who threatened to embroil France in a general conflagration." (6) Lamartine's colleagues were pacifists of another school. They did nothing to check and much to provoke the mobilizing of revolutionary legions against friendly states. Fifteen thousand Germans left Paris with their blessing, invaded Baden and were killed or captured in the first engagement. The Italians attempted a *coup* against Savoy and captured Chambéry, only to be driven out of Savoy by a general rising of the population. The Belgians, anxious not to be outdone in revolutionary fervour, organized two expeditions, the first of which left Paris in a train obligingly put at their disposal by Ledru-Rollin, one of Lamartine's colleagues in the Government. The train was allowed to cross the frontier, whereupon it was ignominiously surrounded by the Belgian police. The second legion was less fortunate, for though they succeeded in crossing the frontier, many of them lost their lives in the brief encounter with Belgian regiments which brought this expedition to an inglorious end.

Well may Bertaut exclaim, "Encore une ou deux 'expéditions' de ce genre et le feu était mis à l'Europe une fois de plus, et la France déclarait la guerre au monde au nom de la liberté."* (7)

II

In the days of my youth young people instinctively questioned the beliefs of their teachers, but modern youth is more easily led. There has been a marked movement to the Left in the teaching profession, and Conservatives are as rare among

* "One or two more such expeditions, and Europe would have been set alight, and France declared war on the world in the name of liberty."

Secondary School teachers, and Tories among Dons, as Socialists in the Senior Common Rooms of pre-war Oxford. If young people today were as critical of authority as in my youth, this Left Wing movement among their teachers would provoke a Right Wing reaction amongst the pupils. But nothing of the kind occurs. I feel about these young Communists much as Alexander Selkirk felt about the animals on his desert island, "Their tameness is shocking to me."

Even more disconcerting is the contempt for political research among teachers with Communist sympathies. Nothing else can explain their readiness to accept Red Dictators as the champions of democracy, and militant Imperialists as the protagonists of peace. "The Dictatorship of the Proletariat," wrote Lenin, "is a relentless struggle waged with bloodshed . . . a war, a hundred times more difficult, more long drawn-out, more complicated than the most bloodthirsty war which could be possible between Nations." (8)

It would be difficult to decide whether the published utterances of Marx and Lenin or the imperialist wars waged by Soviet Russia are more inconsistent with the avowed aims of the League against Fascism and War. Marx's biographer, Franz Mehring, records with regret the "disdainful judgment" passed by Engels on "the struggle of the southern Slav nations and groups for national freedom." (9) When the German Federal army invaded the Duchies of Schleswig and Holstein Marx sympathized strongly with the invaders, and bitterly resented the intervention of Britain and Russia which robbed the Germans of the reward of their military victories.

"The Danes are a people unconditionally dependent on Germany," wrote Marx, "commercially, industrially, politically and in literature. It is a well-known fact that Hamburg is the capital of Denmark and not Copenhagen, and that Denmark derives its literary imports from Germany in the same way as it does its material imports. With the sole exception of Holberg, Danish literature is nothing but a feeble copy of German literature. . . . Germany must take Schleswig with the same justification that France took Flanders, Alsace and Lorraine, and sooner or later will take Belgium. It is the right of

civilization against barbarism, of progress against stagnation.” (10)

Our modern Marxists affected great indignation when Mussolini justified his attack on Ethiopia by “the right of civilization against barbarism,” and yet this Marxian formula could be applied with far greater justification to the conquest of slave-trading Ethiopia than to the annexation of progressive Schleswig, Alsace and Lorraine. Orthodox Marxists are, indeed, slightly disconcerted by the unashamed enthusiasm with which Marx applauded Germany’s wars of conquest. V. Adoratsky produces a characteristic apology for such passages.

“Marx and Engels,” he writes, “spoke of the legitimacy of the wars for national emancipation that took place in Europe in the first half of the nineteenth century, e.g. in Prussia in 1813. Kautsky takes these words of Marx and Engels and applies them in a different epoch, namely, to the wars of the twentieth century, which are essentially imperialistic and predatory.” (11)

It is the method of the Marxian Sophist to draw artificial distinctions between basically similar cases. Adoratsky can safely gamble on the fact that few of his readers will discover that it was not the “wars of national emancipation” before 1813 that Marx justified, but Prussia’s imperialist adventures from 1848 to 1870. Marx’s attitude to the 1870 war would have pleased Bismarck. The innocent working men of France were naïve enough to believe that the International which Marx had created would justify its name, and that the German proletariat would unite with the French in opposition to the threatened war. On July 12th they published in their paper *Le Reveil* a touching appeal to the people of Germany.

“Brothers of Germany, in the name of peace do not listen to the subsidized or servile voices which seek to deceive you on the true spirit of France. Remain deaf to senseless provocations, for war between us would be a fratricidal war.” (12)

Marx was incensed. He damned the appeal for working-class solidarity as “pure jingoism,” and in a letter to Engels on July 20th insisted that “the French need a thrashing (*die Französer brauchen Prügel*).” (13)

When the Internationale of Paris sent a fraternal protest to the working men of Germany against the invasion of French territory, a protest which elicited from the German Social Democrats at Brunswick a plea for "an honourable peace," Engels reacted as any Prussian Junker might have reacted. "It is just the old infatuation, the superiority of France, the inviolability of the soil sanctified by 1793, and from which all the French swinishness (*les cochonneries françaises*) committed since then have not been able to take away the character, the sanctity of the word Republic." (14)

And how did this orthodox Marxian propose to exploit such influence as Marx possessed with the working classes? The proletariat were to be kept quiet until Prussia had imposed her peace terms. "If we have any influence in Paris we must prevent the working men from moving until peace is made." And next day Engels adds, "The war by being prolonged is taking a disagreeable turn. The French have not yet been thrashed enough." (15)

Marxism, which in the seventies served the ambitions of Prussia, is today the docile tool of Russian Imperialism. Soviet Russia has waged no less than twelve wars of conquest and aggression without protest from those who were incensed by the Italian invasion of Ethiopia. In 1936 the Soviet military budget totalled some six hundred million pounds (16), and while Russia prepares for war her dupes in other countries are weakening Russia's future enemies by incessant campaigns against rearmament and by seditious propaganda in the Armed Forces.

III

Mr. William Henry Chamberlin, one of the greatest authorities on Soviet Russia, summarizes in *The American Mercury* (April 1938) the "round dozen wars of conquest and aggression" which Soviet Russia has waged in the short space of twenty years.

"From the almost-forgotten civil class-war in Finland in

1918," writes Mr. Chamberlin, "to the somewhat similar Spanish conflict today, the Kremlin has displayed an incorrigible tendency to interfere in disturbances outside its own borders which puts the military adventures of Mussolini to shame.

"The Soviet Government has proved itself a past master in every old trick of imperialistic conquest and has added a few original new ones on its own account. A favourite device has been formally to recognize the independence of a State, then to create disorder through Communist agents within the country in question, and to complete the process by sending in the Red Army to help the local Communist rebels. The creation of 'independent' States which are completely controlled from Moscow and the waging of war without declaring it are two other favourite Soviet methods of procedure."

Soviet Russia, having formally recognized the Independence of Finland on December 31st, 1917, proceeded to instigate civil war. The Whites had a slight majority in the Finnish Diet, but it is an accepted principle of Communists and their supporters that it is laudable to rise in armed rebellion against a legal Government if that Government is anti-Socialist, as was the case in Finland in 1918 and in Spain in 1934, but damnable to rebel against a legal Government dominated by Communists as was the case in the Spain of 1936. Russia instigated a revolution in Finland, but the Whites proved too strong, and Finland won her independence from those who had officially recognized that independence as a preliminary to an intended annexation.

In the winter of 1918-1919 the Soviet army moved westward. Riga was occupied and lived through a Red terror, but the Baltic provinces proved as indigestible as Finland, and the Communists were forced to retire within their own frontiers. In the Soviet-Polish war of 1920 the Poles were technically the aggressors, since they had attempted to forestall an almost certain attack by invading the Ukraine. Their offensive was repulsed, and the Soviet had an excellent opportunity to demonstrate their fidelity to those principles of non-annexation

which they had proclaimed by accepting the generous terms which Poland offered. Instead, they continued to advance only to be defeated in the battle for Warsaw.

Ignorance of contemporary Russian history has helped the Soviet to conceal from the world their brutal annihilation of the diverse nationalities which were included in that strange patchwork, pre-war Russia. The Ukrainian has his own language, and has less in common with the Russian of Moscow than the Czech with the Sudeten German. After the Bolsheviks seized power, the Ukraine set up its own Government at Kiev, but Lenin, who had repeatedly pronounced in favour of sweeping self-determination for the different nationalities included in the Russian Empire, invaded the Ukraine and instituted a pitiless reign of terror against the nationalists. The records of the Checka admit to 3,879 Ukrainian executions in the year 1920.

Georgia, the romantic mountain country south of the main Caucasian range, had its own language and culture, and formally seceded from Russia in 1918. In the spring of 1920 Soviet Russia made a treaty with Georgia and explicitly recognized its existence as a separate State. In February, 1921, with the aid of the Turks, Soviet Russia over-ran Georgia and annexed it. The alliance between Russians and Turks for the annihilation of this little mountain democracy awoke no response from those who flocked to the Albert Hall to register their disapproval of the conquest of Ethiopia.

Daghestan, to the north-east of Georgia, is inhabited not by Russians but by Oriental tribes of the Islamic faith, and Daghestan "had the bad taste to object to Soviet rule," writes Mr. Chamberlin. "So that, instead of being recipients of sympathy and funds from a 'Committee in Defense of Daghestan Democracy,' the unfortunate inhabitants received only a merciless punitive expedition which reduced Daghestan to subjection." The annexation of Daghestan was followed by "an old-fashioned imperialistic invasion" of Bokhara, and by "a protracted period of colonial warfare."

In the Far East the Soviet troops have conducted military operations on three occasions. In 1921 they invaded Outer

Mongolia, which has never been formally annexed, but which is "as completely a puppet State of the Soviet Union as Manchoukuo is a dependency of Japan." In 1929 the Soviet troops invaded Manchuria, and advanced as far as Hailar, a war which was the first breach of the Kellogg Pact which Russia had signed the previous year. More recently the Soviet has subjugated the Tungans by the aid of aeroplanes and poison gas.

There is one aspect of these imperialist wars to which Mr. Chamberlin does not draw attention in his survey. Not once did the League of Nations protest against these flagrant violations of the principles which the League professes. Many of the most prominent figures in the League have been hostile to Communism, and yet so powerful has been the influence of Russia and her League allies that the supreme war-maker of modern times has been welcomed with enthusiasm at Geneva. The serenity of League discussions has never been disturbed by tactless references to the Ukraine, to Georgia or to any of the other imperialist exploits of Soviet Russia. The League has ostentatiously passed by on the other side, averting its selective gaze from those who have fallen among Russian thieves. But the League which ignored the tragedies of Georgia and the Ukraine awoke to feverish activity when Italy invaded Ethiopia.

The Archbishop of York and ten of his fellow bishops issued a manifesto during the summer of 1938 in which they urged the use of armed force in defence of the League of Nations. They attributed the growing contempt for the conception of International Law to our failure effectively to oppose the invasion of Manchuria and Ethiopia. I am convinced that the facts cited by Mr. Chamberlin are unknown to these signatories, for I am confident that they would not willingly endorse a double standard of morality, condoning in the case of Soviet Russia what they condemn in the case of Italy and Japan, and I believe that if they were better informed they would be the first to agree that there is some justification for the contempt with which the League is regarded by critics who are both honest and well-informed. Nobody disputes the good faith

and the good intentions of these distinguished signatories, but surely those who aspire to reshape history would do well to read it, and not to base their verdicts on Left Wing propaganda.

NOTE.—*This chapter was written some weeks before the Munich Conference.*

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CHAPTER XII

THE STANDARD OF LIVING IN SOVIET RUSSIA

No intelligent Communists deny that the standard of living in the workers' paradise is far below that of Capitalist countries, but their reluctant admissions are always qualified by the trite excuse, "Anyhow, the poor are much better off than they were under the Tsars." This view is more common among Communists who have not worked in Russia than among those who have subjected their Communist convictions to the test of experience.

Andrew Smith, author of *I Was a Soviet Worker*, a convinced member of the Communist Party of the United States, decided to make his home in Russia. He offered to give the greater part of his life savings (about 3,000 dollars) to the Soviet Union, an offer which irritated his American Comrades, who finally persuaded him that it would be foolish to give money to Russian workers whose every need was gratified by the Soviet instead of to American Comrades groaning under Capitalism. The argument was convincing, and Smith distributed most of his life savings before setting sail from the States.

On the journey to Leningrad the train was boarded by peasants on a pilgrimage to Leningrad in search of bread. "It was different before," they complained. "We had enough. We did not have to go to Leningrad to try to get a crust of bread." (1) The room assigned to Smith provoked the envy of a Russian friend. "Two people for such a big room!" exclaimed Peter in amazement. "You foreigners have it good. My father died in the Revolution and what do we have? We live sixty in one room like this. They tell us that under the Tsar the Russian people lived in the same room with cattle. But the pigs, the cows and the chickens were healthy at least.

Now we have to live with all kinds of diseased people. . . . The pigs lived much better than we do now.' " (2)

Aleksandra, their washerwoman, was yet another of these Russians who had the bad taste to sigh for the old days. " 'How can the Communists be good people if they do not give us enough to eat? Under the Tsar I made 15 kopeks a day, but I could buy more with 15 kopeks than I can buy with the 75 roubles I get in the factory. On Sunday I used to buy *piroshni* (Russian cakes). I used to go to church and cook and bake. I had a fine holiday. Now I have to wash and scrub on my day off.' " (3)

Victor Serge is yet another Communist who denies that Russia has gained by the substitution of Commissars for Tsars. Serge arrived in Petrograd in 1919, and was immediately elected to the Executive Committee of the Comintern. "Did they live better before the revolution? People of forty are unanimous in affirming it, in all three respects of food, clothing and lodgings. Statistics confirm it. A worker of the textile industry who, in 1912-1914, received 300 kilograms of bread per month, a miner who received 600, today get an average of 150 (the equivalent of 150 rubles). More than once I heard mothers deploring the fact that their children have never known the good times when, during religious festivals, such nice things as pastries, preserves, and creams were made; and old women complaining of no longer even having tea to drink. . . . Most of the pensions of Civil War widows are 30 rubles a month. In 1926 the pre-war level seemed to be nearly reached; they are far from it today. In order to restore to the vast majority of Russian workers their material level of 1926 it would be necessary to double all the low wages." (4)

The chronic housing hardships were aggravated towards the end of 1932 by the institution of internal passports. "The custom of internal passports," writes Serge, "does not exist, I believe, in any large civilized state. Not even the fascist states have thought that they could rob their nationals of their freedom to move about in the country and to change residence. The *Small Soviet Encyclopædia*, published by the State Publishers, says in its edition of 1930 that 'the custom of

internal passports, instituted by the autocracy as an instrument of police oppression of the toiling masses, was suppressed by the October Revolution.' It was re-established and terribly aggravated in 1932." (5)

Eugene Lyons arrived in Russia early in January, 1928. By profession he was a journalist, by conviction a sincere Communist. He left six years later having lost his illusions about Russia, but none of his faith in Socialism. His book, *Assignment in Utopia*, is a most scathing indictment of Soviet Russia, based on personal experience. His description of housing conditions reinforces Serge's comparison between Tsarist and Communist Russia. The entire Russian urban population, he tells us, some fifty millions, were questioned and classified in a residential purge "carried through with a frightful indifference to human suffering." And Mr. Lyons adds, "Under the Romanovs, every subject had a passport merely for identification, to assure effective police control. It did not restrict their right to travel or change their residence within the Russian frontiers—except for the Jews, most of whom were confined in the so-called Pale of Settlement. The new Soviet passport decree went much further. It turned every locality into a 'pale' for all its inhabitants, beyond which they could not move without the government's explicit sanction. The passport now issued fixed the domicile of its holder. No *concierge* or relative could give him shelter for more than three days without a special permit. . . .

"Moscow, Leningrad, Kharkov, Odessa, Vladivostock, and a few other key cities were the first to undergo the cleansing. No one bothered to explain what the 'undesirables' were to do if they had no place to go to and no funds to get them there. The code of Bolshevik firmness made it 'unfriendly' and counter-revolutionary to raise such a 'private' problem. 'We can't stop to worry about such sentimental nonsense,' communist acquaintances said. 'They'll get there, one way or another, or they'll blow out their brains. We have enough to worry about without that.' Panic swept through every street in Moscow. Hundreds of thousands who had adjusted themselves after years of travail must again justify their warrant

to remain alive. They knew that neighbours with influence, perhaps on the passport commission itself, coveted their corner of 'living space.' . . . The passport officials were pitiless, arbitrary, autocratic, sparing neither the very aged nor the very young, not even bed-ridden invalids." (6)

"The passport," writes Serge, "is visaed at the place of work. With each change of employ, the reason for the change is entered into the passport. I have known workers discharged for not having come on the day of rest to contribute a 'voluntary' (and, naturally, gratuitous) day of work, in whose passports is written: 'discharged for sabotage of the production plan.'" (7)

To compare standards of clothing the reader should turn up old files of the *Illustrated London News* and note the sheep-skin coats and leather boots worn by the Tsarist proletariat and peasantry, and then read Sir Walter Citrine's description of the articles of clothing displayed at the Dilka, the store of the Leningrad Consumers' Co-operative Society. "All these articles," he writes, "were of shoddy quality, and in England the hats would be about 5s. and the waterproof £1, whilst the shoes anything from 10s. 6d. to 15s. The coats were all of indifferent quality, and would not bring more than £2 10s. to £3 10s. in England. Standing apart from the other exhibits was a solitary suit of plus fours, of a pattern which would have made a racing tipster blush! It was priced at 650 roubles. At the average wages we had come across so far the Russian worker would have to work about three months to buy this abortion." (8) I take this quotation from *I Search for Truth in Russia*, by Sir Walter Citrine, K.B.E., General Secretary of the Trades Union Congress and President of the International Federation of Trade Unions. His book represents the results of research during a journey through Russia in 1935, in the course of which Sir Walter made copious notes on wages and housing. His statistics are flattering to Russia, for though rubles could be bought in the Black Exchange at twopence each, Sir Walter values them at fourpence. "That is an extravagant assumption," he writes, "but let it pass." (9) He gives the following table of wages:

REPRESENTATIVE AVERAGE EARNINGS AT FACTORIES VISITED

<i>Undertaking</i>	<i>Average Monthly Earnings. in English money.</i>	
	<i>Weekly Average</i>	<i>Average</i>
	<i>Rubles</i>	<i>s. d.</i>
Sokorokhod Shoe Factory	190	15 10
Kirov Engineering Works	250	20 10
Kaganovitch Ball-Bearing Factory	230	19 2
No. 6 Moscow Underwear Factory	210	17 6
No. 4 Children's Underwear Factory	195	16 3
Kharkov Electrical and Mechanical Plant	207	17 3
Orjohnikidzie Tractor Plant	205	17 1
Stalin Oil Refinery	210	17 6 (10)

To these wages must be added an estimate of the value of socialised wages, that is, of the various privileges which the workman receives in addition to his money wages. "The last figures I have seen from Soviet sources gave it at 31.7 per cent of the monetary wage for the year 1932. I have tried to calculate it for myself from data in my possession and I make it out to be 28 per cent. It is quite possible that I have overlooked something or other, but I don't think I would be far out if I took the socialised wage as being worth about one-third of the monetary wage. If I add this to the weekly wage I have already given, the average at the Sokorokhod Shoe Factory now becomes 21s. 1½d. a week, and the highest average at the Kirov engineering works 27s. 9½d." (11)

Sir Walter was depressed by the tragic overcrowding and the horrible sanitary conditions. His book is restrained and balanced; he says what he can in favour of Soviet Russia, and the result is an indictment all the more effective for its reserve.

The unemployed in England and the United States are better fed than the higher paid workers in Russia. Communists assure us that Russia has abolished unemployment. So have Pentonville and Sing-Sing. It is not work, however, that most people desire, but the reward of work. There is no reason to suppose that British or American unemployed would accept a lower standard of living in return for the privilege of working long hours under Russian conditions. Indeed, as Mr. W. H. Chamberlin remarks, "President Roosevelt could 'abolish unemployment' immediately if he should assume dictatorial

powers and declare that every unemployed person should do some prescribed work in exchange for the food and clothing which he receives in the form of relief. Such action would, of course, elicit the most strenuous opposition on the part of the unemployed themselves." (12) Elsewhere in this book I have quoted Mr. Chamberlin's account of the impression produced on his friends in Russia by a list of rations given to unemployed families in Milwaukee, which in quality and quantity were not inferior to those within the purchasing power of a Soviet official of moderately high grade.

The facts cited in this chapter, facts testified to by disillusioned Communists and Socialists, fully justify the letter which Andrew Smith addressed, while still in Russia, to the Central Committee of the Communist Party, the letter in which he stated that in his opinion "Capitalists treat dogs better than the Soviet Government treats the workers." (13)

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- (6) Eugene Lyons: *Assignment in Utopia*, Harrap, p. 515.
- (7) Victor Serge: *Russia Twenty Years After*, p. 68.
- (8)-(11) Sir Walter Citrine, K.B.E.: *I Search for Truth in Russia*, Routledge, pp. 61, 334, 334, 335.
- (12) W. H. Chamberlin: *Russia's Iron Age*, Duckworth, p. 96.
- (13) Andrew Smith: *I was a Soviet Worker*, p. 201.

CHAPTER XIII

THE APOLOGETICS OF PERSECUTION

NEITHER Soviet Russia, Nazi Germany nor Republican Spain have enriched the apologetics of persecution. On the contrary, they have been content to exploit the classic pretext of Nero, and have justified persecution by the argument that the persecuted have been guilty of political crimes. Even Russia, which has adopted materialism as the state creed, disguises its implacable hostility to religion by the substitution of political for religious indictments. Now, of course, it is always easy to pass legislation which automatically transforms every sincere Christian into a potential political offender. All that is necessary is to demand from Christians that they should render unto Cæsar the things that are God's. Few Englishmen have been deceived by this shallow subterfuge in the case of the heroic Protestant Minister, Niemoller, but it is less generally realized in England that the squalid pretexts which have been advanced to justify the immeasurably more brutal persecutions in Spain are as worthless as those advanced to justify the imprisonment of Niemoller.

We can test the apologetics of persecution if we begin by defining certain universal principles which apply to all organized groups. By group I mean in this context any class of human beings united by a common religion (e.g. Christians), a common political creed (e.g. Conservatives) or by racial or class ties as in the case of Jews and class-conscious proletarians. It is clearly better to state general principles before attempting to apply those principles to particular cases, for the particular case (as, for instance, the particular case of Christian persecution) is always confused by emotional associations which complicate scientific research. I therefore invite the reader's consideration of certain universal propositions which apply not to Christians in particular but to all organized groups.

1. Self-preservation is the first law of group life. Every group, therefore, tends to support other groups if they be friendly, and to oppose them if they be hostile.

Let me illustrate this universal principle by particular examples. The Irish Protestants in the Victorian age supported the Conservative Party not necessarily because their sympathies were with the rich (for the poorer Protestants in Belfast voted Conservative), but because the Liberals were campaigning for Home Rule, which threatened the end of the Protestant ascendancy. Similarly, convinced Communicants of the Established Church in Wales usually voted Conservative because the Liberals urged the disestablishment and disendowment of the Welsh Church. Sincere Spanish Catholics normally voted Conservative because Spanish Liberals were fiercely anti-clerical, and because their periods of power often coincided with further attacks on the depleted resources of the Church, and sometimes with outbursts of mob violence directed against the priests. It is, however, truer to say that Irish Protestants, Welsh churchmen and Spanish Catholics voted *against* the parties that were hostile to their respective Churches rather than in support of Conservatism.

No group can be blamed for opposing its persecutors, even where the persecution takes the mild form of what is described in the courteous terminology of Liberalism as "disendowment." Had Schuschnigg been allowed to hold a plebiscite in Austria just before the *Anschluss* there is no doubt but that the overwhelming majority both of Jews and Socialists would have supported him, not because the Jews or the Socialists were enthusiastic supporters of dictatorship in general or of Schuschnigg's ideas in particular, but because both the Jews and the Socialists dreaded the only other alternative, a Nazi Austria. If critics would only realize that a vote must often be interpreted less as a vote *for* a particular Party than as a vote *against* their opponents, they would be less inclined to accuse Protestants in Ireland and Wales and Catholics in Spain of supporting the Parties of reaction.

"The Church of England," wrote Dean Inge, "has been freely accused of too great complaisance to the powers that be,

when those powers were oligarchic. Some of the clergy are now trying to repeat rather than redress this error by an obsequious attitude to King Workingman. . . . The taunt of Helen to Aphrodite in the third book of the *Iliad* sounds very apposite when we read the speeches of some clerical 'Christian Socialists' who find it more exciting to organize processions of the unemployed than to attend to their professional duties. 'Go and sit thou by his side and depart from the way of the gods; neither let thy feet ever bear thee back to Olympus; but still be vexed for his sake, and guard him till he make thee his wife, or rather his slave.'

"It is as a slave and not as an honoured help-mate that the Social Democrats would treat any Christian body that helped them to overthrow our present civilization."

It is interesting to observe that exactly the same charge has been brought against the Church in Spain, which was accused by the anti-clericals of the Right of undue subservience to the republican régime. Thousands of priests voted for the Republic in 1931. Professor Allison Peers, an Anglican who has declined to take sides in the Spanish War, and who knows Spain as few Englishmen know Spain, describes the attitude of the hierarchy to the Republic "during five years of sore trial" as "not only correct but generous." And he added in a letter to *The Times*, in May, 1938, "I hope shortly to publish a series of quotations from episcopal pastorals and speeches (too long to ask you to print here) which will make their loyalty to the Republican régime perfectly clear. What they opposed were those articles of the 1931 Constitution which attacked the Church and the religious and moral principles for which it stands and involved a unilateral repudiation of a Concordat of 80 years' standing. Just so, years ago, Anglican Bishops protested against Welsh Disestablishment and would presumably protest again if a Government of our own were to close all the Church of England schools in the country."

2. Every group must necessarily make concessions, other than concessions of basic principles, to establish a *modus vivendi* with the State.

It is exceptional for Jews in democratic countries to profess

anything but hostility to Fascism, but many Italian Jews had expressed their admiration for the Corporate State before the recent anti-Semite legislation. Convinced Nazis must be rare among sincere German Protestants, but the Protestants were prepared to sacrifice everything save those basic principles which they have defended with magnificent courage, to arrive at an understanding with Hitler. The Pope has often severely criticized certain aspects of Italian Fascism, but he has none the less signed a Concordat with the Italian State, a concordat which has secured for the Church far better treatment than she received under the Parliamentary régime. The Pope has not concealed his strong disapproval of the Nazi régime, but he has not denounced the Concordat with Germany, in spite of the fact that its terms have not been kept, nor has the Pope broken off relations with the Republican Government in Spain, in spite of the bitter persecution of the Church. *A fortiori*, the Church is prepared to co-operate with any Government which allows liberty of worship, and which grants a reasonable measure of freedom for Christian teaching and Christian propaganda.

3. Every group tends to be civil towards those who contribute to its resources.

The Daily Worker is civil to the Dean of Canterbury whose support Communists value, and yet if it was consistent it would attack him for peddling round the "opium of the people," and for his continued support of superstitions which only serve, on their theory, to facilitate the exploitation of the poor. The Church has been accused, with some justice, of undue civility to the rich. I remember hearing an American Bishop criticized because he accepted a big subscription from a millionaire who was accused of grossly underpaying his own workers. If the facts were as stated, the criticism was sound, but a sharp distinction must be drawn between those who cultivate the rich because they have a weakness for good food and good wine, and those who are too indulgent to the shortcomings of the great because they hope for a subscription to the charities for which they are responsible. In the case I have mentioned the Bishop would have had to sacrifice a most

deserving charity had he refused to accept the money of a man whose business methods invited censure. Vicarious heroism at the expense of their flocks is less common among priests, of all denominations, than individual heroism in times of persecution. There are, indeed, many reactionary prelates who would not find it difficult to accept death for themselves but impossible to refuse a cheque for their poor.

4. Every group is composed of human beings whose human frailties provide no legitimate pretext for the persecution of the group. Individual members of a group may justly be punished for their individual offences, but persecution of a group is only justifiable if the objectives of the group are anti-social.

Even bigots would find it difficult to refute this self-evident principle, but once the principle is accepted, the persecution of the Jews must necessarily be condemned unless we can prove that the objectives of Judaism are anti-social. It is easier to denounce than to define these alleged objectives. Indeed, it is by no means easy to prove that Judaism as such has any objectives other than the legitimate objective of self-protection against anti-semitism. The only tenet common to Jews is the belief that Jews should not be persecuted. Every group, religious, political or racial, presents to hostile critics an exaggerated impression of unity. "Catholics," remarked Father Martindale, "use up all their available unity on points of defined doctrine, and have nothing left over for anything else." It is estimated that seventy per cent of Catholics in England vote Labour, yet Catholicism is always accused of supporting reaction. It is said that the majority of Jews are Communists or near-Communists, but the alleged alliance between Jews and the Left may, for all I know, have even less foundation than the alleged alliance between Catholics and the Right.

Of all forms of persecution racial persecution is perhaps the most cruel, for a man can change his religion, his politics or his nationality, but no man can change his race. Let me briefly summarize the pretexts advanced in justification of anti-semitic persecution.

(a) *The Russian Revolution was engineered by Jews. Jews*

were certainly prominent among the leading Bolsheviks, which is scarcely surprising, for the Jews had no reason to love, and every reason to revolt against, the Tsarist régime which had driven them into the ghetto and decimated them by periodical pogroms.

(b) *Jews are prominent in all subversive movements.* Subversives are always more prominent, more articulate and more active than traditionalists. We hear a great deal about subversive Jews, but very little about Conservative Jews. Yet one of England's greatest Prime Ministers was the Conservative Disraeli. Thousands of Jews in England belong to Conservative and National Associations such as the Primrose League, the Navy League, etc.

(c) *Jews direct the world-wide campaign against Christian civilization.* Jews are certainly prominent in the war against Christianity. These obstinate men have resisted in past centuries the dialectics of persecution. The rack, the stake and the pogrom have left them unconvinced that Christian civilization is infinitely superior to their own sectarian culture. But since these plausible arguments have so consistently failed, there is no reason to hope that modern anti-semitism will succeed.

(d) *Jews are unpatriotic, for they are only loyal to international Judaism.* The Jewish immigrant who applies for naturalization papers is often an internationalist in his outlook, as are also immigrants of other races. The Jewish influence in the Grand Orient, and through the Grand Orient on French Socialism, has not only been international but anti-national. Every effort should be made to counteract the influence of such Jews and of their Gentile allies. But it is unjust to condemn the majority of Jews who identify themselves with the country of their birth or choice because a minority are unpatriotic. The children of immigrants are normally as patriotic as those born of native stock. The love of Germany has seldom found more passionate and more moving expression than in the poetry of the German Jew, Heinrich Heine.

(e) *Jews are prominent in the exploitation of vice.* So are Gentiles. But whereas everybody knows that many of the

more salacious films were produced by Jewish firms, very few people are aware of a fact, mentioned to me by an American Monsignor, that the hierarchy received invaluable support in its campaign for clean films from leading Jewish personalities in the world of Hollywood.

(f) *Jews are unpleasantly clannish. Once they get a footing into a business they surround themselves with other Jews, and drive out the Gentiles.* Perhaps, but the inevitable result of driving a race into the ghetto is to develop the ghetto complex with it inevitable clannishness. The anti-semitism which is only a form of economic jealousy varies inversely with the intelligence of the native population. The Germans are more hard working but on the balance less quick-witted than the British, Italians or Spaniards, and consequently anti-semitism is far more violent in Germany than in the Latin countries or Great Britain.

(g) *Jews are ruthless as money-lenders and usurers. There are ruthless Gentile money-lenders, and therefore the right course is to legislate not against Jews but against usury.* In recent years Acts of Parliament have been passed to protect the debtor against exorbitant claims. These Acts exemplify the principle which I defend, that men should be punished for anti-social activities and not for membership of a race which includes, as all races include, anti-social individuals.

It was necessary to discuss in some detail the apologetics of anti-semitism, because anti-Communism and anti-semitism are so closely associated in Germany and elsewhere. I am resolutely opposed to Jewish Communists not because they are Jews but because they are Communists. The Jew has far more excuse than the Gentile for embracing Communism, for Soviet Russia and Nazi Germany are bitter enemies, and it is tempting for the Jew to support any opponent of Hitler, and to feel some sympathy for those who have avenged in Russia the persecution which the Jews endured under the Tsars.

We are living today in the darkest period of European history. Never has persecution been more general, more systematic and more successful. Surely the time has come for all men of good will to unite in protesting against persecution

as such. Those who are only moved by the sufferings of Protestants and Jews, and those who mourn the martyrs of Republican Spain but condone the persecution of Jews in Germany, do not hate persecution *as such*. Selective indignation is of little avail against the growing tendency to condone and to defend brutality, for protests provoked only by the sufferings of one's own group do nothing to arrest the rapid decline of Europe into barbarism. Those who detest all forms of persecution will not content themselves with those poor perfunctory phrases of conventional regret which serve rather to defend than to condemn. "Of course the murder of so many Spanish priests was very regrettable but. . . ." Or, "of course, the methods which Hitler has adopted to deal with the Jewish problem are very regrettable but. . . ." The Christian apologist is less embarrassed by the fact that secular Governments in Christian States should have continued to exploit violence and torture than by the connivance of ecclesiastics in methods which we know to be incompatible with the teaching of Christ. Christian apologists in years to come will be no less perplexed by the failure of Christendom to unite in its condemnation of persecutions even more terrible, more persistent and more comprehensive than any which are recorded in the early history of the Church.

CHAPTER XIV

THE FRUITS OF A FALSE PHILOSOPHY

“CRUELTY and the abuse of power,” wrote Charles Dickens, “are the two bad passions of human nature,” passions which have not been eradicated, but have certainly been tamed by Christianity, for though no Christian can read without shame the history of the Inquisition or the story of the Catholic martyrs racked and tortured in Elizabethan England, Europe, even in its darkest moments, paid homage to Christian ideals, ideals whose influence was cumulative and progressive. The rack and the stake vanished from Europe under pressure of the strongest of all arguments, the appeal from Christians to Christ. The contrast between the ideals and the practice of Christian men is impressive, but the value of the Christian ideals has been proved by the consequences which follow when these ideals are repudiated. Russia is the first European country officially to accept atheistic materialism as the State creed, and only those who are wilfully blind can continue to ignore the fruits of that false philosophy.

Soviet Russia provides indirect evidence of the immense importance of high standards even in a society in which only a minority seriously attempt to live up to those standards. Even lip-service to an ideal has some value. The contrast between Soviet Russia and the Christian Europe which even in its darkest period recognized Christian ideals, is a powerful if indirect argument for the influence of Christianity. Soviet Russia within a few short years has sacrificed the hard-won gains of the Christian spirit, and has re-established the ruthless standards of the pagan world into which Christ was born. The uneasy conscience of the Christendom which still condoned and exploited pre-Christian methods of persecution is apparent in the apologetics with which Christians attempted to justify the rack and the stake. These tragic derelictions,

which Christians defended with halting casuistry, are proudly accepted by Communists as an integral element of their new civilization. Modern States accused of war atrocities have implicitly recognized the Christian standards, and have either indignantly denied the charges, or have disclaimed responsibility for regrettable excesses. The worst crimes charged against States still influenced by Christianity are venial compared with the horrors officially enjoined by the rulers of Soviet Russia. The secretive use of terrorism as an emergency weapon to be disowned and denied when challenged has been displaced by the defiant glorification of terrorism and of violence. Lenin, indeed, argues that the dictatorship of the Proletariat is impossible without the "violence which is not limited by any laws or restricted by any absolute rules." (1) Lenin glorifies terrorism in the famous letter published in *The Bolshevik* for October 31st, 1920. "The legal trial," he wrote, "is not intended to replace terrorism; to make such a profession would be deception of others or oneself; but to base terrorism firmly on a fundamental principle and give it a legal form, unambiguous, without dishonesty or embellishment." (2)

Mr. Walter Duranty, for many years the brilliant correspondent of the *New York Times* in Russia, may be classified as a neutral, if not actually as a friendly witness. "You have done a good job in your reporting of the U.S.S.R.," said Stalin to Duranty on Christmas Day, 1933, "although you are not a Marxist, because you tried to tell the truth about our country and to understand it and explain it to your readers. I might say that you bet on our horse to win when others thought it had no chance, and I am sure you have not lost by it." (3)

Mr. Duranty obtained with some difficulty a copy of a pamphlet on terror written by Latsis at the time when he was in control of the Cheka. "It explained in simple, lucid terms the principles by which the Red Terror was directed. The chief purpose, the writer said, was to strike terror into the hearts of the enemies of the Revolution; therefore action must be ruthless and, above all, swift. The destruction of enemies without delay might often, by paralyzing opposition,

save many more lives later. Secrecy was also stressed, because that, too, was an element of terror. For this reason Cheka arrests almost always were made in the dead of night and the relatives and friends of arrested persons generally heard no more of them for weeks." (4)

On the night of the attempt on Lenin's life five hundred people were executed without trial, not, as Mr. Duranty explains, because they were privy to the plot, but because as "former nobles, landlords, bankers or generals," they were regarded as "'class enemies' whose 'execution' " was necessary "as an example and warning." In support of this view Mr. Duranty quotes a significant passage from the official history of the Russian Communist Party written by Popov in 1931. "The system of mass Red Terror proved a weapon of tremendous importance. It came down with all its severity upon the heads of the landlord and bourgeois counter-revolutionaries, on the White officers, big Tsarist officials, and the most prominent figures among the nobility, the clergy and the capitalists." (5)

The basic principles of civilization are being challenged in Soviet Russia. No man should be punished merely because he belongs to a particular religion, race or social class, and no man should be condemned for criminal offences which he had not himself committed. Both these self-evident principles have been rejected by Soviet Russia. Men are executed merely because they belong to a particular class, hostages are imprisoned because their relatives have failed to return from abroad.

On November 1st, 1938, Latsis, stacionian to the Russian Government, and responsible as such for compiling statistics of executions, published an article on the Red Terror in which the following passage occurs, "We are out to destroy the *bourgeoisie* as a class. Hence, whenever a *bourgeois* is under examination the first step should be, not to endeavour to discover material of proof that the accused has opposed the Soviet Government, whether verbally or actually, but to put to the witness the three questions: 'To what class does the accused belong?' 'What is his origin?' and 'Describe his upbringing,

education, and profession.' Solely in accordance with the answers to these three questions should his fate be decided. For this is what 'Red Terror' means, and what it implies." (6) Latsis, as Melgounov reminds us, was a mere plagiarist, for he had adopted with modification the formula of the French terrorists. "To execute the enemies of one's country," said Robespierre, "one needs but to establish the fact that they are themselves. Not their chastisement, but their annihilation, is what is called for." (7)

In 1921 the "Union of Russian Publicists and Journalists Resident in Paris" issued an appeal which began, "There should be no punishment where there has been no crime," a principle which they described as "the first and foremost verity of civilization." (8) It is less disconcerting that this self-evident principle should be disregarded in Soviet Russia than that decent and amiable, if foolish, people in England and America should continue to defend a Government which treats with contempt this "first and foremost verity of civilization." S. P. Melgounov, in the first chapter of his book, *The Red Terror in Russia*, describes in detail the Soviet system of hostages, a system which violates yet another basic verity of civilization. A correspondent who signs himself "J.K.B.," and who was described by the *Manchester Guardian* in an editorial note as having "a close knowledge of political conditions in Russia," explained the abject confessions of Kamenev and Zinoviev by their fear of reprisals on their wives and children. "According to Soviet law," writes J.K.B., "the families of any Soviet citizen who escapes abroad or stays abroad are liable to ten years' imprisonment. This law refers not to accused persons but to those who dare to wish to live elsewhere than in Russia. Making a man's family suffer for his crimes is an accepted practice in Russia and explains much of what appears incomprehensible to the foreign observer. Those whose abject confessions are read in court to make a public holiday hope to save their families from prison or destitution even if they have little hope of saving their own lives." (9) The inter-Party feud between Stalin and the old Bolsheviks "settled things," according to Mr. Duranty, "in the only way which

Asia can understand, that is, by the survival of the fittest in a conflict without mercy." (10) Stalin's famous remark to a Japanese, "I too am Asiatic," has often been quoted, and certainly Stalin's technique of liquidation is Asiatic in its immense, unprecedented scale. It is, of course, impossible to obtain accurate statistics of executions in Soviet Russia, and I therefore quote with reserve the estimate given by Iljin in his book, *The World on the Brink of the Abyss*. According to this estimate, which is already out of date, 1,860,000 people have been put to death, among them 28 bishops, 1,200 priests, 6,000 teachers and professors, 8,800 doctors, 192,000 workmen and 815,000 peasants. (11) According to Mr. W. H. Chamberlin, who represented the *Christian Science Monitor* in Russia from 1922 to 1934, the number of Soviet citizens who have been "deprived of liberty without anything that could plausibly be called 'due process of law' can be scarcely less than two million." (12)

Nothing, again, could be more ruthless than the methods adopted by Stalin to break the resistance of the recalcitrant peasants. On December 27th, 1929, Stalin raised the slogan, "The liquidation of the kulaks as a class." The term "kulak" was employed after the Revolution to describe any peasant who employed labour or who owned slightly more property than the rest. The word "kulak" rapidly degenerated into a general term of abuse. "Any peasant," writes Mr. Eugene Lyons, "who was too outspoken in the general dislike of collectivization, taxes, grain deliveries, became a kulak." (13) Stalin lost no time in translating into action his programme for the liquidation of the kulaks. The poor and landless peasants accepted with enthusiasm the part which Stalin had assigned to them in this new revolution. They attended village meetings throughout the country, and voted that such and such peasants were "kulaks" and therefore deserving of liquidation. As many as fifteen or twenty per cent of the peasants were "liquidated" in some villages. (14)

A community equal to the population of Switzerland was deprived of all they possessed, land and home, cattle and tools. "Kulaks" who were guilty of the industry and intelli-

gence which had raised them above their fellows were marched between bayonets to the railway station, and crowded like cattle into freight trains. Thousands died of exposure on the long, bitter journey to the deserts of Central Asia, or to the windswept uplands of the frozen north. Hundreds of thousands perished miserably in the forced labour settlements where they were eventually dumped. Thousands of homeless waifs whose kulak parents had died, or had refused to drag them into exile, wandered through the land. (15)

Even the most servile of Soviet panegyrists have found it difficult to defend the liquidation of the kulaks. Anna Louise Strong, a well-known American Communist, describes it as "the most spectacular act of ruthlessness which occurred in these years." (16) "The sum of human suffering involved," write the Webbs, "is beyond all computation." (17) Mr. G. D. H. Cole, an extreme Socialist, who writes with respect of "Socialist Planning in the U.S.S.R.," describes the "ruthless suppression of the kulaks" as "morally indefensible and also economically wrong." Mr. Cole insists that among those liquidated were "many of the most competent farmers." (18) His view is supported by Mr. Chamberlin, who dismisses with contempt the argument of Soviet apologists, that all the difficulties of collectivization were due to "the 'backwardness' of the peasants." The best disproof of this idea is the unquestionable fact that collectivization wrought greatest havoc, in the main, just where the peasants were more intelligent, more progressive in farming methods, where the pre-war standard of living was highest. It is not in the primitive Caucasian *aul* (mountain village) or in the forest hamlet of the North that one finds the clearest signs of devastation. The worst famine regions in 1932-1933 were in many cases the most fertile and prosperous farming districts of pre-war Russia: the rich North Caucasus; the German colonies on the Volga and in Ukraine, where the people were always noted for their good farming; the fertile 'black-earth' Ukrainian provinces of Kiev and Poltava." (19)

The liquidation of the kulaks was followed four years later by the deliberate organization of famine. A famine, artificially organized, was employed to break the resistance of the peasants

to the régime of collectivization. The "deplorable general sullenness . . . of the peasants" (20), to quote the Webbs' sympathetic description, was more accurately described by Eugene Lyons as "a weariness of the spirit and body so profound that even the prospect of death by starvation could not stir them into activity." (21) What was the use, argued the peasants, of reaping crops which Government grain collectors would remove? They sowed what they required for their own needs, and tried to conceal their little stores of grain.

No sooner had the harvest been reaped than Soviet grain collectors descended upon the village and ruthlessly squeezed out the last bushel of the surplus grain. According to their own statistics, cited by Chamberlin, they extracted two or three times as much from the peasants in the hungry years as they had taken in 1928 "when the situation with meat and dairy products was vastly better," with the result that they turned "what would otherwise perhaps have been a hunger into a famine." (22) During the earlier famine of 1921-22 the Soviet Government appealed for assistance, but in the famine of 1932-1933 the Government "stifled any appeal for foreign aid by denying the very fact of the famine and by refusing to foreign journalists the right to travel in the famine regions until it was over. Famine was quite deliberately employed as an instrument of national policy, as the last means of breaking the resistance of the peasantry to the new system where they are divorced from personal ownership of the land." (23)

The Soviet Government could have averted the famine without appealing for foreign aid, but they continued to export foodstuffs in 1932, and refused to divert foreign currency for the purchase of grain. "To have imported grain," said the President of the Poltava Soviet to Mr. Chamberlin, "would have been injurious to our prestige. To have let the peasants keep their grain would have encouraged them to go on producing little." (24)

Every effort was made to prevent the journalists discovering the truth. The authorities, according to Mr. Chamberlin, forbade several correspondents to leave Moscow, and decreed

that "no foreign correspondent could travel in the countryside without submitting a definite itinerary and obtaining permission to make the trip from the Commissariat for Foreign Affairs." (25) Mr. Maurice Hindus, a sympathetic critic of Soviet Russia, was kept waiting for a month before being granted a visa for Russia. His passport was only accorded him on the condition that he did not leave Moscow or revisit his native village as he had done in previous years. (26)

It is difficult to estimate the famine casualties, for the Soviet Government "stopped publication of vital statistics for the period in question, although such statistics were a matter of routine in previous years." (27) This thoughtful suppression of inconvenient facts must have pleased the Webbs, for though the Webbs were industrious collectors of suitable statistics, they would seem to prefer no facts to uncomfortable facts. Thanks to Stalin's consideration, the famine which, on the evidence of friendly critics, claimed millions of victims, appears in the Webb Index as "Famine in Russia, alleged, in 1931-3." (28)

Other writers have given us estimates which range from three to seven millions. Chamberlin's estimate is four millions. Ralph Barnes in the *New York Herald Tribune* was ultra-conservative, and his estimate of one million did not long hold the field. *The New York Times* for August 23rd, 1933, implied that there had been two million deaths more than usual in the famine areas. The representative of *The New York Times* in Berlin, Frederick T. Birchall, talked to a group of foreigners who had returned from Russia, among them Americans, who suggested that four millions would be an under-estimate. Maurice Hindus broke his long silence with an estimate of at least three millions. (29) Had Stalin condemned a few million peasants to be shot, the process of liquidation would have been more spectacular and less painful, but the final result would have been no less terrible than the consequences of the organized famine of 1933.

The tragic effects of Communism can be studied in the recent history not only of Russia but of Spain. I am not concerned in this book with the case for the Spanish Nationalists, and have no wish to affirm that men filled with

passionate resentment against those who had murdered and tortured their friends and relations invariably behaved with iron restraint, or that the Courts Martial in Nationalist Spain were never marred by the revenge which Bacon describes as "a wild kind of justice." But even if the Badajoz myth had not been conclusively refuted (30), and even if the other charge against the Nationalists could be proved, we should only have established the truism that the code of civilized war was sometimes broken by the Nationalists, as it was sometimes broken by all the belligerents in the Great War. Communist-inspired atrocities in Spain, as in Russia, differ radically from the acts of violence which are the commonplace of every war. There is no war in which prisoners are not sometimes shot in the heat of battle, and such cases have occurred on both sides in Spain.

The Nationalists regard themselves not as the champions of any particular class, but as crusaders fighting to redeem all Spaniards, rich and poor, high and low, from the Red tyranny. They have therefore no quarrel with any particular class of society as such. The Spanish Communists, on the other hand, have murdered men and women by the hundred thousand merely because they belonged to a particular class. Mr. Arthur Bryant, who as an historian is well accustomed to weigh evidence, and has compared the estimates formed by correspondents in Madrid, Barcelona, Valencia and other cities, and examined a number of relevant documents, estimated the number of civilians murdered during the first month of the war at the terrible figure of 350,000. (31) The special correspondent of the *Manchester Guardian*, a newspaper which has consistently supported the Republicans, who visited Madrid in June, 1937, stated that the official records of those massacred in Madrid reached the appalling total of 35,000. "The records still exist." He insisted that "the number of those persons executed in Madrid alone can hardly be much less than 40,000." The Duchess of Atholl, quoting this correspondent with characteristic inaccuracy, reduces the figures to "30 to 35,000," and adds, "Half of these, it is believed, had no trial. The figure is a terrible one." (32)

It is interesting to compare this estimate with the estimate of executions by the Spanish Inquisition. Lea, the Protestant historian of the Spanish Inquisition, accuses Llorente, a bitter enemy of that institution, of gross exaggeration in his estimates. But let us accept Llorente's estimate for the purpose of comparison. His "extravagant guesses," to quote Lea's description, give 31,912 as the grand total of the victims executed by the Inquisition from its foundation in 1480 up to 1808, a total of 328 years. (33) Fewer people were executed by the Inquisition in the whole of Spain during three centuries than were murdered in Communist-controlled Madrid during the first three months of the war.

II. METHODS OF TERRORISM

I shall not inflict upon the reader details of torture, for I have found it difficult to read, and should find it even more difficult to transcribe, the documented horrors of Russian terrorism. But no record of what Communism means in practice would be complete which ignored the methods of Russian terrorism.

The evidence for the use of torture may be classified under the following headings. First there are the official documents of the Soviet Government and their officials, secondly the records of trials in which Communists have been accused and convicted of torture, thirdly the official reports of British observers recorded in British Parliamentary papers, fourthly the evidence of disillusioned Communists whose first-hand knowledge of Soviet Russia transformed them from supporters into enemies of the Comintern, and finally there are the statements by men who have escaped from the torture chambers of Soviet Russia. Of these classes of evidence the first and second suffice to establish the facts, which do not, therefore, need the cumulative corroboration provided from other sources.

My first document is extracted from the official journal published by the Cheka, which contains the reprimand to officials

who failed to torture Mr. Bruce Lockhart. (34) This famous and oft-quoted document is not referred to by the Webbs, who content themselves with two discreet references to this troublesome subject. They admit that "every kind of torment seems to have been employed" by the brutal gaolers on the North Sea Islands, (35) and they endorse the view of Mr. Allan Monkhouse, whom they describe as "an exceptionally qualified witness" that "the Ogpu themselves circulate fantastic tales of the tortures and punishments which it is alleged are employed in their prisons and places of detention," (36) but in the reality of which he did not believe.

Izvestia of Moscow reported on December 12th, 1923, a trial in which one, Hermann, Commandant of the district Militia at Sherbanov, and two other Communists, were tried on a charge of inflicting excruciating tortures on their prisoners. (37) Saner Communists were shocked by these disclosures, and appointed a commission of inquiry to examine the cases of torture at Stavropol. The torturers pleaded that they had acted on instructions, and produced a secret circular issued by the Central Cheka itself, which laid it down that "the old and proven remedy" should be applied to prisoners who refused to confess. This circular was apparently inspired by the fact that Voul, a People's Prosecutor in Moscow, who had been accused of employing torture in 1921, threatened to resign if he was deprived of his valuable instrument for counteracting banditry, and the threat was so effective that Voul was promptly granted permission to use "the old and proven remedy." (38) As a result of the Stavropol investigation none of the torturers was punished, but the persons who had displayed undue zeal in exposing them were promptly arrested. (39) Mr. Melgounov supports his accusations of revolting torture by quotations from British Parliamentary Papers, and from letters written by Foreign Office representatives such as Mr. Alston to Lord Balfour, in which horrible details are recorded of Bolshevik sadism. (40) Mr. Melgounov also quotes a letter from Sir Charles Eliot to Lord Curzon recording the "torturings and other outrageous acts" which preceded the Bolshevik massacres in North-Eastern Russia.

(41) Even more terrible are the documents in Mr. Melgounov's book collected from men and women who had escaped from the torture chambers of the Cheka.

I shall not quote these details, for I do not wish to play on the emotions of my readers, or to influence their judgment by harrowing their feelings. I need therefore only say that the evidence compels the belief that the Chinese torturers have met their masters in the Asiatics of Russia, who have enriched the repertoire of torment with new, ingenious and bizarre variations.

So far I have confined myself to the terrorism during the period that Lenin and Trotsky were in power. Trotsky, who not only condoned but helped to organize the terror, is now attacking Stalin for putting into practice what Trotsky preached. Thousands of schismatic Trotskyites are asking us to believe that Trotsky is distressed by the horrors of the Stalin régime. The Independent Labour Party regards the Stalin régime as "simply a temporary aberration" (42) from "the bases of Communism" of which the Independent Labour Party approves. But if Leninism be the norm, it is by no means certain that the aberration does not mark a definite improvement. It would certainly be difficult to prove that the Stalin terror is worse than the Lenin terror.

Schismatic Communists who have escaped from Russia invite our sympathy for their sufferings under a régime which differs from Leninism in its choice of victims but not in its methods, its ruthlessness or its contempt for justice. We are assured by these escaped Communists that prison conditions were far better in the old days of Imperial Russia than they are today. Victor Serge, imprisoned as an Opposition-Communist for three years, tells us that a hundred prisoners and more are often confined in a room which never accommodated more than twelve criminals in the days of the Imperial Government. "A point is sometimes reached," writes Serge, "where small quarters are so filled up that the prisoners cannot sleep in them except in turn; they pass the day standing up or on their haunches, one against the other, and institute among themselves a rotation according to which they succeed

each other at the stinking tub or at the dormer window through which a breath of air may come. In every season the humidity of the sweat and the breath covers the walls." (43) Serge quotes a description of prison conditions from the Trotskyite A. Tarov, who escaped at the end of 1935. "In the Petropavlovsk prison," he wrote, "I saw 35 women, eight of them with nursing babies, shut up in a cell of 25 square metres. The only access to air was through the peephole. I shall never forget those piteous and puny children! Taking turns, the mothers held them up to the peephole so that they might breathe a wretched ration of fresh air. . . ." (44) In this, as in all else, the intellectuals have every reason to mourn the old régime. "Chernychevsky," as Serge reminds us, "was able to write his great novel, *What to Do?*, in the Petropavlovsk Fortress, where Kropotkin was also authorized to continue his works on geography," (45) but the writings of intellectuals fortunate enough to be released from Stalin's prisons are confiscated when they leave.

Victor Serge confirms Eugene Lyons' terrible description of the new tortures recently adopted by the Government to extract hidden stores of gold, jewellery and foreign money. Eugene Lyons remains a Socialist in spite of his experiences in Russia, years which shattered his faith in Russian Communism; and of all the grim chapters in his book, the grimest is that in which he describes the tortures of the *parilka*. The *parilka* is a small room from which all ventilation is shut off. Into this space hundreds of men and women are packed, poor victims who are suspected of possessing gold or jewels or foreign exchange, "in heat that chokes and suffocates, in stink that asphyxiates, one small bulb shedding a dim light on the purgatory. Many of them have stood thus for a day, for two days. Most of them have ripped their clothes off in fighting the heat and the sweat and the swarming lice that feed upon them. Their feet are swollen, their bodies numbed and aching. They are not allowed to sit down or to squat. They lean against one another for support, sway with one rhythm and groan with one voice. Every now and then the door is opened and a newcomer is squeezed in. Every now and then those

who have fainted are dragged out into the corridor, revived and thrown back into the sweat room . . . sometimes they cannot be revived." (46)

In some cases the torture fails to extract valuta and the victim's family are brought in and tortured before his eyes. A merchant who had resisted for weeks broke down when his little boy was thrown into the *parilka* and kept there for three days. He then admitted that he had buried a box of jewels in his back yard. Another child was then thrown into the *parilka*, and the merchant admitted that he possessed valuta in another hiding place. (47) Most of these victims were Jews, since the Jews predominated among the successful "Nepmen" who made money during the brief period of the New Economic Policy.

Eugene Lyons' account of the *parilka* is, as I have said, corroborated by Victor Serge. (48)

In republican Spain the Communists divide with the Anarchists the responsibility for tortures which recall the worst period of the Lenin-Trotsky régime. This is not a question of opinion, but of admitted fact. The Nationalist Government in Burgos published in October, 1936, a preliminary official report on the atrocities committed by the Reds. The Spanish Embassy in London issued a reply. "The Embassy has not denied nor denies now that there have been excesses in the repressive conduct of the Government forces," and the Embassy adds, "The Spanish Embassy in London does not, in fine, contradict the rebel pamphlet." (49)

The facts and photographs of the Burgos Report, which are not contradicted by the Spanish Embassy, prove that Communists and Anarchists were not content to kill, but in many cases took a sadistic delight in torture. These atrocities were inflicted not only on the rich but also on the poor. For further details I refer the reader either to the Burgos Report or to the long passages from that report quoted in my book, *Spanish Rehearsal*.

The Burgos Report is corroborated by an American journalist in Republican Spain sympathetic to the Republican cause. Mr. Cornelius Vanderbilt, whose *Farewell to Fifth Avenue*

is a brilliant attack on the New York aristocracy into which he was born, described in the American paper *Liberty* crimes that he had himself seen. One of the saddest features of Communism is the degradation of the young. "At Molins del Rey," writes Cornelius Vanderbilt, "I saw a lot of tonsured monks being carried in a manure wagon pulled by a raving mob of ragged boys and girls, mind you, through the village streets. Running along beside the wagon were little girls with pointed sticks which they savagely jabbed into the monks' flesh. At Marquina, held by the Governmentalists, I saw nuns shackled to one another's ankles being dragged by lively mules through the cobble-stone streets, the whole tops of their heads ablaze." (50)

Horace W. Abrams, photographer for the Keystone View Company, contributes a horrible description of a little girl who had been mutilated by the Reds "because they found out her father was fighting with the rebels." He photographed the girl. "You can guess," he adds, "what they did to the mother, who was quite young. She died." (51)

Joseph Lee Mason, writing in the *New York Times* of September 13th, 1936, stated that he had seen the body of a priest who had been crucified, and that "while accompanying a patrol searching houses in Almorgen, we found three nuns of the Carmelite Order in a house that had been ransacked by the Communists. Two of the nuns were dead. The third, Madre Rosa, was alive, but her face had been slashed with knives." (52)

III. "VIOLENCE WHICH IS NOT LIMITED BY ANY LAWS"

"I don't see," writes Mr. Walter Duranty, "that I have been any less accurate about Russia because I failed to stress casualties so hard as some of my colleagues, than I was in reporting battles on the French Front when I said more about the importance of the victory than the lives it cost. I saw too much useless slaughter in the World War . . . to allow my judgment of results to be biased by the losses or suffering

involved. I'm a reporter, not a humanitarian, and if a reporter can't see the wood for trees he can't describe the wood." (53)

The detachment of a man who declares that he is a reporter, not a humanitarian, is more attractive than the attitude of humanitarians who refuse to condemn brutalities. But Mr. Duranty's superficial analogy does not tell in favour of Communism, which repudiates that code for the restraint of violence which civilized nations accept both in war and in peace, and which Communists reject both in peace and in war. In civilized war soldiers continue to shoot so long as the enemy continues to resist, but the code of war forbids the execution of prisoners or of unarmed civilians. On the night of Lenin's assassination 500 members of the aristocracy and bourgeoisie were, as we have seen, shot without trial because they were "class enemies." They were not accused of complicity with the crime, and were guilty of no offence. They were in much the same position as that of defenceless prisoners in the concentration camps. (54) The rules of war are expressly devised for the protection of the unarmed, the defenceless and the civilians. Bombardments from the air admittedly raise a difficult problem. Our own policy in the Great War was carefully defined in the official History of the War in the Air:

"The policy intended to be followed is to attack the important German towns systematically. . . . It is intended to concentrate on one town for successive days and then to pass to several other towns, returning to the first town until the target is thoroughly destroyed, or at any rate the morale of the workmen is so shaken that output is seriously interfered with.

"Long distance bombing will produce its maximum moral effect only if the visits are constantly repeated at short intervals so as to produce in each area bombed a sustained anxiety. It is this recurrent bombing, as opposed to isolated spasmodic attacks, which interrupts industrial production and undermines public confidence." (55)

Among the "Heads of Agreement as to the constitution of

the Inter-Allied Independent Air Force (an agreement reached between Britain and France and transmitted, through the Supreme War Council, to the American and Italian Governments for approval)" were:

- "1. *The object of the force:* To carry war into Germany by attacking her industry, commerce and population.
- "2. *The plan of campaign:* Air raids must be on a large scale and repeated, forming part of a methodical plan and carried on with tenacity.
- "3(b). *During steady or quiet periods:* Bombing raids on the interior of Germany become the chief work of our bombing squadrons." (56)

Mr. Winston Churchill, who read the Spanish Nationalists a severe lecture when they adopted this policy and bombed Barcelona, wrote as follows:

"Our air offensive should consistently be directed at striking at the bases and communications upon whose structure the fighting power of his armies and his fleets of the sea and of the air depends. Any injury which comes to the civil population from this process of attack must be regarded as incidental and inevitable." (57)

Sir Douglas Haig and Marshal Foch endorsed these views. (58)

During the Spanish Civil War the Republicans enjoyed the supremacy of the air in the earlier periods, and systematically bombed Nationalist towns without exciting any protests, official or otherwise, from the English and American Progressives who were perturbed by the bombing of Barcelona. The Nationalists have published statistics according to which there have been 2,091 raids on 373 different centres in Nationalist Spain resulting in the deaths of 18,985 civilians. No British Commission was sent out to Spain when the Republicans enjoyed the air supremacy, and the Commission which visited Republican territory in August, 1938, substantially justified the Nationalist claim that their air bombard-

ments are directed towards military objectives alone. (59) The Commission reported that 41 out of the 46 raids which they had investigated were legitimate attacks on military objectives. Of the remaining five two were due to mistakes of inexperienced airmen, and one to a pilot's need to escape, unloaded, as quickly as possible. Only one raid was condemned as a deliberate attack on a civilian population.

Since the bombing of towns appears to invalidate the distinction which I have drawn between acts of warfare confined to belligerents and the massacre of the defenceless, I have examined the questions raised by the new and terrible weapons. In wars which are waged between populations, the old distinction between the soldier and the civilian has lost much of its force. Military experts estimate that it will take eight men working in a factory to keep a machine-gun in the field, and forty men to keep a tank. It is difficult to understand why factory workers who produce and keep in the field these modern weapons of war should expect to be immune from attack. (60) There is an immense difference between attempting to put out of action the millions essential to the maintenance of the armed forces in the field and the massacre of defenceless prisoners in one's power. There is an even greater distinction between the incidental killing of civilians as the result of an air bombardment directed against a military objective, or, as in the case of the Great War, a sea blockade, and the deliberate massacre of unarmed civilians. Finally, there is the distinction which to the potential victim of violence would probably seem all-important, the distinction between killing and torture.

Atrocities occur not only in every war, but in peace, for there is a cruel streak in mankind. The gradual development throughout the centuries of the Christian conscience has not banished cruelty and violence from the world, but has acted as a curb on the passions of fallen man. High standards are not as effective as we could wish, but they are less ineffective than we were sometimes inclined to believe before Soviet Russia had revealed to the world the bitter fruits of a false philosophy.

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CHAPTER XV

THE BOLSHEVIK PERSECUTION OF RELIGION

"THERE exists no difference between the Orthodox, the Catholic, the Mohammedan, and the Jewish Churches. We repudiate them all. Your religion" (turning to the prisoners in the dock), "I spit on it, as I do on all religions—on Orthodox, Jewish, Mohammedan, Lutheran and the rest. No religious denomination has any political rights or any legal status within the territory of the Republic." (1)

KRYLENKO, Public Prosecutor in the Cieplak Trial.

"The things I want my Church to stand for lie behind what Russia has done." (2)

THE DEAN OF CANTERBURY, in a statement made after visiting Republican Spain in 1937.

"A wonderful and horrible thing is committed in the land. The prophets prophesy falsely, and the priests bear rule by their means; and my people love to have it so: And what will ye do in the end thereof?"

Jeremiah, Chapter V, verses 30-31.

The apologists for the religious persecutions which can no longer be denied usually fall back on the plea that the persecution is not religious but political. The attempt is being made outside Russia to prove that Communists have no quarrel with religion as such. This propaganda will only succeed with those who are too ill-informed to realize that implacable hostility to religion is woven into the very texture of Marxist philosophy. Soviet Russia, which has adopted Materialism as its State creed, cannot consistently tolerate religion. The degree and intensity of persecution will be determined only by questions of tactics.

In the United States, for instance, tactical considerations demand an explicit repudiation of violence and persecution. As a classic example of Communist tactics I may commend to the reader the report of Earl Browder's discussion with a group of students of the Union Theological Seminary on February 15th, 1935, a report of which he prints in his book, *Communism in the United States*. Earl Browder, secretary of the Communist Party of the United States, possesses one important

qualification for his position, a discreetly selective memory. Not even the Webbs have forgotten more facts of contemporary Russian history. Browder has forgotten, among other trivialities, the fact that twenty-eight bishops and 1,200 priests have been put to death by Communists in Russia. (3) He might dispute these figures, but even if he reduced them by one half, he would still deserve to be congratulated by the Comintern on the audacious impudence of his remark, "The Communist Party is absolutely opposed to any form of coercion on religious matters." (4) In Browder's address to the theological students he anticipated the Party line laid down at the Fifth World Congress. According to a resolution which was adopted at that Congress, the campaign against religion must be conducted with all the necessary tact and prudence among those sections of the proletariat in whose daily life religion has hitherto been firmly rooted. Even Browder's selective memory retains some inconvenient facts about Communism. When challenged to define the position of the Communist Party of the United States on the question of religion he replied, "The Communist Party takes the position that the social function of religion and religious institutions is to act as an opiate to keep the lower classes passive, to make them accept the bad conditions under which they have to live in the hope of a reward after death. From this estimate of the social rôle of religion it is quite clear that the Communist Party is the enemy of religion." (5)

In statements intended not for America and England but for home consumption Communists make no attempts to conceal the fact that it is not the alleged abuses of religion, but religion itself, which they are concerned to eradicate. In June, 1929, Kalinin, President of the Executive Committee of the Congress of Soviets, insisted that the war against religion was "really a philosophy, for it means the establishment of materialism against idealism." (6) It is impossible for an orthodox Communist to renounce a fundamental principle of Marxist orthodoxy as defined by the founder of his sect. "Religion," wrote Marx, "is the sigh of the oppressed creature, the kindness of a heartless world, the spirit of unspiritual conditions. It is the people's opium. The removal of religion as the illusory

happiness of the people is the demand for its real happiness." (7)

Communists wage war not against any particular religion, not even against the religion dominant in the country in which they operate, but against religion as such. Roman Catholics were persecuted in Imperial Russia, but in Soviet Russia they were regarded with even more loathing than the Russian Orthodox. "The Catholic Church does not stand alone," wrote E. Yaroslavsky. "Every other ecclesiastical organization—Lutheran, Anglican, Jewish, Buddhist, Mohammedan and others, likewise helps the capitalists and landowners of its country to exploit and stupefy the masses. . . . What about the Jewish religion? It is of very great value to the Jewish capitalists, who, with the help of the rabbis, and the ancient 'sacred' Hebrew tongue (which throws glamour over their innumerable mummeries) hold the people in bondage." (8) Gali Ibragimov, a Mohammedan in the service of the Soviet, ridicules Mohammedanism, and tried to prove that it was the enemy of Hygiene. (9)

Maurice Hindus, who was born in Russia, describes the collapse of religion in his book *Humanity Uprooted*, first published in 1931. As Mr. Hindus has since returned to Russia it must be presumed that the Soviet Government did not object to the main tenor of his book or his visa would have been refused. "The golden rule," writes Mr. Hindus, "they find utterly subversive and against it they set the class-struggle." (10) Soviet Russia is often praised in the English-speaking world as a country in which "practical Christianity" is not only preached but practised. Mr. Hindus comments on "the defiant atheism of the youth" in Soviet Russia. "Everywhere so-called advanced youth is openly and hilariously atheistic." (11) Mr. Hindus revisited his old village. The wooden crosses which had marked every turn in the road were gone. They had been used for firewood. He asked a crowd of children from seven to twelve years of age whether they believed in God. Good-humoured mirth was the only response. (12)

The Communists are as hostile to the culture created by

religion as to religion itself. The old ikons, many of great beauty, are replaced by "pictures of the leaders of the Revolution; pictures vividly depicting evils of drinking vodka." Church choirs are to be replaced by choirs chanting revolutionary hymns, Church baptisms and Church funerals by Soviet ceremonies. "It is, I think," writes Hindus, "a challenge to religion as never before faced in any land, not at any rate in such basic and intensely diversified forms. . . . The forces of infidelity bore deeper and deeper into the life of the people."

(13)

The most detailed, and at the same time the most moving, history of the early phases of religious persecution in Russia will be found in Captain Francis McCullagh's book, *The Bolshevik Persecution of Christianity*. Captain McCullagh, a famous War correspondent, was imprisoned in the early years of the Revolution in Russia, and was present during the famous Cieplak trial. In 1922 the Soviet Government asked the Patriarch Tikhon to contribute Church valuables to the famine fund. The Patriarch agreed in principle, and issued a circular to the clergy permitting them to hand over to the Government treasures other than the consecrated vessels. In Russia chalices are usually of silver gilt, and the Government would certainly have made an exception in favour of eucharistic vessels had they not hoped to provoke by the seizure of these vessels riots which would provide a pretext for persecution. The refusal of the Government to dispose of, for famine relief purposes, the smallest portion of the fabulously valuable collection of jewels in the Kremlin, will assist even the most obtuse to understand the true motive which prompted their seizure of comparatively worthless eucharistic vessels. The ruthless brutality with which the churches were despoiled provoked popular resentment and rioting, and as a result of these disturbances the Government brought to trial fifty-four persons, including seven archdeacons. Eight priests and three deacons were condemned to death, and of these sentences four were executed. (14)

The Bolsheviks had been startled by the depth of feeling aroused by the plunder of the churches, and they decided that

active persecution should be reinforced by the subtler process of internal disintegration. The modern tactics of "la main tendue" which are being adopted with conspicuous success in France and in Great Britain, were first tried out in the spring of 1922. The Soviet Government persuaded a group of renegade priests to form an "initiative group" which should concern itself with the reform of the Church. The movement was led by Bishop Antonin of Moscow, but the "Living Church," which was founded as the result of his initiative, did not enjoy a long or glorious career. In this as in other things, the Russian Revolution ran true to revolutionary type. In pre-revolutionary France the Bishops did even less than the Bishops in pre-revolutionary Spain to check the general drift towards the Left. In 1790 the Constituent Assembly called upon the clergy to take the oath of loyalty to the new Constitution. A few conformed; many did not. The faithful treated the conforming priests with contempt, and continued to assist at Masses offered by the refractory clergy in barns and deserted houses. The Constitutional Bishop of Paris did not fare much better than Bishop Antonin of the "Living Church," who was eventually deposed. The Bishop of Paris was ordered in the last phases of the Revolution to abjure the Catholic religion. The wretched old man implored his persecutors to spare him this ordeal, but they were inexorable, and on November 8th, 1793, he appeared before the Convention and declared that "the will of the supreme people" had now become his "supreme law." Since the sovereign people had so willed it that there should be no other worship than that of Liberty and Holy Equality, he placed, in token of submission, his cross, ring and other insignia on the President's desk, and put on the red cap of liberty. (15)

The "Living Church" of Russia found it even more difficult than the Constitutional Bishops of France to discover other Bishops who were prepared to collaborate in their work of disintegration. The first action of the renegades was to expel Bishops who were still hostile to the Government. Bishop Benjamin, Metropolitan of Leningrad, was expelled, and shortly afterwards arrested by the Government. He was sen-

tenced to death along with a number of priests and laity, all of whom displayed exceptional courage during their trial. (16)

The saddest episode in the persecution was the recantation of the Patriarch Tikhon. His nerve broke under the strain of long imprisonment, and he signed a statement to the effect that he had "completely adopted the Soviet platform." Against the squalid servility of the apostate priests and the weakness of the Patriarch must be set the glorious martyrdoms of twenty-eight bishops and 1,200 priests. Many of these died terrible deaths.

The Soviet Government followed up this attack on the Russian Orthodox Church by the trial of the Catholic Archbishop of Petrograd, Monsignor Cieplak, and seventeen other priests. The Communists in Russia were particularly incensed against the Russian Catholics. "The iron rigidity of the Catholic community in Petrograd infuriated Zinoviev and his Reds as far back as 1918 . . . the Catholic Church remained incorruptible, invulnerable, solid as a rock. Even its laity could not be seduced. . . . The Bolsheviki could not get a single Catholic layman to act as their tool." (17)

On the night of March 2nd-3rd, 1923, all the Catholic priests in Petrograd were summoned to appear before the Supreme Tribunal at Moscow. The trial opened in the former Club of the Nobility. Archbishop Cieplak was a tall, spare man, upright and grey-headed. In spite of the Prosecutor's bullying, he remained dignified and courteous. Monsignor Budkiewicz, who was condemned to death and executed, was noted for his fine manners. "It would be hard," writes Captain McCullagh, "to find a more striking contrast than that which existed between him and the slovenly, long-haired Bolsheviki on the bench. . . . Monsignor Budkiewicz looked like a man whose world has not been shattered or even shaken, who is as sure of his principles as ever, and as little inclined to make any concessions to the temporary insanity raging around him as a British Governor of the Gold Coast would be inclined to worship a fetish and wear a loin cloth." (18)

In 1923 the Soviet Government was anxious not to prejudice their hopes of American and British diplomatic recognition

by the overt persecution of religion as such. The thin pretence was therefore maintained that the priests were being tried not as priests but as citizens who had broken the law. They were accused of activities which in point of fact were inseparable from their office, such as the teaching of religion to the young. They were charged with failing to submit their sermons to the censor, and with reluctance to surrender church vessels to the famine fund. The modern technique of transforming the simplest religious act into political offences was illustrated during the trial. Father Rutkovsky, for instance, was charged with "falling demonstratively on his knees" when the militia entered his church to confiscate the sacred vessels. He could not prevent this, he explained, so he knelt down to pray. "That was a counter-revolutionary act," exclaimed Krylenko. (19) Krylenko lost no opportunity of insisting that where the law of God came into conflict with the law of Russia, the priest was expected to obey the latter. "In the conflict between these two laws," replied a young priest, "I shall for ever follow the divine law and the law of the Church." (20)

The end came on Palm Sunday. Archbishop Cieplak was sentenced to death, a sentence afterwards commuted to imprisonment. Monsignor Budkiewicz was also sentenced to death, and the remaining fourteen prisoners to terms of imprisonment. The sentences of death provoked universal indignation. In England a protest was issued signed by the Archbishops of Canterbury and York, Cardinal Bourne, the leaders of the Free Churches, the Moderator of the Church of Scotland, the General of the Salvation Army and the Chief Rabbi. This protest saved the life of Archbishop Cieplak, and thereby aggravated his martyrdom, for the death sentence was commuted to the more terrible punishment of imprisonment. Monsignor Budkiewicz was more fortunate.

The trial took place in Passion Week, the priests were condemned on Palm Sunday, and Monsignor Budkiewicz was executed on Good Friday. The experience of centuries is enshrined in the prayers ordained for Good Friday, and whatever these may mean to devout Christians in security, they must have meant more to the prisoners in the Lubyanka cell.

"Hear our prayers which we pour forth for the blindness of this people: that by acknowledging the light of thy Truth which is Christ's they may be brought out of their darkness."

Aperiate carceres vincula dissolvata perigrantibus reditum.
And this prayer at least was granted, for as the day ended God opened the prison, broke the chain, and granted safe return to the traveller of Christ. Monsignor Budkiewicz suffered on Good Friday, and repeated in his martyrdom the pattern of Calvary even to the designed indignity of an ignominious death. The priest whose dignity and breeding had won the envious respect of his judges, was stripped naked in his cell and driven down a dark corridor into a room lit by powerful lights. As he blinked and recoiled from the glare he was shot through the back of the neck, and the servant of One who had been crucified between two thieves was thrown contemptuously into a nameless grave in which the corpses of nine bandits were awaiting interment. (21)

II. IBANT GAUDENTES

Of those who directed the first phase of the Russian Revolution, and who organized the persecution, religious and secular, two still survive. "The list of those shot," writes Max Eastman, "or who shot themselves, or who were named as implicated with the victims, comprises—with a single exception—every one of the eminent Bolsheviki who sat with Stalin around the council-table of Lenin:* Trotsky, Zinoviev, Kamenev, Rykov, Bukharin, Radek, Sokolnikov, Piatakov (mentioned in Lenin's Testament as among the ablest), Yevdokimov, Smirov (once known as 'The Lenin of Siberia'), Tomsky (head of the Federation of Labour), Serebriakov (Stalin's predecessor as secretary of the party), and several others only a little less eminent." (22)

* "The exception is Rakovsky, whose distinction is that he was the last of all to give up open opposition, and capitulate to Stalin's dictatorship, remaining in exile until 1933, and capitulating all too obviously in a sick if not a senile despair."

Ten Judases out of twelve is a rather high proportion for a new religion.

Stalin has made things very difficult for his supporters. If we reject the possibility that he organized the conviction of innocent men, we must accept the disquieting alternative that with the exception of Lenin and Stalin, the old Bolshevik guard were all traitors to the cause which they professed to serve. It is only a few years since we were invited by our leading progressives to worship Stalin's victims as disinterested prophets who were leading humanity to the Promised Land. Now we are invited to believe that they were one and all crypto-Fascists, traitors to the proletarian cause, and in some cases agents of Japan or Germany. If our trust in these much advertised heralds of the Red Dawn was misplaced, what confidence can we have in those whom the Communists now accept as leaders? How can we be sure that they too will not betray us? May not Stalin himself one day be condemned as a Trotskyite?

The Russian terror is still devouring its parents, and repeating the pattern of the French Revolution. There is a God in heaven, and there is justice on earth. The old Bolshevik guard who instigated and approved the Russian terror are re-enacting the squalid tragedy of the French terrorists. The Duc d'Orléans, prototype of aristocratic subversives, Cloutz, Danton, St. Just, Robespierre, Fouquier-Tinville, Carrier, butcher of Nantes, died on the scaffold ensanguined by the blood of their victims. But these Frenchmen at least were not wholly divorced from that great tradition against which they had revolted. They died like men. St. Just passed in the tumbril through the jeering crowds, calm and statuesque. Danton faced the inescapable with ironic resignation. "Qu'importe si je meurs? J'ai bien joui dans la Revolution, j'ai bien dépensé, bien ribotté, bien caressé des filles, allons dormir." (23) On the scaffold he softened into a cry of farewell to his wife whom he loved, recaptured control—"Come, Danton, no weakness"—and turning to the executioner said, "Show my head to the people. It is worth it."

These men were French, and they died as Frenchmen can

die. But a century of subversive propaganda has undermined the tradition which sustained them. The *déraciné* internationals of Moscow had no resources in themselves, and could draw no consolation from the arid dustiness of Marxist Materialism. God knows what they had endured before they were deemed ripe for the dock and for the loud speakers through which they were to declaim their set pieces of self-abasement. But there were others who had faced the same ordeal, and who did not whimper or cringe before their judges, others who were supported by a faith more helpful at such moments than Dialectical Materialism.

There can have been few Communists who did not lose heart and stature when the old Bolshevik guard abased themselves in the dock, asking pardon not of God for the crimes which they had committed, but of Stalin for offences of which they were for the most part innocent. It is easier to meet indignation than contempt. Parlour Communists who defend, and even glory in the ruthlessness of the Russian terrorist, find it difficult to explain away the wretched figure which these same terrorists cut when overtaken by the violence which they had called into being. Men are more ashamed of cowardice than of crime. St. Just went to the scaffold bearing a red carnation, but when the red light turns yellow, the red star loses its lustre.

Those whose faith in human nature has been weakened by the squalid story of Bolshevik dereliction in the dock should read the records of the trials in which Christians, Roman Catholic and Russian Orthodox, faced with courage and with calmness the vituperation of judge and prosecutor. It may be easier to live as a Communist in Soviet Russia, but it is certainly easier to die as a Christian. "Any sentence that you pass on me," said Father Yunevich, "I will receive with dignity. I will not protest against it, for I see in all things the workings of Providence, and I say 'Thy will be done.'" "Herein I see the providence of God," said Father Leonidas Fedorov, "the will of God; and in this faith I accept all that He shall send."

(24)
"Ibant gaudentes. C'est pour le même Maître." These

words of consolation spoken by a martyr of the Paris Commune (1870) to a fellow victim, enshrined the spirit of Christian martyrdom. Courage is not the monopoly of Christian martyrs, but the recurring pattern of radiant joy is the distinguishing characteristic of religious martyrdom. The Roman amphitheatre, the dungeons of Revolutionary France, the cells of Cheka, the firing squads of Republican Spain, have proved powerless to dispel the happiness of those who "went rejoicing."

III. THE PRESENT POSITION IN RUSSIA

The Russian religious persecution varies in intensity from year to year. In the *magnum opus* of the Webbs the index reference to religious worship ends appropriately with the words "see also Persecution."

The Webbs quote with disapproval Mr. W. H. Chamberlin's assertion in his article in *Foreign Affairs* (New York) that "representatives of all religious faiths are being persecuted (in the U.S.S.R. in 1935) at least as vigorously as Dissenters and Catholics were persecuted under Charles II (in England)." And the Webbs add, "Fortunately, Mr. Chamberlin enumerates carefully all the forms that the 'persecution' takes." The word "fortunately" and the quotation marks in which the Webbs enclose the word "persecution" do not prepare us for what follows. I was expecting a little gentle Webb irony on the theme of a non-existent "persecution." But the Webbs continue, "The Soviet Government refuses to print or to import religious books. Practically all seminaries for priests are suppressed. The churches are forbidden to carry on charitable or recreational work. The children of priests are denied access to higher education. There is frequent arbitrary closing of particular churches. Priests and others active in religious work are sometimes summarily arrested and deported on grounds that they do not understand." (25) All of which, of course, is only "persecution." I should be interested to know what constitutes persecution in the judgment of the Webbs.

Moreover, the recent developments in Russia do not support

the Webbs' contention that the Russian persecution is less severe than that of Catholics and Dissenters under Charles II. The understandable anxiety of the Russian Government to conceal the extent of the persecution makes it difficult to obtain accurate information, but if the summary recently published by the Warsaw Catholic Press Agency is even approximately correct, religious persecution is certainly not diminishing in intensity.

"According to information published by the Warsaw Catholic Press Agency, altogether 42,800 Orthodox priests were liquidated in the first half of 1936, some being shot, others despatched to the labour camps of Siberia. Of the 200 Evangelical pastors who were working in Russia in 1917, only four are still alive. In the year 1936 over 800 Catholic priests were sent to prison, 102 were shot, and the others banished. The G.P.U. recently issued orders for the arrest of all wandering Christians, whom the Bolshevists have so far been unable to prevent travelling from district to district and preaching the Gospel. These 'Stanniks' wield great influence over the population and keep the faith alive wherever the clergy has been exterminated.

"In the course of 1937, 1,900 places of worship have been closed by the G.P.U. on the pretext of arrears in the payment of religious taxes. They include 240 Roman Catholic churches, 200 mosques, 115 synagogues, sixty-one Lutheran churches, and other houses of prayer belonging to various denominations." (26)

So much for the "freedom of worship" guaranteed in Article 124 of the new Soviet Constitution. Article 124 states that "Freedom of worship and freedom of anti-religious propaganda are recognized for all citizens," a handsome concession which was hailed with hosannahs by Communist sympathizers in democratic countries. On October 1st, 1935, Krylenko was good enough to explain the meaning of Article 124. He pointed out that "separation means that the Church does not and cannot enjoy any kind of juridical rights. Consequently it cannot and must not enjoy or be entitled to rights and privileges of any kind," and he added that no form of religious

education would be tolerated in any school or institution of learning. (27)

Article 124 specifically permits "freedom of anti-religious propaganda" but no freedom of pro-religious propaganda. It is fatuous to pretend that there is no persecution in a country in which Christians are denied the right to propagate their faith. Let us test this alleged toleration by a simple analogy. Let us suppose that every teacher in State schools were instructed to attack Socialism, and no teacher permitted to defend Socialism. Let us suppose that Socialists were allowed to hold meetings in private, and denied the right to propagate their views. Any Constitution embodying such principles would not be welcomed by Socialists as a triumph for political toleration.

IV. THE RELIGIOUS PERSECUTION IN SPAIN

I wonder whether the Webbs would classify the attack on Christianity in Republican Spain as persecution or "persecution." They would certainly have been on sure ground had they defended the Russian Bolsheviks by the plea that the Russian persecution of religion was relatively mild compared with the savage persecution in Republican Spain. Such was the verdict of the Special Correspondent of the *Manchester Guardian*, a paper which consistently supported the Republican Government. In its issue for June 24th, 1937, a correspondent who had just returned from Republican Spain wrote as follows, "The attack on religion has been more radical in loyalist Spain than anywhere else in the world, including even Mexico and Russia. All Roman Catholic churches have been closed down as places of worship, and nearly all have been completely destroyed inside, only the walls, roof, and tower remaining. Nor have the Protestant churches escaped, with the exception (it would appear to be the only one) of the small German church in Madrid. In that little church divine service still goes on, thanks to the fantastic courage and devotion of the pastor, Dr. Fliedner, and his popularity

amongst the poor of Madrid, thanks also to its position (it is very small and is built between houses and behind a garden with trees). The English church in Barcelona has been closed. The two Nonconformist places of worship at Clot and Pueblo Nueva have been burnt. . . .

"Visitors to Madrid are shown 'an unburnt church' as a piece of propaganda, and some families in Madrid have had permission to hold private Mass. But these are the loneliest exceptions. . . .

"The lovely churches of Valencia have been burnt out or destroyed inside, and are now used as garages, repair shops, depots, and so on. . . .

"In Russia the churches are full and religion is a power still. In Russia persecution has a meaning. In loyalist Spain there is nothing left to persecute. . . ."

In Spain as in Russia the apologists for religious persecution have attempted to prove that the persecutors were inspired by anti-clericalism rather than by hatred of religion as such. The Church in Spain is represented as rich in the midst of grinding poverty. The wealth of the Church is a propaganda myth, for the Spanish Church has been the victim of a long series of partial and complete confiscations in the years 1812, 1820, 1835, 1837, 1868 and 1931. The State, having expropriated and disendowed the Church, agreed to pay the stipends of the clergy. In 1913 the Primate of Spain received the equivalent of about £1,600 a year. Eight Bishops were paid at the rate of £400 a year, and of all the parish priests only fifty were lucky enough to receive an annual grant of £100, and 3,495 received annual stipends varying from £20 to £25 a year. Spanish priests were overworked and underpaid members of the proletariat.

The continued expropriations by the State were partially made good by Catholics who left money to the Church as trustee for hospitals and schools. The records of Liberal Governments in Spain, so far as education is concerned, has been a record of destruction. The Church educated more than half of those who were educated, a magnificent effort, considering its crippled resources. "Backward as Spain has long

been in this respect," writes Professor Allison Peers, a distinguished Anglican scholar, "it is hardly possible to imagine in what condition she would be were it not for the labours of the clergy, and, in particular, of the religious Orders . . . if the religious Orders are distrusted, it is not by the poor, the sick and the hungry." (28)

The pretext that the Spanish persecution was inspired solely by anti-clericalism is for export only, and was repudiated by *Solidaridad Obrera* in its issue of January 28th, 1937. This paper is the official organ of the Anarcho-Syndicalists, who are represented in the Republican Government, and whose views would have been suppressed by the Press censor had they been regarded as inconsistent with the Government policy.

"It appears that Alvarez del Vayo," writes *Solidaridad Obrera*, "found himself obliged in the League of Nations to define the limits of our revolution. 'Spain will have,' he said, 'a social democracy and therefore have freedom of religion.' Admirable. We know the value of words used by diplomatists if spoken in Geneva meetings.

"Lenin said that religion was opium. He did not say enough. Opium stupefies, enervates. Little by little it robs man of his organic energies, but it does not go beyond animal physiology.

"We do not know up to what point we can speak of the 'freedom of religion'. . . . The 'freedom for evil' is an excessively liberal principle.

"If we do not allow the freedom of drunkenness, prostitution, suicide, must we allow fanaticism?

"It is enough to judge religion by the simple fact of its burnt churches. Not one remains standing, not an effigy remains intact. Hardly a shred remains. With all this they still have pretensions of returning to the Faith. . . .

"This speech of Alvarez del Vayo with his kind of promise or compromise that Spain will re-establish the Catholic religion, may have sounded very well in the League of Nations. It appears to have given tone to the discussion; but here in Spain it makes us smile."

During the Nationalist drive for the sea in the spring of 1938 I visited many churches in the territory recaptured from

the Republicans. Most of these, as for instance at Lerida, had been ruthlessly destroyed. Some had been transformed into cinemas, or as at Alcaniz, into co-operative stores. In the cathedral at Alcaniz the side chapels were still full of groceries on Palm Sunday, 1938. I only found one church, at Morella, which was undamaged, a church of great beauty which had been preserved as a national monument. Many churches no less beautiful had been destroyed, and the preservation of the few which had escaped destruction was due to chance rather than settled policy. The Republican army is believed to contain high officers out of sympathy with the attack on religion, and it is to some such officer that the church at Morella owes its preservation. I visited the cemetery at Huesca which had been occupied by the Republicans. The little chapel had been transformed into a barber's saloon. Every cross and every crucifix had been broken. The walls were covered with obscene drawings. Many coffins had been opened and desecrated. The significance of Huesca is the fact that these outrages were not the work of an infuriated mob in a period of excitement. The cemetery was occupied for eighteen months by officers and men who were apparently unperturbed by the squalid, tragic and desecrated environment.

It is difficult to obtain accurate estimates of the assassinations of priests. Twenty-eight religious Orders have sent in their estimates, and the list was published in *The Times* for May 7th, 1938. According to these incomplete results 1,403 members of religious Orders are known to have been killed, but many of the greatest Orders in Spain, such as the Dominicans, have not yet compiled their list. The estimates for the total number of assassinations of the religious Orders and the secular clergy range from 10,000 to 14,000. Many of these martyrs were offered the choice between apostasy and death, often a cruel death by torture. The number of apostasies were negligible.

It is improbable that the Church of England will remain for long in its present secure position. The richest and most powerful Church in Christendom is peculiarly vulnerable to attack, and if ever the Anglican clergy are called upon to die for their Faith, we shall hear a great deal about tithes and mining

royalties, and we shall be assured that their murderers are inspired not by hatred of religion as such, but by a very proper detestation of clerical abuses. Even if the Church of England escapes active persecution, the campaign for disestablishment and disendowment is only being held in reserve for a more auspicious moment. It would be disastrous if such a campaign were to succeed. The official recognition of Christianity as the State religion is some restraint, however small, on the gradual secularization of national life. It is not in the national interest that funds which support the clergy, Church schools, charities and missions should be deflected to finance the extravagances of Socialistic and bureaucratic legislation.

"The aim of the extremists," writes Dr. W. R. Inge, "is to break all links with the past. Naturally they wish to destroy the Christian religion. They do not wish to reform the Church, as is most falsely stated, but to root out all religion. . . . The issue is perfectly clear. The enemy, we may almost say, is anti-Christ in person. We must fight, and close our ranks as far as we can. Reunion is far away, but in this battle we may surely all fight together. The gates of hell shall not prevail against the Church, but the battle will not be short or easy." (29)

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CHAPTER XVI

SOCIALISM AND SEX

It is regrettable that the case against Socialism should so often be confused by exaggeration. The attack on the sex philosophy of Socialism is often weakened not only by assertions which cannot be proved, but also by statements that can be conclusively refuted, with the inevitable result that the Socialist emerges triumphant from a controversy in which his opponent has thoughtfully provided him with a convincing reply. The Communist or Socialist should be attacked on the ground that his creed logically leads to promiscuity, which is provable, but not that it leads to the "official and open community of women," which is far from being the case. Yet in an otherwise well-documented criticism of Communism this statement appears, and is supported by a footnote reference to the *Communist Manifesto*. Had the *Manifesto* been quoted in the footnote, the statement in the text would have been refuted, for what Marx wrote was, "The bourgeois sees in his wife a mere instrument of production. He hears that the instruments of production are to be exploited in common, and, naturally, can come to no other conclusion than that the lot of being common to all will likewise fall to the women." And Marx adds, "Bourgeois marriage is in reality a system of wives in common, and thus, at the most, what the Communists might possibly be reproached with is that they desire to introduce, in substitution for a hypocritically concealed, an openly legalized community of women. For the rest, it is self-evident that the abolition of the present system of production must bring with it the abolition of the community of women springing from that system, i.e. of prostitution both public and private." (1)

It is no less foolish to suggest that all Socialists are licentious, or that the revolt against sexual restrictions is the only, or even

the most important, factor in the world revolutionary movement. Lenin, perhaps the greatest of revolutionaries, was ascetic by temperament. He despised self-indulgence, and explicitly condemned the "glass of water" defence of promiscuity. "You are doubtless acquainted with the capital theory," he said, "that in Communist society the satisfaction of the instincts of the craving for love is as simple and unimportant as 'the drinking of a glass of water.' This 'glass of water theory' has driven some of our young people crazy, quite crazy. It has been the destruction of many young men and women. Its supporters declare that it is Marxist. . . . I consider the famous 'glass of water theory' to be utterly un-Marxian, and moreover un-social. . . . Of course, thirst cries out to be quenched. But will a normal person under normal conditions lie down in the dirt in the road and drink from a puddle? Or even from a glass with a rim greasy from many lips?" (2)

Even if we avoid, as we must, charges which cannot be substantiated, we shall find it easy to prove that revolutionary movements have a disastrous effect on those moral standards which were once accepted as the unquestioned basis of western civilization. The repudiation by Communists of the traditional moral standards in sex is only one aspect of their repudiation of all objective morality. In this chapter I am concerned only with sex morality, and the words "morality" and "moral standards" must be understood in this restricted sense. I shall try to show:

1. That the attack on the traditional moral standards of Europe plays an important rôle in the propaganda of revolution.

2. That the lowering of standards involves a corresponding change of behaviour.

3. That revolutionary movements appeal, not only to idealists and occasional ascetics like Lenin, but to those who have abandoned all attempt to conform to difficult standards, and who rationalize their sense of failure by reproaching not themselves but the code which condemns them.

4. That revolutionary leaders are forced by the logic of

revolt to exploit against the established order the undisciplined and criminal elements of the population.

5. That in consequence of this alliance the first phase of a successful revolution is characterized by a general revolt against restraint and self-discipline.

6. That traditional morality is based on laws which cannot be defied with impunity, and that the rulers of a Socialist State are therefore forced by the logic of facts to curb the forces which they have exploited in their attacks on tradition, and to impose a gradual return to the standards which they have condemned.

The advocacy of free love has been consistently exploited in the interests of world revolution. "It is significant," writes von Mises, "that no other German Socialist book was more widely read or more effective as propoganda than Bebel's *Woman and Socialism*, which is dedicated above all to the message of free love." (3)

Fourier (1772-1837), the founder of French Socialism, advocated a return to nature, which he represented as a condition in which passions could be indulged without restraint. Wishful thinking, which is the concealed basis of the pseudo-scientific Socialistic literature of today, appears undisguised in Fourier. He looked forward to a day when the sea would be purged of brine, and would be turned into "a pleasant drink like lemonade," when men would attain an age of 144 years, of which 120 years were to be spent in the exercise of free love. (4)

Weishaupt, founder of the Illuminati, proposed a festival to be called the Eroterion, in honour of the Goddess of Love, a suggestion which may perhaps have inspired the famous scene in Notre Dame in which a prostitute was enthroned on the High Altar. (5)

The sex-frustrated are to be found in large numbers in all revolutionary movements. Unfortunately feminists have received scurvy treatment from the unchivalrous leaders of revolt, who had always been ready to exploit and reluctant to reward the enthusiasm of revolutionary ladies. "Mark too," writes Robison, "what return the women have met with for

all their horrid services, where, to express their sentiments of civism and abhorrence of royalty, they threw away the character of their sex . . . there is not a single act of their government in which the sex is considered as having any rights whatever, or that they are things to be cared for." (6) The same unchivalrous pattern reappears in the Revolution of 1848. Feminists had contributed not a little to the unrest without which the revolution would never have succeeded. "Ces héroïnes de l'amour manqué font à grands cris le procès du mariage bourgeois: 'Affaire de bourse qu'on traite par courtoise. . . . Alliage monstrueux de la beauté et de la décrépitude. . . . Immense maison de prostitution où les pères vendent leurs filles. . . .'" (7) Georges Sand declared that adultery should no longer be considered an offence. Other feminists demanded that children should take the name of their mother, a proposal which was supported by the irrefutable statement that whereas a child's paternity is a question of opinion, its maternity is a question of fact. Fourier found eager disciples among those pioneers of sex reform. They were charmed by his proposal that young girls should be invited to choose, at sixteen, between the "vestalat" and the "demoisellat." Demoiselles should be entitled to practise free love without further delay, whereas the more ascetic vestals would take vows of chastity terminable at twenty-one. (8) These champions of sex equality were applauded until the revolution had succeeded, but their ideals were ignored when the revolutionary government issued their scale of pay for the "National Workshops." Men were paid at the rate of two or three francs a day, but the indignant feminists had to be satisfied with twelve sous.

All of which suggests a certain reserve towards the spirited proposals for sexual equality which have been formulated by that distinguished French Socialist, M. Léon Blum. It is possible that M. Blum is sincerely distressed that the lapses of unmarried girls are still regarded with less benignity than bachelor liaisons, but his feminine disciples had better be prepared for disappointments if M. Blum is ever entrusted with dictatorial powers in a revolutionary France. M. Blum

has the distinction of being the first Prime Minister of a European State to defend incest during his term of office, for though he wrote *Du Mariage* as a young man, he republished it with a new preface in May, 1937. Blum is no anarchist, for he desires not to abolish but to reform the institution of marriage, but I doubt if traditionalists will be reassured by his proposals, for he defends the thesis that young people should matriculate by promiscuity before taking their degree in marriage. He believes that young people should be free to yield to the changing impulses of instinct, and when their tastes are formed, to settle down in a durable marriage.

"Why should one forbid oneself to yield to a sincere and lively attraction?" he writes. "For whom should one preserve oneself intact, or rather virgin? The condition of vague uneasiness, this anonymous sensibility, if I may so describe it, which one finds among the lovers of today, will disappear with the restraints which are its cause, and moreover, at the age at which our young girls of today have acquired sufficient freedom to experience direct familiarity with men, the young girls of a future age will already have had several lovers. They will be less deflowered by being possessed than the girls of today by cold complacency or lewd curiosity." (9) In M. Blum's *Utopia* "young girls will return from their lovers as naturally as they now return from school or from taking tea with a friend." (10)

Once the world has accepted these modest proposals, humanity will be ripe for a further advance on the road to sexual freedom. To avoid the charge of misrepresentation I had better quote from the original French M. Blum's discreet comments on incest.

"Je n'ai jamais discerné ce que l'inceste a de proprement repoussant, et, sans rechercher pour quelles raisons l'inceste, toléré ou prescrit dans certaines sociétés, est tenu pour un crime dans la nôtre, je note simplement qu'il est naturel et fréquent d'aimer d'amour son frère ou sa soeur."* (11)

* "I have never discovered what is inherently repulsive in incest, and without attempting to discover why incest, tolerated or enjoined in certain societies, is considered a crime in our own, I merely note that it is natural and usual amorously to love one's brother or one's sister."

And that brings me to my second point, that the lowering of standards involves a corresponding change in behaviour. In Fourier's day rebels were content to defend promiscuity and adultery. But once these rights had been conceded, the rebel must busy himself with destroying such taboos as remain. There is an inevitable lag between code and practice, and where the code is lowered the practice is correspondingly lowered, and the adulterer of yesterday advocates incest today. All of which suggests some disquieting comments on the popular theory that it does not matter what a man believes provided that he behaves himself, for it seems as if there really is some connection between creed and code. Even in a society which condemns adultery men of normal passions have not found it easy to remain monogamous; in a society which condoned promiscuity self-control in sex would be not only difficult but slightly absurd.

Traditional Christianity has followed Christ in combining intolerance of sin with tolerance of sinners. There is nothing uncharitable in the defence of rigid standards, or intolerant in the conviction that a degradation of standards involves a corresponding degradation of behaviour. If morality be merely a matter of taste or local convention, M. Blum is as entitled to defend incest as promiscuity. Indeed, like the Russian Communists, he should be praised for drawing conclusions which follow logically from the premisses of that secular humanitarianism which is the dominant philosophy of the modern world.

Free love is a misleading slogan. Everybody is free to love, but nobody is free to compel love. The demand for free love finds a ready response amongst those whose desires have been frustrated, and who interpret the Communist slogan, "To every man according to his needs" as the compulsory equality of a sexual Utopia in which every desire shall be automatically gratified. The realistic Spaniard has little use for vague slogans. Anarchists in Spain appreciate the true significance of free love, and have taken practical measures to compel the desired reactions among those who still defend the freedom to be chaste. At a meeting of the C.N.T. at

Saragossa just before the civil war, the Spanish Anarchists "passed a resolution," writes Mr. John Langdon-Davies, "that if anyone, male or female, chanced to rouse the sexual feelings of another, it amounted to a gross and palpable interference with the freedom and happiness of that other, unless the guilty person was prepared to relieve the feelings he or she had produced. They therefore carried with acclamation the proposition that such a person, if they refused to alleviate the suffering they had imposed on another by rousing sexual feeling, must be exiled from the town or village where they resided for a period long enough for all fires to be quenched."

(12)

The campaign for free love appeals not only to those who believe, as all good Socialists do believe, in universal compulsion, but also to those who suffer, not from unrequited love, but from an unconscious respect for the code which they profess to despise. Conscience, deadened, moribund and repressed, still intrudes like an uneasy ghost into the sexual El Dorado of Fourier. The profligate has not yet achieved his final goal of serene promiscuity. He continues to preach what he practises in the hope of converting the most important member of his audience—himself. He rebels against non-existent restrictions, for no State denies to its citizens freedom to love. The campaign for free love is characteristic of Socialist propaganda in its dishonesty, for the unavowed objective of this campaign is not the removal of non-existing restraints, but the removal of all stigma from promiscuity. "Free love" is a formula which disguises the search for a philosophy which will combine the hyperæsthesia of the senses with the anæsthesia of conscience. Its real objective is not free love but carefree lust.

"The liberation we desired," writes Aldous Huxley, "was simultaneously liberation from a certain political and economic system and liberation from a certain system of morality. We objected to the morality because it interfered with our sexual freedom." (13)

The Russian Revolution ran true to type. The destruction of the old régime was followed by an abandonment of moral

restraints. This general collapse during the first years of the Russian Revolution is admitted by the Communists themselves. "The Bolshevik authorities," writes Mr. H. G. Wells in his record of his visit to Russia in September, 1920, "have collected and published very startling, very shocking figures of the moral condition of young people in Petersburg, which I have seen . . . there can be no doubt that in the Russian towns, concurrently with increased educational effort and an enhanced intellectual stimulation of the young, there is also an increased lawlessness on their part, especially in sexual matters, and that this is going on in a phase of unexampled sobriety and harsh puritanical decorum so far as adult life is concerned. This hectic moral fever of the young is the dark side of the educational spectacle in Russia." (14)

During this period the formula of proletculture, "Everything is allowed," produced devastating effects on Russian life. "Communist youth," wrote Madame Smidovich in March, 1925, "evidently believes that the most primitive approach to questions of sexual passion is really a Communist one. Everything which does not fall into a way of life which might be good enough for Hottentots, or even still more primitive races, is qualified as being bourgeois." (15) During this period abortion was legalized, and divorce could be had for the asking, and without delay, by either partner. "The applicants for marriage and divorce," writes Mr. W. H. Chamberlin, "waited their turn in the inevitable queues in an ante-room where a loud-speaker entertained them with denunciations of the heresies of the 'right deviationists' in the Communist Party." (16)

Christians are entitled to attack the Communist code, and to maintain that Marxist materialism inevitably leads to the destruction of marriage, a consequence which is desirable if the Communist premiss be correct, and deplorable if the Christian premiss be well founded. Christians should unsparingly attack the Communist code, but cannot reasonably denounce the Communists for practising what they preach. It is foolish to attack the Soviet regulations for marriage and divorce as if these regulations represented not merely the legal

expression of the Marxist code, but a further refinement of Marxist wickedness. The Christian who believes that marriage is indissoluble bases his belief on the words of Christ as quoted by St. Mark, "What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder." (17) " 'Ridiculous,' flames the revolutionary, 'neither a God nor man has or can have anything to do with the joining and the sundering of men and women from one another,' " writes Mr. Maurice Hindus. " " "Until death do us part?" Rubbish, shouts the revolutionary, life is too precious to wait for death to offer redemption from a union that may be blighting your every hour of existence.' " (18)

Both the Christian and the Marxist argue correctly from their respective premisses. The sincere Christian believes that temporal happiness is relatively unimportant compared with eternal happiness, and that the latter must not be jeopardized to escape from the discomfort of an unhappy marriage. But the sincere Communist has no rational grounds for continuing to live with a disagreeable mate for the few short years of human life. He cannot reasonably be blamed for framing his mating laws within the context of the only world in which he believes. Christians should attack the Communist premiss, and show that objectionable conclusions follow from that premiss.

Wherever dates have been available for Communist statements, books or legislative enactments, I have given them. It is misleading to cite conditions which, though true of one phase, such as the early phase of the Revolution, are not necessarily true today. A valuable witness to Soviet conditions is Mr. Maurice Hindus, an American citizen who was born in Russia. His criticisms are necessarily discreet, since he is constantly revisiting Russia in search of new material for books and lectures. He would be deprived of an entrance visa if he was regarded as a hostile critic. In his interesting book, *Humanity Uprooted*, he writes, "Now when women enjoy the same sex liberties as men, the ancient doctrine of virginity topples down like a heap of snow struck by a rock. There is nothing to hold it together. Chastity, as a principle

and a practice, as a canon and a custom, in and of itself, ceases to have any meaning, any virtue, any glory. . . . Chastity is no longer a badge of honour or glory. Its loss is no longer a disgrace or a source of torment, save only to the extent that the old tradition is still a part of the individual's consciousness." (19)

Mr. Hindus does not deny that this new sex morality is gradually destroying the family, which is also being undermined by the methods adopted to impose upon the young an ideology which many of the older generation have not yet accepted. The child in consequence grows to manhood under influences which are indifferent and often hostile to the influence of the home. At the age of five or six the young Russian enters the Pioneers, and is encouraged not only to defy parental authority, but also to report recalcitrant parents to the authorities. "The so-called Pioneers," writes Dr. Waldemar Gurian, "are an institution for children up to about the age of fifteen or sixteen. It is a preparatory organization for the League of Communist Youth, the Komsomol. The Pioneers devote themselves particularly to influencing the older generation. They are encouraged to introduce the Bolshevik spirit into the family, without the least regard to parental authority or the respect due from children to parents—for the parents' commands must yield to the Bolshevik principles of the Pioneers. How far the destruction of parental authority has gone is shown by the fact that during Ramsin's trial for wrecking, the son of Syntin, one of his fellow accused, wrote to the papers demanding the infliction of the death penalty upon his own father." (20)

Mr. Hindus believes that the odds are stacked against the family in Russia. "The forces of dissolution, both objective and subjective, would appear to be too multitudinous and too persistent." "The family is persisting in Russia, but it is in the process of becoming a mere shadow or skeleton of the old family." "One cannot help wondering if the Russians are in danger of sinking into a morass of animality."

The night is dark, but there are faint signs of dawn, and the Red Star has certainly lost some of its brilliance. Com-

munists may continue to reaffirm their contempt for traditional morality, but a note of doubt can be detected in their robust defiance. They are right to associate morality with the religion which they both detest and persecute, but they are beginning to discover that even in the natural order breaches of the moral law entail their inevitable punishment. Nobody would accuse Mr. Havelock Ellis of a bias in favour of traditional morality, and yet of the family he writes, "Its existence may even be said to be woven into the texture of the species." (21)

The more enlightened of modern humanists are beginning to rediscover the truths which Christians have never ceased to affirm. "It is notorious today," writes Mr. C. E. M. Joad, "that heavenly rewards no longer attract and infernal punishments no longer deter with their pristine force; young people are frankly derisive of both, and, seeing no prospect of divine compensation in the next world for the wine and kisses that morality bids them eschew in this one, take more or less unanimously to the wine and kisses. Unfortunately the pleasurable results anticipated from these sources fail to materialise. That unchecked indulgence in the more obvious types of pleasure is unsatisfying is the unanimous teaching of those who have had the leisure and opportunity to try them in all ages. It is the more unfortunate that it is a truth which nobody believes to be true until he has discovered it for himself. . . . You cannot take the kingdom of pleasure, any more than you can take the kingdom of beauty, by storm." And he adds, "For the first time in history there is coming to maturity a generation of men and women who have no religion, and feel no need for one. They are content to ignore it. Also they are very unhappy, and the suicide rate is abnormally high." (22)

As, indeed, the Russian Communists are beginning to discover. "The extreme sexual promiscuity which was both fashionable and general among the Young Communists and the 'emancipated' Soviet younger generation a decade ago is now officially frowned on," writes Mr. Chamberlin. "Excessive loose living, like excessive drinking, is a recognized ground for expulsion from the Communist Party or from the Union of Communist Youth." (23)

The Soviet State has begun to regret its encouragement of legalized abortion, and there are signs of a return towards the traditional respect for the family. If these tendencies become more pronounced they will be exploited to prove the beneficent consequences of the Communist régime, whereas such evidence of returning sanity merely justifies the gloomy belief, so firmly held by Max Eastman and other Trotskyites, that we are witnessing "the end of Socialism in Russia." The return of the Russian prodigal to his Father's house will be inspired by a philosophy very different from that Marxist creed which withholds from man even "the husks that the swine did eat."

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CHAPTER XVII

THE OPIUM OF THE FEEBLE

REVOLUTIONARY propaganda by its over-emphasis on the evils of Capitalism obscures the existence of a widespread revolt against the moral and cultural standards of the past. Every civilization is the creation of a philosophy. Periclean Athens and Mediæval Europe reflected their respective philosophies in their art and in their ethics. The culture of Mediæval Europe was the flower of a philosophy in which freedom was safeguarded by restraint. Private property was protected by a philosophy of social safeguards which condemned, as Professor Laski himself insists, "the pursuit of wealth for its own sake." Christianity is a system not of uncompromising vetoes, but of balanced restraints. The Church denounced avarice, but defended the legitimacy of private property against the predecessors of modern communists; she endeavoured not to abolish, but to restrain the profit motive by determining the principles of that Just Price which should be fair to merchant, worker and consumer. She condemned adultery and fornication, but defended the purity of marital relations against the Cathari who condemned sex as intrinsically unclean. She condemned drunkenness, but refused to follow the Manichee in his condemnation of wine. She strove for peace, but she parted from the extremer pacifists in her attempts to define the exacting conditions which justified war or rebellion.

The Christian ethic is, and has always been, too exacting for the "average sensual man," but high standards are not necessarily valueless because few people attain them. There must always be a lag between preaching and practice, and where standards are lowered the practice is correspondingly lowered. Within the framework of restraint the Christian life flowers in an ordered freedom all the more precious by contrast with the enslavement of mind and body imposed by

atheistic Communism. It is not self-control but self-indulgence which is the enemy of liberty. The abandonment of self-control which disguises itself as a crusade for freedom has flavoured the word "restraint" with a sense of diminution. We are beginning to forget that restraints often serve to canalise power and to prevent the weak disintegration of force. Below Visp, the Rhone, which in the past often wasted its energy in diffuse floods, now flows in a strong stream between restraining banks which engineers have strengthened and reinforced. It is a tired and enfeebled civilization which chafes at restraints. The most striking characteristic of Mediæval Europe was the dynamic energy which drew strength from a Christian source. Bergson, by race a Jew, and by conviction far removed from Christianity, praises "the energy and audacity, the power both to conceive and to realize, which is the characteristic of the great Christian saints. One has only to remember," he continues, "all that was accomplished in the realm of action by St. Paul, St. Theresa, St. Catherine of Sienna, St. Francis or St. Joan of Arc." (1) Bergson's case would be strengthened by a study of Wesley's journals, which bear record to an energy, moral, intellectual and physical, for the like of which you will search in vain among the records of revolutionary leaders.

St. Paul, dynamic archetype of the Christian missionary, conceived religion not as opium for the people, but as a flame which tempered the steel of character. He takes his analogies not from balms and medicaments, but from the *ascesis* of athletic training. Admittedly there are Christians to whom religion is nothing more than a drug and a substitute for action, but the energy of Christian Europe which flowed into a thousand channels was not confined to the saints or even to those who made a consistent attempt to model their lives on Christ.

The modern revolt against that great culture which was moulded by Christianity assumes many forms, economic, ethical and artistic. The enduring element in these protean shapes is the appeal to sloth. Communism, admittedly, has some dynamic leaders, and among the rank and file there are many who are ready both to fight and to die for their faith.

Spain, indeed, suggests a disquieting comparison between the dynamic energy of many Communists and the inertia of too many Catholics. But revolutionary movements are recruited not only and not mainly from the militant and dynamic, for the army of revolt includes vast numbers who enthusiastically applaud the abolition and lowering of standards which they have abandoned all hope of attaining.

The basic cause of the revolt against civilization is a failure of nerve. Cowardice is first cousin to sloth, for it is the coward who shirks the difficulties of moral and intellectual problems. From the difficulties of self-control the escapist flies to the gospel of Free Love, a gospel which bears unwitting testimony to the rejected code, for the freedom which it proclaims is not the freedom to love, but freedom from the twinges of a conscience which even the opium of a bogus philosophy cannot wholly anæsthetize. There is a close connection between lazy living and lazy thinking. Verbosity and indolence are the distinguishing characteristics of revolutionary literature. If Marx is quoted against me I reply that mental indolence deprived him of the rewards of his laborious researches. Marx, like other lethargic thinkers, took refuge from the complexities of life in over-simplification. The social order is the product of many agencies; Marx concentrated on the economic agency and ignored the rest. The average man, the raw material of the social engineer, is a complex of avarice, selfishness, sloth and idealism; Marx postulates that Communism will produce the perfect citizen and leaves it at that. The Utopia of Communism is the paradise of the escapist taking refuge from reality in a world of wishful thinking.

"When the social order is like a well-oiled machine," writes the author of *The A.B.C. of Communism*, ". . . there will be no need for special ministers of State, for police and prisons, for laws and decrees, nothing of the sort." Very true, but the problem is to produce the well-oiled machine, not to describe what happens when the problem is solved. In a society of saints there would be no need for "police and prisons," but those who are interested in realities will waste little time over Communist Utopias.

A good controversialist, said Chesterton, must be a good listener, but you will search Communist literature in vain for any evidence of "listening" to the case against Communism. Mr. John Strachey, to quote one example, is perhaps the ablest of modern Communists, but he is so busily engaged in explaining what Marx meant that he has no leisure to prove that the refutations of Marx are unsound. It is irritating when one has read destructive criticisms of, shall we say, the Labour Theory of Value, and turned with impatience to Mr. Strachey's works in the hope of a detailed reply, only to discover, as I have already remarked, that the authors of these criticisms, Mr. A. D. Lindsay, the Master of Balliol, and Mr. H. W. B. Joseph of New College, are dismissed in a contemptuous footnote. (2) They may be wrong, but the gulf between Mr. Strachey's intellect and theirs is not so wide that he can afford to treat them with such curt disdain.

The Marxian revolt in the sphere of economics is paralleled in the sphere of literature and of art. "We are confronted today," writes Mr. Alfred Noyes, "by the extraordinary spectacle of 10,000 literary rebels, each chained to his own solitary height, and each chanting the same perennial song of hate against everything that has been achieved by past generations." (3) This revolt against the past is the revolt of idleness against exacting standards. Discipline is as unpopular in art as in life, and the modern rebel demands that same freedom from restraint in art as he has achieved in sex. From the regimented ranks of the conventionally unconventional rises the parrot cry "Conventions kill art." On the contrary, without conventions there can be no art.

The same symptoms of a tired civilization are apparent in the work of many architects of today. The great mediæval cathedrals bear witness to the patience no less than to the energy of their builders. The foundations were laid by men who saw life *sub specie aeternitatis*, and who were content to work for the inspiration of unborn generations. The mediæval sculptor was no less conscientious when he carved some statue on a remote part of a cathedral roof, as at Milan, or the Christ over the West Porch which every worshipper saw, and still sees,

as he enters Chartres cathedral. In the Renaissance we find not only the dynamic energy of a cultural revival, but also the first signs of an ageing civilization. The new spirit finds early expression in the tomb of the Doge Andrea Vendramin in the Venetian church of St. John and St. Paul. Ruskin climbed up to this tomb and discovered that the "wretched effigy had only one hand and was a mere block on the inner side . . . it having been supposed throughout the work that the effigy was only to be seen from below and from one side." Today the energy has spent itself, and the weariness becomes ever more apparent. The modern cult of simplicity in architecture has given us some fine work, but too much of modern simplicity consists in the evasion of difficulties by denying their existence. There is the simplicity which expresses as simply as possible an idea which is worth expressing, and there is the simplicity which betrays the barrenness of men with no ideas to express. "When people contend for their liberty," said an earlier Lord Halifax, "they seldom get anything for their victory but a change of masters." This apothegm illustrates the simplicity which resolves complexity, for in these seventeen words Halifax crystallized what was true in the Marxist analysis of past history, and refuted what was false in the Marxist prophecy of the future.

On the façade of the little church at Campione there is engraved a tribute to the masons of Milan cathedral which may be rendered thus :

*By what remote parentage, by what silent preparation,
by what vast agreements is nourished the eternal
dream of art.*

The Bolshevik of today, using this word in its widest sense, is in revolt against the remote parentage of European culture, against the silent preparation which is as necessary in social reconstruction as in art, and against the vast agreements which he dismisses as conventions, agreements which are the foundation of European culture.

The fashion of the moment forces even those who have served the apprenticeship of "silent preparation" to disown

the technique and skill which they have acquired. Every degree of technical skill and technical incompetence is represented in exhibitions of advanced art. It would seem that some artists, Hodler for example, have deliberately painted badly in order not to lose caste with progressive critics. Hodler proved that he could paint the human body with a mastery of tactile values which reminds us of Masaccio, but he could also defile his canvasses with mis-shapen, badly drawn and crudely coloured forms.

The widespread revolt against discipline in morality and in art is the unmistakable symptom of a tired and dying civilization. In the springtime of our western civilization men believed that God had made them a little lower than the angels, a belief which was at once a challenge to man's energy and a safeguard of his rights. For if man is made in the image of God he has rights which no Dictator is entitled to disregard, but if man is nothing more than first cousin to the chimpanzee, he has no redress if, like the chimpanzee, he is put behind bars. It is no coincidence that those who have refused to admit the obligations of man's high estate have lost the corresponding privileges. Irreligion is the opium of the feeble, and atheism a drug which dulls the regrets of those who have surrendered their birthright because they have neither the strength nor the courage to face the demands of a civilization still informed by the fading vision of a supernatural order.

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CHAPTER XVIII

THE PROFIT MOTIVE

LANGUAGE is an instrument designed for the clarification of thought, and not, as Socialists too often assume, as a substitute for thought. This is no new development, for the discussion groups of Mr. Victor Gollancz's Left Book Club carry on the tradition of the revolutionary clubs in eighteenth-century France.

"Dans la vie," writes Pierre Gaxotte, "ce qui compte, ce sont les actes; ici, ce sont les paroles. Dans la vie, ce que l'on recherche, ce sont des résultats matériels, tangibles; ici, ce sont des votes. Dans la vie, gouverner, c'est lutter contres des choses, prévoir, préparer, organiser, agir; ici, le grand art consiste à composer l'ordre du jour et à faire la majorité. Dans la vie, une pensée se juge à l'expérience, à l'épreuve des faits. Ici, c'est l'opinion qui règne. Est réel, ce qui emporte l'assentiment des auditeurs; est vrai, ce qui entraîne leur adhésion. . . . Dans la société de pensée, l'initié fait table rase de tout ce qui n'est pas abstraction et raison raisonnante. Il retranche de lui-même tout ce qui lui est vraiment personnel; il se réduit à cette petite faculté déductive qui est la chose du monde la plus répandue."* (1)

Word fetishism plays an important part in the propaganda of the Left. The Oxford Dictionary defines "fetish" as an

* This may be baldly rendered:—

"In life what counts are acts; here it is words. In life what one seeks are material, tangible results; here it is votes. In life to govern is to struggle against things, to foresee, to prepare, to organize, to act; here the great art consists in composing the order of the day and in making a majority. In life a thought is judged by experience and by the proof of facts. Here it is opinion which reigns. That is real which carries the assent of listeners; that is true which engages their allegiance. . . . In the society of thought the initiate makes a clean sweep of all that is not abstract and reasoning reason. He abstracts from himself all that is truly personal; he reduces himself to this little deductive faculty which is the most diffused thing in the world."

"inanimate object worshipped by savages for its magical powers." To the Socialists inanimate words seem invested with magical powers. "Democracy" is such a word. No genuine Socialist worships the *fact* of democracy, for the Intellectual Socialist has a contempt for the people and is ambitious not to be governed by but to dictate to the demos. It is the *word* "democracy" which he loves, a word which he applies with no sense of inconsistency to the iron dictatorship of Russia. "Humanity" is another magical word, an abstraction dissociated from real life. "You don't matter," says the humanitarian doctor in *Men in White*, "I don't matter. Humanity alone matters." Humanity is a collection of "you's" and "I's," and if you don't matter and if I don't matter, humanity does not matter, for the sum of an infinite number of zeros equals zero. The word fetishist likes to invest neutral words with ethical significance. "Progress" is a neutral word, for progress is good if you are progressing towards a good end, and evil if you are progressing towards an evil end. It is the direction of the movement, not the fact of movement, which is decisive. The word "progress" acquired its present flavour in the Victorian age, which was naïve enough to believe in an evolutionary process which was inevitably beneficent. Under the blind influence of Natural Selection the protoplasm had automatically evolved into Mr. Darwin, from which it followed that Progress was a one-way street leading inevitably to the superman. We are wiser than our fathers, for Progress has produced Soviet Russia and Nazi Germany, and Mr. Joad has recovered his childhood's faith in Original Sin, but the word "progress," even in Mr. Joad's post-conversion writings, still retains its Victorian flavour.

The Oxford Dictionary defines "taboo" as "a system, act, of setting apart person or thing as accursed or sacred." The taboo word "progress" has been set apart as sacred; the taboo word "profit" as accursed. Yet "profit" is a word which, properly used, is as neutral of ethical significance as "progress," and just as progress is good if directed towards a good end, and bad if directed towards a bad end, so profit is justifiable if it be a just profit, and unjustifiable if it be unjust. The problem

is, of course, to decide what constitutes a just profit, but a universal principle is not invalidated by the difficulty of applying it to a particular case. Profit is only a form of payment, and the fact that many people extract unfair profits is no more valid as an argument against profit than the fact that some people are over-paid is an argument against payment. Even Communists expect to be paid for their services, but underlying Socialist propaganda is the idiotic implication that mankind may be divided into Socialists who work for nothing, and Capitalists who exploit the work of others for profit. Admittedly no Socialist would commit himself to the explicit statement of so indefensible a position, for Socialist propaganda relies on suggesting a train of thought which is never defined in exact words. It is always easy for Marxists to quote some cautious qualification discreetly buried by Marx in pages of confused writing, a qualification which is useful as a defence against criticisms based on the general tendency of the diffuser passages.

The Capitalist economy, we are told, is planned to make profits; the Socialist economy to satisfy human needs. This is an excellent example of indolent over-simplification, for it is clear that the Capitalist economy cannot make a profit unless it satisfies human needs, and the Socialist economy cannot satisfy human needs unless it makes a profit. Moreover, no Socialist State can make a collective profit unless it makes full use of the profit motive in the individual workers. "The Soviet economy," writes Mr. G. D. H. Cole, "is planned for welfare," (2), but unless the Capitalist plans for welfare he will make no profit, since profit is the payment for services which the consumer regards as a contribution to his welfare. The Socialist will retort that whereas the rulers of a Socialist State will ask themselves, "How many boots must we manufacture to provide the bootless with footwear?" the Capitalist inquires, "How many boots can we sell at a profit?" But it is not motives but results that matter so far as production is concerned.

Socialists prefer to evade the economic case for the profit motive and to concentrate on denouncing the profit motive as unethical. But it is difficult to understand why the form of payment for services which we describe as profit should be the

object of intemperate abuse, whereas the form of profit which we describe as wages, should be the theme of unqualified approval. I pay my coal merchant more for my coal than the coal merchant pays at the pithead because I do not want to be bothered to travel to the pithead. I pay the coal merchant to bring the coal from the pithead to my cellar, and his profit is nothing more than payment for services rendered.

Another form of profit may be illustrated by a simple example. Jones and Brown are skilled workmen, but whereas Jones is thrifty Brown is extravagant. Robinson, who is anxious to set up as a taxi driver, applies to Brown for a loan, but Brown has no capital to invest. Jones advances the hundred pounds which Robinson needs to make up the necessary capital for the purchase of a taxi. Three years later he repays Jones his hundred pounds and an agreed share of his profits during the period. Is there any reason why Jones, who has saved his money and thereby deprived himself of its enjoyment, should receive no reward for his abstinence? Is there any reason why Robinson should make no payment to Jones for the service which he has rendered in advancing him money? Surely Jones' profit is merely a legitimate payment for services rendered.*

The phrase "profit motive" has been a godsend to Socialists, for it suggests not payment for services rendered but an unfair increment capriciously added to the just price, and extracted by a trick from an innocent purchaser. Few people are lucky enough to get something for nothing, and few purchasers are so disinterested as to allow vendors to add an arbitrary profit. If I pay my grocer more per pound for ham than he paid per pound for the pig, it is not because he has hypnotized me into ceding him a profit to which he is not entitled, but because I

* Aristotle, Moses and the Mediæval Church condemned usury, but they did not condemn profit sharing. Jones advanced the money without security on the assumption that if Robinson failed there would be no profits and his capital would be lost. Had Jones advanced a hundred pounds on the security of a house worth a thousand pounds knowing that he could draw interest at a fixed rate so long as Robinson was solvent and recover his capital with complete security by foreclosing when Robinson went bankrupt, his loan might have been criticized as usurious. In practice the mediæval theologians found it difficult to decide where legitimate profit ended and usury began.

am paying him for services rendered. The payment which we call profit to the grocer, and the payment which we call wages to the grocer's assistant, are both payment for services rendered. Whether the grocer gets too much or the assistant too little is another question.

Socialists have cleverly confused two different issues, the legitimacy of profit as such and the legitimacy of the present distribution of profits. The profit motive is an appetite which, like other appetites, must be controlled. Temperance in profit-making is as important as temperance in eating. Profiteering may be compared to gluttony, but the cure for gluttony is to curb rather than to abolish appetite, and the cure for profiteering is to restrain rather than to eliminate the appetite for profit. The basic problem of social justice is the problem of a just division of the national income. If one class receives too large a share it matters little whether the share is described as "profit," as "salary" or as "wages." Only the uncandid or the ignorant still pretend that Soviet Russia has solved the problem of distribution. Max Eastman, who is still a Communist, but who has lost his illusions about Russia, quotes an article by Leon Sedov in *The New Internationalist* for February, 1936.

"There is hardly an advanced capitalist country where the difference in workers' wages is as great as at present in the U.S.S.R. In the mines, a non-Stakhanovist miner gets from 400 to 500 rubles a month, a Stakhanovist more than 1,600 rubles. The auxiliary worker, who drives a team below, gets only 170 rubles if he is not a Stakhanovist and 400 rubles if he is (*Pravda*, November 16th, 1935)—that is, one worker gets about ten times as much as another. And 170 rubles by no means represents the lowest wage, but the *average wage*, according to the data of Soviet statistics. There are workers who earn no more than 150, 120 or even 100 rubles a month. . . . The examples we give by no means indicate the extreme limits in the two directions. One could show without difficulty that the wages of the privileged layers of the working class (of the labour aristocracy in the true sense of the term) are 20 times higher, sometimes even more, than the wages of

the poorly-paid layers. And if one takes the wages of specialists, the picture of the inequality becomes positively sinister. Ostroglidov, the head engineer of a pit, who more than realizes the plan, gets 8,600 rubles a month; and he is a modest specialist, whose wages cannot, therefore, be considered exceptional. Thus, engineers often earn from 80 to 100 times as much as an unskilled worker."

Max Eastman cites a table which appeared in the *New Republic* for July 15th, 1936, "comparing the salaries of officers in some of our wealthier American companies with the average weekly wage of the workers employed by them." From this table it appears that the ratio of the best paid officials to the worst paid workers is 41 to 1 in the Chile Copper Co., 51 to 1 in the Curtis Publishing Co., 82 to 1 in Consolidated Oil. Comrade Ostroglidov is lucky to be a head engineer in a country which recognizes the commercial value of specialists. Unlike the grossly underpaid officials of the Chile Copper Co., who have to struggle along on a salary only 41 times as great as that of the workers, Communist Ostroglidov, under the beneficent régime of Stalin, draws from the national pool a sum equivalent to the drawings of eighty-six labourers in his Communist pit. (3)

André Gide, who like Max Eastman was once a Communist, visited Russia and discovered that though the workman in Russia is not exploited by capitalists, he is none the less exploited in the subtlest and most ingenious fashion (4), and it is, as Gide insists, the insufficient salaries of the underpaid which alone make possible the disproportionate salaries of the higher-paid officials. Marx attacks the capitalists for exploiting the "surplus value" produced by the workmen. In Soviet Russia it is not the workman who profits from his extra work, but those whom Gide describes as "les favorisés, les bien-vus," the favourites of the régime. If it be true that the Communist economy is planned "to satisfy human needs," it is also true that Soviet Russia is eighty-six times more successful in satisfying Comrade Ostroglidov's needs than the needs of his workers. The word fetishist will reply that Comrade Ostroglidov is not working to make profits for shareholders but

for the State. The word fetishist forgets that even in capitalist England the State extracts a large share of any profits that are made.

The basic problems of the economic order are, as I have said, the problem of production and the problem of distribution. The first is primarily economic, the second primarily ethical. Distribution depends on production, for unless goods are produced they cannot be distributed. Our first task must therefore be to discover an incentive to production. Soviet Russia has been far less successful in solving the problem of production, and no more successful in solving the problem of distribution, than capitalist countries. As indeed is admitted by those fervent panegyrists, Mr. and Mrs. Sidney Webb.

"The U.S.S.R.," they write, "cannot yet be shown to have reached the level of productivity per head of population enjoyed by the United Kingdom or some other European countries, or in the years prior to 1929, by the United States."

(5)

On the question of distribution the Webbs write, "The maximum divergence of individual incomes in the U.S.S.R., taking the extreme instances, is probably as great as the corresponding divergence, in incomes paid for actual participation in work, in Great Britain if not in the United States. It is not clear whether the divergence between the extreme instances in the Soviet Union is actually widening." (6)

For twenty years the Comintern has enjoyed undisputed control over an empire abundantly provided with natural resources and equal in area to one-sixth of the earth's surface. The cost of the Communist experiment has been a sum of human suffering beyond all computation, and the result achieved has been a tragically low standard of living.

When André Gide criticized the gross exploitation of the Russian workers, "un excellent marxiste" replied, "You understand nothing. Communism is not opposed to the exploitation of men by Man. How many times need I repeat this? And accepting this you can be as rich as Alexis Tolstoy or a singer in Grand Opera provided that you have acquired your fortune by your own personal work. In your contempt and hatred for

money and property I see a regrettable survival of your early Christian ideas." (7) And the Communist added that these Christian ideas had nothing in common with Marxism.

True enough, but the Communists in England, France and the United States who are endeavouring to form a common front with Christians as the first step towards the destruction of Christianity are less candid than Gide's Marxist friend.

Work may be divided into the work which is its own reward and the drudgery which requires a special incentive. Admittedly creation is as necessary to the artist as procreation to the lover; admittedly research is its own reward to the true scientist. The true artist and the true scientist only ask from society the modest livelihood which will leave them free for their work and liberate them from sordid anxieties. Doctors are often cited by Socialists as men who work without thought of the profit motive. There are certainly many physicians to whom medicine is a vocation, but there are others, as that eminent Socialist, Mr. Bernard Shaw, has been at some pains to prove in the preface to his play, *The Doctor's Dilemma*. The profession of arms supplies Socialists with yet another misleading analogy. It was not, we are told, the profit motive which inspired the volunteers in the Great War. "If men are prepared to die for their country why should they not be ready to work for it?" Socialists have always envied the military tradition, however much they may inveigh against militarism. Marx observed with disgust that the officers who had gone over to the people in the 1848 Revolution had proved unsatisfactory. "This mob of military men possesses an incredibly disgusting corps spirit. They hate each other like poison and envy each other the slightest distinction like schoolboys, but they stand together like one man against the 'civilians'." (8) Now this "incredibly disgusting corps spirit" is essentially aristocratic. The officer, like the priest, may be recruited from any class, but unless, like the priest, he feels that he belongs to a caste set apart from other men he is unlikely to be a successful leader in the exacting emergencies of war. Admittedly it is not the profit motive which keeps men in front-line trenches, but a spirit which is essentially feudal and

aristocratic, and therefore a spirit which the Socialist detests. The feudal tradition that every privilege involves a corresponding obligation still survives in the front-line trenches, for the officer commands respect because his privileges are balanced by the greater risk which he runs. The casualties among officers are proportionately higher than the casualties in the ranks, and the comradeship of the trenches is based not on a partnership of profit but on a partnership of honour. But though it is a point of honour not to shirk danger at the front, it is almost a point of honour to shirk work behind the lines. If the conduct of men under fire is cited as an argument for Socialism, the behaviour of a soldier on fatigue duty casts a certain doubt on the value of work uninfected by the profit motive, and directed solely for the common good.

The conservatism which is characteristic of all State controlled institutions, whether Capitalist or Socialist, is very pronounced in the Army. General J. F. C. Fuller tells me that his regiment (Oxford Light Infantry) was in 1898 far superior in drill to other regiments because they were only ninety years behind the times, having adopted the drill system of Sir John Moore, whereas the other regiments were still drilling on the basis of methods used in the middle of the eighteenth century. Fire drill for a breech loader remained for many years the same as that for a muzzle loader. The Maxim gun originally went into action as a small canon on wheels with a soldier riding on each side. Eventually it was placed on a tripod. Because Maxim guns had been placed on tripods the Lewis gun, which was designed to be propped up on a trench, was also provided with tripods. The Field Service Regulations issued after the War were very similar to those issued before the War. The doctrine was still preached that the bayonet was necessary to consolidate the victory which the rifle had prepared, in spite of the fact that bayonet charges are unknown in modern war.*

The immense wastage of food and ammunition in the Great War was symptomatic of all State controlled institutions. Wastage is not unknown under capitalism, but the incentive

* See also General Fuller's brilliant book, *The Army in My Time*.

to economy is ever present, since the merchant whose produce is wasted is liable to go bankrupt. His balance sheets record with unwelcome accuracy the results of all unproductive developments, but though a State may go bankrupt, a Government department can continue to waste money indefinitely without any automatic warning such as is provided by annual balance sheets. There is a world of difference between spending one's own money and spending Government money.

Economic reformers may be divided into those who realize that certain activities, such as the army, must be State controlled, and that other economic activities must be partially controlled to prevent the exploitation of the weak, but who regard every extension of State control with dark distrust, and the ardent planners for whom bureaucratic control is an end in itself, and who welcome every extension of State control as a stage towards the Utopia of complete socialization. There is nothing in the experience of mankind to allay the doubts of the anti-Socialist, or to encourage the hopes of the Socialist. The bureaucracies of today still reveal the same inherent weaknesses which have provided satirists from Aristotle to Gogol with a butt for their irony. Socialism multiplies office holders all jealously concerned to defend their own status, and resentful of any intrusion on their particular territories, yet loath to assume responsibility.

"For all its officiousness," writes von Mises, "such a bureaucracy offers a classic example of human indolence. Nothing stirs when no external stimulus is present. In the nationalized concerns, existing within a society based for the most part on private ownership of the means of production, all stimulus to improvements in process comes from those entrepreneurs who as contractors for semi-manufactured articles and machines hope to make a profit by them. The heads of the concern itself seldom, if ever, make innovations. They content themselves with imitating what goes on in similar privately-owned undertakings. But where all concerns are socialized there will be hardly any talk of reforms and improvements." (9)

The Socialist dream of a society in which men will gladly

work not for profit but for the State is, as Mr. Walter Lippmann remarks, based on "a crudely naïve conception of the nature of property." (10) The Socialist identifies property with the residual title deeds. The residual owner of all the land of England is, as Mr. Lippmann points out, the King, but the lands of England are not administered for the benefit of the King. Socialists assume that the legal transference of ownership to the State will automatically transfer to the citizens the enjoyment of the property thus transferred. This simple faith in the magic of title deeds is an example of word fetishism. No Socialist has attempted to prove that the mere act of transferring ownership to the State provides any guarantee against exploitation of citizens by State officials. It is easy to transfer title deeds, less easy to decide how the property theoretically owned by all citizens is to be administered in their interests. The experience of centuries negates that facile and unscientific assumption which is the corner-stone of the Socialistic structure, that property which is held in trust for the people will be administered in the interests of the people and not in the interest of the official trustees.

"In short, Communism," writes Mr. Walter Lippmann, "when it abolishes private property in productive capital, establishes a new kind of property in the public offices which manage the collective capital. The commissars replace the capitalists, exercising the same powers or greater ones, enjoying the same social privileges or greater ones, and though their money incomes may be less, their luxuries less florid, they have everything that could tempt the less favoured to envy them, to challenge them, and to strive to replace them. The social situation and the psychological mechanism which exist today, and which according to Communist theory divide society into antagonistic classes, remain intact in the Communist order. The only difference is that whereas under capitalism social advantages give political power, under Communism political power gives social advantages. Thus the struggle for wealth is transmuted into a struggle for power, and the party of Stalin puts to death the partisans of Trotsky." (11)

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CHAPTER XIX

THE INHERENT WEAKNESSES OF THE SOCIALIST STATE

SOCIALISTS evade the problems of Socialism by postulating a new type of man whose incentive will be not profit but joy of service. Engels forecast a society in which "productive labour will be not a means for enslaving but for liberating mankind, which will give every individual the opportunity to develop and to exercise all his capabilities, bodily and mental, in all directions, and will transform a bane into a boon." (1) Marx promised the disappearance of "the slavish subjection of the individual under the division of labour," (2) and paints the picture of a society in which "the contrast between mental and physical work has disappeared," and "labour has become not only a means of life, but the first need of life itself." Max Adler promised that the Socialist Society of the future will not assign anybody work "which must cause him pain." (3) Fourier and his school hoped to provide the necessary incentive to labour by competition between different groups of workers who will be inspired by "un sentiment de rivalité joyeuse ou de noble émulation." (4) Socialists never tire of denouncing the competitive aspects of our social system, but in Russia they have been forced to adopt Fourier's plan and have reintroduced competition after the collapse of co-operation. So far, however, there has been no evidence of "rivalité joyeuse."

The scientist argues from the premiss of verifiable facts, the Socialist from the premiss of unverifiable prophecies. The scientist prolongs the past into the future, the Socialist ignores both past and present, and disregards the cumulative evidence of the centuries. A thousand years of slave labour should produce even in the most sanguine a certain scepticism as to the value of work performed by workers who have no direct

share in the profits from their work. Contemporary experience reinforces the lessons of the past. Payment by time is far less productive of good work than payment by results, for the more skilled workers have no incentive to do better than the less skilled where all receive the same daily wage. Socialists contend that the worker under Socialism feels that he is working for the community and not for private profit, and, therefore, makes very special efforts to give of his best. But the experiences of municipal and Government offices, where employees are not working for private profit, proves the opposite. The worker under Socialism who works twice as hard as his colleague does not receive twice his wage, but benefits by a fractional part of a millionth of the extra product produced. When Socialists began to realize that an equal distribution of income would add very little to the average income of the wage-earning classes, they developed the thesis that the productivity of labour, and therefore the average income to be distributed, would be vastly increased under Socialism. Kautsky maintained that a Socialist State would increase production by concentrating production in the most efficient, and by closing down the least efficient, organizations. Socialists, on the contrary, are always tempted to maintain inefficient concerns rather than provoke local opposition by closing them down. "On most State railways all reforms of this kind are frustrated by the attempt to avoid the harm to particular districts which would result from the elimination of superfluous branch offices, workshops, and power stations. Even the army administration has encountered parliamentary opposition when for military reasons it has been desired to withdraw a garrison from a particular place." (5) Socialists also insist that production would be increased by the elimination of expenses inherent in the Capitalist system. Now admittedly certain expenses would disappear under Socialism, such as the expenses involved in advertising, commercial travellers, etc., but as von Mises rightly insists, it is fallacious to select certain costs inherent in the Capitalist system and to treat the elimination of these costs as a nett gain. "It is more than probable," writes von Mises, "that Socialism would

employ many more persons in the service of the apparatus of distribution. War-time experience has taught us how cumbersome and expensive the social apparatus of distribution can be. Were the costs of bread, flour, meat, sugar, and other cards really less than the costs of advertisement? Has the enormous personnel required to run a rationing system been cheaper than the expenditure on commercial travellers and agents?" (6) According to André Gide the bureaucracy in Russia consumed 8.5% of the national income before the War, and 19% in 1927. The increased cost of a Socialist bureaucracy must be set against the saving in advertising and other expenses of a Capitalist régime. (7) In comparing Capitalism with Socialism we must compare total costs, total receipts and the respective balances after deducting receipts from costs. The explanation of a fact which Gide mentions without comment, the absence of corresponding statistics after 1927, is given by Trotsky. (8) Stalin countered the growing criticism of the increasing proportion of the national income allocated to officials by discontinuing the publication of relevant statistics, with the result that it is no longer possible to calculate what proportion of the national income is consumed by the bureaucracy.

The efficiency of a productive system depends very largely on the personnel by which the system is operated. Now the choice of personnel presents insuperable difficulties in a Socialist régime. The Capitalist is directly interested in the selection of capable personnel, for bad judgment may mean bankruptcy in a keenly competitive economy. Moreover, under Capitalism bankruptcy cannot be concealed, whereas under Socialism a department may continue indefinitely to be run at a loss. Capitalist competition eliminates inefficient personnel, but the inefficient are seldom discharged from State-controlled institutions, for a Civil Servant is virtually irremovable save for criminal or quasi-criminal offences. Nobody, of course, maintains that State control destroys all initiative. The man of genius and vision can succeed in Civil Services as elsewhere. Our own Civil Service has been largely recruited from families with a tradition of public

service, a tradition which tempers and counteracts the normal weakness of bureaucracy, and moreover, our Civil Service has an untarnished record of integrity. But this is not the universal experience. "Sir, you steal too much for your position," says the old official to his subordinate in one of Gogol's plays, and it has yet to be proved that the Russian bureaucracy of today has changed very much in this respect.

Under Socialism officials in charge of production are appointed either directly by a Dictator or Secretary of State, or by some subordinate who makes appointments in accordance with the policy dictated to him from above. In these circumstances it is inevitable that the selection of officials in charge of productive processes should be largely governed by uneconomic considerations such as political orthodoxy, political affiliations, personal connections, relationship to the great and so forth. In the modified Socialism of State enterprises promotion tends to be automatically determined by seniority or by examination tests. But business capacity is not necessarily tested in routine examinations, nor inevitably acquired with the passing of time.

In comparing the productive possibilities of Capitalism and Socialism we must take quality into consideration no less than quantity. In a Socialist economy State officials decide what goods are to be produced, and their preferences, which may be biased by a multitude of non-economic considerations, and their tastes, which are not necessarily fastidious, determine not only the quantity but the quality of production. In a Capitalist society the discriminating consumer is responsible for qualitative improvements. It is the consumer who determines both the quantity and quality of production.

"All production," writes von Mises, "must bend to the consumers' will. From the moment it fails to conform to the consumers' demands it becomes unprofitable. Thus free competition compels the obedience of the producer to the consumers' will and also, in case of need, the transfer of the means of production from the hands of those unwilling or unable to achieve what the consumer demands into the hands of those better able to direct production. The lord of pro-

duction is the consumer. From this point of view the capitalist society is a democracy in which every penny represents a ballot paper. It is a democracy with an imperative and immediately revocable mandate to its deputies." (9)

Von Mises' analogy is not based on one man, one vote democracy, but on plural voting. The labourer with the small income has far fewer votes than his employer, but he has one vote for every penny he earns, and his votes, though they contribute nothing to the improvement of motor-car design, are influential in determining the relative merits of "Gold Flake" and "Players." It is irrelevant to reply, as the Webbs reply, that the effective choice of the English proletariat is severely restricted to a narrow range of commodities (10), and still less relevant to insist that the wage earners are underpaid in Capitalist countries, for one need not be a Socialist to regret the unequal distribution of purchasing power. The smug assumption that the Socialist alone is concerned to raise the wages of the underpaid is one of the more exasperating features of Socialist propaganda. Mr. Chamberlin, who, unlike the Webbs, was not escorted round Russia as an honoured visitor, but who worked in Russia for ten years as a journalist, writes as follows:

"When I returned to the Soviet Union from America and read to some Russian friends a list of the rations which unemployed families in Milwaukee received, the Russians exclaimed: 'That sounds more like the ration of a "responsible worker" (a Soviet official of fairly high grade) than of our ordinary worker or employee.' They were especially amazed at the variety of fruit, vegetables, and canned goods. The average Russian worker's monthly wage (125 rubles), reckoned in gold rubles at the general current unofficial rate of exchange (forty paper rubles to one gold ruble), would not buy three dollars' worth of provisions in a Torgsin shop. . . . When every allowance has been made for the favourable sides of the Russian worker's life, there can be no doubt that the American or West European worker, suddenly transplanted to Russia, would be conscious of a sharply lower standard of living, which he would require a good deal of

strength in the Communist faith to bear with patience and hope for the future." (11)

Every argument which the Webbs advance to prove that few workers in Capitalist countries can fairly be described as "discriminating consumers" applies with far more force to Soviet Russia. In Russia the discriminating consumer has long since disappeared; it is the indiscriminating consumer of any food that will keep body and soul together who is the principal victim of Russia's Socialist economy. Gide, a fastidious Frenchman, was depressed by the restricted choice of inferior merchandise which the Soviet State offers to the indiscriminating consumer. "You pity," he writes, "those who have to stand in the queue for hours, but they find it quite natural to wait. The bread, vegetables and fruit seem bad to you, but there are no alternatives. These stuffs, these objects which they offer, seem ugly to you, but you have no choice." (12)

Ludwig von Mises attempts to show that economic calculation is impossible in a Socialist community. I am not convinced that accurate economic calculations are impossible in a Socialist State, but he has certainly proved that they would be very difficult. The dream world of the Socialist future is unclouded by such problems. Lenin naïvely assumed that accountancy did not require any special qualifications. "Armed workers" could safely be entrusted with "auditing of production and distribution" and "keeping the records of labour and products." (13) Lenin distinguishes between the work of Capitalists and clerks, and the work of the technically trained higher personnel, and assumes that for "this exercise of audit" nothing more is needed than "a knowledge of elementary arithmetic and book entry within the grasp of anyone able to read and write," and he makes it clear that in his view "it is therefore possible straightway to enable all members of a society to do these things for themselves." (14) This airy denigration of technicians is characteristic of Socialistic propaganda. Babeuf, whose conspiracy was the last phase of the French Terror, recommended general pillage and massacre as the first step towards Utopia, and in reply to a

doubting Thomas who asked him what preparation he had made for "erecting the august temple of equality" after the rich had been liquidated, Babeuf quoted Diderot to prove that it would be easy enough to provide for the needs of the citizens. "All that is only a simple affair of numbering things and people, a simple operation of calculation and combinations, and consequently susceptible of a very fine degree of order." (15) Lothrop Stoddard has described the world revolution as the war of the hand against the brain. The denigration of education and specialized training is a valuable revolutionary weapon of immense importance, with a sure appeal to the lowest elements in the population.

Socialists, adds von Mises, "have no greater perception of the essentials of economic life than the errand boy, whose only idea of the work of the entrepreneur is that he covers pieces of paper with letters and figures." (16) This is perhaps too extreme, but it is interesting to compare the amount of space that Mr. Strachey devotes to proving that Capitalism has failed and the little he devotes to the detailed criticisms of the leading anti-Socialists. Speculation has become a term of abuse in Socialist literature, but, as von Mises points out, "economic activity is necessarily speculative because it is based upon an uncertain future. Speculation is the link that binds isolated economic action to the economic activity of society as a whole." (17) The envy which successful speculation provokes is partially responsible for the ill odour of the word "speculation," a word which, like "profit," is ethically neutral. "All socialists," writes von Mises, "overlook the fact that even in a socialist community every economic operation must be based on an uncertain future, and that its *economic* consequence remains uncertain even if it is *technically* successful. They see in the uncertainty which leads to speculation a consequence of the anarchy of production, whilst in fact it is a necessary result of changing economic conditions." (18)

Von Mises is an extreme exponent of *laissez-faire* Liberalism, but even those anti-Socialists who, like the present writer, are resigned to a far greater measure of State control than

von Mises considers necessary, will find it difficult to refute any particular instance cited by von Mises of incompetent State control. His brilliant book represents a welcome reaction from a universal tendency even in countries which formally reject Socialism, and if more widely read, might do something to counteract the prevailing defeatism of those who dislike Socialism, but who are taking no active steps to resist the ever-increasing encroachments of the State. It is curious that whereas anti-Socialist States offer so little opposition to the infiltration of Socialistic philosophy, Soviet Russia is steadily receding from Socialism, and is reviled in consequence by consistent Socialists such as Max Eastman, who continues to lament "the end of Socialism in Russia." But it is arguable that Socialism, so far from having ended in Russia, has proceeded with triumphant logic from its basic premisses to its inevitable conclusion. If this be so it is not surprising that Eastman should be reluctant to identify his creed with the practice of Soviet Russia, a country in which an over-paid bureaucracy exploits the tragically under-paid proletariat, a country in which the workman is deprived of all hope of redress, and of all constitutional means of defining his grievances. In Capitalist England workers can strike. In Socialist Russia the death penalty for counter-revolutionary activities is the punishment not for strikes, which are impossible, but for the formulation of legitimate grievances. The idealistic vision of a new world in which the profit motive would be replaced by "joyous co-operation" has ended in the nightmare of a bureaucratic tyranny reinforced by bureaucratic terrorism.

Meanwhile Soviet Russia preaches Socialism and continues its search for the incentives which a Capitalist economy automatically provides. The worker is incited to increase production by bonuses for good work, the specialist by enormous salaries reinforced by an even stronger incentive than the profit motive, the dread of execution. Thousands of specialists, engineers, managers and foremen, have been shot for "Trotskyism," a general term which covers almost any form of inefficiency. The rulers who still profess Socialism dare

not admit that failure may be due not to disloyalty or counter-revolutionary activity, but to the inherent weaknesses of a Socialist economy, and are therefore driven by the logic of Bedlam to conceal failure by inventing crimes. The inevitable defects of all State-controlled institutions are aggravated in Russia by the spinelessness which is the product of terrorism. There is widespread reluctance to assume responsibility or to accept posts whose prominence invites the inquisitive attention of the Ogpu. Eugene Lyons, at one time an enthusiastic Communist, describes Stalin's speech at the end of the third year of the Five Year Plan, a speech which was "a more devastating indictment of Stalin's economic régime than any of his enemies had made. . . . The vast majority of workers were deserting their jobs 'to go elsewhere, to a different place, to seek fortune.' 'Rationalization of industry,' he said, had 'long ago gone out of style.' Soviet enterprises had 'long ago ceased to count, to calculate, to make up actual balances of incomes and expenditures.' Many of the plans presumably fulfilled, or even over-fulfilled, were just 'on paper.' The non-stop work-week, foisted on the population in the most callous disregard of its own comfort or wishes, Stalin now admitted to be uneconomic, harmful, merely 'an uninterrupted week on paper.' . . .

" 'Nobody is accountable for anything,' Stalin complained. Worse than that, the leaders of industry understand all that, but—I quote Stalin's words again—'they hold their tongues. Why? From all evidence, because they are afraid of the truth.' He did not, however, explain *why* these leaders are afraid of the truth. That would involve public admission that the truth is dangerous, that those who dare to protest end up in concentration camps, that an economic system under the knout of the G.P.U. makes blind obedience the only guarantee of safety." (19)

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CHAPTER XX

THE GREAT ESCAPIST

FOUR books have exercised a decisive influence in shaping European history during the last two centuries: Rousseau's *Contrat Social*, Karl Marx's *Kapital*, Charles Darwin's *Origin of Species* and Hitler's *Mein Kampf*.

It is a mistake to credit leaders who have changed the course of history with creative originality. The genius who creates and discovers is much rarer than the genius who gives form to ideas which have already begun to permeate the mental climate of the age. Rousseau was not the first to attribute all evil to civilization. Marx took his dialectic from Hegel, and his theory of value from Ricardo. Darwin developed the theory of evolution which had been first formulated by Buffon in the eighteenth century, and which had been elaborated by Lamarck and Darwin's own grandfather before Darwin was born. Darwinism is not, as Marxists constantly imply, the theory of evolution, but the theory that Natural Selection is the *modus operandi* of evolution, and even this development of an old theory was not original in Darwin, for the hypothesis of Natural Selection as the principal evolutionary agency had been formulated in 1813 by Dr. W. C. Wells and in 1831 by Patrick Mathew. Hitler borrowed Fascism from Mussolini and his racial theories from Houston Stewart Chamberlain.

Rousseau, Marx, Darwin and Hitler exercised world-wide influence not because they were creative thinkers, but because they were prophets who had the good fortune to proclaim a gospel which their public was already, unconsciously, beginning to believe. A successful prophet may introduce his message with the formula, "Thus saith the Lord," but unless his Lord and his audience are already in substantial accord, his chances of success are greatly reduced. Nothing pleases people more than to be told that the Lord has anticipated their conclusions,

and no prophets are more popular than those who crystallize the formless aspirations of the age in which they live. Rousseau and Marx, Darwin and Hitler, provided form for the shapeless ideologies which were already developing among their contemporaries. Rousseau crystallized the new humanism, of which the revolt against feudalism was the political, and the revolt against Christianity the philosophic, expression; Marx the just indignation of the poor in the most heartless phase of nineteenth-century industrialism. Darwin appeared to justify the current scientific prejudice against special creation, as a capricious and untidy intrusion into the orderly universe of natural law, and by his doctrine of the survival of the fittest, sanctified the cut-throat methods of industrialists who believed in the survival of the most unscrupulous. Hitler canalized the resentment of a great nation against the injustice of the Versailles Treaty.

Marx owes his influence neither to his philosophic nor to his economic writings. Even among philosophers attracted by Communism as an economic theory, there is not one, recognized as such by non-Marxists, who is prepared wholeheartedly to defend Dialectical Materialism. The Labour Theory of Value is an even more embarrassing liability for thinking Communists. "The theory is regarded," writes Mr. A. D. Lindsay, who does not conceal his sympathies with Socialism, "by many Socialists as the keystone of Marxianism, but it is also regarded by many other Socialists, as well as by most, if not all, so-called academic economists, as an out-of-date and indefensible doctrine. The Fabian Socialists have long discarded it; Mr. Laski, in his otherwise sympathetic account of Marx, has no use for his theory of value; and even Mr. Beer, most of whose book is a vindication of Marx, thinks this part of Marx's doctrine indefensible." (1)

Marx went to history not to discover truths but to discover evidence which would support his rationalization of resentment. He had a genuine talent for concise expression, and the appalling prolixity of *Das Kapital* is a by-product of insincerity. His writing became prolix and confused as the result of a conflict between facts fatal to his theories and the theories which he

hoped would prove fatal to Capitalism. Even Marxists are dismayed by his verbosity. "While we Marxians," writes the Italian Labriola, "are trying to repatch the master's cloak, political economy is making some headway every day. If we compare Marx's *Kapital* with Marshall's *Principles*—chapter by chapter, that is to say—we shall find that problems which required a few hundred pages in the *Kapital* are solved in a few lines by Marshall." (2)

The genius of Marx finds expression not in philosophy nor in economics, but in propaganda. As a General in the Class War he had no equal. "In this lies his originality," writes another Italian critic, Benedetto Croce, "not as a philosopher nor as an economist (for in that respect only a few fragments of his thought are still useful), but as a creator of political ideologies or myths." (3)

Marx is at his best in his devastating attacks on the odious industrialism of his day. We cannot deny the essential justice of his burning protest against the iniquity of early nineteenth-century capitalism, but we do not turn to Isaiah for metaphysics nor to Jeremiah for economics. Marx was a Hebrew for whom the proletariat were the chosen people and the Capitalists the Gentiles. His theory of value is an ingenious attempt to prove that only those chosen by a non-existent god contribute value to the products of labour. Mediæval theologians devoted real thought to the problem of that Just Price which should be just not only to the workman, merchant and middleman, but also to the consumer. They tried to take into consideration all relevant claims and all relevant facts. Marx's theory of value might be described as an attempt to provide scientific justification for that Unjust Price which is unjust to all save the manual labourer. The messianic complex latent in the theory of value is explicit in Dialectical Materialism. "Behind the hard rational surface of Karl Marx's materialist and socialist interpretation of history," writes Mr. Christopher Dawson, "there burns the flame of an apocalyptic vision. For what was that social revolution in which he puts his hope but a nineteenth-century version of the Day of the Lord, in which the rich and the powerful of the earth should be consumed and the princes of the Gentiles

brought low, and the poor and disinherited should reign in a regenerated universe?" (4)

Marxist philosophy is a strange blend of truism and falsehood and messianic vision. That the ruling class tends to govern in its own interest, that the selfishness of the rulers provokes the resentment of the ruled, that from the conflict between rulers and ruled a new order of society may emerge, are truisms with which the world was familiar long before Marx decked out these trite commonplaces in the tawdry robes of polysyllabic terminology. From the truism that material factors influence spiritual development Marx proceeded to the illicit conclusion that religion itself is a product of economic processes. It would be interesting to learn how orthodox Marxists interpret in terms of contemporary economic processes the lives of Christ, of Buddha, of Mohammed, or of Father Damien.

Marxism owes its influence neither to truisms nor to falsehoods, but to the millenary vision of the perfect world. In the classless society of the Marxian future the State will wither away and greed and selfishness will disappear. It is only too obvious that we have left the realm of science for the lazy world of facile dreams. "All feeble spirits," wrote G. K. Chesterton, "live naturally in the future because it is featureless. It is a soft job. You can make it what you will. . . . It requires real courage to live in the present."

"Men of science," wrote Professor Tyndale, "prolong the method of nature from the present into the past. The observed uniformity of nature is their only guide." Scientific prophets should prolong the method of nature from the present into the future. The observed uniformity of human nature should be their only guide. Marx, that naïve millenarian, believed that human nature could be changed by a change of political environment. He relied on the perfection of the system to produce perfect citizens. "The plain man," writes Mr. Sheed, "would tend to say that you cannot make a good omelette with bad eggs. Marx replies that the goodness of the omelette will itself make bad eggs into good eggs; which to the plain man seems sheer lunacy. Fundamentally the one great problem of

sociology is man's selfishness: Marx hardly bothers with it at all. Men will acquire good habits in a good society. In fact Lenin cuts the knot for Marx: "The great socialists, in foreseeing the arrival (of the classless society) pre-supposed *a person not like the present man in the street.*" It is as easy as that!"

(5)

Communism in Russia is collapsing because it was based on the pre-supposition of a person "not like the present man in the street." Christianity pre-supposes that man will remain in the future much the same as man has proved to be in the past, and Christianity continues, converting individuals, and through those individuals influencing the stubborn mass of unconverted humanity. Marx was a lazy escapist who took refuge from the harsh world of fallen man in the messianic future of the Marxist faith. Even Marxists would hesitate to acclaim him as a philosopher if his philosophic prestige were not essential to the propaganda of expropriation, for though it is pleasant to liquidate the rich, it is still pleasanter to liquidate them with a clear conscience. Conscience is a variation with an obstinate survival value, a Mendelian recessive which Marxists will never breed out of the human race. A system which provides an anæsthetic for conscience has more appeal than a creed which is naked in its incitement to plunder. Just as the campaign for Free Love is an attempt to discover a recipe for care-free lust, so the labour theory of value is a formula for care-free loot. Hence the anxiety of Marxists to manufacture philosophic prestige for a writer whose genius lay in the exploitation of envy. His champions are true Marxists in their refusal to meet criticism, and in their reliance on uncorroborated assertion. They have borrowed their technique from those who continued to shout with one accord, "Great is Diana of the Ephesians!" Thus Mr. John Strachey writes, "Marx's substantially correct prediction of the future course of capitalist development, considered as a sheer feat of intellect, has never been surpassed." Mr. Strachey calls upon us to "marvel and delight in the startling mental powers which certain men have displayed. What future triumphs for the mind of man are not promised us by these present and exceptional phenomena?" (6)

Marx, as we shall soon see, was a false prophet, but even had his predictions proved correct, we should require something more than Mr. Strachey's assertions before accepting Mr. Strachey's conclusions. There are certain tests which we may apply with confidence to all candidates for the Pantheon of the world's greatest thinkers. Of these tests, the first and most important is objectivity. Rühle, Marx's devoted biographer, admits that Marx was completely lacking in the scientific temper. He quotes from Carl Schurz, who was present at the Cologne Congress of 1849. "Never have I seen anyone whose manner was more insufferably arrogant. He would not give a moment's consideration to any opinion that differed from his own. He treated with open contempt everyone who contradicted him. Arguments that were not to his taste were answered, either by mordant sarcasms upon the speaker's lamentable ignorance, or else by casting suspicion on the motives of his adversary." (7) On this Rühle comments, "His arrogance, his self-conceit, his dogmatism and disputatiousness and irritability, must reveal themselves to everyone who understands human nature as masks for a lack of self-confidence, under stress of which he was perpetually trying to avert the danger of exposure. He could not listen quietly to an opponent, because he was afraid that his opponent might get the better of him if allowed to continue. He had to shout down every hostile opinion because he was haunted by spectral doubts lest this opinion should gain adherents and leave him unsupported. He tried to discredit his adversaries because he hoped that personal onslaughts would shake the validity of opposing arguments." (8)

If objectivity be the first criterion by which candidates for the intellectual Pantheon must be judged, exactness of definition may perhaps be accepted as our second criterion. Euclid, Aristotle and St. Thomas Aquinas defined their terms with care, and devoted immense resource to the creation of scientific terminology. Karl Marx tried to define Materialism, but never defined matter. His disciples, loudly though they may abuse "vulgar Materialists," entirely fail to explain the distinction between old-fashioned and Dialectical Materialism.

The third, and perhaps most important criterion, is the prediction value of those theories for whose formulator greatness is claimed. "The discoveries of Newton and his contemporaries," writes Mr. Strachey, "were found to have prediction value. By their use it became possible to predict some natural events. . . . The discoveries of Darwin and the biologists who have succeeded him have been found to have the same capacity. And now the discoveries of Marx and Engels, who stand in very much the same relation to social dynamics as does Newton to physics and Darwin to biology, have also been found to have this same decisive capacity of enabling the prediction, and hence, if appropriate action is taken, the control, of events." (9)

I should have been interested to have learned from Mr. Strachey exactly which predictions of Charles Darwin's have been verified. The early Darwinians predicted the discovery of pro-Aves, pro-Cetacea, pro-Chiroptera, etc., none of which have yet been discovered. If we accept Mr. Strachey's criterion, it would be difficult to prove that Darwin was a greater scientist than Mendeléef, for when Mendeléef propounded his periodic law he pointed out that if his theory were true, there must exist a number of unknown elements of which he was able to give approximately the atomic weight. Some of these have since been isolated.

Marx does not emerge with credit from the prediction test. Here are a selection of his more famous predictions.

1. In 1847 Marx maintained that if slavery was abolished America would be "wiped off the map of nations." Engels attempted to prove in 1885 that the prediction was true for 1847. It is a strange prophecy which is only true for the present. He justified his view by insisting that the abolition of slavery led to the ruin of the South. He overlooked the fact that the South was ruined because during the reconstruction period the agricultural interests of the South were sacrificed in the interests of Northern industrialism. It was fantastic to imply in 1847 that a continent with the rich natural resources of North America would be faced with the alternatives of slavery or ruin. It is, of course, easy to understand why Marx attached undue economic importance to slavery, since in the Communist Utopia

every citizen is compelled to labour at work assigned to him by State officials. (10)

2. Marx prophesied the disappearance of the lower strata of the middle class. "The lower strata of the middle class," he wrote, "the small tradespeople, shopkeepers, and retired tradesmen generally, the handicraftsmen and peasants—all these sink gradually into the proletariat." (11) He did not foresee the creation of a new white collar middle class, or the fact that the upper strata of the proletariat would be absorbed into the middle class.

3. Marx foretold a steady growth of unemployment. There has been no such steady growth. Unemployment has risen and fallen in different countries and at different times. Post-war France was importing labour.

4. Marx foretold the increasing misery of the workers. "Along with the constantly diminishing number of the magnates of capital," he wrote, "who usurp and monopolize all advantages of this process of transformation, grows the mass of misery, oppression, slavery, degradation, exploitation." (12) Even Marxists admit that the standard of living has steadily improved since Marx wrote. They attempt to save his reputation by insisting that his predictions would have proved correct had not Capitalism been modified. The modified Capitalism of Marx's day has given place to controlled Capitalism, modified by semi-Socialistic laws, and by the influence of Trade Unions. It would seem, then, that Mr. Strachey's claims for the prediction value of Marx's theories must be qualified by the admission that Marx's prophecies would have come true had Marx foreseen facts which Marx did not foresee. It should not have required superhuman intelligence to foresee that unmodified Capitalism would gradually be replaced by controlled Capitalism.

5. Marx believed that Capitalism would generate crises of ever-increasing severity. The great post-war depression is often cited as evidence of the correctness of his prediction. On the contrary, this depression proved that Capitalism could not only finance four years of world war, but could also survive the inevitable, if delayed, consequences of that war.

6. Russia, according to orthodox Marxists, should have been the last European country to go Communist. Marx expected Communism to develop from the increasing misery of the workers in highly developed industrial countries. In answer to the question of an American newspaper man in 1871, "Do you expect to see it soon in England?" Marx declared, "Sooner than in any other country." (13) Communists are in power in Russia, and were for a brief period in control of Munich and of Buda Pesth. They are still in control of Republican Spain. They narrowly missed seizing control of Italy. England, which on the Marxist theory should have been the first to go Communist, has so far defied the Comintern.

The rise of Nazi-ism is, indeed, a complete refutation of the Marxist theory that Communism will inevitably develop from the increasing misery of the working classes. The collapse of the mark ruined the middle classes in Germany, and produced among the working classes that "mass misery, slavery and degradation" which Marx regarded as the inevitable preparation for Communism. The Communists controlled about a third of the votes in pre-Hitler Germany. Communism failed to capture Germany not because the Communists were weak, but because the Communist leadership was contemptible and because the Communists lacked the ruthless courage of the Nazis. The initiative, fanaticism and violence of the individual triumphed over the hesitations and timidity of the mass. The Marxist philosophy discounts the importance of individuals and exaggerates the importance of masses. Russian propaganda films are designed to deflect attention from film stars to film masses. Italy and Germany have proved the supreme significance of individuals in the shaping of events. If Materialism were true, and if men were little more than machines, the Marxist predictions would no doubt have been fulfilled in Germany. Never had conditions seemed more favourable for a Communist Revolution. But once again the free will of the individual triumphed over the fatalism of the masses.

Germany has proved Marx a false prophet so far as the conditions for the advent of Communism to power are concerned. Russia has shattered his millenary vision of the effects

that should follow when Communism has seized power. The dictatorship of the proletariat has not been followed by the withering away of the State; on the contrary, the State is attaining an ever wider sphere of control in the lives of individuals. The dictatorship of the proletariat has not inaugurated a classless society; on the contrary, the ruling class of the Communist bureaucracy is more aloof and more sharply differentiated from the toiling masses than the Civil Servants of the Imperial Government from the humblest of the Russian peasants.

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CHAPTER XXI

THE PHILOSOPHIC BASIS OF MARXIST COMMUNISM

I. DIALECTICAL IDEALISM

"WITHOUT Hegel," wrote Lenin, "Marx's *Kapital* is unintelligible." (1) It will therefore be as well to begin our discussion of Dialectical Materialism by a brief summary of the Hegelian ideas which formed the starting point of the Marxian philosophy.

Hegel was born of middle-class parents at Stuttgart in 1770. He studied philosophy at Tübingen without making much impression on his teachers, who described his knowledge of philosophy as inadequate on the certificate with which they rewarded his labours. In the course of his life he held a number of professorships, and he died in 1831.

Hegel believed that Spirit is the only reality and indeed the whole of reality. It is only the Spirit of the Idea which truly exists. "Reason is the sovereign of the world." Hegel's reluctance to use the word "God" instead of "Idea" was not inspired by the suspicion, so common among modern "progressives," that a philosopher loses caste by employing old-fashioned terminology. He was fully justified in using a new word for a new conception of the Logos. Indeed, I prefer his terminological honesty to the habit of many moderns, such as Professor Julian Huxley, who attach a meaning of their own to the word "God," thereby aggravating the difficulties of rational discussion.

Hegel's Spirit or Idea differs from the Christian God because its omniscience is only potential. At the beginning of the world process the Idea is completely ignorant, and it is only in the course of this process that the Idea achieves self-consciousness and self-knowledge. Mr. Wells, under the stress of war emotion, tried to impose a quasi-Hegelian theology on the world. "The

God of this new age," he wrote, "we repeat, looks not to our past but our future, and if a figure may represent him it must be the figure of a beautiful youth, already brave and wise, but hardly come to his strength." (2) Hegel is less explicit, but the Hegelian Idea is as immature as Mr. Wells's good-looking and plucky boy-deity. It is only in the fulness of time that the Idea will achieve omniscience and be entitled modestly to describe itself as a self-made God.

The Hegelian Idea has been transformed into the Absolute of the Neo-Hegelians, a deity even more impersonal than the Logos of Hegel. My friend, Dr. F. S. C. Schiller, showed me in my undergraduate days a delightful parody of that profound philosophic periodical, *Mind*, entitled *Mind!* The frontispiece was a blank page but for the legend "Portrait of the Absolute." The advertisements included "Key to the Jokes in *Mind!* 3/6." Dr. Schiller was proud of a letter from a German professor enclosing a postal order for 4/- to cover postage, and a request for the valuable key to the jokes which had apparently defeated him.

Hegel's Idea achieves self-knowledge by the principle of Dialectics. He took this word from the Greeks, for whom Dialectics was a process of arriving at truth by debate. In the Dialectics of the Greeks the approach to truth was by definition, differentiation and redefinition. Hegel discovered—or more accurately, re-emphasized—the principle of fruitful contradiction. Everything save the Idea in its ultimate form contains within itself not only itself but its opposite. The conception of being involves the conception of non-being, from which emerges the higher conception of becoming. The conflict of opposites produces progress. Truth consists not in a series of fixed dogmas which need only to be discovered and learned by heart, but in an evolving process whereby each new approach to truth is valuable but none final, since every new truth contains within its womb undiscovered and higher truths.

Hegel saw the world process wherein the Idea realizes itself less as a conflict between absolute good and absolute evil, or between Absolute Truth and Absolute Error, than as a co-operative process between partial truths synthesizing in a

higher but by no means final truth. His conception of fruitful, as opposed to unfruitful, dialectics may be illustrated by two examples. First, let us suppose that a man who believes that twice two is four is arguing with a man who believes that twice two is five. This controversy should end in the complete defeat of the error that twice two is five, and in the triumphant vindication of the truth that twice two is four. The heretical arithmetician contributes nothing of value to the discussion save his defeat. Very different would be the discussion between two statesmen, a democrat and a Fascist, entrusted by a perplexed Cabinet with the formulation of a new constitution for a country emerging from revolution. The democrat would stress the safeguards which representative government provides for the poor and oppressed, the spiritual values of freedom, the importance of free criticism as the corrective of ill-considered schemes, and the restraining influence of public opinion on legislators who know that they cannot remain in power without the support of a popular electorate. The Fascist would reply by insisting on the vacillating weakness of democracies, and on the dangers of entrusting the safety of the State to politicians who subordinate the well-being of the country to the necessity of placating the electorate. From the democratic thesis and the Fascist antithesis dialectics might evolve a new synthesis which would contain many of the peculiar virtues of democracy and Fascism and avoid their characteristic defects, demogogy and tyranny. The tension between two opposites will produce a third thing which will synthesize the two opposites and contain them.

Organized games illustrate the Hegelian principle.

Thesis: Perry serving balls into the opposite corner of a vacant court. This would be worth watching, as we should certainly learn something from his practice serves.

Antithesis: Budge returning the service in the Centre Court at Wimbledon.

Synthesis: A wonderful match infinitely more thrilling than mere practice shots.

The basic doctrines of a philosophy which has commanded widespread assent may be fallacious or even flagrantly absurd,

but if this philosophy succeeds in making many disciples, it must either have some element of truth, however small, or appeal, as Dialectical Materialism appeals, to some racial or class interest. Hegel owes his influence to his re-emphasis of old truths, in particular to his insistence on the value of discussion and dialectics. The Marxist, as we shall see, accepts dialectics in theory but rejects it in practice, for no philosophers are more contemptuous of discussion than the Marxists, or more committed by their premisses to mere denunciation. On the other hand, the Marxists have absorbed with eagerness all that is most irrational in Hegel. It is true, as Hegel insisted, that it is often more useful to contemplate things in movement and in relation to other things than in isolation. It is not true that there are no absolute and timeless truths. Hegel substituted for the old principle that everything is identical with itself and that nothing contradicts itself, the new principle that everything is identical with itself and everything contradicts itself. He denied by implication the law of contradiction that a thing cannot both be and not be. A philosophy which begins by denying what the overwhelming majority of philosophers still regard as a self-evident truism cannot escape irrational conclusions. It is no coincidence that the very terminology of Marxism is infected by the basic irrationality of Hegel. People who talk about "the unity of opposites" can hardly be expected to realize the distinction between those ancient opposites, sense and nonsense. There is no unity between absolute white and absolute black, but there is often a synthesis of opposites, such as grey.

I have confined myself to Hegel's teaching on the doctrine of the Idea as manifested in history. I leave it to the neo-Hegelians to discuss whether the Idea has already passed through the process of self-development and self-knowledge before alienating itself and repeating the process in time and space. As Mr. F. J. Sheed remarks in his penetrating, lucid and readable book, *Communism and Man*, "Almost anything can be established from some part or other of those strange Hegelian jungles where light is darker than darkness." (3) No true Hegelian claims to understand Hegel. "Only one man

ever understood me," said Hegel on his death-bed, "and he didn't understand me."

II. DIALECTICAL MATERIALISM

From Hegel Marx took the principle of Dialectics and from Ricardo the Labour Theory of Value. Hegel was a subtle philosopher, Ricardo a competent, if limited, economist. Marx was neither a philosopher nor an economist but a gifted revolutionary in search of a scientific rationalization of class warfare. The real Marx is a curious blend of Hebrew prophet and demagogue. He detested exploitation and social injustice, and the white heat of his invective is as impressive as the denunciations of the major prophets. It is, indeed, interesting to read a chapter of Jeremiah after reading a chapter of *Das Kapital*.

Hegel was an idealist in the correct sense of this much-abused word. He believed in the supremacy of the Idea as the vitalizing Spirit of the Universe. He maintained that the Dialectical process would lead through the meaningless to the triumph of meaning. The Logos, the ultimate rationality of the Universe, must ultimately triumph. Marx translated Dialectical Idealism into Dialectical Materialism. He rejected the belief in God and all belief in the independence of spirit and matter. He did not try to disprove the existence of God, or to prove that in this infinite universe there are no minds higher than man's, but he accepted these basic doctrines with the uncritical faith of a child. He hated institutional religion, which he identified with capitalistic oppression.

Like Hegel he believed in a universal substance, but whereas Hegel identified his substance with Spirit, Marx identified it with matter. Like Hegel he believed that the universal substance was compelled by its inherent nature to a process of self-development. Like Hegel he believed that the principle of this development was dialectical, but he substituted for Hegel's conception of the dialectic of thought advancing from the conflict between partial truths to fuller and more concrete truth, the dialectic of class war advancing by the

conflict between classes toward the Communistic Utopia. The inevitable goal of Dialectical Idealism is the Idea fully conscious of itself. The no less inevitable goal of Dialectical Materialism is the classless society sufficient for itself.

The basic tenet of Marxist Materialism is the belief that economic processes are omnipotent in shaping not only man's social activities but his religion, his philosophy and his artistic creations. "It's not the consciousness of men," he wrote, "that determines their existence, but, on the contrary, it is their social existence that determines their consciousness." (4) Engels, in this as in everything else, echoes Marx, "The ultimate causes of all social changes and political revolutions," he writes, "are to be sought, not in the minds of men, in their increasing insight into eternal truth and justice, but in changes in the mode of production and exchange; they are to be sought not in the *philosophy* but in the *economics* of the epoch concerned." (5)

If this be true, it follows that the windmill and other primitive economic agencies of the feudal period produced mediæval Catholicism, Gothic cathedrals and the feudal system, that the nascent Capitalism of the sixteenth century produced Protestantism and Palladio, and that the new economic processes of the industrial revolution produced Liberal Protestantism, the bourgeois philosophy of *laissez-faire* Capitalism, and the poetry of Alfred Tennyson.

Marx adopted from Hegel the conception of a world process in which partial and antagonistic truths are synthesized in a higher truth. He translated the Dialectic of truths into the Dialectic of class warfare. He believed that classes rise to power because they fulfil the economic needs of a particular period. He maintained that the ruling class is compelled by the logic of the Dialectical process to exploit the other classes. Nobody who has read even a few pages of Marx would expect consistency or show astonishment because Marx, the Hebrew prophet, denounces with unmeasured invective the oppression which Marx, the neo-Hegelian, regards as the consequence of a law not only inescapable but benevolent. Exploitation is due not to the wickedness of individuals, but to the inevitable

law of economic evolution. The exploiters owe their position to the services which they render to the development of productive forces. Apart from these purely economic services, a ruling class, by awakening the hostility of those whom it oppresses, renders inevitable the next stage in the progress towards the Communistic Utopia. The thesis of Dialectical Materialism compels a verdict of Not Guilty on those whom the Marxists denounce as criminals in passages intended for political propaganda.

It is significant that Marx justifies slavery, for Russia has proved that Socialism is impossible without forced labour, but earlier Marxists were embarrassed by his defence of American slavery as an "economic category of the greatest importance." "Without slavery," he wrote, "you have no cotton; without cotton you have no modern industry. It is slavery that has given the colonies their value; it is the colonies that have created world trade, and it is world trade that is the precondition of large-scale industry. Thus slavery is an economic category of the greatest importance. Without slavery, North America, the most progressive of countries, would be transformed into a patriarchal country. Wipe out North America from the map of the world, and you will have anarchy—the complete decay of modern commerce and civilization. Abolish slavery and you will have wiped America off the map of nations." (6)

Engels is even more explicit. "It is very easy," he writes, "to inveigh against slavery and similar things in general terms, and to give vent to high moral indignation at such infamies." Engels, like the classic economists, regarded the division of labour as the greatest of all methods of increasing productivity. "The simplest and most natural form of this division of labour," he writes, "was in fact slavery. In the historical conditions of the ancient world, and particularly of Greece, the advance to a society based on class antagonisms could only be accomplished in the form of slavery. This was an advance even for the slaves; the prisoners of war, from whom the mass of the slaves were recruited, now at least kept their lives, instead of being killed as they had been before. . .

When, therefore, Herr Dühring turns up his nose at Hellenism because it was founded on slavery, he might with equal Justice reproach the Greeks with having no steam engines and electric telegraphs." (7)

Slavery served a useful purpose in its day. So did feudalism. Indeed, Marx the Hebrew prophet, writes with genuine feeling of "the feudal patriarchal, idyllic relations" and "the beautiful harmony between rights and duties," but with even greater enthusiasm of the bourgeois capitalism that replaced the feudal system and prepared the way for the Communist state. Hegelian Dialectic is invoked to prove that the dominant class inevitably develops its own destroyers. "From the serfs of the Middle Ages sprang the chartered burghers of the earliest towns. From these burgesses the first elements of the bourgeoisie were developed. The discovery of America, the rounding of the Cape, opened up fresh ground for the rising bourgeoisies. The East-Indian and Chinese markets, the colonization of America, trade with the colonies, the increase in the means of exchange and in commodities generally, gave to commerce, to navigation, to industry, an impulse never before known, and thereby, to the revolutionary element in the tottering feudal society, a rapid development." (8)

The old order of feudalism was replaced by the Capitalism of the Renaissance. Such is the Dialectic of Class War. Every stage is necessary, and the oppression of the ruling classes is the essential link in the realization of the ultimate ideal, the classless society of Communism. The tyranny of the exploiter provokes the revolution which overthrows him, and thus carries humanity one stage further on the road to Utopia. "Feudal production, too," writes Marx, "had two contradictory elements which are likewise characterized as the 'good' and 'bad' sides of feudalism without regard to the fact that it is always the 'bad' side which triumphs ultimately over the 'good' side. It is the bad side which calls into being the movement which makes history, in that it brings the struggle to a head. If, at the time of the supremacy of feudalism, the economists, in their enthusiasm for knightly virtues, for the beautiful harmony between rights and duties, for the

patriarchal life of the towns, for the flourishing home industries in the country, for the development of industry organized in corporations, companies and guilds, in a word, for everything which forms the finer side of feudalism, had set themselves the problem of eliminating everything which could throw a shadow on this picture—serfdom, privileges, anarchy—where would it all have ended? They would have destroyed every element which called forth strife, they would have nipped in the bud the development of the middle class. They would have set themselves the absurd problem of blotting out history.” (9)

The reader will observe that Marx encloses the words “good” and “bad” in inverted commas, thus indicating his own disbelief in the absolute standards of morality.

The conflict between the feudal landed proprietors and the rising bourgeoisie produced capitalism. It would be difficult to determine whether the Hebrew prophet's detestation of the bourgeoisie was stronger than the admiration which the urbanized demagogue felt for their achievement in the sphere of production. Ancestral memories of a happier past when the Jews were still a patriarchal and agricultural community may have softened with regret Marx's verdict on vanished feudalism. “The bourgeoisie,” he writes, “wherever it has got the upper hand, has put an end to all feudal, patriarchal, idyllic relations. It has pitilessly torn asunder the motley feudal ties that bound man to his ‘natural superiors,’ and has left no other bond between man and man than naked self-interest, than callous ‘cash payment.’ It has drowned the most heavenly ecstasies of religious fervour, of chivalrous enthusiasm, of philistine sentimentalism, in the icy water of egotistical calculation. It has resolved personal worth into exchange value, and in place of the numberless indefeasible chartered freedoms, has set up that single, unconscionable freedom—Free Trade. In one word, for exploitation, veiled by religious and political illusions, it has substituted, naked, shameless, direct, brutal exploitation.” (10)

But the *déraciné* Jew, whose ambition was to transform “England's green and pleasant land” into a New Jerusalem of

giant factories, emerges from his lyrical praise of bourgeois achievement. The bourgeoisie "has accomplished wonders far surpassing Egyptian pyramids, Roman aqueducts, and Gothic cathedrals; it has conducted expeditions that put in the shade all former migrations of nations and crusades. . . . The bourgeoisie has subjected the country to the rule of the towns. It has created enormous cities, has greatly increased the urban population as compared with the rural, and has thus rescued a considerable part of the population from the idiocy of rural life. Just as it has made the country dependent on the towns, so it has made barbarian and semi-barbarian countries dependent on the civilized ones, nations of peasants on nations of bourgeois, the East on the West." (11)

In the eyes of Marx the supreme service of the bourgeoisie consists in the clarification of class warfare. "Our epoch, the epoch of the bourgeoisie, possesses, however, this distinctive feature: It has simplified the class antagonisms. Society as a whole is more and more splitting up into two great hostile camps, into two great classes directly facing each other—bourgeoisie and proletariat." (12)

Marx believed that Capitalism would destroy itself by its own inherent characteristics. Means of production would become increasingly efficient, the markets for export trade would diminish in proportion as other nations became more efficient and more industrialized. The increasing misery of the working class would be balanced by their increasing power, which would reflect the increasing centralization of capitalistic processes. Marx foretold that from the inevitable clash between Capitalism and Proletariat would emerge the classless Utopia of Communism. The dictatorship of the Proletariat would ease the transition from an epoch of production for profit to the ideal of production for use. The historic process would end; since there would be only one class in the State, there would be no further need for the Dialectic of Class Warfare. The millennium would arrive, and the capitalistic lion would lie down with and be eaten by the proletarian lamb.

III. MATERIALISM: "VULGAR" AND REFINED

Marxists repudiate with contempt those whom Lenin described as "vulgar materialists," and are anxious to emphasize the distinction between Dialectical and Mechanical Materialism. But their eagerness to repudiate Mechanical Materialism is qualified by a curious reluctance explicitly to reject any specific doctrine accepted by nineteenth-century materialists.

The Concise Oxford Dictionary defines Materialism as the "opinion that nothing exists but matter and its movements and modifications, also, that consciousness and will are wholly due to material agency." There is nothing in this definition which Marx, Engels or Lenin would have repudiated, for they all believe that nothing exists save matter and its movements and modifications, among which modifications they would have classified mental activities, and they would have all agreed that consciousness and will are, in the final analysis, wholly due to material agencies.

The German scientist Haeckel was one of the most famous exponents in the nineteenth century of that mechanical Materialism which modern Marxists profess to despise, but it is easy to show that the leading Marxists accept and endorse every belief that Haeckel would have regarded as essential.

Haeckel maintained:

1. That there is no God.
2. That the human will is not free.
3. That immortality is a myth.

It is unnecessary to prove that orthodox Marxists reject theism, free will and immortality.

To these three basic doctrines of Materialism Haeckel would certainly have added the following propositions:

4. Matter existed prior to mind.
5. Mental activities are a by-product of matter.
6. Energy may be transformed into mental activity, and mental activity is nothing more than a form of energy.

Lenin endorses 4. "Materialism," he writes, "in full agreement with natural science, takes matter as the *prius*, regarding consciousness, reason and sensation as derivatives." (13)

No Victorian materialist expressed proposition 5 more explicitly than Engels. "Matter is not a product of mind," he writes, "but mind itself is merely the highest product of matter." He was quoting and endorsing the views of Feuerbach. (14)

Lenin restates our sixth proposition in the form to which Haeckel could not possibly have taken exception. "Sensation," writes Lenin, "is nothing but a direct connection of the mind with the external world; it is the transformation of energy of external excitation into a mental state." (15)

What, then, is this "vulgar" Materialism that the Marxists so indignantly disclaim? "Engels," writes Lenin, "opposed the 'vulgar' materialists, Vogt, Büchner and Moleschott, because they assumed that thought is secreted by the brain as bile is secreted by the liver." (16) But it is misleading to confuse genuine differences of doctrine with the differences between subtle and crude interpretations of the same doctrine.

On this point, as on others, Marxists confuse the issue by the eloquence with which they repudiate beliefs which nobody supposes that they hold, and defend beliefs which their opponents are not concerned to criticize. Thus they repudiate with indignation the theory that thought is unreal, and that the historical process is only affected by material causes and not by mental causes such as ambition or altruism. But the point at issue between the Idealist and the Materialist is not whether thought is real or whether mental activities can influence history, but whether thought and spirit are merely by-product of matter.

An avalanche falling into a narrow valley often causes a hurricane, which in turn starts another avalanche. Nobody suggests that the hurricane has no influence on the second avalanche, but the primary cause of the second avalanche is not the hurricane but the first avalanche. Similarly, if thought be a product of matter, thought may be the secondary cause of a material event, but the primary cause is the matter, and

thought, the secondary cause, is a mere by-product. It is no less disingenuous to emphasize the reality and importance of material conditions. The Christian does not deny the reality of matter or the importance of material causes. These fictitious arguments and side issues are exasperating to those who are anxious to persuade Marxists to discuss the fallacies of Marx, and not the issues which both Marx and his critics accept.

This technique of confusion is exploited, consciously or unconsciously, to establish an artificial distinction between Mechanical Materialism and Dialectical Materialism. Mechanical Materialism, we are assured, is primarily concerned with matter, whereas Dialectical Materialism is primarily concerned with motion. Dialectics is the science of the general laws of motion. But *The Concise Oxford Dictionary*, as we have seen, defines Materialism as the opinion that nothing exists save matter and its movements. It is therefore unjustifiable to suggest that Mechanical Materialism is solely concerned with matter at rest. Both Mechanical Materialists and Dialectical Materialists attempt to interpret the movements of matter, and though their interpretations may differ, their mode of approach is the same. Nor are we any nearer a true distinction if we insist that Dialectical motion is motion in a direction, and that direction inevitable, for such beliefs are implied in the determinism which all Materialists accept. A Materialist, no less than a Dialectical Materialist, is ready to agree that the laws of motion apply to man and to human society.

Mr. Sheed makes a gallant attempt to discover this illusive distinction. "Whereas for Mechanist Materialism," he writes, "motion comes as a result of a shock from without, for Dialectical Materialism there is a contradiction in the very heart of matter from which motion necessarily comes. Influences from without may affect the course of that motion, but they do not originate the motion. It is of the essence of matter that its motion is from within. Matter is not simply passive, a thing that *is moved*: it is active, it moves by an inner necessity of its nature . . . this is implied in everything

Marx and Engels wrote. It is explicitly stated by Plekhanov in his *Fundamental Problems of Marxism*, and now under the name of "autodynamism"—self-movement—it is the creed of the contemporary orthodox Marxian." (17)

But autodynamism is implied not only in Marx but in Haeckel. Haeckel, as Lenin points out, "assumes the existence of a property similar to sensation 'in the foundation-stones of the structure of matter itself.'" (18) Haeckel, in fact, attempted to evade the inescapable dilemma of atheistic Materialism by suggesting that the atom might possess a rudimentary type of consciousness which implies the possibility, at least, of self-movement. One need not therefore be a Dialectical Materialist to believe in "autodynamism."

I do not, of course, deny that Dialectical Materialists have added something to the deposit of Materialistic Faith, but these additions are interpretations rather than repudiations. The Pope does not reject with scorn the "vulgar Catholicism" of the Early Church, even though successive Councils have clarified primitive doctrines with new definitions and new interpretations.

Though it is difficult to define the distinction between Mechanical and Dialectical Materialism, it is easy to understand why Marxists should be anxious to repudiate the implication of doctrines which they can neither defend nor consistently deny. Marx himself was far less disturbed by the inherent difficulties of Materialism, for Marx was not a philosopher. He was a brilliant politician who exploited pseudo-philosophy in the interests of world revolution. He hated Christianity because Christians had acquiesced in what he regarded as a system of exploitation. He was impatient of religion which, so he believed, dulled the resentment of the proletariat, and rendered them impervious to revolutionary propaganda. He adopted Materialism less as a philosophic creed than as a political label, and expressed his hatred and contempt for the religion which he associated with Capitalism. But Marx himself was far less interested in philosophy than in action. "The philosophers," he wrote, "have only *inter-*

preted the world in various ways; the point however is to *change* it." (19)

Since Marx's day consistent and continuous criticism has exposed the inherent contradictions of Materialism. The increasing discredit of Mechanical Materialism is principally due to the fact that the Materialist cannot escape from the sceptical consequences of his creed. "On the naturalistic hypothesis," wrote Arthur Balfour, "the whole premises of knowledge are clearly due to the blind operation of material causes, and in the last resort to these alone. On that hypothesis we no more possess free reason than we possess free will. As all our volitions are the inevitable product of forces which are quite alien to morality, so all our conclusions are the inevitable product of forces which are quite alien to reason." (20)

Few Marxists and few theists have read the late Lord Balfour's brilliant book, but the professional Marxists are familiar with Sir Arthur Eddington's development of Lord Balfour's argument. Marxists are beginning to realize the dilemma. The Marxist rejects Hegelian Idealism, and hopes to escape the sceptical consequences of Materialism by the introduction of Dialectics. The hope is vain. Among philosophers sympathetic to Socialism there is a growing revolt against the compulsory marriage of economic and philosophic Communism. Mr. E. F. Carritt, for instance, Fellow of University College, Oxford, and a lecturer in Philosophy, states that he is "in sympathy with the objectives of Communism," but his urbane contempt for the inconsistencies of Dialectical Materialism is evident in every line of his masterly critique, which was published in the May and June numbers of *Labour Monthly* for 1933. The Marxists replied in the July and August issues. It is easy to test a writer's confidence in his creed by observing his reactions to criticism. If he is anxious both to meet and to refute the strongest case against his own position, he must be credited with sincerity both conscious and unconscious. Let the reader secure Nos. 5, 6, 7 and 8 of the *Labour Monthly* for 1933 and apply this test to Marxists attempting to rebut Mr. Carritt's criticisms.

Dialectical Materialism aggravates the difficulty of evading

the sceptical consequences of Materialism, for if our religious and our philosophic beliefs reflect the economic processes of the age, they have clearly no objective validity. Marxism itself is as much a product of the *laissez-faire* Liberalism as mediæval Catholicism, on the Marxist hypothesis, is of mediæval Feudalism.

The neo-Marxist dislikes Mechanistic Materialism because he regards it as a reflection of that Early Victorian Liberalism which accepted the omnipotence of the Economic Law. The Marxist feels moreover that Mechanistic Materialism, which suggests the passive reaction of matter to its environment, is a poor creed for an active revolutionary. But it is difficult to discover the superiority of Dialectical Materialism as a dynamic of revolutionary energy. All forms of Materialism logically lead to fatalistic acquiescence in things as they are. Certainly no orthodox Marxist believes in Free Will, but the moral indignation which revolutionaries exploit as one of their strongest weapons against the ruling class is deprived by determinism of all reasonable basis. The determinist can consistently attempt to restrain destructive forces, human or material. Prisons for the restraint of crime serve an analogous purpose to the avalanche barriers with which Alpine peasants attempt to restrain the avalanches which would otherwise destroy their homes, but the peasant does not denounce the avalanche as wicked, and the rational Communist can consistently liquidate but cannot consistently scold the Capitalist, the oppressor and the tyrant. The Marxist vocabulary is well provided with words which express moral indignation, such as "oppression," "tyranny" and "exploitation." It is a pity that the Marxist philosophy should deprive these words of real meaning. No revolutionary would be disposed to deny that the belief in Free Will, if an illusion, is at least a useful illusion, for revolutionary leaders must use the language of free will. No mob could be aroused by a consistent Marxist who used the deterministic terminology which his creed demands. "Comrades, I cannot contain my indignation when confronted with these capitalistic crimes, but indignation is, as you know, an emotion which is itself

a by-product of matter. I am a temporary combination of atoms which will be dissolved by death. The sounds which issue from my mouth are the result of an infinite series of predestined causes and effect. They will, I hope, produce certain reactions in your minds, and awaken in you the form of energy which we describe as moral indignation. In due course this energy will be transformed into other forms of action, in the course of which, I hope, you will overthrow the Government and liquidate all Capitalists. The resentment and hatred which I hope to inspire may be irrational, for the Capitalist is predetermined to oppress, but do not let that dismay you, for your irrational emotions are as much the product of predetermined laws as your more reasonable conclusions."

Marxist philosophers are well aware of the difficulties of reconciling Determinism with revolutionary fervour, and their attempts to solve this problem are not particularly convincing. "If I strive to promote a movement," writes Plekhanov, "whose triumph seems to me a historical necessity that is because I think my own activity a necessary link in the conditions which necessarily bring it about," and Mr. Carritt adds, "and I suppose if I do not promote it, that is because (whether I think so or not) my inaction is a necessary link. The fact is he uses 'necessary' here in two senses: 1. *Sine qua non* (as applied to my activity). 2. Inevitable (as applied to the triumph of the movement and the bringing of it about). That the conditions in which we have to act are fixed is what Utopianism fails to see. That within the limits of these conditions we are free to act is what determinism fails to see." (21)

Mr. Carritt implies, if I read him aright, that Materialism is untenable, whether it describes itself as Mechanical or Dialectical. For though he nowhere hints at the ultimate heresy, belief in God, he would probably agree that it is impossible to inject reason into matter by Dialectics. "Obviously the theory is becoming more complicated," he writes. "We have now not only the dialectic of thought advancing from abstract error or partial truth to fuller more concrete truth, and not even only the dialectic of those human

institutions which, since they partly depend on thought, might be expected to follow its dialectic (e.g. tyranny—licence—order, depending on men's developing beliefs about society). We have also the same term dialectic applied to the evolution of species, the growth of organisms, the movement of matter and even to mathematical formulas. We are indeed told that the dialectical movement of thought is only a result of the dialectical movement of matter." (22)

But how does thought succeed in intruding itself into matter? It is impossible to extract from the pot ingredients which it does not contain. If matter was, as Lenin asserts, the prius, no Marxist sleight of hand, no juggling with "quantity into quality" could transform inorganic matter or extract thought from matter. If there was no intelligence presiding over the beginning of the world process, it is impossible to suggest any natural method, dialectical or otherwise, for the introduction of reason, thought and consciousness into an irrational universe of inorganic matter.

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CHAPTER XXII

THE LABOUR THEORY OF VALUE

MARX'S Labour Theory of Value should be classified as propaganda rather than as economics, for it provides a pseudo-scientific rationalization of the manual labourer's jealousy of the brain worker. Its depreciation of the brain worker and the middleman is ironic, for Marx was a brilliant middleman in the realm of ideas. He took his theory of value from Ricardo, and in the process deprived this theory of any claim to a basis of reason. He took his dialectic from Hegel, and deprived Hegelianism of meaning by translating the dialectic of thought into the dialectic of matter. Marx was not an honest broker of ideas, but though the commodities which passed through the warehouse of middleman Marx lost weight on the scales of reason, they acquired an explosive quality in transit the destructive effect of which it would be difficult to over-estimate.

It is impossible in one brief chapter to deal with all aspects of the Marxist theory, or to expose all its fallacies. I hope, however, that this short sketch will send the reader who wishes for a fuller treatment to Marx's *Kapital* and to the scholarly and complete discussions of Marx's theories which will be found in *Karl Marx's Capital*, by Mr. A. D. Lindsay, Master of Balliol College, Oxford, and in *The Labour Theory of Value in Karl Marx*, by Mr. H. W. B. Joseph, Fellow and Tutor of New College, Oxford. I wish to acknowledge my own indebtedness to these brilliant essays.

The Labour Theory of Value can be traced to Adam Smith. "The value of any commodity," he wrote, "... to the person who possesses it, and who means not to use or consume it himself, but to exchange it for other commodities, is equal to the quantity of labour which it enables him to purchase or command. Labour, therefore, is the real measure of the exchangeable value of all commodities." (1)

Adam Smith's theory of value was enthusiastically adopted by nineteenth-century economists, not as an instrument of class warfare, but as a scientific justification of that unbounded faith in their favourite panaceas, free trade and the division of labour. They condemned tariffs as a form of protection for the incompetent, since tariffs enable inferior producers to compete on equal terms with their more efficient rivals. Under the régime of free trade every country would produce the goods for which their workmen had a special aptitude, and for the production of which their natural resources and climate were specially adapted. In these circumstances the exchange value of commodities would be determined by the labour which they embodied, and would not be artificially increased by the uneconomic effect of tariffs.

Ricardo inherited this theory from Adam Smith, and though he never attempted to prove that manual labour alone adds value, and though he grudgingly admitted that the value of a small fraction of commodities is determined by scarcity, his theory, though less indefensible than Marx's, was open to destructive criticism. Like other exponents of the Labour Theory of Value he virtually ignored demand. Now, as Mr. Lindsay remarks, "a theory of value which says practically nothing about demand is a theory of value which says practically nothing about valuing." (2) As early as 1850 N. W. Senior subjected to very damaging criticism the theory which Marx was later to adopt and revise. He pointed out that any cause which limits supply is as efficient a cause of value as the labour which went to its production, "and in fact," he wrote, "if all the commodities used by man were supplied by Nature without any intervention of human labour, but were supplied in precisely the same quantities as they now are, there is no reason to suppose either that they would cease to be valuable or would exchange in any other than their present proportions." (3)

Richard Whateley had anticipated this argument in his lectures on Political Economy delivered at Oxford in 1831. "If the aerolites," he wrote, "which occasionally fall, were diamonds and pearls, and if these articles could be obtained in

no other way, but were casually picked up, to the same amount as is now obtained by digging and diving, they would be of precisely the same value as now. In this, as in many other points in Political Economy, men are prone to confound *cause* and *effect*. It is not that pearls fetch a high price *because* men have dived for them; but on the contrary, men dive for them because they fetch a high price." (4)

An honest author does not resolutely ignore published criticisms of a theory which he himself adopts with modifications, and an intelligent author anticipates the more obvious criticisms of his own modifications of an accepted theory. Marx was a prophet, and prophets seldom argue. He makes no attempt to meet the criticisms of Senior and Whateley, or to forestall the obvious objections against his own development of Ricardo's theory of value. In this, as in other respects, his example has been followed by his disciples. Marx does not argue; he knows.

Marx did not meet these criticisms, for he was appealing not to reason but to resentment, the resentment of the manual worker against the brain worker. In the war between the hand and the brain, Marx, the brain worker, was on the side of the hand. His labour theory of value is an attempt to suggest that manual labour alone creates value. Admittedly he qualifies the crudity of this untenable theory by occasional grudging concessions buried in the later volumes of *Das Kapital*, but it is to the theory in its crude form that Marxism owes its influence. Marx was a supreme demagogue, but he realized that demagogy was not enough. He knew that it was necessary to appeal not only to the resentment but to the vanity of the victims of social injustice. Nothing is more flattering to our vanity than the discovery that science justifies our conviction that we are underpaid. Marx not only incited the proletariat to liquidate their exploiters, but provided the proletariat with a parade of scientific justification for class hatred. *Das Kapital* would have been less influential had it been less long, tedious and confusing. Few readers struggle as far as the second volume, in which Marx concedes, but only by implication, that others beside the manual worker contribute to the

products of labour. It is the theory in its crudest form which alone has the dynamic power, and which alone forms the true basis of Marxist propaganda.

H. M. Hyndman "to the end of his life taught that the gross profit of the capitalist comes 'from the labour of the workers embodied in the goods produced,' and even that 'salaried servants, superintendents, clerks, etc.', who 'are paid their salaries out of the gross profits,' 'add no value to the goods produced.'" (5)

Marx distinguishes, as other economists have done before him, between use value and exchange value.*

A thing has use value if it serves human needs, even if it has no money value. Air has immense use value, but seldom has exchange value. On the other hand, nothing has exchange value if it has not also use value.

What is a thing's exchange value? "If we leave out of account the use value of commodities," writes Marx, "they have only one common property left, that of being products of labour." (7)

Labour, as Marx of course admits, differs in quality. The weaver's labour is not the same as the spinner's, but these qualitative differences in labour can be ignored since they are only concerned with what is common to all types of labour, the mere fact of being human labour. It is labour as such, not labour of this or that particular type which gives value to the products of labour. The magnitude of this value is determined by the quantity of labour measured by duration. "As values, commodities are only definite masses of congealed labour-time." (8)

Marx does not, of course, assert that exchange value is determined solely by duration of labour-time irrespective of the value of the labour employed. "Some people might think,"

* As the distinction is fundamental it may be as well to quote direct from the German text.

"Die Nützlichkeit eines Dinges, seine Eigenschaft, menschliche Bedürfnisse irgendeiner Art zu befriedigen, macht es zum Gebrauchswert. . . . Der Tauschwert erscheint zunächst als das quantitative Verhältnis, die Proportion, worin sich Gebrauchswert einer Art gegen Gebrauchswerte anderer Art austauschen, ein zufälliges Verhältnis, das fortwährend mit Zeit und Ort wechselt." (6)

he writes, "that if the value of a commodity is determined by the quantity of labour spent on it, the more idle and unskilful the labourer, the more valuable would his commodity be, because more time would be required in its production." (9) He meets this difficulty by postulating an imaginary unit of labour value, a hypothetical unit based on socially necessary labour (*gesellschaftlich notwendiger Arbeit*). (10) "The labour-time socially necessary is that required to produce an article under the normal conditions of production, and with an average degree of skill and intensity prevalent at the time." (11)

But how can we discover a standard to measure the hypothetical unit of "socially necessary labour," and how shall we determine how many such units are contained in any particular commodity?

Marx rejects the obvious solution, comparing different kinds of labour by the prices paid per hour to the labourers, for he rejects not only as unjust but as unscientific the standards of payment in Capitalistic society. He writes not as an economist but as a prophet of social justice. "He is not concerned," as Mr. Lindsay points out, "to give a formula which will enable us to predict what a commodity will fetch, but to tell us under what conditions what it will fetch will be what it is worth." (12) And as Marx is concerned not with economics but with ethics, he is at least consistent when he remarks, "Wages is a category that has no existence at the present stage of our investigation." (13)

If we ignore wages and prices it is essential to discover some method of reducing units of skilled labour to units of unskilled labour without reference to wages and prices. "Skilled labour," writes Marx, "counts only as ordinary labour intensified, or rather as multiplied simple labour, a given quantity of skilled labour being equal to a great quantity of simple labour. Experience shows that this reduction is constantly made." (14)

The reduction indeed is constantly made, but only by reference to prices determined by the law of supply and demand. "It is," as Mr. Joseph insists, "essential for Marx's argument to show that the reduction can be made without considering

the prices of the commodities; but he cannot show it. . . . (15)
By what means shall we determine how many hours of the simple labour of a fagot-maker are contained in one hour of a joiner's or a cabinet-maker's labour? We can only do it from the different sums which they charge by time, or add *per* hour to the cost-prices of the materials on which they work. And to determine it thus is, for Marx, to argue in a circle." (16)

Marx's writing is never more confusing than when Marx the prophet is evading the criticisms of Marx the thinker. He concealed with some skill his circular arguments, but these have been exposed with devastating effect by Mr. Lindsay and Mr. Joseph. Mr. Joseph gives many examples of Marx's habit of attempting "to establish a principle by pointing to facts whose alleged conformity to it is itself inferred from the principle to be established," and this, as Mr. Joseph remarks, "is to argue in a circle." (17)

Now, of course, the Labour Theory of Value could be stated in a form which would compel universal agreement. If we include in the term "Labour" not only manual labour but the work of the merchant, the middleman, the accountant and the speculator, it is clear that the exchange value of a commodity can be measured in terms of three factors, labour, scarcity and demand, but no such definition would serve the purposes with which Marx is solely concerned, for his object was not to analyze the factors that produce value, but to prove that workers are exploited. He tries, therefore, to show that existing price levels provide no true index to value, for value is a social product. He maintains that Capitalism has perverted value in order to transfer from the workers to the Capitalist the surplus value which the workers have produced.

Marx is always more effective in criticism than in construction. He has little difficulty in exposing the smug complacency of the Victorian Liberals who maintained that the abolition of monopoly and tariffs would enable not only countries but individuals to compete on equal terms. Equality before the law is a mockery unless the law attempts to redress the inequality of bargaining power between the Capitalist and the

workman. The workman has no property in the means of production. He is hopelessly handicapped in his attempt to secure from the Capitalist a fair return for his work.

Marx contends that the true social value of a commodity can be calculated by adding the cost of the material employed to the exchange value produced by the labour which has been used in producing the commodity in question. The Capitalist, Marx insists, adds no real value to the commodity, and therefore the difference in price between the true exchange value of the commodity and its selling price is surplus value stolen by the Capitalist from the worker. Even Marx hesitated explicitly to defend this doctrine in that crudest form which is implied in every chapter of *Das Kapital*. It is part of his thesis that mere exchange cannot create value. If he had succeeded in proving this, he might have established a premiss from which he could have argued with some success that Capitalism produces no value. Marx admits that value depends on socially necessary labour and not on labour irrespective of its usefulness. Labour, therefore, which is expended in producing goods for which there is no demand, is not socially necessary labour. On the other hand, the mental labour which correctly anticipates demand and thus avoids wasting labour is socially necessary. It follows, therefore, that those persons who are engaged in planning the equalization of supply and demand are increasing value by saving waste.

In a primitive society where there is little or no division of labour, the boot-maker not only makes boots but calculates how many boots he needs to make. He combines the functions of the producer with that of the specialist anticipating demands. It is part of the Marxist thesis inherited from Ricardo that division of labour increases productivity. It is therefore desirable that the labour of making boots should be divided from the mental labour of anticipating the demand for boots. Marx, it is true, grudgingly concedes that the buying and selling agent performs necessary work by setting free the labour time and power of others. "The merchant," sneers Marx, "may be regarded as a machine which reduces a useless expenditure of energy which helps to set free some time for

production." (18) But why should the merchant who renders his indispensable service be dismissed as a machine? Only because Marx cannot bring himself to admit that a merchant is a human being.

In effect, however, this sullen admission that the merchant "reduces a useless expenditure of energy" destroys the propaganda virtues of the Labour Theory of Value. Marx recoils from the conclusion implicit in his admission, and defers for another hundred pages (by which time the reader may have forgotten his lapse) a further concession to the merchant and middleman. It is only in the next volume that we learn that "Commercial capital creates neither value nor surplus value, but promotes only their realization." (19) But as Mr. Lindsay justly remarks, "the distinction between 'creating' and 'promoting realization of' seems to the ordinary mind a distinction without a difference." (20) Whereas Marx, in the first volume of *Das Kapital*, implies that buying and selling are superfluous and unnecessary occupations, and the profits of buying and selling are mere robbery, he is driven, towards the conclusion of his book, to admissions which destroy the very basis of his theory of value. It is not, however, these admissions which are quoted in Hyde Park or in propaganda pamphlets for circulation among the faithful.

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TO RED FLAG

forget them for a while with chorus and ballet girls. This was the famous "reserved room." They put their hats scornfully on a small table before a mirror. "What kinds of people have put their hats here," they thought.

"Look, Vera," Natalia Borisovna said,—“the whole mirror is covered with inscriptions.”

"Ah, yes. A heart pierced by an arrow and 'A.S.' beneath it. Is it you by any chance, Alexander?"

"Mesdames," Gritzenko said, "it isn't the custom to read aloud the inscriptions on mirrors and fences. You may reveal other people's secrets. What would you prefer to have with the fish—sauce provençale or mushroom?"

Gritzenko sent for tea and champagne, but the conversation flagged. The officers felt constraint before the ladies of the regiment and could not get into the spirit of the place. At last the actress Morgenstern arrived. All knew that she lived with Gritzenko, that she was a late but real love of Pavel Ivanovitch and all were interested to see her. A slim young girl in a white dress with a high collar entered the room. She had a simple face with large blue eyes that looked frightened. Gritzenko and Rotbek rushed to meet her.

"Alexander Nicolaievitch," Countess Paltoff asked Sablin in a loud whisper, "what must we do? Must we shake hands?"

Sablin shrugged his shoulders and Matzneff had to save the situation by introducing her to the ladies:

"Maria Feodorovna Onegine,—Countess Natalia Borisovna Paltoff, Vera Constantinovna Sablin, Nina Vasilievna von Rotbek."

The ladies coldly shook hands. A young man in a black evening dress, bald in spite of his youth, meanwhile slipped through the door to the piano and struck several chords. The ladies sat down on the sofa, arranging their dresses with disdain; the officers settled in arm chairs around them. A moment of silence followed. The singer did not feel at ease before the ladies, who were unceremoniously looking her over and exchanging remarks at her expense.

"People always seek for contrasts," Countess Paltoff said

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quietly to Vera Constantinovna. "The dark Gritzenko and—look at her—quite a pretty Finnish girl."

"She isn't pretty at all," said Vera Constantinovna.

The singer told the accompanist by a glance to begin and he struck several chords.

She sang a quiet, sad song speaking of recollections of youth. Involuntary sadness was reflected in her eyes. She sang well and each word conveyed much power of feeling. But she created an atmosphere of sad thoughts which did not agree with the mood of the visitors. They continued to whisper among themselves.

Onegina finished her song, sadly looked round upon the guests and began another which was full of passionate grief. Vera Constantinovna was impressed but the rest began to be impatient. Gritzenko felt that Onegina did not meet with success and led her away. The accompanist followed her out with a bent head like an obedient dog.

Constrained silence reigned in the room.

"They are nice, these songs with tears in them," said Countess Paltoff, "but, . . . they need a different mood in the hearers."

"You have chosen the wrong moment to serve this dish, Pavel Ivanovitch," Matzneff said. "It would have been excellent after drinking a good deal when the heart would be overcome and one would feel inclined to weep and to dream. Then these sad eyes and that strained, passionate voice would have been good. We would not even need passion after being surfeited but we want something fiery for the start. As it is we are cold."

At that moment the doors swung open and a little black-and-red fiend, as Nina Vasilievna classified her, ran into the room. It was the diseuse Ivette. Her black hair was piled on her head, diamonds were scattered over it and two black aigrettes rose like horns over her brow. Her tight fitting black dress was cut extremely low both in front and back and she appeared half naked. Her black skirt, caught up with red roses, barely reached her knees. Silk stockings, so transparent that they were hardly visible, covered her legs. Ivette tripped lightly among the ladies and the officers, saying words of greeting and almost sitting

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down on their knees. She filled the room with a sharp aroma of perfume and passion. Vera Constantinovna noticed that the nostrils of the men were quivering and their eyes becoming dimmed.

Mademoiselle Ivette began to tell an amusing story, walking about the room, stretching herself in an arm chair and rising again to sip nervously a glass of champagne. The story was quite decent and the ladies were disappointed.

"Where does the 'very' come in then?" Nina Vasilievna asked.

"Immediately," Gritzenko answered,—“Mademoiselle Ivette, please tell us, 'c'est ici.' ”

"Oh!" said Ivette, her eyes round with feigned horror, and began to speak.

The ladies now had to shield their faces with fans so as not to see the men. They were ashamed of their husbands.

Ivette ended the story, clapped her hands, and the same accompanist slipped up to the piano. She began to sing a risqué song "les noisettes."

"I should never dream that a song could be so. . . ." said Nina Vasilievna.

"Horrible. . ." added Vera Constantinovna.

"How corrupt the men are," drawled Countess Paltoff.

Rotbek had made each lady sip at a separate glass and had drunk it down afterwards. He was half drunk and hummed: "Il cueillit six noisettes dans son après midi. . . ." Sasha, could you do it? Six? I couldn't."

"Stop, Pik! You are quite mad!" said Countess Paltoff. "Poor Nina is almost fainting."

"Petia, I shall leave if you don't stop this immediately," Nina Vasilievna said with tears in her eyes.

"Six! Only to think of it! Quatre happened, but six. . . . He must have been a smart fellow this Colin!"

XX

THE supper passed merrily. Everyone joked, laughed and told anecdotes.

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"No, for heavens sake," exclaimed the ladies,—“don't dot the 'i's,' it's quite clear enough.”

But they immediately put these dots themselves. Nina Vasilievna pretended to be naïve and put impossible questions. It was Rotbek's turn this time to stop her by exclamations, although he was half conscious from drink.

“Nina! Shame!”

Stepochka outdid himself. Sablin told anecdotes in Russian and in French. The ladies were now feeling quite at home and the atmosphere of the “reserved room” surrounding them made them appear in a new and alluring light to their husbands. The fruit had already been finished, and the waiters had placed chairs for the tzigane choir but it did not appear. The Maitre d'hotel twice approached Gritzenko, whispering something in his ear. Gritzenko left the room and returned flushed and looking angry.

“What's wrong?” asked Stepochka.

“Stesha doesn't want to sing. She says that too many people have been killed today.”

“How stupid of her. Who is she? Is she a 'red?'” asked Natalia Borisovna.

“No, simply a fool. She will come all right. It's mere coquettishness. She wants to make herself more highly valued.”

The singers entered the room at that moment as if to prove the correctness of his words. Eight tzigane women came first. All were dark, ugly, with black hair and large mysterious eyes. They were clad in a mixture of ball dresses and the bright coloured rags of a gypsy camp with black lace pelerines. The men came behind, some in plain clothing, others in embroidered gypsy jackets. Sandro Davidoff stepped forward holding a guitar with a white ribbon attached to it.

The ladies looked at the gypsies who boldly returned their gaze, laughing and talking among themselves, the men stood behind, ugly, serious and with an air of importance about them. The stout, bald Sandro who did not look like a gypsy began by singing in a deep voice a well known romance, the chorus accompanying him melodiously.

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A dashing dance song followed. The gypsies danced in wild frenzy one after another, shrieking to the rhythm of the song.

Song followed song, some in Russian, others in gypsy dialect. The air was becoming hot and close in the room and Stepochka proposed to open the window.

Matzneff pulled the curtains aside, and the pale morning light penetrated the room. Small wooden houses and dark trees covered by soft snow were seen outside. Three peasant sledges passed down the street. Women wrapped in large grey shawls were taking milk to the town.

The window was opened and the cold air streamed into the room bringing the morning freshness with it.

"The ladies will catch cold," said Stepochka.

A fragment of distant singing, harmonious and majestically sad, suddenly floated into the room. All started and listened. The gypsies rushed to the window. The singing came nearer and nearer. The ladies were startled. All rose and looked through the window.

A huge black crowd of people was coming down the street. Four simple wooden coffins covered by wreaths with red ribbons swayed over their heads.

"You have fallen in desperate strife
The victims of love for the people
For their freedom, honour and life
You have given all that you had"

young male and female voices sang in the crowd.

"The funeral of the victims of the revolution," Stesha said sadly,—"your victims, gentlemen!" she shrieked and rushed out of the room.

The chorus followed her.

"What is it? What is it?" Stepochka was repeating.

"Take the ladies home, I will pay the bill," said Gritzenko.

"How disgusting!" muttered Matzneff.

"They think they'll prove something by all this," said Sablin, helping his wife to put on her sable coat.

Rotbek was also helping his wife with her coat. She was

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crying. Vera Constantinovna looked pale, and Countess Paltoff laughed nervously.

"The villains," she was saying through fits of laughter, "they have rejected God, religion, everything and are pleased about it. Victims! Strife! Great God! Too few have been executed!"

The crowd had passed the restaurant and was disappearing down the street. No one had closed the window and the words of the touching melody penetrated feebly into the room, mingled with the frosty morning air.

"The scoundrels!" Matzneff said once more through his teeth.

XXI

ON the 6th of October 1905 Sablin rode into the yard of a factory in the suburbs of the town. Twenty mounted troopers accompanied him. Thin cold rain was pattering slowly. The Cossacks, whom Sablin had come to relieve, were preparing to depart. Tall, muscular men led their bay horses out of a barn and lined up in the yard. A young Cossack Captain with a little pointed red beard which sparkled with drops of rain stood in the doorway of the factory office and waited for Sablin.

"So you have found our hole, Captain," he said, shaking hands and giving his name. "A rotten place. Everything is quiet and no signs of a strike. Mostly women work here. A table is reserved for you at the office and there is quite a nice girl working there. She's a staunch monarchist. You can pass the time quite agreeably if you choose. It is a little awkward that you will have to take your meals with the manager but he is a very nice man—a Swede—and a most amiable host. He seems to be clever and highly educated."

The Cossack corporal showed Sablin's men where to put their horses. The Cossacks mounted.

"Well, good-bye and good luck. I shall have to relieve you tomorrow—an unfortunate and unpleasant fact for me. The whole of our regiment is out doing patrol work. Last week I spent three days at the Putiloff works. It was disgusting. The workmen were on strike but were quite friendly with us. The whole show is so stupid!"

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The Captain leapt into his saddle and rode out of the yard followed by his Cossacks. Sablin saw them leave, looked round the quarters of his men and went up a narrow stone staircase leading to the office.

The office was in a large room with three windows, the walls covered by oil paint. Five tables stood in it. At three of them sat young fellows in plain clothes who were writing busily. The fourth was occupied by a nice looking girl with slightly dishevelled hair falling in wayward locks over her ears, cheeks and brow. She had a provokingly turned up nose, small beautiful teeth and large hazel eyes with a bold sparkle in them. The fifth was left free for Sablin. He bowed to the company.

"How do you do," the young girl said quickly, "we are so glad that you have come. Boris Nicolaievitch, the Cossack officer, quite scared us by saying that he would leave at the appointed time without waiting to be relieved. We are so afraid to be left unprotected. Please, what is your name?"

"Alexander Nicolaievitch," said Sablin.

"This is your table, Alexander Nicolaievitch. I can bring you a book if you like. But I don't know whether it would interest you: 'Prince Serebrianny.' What a nice name you have, Alexander Nicolaievitch. Mine is Anna Iakovlevna, but I prefer to be called simply Nelly. Do you like to go to the theatre?"

"Yes," said Sablin.

"I also. I like the ballet, the opera, but best of all the drama. I have seen the 'Three Sisters' at the Moscow theatre. How beautiful it was! Or 'Tsar Fedor Ivannovitch' at Suvorin's. Orleneff played. Chekhoff is my favourite writer. Whom do you like best, Chekhoff or Gorky?"

The question was left unanswered.

"It has become difficult to live now, with these strikes. Who needs them? They are not useful to anyone. Our factory has not been on strike for a single moment. That is why we are so hated in the neighbourhood. Students came here and called us all sorts of bad names but we threw them out ourselves and then the Cossacks arrived. What a nice man their officer Boris Nicolaievitch is."

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Sablin listened to her chatter and continued to sit looking out the window, on the long narrow yard. A low barn, covered by sheet iron, stood at the opposite end. The red roof was glistening with moisture. Dark kitchen gardens covered by gloomy looking cabbage stumps, could be seen behind the barn. Wet, brown fields stretched farther on and a forest loomed in the distance. Fog floated over the earth, a train sped through the fields and dense white steam first stretched up in large curling clouds, then broke and flew low over the earth. Everything was damp, grey looking and gloomy.

A man dressed in a black wet overcoat and black soft felt hat which shone from the rain, stopped in the street before the gates, looked into the yard for some time in indecision and then entered and turned toward the barn. A soldier, Kushinnikoff, came out. Sablin could see his handsome round face with a black moustache. He was without an overcoat in an unbuttoned tunic. He assumed a picturesque attitude and lit a cigarette. The man in black approached him and began to say something. Kushinnikoff listened attentively. The man in black produced a sheet of paper from his pocket and they began to read together. Kushinnikoff laughed. Then he took the sheet and returned to the barn. The man in black quickly walked out of the yard.

"He has given him some propaganda," thought Sablin and ran down the stairs.

The yard was empty. He entered the barn. Saddled horses stood there and peacefully munched hay. A guard dozed in a corner. Sablin sent him to bring the section corporal and Kushinnikoff. The corporal appeared looking sleepy and discontented. Kushinnikoff saluted smartly and boldly looked at Sablin with his bright grey eyes.

"Kushinnikoff," Sablin said. "A civilian was here a few minutes ago and gave you a sheet of paper. Where is it? Give it up immediately."

"No, Your Honour, I have seen no paper. No one has been here," Kushinnikoff answered, growing pale.

"Why do you tell lies!" Sablin said. "Why? I saw you.

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You came out of the barn and lit a cigarette. A civilian dressed in a black overcoat came up to you and gave you a sheet of paper. You read it together, you laughed and he went away."

"No, Your Honour," Kushinnikoff answered,—“this did not happen.”

“Am I lying then?”

“I don’t know, Your Honour, only I have seen no civilian. I can swear to it.”

“Ah, you villain! You lie! I shall have you court-martialled!”

“As you please, Your Honour,” Kushinnikoff said humbly.

“Search the scoundrel!”

The corporal turned out his pockets, searched under his clothing.

“There is nothing, Your Honour,” he reported.

“Search over all the quarters. Arrest this scoundrel and send him back to the regiment. He is to be kept under guard until I return. Liar! Receive propaganda. . . .”

“No, Your Honour, I can swear to it. It’s as you like, you can have me sentenced, you’re an officer. . . .” Kushinnikoff said, growing deathly pale.

“Silence!” shouted Sablin.

Working men and women crowded in the yard attracted by the noise. Sablin pulled himself together and returned to the office. He was boiling with indignation. He could not have been mistaken. It was Kushinnikoff. He clearly recollected how he had thought that he had a most typically Russian face. “At any rate,” he decided,—“I have witnesses. Two of the clerks and Anna Iakovlevna sat at the windows, they must have seen the civilian in black.” He raised his eyes. All the office people were crowding at the windows and displayed a marked interest in the proceedings. They must have seen the preceding incident.

“Gentlemen,” he said entering the office, “several minutes ago a civilian entered the yard and talked to a soldier. Did you see this?”

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"We have seen nothing," said one of the youths as he sat down at his table and resumed his work.

"We didn't look outside," confirmed another.

"Anna Iakovlevna, and you, have you also seen nothing?"

Anna Iakovlevna became confused and blushed.

"I didn't look out of the window, Alexander Nicolaievitch, I was talking to you. There is nothing interesting out in the yard. Perhaps someone did come but I didn't notice it."

Sablin felt that all of them had seen it but that they sided with the soldier and the man in black because they feared them, but did not fear him, an officer. He felt disgusted. He unbuckled his sword, took off his great-coat, hung them on a peg near his table and sat down. He produced a French book he had brought and feigned to read it. The clerks continued to scribble. Anna Iakovlevna was sighing and at last grew bolder.

"What are you reading, Alexander Nicolaievitch?" she asked.

"A book," he replied.

"Oh, I love to read books. But I prefer the old literature to the modern. There can be nothing better than the "Obriv" of Gontcharoff. And whom do you like best, Leonid Andreieff or Turgenieff?"

Sablin did not answer. The clerks giggled and scribbled more noisily. Anna Iakovlevna grew red, buried herself in a huge office book, but could not keep silent.

"Do you know bookkeeping?" she asked.

Sablin did not answer. The clerks giggled again and Anna Iakovlevna looked offended. "Hang her!" thought Sablin.

XXII

ALL left at three o'clock. The clerks in silence and without bowing, Anna Iakovlevna stretching out her little hand and saying capriciously: "Au revoir, until tomorrow."

A janitor swept up the office and opened the window. Early autumn dusk was falling outside. The factory continued to work noisily and the whole building shook nervously. A lamp with a green shade was lit on Sablin's table.

At six o'clock the janitor appeared again.

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"The manager invites you to dine with him, sir. I will show you the way."

Noticing that Sablin made a movement towards his great-coat and sword he added: "Leave it here, sir, all will be in order, I will see to it personally."

He led Sablin up and down the stairs and corridors and stopped before a door which he opened. Sablin entered a spacious hall and passed into a study where a clean-shaven bald little man rolled up to him on his short thick legs. He was extremely stout.

"I am glad, sincerely glad to see you," he said enveloping Sablin's hand in his fingers, warm and soft as if swollen with fat. "Please come with me to the dining room, everything is ready. The 'starka' is waiting for us."

He spoke perfect Russian with a hardly noticeable accent.

The dining room was agreeably warm. Wood crackled pleasantly in a huge fire-place, a shaded lamp hung from the ceiling, lighting a table covered by a faultlessly clean starched cloth and laid for two persons. A big fat smoked "sig," pink salmon cut in thin slices, mushrooms in sauce, sausages and ham decorated the table.

"I like good food, Captain," said the manager, pouring yellow vodka into small crystal glasses. "I am a Swede. We have the same custom as yours to provoke appetite before the dinner and I specially recommend this sig to your attention. I chose it personally when it was alive and have had it smoked. It tastes like cream."

Oscar Oscarovitch placed the back of the sig which was covered with a thin layer of fat on Sablin's plate. It was really excellent.

"I also recommend the salmon, I like our northern fish," Oscar Oscarovitch said as he poured out a second glass.

The amiable hospitality of this stout little man and the cosy atmosphere created by the vodka, the "zakouskas" and the crackling of the wood in the fireplace dispelled Sablin's gloomy mood. He ate with appetite the simple but good food that was served.

Both lit cigars after dinner. Sablin wanted to rise but Oscar

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Oscarovitch stopped him and said, rolling up an arm chair to the fireplace :

“Stay a little longer, Captain. Everything is quiet in my factory. The strikes and workmen’s riots arise only because of a misunderstanding of the situation by the government. They direct their blows at the shafts and not at the horse. It is all the result of a policy which aims at the destruction of the Orthodox faith and autocracy in Russia and at the enslavement of the Russian people.

“But the revolution comes to us under the banner of liberty,” said Sablin.

Oscar Oscarovitch placed his warm soft hand on Sablin’s knee and said, puffing at his cigar :

“Do you know what the International is?”

“I have heard something about it, but I know nothing definite,” answered Sablin.

“It’s good that you don’t know. Opinions differ about it. Some want to see in it something of a higher order than even Christianity, something all-human. They want to create not a State, not Nations, but something peculiar which would embrace the whole world . . . in other words a tower of Babel, turned inside out. I think of it differently. I don’t know whether you are a believer, Captain, but it seems to me that the International is a teaching of the Antichrist. The ideas will bring the end of the world and the destruction of civilisation. Our government is short sighted and does not see the evil. Eight hours work per day, participation of the workmen in the management of industries and in the government are being claimed. This is excellent and not so terrible after all. But why do they speak of workmen only and not of peasants?”

“They give admission to all,” said Sablin.

“No, Captain, it would still have been possible to fight them, had that been so. But they exclude everyone except themselves. Universal, direct, equal and secret voting has been created for them. One must know their leaders to understand the whole danger of such voting. Will you vote? No, because it disgusts you. Will a tradesman vote? No, he is too lazy for that. Will

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a peasant vote? No, he is too busy and it all appears to be too distant from his village. Who will vote then? Proletarians, hooligans, idlers and men of a similar kind. For whom will they vote? For the people that shall be pointed out to them. They will vote a list of the leaders appointed by the party and the party itself has been prepared abroad. First of all they need a general amnesty so that these agents of Satan can come here and start on their work of destruction. You have mentioned the word 'liberty.' It would be better to say that you have repeated it. What is liberty? Do you understand that word? Liberty of what?"

"Freedom of meetings, speech, strikes, inviolability of dwellings and of personality, as they put it," said Sablin.

"Excellent, excellent. But doesn't all this exist? Can't you assemble at a theatre, at a church, at a club or at your home? You are only prevented from meeting for purposes of destruction and murder. Is this unreasonable? Can you touch or offend even the lowest beggar? It is all provided for in our laws. No, Captain, they want something quite different. Two months ago I was in Switzerland on business and talked there to a certain Korjikoff. A terrible personality."

Sablin started.

"What was his name?"

"Korjikoff. Do you know him?"

"No," Sablin said in a dull voice. "Well, what about this Korjikoff?"

"He occupies a secondary position among them and is not initiated into all their secret plans. But he has a boy of nine years of age whom he brings up. He has the features of a cherub. You can see such faces on old Italian paintings. Ah! Captain, one can never forget this child once one has seen him."

"Where did he get this child?" asked Sablin, fixing his eyes on the fire.

"He is his son."

"His son? Korjikoff is married then?"

"He is a widower. It is said that his wife was wonderfully

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beautiful and died on giving birth to this child. It is rumoured that he isn't even Korjikoff's son. . . ."

Oscar Oscarovitch stopped talking and puffed at his cigar which had gone out.

"Yours is out too. Would you like another? A real Havana?"

"Well, what about this boy? Who was his father? What was the name of his mother?"

"I don't know. That is not important. The point lies in the way Korjikoff brings up his son. The boy has no idea of God. When they see churches Korjikoff talks of them as he would of ancient Greek mythology. The boy has no illusions. He knows the secret of his birth and has been convinced that there is no soul, that personality vanishes after death and that everything is permissible because there is no future life, no punishment and no reward. The boy is nine years old but he makes me think of a demon of the future."

"I have seen him throw a stone from behind a corner at a little English girl, daughter of wealthy parents. He used to cut kittens to pieces with a pen knife and to pick their eyes out while they were yet alive. I told his father about this and he only laughed, pulling at his nasty little beard: 'Let him get used to the sight of blood,' he said. 'Those who shall be strong enough to dare anything shall be the victors.' These are the people, Captain, who will lead the revolution in Russia. Do you think that it was Gapon who wrote his letters and appeals to the Tsar? No, it has all been inspired from there. They hope to destroy the whole European cultured world, to bring the peoples to a state of despair through hunger to enslave them and to build up their kingdom, the kingdom of Satan. Korjikoff told me openly: 'You have three whales on which your Christian world rests—Faith, Hope and Love. We shall destroy faith and prove that God does not exist, we shall replace hope by despair and love first by class, and then by general, hatred.' I remarked that people would then be transformed into animals living in caves and avoiding each other. 'That's exactly what we want,' he said. 'We shall remain. The workmen? The

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workmen are slaves. We use them as a tool, as a dark power, as cannon fodder.' The socialists do not understand this and work for them. 'Russian socialists,' Korjikoff told me, 'are docile good natured idiots, who are ready to sacrifice themselves as soon as we wave a red flag before them. They are our slaves, all these Risakoffs, Jeliaboffs and Koliaeffs.' It is difficult to do anything, Captain, under our present Government. It always comes five minutes late. A constitution should have been granted at the coronation of the Emperor Nicholas II—the Duma and a responsible Cabinet would have then destroyed the work of these demons,—but it is going to be given tomorrow when it has been wrenched from the Government by strikes and by riots. Ah, Captain, they are stronger than we are. Evil is with them and evil is stronger than good."

Oscar Oscarovitch was silent and puffed at his cigar.

"What would you prefer for supper, Captain,—boiled sturgeon with mushroom sauce or white partridges with bilberry and klukva jam? Both can be served."

"I hope you will excuse me," Sablin said rising, "if I decline your kind invitation for supper. I do not feel quite well and would like to go to bed earlier."

"You have probably caught a cold on your way here or I may have worried you by my chatter. But I will send you both and a bottle of warm Burgundy. It will do you good before you go to sleep. The sturgeon and the partridges are really fine. I have personally chosen them and I should be really pleased if you would accept."

XXIII

THE large room with five tables and three uncurtained windows had a queer appearance in the dusk. Sablin extinguished the light. A bed had been prepared for him in a corner and a washstand placed near it. But he could not sleep. A lantern burnt outside in the yard and its reddish rays penetrated the room. The rain had ceased and the night frost had covered the pools of water in the yard with ice. The sky was starlit and the moon shone brightly. The white walls of the Novodevitchy mon-

FROM DOUBLE EAGLE

astery and its churchyard were seen to the left. Lights twinkled there on some graves in ever-burning ikon lamps. The fields covered by cabbage stumps were straight before the windows. Sablin had had enough of the view during the day. The factory was working noisily all around him. The night-shift was on duty. The monotonous dull rumble and vibration of the building unnerved Sablin. It aroused thoughts about the past in connection with the words of the manager. Several courses, a bottle of wine and tea were served on a table lit by the moon. Sablin touched nothing. The cold linen of the bed attracted his body which was tired from being in a tight fitting tunic all day, but he did not think of lying down. He walked up and down the room watching his own shadow cast by the moon as it moved over the walls. Sometimes he halted and looked fixedly into the silvery gloom of the night.

"My Prince! My Prince!" He seemed to hear a ringing but distant voice. The vision came to him of a beautiful face with large radiant eyes and a tiny red body lying in an arm chair. His son. Why had he not thought that this unpleasant looking little creature was his son? Why had he not taken him? The son of his gentle Marousia had now become beautiful as an angel and wicked and cruel as a demon. Could he have taken him then? What would he have done with him at his flat, where would he have sent him? Marousia's secret and that of the insult he had suffered from Lubovin would then have been revealed.

Sablin ran his hands through his hair. No. . . . It was impossible then. Korjikoff would not have given him his son. He could not have fought Korjikoff,—the law would have been on his side, and it was impossible to reveal the whole secret of the child's birth. Now his son was growing up somewhere in distant Switzerland. Oscar Oscarovitch said that he had not been baptized but that the name Victor had been given him because he was intended to be a conqueror. His son Victor. He must be about ten years old now. Should he go to Switzerland and bring him back? But what would Vera Constantinovna say about this? It would mean the destruction of his family happi-

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ness. Nicolas, Tatiana and Victor. Victor, brought up in nihilism and deep cynicism, could not live with his brother Nicolas and good natured sister Tania!

"Vera," he would have to say, "he is my son." And everything that had already been forgotten about Marousia, Lubovin and the insult would then come to light.

The factory vibrated with the noise of machinery and of hundreds of lathes. Lights sparkled on the cemetery, the lantern burning in the yard resembled a red blurred spot. Ugly and artificial bustle reigned everywhere. The great town lived and swarmed like a mass of worms in a tin. The mystery of life was revealing itself in every house, beyond every window, dark or bright. Men were living and suffering there. Sablin thought of the numerous suicides that happened at night in Petersburg. Every hour carried new victims with it. We hear of them from police and newspaper reports but we do not see them because they hide from other human beings, seeking for loneliness.

Sablin seemed to see through the gloom a dark barn in a lonely yard full of old furniture among which an aged man tried to attach a rope to a beam and to tie it into a loop. Oh! what horror and cold must be filling his soul during these last terrible moments. It seemed to him that young girls were running towards the dark waters of muddy canals. What faced them in the dark depths at that minute? He saw the little rooms of dirty boarding houses on the outskirts of the town with close air and torn wall paper and youths with revolvers in their hands. Visions came to him of great bare black trees amid vast parks. The stretched bodies of youths and of young girls hung on their crooked branches. He saw benches on the edge of the waters where young people had gone for eternal sleep after a dose of poison. The phantoms of the night swept past and surrounded him, attracting and inviting him to follow in their wake.

"What is your life!" they told him,— "shame and torture. How shall you reconcile the fact of your easy and wealthy life with Vera Constantinovna with that of Victor's existence? All your past is a mistake. You live on, attracted by mirages, while we have understood the meaning of life and we have left it."

FROM DOUBLE EAGLE

The lights twinkled attractively in the monastery cemetery and the shadows of the dead beckoned him to join them in their cold rest. . . . "Faith, the Tsar, the Motherland," they whispered. "We have realised that they do not exist. Faith in God, but there is none, because miracles could happen if there were a God. You waver? Pray earnestly then. Fix your eyes on the Southwest where Switzerland lies. Korjikoff is there with your son. Pray that God may let you see him." "Oh, my Lord, I implore you with all the power of my faith to lead my gaze through space and let me see the face of my child through the gloom of the night!" Sablin waited. The thought passed through his feverish brain that the miracle might be accomplished. The darkness of the cold October night would be rent asunder and the face of his son would appear as if on the screen of a magic lantern. Some invisible threads certainly did unite them. But if nothing should appear, then there was no God. The same silvery night reigned outside, the stars glimmered quietly, the ice-covered roof shone with the moon's rays and the lantern burned dimly.

Then recollection of the cosy atmosphere of his own family, of Vera Constantinovna, of the pure and beautiful Kolia and Tania came to him. He thought of his children's bedroom with a huge ikon of the Holy Virgin and a tiny lamp burning before it.

His sword and revolver hung on the wall. It was dark in the room. Only the light of the lantern outside partially penetrated the room and Sablin saw the revolver. Why the revolver? Was it not a special sign? An answer of God to his defiance. "Take it, dare and you shall witness a miracle!"

Sablin thought of Baron Korff as he lay in his coffin. How cold and contemptuous his features had been. Something important seemed to have been revealed to him. Revealed there. Here everything would be as usual. A tortured conscience, his son Victor as an anarchist and a hooligan with the noble blood of the Sablins in his veins, Lubovin's insult, the Kushinnikoffs, the **strikes and the shouts of the crowd**: "murderers!"

Count Paltoff had told him of an episode. A young officer

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of an infantry regiment led a patrol of soldiers to relieve posts. A workman ran up to him, struck him a swinging blow on the face and ran away. The officer was at a loss what to do and the guard took no action. He returned to the regiment, said nothing about the event and went home. There he shot himself in the night. The soldiers told that a workman had struck their officer on the face and were asked why they had not tried to arrest him. Some answered that they had not dared to do it without an order, others said that they thought they could not leave the ranks when on the march. Several replied openly: "It was His Honour's business and did not concern us." Most of them kept sullen silence. Count and Countess Paltoff and the officers present considered that the young officer had done the right thing.

And Sablin continued to live after Lubovin's insult.

"Vengeance is mine, I will repay!"

The vengeance was approaching. The insolent features of the boy with the beauty of an angel shone out of the misty distance and vengeance approached from there.

Sablin felt a cold chill down his spine.

"So you are afraid?"

Sablin walked firmly up to the wall and took the revolver out of its case.

"I fear nothing," he told himself.

"No, you are a coward," answered the same voice. "Dare! You shall see that there is no God and no eternal life. That there is nothing after death and that your 'ego' will not exist."

Sablin felt this "ego" in every part of his body. No, it could not vanish. He looked at the cemetery. The walls of the monastery behind it seemed whiter. The night was passing away. He examined the revolver. The bright nickel plate shone and it seemed to invite him to use its power.

"What am I doing? How stupid! My nerves have become too unstrung after all this. Someone less stable might have done it. We are all balancing on a rope. One wrong step and all is finished."

Sablin put the revolver back and returned to the window.

FROM DOUBLE EAGLE

A pale clear day was dawning. The cabbage stumps were lit by the slanting rays of the sun whose edge was appearing over the distant wood. The lantern gave no light in the deserted yard.

"There is, there is a God," whispered Sablin. "Let God arise and his enemies will scatter. My Lord, save me from the demons of the night!"

Something heaved over him, roared and rumbled with thousands of feet rushing down staircases and filled the air with human shouts. Sablin clutched at his heart. The factory whistle was screaming persistently, making his ears ring. Working men and women filled the yard, shouting and laughing. The night-shift had finished its work. Day was assuming its rights.

XXIV

By telephone Sablin received an order to return to the barracks. A constitution had been declared and freedom of conscience, personality and of meetings had been granted. The people had obtained what they had striven for.

The sun was dully shining in a pale sky and the ice was melting under its rays. The streets were muddy. Crowds of people moved through them and gathered in groups. The town had a holiday-like appearance. Flags decorated the houses, red ribbons were seen here and there in the crowds and mutilated notes of the Marseillaise were heard. The police looked on indifferently. It had been vanquished. Sablin and his section felt awkward and out of place among these rejoicing multitudes.

"Long live the Army!" shouted a drunken workman.

"Murderers!" came from another direction.

A stout merchant drove past the section in a light carriage.

"Benefactors! But what will happen now! Don't deliver us to them, my dears!" he exclaimed waving his beaver fur cap at Sablin.

Sablin remembered that the Emperor had been against the constitution, and pounced upon the newspapers as soon as he returned home.

Yes. . . . The Imperial edict was there containing the vari-

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ous liberties. But the words remained that were golden to Sablin: "By the will of God, We, the Autocrat. . . ." All these liberties were not terrible so long as the Tsar was "by the will of God." Sablin read further about the freedom of the press, of meetings, conscience and of personality and about the convocation of a State Duma.

Blood rushed to his cheeks. "It is a fraud," he thought. . . . "A fraud signed by the Emperor. How could he have signed it?"

Quite simply. The edict had been prepared and brought to him with the words that it had to be signed for the welfare of the people.

"For the welfare of the people?" the Emperor must have said raising his beautiful eyes. Oh! Sablin could see those large grey eyes and the beautiful hand slowly moving over the parchment writing the characteristic signature. Sablin felt sadder than ever. He was losing his faith in the Tsar. He had often heard parallels drawn between the Emperor and the Tsar Feodor, the last Tsar * of the Rurik dynasty. What had followed then. . . . Godunoff, the rule of the seven Boyars, the Touthinsky pretender, Zaroutsky and the Poles, blood and wailing everywhere, martyrdom and enslavement of the Moscow kingdom, long years of internal warfare and strife and then the election of Mihail Feodorovitch, † the first Romanoff and then Peter the Great. History was being repeated. But would he live long enough to witness a second Peter!

The sleepless night he had passed tormented by his conscience reacted now not in weariness but in a nervous tension. His heart beat quickly and his eyes sparkled from under swollen red eyelids. His face burned from the cold water with which he had refreshed it. Sablin asked the servant who was waiting upon him where Vera Constantinovna was.

"Madame is in the dining room. The lunch is waiting for you, sir. Mr. Oblenissimoff is there," answered the servant.

* Died in 1598.

† 1613.

FROM DOUBLE EAGLE

Oblenissimoff was the husband of Sablin's aunt. He was a large, talkative man, a worker of the "Zemstvo," extremely unbalanced in his ideas, idealising the moujiks and the people at times, and cursing them at others. He usually left for Nice and for Monte Carlo after his moments of disillusionment to heal the wounds that had been inflicted on his feelings. He was a gentleman, a Russian "barin" in the full meaning of the word, tall, stout, with grey hair and carefully trimmed beard framing a handsome florid face. His fingers were covered with rings and his clothes were always of the latest fashionable cut. Oblenissimoff knew how to tie his cravat with taste and to wear a flower in his button-hole so that it would have a political meaning. Lately he had devoted much time to politics and had composed letters and petitions to the Tsar and the Ministers.

Sablin entered the dining room.

XXV

"Ан! at last!" exclaimed Oblenissimoff rising to meet him and clasping him in his arms. A red carnation adorned his button-hole. "We had almost decided not to wait for you. I congratulate you, Sasha, ah! the spring has come and a new era of life is beginning. The Tsar has gone with the people. The people have received the power and the law out of his hands. The spring, Sasha!"

"Why are you so glad, uncle?" said Sablin, freeing himself from his embrace and coming up to his wife.

"That is what I have told Egor Ivanovitch," said Vera Constantinovna, "his joy is precocious."

"Liberty!" exclaimed Oblenissimoff. "I am filled with joy. At last we are going to become a real part of Europe. We shall no longer have the nagaikas, knouts and prisons, but liberty as a method of government. The people will elect their representatives and they will fill the chambers of the Duma."

"Whom shall our people elect? What do our people desire?—land and freedom. The same free distribution of land that they have been demanding since the reign of Catherine the Great and which Pugatcheff gave them during the mutiny he raised.

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Do you want a similar mutiny to be repeated, do you want the 'illumination' of landowners' manor houses and the destruction of cultured life? . . ."

"Let all that be. A great work of construction cannot pass without excesses. The people are not so wild and stupid as you think, Sasha, and then they have leaders."

"Who are these leaders? Village teachers—socialists. Have you read their motto: 'Proletarians of all countries unite,' do you know what our modern proletarian is like? Maxim Gorky has given us their beautiful images in all their primæval simplicity. Shall the Makar Choudras of Gorky be at the head of the Government? You must understand that Russia is being set aside. Proletarians of all countries, worthless fellows who have been unable to create even their own personal welfare are going to be invited to participate in the construction of Russia's welfare. Men who are destroying and who despise everything are invited to create the power of a country. Oh, Great God! . . . No good will come out of such a beginning!"

"But who told you, Sasha, that hooligans and raggamuffins will have a place in our parliament?"

"The proletarians will be there," Sablin answered.

"No, the parties! Life and the struggle of parties shall reign there. Yesterday I was at a meeting of our young Constitutional Democratic party. Roditcheff and Muromtzeff,* delivered speeches. What brains these men have! They clearly and brightly described Russia's happy future. The Tsar has placed Russia's destiny in the hands of the Russian people and they will be able to preserve the integrity of all that once belonged to the Romanoffs alone."

"Proletarians of all countries, that means Jews, Armenians, Greeks, Georgians and our own yellow beaked youths who have been expelled for misconduct from schools—these are the ones whom your people are calling to power!"

"Sasha! Sasha! Shame! Professors with great names,

* A Moscow lawyer, President of the first Duma convoked at Petersburg on the 27th April 1905.

FROM DOUBLE EAGLE

famous scholars in law and in political science! Muromtzeff, a patriarch with a huge grey beard, authors of scientific researches, men of knowledge and of light!"

"I have not read their works."

"You ought to be ashamed then. You have mediæval ideas about things, Sasha. Knights, town folks and peasants. The knights spend their time in hunting and in revelry, the town folk work for them, and the peasants till the ground for them. It is absurd!"

"And beautiful," added Sablin.

"No, beauty lies in general work."

"The knight should till the ground and the peasants burn their castles and cut to pieces paintings of Vandyke and Teniers—eh?"

"It is a pity you didn't hear Muromtzeff's speech."

These men have been in prisons and in exile. They know the people and will be able to manage them."

"Criminals."

"No, sufferers for the truth, for the people."

Sablin shrugged his shoulders. At that moment Count and Countess Paltoff arrived. Natalia Borisovna greeted Vera Constantinovna and rushed towards Sablin and Oblenissimoff.

"Egor Ivanovitch, what does all this mean? Alexander Nicolaievitch, explain it to me, I don't understand it at all. Can it mean 'égalité, liberté, fraternité.' Will our estate be taken away from us? Am I no longer a Countess?"

"A citizen. . . Natalia Borisovna," said Oblenissimoff,—
"is the word 'citizen' worse than 'Countess?' The great ideals of the French revolution. . ."

"With the Russian people," put in Sablin.

"Murder of the King, the Terror, Robespierre, Marat, Danton . . ." said Vera Constantinovna.

"I have already seen one fellow of that type today. He sat on a lamp post and exhorted the crowd to storm the Petropavlovsky fortress and to liberate the criminals who are imprisoned there. The police had to pull him down by the feet while he

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howled 'liberty!' The police gave full liberty to their nagaikas while thrashing him," said Paltoff.

"Count! You are incorrigible! No, gentlemen, you do not understand the great act of Imperial clemency. You are bad servants of the Tsar."

"What else could one do?" said Sablin with feeling. "Can people be allowed to instigate the liberation of criminals? The Emperor signed the edict against his will. He did not want it but he was forced to."

"What can one do!" roared Oblenissimoff. "One must go to the streets and the squares of the city and preach the words of the Tsar and his sacred will. Yes, one should disband the army, beat the swords into ploughshares, give the land to the men who toil on it and go to the Tsar arm-in-arm with workmen and peasants and call him to follow you into the heart of the holy Russian people, into quiet, orthodox Russia. Liberty! Spring! I cannot stay indoors when everything speaks of spring. I will go into the streets and listen to what is being said there, I will go to the party meeting and rejoice at the great men who are coming to the front. A great day! As if it were Easter! I feel like singing 'Christ is risen!'"

Oblenissimoff shook hands with everyone and left.

"Is he mad, your uncle?" Count Paltoff asked.

"No, he sold all his estates at a very high price two months ago and has transferred the money to Switzerland. He can rejoice now."

"Queer man," said Natalia Borisovna. "Wears a red carnation in his button-hole and shouts like a workman."

"Terrible times are approaching. My father wrote to me from his estate that the Esthonians were getting quite out of hand there. They burnt down some young forest plantations last week. The damage is estimated at over five thousand. Some paid the rent for this year, but others didn't."

"A policeman was killed near our estate," said Paltoff. "Father called out the Cossacks, as by a lucky chance he was on friendly terms with the Governor. But the whole manor of our neighbours was burnt down and no one could be pun-

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ished. They declared that the whole village had decided to do it."

"Have you heard who these Muromtzeffs and Roditcheffs are?" asked Sablin.

"No, Sasha, I haven't. They must be scholars or writers."

"Writers?" Sablin said meditatively. I would understand it if they had such names of world renown as Leo Tolstoi, Mendeleieff, but these. . . ."

"They possess something more important," Natalia Borisovna remarked bitinglly.

"What is it?" asked Sablin.

"They have been in prison."

Sablin shrugged his shoulders and said nothing. The general silence became depressing. The feelings of each varied but all were gloomy.

XXVI

YEARS passed. Nothing was changed, as Sablin wanted to think. The Emperor still held the title of Autocrat and emphasized wherever he could that he was an Autocrat. The first Duma had been dissolved after it had begun to speak too freely. It assembled again at Viborg and was arrested. The people answered by bloody riots, pogroms and "illuminations" of the estates,—the troops quelled the riots. Capital punishment, which had not been heard of for a long time, now became an ordinary event. Incendiaries, murderers and propagandists were hung and shot everywhere. Sablin thought that they deserved what they got for having acted against the law, but the people blamed the Government . . . and the Emperor . . . for everything. The words "the hated Government" became of common use.

Some glorified the Duma, called it "the Duma of National Wrath," and predicted a great future for it; others only laughed at it and called it a "place for talking." Sablin once talked with Pestretzoff on this topic.

"The Emperor makes a great mistake by his present policy," Pestretzoff said. "Either the Duma is a Parliament which

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rules the country, before which the responsible Ministers tremble and which performs the functions of the Emperor's eyes, or no Duma is needed at all and only 'We, by the will of God . . .' should remain."

"I think that we have both," remarked Sablin. "As far as I know the Emperor does not want to give up autocracy."

"Then no Duma is needed, Sasha."

"Why, let them talk. It amuses the people. I have heard some speeches at the Duma and have read all the reports of the sittings. They are all devoid of real activity. The parties quarrel and fight each other. The Ministers pay no attention to what is going on there and the Emperor still less. . . ."

"You are wrong, Sasha. The Duma in its present state represents a terrible evil. The people create nothing through their representatives but only criticise. That is easy. The Duma fits out men who are capable only of talking and criticising while the country will soon require men capable of creative work. Sasha, the disturbances do not cease. The troops are becoming unreliable and the discipline is weakened. It is the work of the Duma! The Duma undermines the State, it corrupts the people. By its criticism, founded or unfounded,—that does not matter, as the point of the question lies elsewhere,—the Duma instills in the people distrust and contempt towards the Ministers. The Duma brings forth and shows to the people all the dark sides of the Government and of the Tsar. The Duma has arisen between the Tsar and the people. It ignores the good actions of the Tsar and emphasises the bad. Sasha, you often see the Emperor and you speak with him freely,—tell him that things cannot remain as they are. The Duma should be made responsible, it should be invited to participate in government and not in criticism. Its powers should be enlarged and not curtailed. The entire responsibility for everything should be placed on the Duma. The Tsar should remain only a Tsar. . . . The only other issue would be for him to take everything upon himself, to break with the noble classes, to go with the people and personally make them a gift of the land."

Sablin watched the Emperor. A great change was noticeable

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in him. He became moody and irritable. Sometimes he drank vodka before dinner and supper as if trying to forget something and to dispel gloomy thoughts. He did not become drunk, his eyes did not shine, but were simply fixed with deep sadness in them upon something that he saw in the distance. Sablin's feelings of love for the Emperor remained unaltered. He wanted to penetrate into the reason of the Emperor's sadness but he did not know how to do it. The Emperor's position was becoming extremely difficult because the Ministers placed all the responsibility upon his shoulders. Military executions, capital punishment and proclamations of a state of siege were done in the Emperor's name. Clemencies and favours were given by the Duma which obtained them from the Emperor by arrogant speeches. It always asked for more than was needed and when the laws were issued the impression was created that the Tsar had cut down the rights of the people,—that the Tsar had given one thing when the Duma had asked for another. The Tsar saw and understood that the men whom he had appointed to help him, on whom he had showered favours and distinctions now transformed him into an object of a political game. These men were betraying him.

The Emperor's family life was also worrying him. The Empress was ill and often did not appear at the table for meals. New persons surrounded her and they had pressed Sablin aside. The Empress had given up her dreams of power and lived only for her family and her son, but she had strange mystical ideas and acquaintances. Anna Viroubova, the abnormal wife of an abnormal husband became her intimate friend. They prayed together, together they reached ecstasy and searched for new saints and for signs of the will of God. The Empress stayed for hours on her knees, and bruises covered her skin. Happy people did not pray thus. She was unhappy.

Sablin suffered greatly in seeing the sorrow that reigned in the Imperial family. Often he had opportunities for watching the Emperor and the Ministers when on duty at the palace. Rodzianko, the tall stout President of the Duma also came there often. And all of them felt contempt for the Emperor. They

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laid reports before him, they tried to persuade him to do certain things; but their general attitude was unfriendly. They placed their own personalities higher than that of the Emperor. The Emperor felt this. He grew tired of this strife which worried him and made him slack in his work. He preferred to receive only those persons who would bring him good news. He liked Suhomlinoff * because the clever old General spoke calmly and simply and always presented his reports from an agreeable point of view. He disliked Rodzianko because the President of the Duma always argued and pressed his points, contradicting the Emperor.

The old merry spirit had disappeared from the Court. The palace balls were no longer held after the Japanese war. The brilliant parades of the Guards which usually happened on the "Field of Mars" in April seemed out of place now. The crowds were incited against the Army and excesses were to be feared. The Tsar reviewed his Guards by regiments before the Tsarskoie Selo palace on the days of the regimental holidays. He dined in the circle of officers trying to forget the reality and to create an illusion of fidelity among the troops. He tried to forget the troubles that had arisen in 1905 in his own Preobrajensky regiment.

Sablin saw that the country was falling to pieces after the institution of the Duma. Not Russian people but parties composed it. The Army was separated from the people and the people hated the Army. The Ministers went neither with the Duma nor with the Tsar. The Tsar was left in solitude.

Piece after piece was being torn away from Sablin's heart. His faith in the people had been destroyed,—because Sablin could not believe in a people whose representatives went against Russia and the Tsar, his faith in the Army had wavered, and only the Tsar remained. The beloved Tsar whom he pitied! But one cannot pity a god. The Tsar was losing his divine aspect and that was terrible!

Sablin spent more and more time in the circle of his family.

* War Minister during the years which preceded the Great War.

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His children were growing up; Vera Constantinovna was unchangingly beautiful and loved him as she did before. She was admitted to the intimate circle of the Empress, she tried to sooth her sufferings and Sablin loved her all the more for that. "I have something to live for yet," he thought,—“the Tsar and the family. . . .”

“Let the insane Victor grow up there in the distance. I shall go against my son should he rise against the Tsar. Is he my son after all? I haven't brought him up. The heart which gives the soul is more important than the seed out of which the body arises.”

XXVII

SABLIN was alone in his flat on a spring evening. His son was at the Cadet Corps, Tania at her school. Vera Constantinovna had left for Tsarskoie Selo in the morning and had not yet returned. The clatter of hoofs and the rumble of wheels on the street pavements freed from the snow and ice came from outside. Oblenissimoff, who was a member of the fourth Duma, was very proud of the fact and often delivered smooth speeches full of liberalism but entirely devoid of common sense, had come to see his nephew, and talked at length.

Now Oblenissimoff was gone. Dead silence filled the flat, only overhead some solitary person poured out his soul in a nocturne. It spoke of a tortured self seeking rest in melody and in prayer. Sablin's gaze wandered in his thoughts over the whole of the country. He saw the little smoky houses of the peasants, the land of different owners scattered in strips between the possessions of others, dirt and dejection, hunger and poverty. He saw the Volga steppes scorched by the sun and heard prayers for rain; he saw the white clean houses of the Ukrainians. The same shout rose in a groan everywhere —land!

Sablin knew that it was not only the land that the Russian people needed. It was necessary to alter the present system by which each peasant had his land scattered in small strips over a vast area; proper irrigation had to be introduced in many places; culture and education were necessary; but first of all they needed

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land. The Russian mujiks sought for truth and did not see it in the present state of things when one man groaned on half a desiatin of land while another possessed a whole province and never visited it. The people had always hoped for a redistribution of the land. They had hoped for it even before the liberation of the serfs. It was the Tsar who had to give them the land and not the Duma or the revolution, not strikes, murderers of officials and the burning of manor-houses. The Tsar ought to leave the educated classes and go with the people.

But all these lands had been granted to the nobles as gifts for true service by the previous Emperors. Each estate had been presented together with "gramotas" signed by the Tsars of Moscow and the Emperors of all The Russias. Could the Tsar, the grandson and descendant of these Tsars, break their word and signature and take away the land from the nobles when they had committed no fault?

No, he could never do it!

The nocturne flowed quietly overhead, trickling fainter and fainter till it suddenly poured out mighty and ringing again, the music speaking of power and calling to battle and to great deeds.

The nobles should love the Emperor, they should support him at a time when the Throne was shaking. The Russian State had always based itself upon the nobles and they should support it now. All these millionaires, proprietors of tens of thousand of acres of land, should come to the Emperor and tell him: "Take our lands and use them as you think best!" Villages and stanitzas would thus receive the additional land they needed by an Imperial edict and by the will of the Tsar. Experimental farms and schools of agriculture would be instituted in the manor-houses. The young men of noble families would live and work there and would teach the peasants patriotism and scientific agriculture instead of socialism and hatred for the Tsar and for Russia as the present generation of the educated classes was doing, which instigated murders and pogroms. Let the old coat of arms,—a golden sword on a blue field,—stay over the doors of the manor-house of the Sablins and an inscription be placed beneath: "The Imperial School of Agricul-

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ture founded by the Sablins." Let Kolia and Tania live there surrounded by a crowd of peasant children and teach them how to make Russia prosperous and happy! . . .

Would the nobles refuse if the Emperor addressed them with a request to renounce their hereditary rights to the land and to go thus with the peasants?

The pianist struck a mighty chord and abruptly ceased playing the nocturne, which had risen to the power of a storm, and started again in a sweet weeping melody which spoke of sorrow and of prayer.

Old Russia had been composed of the Tsar, the nobles, the merchants, the clergy, professional classes, peasants and officials.

The "bourgeois" and "proletarians" had appeared now. Peasants and workmen still remained while all the rest were divided into parties: Monarchists, October Party, Nationalists, Constitutionalists, Socialists-democrats, Socialists-revolutionaries, Labour Party, Anarchists, Internationalists, Communists, —perhaps there were even more!

The old classes had worked for Russia and the Tsar. Strife had sometimes arisen between them, but they were all unanimous when the matter touched Russia, and Russia had then been strong and invincible. But now the noble class was in decay. The nobles had helped to form all these new parties and took an active part in their work. Little by little they had taken the form of the horrible, unpatriotic and superficially educated "intelligentzia," who were now ruining Russia in their party strife, Russia could not exist with them. Such nobles were no longer needed, let them perish and give their land to the people.

The clergy was in poverty, had lost its active spirit and faith and had no influence on the people. All its interests were concentrated upon petty fighting for existence and bread. A clergy without spirit is no longer a clergy. It was necessary to make radical changes in the organisation and personnel of the clergy and to make each priest materially independent of his congregation. Two types of priests were possible—either a well-fed man whose material needs were supplied, a man of the type of Catholic or Protestant priests, a man who could help his con-

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gregation by vast scientific and practical knowledge which he had acquired through proper training, or,—a hermit, an aged man who needed nothing. But not the present type of priest, who had to be paid for each office and who refused to perform the wedding or funeral ceremonies without payment. Yes,—the real clergy existed no longer.

Sablin's head sank lower and lower. Where could the Tsar find support? Two of the main pillars were in decay and might collapse at any moment and fall into dust. Independent workmen had been replaced by employers and employees. A powerful army of famishing, discontented men had been created inside the State. Perhaps it would have been better for Russia if the whole of this army had been disbanded and sent back to their native villages, if the factories had been replaced by manual work and articles of luxury imported from abroad.

The peasants and the officials remained. It was evident that the peasants would follow those and work for those who would give them the land. They had become accustomed to the Tsar, they praised him in their songs and their legends.

The officials. . . .

Sablin sighed heavily. "Mea culpa," he whispered, "mea maxima culpa." Devotion to precedence and selfish ambition had always been a characteristic feature of the officials, but they had never attained such proportions as now. The officials were corrupt to the limit. Stolipin alone had risen high above the rest and had perished, murdered by an unknown hand. The "oprichniki" of Ivan the Terrible, the Secret Office and the renowned Third Section in later days had done much injustice and settled many personal quarrels, but they had been careful to guard the prestige of the Tsars. The present "Ochrana" and the swarm of officials which surrounded the Throne thought little about the Tsar's interests. Old Russia was in a state of decay. It was necessary to construct new pillars which would support the magnificent building of the Russian Empire. Wide reforms had to be introduced without delay. The Duma could not and should not give them—it was itself corrupt, being composed of parties and not of Russian people, and could have no

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authority over them. The Tsar should give these reforms. The Tsar should issue edict after edict, ukaze after ukaze, alter everything, till the Russian field in a new manner, find the necessary men and place them in power. The Tsar! Everything should come from the Tsar and be done in his name!

The music ceased overhead in a powerful flowing chord. Sablin rose and looked at his watch. It was four o'clock in the morning.

"I will go to the Tsar," he thought. "I will go and tell him everything. It is my duty! He will listen to me and will understand that what I say is prompted by my limitless love for him!"

XXVIII

THE Emperor had only finished his work at six o'clock and passed to his study. "Wait just a moment, Your Honour," said a stout respectable looking valet de chambre of His Majesty. "I will announce you."

Sometimes the Emperor invited Sablin in these evening hours and talked to him. Sometimes his daughters, the Grand Duchesses, joined them and the Emperor read to them in English. Everything was quiet then in the study of the Tsarskoie Selo palace. Worries and earthly cares vanished, the Emperor's eyes had not such a sad look as usual, and he became more accessible for simple conversation.

Sablin remained alone in the library. The walls were lined by large bookcases with glass doors, and a round table littered with newspapers and illustrated magazines stood in the centre of the room. The "Novoie Vremia" and "Russky Invalid," printed on vellum paper were put on one side. The Emperor read them in the morning.

A mahogany door with a bronze handle led to the Emperor's study. Everything was quiet there. Sablin had already been standing motionless near the table for more than half an hour. A bronze clock which was before him had struck six and then half past.

The doors leading to the presence chamber were suddenly

thrown open and the Adjutant General on duty preceded by the valet de chambre entered the library. A man of strange appearance followed them. He was tall, thin, had black hair trimmed in moujik fashion, a black moustache and a long shining black beard which descended in waves from his extremely pale face. He wore a long white silk shirt embroidered on the collar and borders, long dark velvet trousers and soft peasant "oporki" which made his steps noiseless. But the eyes of the man were his most remarkable feature. Huge, almost entirely white, shaded by black eyelashes and thick eyebrows, they shone with an internal fire from under dark sunken eyelids. Sablin involuntarily lowered his gaze under the sharp and attentive look of this man which seemed to penetrate into his soul and to read all that was there and in his thoughts.

Had that man entered alone without the Adjutant General, Sablin would have stopped him and called out the Guard, so unusual and out of place was his appearance in the surroundings of the palace.

The Adjutant General seemed confused on finding Sablin in the library. Sablin stood at attention looking at the Adjutant General, but the strange man stopped before him and pierced him by the gaze of his uncanny eyes.

"Don't look at him but at me, my dear. Great profit it shall bring you. Lean upon me."

Sablin involuntarily looked at the speaker. His face was separated into two parts by a long, strikingly white nose. His black beard and dark hair glistened brightly and the great horrible eyes gazed keenly from under thick eyebrows. They seemed to see what no one else saw, but no thought was reflected in them. There was something demoniacal in the lustful but powerful gaze.

"You think of great things! O-ho! I shall cut it over again at my will. Bow low to Grisha. . . . He can teach you. . . . Get me to meet your young wife, that'll be better still. . . . Ough, she's good! . . . I like. . . . Whi—i—te! . . ."

And he turned away from Sablin, sniffed, a lustful smile appearing on his thick bright red lips and walked towards the

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door which was opened for him by the valet de chambre. He boldly entered the Emperor's study.

The Adjutant General silently shook hands with Sablin and left the library.

"Who was this?" Sablin asked.

A smile of contempt flickered over the face of the valet de chambre—at least Sablin thought so—but it immediately resumed its usual calm and impassionate expression.

"Grigory Efimovitch Rasputin. The lighter of the Tsar's ikon lamps," he said. "There will be no further reception to-day. His Imperial Majesty is occupied. It is useless for Your Honour to wait. I could report if there is anything that you wish me to."

The passionate speech he had prepared vanished from Sablin's head. The pale face with the long black beard was haunting him, the white eyes burnt him through and through and the lustful strange words rang in his ears.

Sablin shrugged his shoulders and walked out of the library. A painful foreboding of something inevitable and horrible swept over his soul and for the first time his love for the Tsar was seriously strained.

XXIX

THE Emperor reviewed at Tsarskoie Selo the units of his Guard on their regimental holidays and received the officers at his table. An insolent idea came to one of the regiments which was most favoured by the Tsar. The officers decided to invite the Emperor to their regimental Mess and return his hospitality by showing him what the etiquette ordinarily prevented him from seeing and hearing—the Tziganes, a gay Russian choir from the Krestovsky island, Goulesko's Roumanian orchestra and singers and dancers from the "Villa Rode." They wanted to take him away for a moment from the usual stiff surroundings of the palace, Imperial hunts, parades, manœuvres, balls and receptions and bring him into the intimacy of an officers' merry making. Only their own intimate circle would be present, all officers of the regiment which the Emperor liked and every one

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of whom he knew personally. The idea was a bold one. . . . But it was proposed during the days when the Emperor was growing weary of his power and when he sought momentary oblivion of his palace and family life, which were becoming more and more difficult. And the Emperor accepted the invitation.

Another regiment followed the example of the first. It was impossible for the Emperor to refuse now and it became a custom for the regiments to receive the Emperor at their Mess. These receptions cost fabulous sums of money. The year's salary of a junior officer went in one day. For many officers of the more modest regiments such a reception meant a family tragedy, the impossibility of purchasing new clothing for their wives, tears and groans. But no one could complain or protest. The Tsar's clemency was too great and too great was the honour of having the Tsar as their guest. But little by little the god descended from the clouds and men saw no longer a god but an ordinary mortal. The spirit of criticism had penetrated deep into Russian society and men began criticising the Emperor when they saw him in their own midst.

But no one could tell that to the Tsar. He saw sincere merriment, he forgot his worries among the young officers of the regiment and rested there from his heavy moral sufferings. But the god ceased to be a god, and gossip and calumnies which men whispered around and which could not reach the palace, now easily penetrated the barracks.

Sablin's regiment was waiting for the Emperor. He was expected at seven o'clock for supper at the Mess.

Soldiers in parade uniforms lined the staircase, which was covered by a red carpet and decorated by evergreens. Police and agents of the "Ochrana" patrolled the street outside.

Curtains were drawn in the Mess which was brightly illuminated inside. The table for the "zakouskas" was covered with heavy dishes of ham and sturgeon and with crystal vases with fresh caviar. The officers were lined up according to rank in the large hall. The band was placed in the adjoining billiard room. The officer on duty waited downstairs. Exactly at seven

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o'clock the Emperor's large motor car, which was driven by an officer devoted to him, was sighted at the end of the street. The motor car stopped before the Mess around which a crowd of onlookers had assembled. They took off their caps and hats and raised a thin and disorderly cheer. The Emperor went up to the Mess where he shook hands with all the officers while the regimental march rang through the hall. The Emperor passed round among the officers, stopped near a window and lit a cigarette. The men of the band had finished playing and crowded curiously at the doors. For the first time they saw the Emperor not from the ranks but in the familiar surroundings of the Mess. Everything was quiet in the hall. The officers felt restraint in the Emperor's presence and the Emperor did not seem to be quite at ease. He silently looked at them with his shining kind eyes. Sablin broke the ice by approaching the Emperor and beginning to talk to him simply. The Emperor smiled and said:

"Smoke, Sablin. . . . Smoke, gentlemen. . . ."

Sablin lit a thin cigarette and smilingly began to speak about his visit to the camp barracks in the winter and of an old watchman who was guarding them.*

The Emperor looked at him and smiled, but the smile immediately vanished from his face and his eyes took on the sad expression which they wore constantly during the few past years. The Commander of the regiment approached them and invited them to proceed to the dining hall.

At the table the Commander of the regiment sat on the Emperor's right hand; the Prince Repnin on the left. Steepochka, Gritzenko and Sablin opposite. The Emperor seemed to be in a melancholy mood. Absentmindedly he drank a glass of rarest madeira and listened not so much to what the Commander of the regiment said as to the general hum of voices round the table and to the music of the band. The Mexican song "La Paloma" was being played, and all watched the Emperor, as it was said to be one of his favourites. The courses were served

* The camps were occupied by the troops only in the summer.

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quickly and skilfully. Waiters from the best Petersburg restaurant had been called in to help the Mess orderlies. A stout maitre d'hotel, clean shaven and important looking, directed the operations. Wine was drunk in moderation. But the lieutenants led by Rotbek managed to become flushed and noisy when the moment for the toasts arrived. The toasts were official and short:

"To the Sovereign Leader of the Russian Army!" the toast was drowned by a wild hurrah and the National Anthem repeated thrice. The second: "To the regiment and officers of the regiment!" was lost in the tune of the march.

After supper all passed into a small cosy drawing room where coffee was served. The Emperor did not sit down, and called Sablin to his side.

"How is your wife?" he asked. "I haven't seen her for a long time but I know that she often visits the Empress."

His face grew sad. The Emperor was silent for a moment and then said:

"Everything is so wearisome, Sablin. 'La Paloma' was played during supper. About twenty years ago I made the mistake of saying in my hussar regiment that I liked this song and 'La Paloma' has ever since met me wherever I arrived. . . . Sometimes I think of Hamlet's words about the cloud. . . . Do you remember them?"

He approached the table, put down his cup and addressed the Commander of the regiment:

"Have you finished forming the machine gun section?"

"Quite. We are going to begin the shooting exercises at the camp."

"Long ago I considered it necessary to supply the cavalry with machine guns, but the budget caused so much trouble. I quite understand that it is annoying to appropriate money for war purposes."

"Your Majesty," said Gritzenko approaching the Emperor, "may I venture to invite you to listen to our new repertoire in the hall."

"Here is a man who does not seem to grow old," the Em-

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peror said, taking Gritzenko's elbow,—“you are of the same age as myself, I believe?”

“Two years older, Your Majesty.”

“And how smart you look!”

“No, really, Your Majesty, I have lost all my hair. My head is like that of a catholic priest.”

All passed to the hall. A stage had been erected there and arm chairs and sofas were placed before it in picturesque disorder. The Emperor sat down in an arm chair.

A Russian “chansonette” singer fluttered out on the stage. She had bare legs with little shoes and a short ballet skirt. Her extremely low cut dress uncovered her breast. She began to sing new suggestive little songs that were in fashion at that time.

The Emperor listened smiling. Seated behind him the lieutenants were laughing and Rotbek winked at the singer.

The bandsmen and soldiers crowded at the doors.

Sablin rose and went sadly away from the hall. It seemed to him that here, in their very regiment, the Imperial dignity was being offended.

XXX

THE bandsmen were smoking and drinking beer in the billiard room. Bottles and rye bread covered the table. Some of the soldiers sat, others stood. The backs of all were turned to Sablin and evidently none of them expected that an officer would enter at that moment.

“I saw, brothers, how the Emperor lit his cigarette,” said a tall, dark bandsman, who played on the trombone,—“quite simply, quite like an ordinary man. The C.O. told him something and he laughed. Queer! A Tsar, and how simple. I shall tell this at the village when I come home, but will anyone believe me?”

“How he looked at the French girl. I swear, brothers, that her legs were quite bare. What a shame!” said an alto player.

“She ought to be shot for it, the carrion,” said another. “Appears before the Tsar in such a state! Oh, my God, what will

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happen next! Shame! In the village they'll call me a liar and thrash me just for telling about it!"

Sablin retired behind the curtain and listened. His heart was beating, tears rose to his eyes and he felt a desire to weep.

A cornetist, an irascible, choleric and unhealthy looking youth, who had been a pupil at the conservatory, said among the crowd of the bandsmen:

"The Tsaritsa passes her time with Gregory Rasputin, well the Tsar has to find consolation. He can have a wide choice."

"Towards what are the officers leading the Tsar? To think of it,—is it good?" said the trombonist.

"Fool!"

"You're another. Are you an N.C.O. to bark as you do?"

"I am an artist and you—boo-boo-boo and nothing more!" the baritone turned again to his neighbour and continued: "I know this Mary-Kate, she's a simple Finnish girl, her temperament alone brings her forward."

"The Emperor seemed to like her," said a bandsman smiling.

"I should think so. Rasputin has made him understand the value of things."

"How did this man get into such power," said the bandsman,—"they say he's a simple moujik?"

"A big . . .", said the baritone, and all laughed gruffly.

Sablin felt a desire to rush into the room and beat this mad crowd with anything he could lay hands upon. With billiard sticks, balls, bottles, only to see blood on their faces and terror in their base eyes. But he restrained himself. Ah! It wasn't their fault that divinity had been shown to their uninitiated gaze. All this was equivalent to propaganda conducted by the officers, by the very men who ought to save and protect the Emperor. Today at their regiment, yesterday at the Sharpshooters, at the Preobrajensky regiment last week and at the Hussars some time before. What could the men understand in all this? They saw corrupt girls with bare legs, they saw the improper tango and cake-walk, they heard the provoking music of the Rumanians, the words of the suggestive songs and saw the Tsar amid these surroundings.

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The Tsar—meant a god for them! Could one dance or sing a “chansonette” before an altar?

Sablin remembered a case during the revolution of 1905 when a crowd of youngsters burst into the Kazan cathedral during the service. One of them lit a cigarette from the flame of an ikon lamp while his companions laughed merrily.

Was there not something similar here? In that instance socialists had acted, the enemies of God and of Tsar, and here—we! we!

Horror overwhelmed Sablin, he clasped his head in his hands and left the Mess. Unrestrained laughter and the sounds of a too frolicsome French song sung by three merry voices came from the hall while he was putting on his overcoat downstairs.

A pale spring night was outside. The Emperor’s motor car waited near the entrance. A stout officer sat motionless at the wheel, his sad gaze fixed into space. Sablin came up to him and grasped his hand. The officer looked at him and seeing tears in his eyes, rose from his seat, embraced Sablin and kissed him warmly. They understood each other.

XXXI

REPnin took over the command of the regiment in the spring, Sablin was promoted to the rank of colonel for Easter, Stepochka received an army regiment, Rotbek was appointed Commander of the second squadron and Matzneff left the service.

Sablin was in charge of the regimental Quartermasters department. “Now is the opportunity for creative work!” he thought, and settled down to calculate what had to be done. He travelled constantly from the camp to Petersburg and back. Vera Constantinovna intended to leave with the children for the country but for some reason postponed the departure. Kolia was at the camp with the Cadet Corps, Tania was finishing her school. She often visited Tsarskoie Selo and became Virobuff’s constant guest. Sablin did not like this order of things but he was too busy with his regimental work to interfere. He had to carry on a constant strife with the Commander of the regiment.

In the spring Sablin had received a letter from a Cossack

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Colonel, Pavel Nicolaievitch Karpoff, who commanded a regiment on the Austrian frontier. He had become acquainted with Karpoff during patrol service in the Novgorodsky government in 1905. Karpoff did not belong to Sablin's circle of society and they had never met since. He was of a good old family, possessed a coat of arms but did not serve in the Guards. Their deep love for Russia and for the Emperor had formed their friendship during the patrol service and they exchanged letters from time to time.

"Are you thinking about the war?" Karpoff wrote. "All my thoughts are centred on it. I drill my regiment, prepare it for terrible battles and hope that the shame of the Japanese war won't be repeated. Then—'we did not know,' but we haven't got that excuse now. We do know. Only a blind man can't see that England and Germany will have to fight each other. England will perish if she doesn't destroy Germany now. Here on the frontier I feel the pulsation of military life. Germany doesn't want war for the moment, she let the opportunity slip past her in 1911 when we had no machine guns and heavy artillery and when France had not finished her program of armament. Germany would have managed then. But it is too late now, and we shall conquer. I want war, but at the same time I fear it and all my hopes are concentrated on the Emperor's love for peace. I am worried by the fact that the big men among the local Jews want the war. This means that it will be profitable for them and it cannot be good for Russia if it is profitable for the Jews. You must also prepare yourself, Alexander Nicolaievitch, because the tendencies of public opinion after 1905 are such that the Guards will have to be sent to the front.

"But nothing may happen yet. The contractors Mandeltort and Rabinovitch have visited me this morning to sign a contract. They say that the Jews won't allow the war. Here in Poland we all believe in the almighty power of the Jews, may God pardon us.

"I have sent my son to the military college this spring. He is a good boy, three years the senior of your son, and a diligent

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scholar. Try to see him at the college. He is a handsome fellow and a good Cossack. He will be proud of your attention."

This letter made Sablin think. Yes, distant thunder was already heard, though it was hard to believe in the possibility of a world war. But he reinspected the whole of the Quartermasters and Mobilisation stores. There were no warm caps, no fur overcoats, the horseshoes were not fitted, the baggage train was in disorder and had never even been rolled out from the sheds, as peasant carts had been generally used. The hospital ambulances were of a clumsy old-fashioned pattern. Repnin insisted on using the regimental funds for new parade helmets and cuirasses, Sablin demanded the purchase of hospital ambulances, repairs of the baggage train, orders for fur overcoats and the reinspection of all the mobilisation appliances.

This engendered heated disputes. Sablin consulted contractors, travelled to Finland to order wagons, sent to Kozloff for horses for the baggage train. The joy of creative work gripped him. The black thoughts about the people, the Tsar, the Duma and his son Victor now vanished. He estimated, made calculations, and decided not to desire too much but to do his little work as earnestly and as well as he could.

He had been for three days at his Petersburg flat, which was half closed up for the summer. Vera Constantinovna was seldom at home. He thought she looked queer. Her eyes shone strangely, her laugh was nervous and she was constantly wrapped in an Orenburg shawl, as if she had fever.

"Are you ill, Vera?" he said.

"No, why?" she asked nervously. "Do you notice anything?"

"You seem unwell."

She laughed hysterically.

"I am in the power of a demon, Alexander," she said, put on her coat and left the flat. She returned late in the evening and opened the door of Sablin's study where he was working with the chief clerk.

"Are you busy?" she asked.

Sablin came out to her. Her face was burning.

"Save me . . ." she said. "Pray for me. I cannot pray."

TO RED FLAG

"Vera, what is the matter with you?"

"Ah! Nothing . . . nothing . . . God may perhaps pardon me."

"Vera, it isn't good for you to go to these meetings. Faith is good, but mysticism isn't faith."

"Forgive me, Alexander, and if you hear anything,—forgive me. I am tired. Will you soon have finished? I will go to bed."

She made the sign of the cross over him and went away.

Sablin went to his wife's bedroom after he finished his work with the chief clerk. Vera Constantinovna was sleeping. Her face was pale and dark shadows surrounded her eyes. She was restless in her sleep, her eyebrows knitted sternly at times and deep sighs escaped from her breast.

XXXII

LILACS were blossoming and Petersburg was becoming deserted. Very many of its inhabitants had left for the country "datchas." Sablin returned from the camp in the afternoon and had a conference with the contractors until the evening. His wife was not at home when he arrived at his flat at seven o'clock. She had left for Tsarskoie Selo and Sablin went to work in his study. Hours passed, but Vera Constantinovna did not return. At last she arrived about three o'clock at night in a motor car and went straight to her bedroom where she locked herself in. Sablin decided to talk to her seriously. He never for a moment thought that his wife could have fallen in love with someone else and been unfaithful to him, but her behaviour seemed strange. He knocked at the door of the bedroom.

"One moment," Vera Constantinovna said in a dull voice.

He entered.

She was half dressed and was sitting with loose hair before the mirror. She rose as he came in and terrible suffering was reflected in her beautiful blue eyes. Sablin settled down in an arm chair and wanted to make her sit on his knees but she slipped away, put on a dark night gown and began to arrange her hair hurriedly.

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"My dear, darling Vera," Sablin began in a kind-quiet voice. "I have been noticing for some time already that you have some trouble. Be frank with me. . . . If you love anyone, tell me. . . . That can always happen. We will think over together what can be done. . . ."

"I have always loved you and you alone," Vera Constantinovna said sadly.

"Then what is the matter with you? What demon did you mention?"

Vera Constantinovna started and looked at Sablin with a frightened expression.

"Alexander," she said sadly,—“leave me alone if you can—I suffer, suffer terribly now. . . . Perhaps I shall tell you everything tomorrow.”

"All right," said Sablin. "May God help you. Until tomorrow, dear. I will bear anything, if you will only be happy once more."

But the next day she said nothing. She feigned to be animated, said that it had all been nonsense and that she would tell everything should it be necessary. She insisted upon seeing her children and took Tania from her school. Kolia came more frequently on leave from the camp. At times Sablin thought that she was becoming her old self again, but days passed and he could again notice that her eyes were fixed on one spot, that she did not listen to what he said and started when he approached her. She seemed to have her own secret thoughts, her own grief, and was unwilling to share them with him.

It happened on a July evening. Sablin had just returned from the camp when she entered his study and said:

"Alexander, I see that you are also suffering, but you must prepare yourself for the worst. Pray. . . . Pray my dear boy and save our children. . . . Tomorrow you shall know everything. . . ."

She made the sign of the cross over him several times and looked fixedly at him with eyes brimming with tears. She seemed abnormal and nothing could be read in her strange eyes. Her pure clean soul was no longer reflected in them. He rushed

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towards her but she slipped away. "Tomorrow," she said and went to the rooms of the children.

Sablin did not sleep that night. Several times he approached the door of his wife's bedroom and listened. All was quiet there. "She is asleep, probably," he thought. "Sleep, sleep, my darling, and remember that I shall forgive you, whatever it may be." The thought suddenly came to him that perhaps it would be she who would have to forgive him. What if she had learned everything about Lubovin and Marousia? What if Lubovin still sought revenge and had written to her and had enclosed his letters to Marousia? What if she knew everything about Victor! Sablin began to think of words of excuse but could find none. The night passed in feverish anxiety. Vera Constantinovna did not appear at breakfast in the morning and he grew anxious.

"Father, go to see mother," said Tania. "She has been so strange lately. I think that she is ill. Yesterday she made the sign of the cross so long over us, as if she was saying farewell forever. Go to her, she has something on her mind."

Sablin went. He knocked at the bedroom door—there was no answer. He listened—all was quiet inside. The cold of death seemed to come from the door. He tried the handle,—the door was locked. The anxiety of the children increased.

"Father, something must have happened," Tania was repeating persistently,—"mother behaved so queerly yesterday."

A locksmith was sent for and the heavy doors were opened when he arrived. Vera Constantinovna lay on her bed. She was clad in her best dress, her hair was carefully arranged and her face had a bluish tint.

She was dead. A phial of poison stood on a stand near the bed and a banal note "No one is to be blamed for my death" lay by a large sealed envelope which bore the inscription: "To Alexander, my husband. To be read after my funeral."

This charming, cheerful creature, always happy and well-balanced, had evidently for some time been consciously preparing herself for death. What cold horror must have penetrated

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her soul and frozen it so that she could have decided to take this terrible step?

All three, Sablin and the children, stood a long time silently looking at the rigid features. The weeping of Kolia and Tania brought Sablin out of his state of dumb grief. He kneeled, covered with kisses the dear face, rose and left the room, taking the children with him.

XXXIII

VERA CONSTANTINOVNA was buried. Her mother took the children with her; and from the cemetery Sablin returned to his empty flat towards seven o'clock in the evening. It was filled with the scent of flowers, fir branches and the peculiar smell of varnished wood, camphor and incense which remains after the funeral preparations. The flat wore its summer aspect. The mirrors and the paintings were wrapped in muslin and the furniture was covered. His steps echoed sadly through the drawing room and the corridor.

Sablin passed to his study. All the paintings and the large portrait of Vera Constantinovna in her wedding dress were also wrapped in covers. Everything was cleared away from his writing table. Sablin had been preparing himself to move to his camp quarters. He took off the muslin from Vera Constantinovna's portrait, lit all the lamps and gazed at it for a long time. She stood before him in her full height as if alive. Her innocent blue eyes looked at him from under dark eyelashes and her lips seemed to say something.

Sablin closed the curtains and settled comfortably in an arm chair so that he could see the portrait. If Vera Constantinovna's ghost had come to him then he would not have been afraid but would have even welcomed her apparition. Only now as he prepared himself to open the envelope with her last letter he realised how deeply and passionately he had loved her with every atom of his spirit. They had lived for seventeen years together, heart to heart, and he had never once had an intrigue or offended her and she had been faithful to him.

"Haven't you, Vera?" he said and looked at the portrait.

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The young face was smiling. The light was reflected from the paint and one could see that it was a portrait and not a living person. Sablin put out all the lamps except a small shaded one on his table. It was better like that. In her white dress she seemed like a mysterious phantom in the gloom of the study. The evening shadows played on her face and it seemed alive.

Sablin nervously tore open the envelope and several small sheets of paper covered by fine hand writing fell out of it. He arranged them in order of their dates and began to read.

“Will you forgive me? I know that you won’t, but I hope still. Life is too good, I love you and the children too much and it is hard to leave it. Conceal everything, forget that it has happened and lie, lie for the rest of my days to you and the children so that you should know nothing, I try to do it but I feel that I cannot lie. I thought of telling you all so that you would understand and forgive. But you won’t understand and you won’t forgive, you will always remember it in your soul. You may not reproach me and never give out your feelings by words, but still I shall always see that you have not forgotten what has been although you have forgiven me. . . . But what have you to forgive me for after all?”

“What has taken place? I fear that even now I won’t be able to tell everything, to tell what is most important. All of it is too strange and . . . vile.

“Do you believe in demons? I did not before, but I do now. It could have only been a demonical power and nothing else.

“I shall try to tell everything in the order as it happened, but shall I manage it?”

“. . . *May*. Yesterday A.F.* told me that he, Rasputin, wanted to make my acquaintance. I answered that I hadn’t the slightest desire to see him as too many bad things were said about him and as it wasn’t safe for a woman to meet him.

“It isn’t true!” A.F. burst out. “He is a saint. A chosen

* Alexandra Feodorovna, the Tsaritzza.

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phial full of blessing. You should be happy that he has noticed you."

"I answered nothing and changed the topic of the conversation.

"That evening we played poker at the house of V.* at Tsarskoie Selo. V. joked at my expense and then said seriously: 'Salvation lies in abasement. You are possessed by the demon of pride, you know. Drive him away by abasing yourself. Princess L. visited the Russian baths with him, washed his feet there and experienced heavenly happiness. The same happened with G. He has chosen you and this means that you are blessed.'

"I called him a corrupt dirty moujik. A.F. did not like this, she said nothing but I could see that she was displeased. V. said: 'You repeat the opinion of the street. One must know in order to judge.'

"I tried to alter the unpleasant impression I had produced and asked A.F. to excuse me. I said that I would meet him but only when many persons were present.

"'Certainly,' said A.F. and kissed me.

". . . *June.* You arrived from the camp in the morning while I was still in bed. What happiness you brought me. You remember? We lunched together. I was full of love for you. You left after lunch and I remained alone thinking of you. A footman arrived with a note from V. She wrote that she would call on me at six and take me to see him. . . .

"Shall I continue to write? It is so difficult . . . I thought I would leave it, but it would be more difficult still to speak. You must know it. You must know that it was not my fault. I loved you more than ever and I thought that nothing could happen.

"O, God! The abomination of it all!

"V. arrived in her carriage. The air was filled with the fragrance of lilacs, and women and children sold bunches of white

* Anna Virobuva, one of Rasputin's greatest admirers.

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and blue lilacs in the streets. We arrived at his flat. I heard many women's voices from the hall and this reassured me. I entered calmly after V. We were evidently expected as places were left for us:— next to him for me and at the other end of the table for V.

“Stout old O. was sitting at his other side. A pale lymphatic young girl I did not know sat next. She had large exalted eyes surrounded by blue shadows and she looked at me with hatred. I also saw L., Princess P. with her daughter who has only just finished her school, N. and J.,—all were in evening dresses. In all there were ten ladies and young girls. V. and myself completed the number to twelve. They were all sitting 'round a large table covered by a white cloth and littered with expensive “zakouskas,” cakes, sweets, biscuits, fruits, bottles of wine and a samovar. L. was pouring out tea. He sat at the head of the table and did not rise as we came in. His dress was very odd. A long pale lilac shirt, black trousers and slippers put,—as it seemed to me,—on bare feet. His thick shining hair was parted in the middle and his long black beard had a glossy tint. But most remarkable were his eyes. Huge, white, tired but burning at the same time, they seemed to pierce through everything.

“He stretched out to me his large hairy hand and said: ‘Come, come, my dove. Whi-i-ite. I like it.’

“The attention of all the ladies was turned upon me and I heard exclamations:

“‘He has noticed her! Lucky woman! He has deemed her worthy! Our father! . . . God's blessing rests upon her!’

“I was confused and sat down. He poured out some wine for me and offered cakes and sweets. I touched nothing.

“‘You think some powder is added to it?’ he said. ‘I don't do that. Do as you like. Don't eat if you're disdainful. See how the others behave.’

“He broke a piece from a cake on his plate and stretched his arm towards the pale young girl who opened her mouth obediently.

“Maria loves me. Do you want to go to the baths again, Maria? . . . And you are proud! But it'll be all right. I see

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you love your husband. You have seen him today. But that does not matter, I'm not disdainful. I like you, you resemble Alexandra so. . . .

"The ladies looked at me with envy:

"O. told me:

"'You must be happy, Vera Constantinovna. It is the first time that our father has paid such attention to anyone from the very start. You must be a chosen phial. The blessing rests upon you.'

"I thought they were all mad. I understood nothing and continued to sit not knowing what to do. Then I suddenly felt his that huge white eyes were fixed upon me.

"I have heard it explained by hypnotism. No, I could have resisted that and I did not fall asleep then. I felt everything to the very slightest detail, and in this lies all the horror of what happened.

"It was a demon who overpowered me, and I felt that my will was being taken away from me. I felt dizzy, saw everything through a mist and could hardly hear what was said. He was looking at me fixedly and when I turned my face towards him I saw only his huge eyes which shone with a horrible fire. He was disgusting but at that moment I felt that I would do anything he would order.

"He roughly seized my hand and said: 'Come!'

"I rose and followed him obediently, he led me by the hand. All were looking at me with admiring envious eyes. V. told me: 'You happy woman!'

"We entered the neighbouring small room where stood a rather dirty looking sofa. The door to the dining room was left open. All sat quietly there and seemed to listen to what would happen. I understood nothing.

"Alexander! Is this unfaithfulness? It is a violence like to murder, it is horrible.

"He led me back to the dining room where I was met by a

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chorus of exalted voices. Princess O. kissed my hand, V. did the same. The lymphatic girl was almost fainting.

"'You are sacred!' they screamed all around, 'sacred, pure, happy!'

"He drank wine smiling.

"I don't remember how I returned home. You were working in the study. I flung myself on my bed and went to sleep after having taken the decision to tell you everything and to demand vengeance.

"I have to keep silent. A.F. believes that A.N.,* her son, will live and be in good health as long as *he* lives. I know—you will kill him. You will thus kill A.N. and the whole dynasty. This is the belief of A.F.

"I believe it too, because he is a terrible demon.

". . . *July*. I have decided to put an end to my sufferings. You will not forgive me while I live, perhaps you will forgive me when I am dead.

". . . *July*. Live, live at any price. As your servant, your slave, but only to live.

"Go to the monastery and know that you have forgiven.

"The sun shines brightly, nature is full of joy. I went for a drive to the islands. How beautiful the Neva is, the lime trees and the fragrance of their flowers, the fresh breeze, the blue sky. Oh! I want to live, live!

". . . *July*. He calls me. I haven't the strength to resist.

"I will not go to him, God be my judge.

"Forgive me. . . . Oh, God! How I love you Alexander, our children and life!

"I know that you will not forgive me alive, forgive me at least when I am dead.

* Alexei Nicolaievitch, the Tsarevitch.

FROM DOUBLE EAGLE

"Christ be with you. Be happy.

"Forgive me"

XXXIV

THE handwriting of the last sheet was shaky.

Sablin raised his eyes and looked at the portrait of Vera Constantinovna. She seemed to ask: "Have you forgiven?"

"I have," he said. "I have forgiven you, my dear, my poor unfortunate Vera. I have forgiven you."

Yes, when she was dead.

But had she been alive?

For some time Sablin could not collect his thoughts. Such things could be washed away only by blood, and could they be washed away even then? He would, and kill him. He would go and demand justice. But from whom? From the Emperor and the Empress?

Sablin knew that this demon, this uncanny creature, who possessed such strange magnetic power, had entered the life of the Imperial family. It had been impossible to kill him. Many had tried it. A dagger had been stuck into his stomach but he recovered; he had been shot at and his wounds healed; each attempt only seemed to increase his power. He had been sent away from the Court and immediately followed strange unexplainable illnesses of the Tsarevitch, which vanished on his return. The Grand Duchesses hated and feared him, he was hated by the Emperor, but all feared his terrible power. A horrible power had entered the life of the Imperial family and was drawing towards destruction the Romanoffs and with them the whole of Russia.

A Tsarevitch had at last been born but he suffered from a mysterious illness. Medicine was powerless against it. . . . And he, that strange lustful moujik managed to influence it by his uncanny inner power. Whence did it come? He asserted that it came from God.

But how could God be associated with the tragedy of Vera! God and corruption, God and crime! Vera was right! He was a terrible demon who had appeared on the earth. . . . Many

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strange mysterious cases had been known in the past. They had not been explained although history had recorded them. We did not believe them. And now it happened before our eyes and we were silent and trembled.

No, he, Sablin, would not be silent. Unavenged insults would not haunt him for the rest of his life. Lubovin, Korjikoff, who had taken possession of his son, and now this mysterious man!

Once more terrible phantoms began to appear as they had done in the factory office. But they had been distant then. Now the whole flat was speaking of them, reminding of the dead by the mixed smell of camphor, flowers and fir trees.

Everyone has a cross to bear and everyone must bear it. The brilliant Colonel Sablin also has one. His features are unchangingly handsome, his well cared for moustache lies smoothly over his thin lips, not a single grey hair is to be noticed on his head. He remains still young and handsome, like Dorian Grey in the book of Oscar Wilde, while his portrait is growing old and demolished. His soul was growing old and was being torn to pieces.

Little by little he was losing everything in which he believed and that he loved.

He lost his faith in the Russian people and no longer loved them when he had become convinced that among them no strong men of mighty creative powers were to be found. Russia without geniuses, Russia without leaders, appeared to him like a grey and cold desert.

Now by one blow his family and the Tsar had been destroyed in his heart.

How could that be? How could God allow this to happen if He exists?

Sablin raised his eyes to the ikon and thought: "There is no God!" And if there is no God, then there can be no immortality of the soul and as a result of this no punishment. If there is no punishment then there is no crime. The enemies of Christianity, the servants of the mysterious international, Korjikoff who was corrupting his son,—all of them were right. There

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was no border between life and death, happiness and misfortune, good and evil. In reality there is nothing in it, it has been invented. Everything came from God, from Christianity, and if there was no God and no Christianity, then the interests of the body should replace those of the soul. Good is that which pleases the body. It is stupid to worry about anyone's death. Vera Constantinovna is dead; with her have vanished the comfort and calm which she had given,—well, take another then, so that your body shall be pleased. Love is a prejudice, a torment of the conscience,—just nonsense.

He felt cold all over. There was no life if there was no God. Only death, powerful and all absorbing. What was life then? Whence did it come? Whence came the torments of creative work, the creative work itself and the happiness it ultimately brought. Who was right: the professor in the Batoum rose garden or Korjikoff in Switzerland?

God or the devil?

But if there was a devil then there was a God. If there was something dark then there must be something bright. If the dark power was pushing the hand towards suicide, then the bright one would stop this hand.

Oh! But that would never happen! The dark powers have already been influencing you for a long time, and did the bright powers help? They did, he thought. The manœuvres came after the separation from Kitty, the sea trip with Vera Constantinovna after the separation from Marousia and Lubovin's insult. Marousia's death had been obliterated by the beautiful autumn at the "White House," his courting and the company of his bride. There had been moments when death tried to lure him into its dark embrace, but always life, joyful and enchanting, succeeded these moments. The happiness of existence came with it. From whom did it all come?

The soul said that it came from God. God existed, God has saved you and he will do so again.

But cold reason said—coincidence! Only coincidence. But now there would not even be coincidence. Everything had perished and had vanished. Russia stood dirty and befouled

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since the Duma had appeared with its speeches and questions. Only dirt seemed to fill the country. Strikes, demonstrations, executions, murders of policemen and soldiers in the streets. The animal instincts had been aroused in the people and shone in the "illuminations" of the landowner's manors. Everything had fallen into dust and began to break like the decorations of a play in a travelling show. Dust and faded paint, the grey beam work of the theatre and the torn canvas could now be seen through them.

He had hoped that the Tsar would help. But Rasputin had arisen at the Tsar's side. The Tsar ceased to be a Tsar and the soldiers dared to blame him. A slave dominated his master and the legend about the great sovereign in which he had believed all his life vanished.

His family had existed. It seemed to be moulded out of steel. The cold Vera Constantinovna, brought up in a good family and at the best school, straightforward and honest, seemed to think only of her children. But the devil touched her and all her purity and honesty collapsed like a house of cards built up by a child.

He looked at the portrait. The light coming from the window now fell upon it. The night had passed away, it was morning outside and the portrait seemed to say: "It is not true!" She had paid by death for her sin, she had expiated her misfortune by death at the time when she longed to live. Was that not a great deed? But what if all this was a punishment for his sins? What had he done with Kitty, Marousia and others? Had he ever repented?

The night had passed, but Sablin did not go to bed and did not feel weary. A difficult and exciting struggle was going on in him and now he knew for certain where it would bring him. He no longer clutched at life now and did not think that it was possible to continue to live. He had lived quite within himself these three days following the death of Vera Constantinovna. He had not read the newspapers, had stayed at home the whole time, had met no one and had talked to no one.

Day had come long ago, the servant brought in the coffee and

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did not seem surprised that Sablin was still sitting in the arm chair and that his bed was untouched. The noise of the street came from outside and the rays of the sun penetrated through the curtains.

Sablin had decided on his fate long ago. But the portrait held him back. The smile of youthful happiness frozen on the face surrounded by orange blossoms would not be in harmony with a pool of blood and the shattered skull of a suicide sitting in the arm chair. Sablin still implored God and hoped for a miracle as he had done in the factory's office. He had told himself that there was no God and yet clung to Him. And implored and waited for Him.

"Well," he said, deciding at last and taking a comfortable attitude in the arm chair so that his hand would not waver and the last feeling of the body would be that of cosiness,—“if there is a God, he will give me a sign, he will hold back my hand and will tell me what I have to do now that my life is shattered and nothing is left.

“I will approach the window for the last time, I will fling it open, I will look at the blue sky, at the bright sun and I will read the answer in its rays. If there is a God I shall see. . . .”

He laughed at the idea. “What shall I see? Angels, the face of the Madonna, the all seeing eye in a triangle, the face of Vera Constantinovna? Child! . . . Or is it that I want to live? That I cling to life? That I want a delay?”

“No, I simply want to look at the sun for the last time, I shall never see it again.”

Sablin rose, resolutely walked up to the window, raised the curtain, flung open both halves and leaned on the window sill. He remained frozen in this attitude, so startled was he by what he saw. He listened, looked and suddenly made the sign of the cross in a free gesture. He understood that God existed—the miracle was accomplished.

XXXV

THE summer sun was brightly illuminating the houses of the street and shone on the glass of the windows. The sky was

TO RED FLAG

of a pale blue and covered by thin fluffy clouds. A crowd of people stood near the Nevsky. Golden church banners and a portrait of the Emperor in a gilded frame sparkled over it. And suddenly the National Anthem rose in powerful chords, stopped for a moment as if the crowd were adjusting their voices, and then flowed on, beautiful, mighty and Russian, grasping at one's heart. The crowd moved down the street. The Anthem was finished and cheers filled the air. And again rose the singing of the prayer: "God save our people."

God, the Tsar and the people had risen from the dead. They had joined together and went forth sparkling with the gold of the ikons and the portrait of the Sovereign Master, praying and wishing for the victory and glory of the Russian Tsar. Russia had arisen.

What had happened? He seized a newspaper which had been brought in by the servant. The Imperial edict was printed on the first page. Germany had declared war on Russia.

Here it was! Now that had happened for which the nations of Europe had been waiting in horror. War had broken out after thirty-six years of peace. At that terrible hour of its beginning the Tsar had forgiven the people for all mistakes; the people had forgiven the Tsar for his weakness, indecision and failures. The Hodinsky field, the Japanese war,—all was forgotten, the unsuccessful Dumas, the bad laws which satisfied no one—all was forgiven. Rasputin would be sent away today and tomorrow there would be no parties but only Russia!

God save the Tsar!

Everything personal seemed so trivial and small. Russia arose before him, beautiful, great, mighty and invincible!

"Give victory to our orthodox Emperor Nicolai Alexandrovitch over the foes . . ." the crowd sang the words of the prayer and they appeared in a new deep light which Sablin had not noticed before.

He put on his cap and left the flat.

"Hurrah!"—rose all around as soon as he appeared at the door. "Long live the Army!"

Strong horny hands seized him and raised him up into the

FROM DOUBLE EAGLE

air. Dark, tanned faces of workmen looked at him with admiration.

“Long live the Army!”

He now went through the crowd arm-in-arm with a moujik and a student and the air was filled by the singing of the prayer for victory.

The people were with him, the people were ready for anything. Russia was living.

Solemn peals of church bells came from St. Isaacs Cathedral. They boomed smoothly, interrupted by the lighter tones of the small bells and the deep booming of the great one.

The clergy in golden vestments stood on the top of the long steps and waited for the people. The harmonious singing of the church choir came from the church and blended together with the mighty roar of the crowd.

“Save Your people, our Lord,” moujiks said who stood near Sablin. “May Christ save and help you, our beloved officers of the Tsar.”

There were no divisions into nobles and people, but there was one nation with its Army, Officers and Tsar. There were no “murderers and hangmen” any longer, and the crowd mightily sang “God save the Tsar.”

Germany had declared war on Russia and Russia rose before the approaching danger, the demons of destruction vanished and hid in their cellars, and the people, free from all bonds, marched forward majestically solemn, united and powerful, together with their Sovereign anointed by God.

“Reign for our glory! Reign for the terror of our foes! Our Orthodox Tsar!” the solemn praying tones of the National Anthem rose towards the sky and the sky replied by the deep peals of the bells.

Everything now received meaning and importance. The whole of Sablin’s life passed in a moment before his mental gaze. He remembered the revelry at Gritzenko’s flat and the blow on the face of the orderly,—Kitty, Marousia, the discussion at the house of the Martoffs with the young people who tried to prove that wars had now become impossible and that the

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army was useless, the manoeuvres, the drill,—all had received a new meaning now.

“Long live the Army!” roared the crowd. From the steps a deacon pronounced the blessing of “Many years!”

“To the Christ-loving victorious Army, many years!”

“Hurrah, Hurrah! Long live the Army!”

“Many years! Many years!”

The hour of payment had come.

Could Sablin leave life now because of the dishonour of his wife by Rasputin? Could he shrink now from paying for the love of Kitty, for Marousia's death, for the merry life he had led, for the happiness of wearing the regimental uniform and for all the blessings of this world which had been given to him by the people and the Tsar? Could he leave his post now, when the Tsar's portrait dominated the crowd and when the National Anthem flowed out repeated by thousands of voices: “God save the Tsar!”

Great Russia had risen and had turned to the Tsar in the hour of danger. The block of ice melted in Sablin's heart. He joined his powerful voice to the voices of the crowd and sang with full faith, and understanding of his responsibility and duty to his country: “God save the Tsar!”

PART III

I

KORJIKOFF had provided Lubovin with a second class ticket as far as Verjbolovo, a passport, and a document certifying that he was a workman going on a special mission on behalf of the steel-works to buy certain steel drills in Berlin. He sat huddled up in a corner of the compartment, his head concealed by his overcoat, which hung on a hook, and tried to sleep, but unsuccessfully. He pictured to himself Sablin lying dead and Marousia dishevelled and half-clad. His conscience smote him. "Had he acted as he ought to have?" he thought. "Even Fedor Fedorovitch did not seem to approve my action. I played the part of a bourgeois and not of a proletarian. After all, the lass had only gone in for a love-affair. Korjikoff, for instance, takes a much higher view of the matter. 'I'll marry her,' he says. Evidently I am under the influence of bourgeois moral. Where on earth have I got that from? Probably from father, who always wished to live as the upper class does. What is Marousia going to do now? Had she sufficient presence of mind to leave the house straight away? They are sure to find her. They'll accuse her and drag her to the coroner and from one court to the other. What a shame for the poor girl. What a scandal. What a blow for father!"

He shuddered when the door opened and hastened to cover his head with the folds of his overcoat, looking through the slits to ascertain whether they had not come to fetch him. "They'll call Lubovin," he thought,—“but I am not Lubovin. I'm Stanislaſſ Lestchinsky, a lock-smith on a special mission to Berlin. Consequently—no fear!” It seemed to him at the same time as though someone were on the point of asking: “Is Lubovin here,” and was afraid of exclaiming involuntarily: “I'm Lubovin.”

“Then we are likely to be late?”

FROM DOUBLE EAGLE

The custom-house revision took place in a large, light, but cold barrack, with an iron-barred, low partition dividing it lengthways. The sound of luggage being dashed onto the floor and the tinkle of keys and locks filled the place. A lady in a fit of hysterical laughter was being addressed by an official in a black overcoat with green facings:

"It can't be helped, madam, you'll have to strip. You needn't mind, however; we have special female attendants and a separate room for that purpose."

Lubovin, who had no luggage, sat in a corner. Every now and then a big gendarme would appear in the door leading into the passport-office, shouting with a stentorious voice the names of those whose passports had already been viséd.

"General Startzeff."

A small, grey-haired individual in plain clothes rose from the bench next to where Lubovin was sitting and the gendarme instantly ran up to him and delivered him his passport. "Here you are, Your Excellency. Has your luggage been looked at? Is that it? Don't you trouble: it will be brought to your car."

"Lestchinsky!" the gendarme shouted.

"Stanislaw Lestchinsky!"

Lubovin shuddered and hastened towards the gendarme. His knees trembled. He felt as though he were in the presence of Ivan Karpovitch. The gendarme-sergeant was of the same bulky stature, had a ruddy face with a red moustache and stern goggle eyes. The fist in which he held the passport was likewise red and hairy and reminded Lubovin of Ivan Karpovitch's fist and it seemed to him as though he heard the latter's ominous words: "I see right through you to the antipodes, Lubovin."

"Why don't you answer, when you're called," the gendarme exclaimed, sternly but politely, "you keep the other passengers waiting—Stanislaw Lestchinsky, from the Government of Kovno?"

"Yes, proshe panie." *

"A lock-smith?"

* Polish for "Please, Your Honour."

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"Yes, proshe panie."

"Here's your passport. You can continue your journey."

"Dsenkuie panie."*

Lubovin looked tenderly at the gendarme sergeant. He felt full of gratitude towards him and ready to kiss his red, fat, hairy hand. The sergeant turned away from him.

"Mrs. Tverdokhliebova!" he again shouted and the young lady, who had slept on the upper berth opposite Lubovin, came up to the sergeant.

"Mr. Kepsten Rafalovitch"—the sergeant went on.

Lubovin went to his car.

"If they'd only hurry up," he thought, "once over the frontier I am saved."

II

ARRIVED on the German border Lubovin bought everything he felt inclined for at the station, had some coffee and for the first time since he left Petersburg felt entirely at his ease. He called everyone "comrade" and seemed happy, smiling foolishly and surprised at the warm weather. He fetched from the lining of his overcoat the papers received from Korjikoff and proceeded to study them.

Everywhere, where he had to change trains, Lubovin visited, at the address given him, the "tovaristch"† member of the revolutionary faction and was provided by the latter with a note forwarding him to the following "tovaristch." Lubovin noticed that all the "tovaristchi," members of the faction, were Jews. They were excessively polite and kind to him, did all they could to help and direct him. An Austrian "tovaristch" accompanied him to the Swiss frontier and saw him into the train bound for Berne. He gave him full particulars as to what station he had to leave the car at and even made drawings of his foot itinerary.

At Reichenbach, Lubovin left the train. Mountains rose at

* Polish for "Thanks, Your Honour."

† Russian expression for companion, comrade and pal—which has acquired the meaning of equality and is specially used by the socialists.

FROM DOUBLE EAGLE

the back of the station. A silver forest of fir-trees, covered with snow, unfolded along a deep valley, here and there turning to right and left, and forming, in the spaces between, islands of snow brightly lit by the sun. The air was still and transparent, and the horizon quite pure, without a vestige of clouds. Though the temperature was low and the breath turned into steam, you hardly felt the cold. Lubovin looked about, lost in admiration. Before him spread the Kiental valley with its lake covered with bright ice, which reflected, like a mirror, a multitude of skaters. Beyond, the mountains formed a dark background and further yet a range of snowy peaks rose majestically. At first Lubovin mistook them for clouds and was amazed when he discovered that they were snow covered mountains. "To think that at home I believed the Duderhoff and Kirchhoff hills to be mountains! Why, they are mere pygmies as compared to these!" The surrounding snow, crossed by narrow tracks left by snowshoes, sledges and bob-sleighs, was white and pure. The trees, on which the morning sun shone gaily and brightly, threw a bluish shadow upon it.

Lubovin had been told that this place was a village and yet two three-storied stone houses, built with taste, stood on either side of the street, which was overhung by an archway of white lacework, formed by the snow-clad branches of huge oak-trees. Flakes of hoar-frost dropped quietly onto the pavement, where they lay shining in the sun.

A low, clumsy church-tower, with clock dials on all four sides and a pillar-gallery supporting a narrow sexagon steeple topped by a cross, protruded half-way into the street. At this point Lubovin, following the instructions of the Austrian "tovaristch," turned to the left, taking a narrow path up-hill. Boisterous children on bob-sleighs were speeding towards him, waving their caps. A peasant-woman came along, whom he stopped to ask his way to Sommerfeld; she shook her head. Then again he saw a black-bearded unfriendly-looking individual, accompanied by a thin, graceful and good-looking young girl with short flaxen hair. Lubovin, despairing of being understood, decided not to

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address himself to them, when suddenly a voice from the thicket exclaimed in Russian:

"Look, tovaristchi, at those goats."

"You've evidently scared them," rejoined the black-bearded man.

Lubovin walked up to him and, raising his hat, said:

"'Tovaristch,' do you happen to hail from Sommerfeld?"

"Quite so," the other answered eyeing him suspiciously from head to foot.

"Do you know 'tovaristch' Varnakoff?"

"What's that to you?" the black-beard rejoined.

The girl stepped aside scrutinizing Lubovin. The man with the black beard, though of short stature, was wide-shouldered and powerfully built. His putty face, with small-pox marks was adorned by a broad nose and a black moustache hanging over his crimson lips. He was clad in a warm wadded jacket, with a knitted woolen cap, which gave his bearded face a comical expression. He wore knee-breeches and long grey knitted putties.

"My name is Lubovin, officially Stanislaw Lestchinsky. I've a letter for Varnakoff from 'tovaristch' Fedor Korjikoff."

"Well I'm blessed 'tovaritch.' Such frankness at first sight! Now—how could you!"

Lubovin felt disconcerted.

"Certainly, most imprudent on your part 'tovaristch,'" said the girl. Her voice sounded blunt and pale and matched her thin, pale, pretty face.

"You should first have sniffed about and found out who we are. However you need not feel anxious. This hole is a good hiding-place. Not a soul here, who cares. And now let me introduce myself, Vassilij Varnakoff," said he, stretching his hand.

"Tovaristch Lena Dolgopolova," said the young girl.

Just then a lanky youth with a sickly, pale, clean-shaven face, who happened to be the owner of the voice from the thicket, made his appearance. He was dressed in the same style as Varnakoff.

FROM DOUBLE EAGLE

"Who's that?" he inquired.

"A friend of 'tovaristch' Fedor from Petersburg," Lena answered.

"I see; and I am Bedlamoff."

"Well, supposing we went on, 'tovaristch,'" said Varnakoff, as he led the way with Lubovin. "We'll talk matters over."

Bedlamoff followed with Lena.

III

LUBOVIN had ended his narrative and they all kept silent, puffing at their cigarettes. Some glasses, half-filled with weak, cold tea stood on the table and bits of grey bread lay scattered about. The yellow rays of the setting sun shone through the window, which disclosed a distant panorama continually reflecting changing hues.

"Well, 'tovaristch,'" Varnakoff began,—“so practically you have nothing to do with politics.”

Lubovin kept silent.

"You committed manslaughter," Varnakoff continued, "to avenge your sister's honour. As it happens you very probably thwarted a very important and useful scheme which your sister had in mind in sacrificing herself. However I'd like to know more about you and to get an insight into your political opinions. Lost men like yourself are sometimes useful for our plans. 'Tovaristch' Fedor recommends you to us and we shall therefore do our best to employ you."

Three weeks later Lubovin was in the room they had found for him, talking to Bedlamoff.

"Listen," said Bedlamoff in a low whisper: "The day before yesterday the executive Committee decided to accept you into the faction. There will very likely shortly be a division of our faction into 'mensheviks' and 'bolsheviks.' We have made up our minds to side with the latter. They have a clear notion of things. Your opinions are perhaps more like those of the mensheviks: you still seem to have bourgeois instincts. I have received instructions to take you in hand. Our faction is very powerful. You'll hear its creed from the lips of our leader, but

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you must go with me to our meeting to learn the object of our organisations. We have in view to reconstruct the entire world on new principles. We haven't specially Russia in view, Russia is a detail and we need men everywhere. Once you have joined us and have been initiated in the mysteries of our dogma—you lose your individuality and become a blind weapon in the hands of the faction. And there's no returning again! The leaders, to whom everything is known, can dare anything. Rumour is spread about that our leader is in close contact with the secret Police, to whom he communicates what he deems fit to let the Imperial Police know. It may be. However, we have entire faith in him. The mensheviks are our worst enemies and shrink before nothing. We have begun a fight, far worse, may be, than war itself. We have men at our disposal. Yes. . . . If they receive orders to destroy anyone, they must do it without wavering—if not they perish themselves. You have turned pale, 'tovaristch.' Don't fear—such a task will not fall to your lot. We have studied you. But bear in mind that if you told tales out of school or if, God forbid, you came in too close contact with an undesirable element—you'd be lost—mercilessly lost! We'll watch you work and decide what you are capable of doing. But remember that from this day you must be faithful to us until your dying day. The devotion to the Tsar, which the officers taught you, is nothing compared to what is expected of you by us. Do you understand?"

In fact Lubovin was assigned to various unimportant work and sent on errands. He had to seal propaganda sheets, address envelopes, carry letters to the post-office and sometimes forward them to the neighbouring villages on foot or on a bicycle. He soon noticed that all the members of the faction lived under simulated names. He'd carry a parcel to an addressee with a Russian Christian and family name and would be met by a typical Jew, acquainted with the pass-word. The higher the qualification of the individual, the more luxuriously seemed he to live and the greater was the certitude that he'd turn out to be a Jew and this gave Lubovin food for meditation.

He led a hard, gloomy life, continually under observation and

FROM DOUBLE EAGLE

in perpetual dread, and he would certainly have perished had he not been supported by Lena and had not Korjikoff unexpectedly arrived with little Victor—Marousia's son.

IV

It was a hot summer with intermittent thunder-storms, which cooled the sultry air at night, filling it with the fragrant scent of fresh grass and flowers. The mountains shone like mother-of-pearl, grazing cows looked at Lubovin with their large, inexpressive eyes. Every morning Lubovin, Bedlamoff, Varnakoff and Lena bathed in the lake.

One evening, as Lubovin, home-sick and melancholy, was passing by a huge solitary fir-tree growing in the midst of a field, he heard a voice calling to him from under its branches. When he approached he noticed two bicycles leaning against the trunk of the tree, whilst Lena and a pug-nosed, red-cheeked girl, with sly grey eyes lay reclining under its shade.

"Let me introduce you to 'tovaristch' Elsie, 'tovaristch' Victor," Lena exclaimed.

Elsie, a German from the Baltic, simple-minded and hearty, turned out to be the sister of a communist executed in Russia.

"She's a friend of mine, is Elsie. A nice, single and solitary girl, home-sick like yourself. Try your best to console her," said Lena, looking at Lubovin with kind eyes.

Lena rose and picked up her bicycle which she led to the road. Lubovin silently watched her slender, graceful figure, as she lightly rode down the slope. Meanwhile Elsie looked Lubovin over.

That same evening Lubovin sat with Elsie under that fir-tree, playing the guitar and singing Russian songs and ditties and that very night he visited Elsie in her small attic, which though sultry and stuffy, was clean and neat. In the morning he went home to fetch his things and returned to her attic for good.

Elsie procured him that lazy, unpretentious happiness which suited Lubovin's character. She prepared his coffee, gave him simple but good food, helped him in his work and listened for

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hours, gazing at him with her large forget-me-not eyes and an undisturbed smile, as he sat singing in the evening. She gradually got stout, her voice began to change and her hair grew thin. But she seemed just as attractive to Lubovin's eyes.

He became the laughing-stock of his "tovaristchi" who called him "tovaristch bourjoui" * and Elsie—"his wife."

This vegetative, dreamy kind of existence was sometimes darkened for Lubovin by the reminiscence of Marousia, whom he now knew to be dead, of their small house on the Schlüsselburg Prospect, since sold by Korjikoff, of Petersburg with its white nights and cold Neva, and he felt a yearning for its northern clime. Then he'd fancy he heard the Cathedral bells ringing, and the clinking of horses' hoofs on the pavement and the tramcar bells. At such moments he looked with hatred at the splendid mountains, with their sparkling glaciers, at the deep blue lake, which with its mirror surface could have been taken for a fragment of sky fallen amidst the green valleys. As soon however as Elsie would appear, feeding the hens, (which formed part of their household, bought on the proceeds of the Petersburg house sold by Korjikoff), Lubovin would calm down again. After all, his fate was sealed: for him, a deserter who had insulted his superior, no return was possible.

Korjikoff and his supposed son Victor lived on the opposite side of the street and through the open window one could see the boy's pretty face and hear him rehearse his lesson. Victor had barely attained the age of four when Korjikoff started teaching him to read. Elsie gave him German lessons.

The sun shone, the valleys alternately changed their aspect, Elsie hummed ditties, they'd play the guitar and the lute and Lubovin sang and time flew on. The golden-red hues of autumn were followed by bright winter snow accompanied by skating and skiing and then again the spring would set in.

In 1905 Bedlamoff, Varnakoff and Lena left for Russia, where there was work to be done; and shortly after it was re-

* Russian vulgarism of "bourgeois."

FROM DOUBLE EAGLE

ported that Bedlamoff had been executed and that Varnakoff and Lena had been exiled to the Jakoutsk region.

Soon after Korjikoff and Victor left for Naples to join the communist school.

The reports from Russia were vague but events were preparing abroad. Lubovin's errands increased and the whole district swarmed with Jews and Russians. Korjikoff, just back from Naples, looked mysterious and buttoned-up, as though he knew of some event that had to be kept secret. Victor, now a good-looking youth, was arrogant and molested the village girls.

One day Lubovin brought Korjikoff a parcel from the central committee. Neither Fedor Fedorovitch nor Victor were in. The parcel was to be delivered to Korjikoff personally, so Lubovin decided to await his return. It was summer-time. Outside the windows flies were buzzing around lazily and monotonously, the smell of cow-dung came from the yard, and Swiss peasant-girls jabbered gaily in the fields. Lubovin sat at a table by the window, turning over the pages of a note-book in Victor's hand-writing.

On one page he read: "Important, deep and true. To serve as a life-guide."

He put on his spectacles, his eye-sight having weakened with age:

"Man is an animal," he read in the note-book, "an animal with human features enabling him the better to serve the cause and glorious fame of the children of Israel, for it is not meet for the son of a king to be served by animals bearing the image of animals, but by animals with the image of man."

MIDRASH TALPIOT.

"Arise and stand like Israel. He shall be rewarded who succeeds in freeing himself of the enemies of Israel. He shall earn everlasting fame, who will rid himself of them and crush them."

BOGAR.

"To conquer the universe? Fight unceasingly against human society until due order is established and until all the nations of the world have become your slaves."

BOGAR.

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"Slay the best of the gentiles, crush the head of the best serpent."
MECHILT.

"Take the life of the most just unbeliever."
SOPHORIM.

"Assemble, proletarians of all nations. It is by fighting that you will conquer your rights."

"And if a louse in your shirt should exclaim: 'Go and kill! kill!'"

ROPSHIN (BORIS SAVINKOFF).

Lubovin took off his glasses, pushed away the note-book and meditated. A cold shiver ran through his limbs and a feeling of gnawing anguish overcame him.

"That's how matters stand," he thought,—“that explains why Jews are at the head of the faction. Trotzky, whom Victor met at Naples and who has since left for the States on some special mission, Zinovieff, Radek—all Jews, all the leaders are Jews. Lenin alone seems not to be a Jew. Fedor Fedorovitch and Victor are likewise no Jews and yet what a respect Victor has, however, for the Jewish wisdom of the Talmud and the Kabbalah! What strange similarity there is between the apophthegms of ancient Israel and the battle-cry of our faction.” Lubovin covered his face with his hands, pressing his knuckles into his eyes.

The noise of a door being opened and the sound of approaching steps brought him back to his senses. Korjikoff entered.

"Ah, Victor Mihailovitch," he exclaimed,—“you have a parcel for me.” He clutched it from Lubovin's hands and opened it hurriedly. As he read its contents his face darkened.

"Well, be it so," he muttered with a sigh. "The die is cast. Sooner or later it had to come. Victor Mihailovitch, have you heard the news? Germany and Austria have declared war on Russia, France has followed suit with regard to Germany and very likely England and perhaps Italy will join France against Germany. Europe is ablaze." Have you read Marx and Engels? Have you grasped them?"

"Dimly. . . . For instance this note-book of Victor's. . . ."

"What note-book?"

FROM DOUBLE EAGLE

Lubovin passed it on to Korjikoff.

Korjikoff seated himself, took Victor's note-book and looking Lubovin straight in the eyes began, as though he was a teacher instructing his pupil:

"What is a government? Engels' definition is the following: 'A government is an organised form of despotism of one class over the other.' What should therefore be done, so as to free the oppressed class, *i.e.* the working (proletarian) class? The latter should form an organisation which would abolish the division of Society into different classes with irreconcilable and hostile interests. The abolishment of class-interests would do away with the form of coercive subjection of one class under the yoke of the other—*i.e.* the government. The government would die a natural death having lost all reason for existence. Do you follow?"

"Faintly, I admit. I am afraid that your theory corresponds to Victor's notes."

"Well, listen further. Lenin, after studying that statement of Engels,' asks himself: 'By what means is the working class to attain that end?' and answers: 'First of all by converting the oppressed class into a dominating one.' He creates the dictatorship of the working class, possesses himself of the supreme power and, by means of despotism, holds under his entire yoke the unthroned and yet struggling class of sweaters. Do you grasp the idea?"

"I find it rather hard. Well, the long and the short of it is—down with the Tsar? But who's to replace him?"

"Anyone, be it even a scullery-maid."

"A scullery-maid! And how about the Jews? Look at the crowd of them that have arrived here from all the parts of the world. It's easy to say: 'to convert the oppressed class into a dominating one!' but how are you to do it? For instance how could I of a sudden replace Gritzenko at the head of the squadron?"

"I see you cannot do without the corporal's stick! And how about the war? It has begun already."

Lubovin stared at Korjikoff.

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The Emperor Wilhelm has declared war on Russia. The Emperor Franz-Joseph has declared war on Servia. The Austrian Crown Prince has been murdered at Seraievo. Well, what of that? An apple falls to the ground not owing to centrifugal law, but because it is ripe, its stem has dried; and the war likewise has ripened. The central executive committee has decided that, from the point of view of the working-class and all the labouring masses in Russia, a defeat of the Russian army and of the Tsar-monarchy would not be a disaster. In short our interest lies in Russia's defeat!"

Lubovin of a sudden vividly recollected then the last review at Krasnoie Selo. The sun shone on the monarch's noble face. General Drevenitz, on a massive charger, cantered up to the Tsar with uplifted sabre. Tall, handsome soldiers, the pick of the army, on fine horses, galloped with lances balancing in their hands. Dybenko, a good-looking soldier with a tender maiden's soul, longing to return to his home to marry and live a quiet peaceful peasant-life in a village near Pultava, was galloping in the first row in front of Lubovin, on his right the Lithuanian Adamaïtis was pressing on to him. Right in front rode Lieutenant Sablin, an elegant horseman. The band played. Various infantry regiments, consisting of tall, handsome and strong soldiers were seen leaving the review-plain. To think that they could be defeated, perhaps vanquished, by the Germans so as to enable a scullery-maid, or Jews, or Lenin with his covetous idiotic smile, to govern the country in the place of His Majesty Nicholas II! And all this had been foreseen and was going to be put into execution now, when the war had just only begun!

A mist blinded Lubovin's eyes. He could no more discern Korjikoff's pale features and his short red beard. The majestic sound of the Russian National hymn resounded in his ears. He heard Korjikoff's long speech as it were in a dream: "Marx says:—The executive power with its monstrous bureaucratism and military institution, with its outspread artificial governmental mechanism, its army of officials reaching half a million besides a military army of another half million—that fearful nest of parasites, creeping, like a gangrene, among the popula-

FROM DOUBLE EAGLE

tion and stopping its pores—owes its origin to that period of absolute monarchy, when feudalism was beginning to rot in France,—I should add: At the time of serfdom in Russia. Marx insists on the destruction of this bureaucratic and military machine. Marx refers to the first decree of the French 'Commune' which abolished the permanent army and replaced it by arming the population. The 'Commune' consisted of town councils, elected in the various districts of Paris by general suffrage. The majority naturally consisted of workmen or recognised representatives of the working-class. The police, so far the instrument of the government power, was likewise deprived of its political functions and was reorganised into a responsible and revokable weapon of the 'Commune' as well as the officers of other institutions. And this all led France to Napoleon and to the imperialism which has even to the present day not been rooted out. Do you follow me?"

Lubovin kept silent.

"What a nonsense that French Revolution was," says our leader Vladimir Iljitch Lenin. The proletarians cannot but wish the defeat of their native imperialism and they must attain the end. We are going to send our emissaries to the front and elsewhere, we'll profit by the mobilisation and we shall destroy all traces of imperialism. If needed, we shall simply kill its representatives. . . ."

"And slay the best of the 'goys'" * whispered Lubovin, but Korjikoff, carried away by his speech, went on: "We," said Lenin to us, "intend to lull them to sleep by deceit. We shall amalgamate with their forces, preaching victory and at the same time leading the army to defeat. And after Russia's defeat and humiliation we shall rise. We shall cry aloud that all around are nothing but traitors and spies, we shall call all the upper-class lackeys and varlets of the previous 'régime,' putting ourselves forward as the height of courage and self-sacrifice and, after having dug an abyss between the governing class and the population, we shall take the power into our hands. We shall

* "Goy"—Jewish for "Christian."

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deprive the private individuals of their riches, placing them in the possession of the state—thus following the instructions of Marx and Engels. Not one single individual shall have the right of owning were it but a needle or a plough; everything will be socialized—and the people will become our blind weapons.”

“Lenin is of opinion that, on coming to power, it is necessary, not to go in for the Paris chimeras and not to heed the crazy ideas of the Socialist-traitors and demobilize the army, but to create a new army to serve as a weapon of defence for the new government. Our parts for this day’s meeting of the executive committee have been distributed. Our section has been provided with the necessary means and documents and is leaving for the front. Victor has received the mission of doing military work. Under the name of Victor Modjalevsky, scholar of the Kholm lyceum, he is leaving for Sabolotië with instructions to demoralise the Cossacks and, if necessary, destroy the best officers, especially those who are popular among the Cossacks. I have been entrusted with propaganda work and am to spread in the army reports of treason in the staff and other reports likely to create dissatisfaction. As to yourself, Victor Mihailovitch, you will have to get a berth as staff-clerk in some important army-corps and procure information to be forwarded to me. We are to have important sums at our disposal.”

“Where does the money come from?” Lubovin inquired fixing Korjikoff with his eyes.

The latter, who hardly ever blushed, turned crimson and answered abruptly:

“That’s none of your business. We have to obey the instructions that we receive.”

“Treason to one’s native country,” said Lubovin, gently shaking his head. “Spying in favour of one’s enemy, murdering the best officers during the most awful of wars! That you call socialism? That is the teaching that we considered higher than the Christian faith?”

“Victor Mihailovitch,” exclaimed Korjikoff in a threatening

FROM DOUBLE EAGLE

tone,—“you forget that you are tied by faction-discipline and that there are means to keep you silent.”

“And even for ever!” rejoined Lubovin. “And you call that liberty of opinion?”

He walked towards the door, but did not succeed in leaving the room. At that moment a nimble, fidgety Jew of about thirty-five, with a curly lock of auburn hair on his forehead and eye-glasses on his nose, a small moustache and a reddish beard adorning his pale thin face, rushed into the open door.

V

“GOOD-DAY, ‘tovaristchi!’ How are you, ‘tovaristch’ Fedor? Let us shake hands. What a joy overwhelms me. How do you do, ‘tovaristch’ Victor? Why are you so gloomy on the eve of our victory? How glorious! You have heard, of course,—war has been declared! War will teach humanity to despise death and to commit manslaughter. You understand, that’s the most important thing. Otherwise everything is ready.”

“You forget, ‘tovaristch’ Brodmann,” said Lubovin, stopping at the door and half-closing it. “you forget, that human beings have also hearts that can love. War does not necessarily carry hatred with it.”

“Love?” resumed Brodmann. “Ridiculous, ‘tovaristch’ Victor. Love is but a sensual feeling. All of you, the so-called educated Russian class and all the Russian authors have long ago hurled the feeling of love into a dirty refuse-heap. You pretend that the Hebrews are to blame. But where do they come in here? You probably remember ‘The Abyss’ by Leonide Andreieff. A work with a pronounced pornographic flavour, isn’t it? You remember with what avidity it was read by slobbery schoolboys and what success it met with in certain quarters. Then again, do you remember in 1905 those sexual clubs, called ‘Ogarki’ (candle-ends) and the young Russian girls with dark circles ’round their eyelids, who stoically committed suicide after having given their sexual, so-called, love to right and left? What a vast transition from Tolstoi’s ‘Kreutzer-Sonata’ to Leonide Andreieff’s ‘Abyss’ and Artzebasheff’s ‘Sanin.’ Litera-

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ture is the reflection of life and Sanin is the ideal bolshevik such as we must strive to become."

"For what purpose?" muttered Lubovin.

"Why to spew into the very hearts of man-kind and abolish in them all aspiration towards glorious deeds?"

"That's nothing new for the Russian lower class accustomed as it is to bad language," answered Lubovin.

"Bother the lower class! A herd of brutes! It's from the souls of those who lead the lower class that all sense of chivalry must be erased and in that respect 'tovaristch' Jacob is right," said Korjikoff.

"Yet the lower class has its religion," Lubovin retorted.

Brodmann whistled.

"What nonsense 'tovaristch' Victor! You positively make me laugh! Religion! Who are the faithful at the present day? Look at the churches? Inside—nothing but old men and women, and outside—a crowd of striplings and girls, laughing, swearing and flirting. And that you call religion? You pretend that the Russian nation is religious? Nothing of the kind. Can you name me a single peasant-girl that hadn't given birth to a child before being wedded? And after that you mean to assert that matrimony is a sacrament? The Russian lower class has long ago forgotten the meaning of sacraments."

"Well, admitting that all your plans are apt to be successful and that our faction comes into power. Who'll listen to us?"

"Don't worry your brains, 'tovaristch' Victor. Do you pretend not to know the Russian nation? You know the Russian proverb: 'Where there is a bog, you are sure to find devils.' Once in power, we shall have a sufficient number of black-guards, outcasts and varlets of the revolution at our disposal. We'll secure them a good living. Man is the meanest animal ever created and the Russian quite specially so. And mind you, not only will they offer their services but they will lick our hands, glorify us, write articles of praise in the press."

"Whom do you mean?" asked Lubovin wearily, "the rabble, the black-guards and cads, perhaps?"

"You are mistaken," rejoined Brodmann with conviction,

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"professors, men of science, the nobility, princes, artists and authors."

"But tell me, who are you that you claim the right of repeating with conviction: we, we?"

"I? I'll answer curtly: I'm a Jew. Yes, a Jew of that race which for centuries has been persecuted by the Russian Government. I have experienced that wrong which is called 'the limit of residence-license.' Surely, at school, you used to fold the flap of your jacket into the shape of a pig's ear shouting in unison with your schoolfellows: 'Jew, Jew, you've eaten a pig's ear!' A limit was fixed for the access of Jews to the university. During a street-demonstration on the Nevsky prospect a Cossack thrashed me with his 'nagaika' * merely because I am a Jew. Well, let me tell you that I have sworn a solemn oath, that the day will come when I shall be carried in triumph by the young generation of schoolboys and students. And, mind you, those same Cossacks will obey me and will elect me honorary member of their Cossack-settlements. And girls of the best society will come to me to caress me, but I shall torment and torture them before the very eyes of their brothers and their betrothed."

"You don't understand yourself what you are talking about!" exclaimed Lubovin. "Cossacks, young girls!"

"Well, and what of that? Don't you know that there is no limit to human baseness?"

"I believe you are mad. The report of the war must have intoxicated you!"

"Come, come, 'tovaristch'! You know the Latin phrase 'per aspera ad astra'—through abysses to the stars? We'll do it the other way round per astra ad aspera. We'll walk up to the breakers and peep into the black bottomless depths! We shall discover the mystery of Genesis and then laugh!"

"Yes, we shall laugh," repeated Korjikoff, gloomily. He seemed to be dissatisfied with something and every now and then glanced at Lubovin with his small grey eyes.

* A whip with a hard leather thong, used by the Cossack soldiers.

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Brodmann could not keep still. He paced up and down the room, stopped in one corner and crossed his arms on his chest in Napoleonic style.

"What an insanity is war!" he exclaimed. "The old world will perish. The nations, driven by power, by the will of their monarchs, will collide to destroy one another. The capitalists of all countries have failed to come to an understanding and millions of human beings will perish in the defence of their gold. Ha, ha! Mankind perishing for the sake of a vile metal! Satan is leading the dance! What we have been mysteriously preparing for years has now come about. These torrents of blood will beget not human beings, but beasts joined on one same thirst for bloodshed, oppression and violence. This war will be the last collision of nations."

Brodmann stopped speaking. Korjikoff sat down by the table and passed his fingers through his abundant hair. He continually glanced at Lubovin, who still remained standing by the door. He was as pale as death and breathed with effort and it seemed as though he were ready to throw himself upon Brodmann.

"Everything will go to hell," Brodmann exclaimed so unexpectedly, that Korjikoff shuddered and lifted his shaggy head.

"Everything will be destroyed. The nations will lose their individuality and perish. Noble-mindedness, honesty, faith and sense of duty, all that will go to the dogs! So much the better! All these bourgeois prejudices are pure rubbish. They and not we have authorized their people to shed blood. And, when they are weakened and the best elements have disappeared, when they will have bled to death, we shall arise and produce an endless bill. Whilst you led a life of drunkenness, of sensuality, whilst you sat in palaces and drove about in motor-cars, whilst you were clad in fine cloth and silk, wore precious stones and enjoyed wine, women and music, we sat in dark working districts, harassed by overwork, we stood in icy-cold draughts in front of red-hot furnaces, we suffocated in the stench of unhealthy dwellings, we abandoned our daughters to your sensual appetites, and died as your slaves!"

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"That is true," Lubovin whispered. He had listened to every word that passed through Brodmann's lips and was thirsting for some revelation which might of a sudden scatter the nightmare which oppressed him and reconcile him with the ideals of the faction.

"Ha! You've bled us sufficiently! It's our turn now to suck your blood. We'll now claim the right of enjoying the tender flesh of your sweet-hearts, we'll settle down in your mansions and consume your reserves of wine and food. We shall organise a feast for the paupers and we shall plunder you of all the riches that you have collected. Ha! Bygone days, ancestors, history, fame! The devil take your fame and history! Everything has become pale and grey, and heroes do not exist! No fear, 'tovaristchi,' the coming revolution will not give you a Napoleon! May the grey, sticky, stinking dirt which grew in the working-men's quarters cover the false splendour of their banners and eagles. A red rag to replace the banner, blood-stained tatters instead of gilt uniforms, universal famine and the smacking of mouths devouring corpses instead of your battle-feasts. The stench of corpses in putrefaction to replace the incense of victory! All that is beautiful and fine must be done away with. And the best of the 'goys' (Christians) must be slain. Slay! And even should but a louse in your shirt cry out—go and slay. May humanity grovel in bestial sensuality, like worms in a dung-hill! That's what I call equality! All identical, all white, slimy, stinking of the dung they feed on! This is the end we are aiming at! The equality of worms!"

Brodmann raised his hand, widened his fingers and exclaimed with a loud voice, not addressing himself to anyone specially:

"We gave you a God and we shall now give you a Tsar!
. . ."

The door closed with a bang as Lubovin left the room.

VI

LUBOVIN went down the steps, hanging on to the bannister, his legs quaking and a black mist before his eyes: he felt that it was the beginning of the end. His aspiration had always been

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directed towards the good of mankind. He had wished that, in the regiment, the singers had not been made to get up at two o'clock of the night for the amusement of light women and drunken officers, that there had been less militarism and that the corporal Ivan Karpovitch had not had the right of shoving his red fist in his, Lubovin's, face. He had always hoped that violence, bloodshed and death-sentences would be abolished. He had joined the faction and had been convinced that it would give his country equality, fraternity and freedom, mutual love and warm feelings. He had wished to have faith in a new religion, akin to the Christian teaching, but without its priests, rituals, mysticism and legends which were beyond his understanding.

Victor's note-book, Korjikoff's harsh words, the mission in store for him, which destined him to betray his country, and, finally, Brodmann's hysterical cries full of ominous meaning, terrified him. That then was their goal! The equality of dung-hill worms! Whom do they propose to replace the handsome, majestic Tsar? A Jew! He, Lubovin, had thought that if the Emperor had got soaked by rain at the review or if he had been killed, there would have been no Tsar any longer and that everything would have changed for the better!

And what would be likely to happen if they proved successful? The triumph of Jews and an ocean of blood.

Yet to return on his steps was out of question. Where could he flee to? Each member of the section is a spy on his neighbour and they all know one another; on the slightest suspicion they are apt to make you disappear.

Should he, on the other hand, fulfill their will? If he went to the front, following their instructions? And if he were found out and tried? That would mean the gallows!

Lubovin crossed the street. He did not notice the sunny bright day, he did not realise the delicate movement the shade of the acacia, oak and plane leaves reflected on the pavement; the glycenias, covered with bunches of lilac flowers, hanging down the front of his house did not cause him any joy. Elsie's dog came up to him wagging its tail but he stroked its back in

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an absent-minded way. "Elsie," he thought, "good Elsie, as faithful and true as a dog. Dear Elsie, so tender, caressing and simple! Had I not better hide in her house, pretend to be ill and lie in bed until they all leave?" Then again, what a monotonous existence: coffee in the morning, the hens to be fed, the post to be attended to, and, as evening pass-time, the everlasting guitar and lute and sweet songs about his beloved Russia.

After all, that meant life, however dull it might be.

He recovered his boldness as he entered his house. Elsie was neither in the dining room nor in the sitting-room, but he heard voices upstairs, and sounds of scuffling in the bed-room. Lubovin walked up the stairs. He half-opened the door and looked in. . . .

He heard a woman's shriek, followed by a low oath. Lubovin gently closed the door. The noise did not abate. He could doubt no more. He rubbed his forehead and came down the stairs. His head felt absolutely void. A pitiless hand had destroyed the last spark of his vital energy. He had lost the sense of everything. In lieu of the bright July day he saw a frightful abyss into which he was being drawn by invisible hands. He did not try to resist them. Twice he muttered: "Marousia's son . . . Victor . . . Victor!" and then exclaimed aloud: "Everything can be expected of him."

And with a firm step, as if entirely conscious of his intention, he crossed the yard to a barn in which wood was kept and where thin but strong laundry ropes hung from the ceiling. He minutely surveyed the barn, closed the door, found a piece of soft soap in a wash-tub, greedily clutched it and having untied the rope, climbed onto a table and began adjusting the rope to a beam.

All this he did quietly, attentively, meticulously; his movements were firm, his hands did not shake, and his dark eyes alone, grown of a sudden much larger, seemed to be void of expression. The soul was not reflected in them.

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VII

"You seem to have overdone it, Brodmann," Korjikoff said, "you must not forget that Lubovin still hesitates. He can't understand you."

"Well, then he can go to hell," answered Brodmann, as he took a seat opposite Korjikoff. "To tell you the truth, I feel such a flow of energy, that I must vent it on somebody. What would you say, if I repeated my words at the meeting? That would be fine, wouldn't it?"

"Come, tovaristch, we had better discuss the position of our section. I don't rely on Lubovin any longer. He's a coward and a milksop."

"Is he apt to betray us?"

"No, he is not even fit for that. He'll simply keep idle and shilly-shally."

"There's your son, tovaristch," said Brodmann looking out of the window, "he's a trump and fit for any job. He is crossing the street from Lubovin's house."

"So much the better. I'm expecting him. You must leave us to ourselves."

"Are you sending him off today?"

"Yes, to Kiental for money and instructions and thence to the front."

"That's good."

The door was flung open with a bang and Victor bounded into the room, boisterous, flushed and in a gay mood.

Victor was in all the bloom and splendour of his eighteen years. He was the portrait of his father, Lieutenant Sablin in his youth, except that Victor's hair was darker, more like Marousia's and he was stronger and more bulky, a sign of his semi-peasant origin. That same slight tinge of capricious passion noticeable in Sablin's fine quivering nostrils and in the sensual fold of his mouth and which gave his features a fascination for the weaker sex, was reproduced in Victor's features in a more pronounced and a coarser fashion. He was bound to impress girls of the lower class or women of a riper age, whereas a

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higher minded woman, with a knowledge of real beauty, could not have been attracted by him. There was something repulsive in his beauty. His thick hair was cut short at the neck, but two long locks fell on his forehead. His big grey eyes were hard and impudent, looking overbearingly and fixedly at everybody. He was as yet beardless, his young moustache was clipped short, only two little black tufts appearing under his nostrils. His neck, well shaped, long, and muscular, showed his indomitable will. His loose white shirt with a wide open collar discovered part of his chest, showing a dark garnet attached to a gold chain. He wore a wide belt, long trousers and tan shoes.

Without greeting anyone he threw himself onto Korjikoff's camp-bed and burst out laughing.

"By gad, that beats cock-fighting," he began, half-smothered by his hilarity. "Just fancy. I went across to visit auntie, who had promised to treat me to chocolate. I drank my cup, looking at her the while. Not despicable after all, fat, plump and appetising! The sun shone gaily, the room was warm and there was a scent of perfume. I decided to chance it. 'Come, auntie, into the bed-room,' and she, the silly fool, followed me, not knowing what I meant. Once inside, I flung her onto the bed. She didn't utter a word of protest, turned crimson and breathed hard. . . . All of a sudden the door opened and uncle appeared in the door-way. Elsie saw him and yelled. . . . I likewise saw his reflection in the looking-glass. 'No hurry,' I said to myself, —'you just wait a bit, uncle.' And fancy! He, the fool, closed the door and went down on tip-toes. What an idiot . . . !"

Victor again burst into a fit of laughter.

Brodmann joined, whilst Fedor Fedorovitch looked serious.

"What on earth could you have found in that old, painted woman?" he said calmly.

"Absolutely nothing. A passing fancy. Why shouldn't I add her to my collection?"

"Eh, Victor Victorovitch! You should drop all this foolery. This is not the time for it. You are required for serious work. Good-bye, tovaristch Brodman," he turned to the latter, who

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had got up at the beginning of the conversation,—“drop in again later on.”

“Now listen, Victor,” Fedor Fedorovitch began when Brodmann had left the room. “I’ve got to speak to you.”

“Well, go ahead!” answered Victor, staring at Korjikoff.

They were on good terms, but chiefly of a business nature. There had never been any fond feeling between them. Victor hardly ever called Korjikoff “father,” addressing him as a rule as “Fedor Fedorovitch.” Korjikoff always called him by his Christian name. They had never spoken of Victor’s birth or of the first years of his childhood.

Korjikoff brought some documents and began explaining the work which had been assigned to Victor. He gave him some maps, instructing him how to get through to Sabolotie, how to join the Cossacks and what to do when he arrived at his destination.

“You must undermine the authority of the superiors, sow suspicion into the souls of the lower class, lie, calumniate and create bad blood wherever and whenever you can,” said Korjikoff.

“And slay the best,” Victor rejoined.

Korjikoff frowned and kept silent for a while.

“Victor, maybe we shall never meet again. So far I have never spoken to you about your birth and your early childhood.”

“I expect I was born the usual way and not found under a cabbage-leaf.”

Korjikoff fetched a portrait of Marousia and passed it on to Victor.

“That’s your mother,” he said.

Victor began inspecting with curiosity the old photograph of Marousia taken when she was still a schoolgirl in her school-tresses.

“A nice-looking girl,” said Victor. “It was very smart of you to have enticed her!”

“Why, it’s your mother, Victor!” Korjikoff exclaimed with indignation.

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"Well, and what of that? Isn't a mother a woman? The only difference lies in her being eighteen years older than I am. Elsie is still older, I bet."

"Drop that, Victor! She was very unhappy and died in giving you birth."

"Poor thing! Was she young?"

"She was nineteen years old."

"I'm sorry for the girl. I expect you must also have felt sorry for her. How could you have been so careless, Fedor Fedorovitch? You should have attended to her better."

Korjikoff could hardly hide his disgust.

"I wasn't her husband in the true sense of that word," said Korjikoff, handing Victor Sablin's photograph in a military uniform.

"I understand my mother's taste," said Victor. "A smart chap. By jove, he looks hard to resist. And a lovelace, I bet. An officer! So I am the son of an officer! That's a curious freak of nature! How could you allow him to seduce your wife? Surely she was not as great a fool as Elsie?"

"Hold your tongue, Victor! You know nothing. Listen."

And Korjikoff told the whole story of Marousia's misfortune. When he came to the moment when Lubovin forced himself into Sablin's lodging, Victor started laughing.

"The ass! Fancy his shooting! And he missed, probably. As if he were capable of killing. However, damn it all, it was after all a romantic adventure. The son of an officer! And a rich one perchance! Did he provide for my mother? Did you marry her on the ground of that provision?"

Korjikoff explained the reasons which had decided him to marry Marousia.

"What an absurd point of view. Do you mean to say that a girl has not the right to give birth to a child?"

"Victor," said Korjikoff, "what are your feelings with regard to that officer?"

"I have none whatever."

"He seriously injured your mother and made her suffer."

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"Come, come, she must have enjoyed it. After all he was a smart officer. Was he a hussar?"

"He begat you and abandoned you? What do you feel for him?"

"As officer or as father?"

"As father."

"Absolutely nothing. Such things happen. He got his fun out of it, so how is one to blame him. I may likewise have begotten children: well, what of that? He is a bad communist who worries his mind with such trifles. As officer, of course, I hate him like the rest. I'd be ready to throttle him without mercy. He is sure to be an eminent officer, and as such can cause us any amount of harm. I am ready to strangle him with my own hands if you wish me to?"

"Avenge Marousia," Korjikoff said in a low voice, and covered his face with his hands.

"And how about you, father, eh? You loved her, eh? Ha, ha, ha! That beats everything! Ha, ha, ha."

Korjikoff rose and paced the room. He found it hard to subdue his emotions. Having pulled himself together at last, he continued calmly:

"When are you going to Kiental?"

"At once," Victor answered.

"And when do you expect to be back?"

"I shan't return. From Kiental I intend going straight to the train."

"Good."

Korjikoff left the room without looking at Victor.

The prolonged howling of a dog, shouts and sobs in Lubovin's yard startled Korjikoff. He went into the yard. He guessed what had happened. "He had no choice, so he made an end of it," he thought, frowning. He had known Victor Mihailovitch for nearly forty years and had a warm feeling for him after his fashion.

In the barn he saw Lubovin's body hanging in the carefully soaped rope, his head slightly inclined to one side. Elsie was

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sobbing and whining under the body, echoed by the dog. Brodmann was shouting something.

With the help of Elsie (Brodmann afraid of corpses, only waved his arms) Korjikoff lowered Lubovin's body and carried it into the house.

It was getting dusk when he came out. The moon was rising above the mountains. Victor, in travelling togs, with a knapsack on his shoulders was on the point of starting for Kiental.

"Stop a moment, Victor," Korjikoff cried. "Have you heard? Victor Mihailovitch has just hanged himself."

"What an idiot!" was Victor's rejoinder. His face did not betray the least sign of emotion. It was cold, self-sufficient and calm, as usual.

"Victor, won't you say a last farewell to him?"

"What rot. What's the good once he's dead."

Brodmann stood in the gateway looking with admiration at Victor's retiring figure.

"That I call power of will," he said touching Korjikoff's sleeve. "A bolshevik to the backbone."

VIII

SABOLOTIE is supposed to be a small Lublin, Lublin is supposed to be a small Warsaw, and that town being often considered to be a small Paris, Sabolotie ended by being a small corner of Paris in the eyes of its inhabitants. Built in the thirteenth century in the midst of forests and marshes, Sabolotie was, for a long period of time, a stronghold of the catholic faith. It possessed a huge church (in polish "Kostiol") with marble monuments in honour of its founders, the Counts Sabolotski, a magnificent town-hall with a fine staircase built in the fourteenth century and some very fine old oaks and lime-trees. The authorities used to greet Peter the Great from the steps of the town-hall, when he passed through that town, returning from abroad. The grave of Bogdan Khmelnitzki's son, Iuri, was one of the noteworthy relics of the neighbourhood. The town, though small, was well paved and provided with water-pipes and drains. The kerbs were adorned with rows of young chestnut-

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trees. The town further boasted of an old market-hall with arcades under the shelter of which small Jewish shops were displayed, of the former palace of the Counts Sabolotski, converted into the officers' mess of the Cossack regiment in garrison there. Besides these buildings, Sabolotie had barracks, and an old fortress dating from the reign of Nicholas I, with ramparts and bastions. The town was neat and gay, enlivened by a crowd of officers, Cossack soldiers and Jews.

On a fine July day of the year 1914, the town was basking in the sun and the clean stones glittered so brightly that they dazzled one's eyes. The windows of the houses stood wide open, counterpanes and pillows were displayed on the window-sills for the purpose of being aired and dried, and here and there a woman's face, with big soft eyes, a well-cut nose and red sensual lips would appear.

Garrison-officers' wives sat on benches in the shady square sheltered by the wide-spread branches of the chestnut-trees, and surrounded by children at play. Small spots of sunshine pierced through the leaves of the trees onto the sand of the square, which, tidily kept, with its patches of green lawn, attracted the inhabitants, filling them with a sensation of lazy bliss. No wonder the priest of the regiment, father Bekarevitch, would continually repeat that the climate of Sabolotie could be compared to that of the Riviera.

It was mid-day. Of a sudden the whole place was filled with the mellow sounds of a military band and the noise of horses' hoofs on the pavement. The sounds filled the street, echoed from the walls, and spread all about, joyous, boisterous and gay. A Cossack regiment was returning from field-practice.

The Colonel of the regiment, Pavel Nicholaievitch Karpoff, rode at its head on a fine chestnut, bred at the Don Provalsk stud. He was a tall and handsome man of about forty-five, with a dark, well-kept beard slightly tinged with grey. He was slim and well-built and his seat and whole appearance impressed one with the conviction that he was a first-rate and daring horseman. A wide leather belt to which a revolver and a field-glass were attached, was buckled 'round his waist. At his right rode

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his Lieutenant Colonel, Semen Ivanovitch Korshounoff on a well-fed gold-chestnut, whilst his adjutant Gueorgui Petrovitch Kumskoff, a small, fat officer with thin hair, kept to his left.

They were followed by a row of trumpeters. Their horses sidled and pressed against each other, whilst the musicians, in fresh khaki tunics and caps on one side, in Cossack fashion, played a rhythmical and joyous march. Karpoff turned down a side street, stopped his horse and watched the regiment as it defiled past him, his eyes shining with pleasure as the Cossacks turned their heads in his direction with uplifted chins. The music stopped. The lances moved to and fro with a clinking sound. All these fine looking, sunburnt fellows, well equipped, with their wavy thick hair protruding from under their caps, glanced attentively and gaily at their Colonel. They knew that they were young and smart-looking and that their Colonel was admiring them. They were proud of being Cossacks of the dauntless Don regiment, the best regiment of the cavalry division, sons of the powerful Russian army. They felt that a better army was hard to find. The horses of the first "sotnia" (Cossack troop of one hundred horses), all of the same golden-chestnut colour, splendidly matched and trained, carefully groomed, with bushy combed-out tails and uplifted nervous heads trotted hurriedly past the Colonel. The horses of the second "sotnia" were a shade darker, those of the third—light bay and the fourth—dark bay, and all equally well-matched. Karpoff knew every horse and every man, and loved them all, as though they had been his children. That pale fair-haired Cossack Koperskoff, whose sad eyes met those of his Colonel's, had returned from leave but a week before. He had gone to the Don to bury his young wife. His only child, a little girl of two years of age, the sole link that attached him to this world, had remained under the care of perfect strangers and the far-off "stanitsa" (Cossack settlement). Close behind him rode Paskukhoff, the troop smith, a short and bulky red-bearded soldier, the Hercules of the regiment, with, by his side, a handsome youth with a small moustache, Poliakoff, son of rich parents,

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very spoilt, and who could not, for the life of him, succeed in learning to leap over the leaping-block.

"Has Poliakoff finally been taught to leap over the leaping-block," Karpoff inquired addressing 'Essaoul' Captain Trailin, standing next to him on a fidgety grey.

"He's getting on, Colonel," the Captain answered, with a military salute.

"I find, Ivan Ivanovitch, that the horses of your squad are not looking fit enough."

"I positively don't know what to do," Trailin replied.

"They must be better fed," Karpoff went on. "If the squad isn't in the same trim condition as the others, I'll reduce the sergeant-major to the ranks. Karguin," he cried severely to a Cossack,—“what do you mean by not turning your head in my direction, eh?”

The startled Cossack instantly obeyed.

"Medviedeff's bridle is again slack."

"He notices everything," Trailin thought, breathing more freely after his troop had passed by, giving room to the artillery and maxim-gun detachments. The well-fed chestnuts with their glossy coats dragged without the slightest effort the two-wheelers on which the maxim-guns were mounted, cased in khaki casings. Every buckle of the equipment glittered, every strap of the harness was accurately cleaned and polished. Karpoff's face brightened. The maxim-gun detachment, consisting of the pick of the regiment had passed by in exemplary trim. It was followed by the fifth squad on grey horses and by the sixth on black horses. The dark-bearded "Essaoul" Sakharoff, Captain of the sixth, followed his Cossacks and horses with enamoured eyes.

"Konstantin Petrovitch" Karpoff exclaimed, turning towards the Captain, "that troop of yours is splendid. With such a regiment I'd be ready to go to the front at any moment."

Then, addressing the adjutant, he inquired whether there were any papers to attend to.

"Just a few," Colonel, "a complaint has again been lodged against 'Khoroundji (Lieutenant) Lasareff."

FROM DOUBLE EAGLE

"Has he been licking the Jews again."

"Yes, a little."

"He's always at it, every blessed Saturday."

"To tell you the truth they are getting damned impudent. This time it was they who provoked him."

"You don't say so! Roman Petrovitch is not a man who can be provoked with impunity. Had he had too much drink?"

No, he was perfectly sober."

"Well, I'll examine the case," said the Colonel, dismounting in front of his house and stroking his horse.

IX

PAVEL NICHOLAIEVITCH KARPOFF had spent his whole life in military service amongst his Cossacks, and his interest was concentrated in field-exercise, horses, "djigitovkas" (jymkhana), drill, Cossack songs, dust in warm weather, mud on rainy days. Though he was married and father of a son aged seventeen who had already joined the military college, his family represented to him but a secondary interest, absorbed as he was by his service. His son was to follow his father's career and Pavel Nicholaievitch laid particular weight on his being in every way prepared for the army, properly equipped and provided for. He had concluded a love-marriage when quite young, and had begun courting his wife (Anna Vassilievna Dobrikoff) when she was still a pupil of the Mariinsk boarding school, timid and shy, and he, a rising and dauntless cadet of the Novotcherkask military college. They had met in the street and at dancing parties organized by the respective schools. She had a gentle smile, a tender look in her big honest eyes, with such an expression of faithful love in them when she looked at Karpoff, that he understood the happiness in store for him. Karpoff told her of his modest position, preparing her for a very humble life akin to poverty in some out of the way garrison of distant Poland. The sole answer he obtained was a tender look and the words of a Latin girl that had struck her at school: "Where you are Cajus, there shall I, Caja, likewise be."

And indeed, at first, they underwent actual misery. Anna

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would go herself every morning to market with a basket and cook the meals, aided by her husband's orderly. The room they rented from a Jew, on the border of a small Polish town, was small and stuffy; not seldom were they placed in a serious pecuniary dilemma, when a horse died and had to be replaced by a new one. He would get into debt, undergo humiliation when unable to repay what he owed in due time, and yet they remained faithful to one another. She mended his linen, darned his socks, waiting patiently though left entirely to herself while he was absent on field duty. What anxiety fell to her lot, when he was commissioned to subdue riots or revolutionary attempts! She had been stoical enough to part with her beloved son, when he was sent to the military school, and she had again remained alone to lead the same hum-drum life of petty cares and annoyances with one thought in her mind: Aliësha's return home for the holidays. It was a hard life and yet not without glimpses of happiness. A successful review, a prize won at a race, their mutual admiration one of the other at regimental balls where the ladies appeared in blouses and danced with Cossack lieutenants with moist hands and without gloves, and where the supper consisted of hashed cutlets, macaroni and ice cream,—letters from their son, a word of praise from the Colonel,—all these small events of life made it bearable. A monotonous existence some would say; Karpoff and his wife however never complained.

Only seven years ago had a change for the better taken place in their life, a small legacy having come to the wife. Karpoff was thereby put in a position to join the Cavalry school, where he succeeded in being promoted on his merits, and in 1911, quite unexpectedly, he obtained the command of a Don regiment of the N. division. The regiment in question needed to be reformed. The previous Colonel in command was given to drink and a gambler into the bargain; the officers led an idle life and the soldiers were untidy and dirty. Karpoff succeeded, in the space of three years, in converting it into the best regiment of the division. From six in the morning he would be present at the grooming of the horses and at drill; he induced

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the officers to go in for sport and athletic games, raised the standard of horsemanship and rifle-shooting, and worked all day. And when, tired and worn he would return to his hearth after a rough day's work he would find comfort and happiness by the side of his Annita.

Meanwhile political events had developed into a mighty torrent. Karpoff, however, took no interest in what was going on. He never read the reports of the Duma sessions and knew nothing about the various factions, not even about Rasputin or the influence he was supposed to have over the Tsar. All his life he had adored and went on adoring the Emperor and the Imperial family, and at church parade on Imperial festival days he always found appropriate words to deliver to his Cossacks.

His example did not fail to have a beneficent influence on his regiment. Officers and soldiers, without exception, were devoted to the regiment, to their Emperor and to their mother-country, ignorant of political events, fulfilling their duty towards man and God.

As Karpoff reached his house, a splendid white Pomeranian dog, his wife's pet, greeted him. His orderly met him in the lobby. He passed into the sitting-room with its shiny floor and cheap framed pictures, where everything was simple and somewhat shoddy and yet neat and comfortable. Anna Vladimirovna, tall and slim, looking much younger than her forty-three years, without a single grey hair in her thick, smoothly-dressed black head, met him with a tender look in her grey eyes.

Listen, Annita! Maybe it's all talk, but please after dinner have a look at the pack saddles, make a list, together with Nicholai, of my things and decide with him how to pack them, because, if we were suddenly mobilized, I would not have a second left to dispose of my private matters."

"Is there anything new?" Anna Vladimirovna inquired.

"No, nothing. Besides mobilisation does not necessarily mean war. You remember in 1911 we were mobilized and yet nothing happened. However, Annita, if war is declared, you must go to Novotcherkask."

She kept silent. They had always lived together and had

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never parted. But she understood that women could not interfere in war matters and that she could not accompany her husband. Such were the exigencies of military service, and that service meant everything.

She looked at her husband with unutterable sadness and said: "So be it. If necessary I shall go to Novotcherkask. I shall see to everything. Now let us have dinner."

X

KARPOFF felt tired after field-duty and went to sleep early on the sofa in his study, which was next to his wife's bedroom. But in a few minutes he awoke again and listened to see if she slept. No sound came from her room. "God grant that nothing happen," he thought.

In the neighbouring room lay Anna Vladimirovna, her face buried in the pillow. Her heart instinctively foresaw the inevitableness of war and bled at the thought of the separation that awaited them. She shed no tears, for her grief was too deep, she never complained nor did she accuse anyone, convinced as she was, that the coming trial was the cross she was doomed to bear, and meant to do her duty, a duty prescribed by Him, whom she dared not blame. The twenty-four years of their mutual life seemed to her a period of undisturbed bliss. She rose softly from her bed and went down on her knees in front of the image of the Don Virgin Mary, praying in silence.

The kitchen-door bell rang, and a low, excited voice was heard. The orderly, bare-footed, entered Karpoff's study.

"Your Honour," he whispered, "A dispatch from Division Headquarters."

"Give it here," said Karpoff, striking a match.

The official form bore the following words, jotted down in a hurried hand-writing, and the signature of the Chief-of-Staff, Lieutenant-General Lorberg: "twenty-three o'clock and fifty-nine minutes of the 17th July, 1914, to be considered as the starting moment of the mobilization."

His wife stood at the door in a dark dressing-gown, looking at Karpoff.

FROM DOUBLE EAGLE

"Is the war declared," she asked.

"Yes," answered Karpoff.

"Are you going at once?"

"Yes! Nicholai, run across to the adjutant and tell him to assemble all the troop commanders, the pay-master Korshounoff and all the staff officers at Headquarters without delay."

When the orderly had left the room, Anna Vladimirovna threw herself into her husband's arms, and for a few seconds they remained embraced without exchanging a word. Then she wrenched herself from him and seemed calmer.

"When are you starting?" she asked.

"At six in the morning," he answered.

"Do you wish 'Shaloun,' to go under the pack saddle?"

"Yes, and have 'Sharik' put to the two-wheeler."

"I'll have all the warm things packed in the two-wheeler."

"Write to Aliosha that I do not wish him to be commissioned to my regiment."

"I understand. You want him to join a regiment of the guards."

"Yes, since we are to be separated anyhow."

He dressed hurriedly with the aid of his wife, who accompanied him to the stairs with a lighted candle, a look of despair in her eyes. The door closed on its squeaky block and the sound of his footsteps gradually vanished along the deserted street.

Anna Vladimirovna went down on her knees before the ikon and spent half an hour in prayer. Then she lit all the lamps in the rooms, and, aided by the orderly, who had just returned, started packing her husband's things for the campaign and her own for her departure to Novotcherkask. The rest of their belongings had to be abandoned to perfect strangers.

XI

THE dispatch had been a secret one, and yet Sabolotië lived through a night of anxiety and excitement. Light pierced through the chinks of the shutters and through the window-blinds of almost every house, and mysterious sounds and voices

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were heard from all sides. Every inhabitant of the town seemed to know that Russia was being involved in a war with Austria and Germany. Before the officers had found time to assemble, an unseen messenger had spread the unwelcome news from village to village, from town to town, to the confines of the country and beyond.

A term of six hours had been allowed for the mobilization, which meant that, precisely six hours after the fixed time, the regiment was to leave for the frontier. The plan had been worked out and written down many years previously, and the entire staff had full preparatory instructions which now only needed to be put into execution. Hanging lamps burned brightly in the regimental Headquarters. The windows stood wide open into the dark night outside. Karpoff found all the clerks at their desks, and the pay-master Korshounoff, the adjutant and the majority of the officers awaiting him in his private office. Everyone of them guessed the reason of their having been called, but they all kept silent on the matter. They had all appeared in summer tunics with silver shoulder-straps, embossed in gold with the number of the regiment, and with sabres at their side.

"Colonel," exclaimed the adjutant amidst the general silence, "all are present."

The officers placed themselves, as usual on such occasions, according to the numbers of their troops and Karpoff glanced tenderly at his staff.

"Gentlemen!" he began with his calm, even baritone voice, well-trained by years of experience in the ranks, "the mobilization has been announced for fifty-nine minutes past twenty-three o'clock. It is now six minutes past mid-night. You must all set to work. Mobilization does not necessarily mean war. Explain this to the Cossacks. At six the regiment must assemble on the garrison field. I count, gentlemen, on everything being done as thoroughly as always."

The officers bowed in silence.

"Do you wish the colors uncased?" the adjutant inquired.

The Colonel hesitated for a moment.

FROM DOUBLE EAGLE

"Yes," he answered.

And somehow this last instruction, unimportant as it might have seemed, made them feel certain that war was inevitable.

The office gradually cleared. The adjutant fetched some sealed red envelopes containing instructions, with an inscription in large characters: "To be unsealed on receipt of mobilization orders," and passed them to the Colonel.

Karpoff seated himself at the table and began examining and signing the documents.

Round about, the small town was full of a muffled sound. All the windows of the barracks, which had so far looked dark and dim with their dingy night-lights, suddenly shone brightly from top to bottom. In the streets and in the courtyards anxious-looking individuals began to show themselves. The wide gates of the forage-stables were thrown wide open to give passage to soldiers dragging new carts, which they loaded and forwarded to the barracks. Parcels, trunks and boxes with private belongings and parade-uniforms which had to be left behind at Sabolotie were carried out. No one had for a moment suspected that Sabolotie could be abandoned by the troops.

XII

THE short summer night was on the decline and yet Karpoff was still writing and signing documents in the office, answering messengers from the squads and officers who came for various instructions. Among the papers was a heap of passports. He opened the first passport-book to sign it and stopped involuntarily. On the first page, with its double eagle, he read the following words: "Anna Vladimirovna Karpoff, aged forty-three, Greek-orthodox, wife of a Colonel. . . ."

He saw her with his mind's eyes, sitting late at night in the empty lodging, all by herself and maybe forever alone. He recollected how he had met her in the big cool and military cathedral in the midst of a group of other young girls, her school companions, all dressed alike, how she had consented to be his on that memorable moonlit night in the acacia-alley of

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the Alexander garden with its overhanging branches and sweet-smelling flowers.

And now here he was signing a separate passport for her, just at that time of his life, when, with approaching old age, they needed one another more than ever.

Hastily he signed the document. The pale dawn, accompanied by a slightly cool breath of air penetrated the room through the open windows.

XIII

At six o'clock on the morning of the 18th July, 1914, the second brigade of the Nth cavalry division was being drawn up on the so-called Borodin garrison review field.

At that moment Karpoff was on his way to his lodging. The samovar was peacefully steaming in the dining room, buns were disposed in an iron bread-basket, with butter and cream. Anna Vladimirovna, in her best dress, was waiting for her husband. She looked quite calm, although her swollen eyelids betrayed the suffering that night had brought. They hurried over their tea and evaded all that they longed to say, for fear of reopening the wounds that the coming separation had dealt to their hearts.

"Are you going to ride Sardanapal?" she asked.

"Yes. Bombardos will be led."

"I am glad, because Sardanapal is less restless. I have put a pair of spare stirrups into your box. Nicholai knows where they are."

"Well, good-bye, darling. Don't forget to write!"

"Where to?"

"To the front."

She embraced him and crossed him several times with the sign of the cross. Hot tears ran down her cheeks and she would probably have fainted had he not torn himself away and gone down to the court-yard where his horse stood, ready saddled. As he was mounting, she came up to him with trembling lips, gave a lump of sugar to Sardanapal who had recognized her, and clung for a moment to her husband's knee, leaving traces

FROM DOUBLE EAGLE

of her tears on the red stripe of his riding breeches. Karpoff rode off through the gate.

His regiment was waiting, ready to start on the review-field outside the town. The fifth troop, which was late, was trotting from the rear and Captain Tararin, on a big grey, not in the least suited to his size, seemed flushed and angry. A detachment with the colours stood apart, waiting for the regiment to start. The Hussars were drawing up in line on the right side waiting for their Colonel, von Weber, a robust officer of German origin.

Karpoff glanced lovingly at his men. The regiment was in first rate trim. The vans, freshly painted, stood in a symmetrical row close behind the maxim-gun detachment. The lances were so perfectly aligned, that viewed sideways they seemed to form one single lance. The young, sunburnt faces of the Cossacks were clean and their hair brushed. They had had their breakfast and did not make the impression of having passed a sleepless night, spent in hasty and feverish work. Inhabitants of the town began assembling on all sides. The wives of the Hussar and Cossack officers formed a separate group, spotted with bright sun-shades.

In front of the ranks a green-gold altar had been placed and the tall, slim priest of the Hussar regiment in lilac-coloured vestments and a priest's cap was preparing for the service.

The general commanding the division, old General Lorberg, accompanied by the chief-of-staff, had arrived and was riding past the regiment, greeting the men and coughing every now and then. He was nervous, feeling that he ought to say something to the soldiers and not knowing what to say—war was not yet declared and he was far from being convinced that it would be declared. He said nothing and, frowning and puckering his short, needle-like moustache, he cantered to the middle of the field, almost to the very altar, shouting in a hoarse voice :

“Brigade, sheath sabres! Shoulder lances! Attention!”

After the command, repeated by the Colonels of the regiments and the Commanders of the squadrons and troops, had been executed, he again exclaimed :

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“Trumpeters, strike up for prayers!”

The regimental adjutants carried the colours and standards toward the altar. The choir left the ranks of the respective regiments and ran to the altar. The priest arrayed himself in a bright green-gold embroidered surplice and, cross in hand, made a few steps forward.

“In the name of God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Ghost,” he began with his sonorous voice,—“Christian soldiers! The solemn hour of the great and hard trial has come, when you will have to prove to the Almighty whether you are indeed the Christian Army ready to sacrifice your lives for the sake of your faith, your Tsar and your mother-country.”

The rising wind caught his words and often carried it aside. The field-kitchens of the hussar regiment rattled on the high-road; a dog led on a string by an orderly wriggled and yelped.

The priest ended the service and the choir began singing: “To the Lord of Heaven. . . .” The words of the litany sounded too common-place for the event. The ladies stood some way off, some good looking, others plain, some rich, others poor, many of them accompanied by children. They knew that war was inevitable, for otherwise they should not have had to abandon their homes to seek refuge all over Russia and amongst strangers. War had not been declared and yet its destroying blast, its horrors had already begun to be felt and the first to be ruined and thrown into the street were the families of the officers of the frontier garrisons. After service was over and the altar had been removed, the General in command of the division brandished his sabre above his head and delivered a short speech. “Mind you, my fine fellows!” he said, “Don’t plunder peaceful citizens and do not offend them. Don’t forget that war has not yet been declared, and should it be declared, well, then let us all die for our faith, our Tsar and our mother-country!”

“We shall do our best, Your Excellency,” shouted the men.

“Well, God help you! Cossacks to the vanguard!”

Karpoff delivered the command, the first squadron trotted to the front, the patrols cantered on to the right and to the left.

FROM DOUBLE EAGLE

The second squadron started in double column and soon the whole highroad as far as the forest was covered with horsemen in pairs at regular intervals. Karpoff purposely kept the trumpeters back and when the regiment was in full swing the band struck up the regimental march.

And so, did the vanguard of the Russian Army go to war.

Anna Vladimirovna followed the vanishing regiment with dry eyes. The sounds of the regimental band subsided and the trumpeters, their trumpets glittering in the sun, joined their respective squadrons; the dust rose higher and higher hiding the horsemen from the view and the tips of the lances alone still shone above the column. The grey snake of the hussar column began to screen them, the transport carts rattled, the field-kitchens with coals burning in the furnace emitted small cloudlets of smoke, a belated Cossack galloped past, and the dusty garrison field became deserted and dull. The inquisitive crowd gradually dispersed. Sabolotië blazed under the morning rays of the hot July sun.

"Well, those aren't likely to return," Anna Vladimirovna heard someone say.

She staggered and nearly fell to the ground and Trailin's wife had to support her. For a few minutes she stumbled forward, losing every notion of what was happening, with the fragments of the march resounding in her ears and her brains racked by the thought that all was over. Their simple, humdrum life was at an end. All about, other sad-looking, staggering women were returning, some shedding tears. One young woman, married but six months before and already in the family way, Captain Isaïeff's wife, was sobbing aloud and two Polish women, perfect strangers to her, were leading her, making attempts to console her. The regiments were on their way to the frontier.

XIV

FOR eight days Karpoff's regiment had been standing at a distance of twelve miles from the frontier in a small Polish village called Barkhatcheff in the midst of the dense green oak

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forests of Labounsk. A broad river flowed through the village, gaily murmuring over the stones. The village-school, abandoned by both teacher and pupils, stood close by the river, and the staff of the Don regiment had taken quarters in the school-room between the desks that had been shoved towards the walls. Chromos representing the life of the bees, the various nations of the world, agricultural implements, the aurora borealis, a large map of Europe, the reproduction of the two hemispheres, maps of Africa, America and Australia adorned the walls, and above the teacher's desk hung framed oil-prints of the Emperor and the Empress.

Lieutenant Colonel Korshounof and the officers were awkwardly seated on the low benches of the school-desks, whilst the regimental clerks made calculations and prepared field lists. It was early in the morning of the 26th of July. The eve of that day news had arrived that Germany and then Austria had declared war on Russia; the reconnoitering detachment had received instructions to cross the frontier and "get into contact with the enemy."

The weather was stifling hot, the sky was absolutely cloudless and at night the moon shone brightly. The school-yard, still damp with the morning dew, was crowded with men surrounding a young fair-haired Cossack Likhatcheff and the tall, stout, black-bearded Arkhipoff who had just returned with a report and two small bay horses, saddled with foreign-looking saddles, to which rifles, swords with yellow plaited sword-tassels, blue tunics lined with white sheep-skin, and red caps were attached. Both caps and tunics were adorned with gold braid. One of the caps was cut and blood-stained. The white sheep-skin likewise bore traces of blood.

Those were the first trophies of the regiment.

XV

As soon as the report of the declaration of war was made known, the Hungarian cavalry division, stationed opposite the Russian town Vladimir-Volynsk, decided to capture it by a

FROM DOUBLE EAGLE

cavalry charge, taking possession of the army munition and food-supply, thus paralysing the mobilization.

The division consisted of Hungarian magnates. They were mounted on splendid bay and black horses and their uniforms were embroidered with silver. The patrols and spies reported that the Russian cavalry division garrisoned at Vladimir-Volynsk had left the town and that the Borodinsk infantry regiment alone had remained and was busy mobilizing.

The Hungarians decided to die or gain immortal fame. The division was under the command of Count Muncaczy, a short, sinewy, strong man of fifty-five, with a ruddy face and a long, grey drooping moustache. His five sons, four of whom were married, were commissioned to that division, all smart young fellows. The youngest, a lad of sixteen, served as orderly to his father.

Early on the 30th of July, the division started in brilliant order and at a trot across the Russian boundary towards Vladimir-Volynsk through the thick forests. The whole division was equipped as if for a review in blue-green shakoes, dark-blue embroidered Hungarian tunics, with hussar pelisses of the same hue thrown across the left shoulder. On approaching the town the division pulled up. The canteen-keepers unbottled sparkling Hungarian wine which was soon drunk to the health of the King and Emperor, to the glory of the Hungarian cavalry and to the welfare of the fair sex.

Meanwhile the silent and earnest Russian infantry, advised by his patrols, was pouring into the trenches in grey, regular files, the bayonets glittering in the sun. The soldiers disposed their fire-arms on the parapets which were hardly perceptible above the level of the ground. The officers were giving instructions in a subdued tone:

“You mustn't shoot, unless by command, even if attacked. Aim according to my instructions and without hurrying. Remember your drill. Hold your breath and concentrate your whole mind on your shot, aiming attentively.”

It was about ten in the morning, when the Hungarian cavalry drew up in echelon order. Count Muncaczy, the eldest son of

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the General in command, Colonel of the first regiment, mounted on a well-groomed arab and attired in a brilliant uniform covered with silver, made the round of the regiment with words of encouragement.

"You needn't fear that Russian rabble! Remember 1814 and avenge your brothers!"

"Slay them without mercy!"

The General himself rode up at a gallop on a fine hunter arrayed in gold and silk, embraced his son in the presence of the whole regiment and exclaimed:

"Forward, for the fame of Hungary, of our King and Emperor!"

The regiment emerged from the wood and gradually came into the field which lay between the forest and the town. About a mile off the white walls of the stone and wooden houses, the churches glittering in the sun, the mill chimneys and the tower of the Polish church became visible. A highroad with telegraph posts from which the wires had been torn, ran through ploughed fields, with here and there hardly perceptible trenches disguised by straw. Not one living being was to be seen anywhere. The regiment galloped at full speed over the ploughed fields in four even ranks, in a shower of clots of heavy black earth thrown up by the horses' hoofs. The bright sun shone on the silver braid of the uniforms, on the horses' bits, on the unsheathed sabres, and the sleek coats of the horses.

The Borodin regiment, buried up to the eyes in the trenches, watched the charge, the rifles on the parapet, ready for action. As the Hungarian cavalry approached, the horses could be separately discerned and it became possible to distinguish the officers by their brilliant uniforms.

"Non-commissioned officers and best shots! Aim at the officers!" was the command given in the trenches at that moment.

The men in the trenches hardly moved, only a few bayonets were lifted from the ground.

Eleven hundred, nine hundred, seven hundred paces . . . and yet no fire from the trenches.

Count Muncaczy and his men felt secretly confident that the

FROM DOUBLE EAGLE

Russians had fled, and that the Hungarian division would thus have no difficulty in taking possession of the town!

"For the fame of Hungary, the King and Emperor! Hurrah!" shouted the Count in a hoarse voice turning towards his men.

And a mighty shout, which sounded strange to the unaccustomed ears of the Russians, was heard in the trenches.

"Aim at half-chest and hit," was the command signalled at the same time and one after another the shots fell at short intervals, until the whole long row of trenches was lit up by short flashes and a continuous crackling filled the air, the machine-guns adding their voices to those of the rifles.

Count Muncaczy's arab steed fell, hurling his rider to the ground. Horses and men lay motionless, covering the fields with blue and dark spots. The charge had failed and the regiment was all but annihilated. The few men who had survived fled to the woods pursued by the thin whizz of the bullets. Another regiment, met half-way, advancing to majestic waves, likewise overcome by terror, followed their example.

"Clean the rifles. Cool the machine-gun barrels," were the quiet instructions given to the soldiers in the trenches, as though nothing of importance had happened, and yet four attacks had been repelled.

Old Count Muncaczy was foaming with rage. He assembled the remnants of his regiments and, accompanied by his fifth son, the last offspring of his illustrious race, led the fifth charge himself. They got close to the trenches with a few men. At the very edge of the trench both father and son fell and those who leapt into it were captured alive.

Thus, on the first day of the war the best Austrian forces, the Hungarian cavalry division, succumbed in its foolhardy attempt at vanquishing the Russian infantry.

Peasants with spades were ordered by the district police to dig graves and collect the killed whose number reached two thousand. The representatives of the most illustrious Hungarian families were amongst the slain, but who cared about that here. The sanitary attendants stripped them of their silver-

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braided uniforms, sabres, and revolvers, and pilfered their pockets. The rifles and sabres were put into carts, whilst mounted orderlies and baggage-train soldiers ran about catching runaway horses.

The streets of Vladimir-Volynsk were sultry and smelt of baked rye-bread, sour cabbage-soup and black-gruel. Who cared that the half-clad corpse of a handsome old man with a grey moustache and by his side that of a youth with a cherub's face were lying close by the trenches and that the whole field was covered with fallen horses and men? The brass bell of the cathedral was droning loudly, calling the population to the thanks—giving mass to be celebrated by the local clergy, whilst a devil-may-care soldier's song rang from the far end of the street.

On the 1st of August the whole Russian cavalry was ordered across the Austro-German boundary as far deep as possible into the heart of the enemies' country to carry flames and devastation in order to paralyse their mobilization and to destroy their means of communication.

The other regiments of the division with their mounted batteries had been sent some way off to surprise the enemy, whilst Karpoff's Cossacks had received orders to stay by the infantry and protect it. The infantry, however, was still about forty miles off from the field of battle. Every day brought small, hardly noticeable, casualties, which would, in the infantry, where men perish by thousands, have passed unobserved: two killed, eight wounded,—five killed, twenty wounded,—two wounded,—but these casualties happened daily and by the time the infantry had come up, Karpoff hardly knew his regiment again; instead of fifteen to sixteen ranks, only eight to nine filed up. Half of the regiment had perished. The old brave Cossacks had been replaced by young new-comers, unknown to him, quite unlike the usual type of Cossacks. A large contingent of these formed part of the third squadron, commanded by the energetic and enterprising Kargalskoff.

"Who are these men?" inquired Karpoff in a dissatisfied tone.

"They're volunteers, Colonel," Kargalskoff answered.

FROM DOUBLE EAGLE

"Where do they come from."

"They enlist of their own free will. Local peasants, fine chaps and splendid fighters, no worse than the Cossacks and well acquainted with the country. They serve as guides and interpreters and help the grooms and cooks. They're entirely free, their villages having been taken and their houses burnt down or destroyed."

"But can they be relied upon."

"Most certainly. I answer for them."

Karpoff shrugged his shoulders. A painful feeling mixed with fear overcame him; hardly one month had elapsed since the war had been declared and one half of his well-drilled, famous regiment, his pride, was no more.

It was toward evening, while Karpoff was watching the grooming of his horses that Captain Kargalskoff turned up in the court-yard followed by a youngster of eighteen, clean-shaven, his cap at the back of his head. A lock of black hair protruded from under its shade. He was good-looking and had bold grey eyes. He was clad in a clean Cossack shirt with shoulderstraps, new Cossack trousers and well-polished boots. A sabre, a cartridge-pouch and a rifle completed his equipment. He looked smart and could hardly have passed unobserved. But Karpoff involuntarily lowered his eyes under the unabashed piercing gaze of the youth and thought: "What a repulsive expression this good-looking Pole has."

"What's your name?" he inquired.

"Victor Modjalevsky."

"Where from?"

"I'm a pupil of the Kholm college, and son of a citizen of Vladimir-Volynsk."

He spoke good Russian, but with a certain accent customary to foreigners, or to Russians who have passed many years abroad.

"He's a fine fellow, is Vitia," Kargalskoff remarked, "and has won the heart of all the Cossacks. He sings well, knows German and French. Yesterday he cross-questioned the prisoners in their own language."

TO RED FLAG

"Where have you learnt German?"

"At college," was the short reply.

"Has he been long with you?" Karpoff inquired, turning to Kargalskoff.

"For three days only. He joined us at Tchertovetz."

"Good," said Karpoff trying to get over the unpleasant sensation caused by the sight of the youth. "You can remain at headquarters."

"Yes, Sir," answered Modjalevsky looking Karpoff straight in the eyes.

During those three days he had heard enthusiastic praise by the Cossacks of their Colonel and whilst fixing Karpoff intently he thought:

"And slay the best of the gentiles. Slay—."

He turned on his heel, as he had been taught by the Cossacks and left the court-yard. Karpoff stood musing and trying to realise why the young soldier had, at first sight, impressed him so unpleasantly. "Am I doing him injustice? Is it on account of his bold look and seeming fearlessness? But he can't be blamed for that!"

XVI

THE regiment in which Sablin served had been on march for four days. The night-bivouacs had been tiring. They had rested in small Polish villages, in poky and dirty huts, some on camp-beds, others on straw laid on the floor. The squadrons had been quartered in various places owing to the want of huts. Round about were nothing but marshes and forests. It had often rained and the ground was heavy and muddy.

Five days before the cavalry had left the train in which they had passed three days and were now hurrying on to enforce the J. army corps which was slowly retreating from Prussia, occasioning at the same time heavy losses to the German army. During those August days the Russian army helped to save Paris, sacrificing its own land and thousands of its best men.

Prince Repnin was in command of the regiment, Sablin commanded the first squadron, the first troop was led by Captain

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Count Blankenburg and the second by Captain Rotbek. Both squadrons had a large contingent of officers and were expecting the arrival of a number of ensigns only just promoted from the military schools and the Corps of Pages.

The villages they crossed were in full activity, the peasants doing their utmost to finish with as much speed as possible the thrashing of the grain. Here and there Sablin noticed things which proved the proximity of the war. He would come across a spacious, strongly-built Polish cart on high oaken wheels, drawn by a pair of big, well-groomed horses and laden with parcels and travelling-cases, coops with various fowls, amongst which ladies and young girls clad, some in town-dresses, others in peasant-garb, were seated. Then again he every now and then met boys and girls driving cows or geese, or dragging a well-fed pig behind them. The women's faces were sunburnt, their hair dishevelled, and their eyes bore traces of the unusual privations of the past days spent in unexpected peregrinations, in night-bivouacs under the shelter of their carts and in unforeseen emotion and fear; poor fugitives turned out of their homes and mercilessly abandoned to their uncertain fate. For strategical and other reasons the troops were retreating so as to allow the enemy to advance into Russian territory with a view to future successful military operations. Every time such chess-board moves took place, they brought about the dislocation of manifold households and the destruction forever of the social life of thousands of human beings.

On the approach of Sablin's squadrons the beladen carts would turn to one side, and it seemed to Sablin as though he read in the eyes of the wretched women a bitter reproach. A sensation of shame overcame him and he turned his head away to avoid their gaze. These fugitives opened to his eyes a new page of warfare. So far he had somehow had the impression that warfare affected the military class only, that they alone, officers and soldiers, were doomed to die the death of heroes, to lie in hospitals suffering from their wounds, they, who had sacrificed their life to warfare and its science, in exchange for the right of distinguishing themselves, of wearing a bright uni-

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form, of meanwhile enjoying life, the proximity of the Emperor and the love and admiration of the women. The care-worn faces of these poor women opened his eyes to a new life-tragedy; a peaceful existence destroyed and insulted, quiet happiness smashed to pieces. Awe and shame filled his soul, as though he were to blame for all this misery, he, whose duty it should have been to defend and save them from utter ruin.

The younger officers did not seem to realise the tragedy; they looked upon these scenes as incident to the general picture of war, casual and original adventures.

"Where are you bound for, charming 'Panenkas,'" exclaimed Ensign Pokroffsky sending kisses right and left.

"We are going to Warsaw," they answered smiling, but Sablin saw tears in those smiles.

"Why so far! We'll throw back the Germans and you can return to your homes."

"Oh, if that could only be true! May the Lord grant it!" muttered a stout old lady, seated on a hen-coop.

Sablin now noticed an officer trotting towards him from the village, followed by an orderly, and recognized ensign Lidval sent ahead by the quartermaster.

"Colonel," he reported, pulling up his horse, "the headquarters for the first and second squadrons have been reserved. Kindly authorize the officers to stay at the hall belonging to Pan Ledokhovski, who has invited us all to have dinner with him. He is very well off and owns a brandy-distillery, a sugar-refinery and a cloth-mill."

"I strongly object to being indebted to anyone!" rejoined Sablin gloomily. "Surely you could have found quarters at the village in some Poles' or Jews' houses against payment, without having to be under obligation to a complete stranger?"

"He is very rich," continued Lidval in a tone of entreaty, and he would feel so flattered. His house is full of beautiful Polish women; we could arrange a dance and enjoy ourselves."

"Why shouldn't we accept the invitation, Sasha," Rotbek broke in. "We'll get a chance of having a good wash and sleeping in fresh sheets. The house seems to be large enough and

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is sure to contain over a dozen spare-rooms. Far from intruding, we are sure to be received with open arms."

Unable to resist the looks of entreaty which he read in the eyes of his young officers, Sablin gave in.

"I consent," he said, "but on condition that one officer of each squadron remains by turns on duty with the men in the village."

"We promise, Colonel," was the reply echoed by the chorus of young fellows, who began joking gaily, making plans for picnics and other entertainments with the fair Polish girls.

XVII

PAN LEDOKHOVSKI welcomed his guests on the front steps of his huge mansion.

"Pan Colonel," he began, mixing Russian and Polish words,— "please excuse our humble honour; do not blame us for not being able to provide a separate room for each of your officers. Owing to unforeseen circumstances half a wing has been placed at the disposal of refugee neighbours; the Voitzekhovskis, the Lioubitovskis, Princess Razwadovska with two daughters, Pan Lobyssevitch, Doctor Kaspilovski and most of them with their children."

"I am afraid we are putting you to great inconvenience." Sablin said stiffly.

"Oh, on the contrary. I am only too delighted at being honoured by your visit. I am, however, grieved at not being able to place sufficient comfort at the disposal of such distinguished guests. This way please."

A great fire-place, in which one could easily have roasted a full-sized boar, took up part of the huge hall, adorned with trophies such as stags' and roebucks' heads, and various horns with corresponding dates and names affixed. A double staircase covered with grey cloth carpets led from either side of the fire-place to the second floor.

"I'll show you to your rooms. It's now four o'clock. I'll send you some tea and sandwiches; and expect to dine with me at six o'clock, when I shall have the pleasure of introducing you to my wife."

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Sablin, accompanied by Count Ledokhovski and followed by his officers, ascended the stairs to the second floor. A long gallery, with windows on one side and large doors on the other, led from one end of the wing to the other. "This is your room, Colonel," said Ledokhovski, opening one of the doors and showing Sablin into a spacious double-bedded room. Thereupon, leaving Sablin to himself, he proceeded to show their quarters to the other guests.

The room was clean but somewhat musty and Sablin hastened to open the window, which looked out on a well-kept park with tidy lawns and flower-beds and a green meadow, crowded with carriages and carts. A massive coach on iron wheels stood at one side, and the horses, half unharnessed and fastened to the pole, fed out of a big sack of hay. In a cart, close by, two Polish women, seated on hay covered with carpets, were having tea from a tin tea-pot. A young Pole in shirt sleeves and braces was serving them. The women looked sleepy and dishevelled and their blouses were covered with hay. An empty calèche, two carts with household utensils, and, still further on, a long and narrow cart, laden with various articles and black-haired Jewish children, continued the file of vehicles. A frowsy old Jewess in a red shawl thrown across her shoulders sat at one end of the cart, supporting her chin with her bony hands, a look of unutterable grief in her eyes. A young, handsome woman in shift and petticoat, her bare white shoulders and breast glistening in the sun, was feeding a baby, remonstrating the while in a bilious tone with a grey-beard old Jew in a long frock-coat, who was dawdling by a melancholy-looking horse with protruding ribs.

Officers' orderlies passed to and fro carrying luggage into the house, and far away the faint sound of constant firing was audible.

Sablin's room was fitted in the "empire" style and furnished with antique and expensive but solid articles. Above the beds hung a valuable picture representing sunset in Venice and on the opposite wall two engravings: a seascape and a hunting scene.

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A neatly dressed chamber-maid in a white cap and apron brought tea and sandwiches which she placed on a table close to the sofa and then proceeded to lay clean sheets on the beds and fresh towels on the wash-stand.

She looked at Sablin out of her sly grey eyes.

"Do you think Pan," she suddenly exclaimed, "that the Germans are likely to come this way?"

Sablin looked at the girl without replying.

"Just listen how they're firing!" she went on, "some of our men have just returned from over there with the news that many lives have been lost. They say our troops are retiring."

Sablin still kept silent, ignorant himself of the general position.

"What will happen, great God, if the Germans come. My father is lying sick in the village. Where are we to send him? My husband has had to join, being of the reserve."

"In my opinion," said Sablin at last, "the Germans aren't likely to come this way. The fighting seems to be some way off."

The clinking of spurs and the sound of young voices came from the gallery.

"Politza, that's the one you should flirt with," cried Lidval, "see, what a fine fellow he is!"

"Pauline, rub my back."

"Get away, you naughty fellows."

"Pauline, are you a Russian? How is it that you speak Russian so fluently?"

Sablin closed the door.

XVIII

At six o'clock a footman in livery knocked and told Sablin in Polish that dinner was served.

All the officers of Sablin's division and Count Ledokhovski's guests were already assembled in the large dining-hall, where the blinds had been pulled down and the electric light turned on. They were waiting for Sablin, the most distinguished of the guests. As soon as he passed the threshold the regimental band, disposed on the gallery, struck up the regimental march so un-

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expectedly for Sablin that he stopped short. Rotbek came up to him with a smile of contrition:

"Excuse me Sasha," he began, "for having disposed of the band without your permission. But you see, with all these young men and girls about, why shouldn't a dance be organized after dinner."

"Eh! Pik, Pik, always the same old game," he said, half reproachfully, and went up to the lady of the house. The Countess, in the forties, but stately and good-looking, was in evening dress and displayed well-shaped shoulders and neck. She either could not or purposely would not speak Russian and addressed Sablin in excellent French. Sablin answered in Russian, conscious though he was that it was bad form. The conversation lagged. Just then Anelia, the daughter of the house, a charming fresh-looking girl of seventeen with dark expressive eyes, a finely-shaped nose, delicate eyebrows and lips, came up to Sablin curtsying ceremoniously. She had been brought up in a French "convent" and spoke Russian with difficulty.

Sablin was introduced to the guests: Polish land-owners with long noses and glossy hair and their wives and daughters, some in rich evening dresses, others in simple travelling clothes. He noticed many a young and handsome face among the women. One of them Anelia Zboromirska, was presented as the most beautiful and gayest lady of the whole neighbourhood. She could have been barely thirty, while Pan Zboromirski was bald and old.

"The gayest!" thought Sablin. "How on earth can she be gay with such a husband?"

"Zakouska" and "Vodka" were served on a separate table which soon attracted the attention of all the guests. Sablin stood aside, having since the death of his wife pledged himself to total abstinence.

"Sasha," Rotbek exclaimed winking at him, "here's the fourth glass I'm emptying 'ad majorem Poloniae gloriam.' The brandy is first-class, distilled with some marvellous herbs. As for the sausage it's a very dream."

"Pani Anelia," Captain Artemieff, a tall and good-looking

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officer, was heard saying, "Just put your lips to my glass so as to enable me to read your thoughts."

She laughed, showing a double row of magnificent teeth and, threatening him with her small finger adorned with valuable rings, said:

"And why should you, Captain, wish to know the thoughts of a small Polish 'panienka.' They are dark, bad thoughts."

The band was meanwhile playing a selection from "Carmen," and the strains of Bizet's music excited both men and women, and no one thought of the war and of the proximity of the battle-field.

During the meal Ledokhovski, Sablin's neighbor, entertained him by talking politics, but Sablin listened gloomily and in silence.

"Have you heard of the Grand Duke Nikolai Nikolaievitch's manifesto about the regeneration of Poland. What a generous, noble action: two fraternal nations joining in the defence of their mutual freedom against the enemy of Slavonism. I am certain that you have likewise a feeling of deep and innate hatred for the German race?"

Sablin did not answer, for at the bottom of his soul he felt no such hatred. He had no feeling of hatred for Vera Constantinovna nor had his sympathy for Baroness Sophie, whose husband, a Prussian officer, was fighting in the enemy's ranks, lessened in the slightest degree. The whole war seemed to Sablin a fatal misunderstanding.

He turned to his neighbour to the left, Countess Ledokhovska, seated at the head of the table.

"Comtesse, dites, avez-vous reçu votre éducation en Russie ou à l'étranger?"

"J'ai fait mes études au gymnase de Varsovie" answered the Countess, rejoicing at having induced the haughty Colonel to address her in French.

"Then it stands to reason," Sablin went on in Russian, looking at her with his soft grey eyes, "that you must speak Russian in perfection, like all society in the Polish capital."

The Countess muttered confusedly, in Russian:

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"But, Colonel, I've nearly forgotten my Russian."

"The tongue of the barbarians!" Sablin rejoined.

Presently Anelia Zboromirska, from the opposite side of the table, lifted her glass of sparkling wine and, looking at him with a charming smile which showed her pearl-like teeth, exclaimed:

"To victory, Colonel!"

Countess Ledokhovska joined in the toast.

"Yes, to victory! Defend us! Our manor, you know, is nearly two centuries old. Napoleon with his staff was a guest of our ancestor Count Ledokhovski in 1812, and the room he slept in exists still."

Count Ledokhovski joined in.

"This," he said, "is one of the most up-to-date estates in Poland. We have an electric plant, a sugar-refinery, a brandy-distillery, a cloth-mill—representing a value of many millions. Our picture-gallery contains a Teniers and a Rubens, a world-famed collection of Putermans and van Dycks. I'll show them to you tomorrow. The Ledokhovskis have always been art-patrons and my great-grandfather, who spent most of his life in Rome, was a great friend of his Holiness. I'd rather die than part with this manor."

Ices were being served. Judging by the flushed faces of the young people and the animated conversation which was being carried on in French and in Polish, it was evident to Sablin that the consumption of wine had been abundant.

Rotbek never one moment left Pani Ozertitska's side, who gazed at him with amorous eyes. She was a plump and mature widow, and Rotbek, catching Sablin's eye, called to him across the table:

"Sasha, I'm following the line of minor resistance, incapable as I am of competing with the younger generation."

Pani Anelia's attention was divided between her neighbours, the tall and smart Captain Artemieff who attacked her deliberately and the modest Ensign Pokroffsky, who, abashed by her fascination, passively submitted to her advances. Both of them kept, by turns, filling old Pan Zboromirsky's glass, heedless of Pani Anelia's feigned protests, and the old gentleman ended by

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gazing about him with dazed eyes, emptying one glass after the other despite the sleepiness which was overcoming him.

XIX

DINNER was followed by dancing. Two of the Company indulged in a brilliant Polish mazurka to the joy of the Polish guests.

"That I call a dance!" the Count exclaimed with enthusiasm, "not to be compared with all your modern cake-walks, one-steps and other monkey-dances—that's the monarch of dances!" and suddenly seizing his daughter's hand, he dashingly joined in the mazurka. At the culminating point of the dance a footman ran up to the Count with a message.

"Gentlemen," the latter exclaimed, "welcome news! More officers have arrived. I hope, Colonel, that you won't object if I ask them to join us?"

Sablin repaired to the entrance-hall, where fresh looking youngsters, only just promoted to join the regiment, were ridding themselves of their overcoats.

When Sablin made his appearance, they drew up in military style and introduced themselves one after the other.

"Colonel, I'm an ensign, Prince Grieven, just promoted, of His Majesty's 'Corps of Pages.'"

"Ensign Begretzoff, from the Nicholaievsky Cavalry School."

Olienin, Medviedsky, Likhoslavsky, Rosental—Sablin had known them all as children. He had known their parents. They all belonged to the best aristocracy of the Russian Empire. At the far end of the file, hiding behind the backs of his comrades, appeared a tall, handsome boy in a khaki soldier's tunic and a white belt with a heavy sabre attached to it—Sablin's son, Kolia.

Sablin frowned.

"Kolia," he exclaimed, "what does this mean?"

His son pulled himself up in front of him and reported, in a breaking bass voice:

"Your Honour, page of the junior special form Nicholas Sablin, commissioned to the regiment."

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"By whose permission."

"The Colonel's."

"I call this overdoing it, Kolia! Come along with me! Gentlemen," he continued addressing the newly-promoted officers. "I'll appoint you to the various squadrons. Meanwhile have a wash and then enjoy yourselves. Let's go, Nicholas!"

Kolia followed his father obediently.

Once in his room Sablin lighted the lamp and placed himself with his back to the window, while his son looked at him imploringly.

"Well, and how did you get here?"

"Father, I was staying with Granny at uncle George's in Moscow when the war was declared. I couldn't stay on for a minute longer. Uncle George quite approved, and said: 'It's your duty to die for your country.'"

"The old fool," exclaimed Sablin.

"Father! I have got leave until the first of September. Do allow me to remain. I want to see something of the war and to kill were it but one single German. I'm the best marksman of my form. Father—mother's no more. What's the sense of life. Don't be angry. Please give me your permission."

"And where's your sister?" Sablin inquired sternly. "Where have you left Tania?"

"Tania's gone to Kisslovodsk with Granny."

"And how's your grandmother? Did she consent to your leaving for the front."

"Granny has had a lot of annoyance. Uncle insisted on her changing her family name to Volkoff. Granny got furious: 'I'm Baroness Wolff,' she said, 'and such I'll remain to my dying day. Tania set off crying at the thought that her grandmother was a German.'"

"Have you all gone off your heads over there?"

"Father, they started looting and demolishing the German shops and pulling the shields down."

"What savages!"

"Why father, there's nothing wrong in that: that's patriotism."

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Sablin shrugged his shoulders.

"Jolly patriotism!" he rejoined. "A Jewish 'pogrom' could just as well then be looked upon as an act of patriotism. What inveterate fools!"

"Uncle George joined the crowd," Kolia went on "He said that it served the Germans jolly well right; that they were a set of spies."

"Well, I'm blessed!"

Sablin was studying his son. At the bottom of his heart he rejoiced at his having joined the regiment and come to the front instead of remaining in Moscow looting shops, smashing windows and despoiling peaceful Germans who were not to be blamed for the war. He had acted in the true spirit of a Sablin.

His son stood in military fashion, his eyes bearing that expression of strength of will, of indomitable readiness to sacrifice his life for the sake of duty, which had characterized his mother. His features, the oval of his face, his finely-cut nose and delicate but firm lips likewise recalled Vera Constantinovna. The weight of solitude, which had not left Sablin ever since his wife's death, seemed lightened. It seemed to him as though his son had been sent by her to help him.

"Welcome, then, my boy!" said Sablin embracing his son. "So be it, stay on with me."

Kolia clung to his father's neck, with tears in his eyes.

"Father," he said, "we are alone. Mother is no more. Don't let us ever part again."

"Have you dined?"

"I'm not hungry."

"Well then make yourself smart and go join the others. Dance and enjoy yourself. You see how warlike it looks here."

He looked tenderly at his son's bare torso, as the boy stood drying his muscular arms and back with a towel in the full bloom of his healthy youth and telling his father all about his recent impressions in Moscow.

"You remember Kestner, the solicitor! Just fancy! He now goes under the family name of Kostretzoff. On our way here we decided to Russify Ensign Grieven by calling him Grivin.

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Doesn't it seem ridiculous? What has war to do with sympathy or feeling. I'm longing to kill a German and I wouldn't waver if I had to shoot my uncle von Schreintz as an enemy, although I love him and aunt Sonia. But then that's war."

Kolia went down to join the rest of the company, while Sablin remained in his room. Had he been able to, he would have prayed, but he had lost all faith in God. The night was dark, calm and mysterious. In the far distance the fire of casual cannon-shots flashed noiselessly like heat-lightning and it seemed to Sablin as though the flashes were now nearer than during the day, perhaps not more than twenty miles from the manor, behind the dark zone of the forest.

"Can it really be that our troops are retreating?" he thought. The strains of a waltz and the sound of animated voices came to him through the open window.

At eleven the band played the final march and retired and presently the voices of officers regaining their rooms resounded in the gallery.

"D'you know, Sandy," Pokroffsky was heard saying as he passed Sablin's door, arm-in-arm with Artemieff, "Anelia has promised me to open the door of her room at two sharp."

"What a rascal you are!" rejoined Artemieff, laughingly. "You want to make me cuckold!"

"What d'you mean?"

"Why she promised to let me in at mid-night on condition that I left her at half-past one, when she feared her husband might turn up."

"By Jove. That's splendid!"

"You seem both of you to be in for a love-adventure," said Baron Lidval. "Poushkareff and myself have decided to share Pauline."

"What do you say to Pik! Fancy his locking himself in with that stout Ozertitzka in the presence of us all!"

Artemieff and Pokroffsky started singing the duet from Hoffman's tales: "Oh, come thou night of love—impart us thy delights."

Kolia, gay and joyful, full of pride at the idea of being at

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the front and in the company of real officers, entered Sablin's room.

"How awfully jolly it is, father," he exclaimed. "And what a brick you are. A regular hero!"

XX

TOWARDS dawn Sablin had a night-mareish dream. He dreamt that, fighting against a strong current, he succeeded in swimming across a wide, deep river whilst Kolia, who was swimming by his side, suddenly disappeared and was drowned. As, shortly before Marousia's death, he had had a similar dream, he awoke with a heavy feeling, as though some unavoidable calamity lay in store for him. With closed eyes he lay in bed under the troubling impression of his dream, until his attention was aroused by loud, uniform sounds which made the windows shake. Sablin opened his eyes. It was morning. The cannonade gradually increased, becoming more regular and louder. "That's our artillery," Sablin decided. The fire was answered by the distant, continuous rumbling of the German batteries. "Our artillery has approached during the night," thought Sablin, jumping out of bed. This meant that the Russian troops had retreated, that the enemy was having the upper hand, that the war he and his son had come for was now coming close. The night before had been passed in dances, flirtations and general enjoyment, while this very day, maybe, fighting, with all its fearful results, lay in store for them. Sablin turned to the bed on which his son lay smiling blissfully in his sleep. His well-cut features, his finely shaped nose and dark eyebrows reminded Sablin of Vera Constantinovna. He gazed at him, realising perhaps for the first time how deeply he loved him, and now his whole mind concentrated in the one hope, that nothing should befall his son until the end of August, when he would send him back as far away as possible from the horrors of war.

"Kolia!" he mused, "why have you come here?"

Sablin looked at his watch. It was nearly seven. Without dressing he went to the window and pulled up the blind. The sky was covered with low clouds which overhung the dark

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forests, and a drizzly rain was falling. On the meadow beneath the Polish women slept in the cart, sheltered by an improvised awning. A coachman was giving water to the horses fastened to the pole of the carriage, while the old Jew, assisted by a Jewish woman, was nervously harnessing a white horse. The other Jewess, handsome and young, was crouching on her heels by the side of a burning wood-pile and boiling something in a tin-kettle.

"They are leaving," Sablin thought, overcome once more by his anxiety for his son. He proceeded to dress when someone knocked at the door. It was his orderly, who reported that Prince Repnin wished to see him.

"Alexander Nicholaievitch," the Prince began, "you must collect your squadron and concentrate it at ten o'clock at the Vulka Shtitinskaya. I'm off to the Headquarters of the Army corps. I'll see you again on my way back."

"What's up?" Sablin inquired.

"Nothing special. Break up your night-quarters. They enjoyed themselves last night? Well, so much the better!" His orderly was awaiting Sablin in his room. Kolia was still asleep.

"They say, Your Honour, that our troops have been beaten. They're retreating," whispered the orderly.

"Who told you?"

"Stray soldiers have passed this way, evidently fugitives. It seems the Germans are advancing in large numbers backed by heavy artillery. There are reports that the majority of our officers have fallen and the infantry is demolished. No wonder! What's a soldier good for without an officer! Which horse am I to saddle for the young master?"

"Diana, father," said Kolia drowsily on hearing the last words. "Please, father, Diana. You're going to ride Leda probably?"

"But Diana is young and hot-tempered. She's likely to bolt with you."

Kolia sprang out of bed.

"Father dear, don't insult me. I'm the best horseman of my form and, besides, I know Diana's habits. Don't you remember

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that I rode her last year with mother at Tsarskoie Selo? She's such an intelligent mare. Semën, have Diana saddled for me."

"Well, so be it. Tell the sergeant-major to select the best of the spare horses for the newly-promoted officers, and instruct the orderlies to wake their officers: at half past nine they've all of them got to join their squadrons," Sablin said to the orderly, dismissing him.

"I can hardly believe, father, that I'm at the front. They're fighting already, the guns are thundering and so near too! Only yesterday it all seemed so distant and we had doubts as to whether it was the booming of big guns or the sound of thunder we heard. How jolly this is, father!"

At half past nine Sablin visited Count Ledokhovski to thank him for his hospitality.

"Is there any immediate danger, do you think, Pan Colonel?" The Count said, "I think it's perhaps wiser to send off the refugees further inland. I'll remain where I am and shall receive the enemy as my ancestor received Napoleon. The Germans are a civilized nation. They won't destroy the most up-to-date estate of the district with its sugar-refinery, brandy-distillery and cloth-mill."

"But aren't you of opinion, Count, that just owing to the value and the splendid condition of your property, with its numerous costly enterprises, it should not fall into the hands of the enemy in its present state."

"Then it's the duty of our troops to defend it."

"And if that can't be done?"

"Come, Colonel. I surely can't allow that everything belonging to me be destroyed; this property has been built up for two centuries. The picture-gallery alone, as I was telling you, is worth millions."

"Pack the pictures and have them carted off."

"Whereto?"

"To Warsaw, to Moscow—anywhere, and as far as possible."

"But when?"

"This very day."

"Pan Colonel, you must be joking! How do you expect that

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to be done? I should need cases and carts and that would mean at least a month's work!"

"Listen," said Sablin pointing to the forest, beyond which the cannonade was heard.

"Pan Colonel," exclaimed Ledokhovski turning pale, and looking at Sablin with blank eyes. "It's impossible, I'd sooner die."

"That's your look out. But my advice is—leave at once and take your wife and daughter with you."

They parted stiffly. Sablin had a feeling of unutterable anguish. "That was gratitude for their hospitality!" he thought, "abandoning them after having enjoyed their food, drink and entertainment. On the basis of strategical combinations! It would be better to die than desert them in this fashion."

The court-yard of the manor was in a whirl: coachmen hurriedly putting the horses to the carriages, maids and footmen carrying trunks and parcels. Fat Pani Ozertzitka, pale, with her dress in disorder, sat in a cart by the side of the driver, expostulating angrily with Rotbek, who stood smiling confusedly, Artemieff and Pokroffsky were helping Pani Anelia Zboromirska and her husband into a barouche. Pani Anelia was laughing gaily crying out:

"Don't be jealous one of the other, gentlemen, and don't challenge each other! It was mighty fine! To further conquests, panove!"

Pauline stood crying as she bade farewell to the blushing, bashful Bagretzoff.

The warm rain fell, monotonously drizzling. A smell of fresh dung and tar filled the yard, reminding the departing troops of the uncomfortable and dirty night-quarters and inns awaiting them.

XXI

At Vulka Shtitinskaya the men disposed their horses in the various village yards without unsaddling them and loafed about in a state of inertion and uncertainty. The cooks prepared the

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mid-day meal. It had stopped raining but the weather still kept unsettled. No firing was any more to be heard.

The officers had crowded into a spacious house belonging to a Jew. The slovenly, though handsome-looking daughter of the landlord, a girl of about sixteen, was boiling water and getting lunch ready in a large and clean-looking dining room, assisted by a young, dark-bearded Jew, who stared at the officers.

"You must excuse me, Pani officers," the girl said, "but unfortunately we haven't enough of glasses. Some of you will have to content yourselves with cups. And then 'mammele' will only be able to serve you scrambled eggs and some mutton."

"That's all right, Rosa, don't you fret."

"You know, Sasha," Rotbek said, taking Sablin aside, "it's a bad sign that the firing has entirely subsided."

"You suppose that our forces have retreated?"

Rotbek nodded affirmatively.

"Either they or we. But if they were retreating, our guns would be renewing the fire in their rear, whereas you must have noticed how our fire has gradually subsided, while their cannonade seemed to increase, ending in a culminating, ominous roar. Has the Prince told you anything?"

"No, but I expect him presently."

"Well, then we'll soon be posted. Bye the bye, Sasha, that Pani Ozertitzka is quite charming. But for God's sake don't you ever mention anything about her to Nina. . . . She's so ridiculously jealous. . . . However, it was quite a little adventure. . . ."

Kolia was sitting at the corner of the table between Olienin and Medviedsky, with a serious frown on his face:

"There's nothing finer in the world," he said, "than a cavalry charge and to my mind a sabre-blow must be struck over the skull and not across the neck."

"Better still to use the lance," Olienin retorted. "You should have seen the Cossack non-coms of our school. A whole squadron could hardly keep up with them."

"Your Kolia is strikingly like his mother, isn't he," Rotbek

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remarked, "Nina and myself have not been blessed with children."

"And you regret it?" Sablin remarked, not without a tinge of irony. "I'd call you an old rake, if you weren't so young."

"Why? We are both of the same age!"

"No, my dear chap, life has aged me whereas you have so far succeeded in fluttering about like a butterfly."

"Maybe, and yet, when I look at Kolia, I say to myself how jolly it would be to have such a son. He's a charming lad, is your boy. You are giving him Diana? Do you think he'll manage her?"

"I should say so," replied Sablin with fatherly pride.

"Let's hear your 'junker' song," cried Captain Markoushine, a young officer of twenty-eight. "Remind me of the gay years of my youth and of my happiness." Kolia, blushing to the roots of his hair started the first bars of the ditty in a fresh, melodious baritone voice. Ten of the new-promoted officers from various ends of the table joined in.

"Kolia's got quite your voice and style of singing and is just as bashful as yourself. Bye the bye, do you remember Kitty?" Rotbek asked digging Sablin in the ribs.

Sablin left the remark unanswered. His face bore the same sad expression, as though every reminiscence seemed far distant and his life had come to an end.

Rosa brought in a dish of mutton and scrambled eggs and the famished youths fell to.

During the meal an orderly reported that the Commander of the regiment was in sight.

"Go on with your lunch, gentlemen," Sablin said, "while I have a talk with the Prince. I'll then invite him to have tea with us and introduce the newly-promoted officers to him."

"We paid our respects to the Prince yesterday on arriving at the regimental headquarters," said Prince Grieven.

So much the better."

Sablin left the house. The weather was improving and the sun glimpsed through the dispersing clouds, glittering in the pools. Prince Repnin, on a big hunter, was trotting up to the

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house, accompanied by his adjutant, Count Valersky, and some buglers.

"Good-day, Alexander Nicolaievitch," the Prince said, "Are all the officers here?"

"Yes, they are having lunch."

"Well, let's go into that hut. Bondarenko!" he cried to the old staff bugler, "just look inside and see whether there's anyone there."

They dismounted and Bondarenko hastened to the hut, from which he reappeared shortly reporting:

"There's only an old Pole with a small girl of four."

"Just chivey them out. Take the map along, Count."

The inside of the hut was dark and stuffy. A horse-collar, some straps and an awl lay on a low table. Count Valersky chucked them onto the floor and spread out a two-mile Russian map on the table.

"Just look about, Count, and see whether there's anyone here."

"Not a soul," the adjutant reported, after a minute inspection.

"The situation is as follows," Prince Reprin began in a low voice. "The N. army corps is retreating. At six this evening it will take up its position from Annenhof to Kamien-Korolefsky, as marked in red on the map. We must hold out until tomorrow night. The regiments of the guard are soon expected and the second division is approaching. You and your squadron are expected to cover the left wing of the army corps. You'll have to remain here at Vulka Shtitinskaya. The infantry advance guards are to remain ahead of you. You will have to organize a connection with them and tomorrow you'll have to send out reconnoitring patrols. Your duty will consist in observing and reporting to me and to the Commander of the N. infantry division. The whole army corps seems to be in splendid spirits and is sure to hold out. Though we have had heavy losses, the enemy has likewise suffered serious casualties."

"Am I to understand then that Vulka Lioubitovskaya and the manor, where we spent the night, are to be surrendered to the enemy?"

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"Yes. The Commander of the army corps has already commissioned the Cossacks to burn down the whole place to prevent the enemy from profiting by the factories and from finding shelter. A smart Ural Cossack captain has been entrusted with that mission, and he'll manage it first-rate. He left when I was still at headquarters."

"A fine way of thanking Count Ledokhovski for his hospitality."

"What's to be done, my dear fellow. The Count is not so much to be pitied: he owns two houses in Warsaw; but what's to become of the workmen and of the servants attached to the estate? That's where the tragedy comes in! Here lie the seeds of a great social question. The dissatisfaction created by the war and its calamities will affect all the classes of society. Retreat is a misfortune. Not in vain did Suvoroff maintain that defence led to defeat."

"Then why aren't we advancing?"

"Heaven knows. Either we are not strong enough or we lack sufficient initiative to risk it. So long, I'm off!"

"Won't you have tea, Prince?"

"No thanks. I'm fagged. I've been in the saddle ever since eight in the morning and am hurrying home. Put up a telephone connection with Zamoshie, mind."

"All right."

Sounds of gay talk came through the open windows of the Jew's house. Some saddled officers' chargers stood by the entrance-door, held by orderlies in cloaks thrown over their shoulders, the rifles sticking out of the sleeves. Diana, an elegant bay mare, looked about, as though complaining at being saddled with such an uncouth and heavy thing as a soldier's saddle.

"You can have the horses unsaddled," said the Prince, as he mounted his hunter.

The officers rushed out of the dining room into the street.

"How are you, gentlemen?" the Prince cried, greeting them by a wave of the hand. "Had you a good rest last night? Sorry I can't accept your invitation to tea. You'll excuse me,

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but I'm in a hurry to get home—if my modest hut can bear that name.”

And, riding his horse, he trotted off down the village street.

XXII

AT four o'clock infantry regiments streamed through Vulka Shtitinskaya. They appeared quite unexpectedly and filled the village with dull sounds, with the clatter of tin-kettles attached to rolled-up overcoats and with the mingled smell of soldiers' boots and sweat. The whole village turned out to see them go by. The men marched with worn, pallid faces, silently fixing the dusty ground with their exhausted eyes. Their rifles were flung over their shoulders, the ranks were disorderly and out of step. Company after company filled the street, the empty field-kitchen rattling behind. An officer all covered with dust rode past on an ungroomed shaggy horse, followed by a soldier with the regimental ensign hung to the bayonet, and by a further compact grey mass of men with hands black with dirt and faces pale with fatigue.

The soldiers of Sablin's squadron came out of the huts and yards to see the infantry pass, gazing at them with looks of sympathy mingled with perplexity.

“What regiment, comrade,” one of the soldiers cried to the ranks, without obtaining an answer.

“Are you deaf, old chap. What regiment do you belong to?”

“An infantry regiment,” a voice answered from the ranks.

A couple of soldiers laughed at the joke while a fair-haired fellow, leaving the ranks, came up to Sablin's men:

“Give me a cigarette, there's a good fellow. I'm dying for a smoke.”

Several hands with boxes of cigarettes were stretched his way. The soldier lighted one and his face beamed with satisfaction.

“Are you retreating?” asked a cavalry soldier.

“The enemy's just simply driving us back. This morning we were even forced to charge with bayonets and succeeded in beating them off. A great number of them fell, but we likewise

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had heavy losses. They're much stronger. We've only got two divisions. We've been fighting for six days, and are short of cartridges. Their forces are continually increasing and they've got any number of machine-guns."

"Are you retreating for good?"

"No. We're going to fight again. Just you wait a bit, we'll end in beating them. We, Russian soldiers, don't fear bullets and cannon shots. We'll show them what stuff the Tchartorii-ski regiment is made of. And where do you come from, comrades?"

A new column approached the village, but in much better trim. The officers led the companies, looking glum, their arms behind their backs and their guns slung across their shoulders, as were the soldiers'. They were followed by a long string of artillery, the guns giving place to shrapnel cases and the latter again to guns. The guns were covered with dust and mud and again by shaggy horses likewise besmeared with dirt. The crews kept to the roadside, off and on exchanging casual words. Then again came more infantry.

Presently the compact ranks came to an end, but for another two hours straggling lots of ten to twelve men as well as stray solitary soldiers unceasingly loitered past, at times looking in at the huts. Some of them had a slaughtered hen or goose dangling behind their knapsacks. They looked animated, whilst some of them were undoubtedly the worse for drink.

"I say, comrade, d'you want a drink?" shouted a stolid, bearded soldier of the reserve, pulling a bottle of wine out of his pocket as he approached a group of cavalry men.

"Where did you get that from?"

"At the manor. The Cossacks are over there. By gad! They are drunk! They've emptied out the spirits into the ditch and have set the distillery on fire. They're hearty fellows, those Ural Cossacks, and don't grudge those who pass by!"

At seven o'clock a flame arose beyond the village above the elm-wood, disappeared, and was shortly followed in various spots by several others, which gradually increased, majestic and

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ominous. They extended, roaring and droning, till at last flying sparks and burning fire-brands became visible.

A drunken Cossack captain at the head of a troop of thirty men all laden with baskets of wine made their triumphant entry into the village, driving eight head of blooded cattle before them and followed by some young horses. The Captain stopped at the Jew's house where the officers of Sablin's squadron were quartered.

"Gentlemen," he exclaimed, sliding from his horse and nearly coming a cropper. "Oh, you skunk," he muttered hitting out at his horse that had shied. "You cursed fiend, damn you! Won't you have a drink in remembrance of the late squire?"

"What's become of Count Ledokhovski and his guests?" some of the officers inquired.

"Was he a Count into the bargain, damn him. Why, gentlemen, he was a German spy!"

"What's happened to him? Out with it."

"His guests drove away and so did his wife and daughter. The servants and workmen likewise bolted, Heaven knows where, when we arrived and announced that we were going to set fire to the place. As for him, he wouldn't leave. 'I'm going to keep watch on my pictures,' he says, 'you won't dare burn them.' What do you say to that! I tried in vain to persuade him, so I decided to leave him alone. We proceeded, my men and I, to prepare the straw, after having partaken of a jolly feast. He kept walking to and fro, laughing all the while. 'I forbid you to set the place on fire. Napoleon was a guest of my ancestors. I'll complain to the Emperor.' We just laughed without heeding what he said and he started laughing too. A spy—there can't be the slightest doubt. So we began our work of destruction. Let me offer you this bottle, Colonel. It's genuine fine champagne, with three stars on blue background, extra brand. I'm a connoisseur of brandy."

"For God's sake tell us what's become of Count Ledokhovski," Sablin interrupted impatiently.

"He's a fool, that Count of your's," laughed the Cossack captain. "He went to the picture-gallery and blew out his brains,

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and he is burning there. Won't you really have some 'fine-champagne,' Colonel? An offering from the deceased."

"The demons!" Sablin was on the point of exclaiming, but he mastered his impulse and said stiffly:

"I thank you Captain, but I decline your cognac. As for you, gentlemen, I forbid you to accept any of this wine or to give it to your men. It was wrong of you, Captain, not to have rescued his body from the flames. I can imagine how distressed the Countess will be!"

"But he was a spy," muttered the Captain, "I assure you, a down-right spy. I could swear that a wireless telegraph was hidden in the gallery. However, as you please, though the cognac is an excellent old brand."

Sablin went into the Jew's house. The Jew and the young Jewish girl stood by the wall gazing at him with a look of terror in their eyes.

"War!" Sablin mused. "Good Lord, is that war?"

XXIII

TOWARDS evening instructions came to keep in readiness for action. The horses were saddled. The men, massed together in the court-yards and in the hay-barns, slept a light and restless sleep, all the while on the alert for any unusual sound that might break the stillness of the night, which was clear, cold and twinkling with stars. At the door of each house stood a soldier on sentry, surveying the village road. The horses, disturbed in their night's rest, jingled their loosened curbs, heaving deep sighs, at times chewing the hay that lay before them, then suddenly stopping short, pricking their ears as though likewise listening to some uncustomary sounds.

The soldiers kept silent and pensive. The sense of war was to them vague and incomprehensible. The day before they had heard any amount of talk about killed and wounded without having seen any, as the route of evacuation led along the high-road, some way off. They felt no spite against the Germans, nor did they fear them. Some of them were tickled by the idea that, but a short while ago, a wealthy manor and a distinguished

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Polish squire had existed close by and that now nothing had remained of either. However, all kept silent on the subject owing to a certain feeling of awe.

The officers were all assembled in the house belonging to the Jew. Neither they nor the hosts had settled to sleep. They sat about or went to and fro exchanging meaningless, empty words, at times going into the street and listening by the side of the sentries. The night sky was calm. The dark forests beneath were vividly outlined on the purple background of the horizon lit up by the smouldering ruins of Count Ledokhovski's manor.

"The auto dafé of Teniers' and Rubens' works," said Sablin earnestly, as he and Rotbek came into the street.

"And Count Ledokhovski's noble remains are likewise smouldering over there," Rotbek added in the same tone. "Which of the two losses is the greater, my dear Sasha? What a pity old Matzneff is not here; he would have philosophized for us."

"I was told yesterday by the Prince," said Sablin, "that Matzneff is not far from here, active in the service of the red cross motor-car section. Come on, let's go in-doors."

In the dining room a petroleum lamp with a flat iron shade burned brightly above the table. The officers drank of one glass of weak insipid tea after the other.

"It's just like at a railway-station when you're waiting for a night train which is late and when no one can tell you when it is likely to be due. Isn't it, Alexander Nicolaievitch?" Count Blankenburg remarked.

"Yes," rejoined Rotbek, "and the halting places of this train are unknown. The hospital, the surgical operation room, the world to come!"

So unusual did these words sound on the lips of such a gay and frivolous man as was Rotbek, that all present gazed at him with bewilderment.

"What's up with you Pik," Sablin exclaimed. "You seem to have inherited Matzneff's philosophical strain. You'd better let us hear a good yarn."

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"For non-smokers," said Lieutenant-Captain Markoushin.

"I believe I heard a shot. They're firing," said somebody.

There was a general silence. In the quiet of the night loud and distinct shots became audible no great distance off. Five machine-gun volleys rattled of a sudden, followed by a mysterious silence. Everyone went to the street and stood listening.

"Those last were ours," Artemieff remarked. "Maybe some enemy patrols have really come near."

"By God, it must be anything but pleasant being on the outpost, in the forest," said Rotbek. "It must be pitch-dark there."

"It only seems dark at first until you get used to it," Artemieff answered.

"What's the time," Rotbek inquired.

"Going on three."

"We ought to have some sleep. We may find it hard work tomorrow."

The officers proceeded to settle for the night. Rotbek and Markoushin lay down on the table, using their overcoats as pillows, some officers tried to make themselves as comfortable as possible on benches, others on chairs shoved together or on the floor. The Jew offered his bed to Sablin, who refused it and sat down by the window leaning his elbows on the window-sill. The officers, unable for a while to fall asleep, kept exchanging short insignificant questions and sleepy answers. The lamp was put out and the room sank into complete darkness, except for the dim outlines of the windows, through which the night threw its awe-inspiring gaze and the red light of a burning cigarette here and there.

Kolia slept on two chairs, his upraised arms supporting his head, with his cap for a pillow, and his legs in high boots and spurs tucked up on the chairs. A tender feeling again overcame Sablin, as he guessed, rather than saw, the outlines of his son's sleeping figure. He now knew that he had forgiven Vera Constantinovna, and that he could not but forgive her, were it only for having given him such a son. He mused on his son's future career and represented him mentally as a second edition of his own self but without his, Sablin's, defects and vices

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"Perhaps it's just as well that Kolia has come to the front. Maybe the severe school of war will save him from woman's fascinations, and that he will find his Vera Constantinovna and give her his undefiled and undisillusioned love without any preliminary Kittys or Marousias. And yet," he thought, "had there been anything to blame in Kitty and Marousia?" He was deep in memories of his past, when sleep unexpectedly overcame him.

When he opened his eyes a cold dawn had set in and the morning damp came in at the window. The kitchen-garden and the meadows outside glittered under the rays of the sun, as well as the gay and attractive-looking dark forest beyond, with its intermingled patches of young fir-trees. The sky was clear and blue with, here and there, feather-like pink clouds encircling the hardly perceptible crescent of the waning moon.

It was half past seven. The officers still slept in most awkward positions filling the stuffy room with snores.

Sablin stretched his limbs and glancing at the chairs which had served Kolia as a resting-place noticed that his son had left the room. He too went out into the yard.

XXIV

KOLIA, in high spirits, his face flushed after a dip in cold water, was leaning his cheek against Diana's soft nose, calling her pet names.

He was offering her sugar on the palm of his hand but the mare, heedless of the sweets, playfully made attempts at catching his ear with her lips covering his cheeks with the hot breath of her pink, distended nostrils.

"Papa! What a dear Diana is! She knew me at once."

The boy exulted in his sixteen years, in the rapture of a fine summer morning and in the caresses of the young horse.

"Come, father, I'll show you the whole disposition: I know the exact spot from which it can be seen."

Sablin's orderly and a bugler followed them, as cleanly washed and as fresh looking as Kolia. Kolia led his father through the kitchen-gardens to a small meadow which sloped down into a

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wide valley opening the distant horizon to the view. To the right a wood, the outskirts of which were barely five hundred paces distant, sloped to the very boundary of the valley, extending in an even line northwards, towards the summit of a range of hills and dropping again, widening gradually towards the east. Fields, some yellow, newly gleaned, others black or covered with rich green grass, extended to the west. A red Polish church, the same that Sablin's squadrons had ridden past two days before, was perceptible some seven miles off. About two miles from the spot chosen by Kolia soldiers were seen moving about in a long grey row on the outskirt of the wood. As it was impossible with the naked eye to discern what was going on there, Sablin looked through his field-glasses. All along the outskirt, as far as he could see, sand was flying from under the surface of the earth in endless heaps, creating a yellow line of gradually growing trenches. Now and then a soldier would jump out of the dug-outs and run to the wood for branches and trees. Men laden with trees and boughs issued from the thicket and disappeared in the dug-outs.

Sablin scrutinized the position very attentively. He happened to be behind its left wing. He took note of a small hollow-way beyond the kitchen-gardens which seemed to be a suitable spot to dispose his entire squadron in reserve column. Small fir-trees rose from the hollow-way and joined the outskirt of the wood. An uncanny feeling overcame Sablin for a moment. He had no fear for himself, but felt unutterable anxiety for the fate of his son, his officers, of poor frivolous Rotbek, of his men and horses—of all that were dearest to him. However he soon regained confidence. What rôle could his squadron, a couple of hundred horsemen, play in that huge battle? They could only serve as an observing link. He had no intention of sending Kolia with the patrol, and surely there could be no danger for him in watching a battle from a distance of two miles! The enemy could never guess that a squadron was disposed in the hollow-way. He gave a sigh of relief and went on observing the infantry at work in the trenches.

"Still digging and digging," his orderly, Zaïkin, remarked,

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as he stood close behind him, taking the liberty, on the strength of his devotion to Sablin, of addressing his superior. "They started digging last night at ten o'clock. Smart chaps and not in the least afraid of the Germans."

Sablin gave orders to the bugler to fetch the commanders of the troops, and, when Rotbek and Count Blankenburg appeared, he pointed at the hollow-way and instructed them to have the horses led by the bridle to that spot and to form up in a reserve column, facing west.

"How about the enemy," inquired Rotbek.

"He's, so far, not to be seen," Sablin answered.

The troops soon filled up the hollow-way in close order. The soldiers lay down on the grass in the midst of the horses. Most of them, having past a sleepless night, soon fell fast asleep.

Sablin and his officers stood on the ridge of the ravine, watching by turns the infantry, which was bringing the trench-work to an end, and the western horizon, whence the enemy might at any moment turn up.

"Don't crowd together," said Blankenburg to the officers. "They may discover our presence."

The officers dispersed, but, involuntarily, again assembled in small groups.

The sun had risen higher and a bright morning had set in, making the distance more distinct and setting off the red brightness of the church on the background of green fields.

"There they are!" said Zaïkin, who had caught sight of the enemy with his naked eye.

"Where, where?" exclaimed several voices, and field-glasses were instantly raised on all sides.

"Over there, Your Honour, to the right of the church, by that ploughed field. You can't see them just this moment, they most probably have made a halt."

Sablin turned his field-glasses that way, his eyes dim with excitement. At last he discovered a man appearing from behind a large stone in the ploughed field, then another by his side, until a whole line rose athwart the field. Their uniforms of a special bluish-yellow tint proved them to be foes. Sablin had ex-

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pected to see black helmets with glittering brass ornaments, whereas their head-gear was grey and round. The figures looked square-shaped, advanced rapidly, carrying their rifles on straps and then suddenly vanished, having evidently again lain down.

An awe-inspiring strength and power seemed to emanate from their movements and Sablin was so much impressed by their aspect, that he found it hard to keep his legs from trembling with excitement. The officers had turned pale and looked at the enemy under strong tension troubled as they seemed by their sudden apparition.

"Over there our patrols seem to be retreating," remarked Zaikin calmly.

"They're advancing in good order," muttered Blankenburg, with a heavy sigh.

"I've already counted five columns," Artemieff said.

The black field was clear again when Sablin looked through his field-glasses. The Germans had gone down a wide yellow stubble-field and one could distinctly see that they had casings on their helmets, that their guns were slung on straps and that they were advancing very rapidly.

"I can't make out why our men don't start firing at them," said Baron Lieser.

"They're too far off: at least two miles. Through the field-glasses they seem much nearer."

"The batteries, however, could surely reach them," objected Rotbek.

As if in answer to his remark the crack of a field-gun resounded to the right, behind the wood. The projectile rose above the wood, over the Russian trenches and a white cloudlet of smoke hung low over the yellow field, to the rear of the Germans.

After half a minute of suspense a second shot was heard, and this time the white smoke appeared just above the column, which however continued its even pace without quavering.

"How was that?" inquired lieutenant Koushnareff excitedly, "were any of the enemy hit?"

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"They're advancing," Blankenburg sighed.

"No, they've lain down. They're no more in sight," muttered Rotbek.

Just then eight shots resounded, at short intervals, shells flew noisily over the trenches and eight smoke-cloudlets flashed one after the other above the field.

"I believe, they've hit this time," exclaimed Ensign Pokroffsky, breathless with excitement."

"Can you see whether any of them have fallen," asked Artemieff.

"No, they're running forward and forming in line."

Roused by the firing the soldiers left their horses and ascended the ridge of the ravine to have a look at the advancing enemy.

"Their artillery is still silent," observed sergeant-major Ivan Karpovitch, as stout and as stolid looking as ever, but entirely grey-headed.

"I say, you over there! Don't make yourselves too conspicuous," cried Count Blankenburg severely.

The men retired.

"They have crawled out," growled one of the men, "but we mayn't."

From far beyond the fields with the red church four field-guns suddenly thundered, preceded by the hissing of four projectiles. All present involuntarily crouched and bent towards the ground.

"There, there they are," cried Zaïkin pointing behind the trenches, at the foot of the forest where four shells exploded, digging the ground and casting clods of black earth into the air.

"Shrapnel," said Rotbek.

"Well, gentlemen," exclaimed Koushnareff, "this means business, God help us."

Two batteries on the Russian side opened fire, and twelve shots accompanied by twelve flashes of exploding shrapnel rent the air with a deafening thunder. The shrapnel poured bullets into the enemy's ranks and one could distinctly see through the field-glasses how grey figures remained lying on the green

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clover, while others, wounded, crept back, and how the severely injured were carried off the field.

"The stretcher bearers seem to have had a narrow escape," said Pokroffsky, "they have chucked down the wounded fellow they were carrying and have bolted."

"No, they've returned and are picking him up again."

"It's probably their Commander," Zaïkin remarked, with a sigh. He saw with his naked eye as well as the officers did through their field-glasses.

"Have a look through the field-glasses," said Kolia. "You can see all the details most clearly."

"They're marching in wonderful order," remarked Zaïkin, as he looked through the glasses. "New columns are advancing from the rear, evidently reserve troops."

As far as one could see the fields to the west were covered with grey figures disposed as on a chess-board in seeming disorder but regularly and rapidly approaching the Russian trenches. Their number seemed so great that it was impossible to count their ranks. Advance columns presently appeared on the slope of the hill covered with straw stacks, and lay down, and simultaneously the Russians opened a hot fire; the fighting now began down the whole front.

XXV

SABLIN noticed by the disposition of the rear columns that the main attack of the enemy was intended for the left wing, that is to say for the spot where his division was hidden. For one moment he thought that he could always retreat with his men, that, practically, there was no necessity for their staying there, but he at once chased away that thought which appeared to him cowardly. He went on following with nervous excitement the development of the great battle which was displayed to his view. He had not the slightest notion how long they had been in observation, or how late it was, but judging by the shadows of both men and trees, which had nearly disappeared, it must have been past mid-day. He looked at his watch: it was nearly two. He had been standing here ever since the morning without no-

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ticing how time had flown and without feeling the slightest fatigue, and he had completely forgotten Kolia. From time to time, when the enemy's shrapnel came his way he unconsciously prayed mentally: "God help us! Lord have mercy upon us!"

Several shrapnel shells were directed upon the village of Vulka Shtitinskaya. The Germans had in view to smoke out the reserves which they supposed to be there. The whole village was thrown into a state of utmost confusion. The villagers rushed out of the houses half-crazy with terror, seizing at haphazard anything they set eyes on and, loading their carts with their belongings, hurried out of the village. The air resounded with the bleating of sheep, the lowing of cows and the cackle of geese and hens which were being caught and shoved into baskets and coops.

"Look, look, they've set it on fire, it's burning!" cried several officers, pointing to the flames that arose from the village.

"It's the house of that Jew that we were staying at," said Rotbek.

"Poor Rosa," Pokroffsky remarked.

The enemy stopped firing at the village, having evidently ascertained that it contained no troops. As for the cavalry squadron it was seemingly considered unimportant.

From behind the enemy's right wing, about three miles off, a German battery presently came in sight. It descended into a hollow-way visible to the naked eye from where Sablin and his officers were posted, but hidden from the view of the infantry, took its position to the left of the Russian trenches and immediately opened fire.

"Heavens! Just look," exclaimed Markoushin, "they've hit."

A column of dark smoke emerged from the Russian trenches and beams and planks flew up into the air, giving to the overwrought imagination of the spectators, the impression that they were accompanied by human legs and arms.

All the field-glasses were concentrated in that direction. The battery now fired without missing and the line of trenches was soon turned into a row of formless pits emitting clouds of black smoke. In their anxiety to escape the men rushed out of the

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trenches seeking shelter in the wood, but were overtaken by exploding shrapnel. The enemy's infantry now opened an incessant fire very feebly answered. Sablin had to witness the destruction of the most important section of the Russian position. The enemy's infantry was preparing to attack the flank of the trenches.

Sablin paced nervously to and fro, unable to make up his mind how to act. Should he send his dismounted squadron to extend the line of trenches? But what could one hundred and forty dismounted horsemen, inexperienced as infantry-men and without the shelter of dug-outs achieve, where battalions of trained infantry had proved unsuccessful?

"That blasted battery, that damned battery," he muttered, as he grew more and more nervous. A bullet whizzed close past him, without his paying any attention. "That damned battery, it must be destroyed; but how?"

By a cavalry charge?

Sablin laughed at the idea. Was it possible to risk a cavalry charge across an open field into the mouths of a battery? That would have been all right at field exercise at Krassnoie Selo, against blank fire. He stopped to have a look at his squadron. The officers had retired to the hollow-way, for fear of drawing the attention of the enemy and stood in a small group in front of their troops. Sablin could distinguish every one of his officers and men and his heart bled at the thought of sending them to certain death, of sacrificing his whole command, probably in vain. His mission was to watch. He had without delay reported when the battery had appeared, had even made a sketch of its position and it was now his duty to wait until the infantry retreated and then retire to a safe spot.

Calmed by this decision Sablin resumed his pacing from the foremost fir-trees of the thicket to the ridge of the hollow-way, but felt sick at heart. His reasonable decision to remain passive worked on his mind, causing him actual physical pain. Whenever he pictured to himself the cavalry charge, he fell into a state of fever, his pulse beat faster, and he had to restrain his im-

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pulse by mentally convincing himself that he would be committing a folly.

"Intrepidity must go hand in hand with prudence," he said to himself. "I would be responsible to God and to my mother-country, were I to lead to destruction these noble men."

Laughter from the hollow-way attracted his attention. Rotbek was wrestling with lanky Artemieff, and the officers and soldiers stood around keenly watching the result, as though they had completely forgotten the seriousness of the moment.

"How could I take upon myself to lead those men to certain death?" thought Sablin, shaking his head.

He was on the point of turning from the wood to join his officers in the hollow-way and watch the wrestling-match by way of diverting his thoughts from the battle, from the accursed battery and from the uncertainty which tortured him as to where his duty lay, when he noticed a soldier of his regiment on a heavily breathing horse all covered with foam making his way through the bushes of the thicket and waving a paper from afar.

The soldier was afraid of riding into the open space where bullets were whizzing past. He dismounted and tied his horse to a tree. Sablin went to meet him.

"An order for Your Honour, from the Commander of the regiment."

It took Sablin some time to tear open the envelope: his hands trembled and his fingers refused to obey. At last he pulled out the order written in the Prince's firm and legible hand:

"A four-gun battery has been established by the enemy on your left flank, facing you. It is causing our infantry too heavy damage, thus threatening the issue of the whole battle. You must destroy that battery. God help you." It was signed "Major General Prince Repnin, of his Majesty's Suite."

The note epitomized Prince Repnin's dry, cold nature, a man who considered duty and discipline above anything else. He hadn't omitted one single comma and all the words were written with the same even stroke of the pencil. "And yet he

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knew that the order meant certain death," thought Sablin as he left the soldier, with a frown on his brow.

"Please, Your Honour, I must have that envelope back," exclaimed the soldier.

"Right you are. I'd nearly forgotten," replied Sablin as he wrote the following words on the envelope: "We shall do our duty. Sablin," and adding the exact hour: 15:42 p. m., passed it on to the soldier. He then went to his squadron, which, though no change had occurred, impressed him as being quite different. The sky, the sun and the distant landscape seemed small, dim and flat like a scenery. The droning of the field-guns and the rattle of the machine-guns sounded indistinctly to his ears. His mouth was dry and he felt as though he would be incapable of uttering a single word. His gait was erect and elastic, but his face was as white as a sheet and his eyes were wide-open and seemed to look into vacancy.

As he was stepping down the slope he cried:

"Squadron, to your horses."

He gave the command in his usual sonorous voice, but it seemed to him as though it had been uttered in a dull and indistinct way by someone else.

"Troop, to your horses!" shouted Rotbek.

"To your horses," echoed Count Blankenburg.

Everyone understood what that command meant; all turned pale as sheets, and mechanically fulfilled their duty.

Zaikin ran up to Sablin, Leda trotting after him and endeavouring playfully to seize his rifle with her lips. Sablin jumped into the saddle, and without unsheathing his sabre, raised his riding-stick above his head.

"Squadron, mount!" he commanded with his usual firm voice. Once in the saddle his strength had returned.

"First troop!" cried Count Blankenburg.

"Second troop!" shouted Rotbek.

"Mount!" they commanded simultaneously.

Various consecutive orders were delivered, and the clinking of lances and jingling of stirrups resounded as the men formed up in lines.

FROM DOUBLE EAGLE

"Sabres ready for battle! Lances to the hips! Attention!" was Sablin's next command.

The sabres glittered in the sun-shine and the lances bent towards the horses' left ears.

"In echelon of platoons, in one column and in divided ranks, at six paces distance," Sablin went on, while Blankenburg and Rotbek repeated his orders.

"To the battery!"

"To the battery!" Blankenburg and Rotbek echoed.

"The first ranks at a trot!"

"Forward!" the command resounded, and the first ranks opened up in the hollow-way and rapidly began ascending its slope.

Blankenburg, accompanied by a bugler, rode on the right, while Rotbek kept on the left.

Sablin gave Leda her head and galloped in front of the first two ranks. Close behind him, to the right of the bugler, Kolia was following, with difficulty restraining Diana. But Sablin did not notice him.

XXVI

THE German battery had not, at first, noticed the approach of the cavalry charge. The men were busy firing at the trenches, preparing a definite blow which would enable the German infantry to attack. Sablin had succeeded in crossing a wide dale and reaching the top of the hill without having attracted the attention of the enemy. A huge stubble-field spread out in front of him and he could now distinctly discern the battery with its convoy company. The battery was firing at half-turn to the left and Sablin could see the yellow flashes and the men fussing around the guns.

"At field-gallop!" Sablin commanded but his men had already started at full speed, without awaiting the command.

The guns boomed heavily and some shells exploded somewhere in their rear. Sablin could now see individual men in grey helmets running to the ammunition cases and carrying glistening ammunition, he noticed an officer standing erect be-

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hind the middle of the battery and the strangely-shaped guns pointing their mouths upwards. An uncanny sort of whiz was nearing from ahead but Sablin did not even think of asking himself whether it was the wind whistling or the sound of bullets. Rotbek overtook him on his left-hand side with uplifted sabre, as though preparing to cut a blow. Sablin noticed the flash of a flame followed by a white cloud close to Rotbek, saw Rotbek's horse fall and when he galloped past, Rotbek was lying face-downwards on the ground, a flow of blood streaming from the lower part of his body.

"Pik's leg's been blown off," he thought, without being in the least impressed.

The entire battery now came in sight. The men were in a state of excitement and seemed to be at their wits ends. The convoy company fled in disorder.

A fine bay horse, in which Sablin recognized Diana, galloped past with flowing mane, but he hadn't time to realise what it meant that Diana was riderless, when he felt a frightful blow in the chest. It seemed to him as though his horse had stumbled throwing him to the ground. Black earth cooled his flushed face and crept into his mouth. He raised his head. Soldiers were speeding past him on their heavy horses, and shouting hurrah. Rank after rank flew by, filling Sablin's ears with the thundering sound of horses' hoofs. He failed to realise what had happened.

"I'm wounded, I'm killed," he thought, as he saw the blue fathomless sky above his head, while myriads of small transparent bubbles swam before his eyes, blinding him. He closed his eyes and swooned away.

Count Blankenburg was the first to reach the battery. With a blow of his sabre he felled a soldier who was aiming his revolver at him. His troop and that of Rotbek under the command of Lieutenant Markoushin, who had replaced Rotbek, surrounded the guns and mercilessly revenged themselves on the enemy.

To the right a formidable hurrah rent the air. The infantry had left the trenches and was pursuing the retreating Germans.

FROM DOUBLE EAGLE

About half a mile to the left, as far as one could see, the field was covered with horsemen galloping on black horses: the second squadron, arrived in time to join in the fray, was likewise pursuing the fleeing enemy. The victory had been complete and the Russian army was indebted by that victory to the intrepid charge of Sablin's squadron. Sablin himself, seriously wounded in the chest, lay unconscious on the battle-field. His son, Kolia, lay two paces off in a pool of smoking blood, his body wrecked by shrapnel and headless. Lieutenant Artemieff, Ensign Baron Lieser, Ensign Pokroffsky, Lieutenant Agapoff had been killed, Lieutenant Koushnareff, Baron Lidval and Count Toll were wounded. Of the six newly-promoted officers who had arrived two days before, three, Prince Grieven, Olienin and Rosental had fallen, two, Medviedsky and Likhoslavsky, were wounded. The casualties among the men were three killed and sixty wounded.

When Captain Count Blankenburg collected the squadron after the capture of the battery, each troop showed barely two platoons. Ivan Karpovitch, the sergeant-major, had been killed at the very battery just as he was felling its Commander.

Whilst the remnants of the command were being formed in platoons, Prince Repnin came trotting across the field. His face was calmly majestic. His horse looked nervously askance at the bodies of the men and horses lying scattered about.

"I thank you, my good fellows, for your gallant charge. I congratulate you with your glorious dead."

"We are ready to serve you, Your Honour," shouted the men, still pale and breathing heavily.

"Where's Colonel Sablin," the Prince inquired.

"Killed," Count Blankenburg replied.

"No, wounded," said Markoushin. "I have just seen him carried past; he was moaning."

"It was a gloriously intrepid deed, gentlemen," Repnin went on. "You've made our regiment illustrious forever."

He dismounted and wearily walked to the edge of the high ridge.

"Count, lead the men to the regiment at Zamoshië," he said

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to Blankenburg and, turning to the adjutant: "Give me the report-book, Count," he went on, "we must send a cable to His Majesty informing him of the famous and glorious victory."

Prince Repnin gazed at the field on which carts and hospital-cars were driving to and fro and sanitary assistants were picking up the wounded.

"A brilliant deed," he muttered, "a brilliant deed. How many lives of the pick of young Russia it has cost! May Russia, may the whole world know that our nation is united, that our officers are capable of dying together with and ahead of their soldiers. The solemn hour of liquidation has struck, when we must make up in the eyes of the people by paying in full for our privileged position, for our wealth, our landed estates, our luxurious and gay life in time of peace. May the Emperor and the whole of Russia realise that fathers have sacrificed their sons on the altar of their mother-country and have themselves fallen at their side. Poor Sablin! Does he know how tragically his son, that fine youth, met with his death and how mutilated he was? What a merciless fate seems to pursue him! Only a month ago he lost his wife under most tragical circumstances and now he is deprived of his son. Would it not perhaps be better for him to die likewise? What is he to live for now?"

"Fame," exclaimed Count Valersky in a voice full of pride and solemnity, which sounded unusually clear in the stillness of the air. Corpses lay on the field. The wounded moaned and yelled, endeavouring to attract the attention of the hospital corps. The earth had not yet absorbed the pools of blood, the fallen horses lay about with hideously swollen bellies. But that great word seemed to chase away the doleful picture of the field of death.

"The glory of his valiant deed is left to Sablin," the adjutant went on, "whether he dies or is spared, this date, on which the cavalry charge led by him has ended in our brilliant victory, will forever shine with an inextinguishable brightness."

"So be it," said Repnin. His stern face took a solemn expression. He rose from the ridge on which he was seated, made a sign to the orderly to approach, mounted his horse, and taking

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off his cap, rode past the killed down the field. The setting sun threw a long shadow from his slim and erect figure. His dry features reflected whole generations of heroes, who had looked upon fame and valiant deeds as being dearer to them than life, upon devotion to their Emperor and to their mother-country as standing much higher than their individual welfare.

PART IV

I

TOWARD the end of November, 1914, the Nth Cavalry Division in which was included Karpoff's regiment of Don Cossacks was encamped on the Russian side of the river Nida. It had been covering the retreating infantry hard pressed by the Austrian armies in Eastern Galicia. The enemy's advance having suddenly ceased, an infantry force under an energetic officer, Col. Dorman, had under cover of artillery re-crossed the river and begun a counter-attack. The cavalry was being held in readiness for the pursuit if the attack succeeded, but was at some distance from the point of engagement.

As soon as the first artillery shot had fallen from the Russian side and the fire had increased to a formidable cannonade Colonel Dorman, who sat in his small dug-out beyond the bridge, had called the Cossack Lieutenant Rasteriaïeff and instructed him to send for his regiment.

"In two hours time we'll settle the enemy," he said.

Rasteriaïeff wrote a despatch and went down to the bridge, where the Cossacks by turns stood on sentry duty. It was Victor Modjalevsky's turn. Rasteriaïeff, having noted the exact hour on the despatch, put it into an envelope and handed it to the Cossack, saying:

"Mind you, Vitia, it is urgent. Give it to Colonel Karpoff."

"I understand," Modjalevsky answered curtly, looking at the little yellow envelope with greedy eyes. He ran down the bank of the river and crossed a small plank-bridge with shaky railings.

FROM DOUBLE EAGLE

For three months Modjalevsky had hung about at the regimental headquarters doing his utmost to ingratiate himself with the adjutant and Karpoff, all the while studying the Commander's character. He kept in mind the precepts of Korjickoff and the instructions worked out at Zimmerwald. "The war must end in defeat," Lenin had said. Colonels such as Karpoff would lead to victory. He noticed how the ice between Karpoff's Cossacks and the infantry kept daily melting. The infantry officers spoke with due respect of the Cossacks and the Cossacks felt friendly towards the infantry. The half-despising nick-name of "Kazatchki" was used by the soldiers in an endearing tone and as a rule they called them with pride "our Cossacks."

"That won't do," thought Victor, "if men are cemented by love and confidence they are certain to be victorious and my task will fail."

He went to the back of the hut where the detail was quartered and after wetting the envelope opened it with ease.

He read the contents and with his pencil altered the number fourteen to sixteen, thus giving him two hours respite: the despatch had been written at two o'clock and now read as four.

For days Karpoff had been nervous with expectation. Every day, at an appointed hour, he received detailed reports from Rasteriaïeff and attentively followed every move of the infantry.

That very morning he had received word that the battle would take place between twelve and fourteen o'clock and that Rasteriaïeff would send him word when to start.

At two in the afternoon, towards the beginning of the heavy artillery-fire, the regiment was placed under saddle and the squadrons were assembled in the yards. Karpoff wanted to start but Kumskoff kept him back.

"There's plenty of time, Colonel," he said. "There's nothing worse than arriving too soon: the men lose their energy and get slack."

"You're right, Gueorgui Petrovitch. I'm afraid, however, that something must have happened to Rasteriaïeff."

"He's a reliable officer, Colonel."

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"But supposing he's been killed."

"Why, then Alpatoff's there."

Now the red sun was setting towards the horizon. The thunder of the cannon and the clatter of the bursting shells broke off of a sudden, followed by an indistinct noise.

"What does that mean, Kumskoff," exclaimed Karpoff, grasping his arm. His adjutant was standing by his side, pale and with wide-open eyes.

"That, Colonel, is the sound of a hurrah! They have begun the attack and here we are eight miles off. We must start at once. Bugler! sound the alarm."

Five minutes later the regiment was on its way to Novy Kortchin at full trot. It was getting dusk already. The sun had set and the moon hung high in the sky. Two Cossacks appeared coming from the opposite direction, in one of whom Karpoff recognized Modjalevsky. The latter delivered his envelope to Karpoff who did not even take the trouble to open it. By the calm that had set in, the calm of victory, Karpoff had already realized, without reading the report, that all was over and that he had not left in time.

"Why so late," cried he to Victor, without stopping.

"I can't tell," was Victor's loud and distinct reply.

The regiment continued trotting down to the river and, as the bridge was taken up by a crowd of prisoners who were being escorted to the town, Karpoff turned aside to the ford which the horses crossed belly-deep. On the other side of the river Karpoff and his regiment set off at full speed. Soldiers in numbers came their way across the field. With their capes tucked up in front, with their caps shoved to the back of their heads and with their guns flung over their shoulders they gave the impression of bold and valiant conquerors.

"You ought to be ashamed of yourselves for being so late, comrades," a young soldier exclaimed: "We are overtaking them on foot and you can't even manage it on horse-back."

"Kazatchki, Kazatchki," densely said an infantry officer, his face flushed and excited by running, "we've nearly taken the battery, and where have you been all this time?"

FROM DOUBLE EAGLE

"Whip-lashers," a rancorous voice muttered from the dusk. "You're devils for oppressing peaceful folk, whereas when it comes to fighting you're nowhere!"

A shrill whistle pierced the darkness, and so full of scorn and mockery was it, that Karpoff and his Cossacks felt as though they had been horse-whipped. Karpoff involuntarily looked back and his eyes caught the smile on Modjalevsky's face.

"What are you laughing at, you blackguard!" Karpoff shouted, whereupon Victor's face instantly took a serious expression.

A crowd of soldiers filled the air with loud voices.

"I ran after the enemy for at least two miles," a joyful young voice was telling, gasping for breath. "I nearly caught one of them but it was impossible as he was mounted and I—on foot."

"When I caught him by the throat, he dropped his sabre. 'Come along, Your Honour,' I says to him, 'you're my prisoner.'"

"He fired at me, when he was as close to me as you are—but missed me, thank God."

"I stuck my bayonet into his belly so it made his eyes roll."

"If only the cavalry had come in time! We'd have had them all."

"The worst of it is, that they have succeeded in saving their artillery."

Colonel Dorman, in the best of spirits, beaming with joy and filled with the pride of victory met Karpoff amidst the dead bodies of some Austrian soldiers slain in the fray.

"What do you mean, my dear Sir, by coming so late?" he said to Karpoff in a tone of bitter reproach. "You could have captured a division and a half and six batteries. My mounted orderlies succeeded in taking two guns."

The blood rushed to Karpoff's face, but he made no answer.

"Now it's all over. You can go home. I don't need you any longer. I'll intrench myself here, and shall report to the army corps that I'm not to be blamed for being still here and not at Stolin."

"I'll overtake them," said Karpoff with restraint.

TO RED FLAG

"Where! Under the devil's tail? The enemy's sure to have taken shelter in trenches by this time."

"I'll overtake them," Karpoff repeated firmly and turned his horse.

He was seething with rage. He could remember nothing except that he had been insulted along with his gallant Cossacks, and that for no fault of his.

The regiment, formed in reserve column close by, was awaiting him. The Cossacks sat with bent brows. They were hurt to the bottom of their hearts and felt that their Commander was to blame.

"Third and fourth squadrons at full trot to Stolin," Karpoff shouted. "Captain Kargalskoff takes the lead, Lieutenant-Colonel Korshounoff follows at a distance of half a verst with the remaining squadrons."

He had worked out a plan which promised to be successful.

Karpoff rode behind the centre of the Cossacks and pictured to himself quite vividly the coming fight.

Over there, some eight miles distant, the remnants of the Austrian division must be treading the deep mud in a crowd. They are demoralized by the defeat. The worn-out horses can hardly drag the guns. A cold, deceptive moon-light night adds to their feeling of depression. "I'll cross the wood to the right of that column and make a cavalry charge on it," he thought. "They'll surrender. They can't help surrendering. I'll show what stuff the Cossacks are made of! I'll capture prisoners and guns not from among the infantry but quite independently in an intrepid night-action. My moon-light charge will figure in the annals of military history, the battle of Stolin will be studied like that of Begli-Akhmet and Karpoff's name will be covered with fame."

Abandoned vans, field-kitchens, and knapsacks, scattered along the road, proved how great had been the panic and weariness that had overcome the Austrian infantry. Four miles from Novy Kortchin two guns with limbers stood axle-deep in the marshy ground by the side of the road.

FROM DOUBLE EAGLE

The village of Khvalibogovitze was close by and the road rose at this point to a small mound.

Bright yellow lights flashed along the mound, accompanied by the crackling of rifle-shots. Khvalibogovitze was in the hands of the enemy, ready for resistance. The bullets snapped all around. Two of the Cossack horses fell and one Cossack bent over his saddle-bow with a moan.

"Halt," Karpoff shouted. "That's their rear-guard. There can barely be a company here. Captain Kargalskoff, take the centre troop slightly to one side and wait. I'll outflank them with the other troops. Gueorgui Petrovitch follow me, let's see what's up."

A narrow but clean and firm foot-path led to the right of the wide muddy road trodden down by the retreating Austrians. As soon as Sardanapalus had set foot on it, he snorted and, willingly obeying his master's spurs, started at a field-gallop towards the wood. Kumskoff, Loukianoff, Pastoukhoff and Modjalevsky galloped behind. Once in the dark wood they involuntarily pulled in their horses and went at foot's-pace. The horses threaded their way along the soft path covered with brown leaves quite noiselessly. The moon spread its silver rays on the wet trunks of the beech-trees and ashes and shone on the remnants of unmelted snow. Rain-drops fell from the trees on the dry leaves with a sound like cautious foot-steps approaching. To the left the wood became more open towards the outskirt, beyond which lay some hills and the village of Khvalibogovitze. Karpoff pulled up, dismounted, and went to the edge of the wood.

Loukianoff, the bugler, and Modjalevsky followed; the adjutant walked by his side. They reached the edge. The moonlit village, as seen from the dark wood, seemed quite luminous. Every hut, every orchard could be distinctly discerned on the background of the sky. The firing kept on but only on the left side opposite the highroad, where flashes broke the darkness.

"So I thought," Karpoff whispered. "There's barely one company. Hasten at once to Korshounoff and lead him to this spot by the same path. We'll send the second troop on foot to

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the village, and outflank them with the other troops. Instruct Kargalskoff to join the regiment with his troop. You've understood me?"

"Yes, Sir," answered Kumskoff, who hurried off.

Karpoff remained standing on the edge of the wood. His staff-bugler stood five paces off. Modjalevsky stepped back.

A loud shot, quite close by, started Karpoff, who, looking back, saw Loukianoff fall without a moan to the ground, where he lay still. Karpoff had hardly time to realize from where and by whom the shot had been fired when he was dazzled by another flash, a fearful blow in the chest knocked him off his legs and he fell to the ground, bleeding profusely. At the same moment he saw Modjalevsky's youthful face bending over him and, under the impression that Modjalevsky intended to aid him, he was on the point of addressing him. But Modjalevsky was looking at him with hatred and was slowly drawing his sabre from his scabbard. Karpoff tried to seize his revolver but in that instant a blow on the skull stunned him, red sparks flickered before his eyes and he lost the sensation of life.

Victor pushed Karpoff with his foot and, having ascertained that he was dead, sheathed his sabre and hastily ran to the village occupied by the Austrians.

Ten minutes of suspense went by, when the indistinct sound of approaching cavalry echoed through the wood. Korshounoff and Kumskoff appeared at the head of the regiment.

Korshounoff made a sign to the squadrons to stop and rode to the outskirts of the wood. Two corpses—that of the Commander and of the staff-bugler lay on the green moss bathed by the rays of the moon. Both were killed from behind and nearly point-blank, besides which Karpoff had a fractured skull. The volunteer Victor Modjalevsky had disappeared without leaving any traces. A dreadful suspicion came over the Cossacks. Sergeant Alpatoff and the Cossack Polshinsky were convinced that no one but Victor had murdered the Commander, but all kept silent.

The news of their beloved Commander's death was a blow, like a thunder-bolt to the whole regiment. The energy of the

FROM DOUBLE EAGLE

men gave place to apathy. Korshounoff had not sufficient strength of will to carry through Karpoff's plan. The history of cavalry is the history of its Commanders. The leader who had been capable of planning that bold nocturnal charge was dead and no one was there to replace him.

Karpoff's regiment returned low-spirited and down-cast, without trophies and bearing the dead body of their Commander. Its fame faded for ever. He knew what he was doing, who preached the covenant of Mechilt, saying: "Slay the best of the gentiles, smash out the brains of the best of the serpents."

Victor, in smashing Karpoff's brains, had smashed those of his regiment.

The motor-car of the Red Cross in which Matzneff sat supporting Sablin, who lay on a stretcher by his side, bumped over a ditch between the field and the highroad. The shock roused Sablin, who opened his eyes with a groan.

"Where am I?" he asked.

"With me, my dear Sasha," answered Matzneff gently.

Sablin raised his eyes and, recognizing his companion, smiled mildly.

"Ah my worthy philosopher!" he said; "what an unexpected meeting. How about the battery?" he asked with anxiety.

"The battery's captured, Sasha. You and your division have added the most glorious page to the history of our regiment and not only of our regiment, but of the entire cavalry, of our whole Russian army. Four pieces of artillery! Our brave men destroyed the whole crew. You have saved the infantry."

Sablin was listening to him with a strange indifference, as though Matzneff was narrating some fact that had happened long ago, dull and uninteresting. He smiled feebly, endeavoured by strength of will to recall all that had happened, but could remember nothing. There had been a race and Diana, riderless and under a soldier's saddle, had overtaken him. Why was Diana under a soldier's saddle?

"And what about Kolia?" he suddenly asked with anxiety.

"You are a hero, Sasha," Matzneff went on unheeding his inquiry about his son. "You are now a great hero. The St.

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George's cross for you is a dead certainty. Prince Repnin has cabled about you to the Emperor."

Sablin listened to him without grasping what he said. The measured buzz of the machine and the soft sway of the motor-car on its springs kept him from concentrating his mind.

"Where are you taking me to?" he asked.

"Straight to Warsaw, to the best hospital, where you'll be under the care of the best surgeons and of Alexandra Petrovna. Do you remember her?"

Sablin frowned. He did remember her and a certain adventure in connection with Matzneff. The latter understood him.

"You won't know her again. She's separated from her husband and has become a regular saint. She's now working in the soldiers' section. What do you say to that? Who could ever have supposed, that Sasha Rostovtzeff would condescend to wash filthy wounds?"

Presently the throb of the motor lulled him into delirious sleep.

At times he would awake to see the dark pine-forest float past him and Matzneff's white hand close by his face, and he would then relapse into the same state of drowsiness.

Cool evening air followed the heat of the day, the stars began to glitter in the sky, here and there lights were to be seen and the red sunset was reflected on the blue sky. Of a sudden he was roused by an unusual noise and by the sight of brilliantly burning lanterns. The motor-car had stopped.

"Where am I?" Sablin asked, half-dazed and noticing several people around the car.

"At Warsaw," Matzneff replied. "We've arrived."

On the way to the hospital-ward Sablin swooned away.

For several days he lay at times conscious, at times in a state of drowsiness or of utter unconsciousness. In his dreams he saw himself lying in bed surrounded by a crowd of half-grown human beings with huge heads and small bodies, such as are drawn in caricatures. They seemed to move to and fro, sometimes filling the room, at other times suddenly disappearing, talking among themselves without making a sound. Though

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they did him no harm, Sablin was disturbed by their presence and unable to rid himself of them. At times the shadows of full-grown, normal looking human beings would appear in their midst and start doing something with Sablin, whereupon the dwarfs would disappear, making room for complete darkness and a feeling of calm, akin to nirvana. Then, after a certain lapse of time which Sablin could not estimate, he'd again be lying in a low room, with the same crowd of big-headed dwarfs fussing about his bed, talking in silence, disappearing and re-appearing and causing him a sensation of unutterable uneasiness.

By and by the taller, shadow-like figures became more distinct, gradually taking the shape of real human beings, and Sablin began to distinguish who they were. The first figure he recognized to be that of a short and bulky man with a red beard and moustache, in a white surgeon's gown with sleeves fastened at the wrists, who was touching him with cold, cleanly washed fingers. That touch brought him a sensation of ease and well-being. Sablin knew him to be the famous surgeon Evald, who had operated on him. The other figure was tall and clad in a long full petticoat and a black nun's head-gear, showing a narrow white band on the forehead. The head-gear itself, composed of a large black kerchief, fell over the shoulders to the waist. Small white hands with elegant and slender fingers and soft palms, cold and dry, carefully touched the aching places, alleviating the pain by their touch. The whole oval of the face was covered by the kerchief, but large grey eyes peered attentively from under the preoccupied frowning brows. The soft shine of these eyes made up for the irregularity of the features. Sablin knew this figure to be that of Alexandra Petrovna Rostovtzeff, a friend of Countess Paltoff's, to whom she had in his presence asserted that a woman has the right of mentally undressing a man, as men always do to women. Alexandra Petrovna had quite seriously expressed her opinion that if husbands are allowed to flirt with maid-servants their wives ought to be allowed the same privilege with lackeys and grooms.

"Your Ivan," she had said addressing Princess Paltoff, "is a

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very handsome man and I wouldn't object to having an affair with him."

She was known for her "esprit mal tourné" and was feared in society when young girls were present.

And now this very same Alexandra Petrovna beamed with the supernatural humility of her large grey eyes and all her sinfulness seemed to have vanished. It took Sablin a long time to recognize the third figure, that would chiefly appear at night, when Alexandra Petrovna, the assistants and the sick nurses had left. Whenever Sablin moaned or moved restlessly in his sleep this person would come up to his bed-side as quietly and as imperceptibly as a ghost and sit by him, putting his soft hand on Sablin's feverish brow. That touch invariably calmed Sablin's delirious restlessness and he would drop off into a deep and quiet slumber, from which he would awake in the morning feeling much stronger.

Gradually, his strong constitution prevailed. His nightmares vanished, and he was able to ascertain that the third individual was the priest of the Nth infantry regiment, Father Vassily, who had been severely wounded in Eastern Prussia and was now recovering in this hospital. He shared with Sablin a spacious room with painted walls and a large window showing upon the garden with its autumn-leaved trees.

Sablin awoke in the dead of night. A dim light fell from the electric lamp hanging from the ceiling. The blind was down and rain beat restlessly against the window-panes, which every now and then were struck from outside by the branches of the trees, while the water flowing in mighty torrents from the roof down the gutter splashed into the water-barrels below. Sablin's heart ached as though under the foreboding of something inevitable.

He knew all that had happened. He knew that Kolia's head had been blown off by a shell, that Rotbek had been killed, that nearly all the youths he had led to the charge had perished and that he was alive and would go on living and in good health. The St. George's cross sent to him personally by His Majesty was lying on a little table by his bed-side under a bunch of

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shaggy chrysanthemums, a useless trinket, which only the more underlined the darkness and disconsolateness of his life. His memory disclosed to his mental view a whole series of painful moments: his interview with Prince Reprin about Kitty, Lubovin's insult, Rasputin, his mutilated son. . . . Sablin tossed about in his bed, moaning with mental pain.

"You are awake," he heard a gentle voice say, "you are suffering again. Let me assist you."

A light was switched on on Father Vassily's table, which he carefully shaded with a book, so that the light fell on a corner of the priest's bed and part of the wall only.

"Thanks, don't trouble," Sablin answered.

The priest donned his under-cassock and his pectoral cross attached to a brand-new St. George's ribbon, combed out his long hair and beard and, seating himself under the lamp, proceeded to read a small book which Sablin guessed to be the Holy Testament.

Sablin looked at him. The priest had a comely, even handsome and inspired face, with a small curly beard, like Christ's face as usually represented on Russian ikons. It was thin and pale and his eyes, encircled by long dark eyelashes, were of a greyish blue hue. His age might as well have been fifty as twenty-five. His auburn hair, thick and wavy, showed here and there a trace of grey; he had small wrinkles at the corners of his eyes, and his lips, thin and dry, were overhung by a dark moustache.

Sablin scrutinized him.

The priest lifted his head, looked at Sablin with a meek and gentle expression and said:

"And the fool said in his heart: 'There is no God.'"

Sablin, startled, sat upright in his bed.

"How did you happen to say that, Father," he asked.

"I read it here," the priest answered.

"But how is it you read it aloud. How could you tell that I was just then thinking that there was no God."

And Sablin told the priest all about the tragedy of Lubovin's insult, Victor's birth and Marousia's death, which put an end

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to his love-affairs. He had succeeded in vanquishing the demon of sensuality and in finding peaceful satisfaction in his pure love towards Vera Constantinovna and his children. And how had the Almighty rewarded him for his victory over his own self? Rasputin, Vera Constantinovna's tragical suicide and the useless death of his son! And then he had loved the Emperor, the Empress and the Russian nation with an exalted love, and what had been the result?

Sablin spoke excitedly, at times incoherently, with tears in his eyes and bitterness in his tone, as though trying to excuse himself for having dared lose his faith in God.

After that the priest talked long and earnestly.

When Sablin woke the next day, he noticed that Father Vassily had gone; his bed had been carefully done and the hospital-report was being taken from above the bed by a servant.

"Where is the Father?" Sablin inquired.

"Sir," the servant answered. "He left early this morning. He got up, packed his things and left straight for the front."

"He had already obtained his discharge last night from the head-surgeon and only stayed over night, because, as he said, he had some work to finish here. He regretted very much, that Your Honour was still asleep, but he did not wish to wake you. He asked me to deliver this parcel to you."

Sablin untied the parcel and found in it a small volume of the Holy Gospel in a soft black leather binding. Sablin opened it and noticed that some passages had been marked in red pencil. The book opened on one of these passages and Sablin read: ". . . for I am meek and lowly at heart."

Alexandra Petrovna came in with a bunch of shaggy chrysanthemums.

"There, you see," she said, "your companion, Father Vassily, has been able to leave the hospital. Soon you likewise will get your ticket of leave. I am so happy. You are both of you my patients and I have rescued both from death."

Her eyes shone with kindness and joy. Her irregular face seemed beautiful.

"I thank you, Alexandra Petrovna. . . . You have done so

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much for me—both you and Father Vassily. You have saved my body and Father Vassily—my soul.”

Alexandra Petrovna looked into Sablin’s eyes.

“I’ve a very, very important favour to ask of you,” she said, in a tremulous voice.

“What is it?”

“To begin with I must congratulate you: You have been appointed Commander of the Nth hussar regiment.” Her Majesty the Empress was the first to congratulate you. Nicholai Nicholaievitch writes that this nomination is for two months only; they intend appointing you to command the Nth cavalry division on Her Majesty’s special wish.”

“I guess the favor you require of me. But you know how difficult it is for me to write to the Empress?”

“If it had been an easy task, I should not have asked you to do it.”

Sablin took the paper from Alexandra Petrovna’s hands and wrote in a firm hand-writing: “I am deeply touched by Your Imperial Majesty’s attention and devotedly offer You, Tsaritsa, my gratitude for Your kind wishes. I shall strive, at the head of my regiment, towards victory and Russia’s fame, which for me stand above all. Colonel Sablin, aide-de-camp.”

“Send it,” he said.

Alexandra Petrovna read the telegram, bent towards Sablin and kissed him.

“God bless you,” she said.

A fortnight later, entirely recovered from his wounds, he left for the army to take charge of the Nth hussar regiment. Early in the spring of 1915 he was already at the head of a brigade, and during that same summer he was appointed to command the Nth cavalry division.

All these honors were met by him with Christian humility: he accepted the increasing responsibility as a burden and directed his whole effort towards the improvement of the regiments that were under his command.

Lieutenant (Khoroundji) Alexei Ivanovitch Karpoff was wounded in the chest by a machine-gun on the 11th September

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1915, during the battle of Jeliesnitza. He had joined his regiment only a couple of months previously and loved it with that particular feeling that characterizes very pure youths, unacquainted with sexual love. Everything in the regiment filled him with pride and he admired, with the same enamoured ecstasy, the old Colonel Protopopoff, commanding the regiment, the stout and clumsy Cossack-Captain (essaoul) Ivanoff, his officer-comrades and all the Cossacks. Everything seemed to him "deuced" fine, an expression which he owed to his Cadet-school times and which, in spite of his efforts to avoid it, escaped him involuntarily. Karpoff was a very good-looking, dark youth, slightly above middle size, well built, with fine, honest and bright dark eyes veiled by long eye-lashes, and with a sprouting moustache overshadowing his upper lip.

The battle of Jeliesnitza had been his first experience of a serious action. The dismounted cavalry had encountered the German infantry, which occupied a fortified village. This burning village had been stormed by moon-light across a boggy field intersected by numerous ditches and the Cossacks had remained victorious, capturing German machine-guns and prisoners. Young Karpoff had witnessed the retreat of the Germans, had pursued them and, noticing a German soldier lying with a machine-gun, had made a rush at him together with his Cossacks Kushetsoff, Skatchoff, Likhovidoff and Barannikoff, had been wounded and turned a summersault, had nearly come to the ground, continuing his pursuit until he had seen Barannikoff strike the German with his bayonet, while Likhovidoff and Skatchkoff possessed themselves of the machine-gun. Karpoff, spitting blood, had run along the flame-lit road which was clouded with smoke. Cossacks were hurrying to and fro, some one shouted "forward, forward," but at that moment his strength failed him and he dropped on a heap of logs in the middle of the road, staring around with wide-open eyes and unable at times to realize whether he was asleep or the victim of a horrible nightmare.

Two Cossacks passed by with a machine-gun. They noticed Karpoff and approached him.

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"What is amiss with you, Your Honour," asked one.

Karpoff made an effort to reply, but the sound of his voice was choked by a clot of thick, hot blood which stuck in his throat. He tried to pull himself together but fell in the attempt. He did not lose his senses, but it seemed to him as though he were dreaming.

"You are wounded. That's unfortunate. Akimtzeff! stay here with his Honour, while I fetch a stretcher. Mind the machine-gun, so the other soldiers do not get hold of it. The whole division is coming this way."

Akimtzeff helped Karpoff into a more comfortable position and the latter could now see the bright moonlit sky. The rattle of rifle and machine-gun shots sounded a couple of miles off. The battle was still being fought, but for Karpoff it had, to his great surprise, lost all interest. He fancied himself reliving all the incidents of the battle and thought them "deuced" fine. He had dashed into the village at the head of his company (sotnia), clad in a brand-new "French" tunic and Galiffet breeches, feeling "deuced" smart. The fact of his having been wounded seemed to him "deuced" sporting. He never once thought of the eventual result of his wound. Since he was able to move his arms and legs there was evidently nothing wrong with them. He had only been wounded in the chest and that was hardly worth fretting about. He fancied the Emperor visiting him and inquiring after his health, whereupon he would have answered: "My wound is trifling and not worth Your Majesty's notice." He never once asked himself why His Majesty should think of visiting him and taking an interest in his state. He pictured to himself very vividly all the particulars of his visit and gradually relapsed from the world of actuality into that of dream-land.

II

SOME ambulance attendants appeared with stretchers, and carried Karpoff to the ambulance-car. While he was being shoved into the car, he heard a voice inquiring whether it was full.

"Chock full," was the rejoinder—"go ahead."

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The wheels scraped through the sand and Karpoff once again felt inclined to communicate to someone his battle deeds. The car was however completely dark and he could not distinguish the inmates. Some individual's heavy, muddy boots protruded within a few inches of his face. Beyond these someone lay groaning and moaning, crying "oh! oh!" in a piteous way and causing Karpoff a nightmarish feeling.

A thick pine-wood, silver-lit by the moonshine, faced a small field with a wooden house, in front of which nurses in white head-dresses were moving to and fro. One of these nurses in a black leather-jacket with a red-cross sleeve-band, approached Karpoff wearily and bending over him asked what his name was. Karpoff answered automatically, as he used to do when quite a child:

"Aliosha!"

"Your family name, I mean," repeated the nurse without even smiling.

"Karpoff, Khoroundji Karpoff," he replied and was on the point of beginning his narrative, when a voice from the front-door inquired:

"What number?"

"The one hundred and ninety-fifth, Sonia," replied the nurse.

"Isvarine has just died," the voice went on.

A surgeon in a white apron, a young nurse and a stout dark woman with large, fine eyes stood leaning over him.

"Sofia Lvovna," said the nurse in charge of Karpoff. "A wounded officer has just been brought in."

"One moment," answered the stout woman. "Place him in that corner and undress him."

A feeling of shame overcame Karpoff when the nurse in the leather jacket, bending towards him, began to unfasten the straps of his equipment and the buttons of his tunic.

"Let me do it myself," he cried, but he had no control over his hands and was obliged to submit to the nurse's dexterous fingers.

Another sister approached and they both started washing Karpoff's blood-stained chest, whereupon he swooned away. On

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recovering his senses he noticed that he was lying on the floor on a bed of straw. Wounded soldiers and Cossacks were likewise lying on straw beddings 'round about him. The sun had risen and the room was bathed in daylight. The nurses and stout Sofia Lvovna, their faces worn and livid, were pacing to and fro, exchanging short phrases. A nurse placed an iron jug of tea and two English biscuits within Karpoff's reach. "Can you manage it by yourself?" she inquired. "I'll prop you up."

Only then did Karpoff notice that his chest was entirely banded up and that he had a clean shirt on. With the aid of the nurse he sat up.

"Tell me, please, about the battle?" he inquired.

"They are still fighting," was the answer.

"You know, it was 'deuced' fine. Our regiment. . . ."

But the sister had turned away.

"I'm coming. I thought you were asleep," she said addressing a soldier lying close by and who had asked for tea.

"The General in command of the division has arrived," said a fair-haired nurse with big eyes like those of a fish, as she walked into the room. "And fancy there are wounded soldiers lying in the dressing-shed. What are we to do?"

"To begin with," replied Sofia Lvovna, "see to that one being carried out: he is dying."

She dried her hands with a towel. At that moment a handsome young-looking General made his appearance. From the door-way he surveyed the room with his bright eyes and frowned.

"I expect you find it hard to forward them on," he said.

"Your Excellency, over four hundred and eighty-six wounded have passed through our hands in the course of last night."

"You are right; it was a stiff fight."

The General approached Karpoff.

"You are an officer?" he inquired.

"Yes, Your Excellency," answered Karpoff making an effort to raise himself. "Lieutenant Karpoff."

"I remember. You own a splendid chestnut. I've never seen

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a finer specimen under a Cossack officer's saddle. Where are you wounded? In the chest?"

"Yes, Your Excellency."

"Do you suffer much?"

"Not in the least. I hardly feel the wound. I, however, find it hard to breathe," answered Karpoff with a smile.

"Were you wounded at Jeliesnitza?"

"Yes, Your Excellency; it was a 'deuced' smart fight. I . . . the machine-gun. . . ."

"Your father was in command of the Don regiment, I believe, and was killed last year on the river Nida?"

"Quite so, Your Excellency. When you gave the order to dismount near that wood, I. . . ."

"Sofia Lvovna," said the General, without heeding Karpoff. "I shall send you my motor-car to fetch those who are badly wounded. Send Lieutenant Karpoff straight to Sarna, with my note to the superintendent of Her Majesty's ambulance-train. Write the note, Warlam Nikolaievitch!" and with these words the General in command of the division left the room without even looking at Karpoff.

In the train Karpoff had a berth in the officers' car. Next to him lay a lean unshaven man with a yellow, sickly complexion wrapped in a brown dressing-gown. He viewed Karpoff with an unfriendly look while the latter was being lifted into the spare berth and then, with evident disgust, he turned his back on him. The dressing-gown slipped off his shoulders, discovering sharp shoulder-blades protruding through his shirt. The train remained stationary ever so long. The nurses distributed bowls of cabbage soup and meat, which Karpoff, who had had no food for three days, ate with appetite. His chest ached and he at times found it hard to breathe, but on the whole he felt fairly strong, was full of spirits and had more than ever a longing to give a detailed description of the Jeliesnitza battle and of the active part he had taken in it.

"Sister, how about me?" said his neighbour, with a hoarse voice, turning on his berth and addressing the nurse.

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"You know, Wertzinsky, that you mayn't," the nurse rejoined. "I shall bring you some warm milk."

While Karpoff was enjoying his food, Wertzinsky scrutinized him closely and Karpoff felt uneasy under his sharp, unfriendly gaze.

"Where are you wounded?" was Wertzinsky's unexpected question.

"In the chest," Karpoff answered unwillingly.

"Lucky man. Well, I expect you will drop this disgusting show entirely now?"

"I don't understand."

"I mean to say, that you hardly intend returning to the front. You can easily find a job as train-surveyor or some similar employment far away from this brutal slaughter."

"You are wrong. As soon as I recover I shall again join my regiment. On one hand I am glad, on the other sorry to have been wounded. I am glad because my wound is a proof of the active part I took in the fight. I was wounded at a distance of hardly thirty paces and had already drawn my sword. I am sorry because, wounded as I am, I have had, for the time being, to leave my regiment; not for long, I hope."

"To my mind you ought to be pleased. Is it possible that you are not sick of it?"

"Of the regiment? Great Heavens, no! The regiment represents part of my life. It is, so to speak, my family. My father was killed in action last year and my mother is now working as nurse in a hospital at Novotcherkask."

"You are a Cossack?"

"Yes, a Don Cossack."

"Hum."

Wertzinsky looked at Karpoff inquisitively and the latter kept silent.

"Did you enlist of your own free will?" asked Wertzinsky.

"Yes."

"You were, maybe, trained that way by your parents?"

"As far back as I can remember I have worn shoulder-straps, a sword and a gun. The first words I uttered were words of

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military command and my first song was a Cossack war-ditty. Then I was placed into the Cadet-school, where everything was so 'deuced' smart, and finished my military education in the Cavalry-school."

"What's your family name?"

"Karpoff. We descend from the famous Karpoff, who in 1812. . . ."

"Excuse me, but that does not interest me. You are a human being in traces, something in the style of Tchekhoff's fellow in an instrument case. Maybe, however, you have not read Tchekhoff?"

"I have read some of his works, but not all."

"I thought so. You and I look upon life from diametrically opposite points of view. You, for instance, rejoice at having been wounded, whereas I—putting aside the fact of my being physically handicapped by it,—loathe my wound, looking upon it as being a moral offence, an unheard of injustice. I, sub-lieutenant Wertzinsky, at the age of 32, am still only a subaltern, which speaks for itself. I have always hated and despised the military service, I have an aversion for the military class. I passed with honours (gold medal) from the classical Gymnasium into the philological section of the University, am now teacher of Latin and one of the leading Latinists. My work on Seneca has been translated into all the European languages. I had started a translation of Ovid into corresponding verse and, if I had completed that work, I should have attained European fame. I had of course, to go through my obligatory military service, served as volunteer in one of the Petrograd regiments. I did absolutely nothing, incapable as I was even to unscrew a bayonet. In my capacity of learned man I met with due respect and my Commander used me as teacher to his children. For form's sake I was advised to pass my examination as sub-lieutenant of the reserve. Yes, young man, I have attained that most honourable rank and as such have been called to the front.

"Do you consider that reasonable? For a year and a half I have been chased over the fields of Galicia, have been forced to shoot at my brothers, the Czeko Slovaks; I was obliged to for-

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get that I was a rising professor of Latin literature. And now here I am with a wound in my stomach. Do you call this fair, young man? I am married and have children. Two children, who, you bet, are not adorned with shoulder-straps and do not strut about with swords and guns. What have I suffered for, pray? Eh? Answer me, young man! You please me: there is a certain antique beauty in your gaze. Maybe I am destined to hear from your lips that unexisting truth, which perchance might mitigate the suffering inflicted on me by all this injustice. Tell me, oh youth, who reminds me of a Greek God, for whose sake am I going to die?"

Karpoff felt sorry for this nervous, resentful invalid. He felt that his answer, based on what, to him, seemed the essence of life, would not satisfy Wertzinsky, whose general view of life was so different. And yet his unrelenting faith in their magical power caused him to utter the following words:

"For the sake of your faith, your Tsar and your native land."

Wertzinsky burst out laughing. His livid face, with a long hawk-like nose, became distorted by a smile full of hatred. The effort caused by his laughter evidently gave him acute pain which was reflected in his eyes.

"I do not believe in God. I am an atheist. A man of learning cannot believe in God. I admit that Christ's teaching has high philosophical merits. Other well known philosophers, however, have shown more depth. To die for the sake of my faith? Which faith do you mean? The Greek orthodox? Why should I, considering I was christened in the Roman Catholic faith, which I disavow, as I would any other? For the sake of my Tsar? I, a democratic socialist, who would rather kill the Tsar than die for his sake? Your so-called 'mother-country' is represented to me by the universe. I studied at Rome, where I felt more at home than in Vilna, my native town. Patriotism is not recognized by men of high culture. It suits savages and nations on the decline: Rome perished owing to the Romans' pride in their superiority. 'Civis romanus' sounded too ambitious. Our contemporary writer Gorky is of opinion

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that the word 'human being' has a much more glorious meaning than the words 'Russian,' 'Pole,' etc."

"How could you fight under such circumstances?"

"That's where the whole tragedy lies, young man. Here you are, wounded and yet beaming with joy. A hero! Now come, confess that you look upon yourself as a hero. Eh? With a fair sweet-heart, perhaps, waiting for you somewhere? The sequel to some insipid post-card or illustration with following inscription: 'Back from the war.' An arm in a sling, a white head-gear, big dreamy eyes. For the sake of faith, the Tsar and patriotism! Admitting you are a hero: What kind of a hero am I? I ought to have fled from all those horrors and yet, there I was, attacking, lying in ambush and starting off again. Can you explain to me the reason why and for whose sake I acted thus? I, an unbeliever, an internationalist, disavowing the existence of a mother-country."

"I do not know"—Karpoff replied. Terrified at the idea of having to answer Wertzinsky, the first socialist he had met face to face. Karpoff gazed at him with a mixture of awe and curiosity.

"You don't know why"—muttered Wertzinsky slowly and fiercely. "No more do I and therein lies the whole horror of my life and approaching death. And yet I followed the example of my brother-officers without protesting, instead of leading my soldiers out of the fray with orders to murder their superiors: I was mad."

Of a sudden the electric light was switched on, throwing a brilliant light on the white oil-painted walls of the car, which at the same moment started slowly with a swinging motion. Dim yellow lanterns floated past and the wheels, turning on their axles with a scraping sound, soon began beating rhythmical time which accelerated as the pace increased. The motion of the train soothed Karpoff to sleep. Wertzinsky lay half-conscious, with fearful thoughts in his mind. But he kept silent. Besides, to whom could he have communicated his thoughts? Surely not to that clump of beautiful cannon-fodder. "One born to crawl is incapable of flying," thought Wertzinsky, who

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for the following forty-eight hours never addressed a word to Karpoff; and both kept silent.

Late one night the train softly stopped at the Tsarskoïe Selo station. It was raining. The wide streets seemed mysteriously dark with their long rows of milky electric lanterns, vanishing gradually. Ambulance-men were fussing on the platform and carrying the wounded out of the cars.

A nurse, clad in a warm mantle, and in a white head-dress superintended the stretchers.

"Sister Valentine"—exclaimed a youth in a student's cap. "Here is a note from General Sablin directing Karpoff to us and recommending him to your special care. Please, if possible, find room for sub-lieutenant Wertzinsky, my former Latin teacher and a learned man."

"Badly wounded?"

"Yes, both of them: Karpoff has a chest-wound, which has begun to fester and Wertzinsky is wounded in the stomach."

"Now then," exclaimed Sister Valentine, "what are you waiting for? Help the wounded to be carried out of the train. Have you heard, Rita, that Sablin has addressed himself to us: that is a good omen. Maybe he has forgiven us."

"Alexandra Petrovna mentions in her letter from Warsaw that he has greatly changed since he was wounded and is now a good Christian"—answered Rita.

"What do you say to the battle of Jeliesnitza, Rita? I have always asserted that Sablin was a hero and a thorough soldier and, though he is not from the General staff, he has a powerful swing. The Sister-Superior writes that he is very popular at headquarters. He had been promoted to command the division only shortly before that brilliant victory."

"Sister Valentine, Karpoff can be forwarded in a carriage. As for Wertzinsky I urgently beg your permission to have him placed in the motor-car"—said the student.

The permission was granted.

The hospital to which Karpoff was brought was under the direct patronage of the Empress Alexandra Feodorovna and her daughters, the Grand Duchesses Olga and Tatiana, who took an

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active part in nursing the wounded. The Empress not only supervised the hospital but very often nursed the wounded herself, dressed their wounds and assisted at surgical operations. In the hospital it was forbidden to call her "Your Imperial Majesty" and instructions had been given to call her simply "Head-Sister." The Grand Duchesses were called "Sister Olga," "Sister Tatiana."

The Empress had put her whole soul into that hospital. Here she could rest after all her moral disturbances caused by misunderstanding and disillusion. She was conscious that to continue war meant ruin to Russia, at least to Imperial Russia, another Russia was beyond her conception. She pictured to herself an immediate, separate peace with Germany, a peace, which, very lucrative for Russia, would mean the possession of Constantinople, the Dardanelles and a part of Asia Minor, and the triumph of Monarchy.

She disliked the Emperor Wilhelm, whom she considered a hypocrite, but at the same time she could not bear to see the sufferings of the Russians. Her heart bled whenever an officer or a soldier died in her hospital. At night she would drive alone to their graves and pray by the simple wooden crosses. She realized the horrors of war and considered it her duty, as Empress, to put an end to them.

She was looked upon as a German, while she disliked Germany, but on the other hand she did not see enemies in the Germans, but neighbours with whom it was more profitable to be on good terms. She often went to her husband, at Supreme Headquarters, and always there met an inveterate, implacable hatred towards the Germans, an inclination for the French and unfailing loyalty to the word given to the allies. The Tsar, who in home policy seldom kept his word and was influenced by the advice of his ministers, of public officials, of his "entourage" and even of outsiders—faithfully respected the treaties with France and England, and she was unable to attain her end. The influence of his mother likewise stood in the way. The Empress Maria Feodorovna, while passing through Berlin in July 1914, had been insulted by the crowd and could not forget

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that insult. Alexandra Feodorovna was conscious that the nation did not side with her. Vague reports, that both the people and the army disliked her, had reached her ears. They could not forgive her intimacy with Rasputin, from whom on the other hand she could not part, having been bewitched by him. She considered him a saint. Cautiously and indirectly she was given to understand that Rasputin was a lewd peasant.

“Why am I not told so in a straightforward way?” she would say. She lived in a world of her own, full of mystery, of religious inspirations, of bliss in prayer and privations and in that world Rasputin seemed to her a prophet. She trembled for the life of her family and that life was connected by mysterious ties with that of Rasputin: in that she faithfully believed. Whenever Rasputin was removed the “heir” became subject to indefinable ailments and as soon as Rasputin was reinstated and in favour, the “heir” would invariably recover his health and his good spirits. All the relatives of the Emperor, the whole Imperial family, were against Rasputin. All the more reason to see to his safety and the all greater became the intimacy between him and the Empress. She was always alone and sought relief in the hospital. There she wanted to prove to herself that all the rumours concerning her were untrue, that the nation and the army were fond of her and would follow her.

There were two sections at the hospital: one for officers—the other for soldiers. Both were splendidly organized. The wounded returned to their regiments full of pleasant reminiscences of their hospital-life, of the kindness and solicitude shown them by the Imperial family; but in the regiments they saw such cold, sometimes even hostile feelings towards the Empress, that, fearing the nickname of Imperial valets, they did not talk about their gratitude to the hospital, and a few of them, only, wrote touching letters to the Empress and to the Grand Duchesses. Not all these letters were sincere, but at the hospital they caused great joy and were looked upon as coming from the simple, noble hearts of Russian soldiers and as being a reflection of the feelings of the whole army.

At the palace the Empress found it impossible to hide her

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sufferings, the interest she took in Rasputin and the tears she shed at times. She decided, that, being a Christian, it was her duty to love her enemies, to alleviate the sufferings of the captives and especially of the wounded. She visited hospitals where Germans lay, and these visits were interpreted as a sign of her sympathy for the Germans and her disdain of the Russians. A monstrous falsehood was spread abroad about her and the Grand Duchesses and the hospital to which they had devoted themselves became the centre of lies and calumnies. She heeded them not, but the lies spread.

The Cossacks of the hospital guard had been sent to the front to join one of the Cossack divisions and they had brought with them stories of the inexplicable behaviour of the Empress, of Rasputin, of her evident sympathy for the Germans and these stories drowned the modest praises of Her Majesty's hospital. At the palace the Empress saw hostile glances, gloomy silence of the order of soldiers and of the Cossacks. She found it harder still during her journeys to the front. She was met and seen off in a cold official way. Some of the Generals gave her to understand, that, owing to her visit, army columns had been delayed to let her train pass, and that the consequences thereof were likely to affect the position at the front. She was told that there were rumours that she travelled to the front purposely to help the Germans by interrupting the transport. But she could not help renewing her visits to the Supreme Headquarters: she must influence "Nika," as she called the Emperor, she must see her son, who lived there. And all this made her suffer.

She rested only when she was at her hospital. Attending at dangerous surgical operations, or sitting at the bed-side of the dying and assisting at their last moments, she forgot her own sufferings. She often sat of an evening with her daughters among the convalescent. They played round games, had music and sang and it seemed to her that here, in this kind of family "entourage," the officers understood her and loved her like a mother.

It sometimes happened that, during the games, the young men transgressed the limits of propriety. The officers would

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throw indiscreet glances at the pretty young Grand Duchesses, keep their slender hands longer in theirs than was necessary. The sedate Sister Valentine drew the Empress' attention to these familiarities and Her Majesty did not reply at once. Then she said:

"Don't mind them. Let them enjoy themselves; they have so little happiness in store."

III

ALIËSHA at the age of nineteen knew nothing of love. At Novotcherkask he had paid no attention either to the boarding-school or other school-girls.

He had a chivalrous feeling towards women, and only two women existed for him: his mother whom he loved like a devoted son, and one whom he had never met, whom he only knew by her portraits, a woman of uncommon beauty, the Empress, for whose sake he was ready to sacrifice his life. He knew nothing of Rasputin. In his father's study and later on in the drawing-room of their Novotcherkask house he had seen the photograph of a beautiful, fair woman holding a boy on her lap and surrounded by four girls. That whole family had impressed Aliësha Karpoff as being a family to live up to, something superhuman. He looked upon them as upon something holy, not of this world. One only dared admire them, answer their questions, when addressed, in a mechanical, disciplined way, pray for them and die for their sake. They were every one of them beautiful to his eyes.

They were beautiful indeed, but had they even been monsters, they would have seemed beautiful to Aliësha, because they belonged to a world of dreams and not of reality. If he had been told that he could touch them, that their hands would touch his body, he would never have believed it. He remembered his father having often told him how he had embraced the Emperor at Easter and kissed the hand of the Empress. A China egg with flowers painted on it, a present of Her Majesty to his father, hung in their house under the image of the Don Virgin Mary. And his father had often told what a sensation of bliss-

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ful reverence had overcome him when his lips touched the scented little hand of the Russian "Tsaritza." It was the hand of a divinity and not of a human being.

Sister Valentine came up with long firm strides to the bed in which Aliësha Karpoff was lying in a state of fever.

"Well, and how do you feel?" she asked.

"Fairly well, but my chest aches and I find it hard to breathe."

"You'll soon be quite well," she said, smoothing his pillows.

"Your operation has been fixed for today."

Aliësha looked at Sister Valentine with serious, childish eyes but without showing any fear.

"You can be operated upon under chloroform or without anaesthesia, as you choose. The wound must be cleaned, that is all."

"I'd rather have no chloroform," Aliësha answered. "I'm not a girl to be afraid of pain."

Sister Valentine smiled.

"The head-sister is going to assist the surgeon and Sister Tatiana will be in attendance. You know who they are?"

"No."

"Do you know where you are? In what town?"

"At Tsarskoie Selo."

"Yes, in Her Majesty's hospital. The Empress is the head-sister, and Sister Tatiana is the Grand Duchess Tatiana Nicholaïevna, and you have not to call them otherwise than Sisters."

"When is the operation to take place?" asked Aliësha, in a voice that was hardly audible.

"Between ten and eleven, and please, young man, don't excite yourself."

"No fear! I'm not a girl," said Aliësha, blushing.

At the same time he was extremely agitated, but not at the thought of being operated. He did not care about what was going to happen to his wound, nor did he think of the eventful consequences of the operation. His thoughts were exclusively bent towards the fact that the Empress and the Grand Duchess would see him at a disadvantage, that they would speak to him and that he would have to answer.

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At eleven sharp a woman in the severe garb of a sister of charity, with a pale face flushed with nervous excitement, came up to Aliësha and peremptorily said :

“Undress.”

Aliësha gazed at her with wide-open eyes and did not move. He recognized her, whose portrait hung in their drawing-room, whom he looked upon as he would have on an image and who had been daily prayed for by his family. It seemed impossible to undress in her presence.

“Tania, come and help!” the fairy-like woman said.

The taper fingers of a young girl touched the buttons of his dressing-gown. A subtle scent of tender perfume glided past his face. If Aliësha had been told that it was the scent of a good English perfume obtainable by any one, he would not have believed it. To him it seemed a special Imperial perfume, something fairy-like. And awake though he was, he felt in fairy-land. The Emperor’s daughter and someone else, Sister Valentine probably, took off his dressing-gown and stripped him of his shirt. He was carried to the surgical-room and placed on a high table covered with a white sheet. For a few seconds the Empress and the woman-surgeon attentively scrutinized the slim body of the youth lying before their eyes. Aliësha lay in their presence not knowing where to put his hands and burned with unspeakable shame. Such must be the feeling of an innocent young girl when looked at in a state of nakedness by a man. His heart beat with rapidity, and tears of deference and shame filled his eyes. He was undergoing excruciating and yet beautiful sensations.

“He looks well-fed. The operation is perfectly admissible,” said a thin-looking woman preparing some instruments. “Sister Alexandra, maybe you will try yourself. It isn’t very difficult.”

The Empress’ cool hand touched Aliësha’s chest and slightly pressed the rim of the wound.

“Cover his legs and stomach,” said the Empress.

Aliësha turned his bashful gaze to one side. Sister Tatiana came up to him with hardly audible steps and covered the nether

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part of his body with a clean sheet. This was more than Aliësha could stand. A bashful blush covered his face, then he turned lividly pale and swooned away.

On recovering his senses Aliësha found himself lying on his bed in the ward. The consciousness that what had happened was irreparable, the feeling of shame that had overcome him during the operation, racked his brain and he dared not open his eyes. Never, never again should he see those two women. He was reconciled to a certain extent to the thought that the Empress had seen him, as he would have admitted that his mother had seen his nakedness, but the Grand Duchess! That was deuced awkward! He did not recall or had not perhaps sufficiently studied her face. Maybe he had not seen what there was to be seen, but what he wished to see. Tatiana Nicholaievna's fresh young face had been transformed by his imagination into an image of unspeakable beauty and elegance. It would now be out of question to meet her again. With what eyes would she look at him now and he at her? She must shun him and would look at him with disgust.

Aliësha remembered his wound. The pain was less acute. He breathed more freely under the tight bandage. He noticed that he had no fever any longer and realized that he was certain to recover.

A slight noise in the ward, gay voices and whispers roused Aliësha from his thoughts and he opened his eyes.

Sister Tatiana had seated herself on a chair by his bedstead. He knew her at once, but did not see her as she really was, a slender young girl with large kind grey eyes, like those of her father. Karpoff pictured her to himself as a beautiful fairy-tale Princess, whom he had worshipped before seeing her.

Her simple, worn grey petticoat dropped in folds from the chair. Her sympathetic face, framed from her forehead down to her chin by a white head-gear falling over her shoulders, bent over him as she smoothed his pillows, and smiled at him with a bashful smile.

"How do you feel, Karpoff?" she asked, calling him by his family name as was the habit at the hospital.

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"Splendid. The pain has disappeared. It's deuced fine now."

"Where did you get wounded? The Princess, our surgeon, tells me that you were wounded from a distance of thirty paces. Were you so close to the enemy? You saw their faces?"

"I very nearly captured a machine-gun," said Karpoff breathless with excitement. "If I had not been wounded I should have seized it with my own hands. Unluckily I was hit and I rolled over as if someone had struck me in the ribs. Then I started running and noticed that Barannikoff was already slashing a German and that Likhovidoff and Skatchkoff were dragging the machine-gun. Can you imagine, Your Imperial Highness, a German was fastened to a machine-gun by a chain. It's possible that he would have bolted if he could, but he couldn't."

"Don't call me Highness, call me Sister Tatiana," the Grand Duchess said, smiling.

Aliësha felt confused.

"Who's Barannikoff?" Tatiana Nicholaievna asked, by way of making Karpoff feel at his ease.

"Barannikoff is a Cossack of the Oost-Bielo-Kalitvensk settlement. He's a brick, my word, Your Imp . . . Sister Tatiana," Karpoff hastily corrected himself, and feeling totally abashed, stopped short.

"Well, and what about Barannikoff?" the Grand Duchess asked.

"Barannikoff noticed that I was wounded and cried to me: "Don't bother, Your Honour, I'll finish him off for you" and hit him with his bayonet right through the stomach. I saw it happen. The German collapsed. But I ought to give you an account from the very beginning. It was a fine battle."

"Well then begin from the very beginning if it does not tire you. Your chest does not ache?"

If anyone had told Aliësha that his life depended on his not giving his account, he would have nevertheless first told his tale and then have died with a happy smile, once he knew that the Tsar's daughter was cognizant of his deed of valour.

"Well you see," he said, "it was on the 11th September dur-

ing the night. The fighting had gone on for two months, but not regular battles. We'd shoot and let them approach to a distance of about fifteen hundred paces, and then we'd retire. But this time orders were given not to retreat. Cartridges were forwarded to us, because we were very short of them. For five days running our division, besides two Cossack regiments and three battalions of infantry, had to repel the attacks of the enemy. Would you believe it, they attacked us three times a day and twice every night. They'd come up as close as six hundred paces, we'd pelt them with machine-guns and rifle fire and they'd retreat. On the 12th September the Commander of the division, General Sablin. . . ."

"Alexander Nicolaievitch?" the Grand Duchess inquired.

"Yes, Alexander Nicolaievitch."

"I know him well. I knew his dead wife and his children. His son was killed during a cavalry charge. How is he getting on?"

"He's a marvellous man. He's simply worshipped by the soldiers and the Cossacks. And he seems to love them all. When you come to him for an order he'll explain everything so clearly, so well and so circumstantially and finish by saying: 'Well, go now, and God bless you.' And with such an accent, as though God were really ready to help you. And with that very strict. At Kamen-Kachirsky Cossacks of another regiment sacked a Jewish shoemaker's shop. He had them tried by court-martial and sentenced them to death. And the general opinion was in his favour, because a Cossack must not pillage, a Cossack isn't a plunderer. And you know, Sister Tatiana, our division is always provided with everything, he thinks of everything and does everything. On the 12th of September, he gave orders that we should take Jeliesnitza. The second brigade, the Cossacks and Hussars had to form the front line. We, Cossacks, started from the front and the hussars went from the right flank."

The boy went on telling the whole story of the fight. When it was done the Grand Duchess said:

"Why, you're a hero, Karpoff!"

Triumphant loud bells tolled again in Karpoff's soul as they

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did during the victory and he felt warm and blissful at heart. He looked at Tatiana Nicholaievna with such adoring eyes that she felt abashed.

"What's your Christian name, Karpoff?" she said, "I'll pray for you."

"Aliësha."

"The same as my brother. I'll also call you Aliësha now. Will you let me? Why what's the matter?"

Aliësha was crying with excitement and bliss.

Among all the gradations of love, that of first love is the strongest and most acute. It's the more painful when it has not only no chance of attaining its end but has not even any hope of reciprocity. A first love of that description becomes a disease bordering on insanity. Unspeakable bliss brought about by some trifle, a stray ribbon picked up, a photograph given as a present, is often followed by suffering capable of inducing suicide, when the beloved turns a cold shoulder, flirts with a rival, or otherwise shows her indifference.

First love is disinterested. A pressure of the hand, a kiss, the proximity of the sweetheart during some game or dance afford more joy than possession itself. Special bliss lies hidden in disappointed passion, in its never ending ebullition, in incessant insinuations and allusions. First love, alone, pictures to itself the beloved as one indivisible integrity and all the deeds of the beloved are seen through a beautifying prism. Her frock, the style of dressing her hair, every minute article of her clothing are apt to provoke paroxysms of passion. She seems to have no defects whatever. And her empire is stronger when she is absent and a subject of dreams, when the imagination adorns her with physical and moral perfection, and deeds of valour are mentally accomplished for her sake.

Such was the first love that overcame Aliësha Karpoff, like a sudden illness, the moment Tatiana Nicholaievna had left the room. His love was the stronger because Tatiana Nicholaievna was a charming girl, with beautiful hair and fine eyes and was clothed in the sanctity of her noble lineage. She was the daughter of an Emperor. Not a single evil thought came to his mind

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in connection with her; there was absolutely no hope of any possible intimacy with her; and nothing remained for him but to love in silence and to suffer in his dreams.

Aliësha followed her with a hungry and excited gaze when she rose from the chair by his bed-side and left the room. Everything appertaining to her seemed beautiful and unlike anything he had seen before. Her waist, encircled by the white sash of her apron, seemed marvelously slender, her grey frock fell in wide folds, uncovering her well-shaped legs in transparent silk-stockings. Her low-heeled shoes just slightly rapped on the wooden floor and her gait was like that of a fairy. Aliësha still felt the hardly perceptible scent of her perfume, though it had already long since evaporated in the well-ventilated room.

He was not alone in the ward. Other wounded lay there besides himself. Opposite to him sat an elderly officer in a dressing-gown to which a St. George's cross was attached, and smoked nervously. His yellow face was gloomy and his head shook continually and against his will. Two beds further, quite close to the wall, lay a wounded officer, moaning quietly. By the sadly ironical smile of his thin face with protruding skull-bones, Aliësha recognized his travelling companion, Wertzinsky. Aliësha lay to one side, close to the window. He turned to the window, fearing lest someone should address him and dispel the beautiful enchantment which still prevailed in his mind after his conversation with the Grand Duchess. How he longed to be alone with his illusions and his dreams. Wide-boughed lime-trees and white-stemmed birches showed their golden autumn foliage through the large window-panes. Pink clouds swam gently along the pale sky, and Aliësha found pleasure in following the quiet flight of the clouds. Some short distance off, a three-storied building was visible and smoke rose from its chimney. The wind tore the smoke asunder, whirling it towards the sky and disseminating it in all directions, and like that smoke Aliësha's light and passing dreams escaped his mind and flew to upper regions.

"My beloved! My love, my darling. Soon you'll come again and seat yourself on that chair."

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He longed to kiss the chair on which she had sat, but he felt shy. He touched it with his hand, but the chair was cold and the straw of its tressed seat had not retained the warmth of her body.

In his dreams it seemed to him as though Tatiana Nicholaievna loved him with the same pure love and gave him her hands to kiss.

To his end Aliësha remembered that holy, beautiful day. If he had had the means, he would have bought a pretty little ring in the shape of a wedding ring with a precious stone and would have engraved in it the date of that memorable day. The twenty-third of September. She came up to him and brought him some flowers.

"There, you've been obedient and good," she said. "You can get up now and walk a little."

"It's you alone whom I've got to thank for my recovery," he muttered with dry lips.

"Why me?"

There was no one in the ward except Wertzinsky, who lay with his back turned.

"Why?—That I cannot explain to you, Tatiana Nicholaievna. You would be angry with me."

She was placing the flowers in a glass on the table and pouring water out of a decanter. She bent towards him. He saw her flushed face and her large, grey eyes attentively fixed on the water she was pouring, so as to avoid spilling it. Her fingers, which were holding the decanter had become pink. Her white neck showed above her grey blouse.

"Why should I be angry," she asked placing the decanter on the table. "Tell me what you had intended to say and did not dare."

"I wished to ask you a great favour."

"What is it?" she asked. She expected a request addressed to her as Grand Duchess, some petition to be transmitted to the Emperor, a money-matter or some special reward. As a rule nothing came of such petitions and they vexed her.

"I beseech you to let me kiss your hand."

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She laughed and stretched out her hand to him. He grasped it with both his and pressed it to his hot lips with such effusion that she shuddered but did not draw it back. He then turned her hand with his burning fingers and covered the palm with hot kisses.

"Come, that will do now," she said. "How strange you are!" And, swiftly bending towards him, she touched his burning forehead with her lips and instantly left the room.

Aliësha felt as though he could not remain lying any longer nor think of anything. He longed to sing and cry out his joy, to walk, jump or dance. He left his bed and began pacing the room.

"Wertzinsky! Casimir Casimirovitch!" he exclaimed. "Are you asleep?"

A sharp face turned his way and a burning gaze met his.

"What's the matter, Karpoff? What's up?"

"I feel inclined to smother you, Casimir Casimirovitch, do you hear? I'm so happy!"

"My hearty congratulations, but please, don't touch me. My wound is beginning to heal."

"Casimir Casimirovitch do you know what love is?"

Wertzinsky looked at him attentively.

"Come, come, young man, do you happen to be in love?"

Aliësha nodded affirmatively.

"Well, then you're done for. Young man, it's a fool only who can be in love in the present times."

"Casimir Casimirovitch, now tell me sincerely, don't you really know what love is?"

"Love and being in love are two different feelings."

"Well, call it being in love, it's all the same," Aliësha replied gaily, and seated himself on Wertzinsky's bed.

"Being in love means writing the initials of one's beloved in the sand: it's a foolish feeling and not worthy of a man," Wertzinsky went on. "As for me, young man, I've never in my life collected fair maidens' locks, nor have I worn them on my heart as talismans."

FROM DOUBLE EAGLE

Aliësha pictured to himself his joy if he possessed a curl of Tatiana Nicholaievna's and smiled blissfully.

"I see, young man, that you do not agree with me. Well, what's to be done. I consider it my duty, however, to warn you, for it's partly to you that I owe being in this exemplary hospital and on my way to recovery."

"And do you mean to say that you are not grateful to our Empress, our head-sister?"

"Not a bit, young man. She has not fulfilled the hundredth part of her duty towards me. All of them, the head-sister as well as her daughters, are, at the very least, hysterical women."

"How can you say such things!"

"It's the effect of degeneration."

Aliësha kept silent. He recalled the tall, healthy looking figure of the Empress, the beautiful Grand Duchess and was unable to understand how they could be looked upon as degenerate.

Wertzinsky seemed to have guessed his thoughts.

"Neither I," Wertzinsky went on, "nor the Captain, your neighbour, whose leg was amputated at the hip yesterday and who died this morning, were cared for by them: they did not even look at us. We were not sufficiently interesting. They take care of young, good-looking patients, who react on their sensuality and on their nerves. . . . It's an appendix to Rasputin, to that festering plague, which has contaminated the Imperial house on the eve of its fall."

"Who is Rasputin?" Aliësha inquired; and at the same moment he felt frightened at having put the question.

"Rasputin is the lover of an hysterical Empress and a scoundrel paid by the Emperor Wilhelm and who plays the part of a crazy saint. Rasputin is the beginning and the end of the revolution, its corner-stone and the last drop which is to overflow the cup of Russian autocracy," Wertzinsky went on, evidently admiring the completeness of his definition.

"I was told, however," Aliësha interposed, "that he is a common peasant."

"Well, and what of that?"

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"How could he rise to the intimacy of Her Majesty?"

"Eh, young man! He is endowed with what she needs," Wertzinsky continued. "Weigh your own self-confidence and if you find that you dispose of sufficient strength and charm, go and dare it and drop all this sighing of yours and the state of 'being in love.' Sentimentality is of no good here. The more impudently you act the more chance have you of success. One thing you may bear in mind and that is, that you will not find virginity: Rasputin has been before you."

"I don't believe you," Aliësha exclaimed tearfully. "And I don't believe in the possibility of a revolution! We Cossacks shall never allow it, as we didn't in 1905."

The young man hastily retreated from Wertzinsky and having reached his bed flung himself on it and lay looking with vacant eyes out of window.

IV

ALIËSHA could not get to sleep that night. His head was ablaze, his body suffered under the anguish of burning passion. His brain, excited against his will, was full of humble visions. He lay with eyes wide open, his head under his blanket and sobs shook his body.

It's a lie, a monstrous calumny, an invention of those dreadful men whom my father and my teachers always warned me against, an insolent calumny of the socialists. And yet Tatiana Nicholaievna, who even in his dreams seemed inaccessible, had now become accessible in his eyes. He remembered how a Grand Duchess had fallen in love and married a simple cavalry officer. History reminded him of Potemkin, Orloff and Rasumovsky. "Dare" was the word pronounced by Wertzinsky and which now echoed in his brain like an imperious command, and every pulse of his young body cried to him that he should dare.

His head burned as in a fever. His blood curdled in him so that his blanket seemed too heavy, and his pillow heated his face. He threw them away and lay, half naked, subdued by the stillness of the night and eager to catch its every sound. At last when the cool morning air came into the large window with

FROM DOUBLE EAGLE

a hardly perceptible smell of autumn, dry leaves, cold dew and ripe corn, Aliësha's lids closed heavily; and, overcome by fatigue, he fell into a deep, beneficent sleep and dreamt wonderfully beautiful and sweet dreams.

When he awoke, Sister Valentine was standing over him, smoothing his sheets and covering him with his blanket. Sister Rita brought him tea and lemon, and bread and butter.

"There, you see! You have recovered and have got strong again," Sister Valentine greeted him with an affable smile. "I'll ask the doctor to allow you to go out into the fresh air. Later on we'll send you for a month or two to a sanatorium in the Crimea and you'll forget all about your wound."

Rita moved on with her tea-tray, and Sister Valentine was also on the point of leaving, but Aliësha retained her by a wave of the hand and exclaimed, blushing:

"Sister Valentine! Sister Valentine!"

"What is it, my dear?" Sister Valentine asked kindly, and seated herself on the chair which had been occupied by her the day before.

"Sister Valentine, do all you can so as to enable me to stay on here. I don't need the Crimea. I'll recover much quicker here; and then I'll go straight to the front and . . . to death."

Aliësha stopped. His beautiful face was flushed with excitement and his large eyes looked imploringly at Sister Valentine's face.

"Tell me, Sister Valentine, tell me the whole truth. It's of the greatest importance to me. Who and what is Rasputin? And is there . . . is there anything. . . . Has he dared . . . and Her Imperial Highness the Grand Duchess Tatiana Nicholaievna."

Sister Valentine's face flushed. A spark of indignation flashed in her intelligent grey eyes.

"For shame, Karpoff! How can you believe such things. They are splendid girls who have devoted their youth to the wounded and are as pure as freshly fallen snow. They hate Rasputin and Rasputin has never approached them. Besides all that is rumoured about Rasputin and his influence on the

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head-sister is sheer invention. Rasputin has terrorized her by his witchcraft and his influence on the health of the heir apparent. She is to be pitied. You, officers, ought, with all your might, to fight against this dreadful calumny purposely spread about by the enemies of Russia with a view to destroying the country. Karpoff! here she comes! Look at her pure, honest beautiful eyes! Is it possible that you could for one single moment believe that those eyes were capable of falsehood? Here comes a girl worthy of worship."

"And I worship her."

Tatiana Nicholaievna came up to his bed.

"Tatiana Nicholaievna," Sister Valentine said, "Karpoff and I have just been speaking of you. You've gained a new admirer. You subjugate the hearts of our whole army."

"The greatest joy for me, Your Imperial Highness, would be to die for your sake."

Sister Valentine rose and Tatiana Nicholaievna took her seat.

One look at Tatiana Nicholaievna sufficed to banish all the terrors and dreams of the night. Honest and straightforward was the gaze of her round grey eyes, and her face shone with the brightness of youth; her smile showed her pearl-like teeth between her rosy lips.

Her white fingers buttered a roll for him. Aliësha sat up in bed and covering his chest and neck with his blanket—he had not yet slipped on his dressing-gown—proceeded to eat the roll as though it were holy bread.

"My chrysanthemums are fading," said Tatiana Nicholaievna, arranging the flowers. "I'll bring you fresh ones. How jolly that you are soon going over to the convalescent section. It's much gayer there. Olga will play to us on the piano and we'll play at 'rouble.' Do you know that game, Karpoff?"

"No, I don't," Karpoff answered.

"Oh, it's very simple. I'll teach you."

Tatiana Nicholaievna sat opposite to him, chattered kindly and listened to his stories about his regiment, the banner, the Cossacks and about the uncanny feeling that overcomes one when leading the advance patrol and strainingly expecting the

FROM DOUBLE EAGLE

dull report of rifle-shots and the whizz of bullets. Sister Valentine pulled up the blind and, standing by the window, looked across the yard at the opposite wing of the hospital.

"Excuse me, Tatiana Nicholaievna," she said. "I must be going. A transport of wounded from the south-western front is expected to arrive today."

"I'll go with you," Tatiana Nicholaievna rejoined. "Good-bye, Karpoff. Be a good boy. You know that you are dear to me."

She nodded to him. She had to pass by Wertzinsky. He awoke. His thin face and sharp, corpse-like nose protruded from the pillow and his eyes wore a gloomy and spiteful expression.

Tatiana Nicholaievna did not even look at him.

A dozen officers in clean, elegant dressing-gowns were assembled in the convalescent section of the hospital. The Empress and her four daughters, Sister Valentine, Sister Rita and several other sisters and hospital attendants were present.

The Grand Duchess Olga Nicholaievna had just stopped playing the piano. The rain pattered outside and drummed on the window-panes, but here, in the brightly illuminated dining room, one felt warm and cosy. Servants brought in tea, bread and sweets. Karpoff sat in a corner with Sister Rita Durnovo. A mutual passionate love towards the Imperial family had drawn Karpoff to Sister Rita.

"Our great-grandfather was Suvoroff"—Rita Durnovo, a tall and slim girl with large intelligent eyes, was saying. "Suvoroff's last will hangs above the beds of all of us, both brothers and sisters, and in it he says: 'I bequeath you unlimited devotion to His Majesty the Emperor and readiness to die for your Tsar and your mother-country.'"

"Yes, there's nothing to come up to that," said Aliësha. "Do you know, sister Rita, I've for ever so long been yearning to die on the battle-field. You must understand me; Sister Valentine does. . . . You'll soon hear that I have been killed. Promise then to tell Tatiana Nicholaievna that I was killed for her sake."

"You are in love with her," Rita whispered. "How I feel for

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you, Alexei Pavlovitch. You are right: it's impossible not to love her and that to such an extent as to die for her. She's a dream. I can assure you that I've entirely devoted myself to them all. I know nothing higher nor better than to serve them. Whatever happens, I'll remain true to them and never shall I abandon them, should it cost me my life."

"Do you think then that they are in danger?" Aliësha asked, lowering his voice to a whisper.

"I can't tell, I don't know. But there are rumours about, and at times they make one feel so anxious.

"I'm beginning to dread the future. All the best men have fallen in Prussia and in Galicia for the sake of France. I've got a brother who is officer in the Life Guard sharp-shooter regiment and he tells me that he does not know his regiment any more. There are eighty percent. of new elements in it; military-school ensigns hurriedly promoted, students, schoolboys with none of the regimental traditions. And the same in all the other regiments. Reserve battalions of the guard are quartered here; I come across the officers and although I am young and inexperienced I notice the difference. It's shocking to hear the way they speak of the Emperor and to see how they behave in the train and in the tram-cars. What if that should be the beginning of the end? But never, never shall I leave them whatever might happen. My great-grandfather bequeathed me unlimited fidelity and with it shall I die."

"Rita," Olga Nicholaievna called to her in her sonorous contralto. "What are you whispering about with Karpoff? Come and join our game of 'rouble.'"

The officers and the Emperor's daughters seated themselves at a table.

"Karpoff, come here," Tatiana Nicholaievna cried, and Aliësha felt his hot blood rush through his veins and blushed to the roots of his hair. He took a seat by her side.

All the players held their hands under the table. One young lieutenant of a guard infantry regiment, wounded in the hand and not quite recovered from his wound watched attentively the expressions of the faces and the movements of the players so

FROM DOUBLE EAGLE

as to guess in whose hands the silver rouble lay hidden. The players purposely pushed one another making believe that they were passing on the rouble to their neighbours so as to puzzle the guesser.

"Karpoff, you've got it," the guesser cried, but Karpoff lifted both hands and showed his empty palms.

Aliësha knew that the rouble was already for some time in Tatiana Nicholaievna's soft and tender fingers and that, according to a silent agreement, it would go no further. He dreaded lest the guesser should name her. In that case Karpoff would lose the chance of again holding in his own the rouble that her charming hands had warmed. Both he and Tatiana Nicholaievna sat with throbbing hearts as though the childish game had suddenly attained for them both a special, incomprehensible importance.

"Maria Nicholaievna, you've got it," the guesser exclaimed.

Quite a child still, the Grand Duchess Maria Nicholaievna burst out laughing and stretched her plump palms straight into his face.

Aliësha kept his hand in that of Tatiana Nicholaievna. The warm rouble lay between her fingers and his. His hand touched her knee and felt the texture of her grey frock.

The small hand with the rouble firmly pressed Aliësha's hand and kept it long in a friendly pressure. Karpoff felt the slight pulsation of her every finger and was overcome with a sensation of unspeakable bliss.

"Coppel, haven't you got it?" asked the guesser, annoyed and tired with not having succeeded in tracing the rouble.

"Let's drop this game," Tatiana Nicholaievna exclaimed. Better go in for thought-reading," and she once more pressed Aliësha's hand and left the rouble in it.

The Empress sat in a corner with Sister Valentine.

"It's only here amidst these young people that I rest. Look how lively my Tatiana is tonight. It's long since I saw her in such high spirits. And how sympathetic that Karpoff is. He's very well brought up. You told me, Sister Valentine, that his father had been killed in the battle-field not so long ago?"

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"Yes, just about a year ago, at the river Nida."

"Poor boy! How many orphans this war has made. Oh, Sister Valentine, one must put an end to this massacre. We aren't strong enough to fight them."

Sister Valentine kept silent and dropped her head on her bosom.

"We must first be victorious, Your Imperial Majesty," she said in an undertone, plucking the edge of her white apron.

V

THOSE two months had for Aliësha meant being roasted on slow fire. Daily interviews, tender looks, pressure of hands, little presents of sweets, flowers or books, long intimate conversations, in which, however, love was never mentioned. She'd tell him about her romps with Alexei, whom all the sisters adored, or of one of Anastasia Nicholaievna's practical jokes a short while ago, during a journey. Her sister had climbed in to the luggage-net of the car, had wrapped herself in a plaid and had poured drops of water out of a phial on the head of an old brigadier General who was accompanying them, much to the confusion of Tatiana, Olga and Maria. He on his side would talk about the Cossacks and their village life, about Novotcherkask. Pictured by him the Cossacks grew to be fairy-tale heroes. His narratives were imbued with the love that consumed his heart.

"How glad I am that they are such as you describe them," said Tatiana Nicholaievna, "because I've been often told that they fight badly and go in for marauding."

Then Aliësha would tell her all about his regiment, about the new blue banner embroidered in silver, about his horse. She was madly fond of horses, and loved to read books in which horses were described and when the tale was sad she cried and was angry with the author. If it happened that she could not visit the hospital she sent a small note to him through Sister Valentine with a tender greeting.

Sometimes he obtained permission from her to kiss her hand. She'd give it to him, laughingly, but would instantly pull it back.

FROM DOUBLE EAGLE

He more than once reminded her of the memorable 23rd of September. She would then ask him what had happened on that eventful day, and he'd blush and timidly answer :

"I was so happy on that day. I thought I would be unable to survive my joy. You kissed me!"

"Oh yes, I remember," and Tatiana Nicholaievna's face took a serious expression. "I was so sorry for you."

"On that day I gave my oath, that I would die for your sake."

Tatiana Nicholaievna thought that officers must die in war-time, or there would be no victory. She looked at Aliësha seriously and a feeling of pity overcame her. "It's his duty, however," she thought, "and his happiness consists in dying for his mother-country."

"Forget all about it," she said.

"But do you remember how you kissed me?"

She did not remember, but knew that she would hurt his feelings by owning it and replied: "Yes, I remember. You are good, Karpoff, and I wish you always to be good. Love me. It is a comfort for me to know that men of your sort love me. But don't think of silly things. A kiss is a silly thing. Don't forget the 23rd of September though. Always remember that date. If ever you pass through difficult times remember that I am fond of you, that my prayers are with you and life will seem easier."

He was conscious that to love Tatiana Nicholaievna to such an extent was folly. He knew that never would he be capable of loving anyone else, and that his life was done for, because he could never hope to see his love reciprocated. And he vowed to die. At any other time he would have committed suicide in one of those attacks of unrepaid passion—now, however, he was certain of finding worthy death and quietly awaited his fate. What he had achieved at Jeliesnitza did not seem to him a deed of heroism any longer. Now he was prepared to some deed of exceptional valour, which would either bring on death or give him the possibility of returning to her with the St. George's cross, of returning with the laurels of a hero, worthy of her love.

Time took its course and the hour of parting crept on.

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Aliësha intended to visit his mother for one day and then return to the front to join his regiment.

"Karpoff," Sister Valentine said to Aliësha, when, after having sent the hospital orderly to the station with his things, he was on the point of leaving and was putting on his overcoat, "Sister Tatiana wishes to see you. Go into the reception-room."

Karpoff's heart quavered. He threw his coat on his bed and followed Sister Valentine.

"Here he is, our fugitive. He insists on going to the front though he has not entirely recovered yet," said Sister Valentine, as she opened the door and pushed Karpoff in. The door closed behind him.

Tatiana Nicholaievna was alone. The polished floor was lighted by the slanting rays of the setting autumn sun.

The garden-trees, which here and there had preserved their yellow, red and brownish leaves, stood motionless outside the window. Horses' hoofs resounded on the frozen highroad.

"I wished to say farewell to you," Tatiana Nicholaievna began in a tremulous voice, "mamma asked me to transmit to you her blessing. She can't receive you personally but she sends you this cross and this Holy Testament."

Tatiana Nicholaievna's grey eyes grew serious. She crossed Aliësha with the sign of the cross and passed the chain of the cross over his neck. Her face and hands were quite close to his, and his heart throbbed so that it seemed to him as though he heard its pulsations. She placed her hands on his shoulders and said: "Farewell, my dear. God bless and protect you." She reached her hand out to him and the kiss with which he touched it was a kiss of passion. His hot lips burned it and Tatiana Nicholaievna quietly pulled her hand out of his and looked at him with dismay.

"Don't forget me," she said slipping a ring with a red stone from her finger.

"Read," she said.

On the inner circle of the ring the words "Sister Tatiana, 23rd September 1915" stood engraved.

"Let me put it on your finger." She slipped it on and once

FROM DOUBLE EAGLE

more gave him her hand to kiss. Again he pressed his lips to it and she felt the tears that dropped from his eyes.

"Come, come, that will do," she said kissing him gently on the eyes. "Brace up and show that you're a man," she said, shaking him firmly by the hand.

"Good-bye," she said and left the room.

Aliësha staggered to a chair by the window and sat down. Tears streamed down his cheeks. At that moment only did he realize that never again would he see that face and hear that beloved voice. The short dream of happiness would return no more and nothing lay in store for him but the last crown—death.

VI

THE men of the reserve infantry regiment of the Guard were called to drill. The barracks could not hold the entire supplementary reserves. The beds had been shoved together, all the halls and gymnasiums were full of men, so that drill had to be done outside on the wooden pavement of the Morskaya street. The soldiers wore capes and some wore high shaft-boots, others Austrian lace-boots. The head-gear consisted of grey sheep-skin caps. There was a damp thaw, with drizzly rain which penetrated to the skin and made the wooden pavement as slippery as a skating-rink. The soldiers marched with gloomy faces, slipped and fell. There were too few guns for the men and the two guns that fell to the lot of each company were leant against the wall of the porch and served each man separately. The passers-by were in the soldiers' way and the soldiers interfered with the traffic of the passers-by. Part of the latter were moved by the sight of these soldiers being drilled in the streets, and looked upon this as a sign of certain victory, others on the contrary could hardly hide their indignation.

"Why on earth," they said, "do they garrison such a lot of soldiers at Petrograd. They ought to be sent to the front and taught in the field how to build trenches and to run from trench to trench instead of this perpetual saluting, presenting arms and parade drill," some of the passers-by remarked.

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Two ensigns who had found shelter under the porch of the big house, smoked cigarettes and chatted, leaving drill to the sergeant. The battalion had been placed under the command of an active-service officer, sent from the regiment at the front but he never came to drill. He did not himself exactly know whether he had been sent on leave or to command the reserve battalion.

For two hours the drill had consisted in teaching the men to salute and to answer properly. The men defiled before the platoon-sergeant, who had each man stop before him and salute in answer to his greeting in various capacities in the military hierarchy.

"Answer, Robzoff, as though you were saluting in reply to an army corps Commander's greeting of: 'Welcome, my friend!'"

"My respects, Your Excellency!"

"It's not quite that. There's not enough go in it. The army corps Commander requires more accentuation on the Exc . . . You can swallow the ending of the word but must give more weight to the first syllable; well, let's hear it again—welcome, my friend!"

The ensigns exchanged glances and the younger of the two—Knoop, a former student of the law-faculty looked at his wrist watch and said to his companion—Khartchenko: "I guess it's time to stop this idiotic business."

"Perhaps we might just as well," Khartchenko replied.

Khartchenko was quite young, a mere schoolboy. Here in the regiment he was in command of a company of two hundred and fifty men but was continually under some one's influence and was always afraid of somebody. He feared and respected the junior ensign Knoop because the latter ostentatiously wore the university sign; he was afraid of the sedate and gloomy sergeant Mikhailoff with his St. George's cross and of the wide-awake private Korjikoff who did not recognize discipline, and above all he trembled before his battalion Commander the young and smart-looking Captain Savelieff in his well-cut cloth tunic, with any amount of decorations including St. Vladimir's mili-

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tary cross. Savelieff appeared from time to time and found fault with everything.

"Mikhaïloff!" Khartchenko cried. "Stop the drill."

Mikhaïloff called the platoon together and appointed Korjikoff to lead the men with songs to the barracks.

The soldiers began singing a new song which sounded nothing like real Russian music. The words were sentimental and spoke of abandoned home and family, of going to certain death and not to conquest and victory over the enemy. That song made the heart feel sick, as Mikhaïloff said, and yet he did not succeed in having it changed. It was sung everywhere and had been introduced by those ensigns whom Mikhaïloff disliked and despised. "That song's enough to make you bolt," he once said to Korjikoff. "That's not a soldier's song. Neither the Tsar nor our mother-country comes in. There's no rhythm in it. A song must have life in it and spur you on, whereas this one is a perpetual whine with its everlasting 'farewell.' You should sing real Russian songs full of life, of pluck and of boldness."

"I don't know those songs, sergeant. Sing them yourself," Korjikoff would reply, standing respectfully before his sergeant but with an impudent look.

"Sing yourself!" There was the hitch: neither Mikhaïloff nor his assistants of the active service were singers and they knew little about the words. So they addressed themselves to the ensign, who likewise knew nothing in that line.

"You just wait until we are at the front," Mikhaïloff grumbled to himself as he followed the platoon.

At the thought of the front he felt still more gloomy. "Who'll teach them there?" he thought with bitterness. "There's not one single one of the former contingent of officers left: nothing but young and inexperienced men. They don't know how to approach the soldiers. Is it the proper thing for a soldier to wear a love-lock like a girl, as Korjikoff does with ensign Knoop's permission. And who's Knoop? A German or a Jew for all I know. Maybe he *is* a Jew; and he owns, himself, to being a student. Good Lord! After two hours' drill they've

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got sick of it, standing as they did under cover of the porch. And one calls this a regiment of the Guards!"

"March in step, you son of a bitch!" Mikhaïloff cried in rage and pushed one of the rear soldiers with such force that he staggered.

"Mikhaïloff," Knoop remarked from the curb, in the tone of a schoolmaster, "I'd request you not to forget yourself. Drop your police habits."

The two years that Mikhailoff had been in the reserve he had served in the Petrograd police and his former superiors had approved of it on the plea that he had done well in remaining in service where discipline was required. And what now?

When they were back in the barracks Khartchenko and Knoop called Mikhaïloff into the regimental office.

"Mikhaïloff," Khartchenko began, "I'm not at all satisfied with the way in which you drill the soldiers in the yard. Tell me candidly, is that what you do at the front?"

Mikhaïloff kept silent, gazing bluntly at the clean-shaven young face of the ensign and trying hard to look upon him as upon an officer and a superior, and not as a schoolboy.

"Now tell me, Mikhaïloff," Knoop put in in his shrill uncertain voice, "how about this saluting, eh? It's quite over-rated and should be done away with. It belongs to the era of Nicholas I! And then your way of treating the soldiers! In the present day the soldier is educated, we have six men in our platoon with university culture, and you go on using bad language!"

"One moment, Boris Matveievitch," Khartchenko resumed. "Tell me, Mikhaïloff, what did you do at the front?"

"We shot, thrust, hit with the butt-end of our guns, built trenches."

"Consequently what is required of a soldier in warfare?"

"To begin with, the soldier must understand discipline."

"That's all very well. But the chief point is: how has the soldier to act with regard to the enemy?"

"Because without discipline the army becomes a wild horde, goes in for plundering, flees before the enemy," Mikhaïloff went on.

FROM DOUBLE EAGLE

"Very good, but you just mentioned that the soldier must learn to build trenches, to shoot and thrust," Knoop said insinuatingly. "Well, that's what you've got to teach them."

"Quite so," Mikhaïloff muttered still more gloomily.

"There, you admit it yourself. So please teach them military art instead of useless marching and other rubbish," Knoop rejoined pompously.

"Your Honour," Mikhaïloff addressed Khartchenko in a voice of entreaty, "how am I to teach them entrenching on wooden pavements and without spades. How are they to learn rifle-shooting and bayonet-thrusting with one gun only to the whole platoon. . . . I try to teach them discipline and you don't even allow me to have their hair shorn in military style. How's that, Your Honour? After all it's for warfare that they are being drilled."

Khartchenko felt confused and did not answer at once.

"All right, Mikhaïloff," he resumed, "I'll have a talk on the matter with the battalion Commander."

"What do you want, Korjikoff?" Khartchenko inquired.

A young, good-looking, clean-shaven man with hair parted on the side and a big lock on the forehead appeared at the door of the office. He was clad in a well-fitting, cloth soldier's tunic and broad trousers evidently from some good tailor and looked impudently at the ensigns.

"Allow me to speak to you," said the young man.

"All right. Mikhaïloff, you can go."

"Come in Korjikoff."

VII

AFTER the murder of Colonel Karpoff the young man then known as Modjalevsky, now as Korjikoff, had run over to the Austrians. He obtained his liberty owing to the valuable information he gave to the Austrian staff and made his way through to Sommerfeld in Switzerland. He doubted that he would find any members of the faction there but to his great surprise all the seven leaders including Korjikoff and Brodmann were at their posts. Their fighting staff was established in

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Lubovin's house. The conference of the Internationalists had just taken place in Zimmerwald and the formula proposed by Lenin had been accepted:

"From the point of view of the working class of all nationalities in Russia the defeat of the Imperial Russian monarchy and of its armies would be the least evil."

That formula had raised discussions amidst the emigrants, as it was considered too stiff. The members of the seven were aware that Lenin had received important sums of money from the German government and that fact caused many to disavow him. Fedor Fedorovitch was of the number. Thereupon Lenin called them social-traitors and formed an intimate working circle of members entirely faithful to him and mostly Jews.

Brodmann belonged to that group. He summoned young Korjikoff to visit him, had a long talk with him, forwarded a detailed report on his activity to the central committee and communicated the following decision to Victor:

"The German government has established a special branch in Sweden for the propaganda amongst the armies of the anti-German coalition, and we must use that branch for our work tending towards a universal revolution. You are to go there and then to Russia, where you will promote socialistic propaganda, organize strikes, revolutionary riots, disorganize the government functionaries, and lay the foundation of civil war, disarmament and the cessation of this sanguinary war. Such is the general plan of the German government, which coincides with the program of our faction. You have been appointed leader of the 'seven' who are to act in Petrograd. You must come in touch with the following members of the Duma: Petrovsky, Badaïeff, Moorakoff, Samoïloff and Shagoff.

Brodmann laughed nervously.

"You'll notice that they are all of them Russians, so you need not fear."

"I don't care who they are: I have no such prejudices," said Korjikoff.

"You will be able, owing to our connections, to join the army under your real name. Your mission is to deprave and de-

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moralize the soldiers to such an extent as to make them shun the dangers of the front. Demoralize them everywhere in the hospitals, cinemas and theatres. We have now sufficient means at our disposal and public opinion on our side. Everything's ready! Repeat by word and in writing and impress the one watch-word: The only martyr in warfare and the only hero is—the soldier. Raise the soldier and crush the officer.”

“How are we to set to work?” Korjikoff remarked. “There are not many like me to be found.”

Brodmann again laughed.

“Don't you worry, comrade, the entire Russian educated classes are sure to aid you. They are a herd of cowardly sheep and it will suffice to scatter them to the ranks of the army to see it decomposed by them, as by a noxious microbe. Make a laughing stock of the officers in whatever way you choose, either by anecdotes or songs or plays, so that the rank of a General shall seem a disgrace and that of a soldier—an honour. Play on the public admiration of the soldier's merits and gradually form new soldiers with nothing military about them. Await your chance. As soon as the majority is sick of war, we shall aim a blow with all our might along the whole front and shall publicly proclaim our watch-word of: ‘Down with the war! Peace to the huts and warfare to the palaces! Long live the working-class!’ Raise criminals to heroes and get the criminal elements to side with you. Our tactics are to put the Government Duma and the public leaders in opposition to the Emperor, at the same time raising enmity amidst the public leaders. Inculcate dishonesty of their capacities in the public mind, suggest to the mob that the soldiers and workmen are the only honest men in Russia, and choose among them the most demoralized black-guards. We'll see whose then will be the victory, and who will prove to be the strongest: those whose hearts burn with love or those whose hearts are full of hate. The Christians preach that their lives must be piloted by three virtues: Faith, Hope and Charity, Charity taking the lead. Our system consists in sowing unbelief, despair and hate, hate above all. Let us see whether Christ will hold out.”

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Victor was delighted. That was the propaganda that pleased him best. After that moon-light night when he had murdered Loukianoff and Karpoff, a sensual feeling of bliss filled him at the thought of shedding human blood. "Only a short while ago lived a certain Colonel Karpoff, loved and respected by all, who was at the head of a number of men and now he is no more and will never return and that's my doing. I am he who brings death and destruction. What do those attain who serve God and the angels? Nothing but poverty and famine. I'll serve Satan and we shall see who is the stronger—the evil spirit or the angel."

Korjikoff got through to Sweden via Germany and thence proceeded to Petrograd, where he succeeded without any difficulty in enlisting in the reserve battalion of the Guards. With important means at his disposal he plunged into the fulfilment of Brodmann's program.

VIII

"I've come to you, Your Honour, in the name of the whole platoon," Korjikoff began in an off-hand way, "to complain of the snake. You will have yourself noticed the way he swore at Kotoff and hit him this morning. We apply to you, who are a man of culture, because we can stand such treatment no longer."

"I promise you, Korjikoff, to put an end to it," said Khartchenko.

"Your Honour, the whole platoon insists on Mikhailoff being punished."

"I'll consult on the matter with the battalion Commander."

"The platoon, Your Honour, is likewise discontented with the mess. We were short of meat for dinner. The soldiers ask permission to go to their respective homes for their meals. Most of them have families, so that they are provided for at home."

"I'll see to that question likewise in concurrence with the battalion Commander," Khartchenko answered languidly.

"The comrades likewise declare, Your Honour, that they wish to be authorized to go to the cinema and to have town leave up to late hours."

FROM DOUBLE EAGLE

"That I positively cannot authorize," Khartchenko said, "that's prohibited by the statutes of internal service."

"They go all the same," Korjikoff rejoined. "As for the statutes of internal service, they are not observed by the higher officers."

"How's that? What do you mean?"

"Do the statutes allow that the men should lie on the floor like so many pigs? Our barrack-room is meant for one hundred beds, whereas two hundred and fifty men are quartered in it. The mattresses have not been distributed in full and there are not sufficient blankets. At night the barracks are a regular hell: it's hardly possible to breathe."

Khartchenko knew that all this was true. He had more than once made a report on the subject to Savelieff, who had hopelessly waved his hand. "What am I to do?" he would say, "when we are supposed to quarter four thousand in all and twelve thousand have been sent to us. Where am I to place them? There are too few kitchens. I have written to all the authorities and have received no answer from anywhere. It has come to minister Polivanoff's ears, but he only laughed, as though it could not be otherwise."

"You can go, Korjikoff," said Khartchenko, "and you can rest assured that all that's in our power will be done. Now go to drill."

Notwithstanding the cold February day it was stuffy in the company's quarters. There was a sour smell of worn under-clothing and dirty foot-wraps. A genuine fog prevailed in the barracks owing to the damp cloaks and boots. The air echoed with the soldiers' loud voices, and the barracks impressed one as being workmen's and not soldiers' quarters.

When the ensigns made their appearance in the barracks no command of "attention" was given. As they passed by, some of the soldiers stood aside and a few of them rose from their seats. Neither Khartchenko nor Knoop were shocked. They had no understanding of the outward discipline which was considered so necessary by the officers of the old staff. The soldiers answered with deference, were never rude and they con-

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sidered that quite sufficient. Here and there outsiders were to be seen in the barracks. Two young sailors, surrounded by soldiers, sat on a bed with a map of the military operations spread out before them and newspapers scattered about.

"What are you doing here, my friends," Khartchenko asked them.

"We have come to visit our pals," one of the sailors answered.

"They've come to me, Your Honour," said a volunteer.

Khartchenko and Knoop continued their round. In one corner of the barracks a Sister of Charity and an elderly, respectably dressed civilian sat surrounded by soldiers. In answer to the inquiry who they were a pale soldier said that the sister had tended him at the hospital and had come to visit him and that the civilian was her father. Again Khartchenko did not protest, not knowing how to act. The street pushed itself forward into the barracks and the barracks tended towards the street and neither Khartchenko nor Knoop knew how to stop it in either case.

As soon as Khartchenko and Knoop had gone to a distant part of the barracks, the sailor carefully unfolded the map and proceeded to show it to the soldiers.

"How do you explain that, comrade? That looks like treason," said a young soldier fixing the sailor with his grey eyes.

"Yes, comrades, sheer treason," the sailor rejoined calmly.

The soldiers around heaved a deep sigh, and a threatening silence set in.

"Those Generals and officers, comrades, who were to have forwarded the munitions to Krakow had been bribed. Thus, instead of besieging Krakow, our troops had to retreat and it turned out that we were short of ammunition and cartridges. Orders were given to forward them with the greatest speed, special trains were formed for the purpose and just then not one single train was allowed to pass because the Empress was on her way to the Supreme Headquarters at Mohyleff."

"What for?" asked a young, dark-bearded soldier.

FROM DOUBLE EAGLE

"To visit her husband evidently; she probably longed to see him again," ventured a short, wide-awake soldier.

The sailor stopped his narrative for a few seconds, exchanged glances with his companion and resumed sadly and calmly:

"No, comrade, she goes there by order of her lover Rasputin, who, on the other hand, receives instructions from the Emperor Wilhelm."

"Good Lord!" exclaimed several voices in the crowd.

"So he, likewise, has sold himself," asked the first soldier.

"Undoubtedly," the sailor answered.

"They have all sold themselves. What's the good then of shedding blood if all the upper classes are engaged in bartering with our peasant-blood?" the crowd murmured.

At the other end the sister of charity was distributing sweet cakes to the soldiers and talking to them in an insinuating voice.

"Eat, my friends, eat in remembrance of the poor soldier who died last night in my arms. He was so good and compassionate, and all he described was so horrible. They were engaged in a battle. The bullets whizzed past and an officer says to him: 'You lie down in front of me and protect me against the bullets!' Isn't that awful? And the officer, it seems, was dead drunk."

"Where on earth do they get the vodka from!" said a stolid chap with a black moustache.

"Where! Why the bosses can obtain whatever they choose!" replied a broad-shouldered, freckled, clean-shaven soldier.

Korjikoff paced the barracks with his hands in his pockets, exceedingly pleased with himself. He was busy getting together a party for the cinema and offering to lend money without repayment to those who could not afford to go.

"Attention, stand up," commanded a sergeant in a smart brand-new coat with a white varnished belt and a short sabre.

All the men stood up. The elderly gentleman, the sister of charity and the two sailors instantly disappeared.

An officer of about twenty-seven came in with hurried steps. He was dressed in a clean soldier's cloak, of pre-war cut and a winter cap with a coloured band. It was Captain Savelieff, the Commander of the reserve battalion.

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He had lately married and considered his present assignment as being on leave. He therefore seldom appeared at the barracks before eleven o'clock to give directions and attend to order. The rest of his time he spent with his young wife in the whirl of Petrograd entertainments, in paying calls, in parties, in visiting theatres of every description and "cabarets" which had just come into fashion. His whole aspect breathed pluck, discipline and smartness. In his presence all the men pulled themselves together, lifted their chins and put on a lively and bold demeanour, as Mikhaïloff had taught them to.

"Greetings to you, boys," Savelieff cried in a brisk voice.

The reply thundered in the heavy, stuffy barrack air.

The Captain greeted Khartchenko and Knoop and, accompanied by Mikhaïloff, began the round of the company.

"Why are the capes lying about, why haven't they been hung up?" he remarked to Khartchenko.

"The men have only just returned from drill, Your Honour, and have not yet had time to put away their things," answered Mikhaïloff, respectfully.

Savelieff turned towards the latter with a smile and said kindly:

"Ah, how are you, Mikhaïloff? How are you getting on, my friend? Is your wound quite healed?"

Mikhaïloff and Savelieff both belonged to the real Guards. They had known one another and had shared service on the Mokotovsk battle-field. They understood one another and Mikhaïloff was much dearer to Savelieff than Khartchenko and Knoop, who did not appreciate military drill and would not recognize it as being part of the military science, leading to victory. Savelieff often said to himself, that it would have been much better had Mikhaïloff been an officer and a company Commander, instead of those two young ensigns so little imbued with the tradition of the battalion.

"What's that?" Savelieff asked severely, as he stopped in front of Korjikoff. "I ask you, ensign Khartchenko, is that a soldier or a whore? That uniform? That lock of hair? A regular street-whore!"

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"I'd ask you not to insult me. Your Honour," Korjikoff remarked calmly and in a loud voice.

"What? Silence! How dare you! Have him shorn!"

"Please, don't raise your voice in that way and don't insult me," Korjikoff repeated, but the Captain had resumed his round.

"It's I who gave him the permission," said Knoop. "I did not think it mattered much and it gives him pleasure."

"Free-thinkers' abomination," muttered Savelieff as he passed into the office. "How can one allow such things! And what an impudent snout! Mikhaïloff keep your eye on that black-guard."

"It's real hell with them now, Your Honour. Outsiders come regularly to the barracks every day, Sisters of Charity and what not. Heaven only knows who they are! It's impossible to maintain any discipline. Towards evening they leave the barracks in crowds and there's no holding them back. If you make a remark, you hear rowdy answers; they swear at you and call you a policeman. I can't make out what's happened, Your Honour. That Korjikoff deserves court-martial: he's a regular black-guard."

"Ensign Khartchenko, have the company fall in!" said Savelieff.

Five minutes later, after he had convinced himself by the silence that now reigned in the company's quarters, and by the numerous repeated command of: "Fall into line" and "attention" that the company was ready, he went into the barracks.

In the narrow passage between the beds and the windows two hundred and fifty men were standing in two ranks. Though above middle-size Captain Savelieff was about a head shorter than the right flank platoon. He experienced a pleasant feeling as he went by those tall fellows. However, their want of drill, their carelessly worn shirts and loosely hanging belts, the irregularity of their hair-dressing showed Savelieff that they were far from being real soldiers, and that the two months of drill they had gone through had not advanced them much. Want of discipline was noticeable everywhere. He had twelve hundred

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men in his battalion and all of the same stamp as those of Khartchenko's company.

"How can you behave as you do, my good fellows," he said. "We are in the midst of the most cruel war. The enemy is overpowering us. They are anxiously waiting for reinforcement at the front. In what state will you appear? Who are these outsiders who come to see you? Maybe German spies, who wish to demoralize you! You must be prepared to fulfil your sacred duty."

He repeated what he had said in the other companies. He himself had no faith in what he said because he knew that it was impossible to regenerate the men by speeches and persuasion. It would be quite different if one could bring them away from these surroundings to some twenty miles from the position, provide them with arms and, in batches of twenty men, teach them field-exercise! It was, however, for his superiors to decide whether it was rational to keep two hundred and fifty thousand young soldiers garrisoned in Petrograd in the midst of town-perversity and to teach them drill on street-pavements, without rifles, spades, or hand grenades, etc. His duty was summed up in doing what he could.

After delivering his speech Savelieff commanded: "at ease," but perceiving by the noise that ensued, that Khartchenko's company did not realize what "at ease" meant, he at once commanded "attention." He had to choose two sentinels of honour and singers for the charity-ball organized for that evening by Countess Paltoff.

After having completed that mission and noted the family names of the men he had picked out, and having instructed them to repair without delay to the quarters of the first company, Savelieff retired.

Hardly had he left when the company without awaiting the command, broke ranks.

Khartchenko and Knoop also turned homeward.

FROM DOUBLE EAGLE

IX

THAT "cabaret" ball in which the leading Petrograd actors and actresses were to appear had long before been planned on a large scale by Countess Natalie Paltoff for the benefit of the families of her husband's men fallen on the battle-field. She had done her utmost to collect as many officers of the regiment for that day as possible and had succeeded in obtaining leave for them, profiting by the regiment being in reserve. The best-looking and tallest men of the reserve battalion had been picked out and dressed in the pre-war parade uniform to stand in double line on both sides of the wide marble staircase leading to the Countess's apartment. The complete regimental band specially sent to the reserve battalion was likewise in brilliant parade uniform. By amusing themselves for the benefit of the families of the slain they did their best to forget about the war and to recall the former undisturbed time of elegant reviews, of disciplined soldiers and rousing music.

One of the members of the Imperial family, the Commander of the cavalry division, the young General "à la suite" Sablin, General Pestretzoff and his Chief-of-Staff, General Samoïloff and several noted officials were expected to be present.

Preobrajenskaïa was to dance and the Roumanian band of Goolesco was to play. Knoop was expected to recite and sing to the accompaniment of a guitar and the lady of the house had prepared some up-to-date songs and frivolous music-hall ditties. Isa Kremer had promised to come from Moscow for the event.

Despite the food shortage that had already set in, a magnificent supper had been ordered and the Countess had succeeded, owing to high patronage, in obtaining champagne and other expensive foreign wines.

The Countess, Princess Repnin, Countess Valerskaïa and old Matzneff, now chairman of the town and country union, had during a whole month prepared this elegant "cabaret" ball, which was to be the talk of the capital. The cost of organisation, of the artistic program representing soldiers in parade uniforms, of the scenery, the supper, the wine, the remuneration

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of the artists and other expenses were such that they alone would have formed a much larger provision for fallen soldiers' families than the profit counted upon from the select number of guests invited by special cards. Countess Paltoff knew, however, that no one would sacrifice the sum required without the attraction of food, drink and entertainment, that such was the custom; and, besides, the ball, as such, interested her far more than the unfortunate families.

The entertainment was to begin at eight p.m. but the guests only began to appear towards nine. Count and Countess Paltoff and a group of regimental officers greeted the guests at the top of the staircase. The Countess wore a rich evening-dress and her hair had been dressed by the first hairdresser of the capital. She looked very smart and handsome with her white neck and arms.

The officers appeared in new-fashioned tunics with glittering epaulets and decorations. Shortly the tall drooping figure of a General in khaki shoulder-straps and with his sabre on a khaki belt, appeared on the first flight of stairs whereupon the regimental adjutant made a sign to the band, which struck up the regimental march.

"I am happy to see you in good health," said the General in a hoarse voice as he kissed Countess Paltoff's hand. "Your looks are daily improving. It's such a comfort to find rest here after all the anxieties of the war."

He was followed by Sablin, who entered the ball-room clad in an elegant tunic of pre-war cut, adorned with the St. George's cross and aide-de-camp shoulder-bands, looking still young in spite of his close cropped hair which was getting grey and his deeply tanned face.

He bowed to the Countess and to the black-bearded General.

"Ah, Sablin," the latter exclaimed, affably stretching out his broad hand, "what a charitable deed the Countess has undertaken. The number of orphan tears she will wipe away owing to this magnificent party! How little elegance and luxury we have seen during the past eighteen months. Even the parade-

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uniforms of our famous Nth regiment seem to us an anachronism."

The Generals and officers in the ball room rose and bowed to the black-bearded General. The ladies eyed him through their glasses.

"How old he has become," said a good-looking sister of charity in an elegant short khaki frock to General Samoïloff who stood by.

"It's not easy for him fighting on two fronts, Lioubov Matveievna."

"Do you think he is fighting?" remarked the sister, looking at Samoïloff with a coquettish smile.

"Undoubtedly," Samoïloff replied.

"My impression was that he was drifting with the stream. Do you know Nicholai Zakharovitch, all these people are not human beings, Russians, living in the capital at the time of the greatest war, but living factions. With us and against us. Each one of them belongs to a platform and only exists for its sake."

"And what platform do you belong to, Lioubov Matveievna?" asked Samoïloff with a smile.

"I? My motto is: 'Live and let live.' Since my husband left me, I was obliged to find some occupation. To take a lover or to ask for a divorce means to lower one's self. I chose another path and you see how everyone respects me."

"I to begin with! May I hope to win your favour?"

"If you behave yourself and give up looking at me with such eyes, that's a thing I can't stand. With me '*les affaires sont les affaires*.'"

A dark-blue velvet curtain with a gold fringe at the bottom was drawn aside, and ensign Knoop appeared on the stage. In his wide skirted khaki tunic, flaring breeches and yellow puttees, his hair carefully plastered to his temples, he looked anything but officer-like. He produced the impression of an actor badly made up.

"How on earth had he managed to join the regiment? How could he have risen to the rank of officer? How had he succeeded in pushing himself?" were the thoughts that passed

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through Count Paltoff's and the active service officers' heads, as they looked at him.

Meanwhile Knoop, pacing to and fro in front of the foot-lights in an off-hand way with his guitar, waited till complete silence had been established among the spectators, whereupon, imitating the sound of the drum by knocking the guitar with his knuckles, he announced curtly:

"The soldiers are coming!"

He described poetically and with talent the feelings of a child, of a woman and of an old man standing at a window and watching a regiment pass by. A hidden gramophone accompanied him from behind the scene, playing a distant infantry-march followed by the beat of drums.

The illusion was so complete that some of the spectators turned their heads towards the windows, hidden by heavy curtains. When he had ended, he was greeted by loud applause. Sablin rose from his seat and went into an adjoining drawing-room, the sight so depressed him. Only three days before, after having, with the aid of his dismounted division, thrown back a terrific attack of the German infantry accompanied by the heavy fire of the artillery, he had retreated into reserve about thirty miles to the rear, leaving the position in charge of the infantry come to relieve him. He still saw before his eyes the last scene that he had witnessed, when the division crossed a half-frozen river, which as the ice formed had risen and overflowed, shifting into the middle of the stream the clumsy bridge, built in September by the Cossacks. The men had to climb on to the bridge on horseback, belly-deep in the water and climb off in the same way. The bottom of the river was muddy and the regiments as they waded through, trampled the mud, making deep holes in it. The sky was overclouded and a cold, bitter wind accompanied by snow, rent the air.

Rusty looking ice-blocks streamed down the river. The horses would suddenly disappear belly-deep into the water and then again climb out upon some sand-bank, splashing the water and ice about them. Sablin passed the whole day watching the passage of his troops across the river, the artillery having taken

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a long time to do it. It was by moon-light that he crossed the river himself, and proceeded at a trot, getting ahead of the last squadrons of the Cossack regiment, to his night-quarters. The last impression he had retained was that of a young Cossack lieutenant, on regimental duty, accompanying him past the regiment along a narrow wood-path and shouting lustily to the Cossacks: "Keep to the right." The young officer's face seemed familiar to Sablin who inquired his name.

"Lieutenant Karpoff," was the answer.

"You were wounded at Jeliesnitza?"

"Yes, Your Excellency."

"And you have already recovered?"

"Entirely, Your Excellency."

They were outdistancing grim looking Cossacks, seemingly hungry and overfatigued, and that young officer alone looked bright and happy. Sablin look at him attentively and became conscious that faith, hope and love—but above all love—were the cause of his blissful state. Later Sablin with his head-adjutant, buglers and orderlies had ridden along the highroad until he reached a village priest's house where he stayed over night, sleeping on straw spread out in the dining room. The next morning he had proceeded in a motor-car to the nearest railway station when it took him thirty-six hours to get to Petrograd. His daughter and Countess Paltoff had persuaded him to make his appearance at the charity ball. And now he had had to listen to "The soldiers are coming" sung by a Jewish looking ensign, who had never been to war.

"How are you, Alexander Nicolaievitch?" said Pestretzoff, who was sitting in a corner of the room with Oblienissimoff and a lively but elderly civilian in a black tunic of military cut, unshaved and with golden spectacles. "Our brave Rumiantzoff! Wonders have been told about your division. Are you acquainted?" he went on addressing the civilian.

"Alexander Ivanovitch Pootchkoff, our magician. Yes, my dear Alexander Nicolaievitch, these business-men, with their practical system have succeeded where we failed despite our military erudition. And if Alexei Andreievitch Polivanoff is

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our Prince Pojarsky, this is our Minin! The army is saved. Towards spring you will be flooded with munitions and cartridges, and you'll have no end of aeroplanes at your disposal. Such are our allies."

"Not the allies alone, Jakoff Petrovitch. We are likewise establishing our own industry on a large scale. We have proclaimed the motto: 'Everything for the sake of war!'" remarked Pootchkoff in a calm, insinuating voice.

"Good luck," said Sablin.

"Well, and what news from the front?" inquired Oblienissimoff. "You can talk quite openly, we are all of us reliable men."

"The state of mind at the front is such that I would describe it with pleasure even in the presence of the enemy. Give us the technical perfection that the Germans dispose of and you can order us to Berlin."

"Well said," exclaimed Pestretzoff.

"I don't wish to over-rate anything, but the fact is that our soldiers have always been and, let us hope, will always be the best soldiers in the world. The officers are worthy of admiration: thank God, so far, we haven't had any Jews at the front, like the one who has just appeared on the stage."

"He's not much of a Jew," remarked Pestretzoff with reserve.

"And why should a Jew not be an officer?" Pootchkoff rejoined.

"Maybe I shall not be able to answer your question but I assert that no officer not belonging to that race would allow himself to behave as that Knoop just did. It was perfectly disgusting to see him play the fool when his brother officers are sitting in the trenches. Look at the way he's got up. Do you call that a uniform?"

"You're always the same, Sasha," Oblienissimoff remarked. "You're not up-to-date, you do not realize that there is a new tendency which must be brought to life by the army."

"You just mentioned, uncle, that we are among ourselves; the majority of the guests are, I believe, engaged in admiring

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Preobrajenskaïa's dancing. Be frank, then, and say that a revolution is being prepared."

"Aren't you of opinion that a revolution is required?" asked Pestretzoff. "Haven't not only we, the upper-class, but likewise the peasant-class come to the fatal conclusion that such an end is inevitable and moreover desirable?"

"In that case I don't belong to your upper-class, because, in my opinion, a revolution is out of question during warfare and even later on. What would be the object?"

"But what's to be done?" Pootchkoff asked in an undertone.

"The throne must be supported by every means! That's what I told my uncle eighteen months ago and go on repeating. You can call me a reactionary, but I consider that it would be folly to overthrow a throne during such a dreadful war!"

A heavy silence ensued, broken by the sounds of music and the patter of feet which came from the adjoining ball-room through the half-open door.

"The throne is falling as it is and we have not the power to support it," said Pootchkoff in a calm, soft voice; but Sablin noticed that he was anything but calm.

"We have done all we could. You remember the enthusiasm when the war broke out, what faith in the Tsar prevailed then, how universal was the impulse to follow him and die for his sake, and what has been the result? Rasputin has become more arrogant than ever. His influence on Alexandra Fedorovna has increased and threatens the welfare of Russia. You know Admiral Baltoff? He did wonders in Sebastopol. A telegram was sent to the Emperor, requesting him to confer a high post on him, where he would be in a position to bring about some reorganization. The Emperor gave his consent and signed the nomination. Thereupon she hastened to Mohyleff with the result that two hours later a counter-order was signed by him to the effect that Baltoff had to leave Sebastopol and take over a sinecure in the rear of the army."

"That was evidently done to please the Germans and probably in accordance with an order received from Berlin," remarked Pestretzoff.

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"The Grand Dukes themselves are opposed to the Tsar. They tried to persuade the Emperor, wrote him letters, and finished by falling into disgrace. The Emperor's reply was that he preferred to put up with Rasputin than with her Majesty's hysterics," said Oblienissimoff.

"Both she and he should have the power of governing withdrawn from them, but the principles of monarchism should not be shaken," said Sablin.

"My dear fellow, it has been shaky for ever so long. The liaison between the Empress and Rasputin is a matter of gossip in all the regiments and there's not much respect left with regard to the Monarch," said Oblienissimoff.

"In which regiments do you mean? The regiments of the division under my command are ready to die for their Emperor, whatever his defects," exclaimed Sablin.

"So much the better. But the Petrograd garrison is of a different opinion. The revolutionary watch-words are beginning to penetrate the military classes and you won't hear the national hymn at roll-call in the local regiments any longer. If in the companies the workmen's 'marseillaise' has not so far been sung officially, you can trust my word that the soldiers know it," Pootchkoff rejoined. "And whether you wish to or not, you've got to bear this in mind."

"That's the result of drilling the soldiers in the streets. As I drove this morning from the station to my lodging I noticed that abomination. I saw a crowd instead of military ranks, one gun in a stand, and close by some suspicious looking individuals with newspapers and pamphlets. That's evidently the way of forming a republican army. . . ."

No one replied.

"Drill must take place in the open fields," Sablin went on. "Send them to us as reserve and I guarantee that we'll teach them without spoiling them. Even here at this very festival I see the work of the rear."

"Do you blame that lovely Natalie Borisovna?" said Pestretzoff.

"What was the sense of placing those badly drilled idiots in

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shakos and pre-war uniforms at the entrance? So as to let them witness all this luxury, the depravity of the upper ten, their elegance, the exquisite food and wine, and then send them to cold and damp trenches under that impression?"

"As though they did not know!" said Pestretzoff.

At this moment Countess Paltoff joined them.

"I must say, it's polite of you, my friends," she began. "I'm on the point of appearing on the stage and here you are hidden in this room, as though I did not exist."

"We've only just had a smoke, Countess," answered Oblie-nissimoff, rising heavily from his arm-chair.

"You can smoke later on. Besides I know what your smoking means: you just simply longed to jaw, you everlasting chatter-box! Alexander Nicolaievitch, give me your attention. I'm going to sing that charming 'Barcarolle' by Gounod. Just listen to the refrain. It reminds one of waves rocking a boat."

And she hummed:

Dites, la jeune et belle
Ou voulez-vous aller
La voile ouvre son aile
La brise va souffler.

Thundering applause greeted Countess Paltoff as she appeared in the ball-room arm-in-arm with Sablin. The applause was meant for her, as mistress of the house, and for Sablin, his St. George's cross and for the fame that preceded his name.

A civilian in a long black frock-coat with a withered, beardless old face rose from his arm-chair and, stopping Sablin, stretched a bundle of hundred rouble notes towards him.

"Here are ten thousand roubles, Your Excellency," he said, "distribute them among your heroes."

Sablin was at a loss how to act, but Countess Paltoff came to the rescue.

"That's our constant purveyor, Lapin, a great patriot and benefactor. Tell me what you wish me to buy for your men and I'll buy the things you need and send them with you to the front."

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"Many thanks, Countess, that's the best plan," said Lapin.

The ovation Sablin and the Countess met with lasted some time, and Sablin felt his eyes fill with tears at the sight of all the bright glances directed at him and of the small hands clapping in his honour. In the crowd he noticed his daughter Tania's sweet face, flushed with excitement.

Countess Paltoff, noticing his confusion, went to the stage. The spectators repaired to their seats.

When the Countess had finished her song she was greeted with such enthusiastic applause that she felt abashed by her success and, leaving the stage, mixed with the crowd of spectators. Sablin profited by the pause to regain the entrance hall. His nerves were shaken and he decided to take a breath of fresh air and then to return and fetch Tania towards the end of supper.

Sablin succeeded, after some difficulty, in finding his overcoat and left the house.

X

THE streets were brightly lit, crowded tram-cars passed by with soldiers hanging on to the steps. Soldiers could be seen everywhere. They shoved their way through on the pavements; nibbling sun-flower seeds, they loitered about beside the cinemas and music-halls. Sablin had not been in Petrograd for eighteen months and hardly knew the town again, owing to the multitude of cinemas, miniature stages, with singing, dancing and variety shows that had been opened of late. He found it hard to imagine where that large contingent of artistic elements had come from and who they were.

Notwithstanding the hour, soldiers loitered about the town with perfect freedom. They were sober and the majority saluted Sablin respectfully, but their aspect, far from approaching that of soldiers of the Guards, could hardly have been called military at all. They wore their fur caps in a slovenly way, the majority had no belts round their waists and those who wore them had buckled them in an off-hand way. Many of them were in the company of civilians and educated-looking girls.

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The film in one of the big cinemas on the Newsky prospect had just come to an end and one crowd of spectators was making room for a new one.

"Eh, comrades," cried a young soldier with enthusiasm, as he came out of the cinema and addressing his pals, "that's what I call enjoying life!"

"Everything is attainable to those who dare it," said a young woman in the garb of a sister of charity.

"And yet it's a criminal action," rejoined the same young soldier.

"I don't call that a serious crime," said the sister of charity disdainfully.

The soldier caught sight of Sablin and pulled himself together.

The rain had stopped, but a heavy mist had replaced it. The town had an unusual aspect, as though the population had increased by a hundred per cent. There were any amount of Polish refugees, whose language was heard at every moment. Sablin recalled the first action in which he had taken part, remembered the manor, and Count Ledokhovski and his guests. He went along the Newsky prospect, full of indignation. The cinemas that had grown like mushrooms along the Newsky, the Liteiny, in all the main and side streets, advertised, by flashy posters and pictures, the most tempting titles, the hidden sense of which meant: "Proletarians of every country assemble! Down with warfare! Peace to the huts and destruction to the palaces!" A horrid civil-war was being openly propagated by the film, and millions of spectators looked on, while those who should have kept their eyes open were blind.

There, far away was the front, where patient soldiers crossed half destroyed bridges in the cold of night, where they died without murmur; where the wounded, who, as Karpoff, had hardly recovered from their wounds, hastened back to their regiments; where for months they lived in dug-outs, and listened to the explosion of shrapnel in the trenches; where dumb graves without inscriptions stood as a silent reproach. There prevailed faith in God, in final victory, when the banners would be brought back in triumph to their native towns, greeted by

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young girls with flower-wreaths. There indeed charity likewise prevailed: that charity which means self-sacrifice for the sake of one's neighbour.

Only three days before Sablin had lived the holy life of a Christian, amidst Christians, at the front!

Now, far from the battle-field, he witnessed entire apathy regarding faith, he never once heard the name of Christ mentioned. He saw churches where only despair and hatred were propagated. The cinemas on the Newsky prospect, on the Liteiny prospect—everywhere, propagated despair and hatred. Here, close by, at the corner of a by-street, the insolent electric-light advertisement of a cinema announces cynically: "Only for grown-ups." And a crowd of young soldiers, a crowd of small boys and girls flows notwithstanding from out of its hospitable walls. Cynical jokes and immoral laughter become audible as they pour out into the street,—greedy, bestial laughter.

Sablin shuddered at the thought and, disgusted, made room for two soldiers who were dragging a girl, squeaking with laughter, along the street.

As he was nearing Countess Paltoff's house he overtook a General walking by the side of a tall elegant-looking Sister of Charity in a fashionable fur cloak and a red cross head-dress. He instantly recognized Samoïloff. Sablin intended to pass ahead but they quickened their pace and involuntarily he overheard their joyful and loud conversation. They were both under the influence of wine.

"Lioubov Matveievna," Samoïloff was saying. "Where shall we go? We must complete this evening. I have known you ever so long but it's the first time I've seen you as you are tonight."

"Do you approve of me—tonight?"

"Yes, I need you as you are tonight."

"Why?"

"Because that's what I've come from the front for."

"Not really."

"I began to notice that excessive continence acts on one's

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nerves and lessens one's energy and courage and our army corps doctor agreed."

"Quite a new discovery," Lioubov Matveievna remarked ironically.

"It's not new. In old days the Greeks and Romans were quite aware of it and that's why women always became the prey of the victors."

"And of late years?"

"Eminent Generals have likewise always known it. Skobelev had girls sent to the army."

"Nicholai Zakharovitch you are cynical."

"I never pretended to be otherwise. Besides you yourself gave me to understand that '*les affaires sont les affaires*,' and I understood what you meant."

"However, Nicholai Zakarovitch, '*la plus belle fille ne peut donner que ce qu'elle a!*'"

"That's what I want.

"How quick you are."

"I have always been. That's the reason why they value me as Chief-of-Staff: the slightest hint is enough to give me a definite insight into the plans of my superiors. Where shall we go?"

Lioubov Matveievna shortened her pace.

"That's the question! You've got no apartment, and I cannot possibly receive you, because I live at the hospital and very seldom stay over night with my mother. Where are you stopping?"

"At the 'Hotel du Nord.'"

"They won't let me in."

"You have evidently a very poor opinion of my capacities as officer of the General Staff. I had foreseen this eventuality. My wife figures in my passport and I have warned the servants that I expect my wife from the country tonight or tomorrow night."

"How could you tell that I . . . That I would ever consent?"

"I did not believe you would."

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"In that case you had another woman in view. May I ask who my rival is?"

"I had woman in general in mind. I thought of a beautiful and interesting woman, and I have found someone much better than I had expected. I have found a woman of refinement and education, and such women in matters of love stand much higher than women of the ordinary standard. I quite realize that I shall thereby incur much heavier expenses but the pleasure will be more acute."

"It will cost you very dear and I pity you, Nicholai Zakhavitch, acquainted as I am with your means. However, since I am sincere with regard to you I'd better be entirely frank. I must live. I'm a woman of the world, am received everywhere in society, and that leads to various obligations. I must be well-dressed, must behave modestly, be careful in my choice and not repeat this sort of thing too often. I can rely on you not telling tales out of school. Life is getting more expensive every day. A simple red-cross dress costs over one hundred roubles. This is why I consider it my duty to warn you beforehand that I intend robbing you."

"Well?"

They stopped. Sablin was passing them at that very moment and distinctly heard the one, harshly pronounced, word:

"Five hundred."

XI

THE next morning after Countess Paltoff's party, when he awoke, Sablin lay long on the sofa in his study, which had been turned into a bed room. It was nine o'clock already. At the front he was used to rise at seven and to start for the position at eight.

A grey, dull winter morning threw its dim light through the yellow blinds. The curtains had not been pulled together and the study, hurriedly and temporarily transformed into a bedroom, had lost its former intimate aspect. Some old trinkets still stood on his desk, but all his papers and documents had been hidden away and the desk had a deserted look. The portrait

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of his wife hung on the opposite wall. A mild and straightforward expression lay in her eyes, too mild to have been capable of a falsehood. That dreadful diary of her's, written just before her suicide, was hidden in the library.

Sablin stretched his strong and powerful body, experienced a feeling of animal satisfaction due to the touch of the clean bed-linen and the soft pillows and looked with wide-open eyes at the portrait.

A white rose adorned Vera Constantinovna's golden hair and a blissful smile covered her beautiful features. But Sablin did not see her as she was represented on the picture. His mind's eye recalled her to his memory tortured by the martyrdom of shame and despair.

"Have you forgiven me?" her blue eyes seemed to say; and he shrank at the thought of that question full of suffering.

Why had she left him and deprived him of her presence as a woman. Was he, like Samoïloff, to seek solace and passing joy in the arms of a Lioubov Matveïevna, to invite her to come and see him, to unveil her in the presence of that portrait, in his apartment, the abode of his daughter? Or was he to visit Ksenia Petrovna, that pretty divorced person, who had peered at him last night through her tortoise-shell lorgnette and said:

"How interesting you are, Alexander Nicolaievitch! I've taken a fancy to you. Come and see me tomorrow at six."

He had looked at her red dyed hair, at her painted face, glistening teeth and sensual lips, and an old reminiscence of his ensign life and of Kitty had flashed through his brain.

"What for?" he had replied.

"I'll greet you with tea and first-class cognac on a white bear-skin in my favourite soft squirrel-fur dressing-gown."

"And under the dressing-gown?" Sablin had inquired.

She had laughed showing her white teeth and, turning away from him, had retorted: "My skin."

Sablin shuddered at the thought. Vera Constantinovna was looking at him from the frame, smiling with her blue eyes.

"Would you forgive me?" he thought and his whole being

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felt the answer: "Yes, I'll forgive you! I wish you to be happy, were it but for one second!"

"You would forgive me," he went on musing, "but how about the others?"

And the picture of the icy river with its uncouth bridge, of the soldiers carefully wading into the cold water, of the livid faces of his men, came to him like a vision. "Would they forgive?" Hadn't he had sufficient experience? Kitty, Marousia, Vera Constantinovna! And others besides.

A satisfied, idle life, visits, dinner-parties, dances, brilliant reviews, military bands, all that by-gone life between the exercise-field and the theatre, the smell of the soldiers' sweat in the morning, and at night the scent of delicate perfumes and the animated faces of beautiful women. Hadn't he had his fill.

"And yet," Sablin thought, "have we not shown that we knew how to fight and die?"

How many lives had already been lost during the last eighteen months? What a number of casualties on the fields of Eastern Prussia and Galicia, in the Carpatian mountains and the Polish marshes!

And who are replacing them?

Sablin sat up in bed, horrified at the thought: Who is being sent to replace the fallen? That comic-song officer, who last night had sung that ditty about "The soldiers are coming!" who, after supper, had retired with the Countess into the small sitting-room. Among all that lot, who wore the signs of regiments of the Guard? Nothing but new faces, anything but soldiers.

One of them had awkwardly pushed a lady and had only excused himself by cheekily saying: "Sorry."

Three of them had calmly stuck to their seats while ladies were obliged to stand. Another had lit a cigar without asking the permission of the ladies or of his superiors. Though they were all sober, a certain impudence and off-handedness was obvious in their behaviour.

"We were capable of being in love with a Kitty, we were apt to lead astray innocent girls, as I did with Marousia," Sablin

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went on musing, "we went in for drinks and depravity, and yet we looked up to our deity, our faith, our ideals and we kept high our motto: For our Faith, our Tsar and our mother-country. We would have been incapable of scoffing at our faith, of criticizing our Tsar or of disliking our mother-country. Never could we be traitors."

"Wherein consists the faith of the present contingent? I don't even mean deep religious faith. Have they sufficient outward faith to stand decently in church, to place a taper or to kiss an ikon? Have they the semblance of that discipline of the soul, which is given by religion? They neither respect nor like the Tsar, and how about their mother-country?"

These new officers had quite new notions. Sablin endeavoured to find a denomination for these new elements, to define them by one special word, until that word flashed through his mind and made his blood curdle:

"Revolutionary officers."

Was it possible that the phantom which seemed to hang in the air and which his uncle Oblienissimoff, Samoilloff, Pestretzoff and others had hinted at, was going to take a material shape? Was a revolution really fermenting?

His decision to return to the front was made. He dressed and rang for the servant. Some time elapsed before there was a knock at the door and his daughter's maid, Pasha, made her appearance. Her pretty face had still traces of recent sleep, her hair was elegantly though hurriedly dressed, and she was smartly attired. She threw a bold and free glance at Sablin.

"Is my daughter up?" Sablin inquired.

"Tatiana Alexandrovna is still asleep," Pasha replied.

Sablin looked at her, she returned his glance, and he was the first to feel abashed.

"Good," he said, "bring my tea here. And let me have my trunk; I'm leaving today."

Sablin passed the whole day with his daughter. They walked together through their favourite streets. And again Sablin noticed that the aspect of the town had altered. He was surprised at the abundance of articles in the jewellers' shops. Dia-

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monds, precious stones of various descriptions, silver and golden trinkets glittered in all the show-windows and, despite the fabulous prices, found buyers. Sablin studied his daughter and the result caused him satisfaction.

"Tania," he said as he stopped in front of a jeweller's shop, "let's go inside. I wish to make you a present of those turquoise ear-rings as a keep-sake."

The young girl looked at him with a pale smile.

"No, father," she answered. "Don't buy me anything now. I should be ashamed of wearing such jewelry during the war."

"Did you enjoy yourself last night at Natalie Borisovna's?" he asked.

"Yes and no," said Tania. "I felt ill at ease. When there's so much suffering about, owing to the war, it seems unnatural to go in for amusement. I was shocked, father, at the way some of the officers behaved. Don't you find, father, that they hardly look like officers?"

Sablin did not answer.

"Father," Tania said in an undertone, as they had passed the Morskaya, "Father, don't you intend to pay your obeissance to Her Majesty?"

"No," Sablin answered curtly. "I'm leaving tonight for my division. It's not necessary. But why do you ask?"

"Last week the Grand Duchess Olga Nicholaievna asked me why you had never been on leave, even after having been wounded. She said that the Empress was very fond of you and had up to this very day not forgotten my mother."

"Tania," Sablin replied, pressing his daughter's hand, "never mention the Empress and your mother together. You must not know. . . ."

"But I do know," said Tania calmly.

"What do you know," exclaimed Sablin, whose hair seemed to stand on end.

"The Empress caused my mother no end of evil."

"What evil?" Sablin asked.

"I don't know, but I heard her say: 'I have been greatly in

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fault with regard to your mother, but I hope that there she will have forgiven me.' ”

“Tania, I beseech you never, never to touch this subject in my presence.”

“Very well, father, but you must forgive the Empress. She is so miserable. One must love her.”

“Come, come, my darling,” Sablin exclaimed. “Is that possible for me?”

They had passed by the massive granite enclosure of the Winter-Palace garden and were now on the Palace quay. The white clouds, that had covered the sky in the morning, had now dispersed and a pale-blue sky opened out above the Peter-Paul citadel. The wide expanse of the Neva, covered with snow, glittered before their eyes. A machine-gun rattled in the neighbourhood of the citadel. Soldiers were busy at gun-drill on the ice. To their right stood the cold Winter-Palace covered with hoar-frost, and the signboards of the Red Cross on its facade made a strange impression. The whole beauty of the quay suddenly opened out under the rays of the pale winter sun and Sablin's heart filled with ecstasy at the calm magnificence of the majestic river. Tania had evidently been overcome with a similar sensation.

“Father,” she said, as she pressed his arm with her little hand clad in a warm, woolen glove. “Father, do you believe that the Germans are likely to take Petrograd? It suddenly occurred to me that foreigners might take possession of our town, destroy and burn the beautiful palaces, devastate the Hermitage, carrying away the works of art, and that we would not be able to live here any longer. Father, tell me that that's impossible.”

“Of course, dear, there can be no question of such a possibility,” said Sablin, but his voice lacked firmness.

“You won't let them, will you?” she went on, looking with pride at her father and at the St. George's ribbon in his button-hole.

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XII

THE train bound for Sarna was to start in the evening. Tania and Pasha came to see him off. On the right a train for Tsarskoie Selo was leaving from the suburban platform, where elegantly dressed ladies of the hussar and sharp-shooter regiments were seen, accompanied by officers partly in khaki caps, partly in pre-war, bright coloured caps. Life seemed to be going on here as brilliant, noisy and varied as usual, ignoring the war.

The International sleeping-car compartment was brightly lit by electric light. A respectful guard showed Sablin to his berth, saying that he would travel alone as far as Tsarskoie Selo, where a passenger would join the train and take possession of the second berth.

The train stopped at Tsarskoie Selo. A woman's voice was heard, exclaiming close by his window: "Au revoir. Come back soon. Bring your disgusting war to an end. You've fought long enough."

He seemed to know the voice.

Sablin approached the window, screening his face with the palms of his hands, and perceived a sister of charity gaily taking leave of a General. The General was Samoïloff, the sister—Liubov Matveievna.

A minute later the train was again in motion and Samoïloff, his face red with the frost, entered the compartment.

"Ah! Your Excellency!" he said, greeting Sablin, "what a pleasant surprise. So we are travelling together as far as Mohyleff. We'll be able to chat together. Well, how did you find our rear?"

"Awful!"

"Not really? Why they are working at full steam, and magnificent, glorious work it is too!"

"What does the work consist in?" Sablin inquired.

"In preparing for the revolution," whispered Samoïloff.

Sablin gasped.

"What? I've terrified you. So I expected. You, an ex-aide-de-camp, a General à la suite of His Majesty obliged all

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of a sudden to listen to such words and from whose lips? From those of an old, weather-beaten General bound for Supreme Headquarters. . . . You must get used to this. . . .”

“In time of war?” said Sablin.

“I’ve caught you there! Consequently you would admit it in time of peace,” continued Samoïloff, smiling.

“I never said so,” rejoined Sablin with warmth, “and never shall!”

“You don’t seem to have studied the new soldier and the new officer during your stay in Petrograd, Alexander Nicolaievitch.”

“On the contrary. I have studied them quite specially. It’s them I had in mind when I said ‘Awful.’”

“Probably their outward aspect, their want of discipline, a certain slovenliness in their attire, in their way of saluting has displeased you. I agree with you that outward discipline is wanting. But, Alexander Nicolaievitch, we are training conscious soldiers,” said Samoïloff.

“You won’t consider it indiscreet on my part if I ask you what you mean by: ‘we’?”

“We,” Samoïloff replied, “are those who see that the government has chosen a wrong path, who have realized that the old system of warfare must lead us to defeat and we are searching for new ways. We are preparing a conscious soldier, *i.e.*, a soldier capable of understanding all the intricacies of the political position, a soldier capable of criticizing and analysing.”

“In other words you intend to inoculate the army with politics,” Sablin exclaimed with indignation.

“Well, just a touch of politics. We wish the army to realize that Rasputins do not embody the Russian Monarchy, that men like Varnava, Stürmer and Sukhomlinoff won’t do. We need power to destroy stubbornness. Maybe a small court revolution.”

“Will you be able to put a stop at that? I tremble when I hear you talk. And you are going to Supreme Headquarters with such thoughts! Great Heavens, what’s to come of this?”

“I have been called to Supreme Headquarters as a man of counsel,” Samoïloff retorted, not without comical dignity.

“I shall have to report about you,” said Sablin.

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"Please do so. But remember that I'm not the only one and that you'll hardly succeed in getting us all hanged. We are in power and not only the higher staff but likewise the Grand Dukes side with us. Whom have you got to rely upon?"

"The soldiers," Sablin exclaimed with pride.

Samoïloff laughed ironically.

"You believe in them? A herd of sheep, a mercenary Russian rabble, capable of following those who offer them most!" Samoïloff exclaimed as he rose to his feet. "Are you going to dine? There's a dining-car on the train."

Sablin looked at him with disgust.

"No," he replied curtly. "I had dinner at home."

"As you please," said Samoïloff, stretching himself. "As for me I have a mighty appetite."

Whereupon, bending his bald head encircled by very scant grey hair and shrugging his broad shoulders, Samoïloff left the compartment.

Sablin flung himself back and leaned against the compartment cushions. He was hungry. Not only had he not dined but he had not even had time to lunch owing to his hurried departure. But the thought of having to sit with that awful man and of being, perhaps, obliged to listen to his disheartening conversation was unendurable.

"No, for nothing in the world! A revolutionary General. Even they have turned up in Russia, like fungi in a marsh, these leaders of revolutionary officers," Sablin went on thinking.

"Gracious Lord, but a short while ago, impressed by Thy meek teaching, I had vowed pure Christian love to mankind and how many have I learned to hate since! I am incapable of forgiving the Empress, I hate Rasputin, I hate all these new conscious officers and soldiers, I abhor this revolutionary General Samoïloff. Hatred instead of love. It's all very well to love those that hate us, but how if they hate not me, but my country and Thee who was crucified for us? Where am I to look for an answer?"

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Sablin fetched the Holy Gospel out of his hand-bag, opened it at haphazard and the first words that caught his eyes were: "Vengeance is in me, saith the Lord."

Samoïloff came upon Sablin as the latter was reading the Gospel. He looked askance at the book and, smiling ironically, proceeded to undress. He stretched himself under the bed-linen, purposely took a yellow frivolous French novel out of the compartment net and proceeded to cut the pages.

They did not exchange a single word until they arrived at Mohyleff; and Samoïloff left the compartment without taking leave of Sablin. After he had left, Sablin heaved a sigh of relief. It seemed to him as though the very air of the compartment had grown purer.

XIII

THE train was late and Sablin did not reach Sarny until past two a. m. His favourite orderly, the hussar sergeant Shapovaloff, his military-servant, Semion, a soldier of the Guards, who had accompanied him from Petrograd and had become, as it were, a member of his family and his chauffeur, Petroff, met him at the station.

"Welcome, Your Excellency," said Semion as he entered the compartment and proceeded to take his luggage out of the net. We did not expect you back so soon. Your Excellency has had a very short rest. How's the health of Her Excellency Tatiana Nicolaievna? Is the English miss still with you? And how's Pasha?"

"And what's up here," asked Sablin after having answered Semion's questions.

"Fine, Sir. All's quiet and well. Leda is moping for you. Florestan was shod yesterday."

Shapovaloff, who was standing on the quay, greeted his General with a sonorous voice and reported all the news concerning the division-life.

"Captain Mikhailitchenko has been rewarded with the military cross of St. Anne for the battle of Jemiesnitza and Lieutenant Karpoff—with the St. George's sword. A cable came

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from the army headquarters to that effect the day before yesterday. Soon after your wire announcing your arrival was received. The Chief-of-Staff decided to wait until you had arrived. They'll receive their rewards tomorrow at three p.m. The military band of the lancer regiment will play during the banquet and our hostess promised to bake a pie."

Sablin felt as if he had returned to his family, and found the atmosphere amid these simple men much cosier and warmer than in his Petrograd home.

Petroff, in a smart fur coat with red shoulder-straps, walked behind him giving particulars of the road.

"The road is excellent, and there's not much snow. At Boron we got stuck a bit as we came this way. We'll arrive at about nine."

Sablin's favourite Russo-Baltic motor-car, roughly but strongly built, was standing on the small square to which the dark streets of the small hamlet with their wooden houses led. The bright lamps of the motor threw long sheaves of light onto the street and lit up a window with a white lowered blind. A peasant's sledge was waiting outside for someone and the small, shaggy bay horse, covered with a mat, shied with frightened eyes. Sablin looked with pleasure at the small, blue and yellow division flag with the familiar division cypher and realized that the feeling of hatred that he had brought back from Petrograd was waning. He seated himself in the motor-car. Shapovaloff and Semion carefully tucked his legs into a fur rug.

"Ready Sir?" asked Petroff.

"Yes, let's go," answered Sablin, gleefully breathing the fresh night-air.

At headquarters tea was ready. Colonel Varlam Nicholaievitch Semionoff, the Chief-of-Staff, a short man with bandy legs, Captain Davydenko, dark, good-looking and proud of his long moustache, the fat military Doctor Oospensky and two young ensigns, Pavloff and von Dahl, were waiting for him in the dining room. The owners of the house, a young priest and his pretty wife, Alexandra Petrovna, who was the subject of general admiration, were likewise present.

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They sat down at a long table covered by a pink table-cloth with white designs, on which a large copper tea-kettle was boiling. Through the transparent curtains and the round leaves of the geraniums on the small windows the frozen lake, the distant hills and the dark pine-forest could be discerned.

"You don't mind, Your Excellency," said Semionoff, "my having invited for tonight those who have been rewarded by decorations and the knights of the St. George's cross? Fifty all told. Perhaps you are tired and would like to rest?"

"Nonsense, Varlam Nicholaievitch! After tea we'll ride across to the Commander of the army corps and I expect to be back at one. Has the sword been sent for Karpoff?"

"Nothing of the sort," exclaimed Davydenko indignantly. "They are such spendthrifts at headquarters and yet they've only sent a small cross and the sword-knot, though I am more than certain that they have charged the cost of the sword in full."

"Robbery," sighed stout Oospensky.

"I'm sorry," said Sablin, "I was hoping to present him with a first-class weapon, as a keepsake for his descendants. He's a first-rate officer. His father was likewise an excellent officer. He was killed at Nida just as he was going to be rewarded with the St. George's cross."

"The sword could be managed," said Davydenko, "if Your Excellency doesn't object to incurring a small expense."

"Tell me how?"

"A week ago the equipment of a fallen Cossack Captain was on sale about twenty miles off at the headquarters of the Kuban regiment. Among others there was a splendid Caucasian sabre, with a dark blade of wonderful workmanship. The price was three hundred roubles and the sabre has remained unsold. If you had no objection, I could ride across in your motor-car. As for the money, we could raise it from our household funds."

"I'll pay for it," said Sablin. "See whether you can't have the small white cross set into the handle."

"That can easily be done. The chauffeur Petroff is a skilful locksmith. At about three p.m. the job will be completed and

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I'll borrow Alexandra Petrovna's velvet cushion to present it on."

"Thank you, Mikhail Ivanovitch. Do your best."

After tea Sablin, accompanied by the Chief-of-Staff, rode to the army headquarters.

A stolid hussar in a short fur jacket and high, brilliantly polished boots stood in the street close by the priest's house, holding a tall black mare by the bridle. Her glistening coat shone in the sun. Her short tail beat her flanks nervously, whipping away imaginary flies. Leda knew what she was worth, that she was her master's favourite, that a bracing journey along a soft snow-covered road lay in store for her amid the sweet scent of a fir-forest in the sun-shine, followed by a pleasant rest in the priest's warm stable, where good fodder was waiting for her as well as the companionship of her old friend Florestan.

Sablin and Semionoff mounted, and set off at a trot.

"I am glad that you will succeed in giving joy to Karpoff," said Semionoff. "In your absence I have got to know him better. He's a splendid youth."

"An excellent officer."

"His only wish is to die on the battle-field. You know, he has been at the hospital of Her Majesty and was quite taken by his experience there. I'm afraid the poor lad's madly in love with the Grand Duchess Tatiana Nicholaievna."

"I expect that's not so very serious," said Sablin.

"His dream is to die the death of a hero on condition she knows of it."

"Sheer childishness," Sablin replied.

"And yet, Your Excellency, there's something in that childishness. How many have been killed and have died in hospitals, empty-hearted. This one, at least, will die with his heart full of happiness and love."

"Why speak so mournfully. He may easily outlive us."

"Your Excellency must forget how many have fallen already. You remember Seriojin?"

"The hussar?"

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"The 'small hussar' as the sisters of the army corps field-hospital called him. He was a wonderfully handsome lad, and sung beautifully. And do you remember Sister Ksenia, the French girl? Well, they loved one another with a pure, chaste love. Neither of them dreamed of a betrothal, each considering the other so much superior. During a patrol mission at Kamen-Kashirsky a company of Germans cut him off. 'Follow me, lads,' he cried, attacked the company with drawn sabre and managed to escape and save all his men. He himself had, however, two wounds in the stomach. How he ever succeeded in getting back is a marvel. He was brought to the field-hospital and Ksenia nursed him. I was present at the time. He looked at us and at Ksenia. He must have been suffering agonies. 'How fine death is!' he said, closed his eyes and died. Karpoff's the same style. Such lads would never dream of saying or even of thinking that a live cur is better off than a dead lion."

"Have you known any to say so?"

"Formally their number was limited, now it's increasing. As for Karpoff, there's not a dangerous and risky deed that he would refuse to undertake."

The Commander of the 177th division and the Commander of the 709th regiment are engaged with the Commander of the army corps," said a pink-cheeked, curly-haired orderly officer in a smartly cut tunic, as he ushered Sablin and Semionoff into a dark sitting-room, richly furnished with antique furniture.

"However I'll announce you."

He left, but soon returned.

"The Commander of the army corps is ready to receive you," he said.

Sablin passed into a small room, where Lieutenant-General Zinovieff, whom he had known in Petrograd, and a sombre-looking Colonel were seated. The Commander of the army corps, the old infantry General Lossovsky, rose to greet him.

"How soon you've returned!" he said. "You evidently did not feel at your ease in Petrograd! How happy I am to have you back, the more so, as we need your advice. I cannot agree with Leonid Leonidovitch. Do you know one another? Major-

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General Sablin, commanding the cavalry division. Our Murat. . . .”

“Of course we’ve had the pleasure of meeting in Petrograd,” said Zinovieff with a soft smile. “I believe the General could be of help to us,” he went on addressing the Commander of the army corps.

“Look here, Alexander Nicolaievitch,” said Lossovsky, with a wide wave of the hand at a map, “our opinions clash. I’ve again to listen to words that I abhor and that I mustn’t listen to: ‘it’s impossible.’ In warfare nothing’s impossible, gentlemen, when men are ready to sacrifice their lives.”

He puckered his puffy lips and stroked his hanging moustache. “I don’t expect that Bagration ever said to Soovoroff that anything was impossible. My dear Colonel, everything is possible for a Russian soldier. It’s only a question of the percentage of casualties! And losses during war are inevitable.”

“If, however, Your Excellency, the losses reach one hundred percent, nothing can come of it,” said the Commander of the regiment in a respectful, but somewhat gruff tone.

Lossovsky shrugged his broad shoulders.

“The long and the short of it,” he said, addressing Sablin, “is that we must find that soldier of the time of Peter the Great, you know that hero, whom Peter the Great, during a dispute with the Prussian King Frederic on discipline, ordered to jump out of the window. We must find an officer who would boldly and unhesitatingly face certain death. And neither Colonel Sonin nor Leonid Leonidovitch can find an officer of that description in the forces under their command. Eh? What do you say to that?”

“I don’t know your plan yet, Your Excellency,” Sablin remarked.

“I’ll explain it to you. Look at the map.”

It was a huge plan, consisting of various sheets stuck together and representing in its most minute details the disposition of the Russian forces and of those of the enemy. Two zigzag lines, one red, the other black, met and disjoined, covering the outlines of forests, marshes and villages.

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"We intend advancing as soon as the spring sets in," Lossovsky began in an undertone. "Of course that's no secret to anyone. All the Jews of Rafalovka know it and German as well as Russian military correspondents write on the subject. The Commander of the army has entrusted the forcing through of the position to my army corps. I'll be provided with reinforcements. You'll understand that preliminary work must be done, we must prepare new positions for the batteries, we must rehearse, so to speak, the whole play, so as to attack without default. I want to break through on a narrow front and intend the cavalry—two or three divisions, yours among others—to follow on the warm scent. Now, my dear Alexander Nicolaievitch, have a look at the map and tell me where you would consider it best to strike the blow and where to lead the demonstration."

"I'm well acquainted with the locality and with the position," said Sablin. "I fought there with my division last autumn. I would strike the blow at Kostioukhnovka and would demonstrate at Vulka-Galousiska."

"You see! What did I tell you?" said Zinovieff triumphantly to Lossovsky.

"His Excellency says that because he is unacquainted with the circumstances," said the Commander of the infantry regiment in a hoarse bass voice. "A fatal circumstance comes in here. As you see our trenches and those of the enemy come into close touch at Kostioukhnovka, forming a so-called 'Eagle's Nest.' Thirty paces only divide our trenches from theirs. The soldiers can converse from trench to trench. Not only is it impossible to move from the trench, you can't even look through the embrasure of a steel shield without risking being killed."

"No doubt," Sablin confirmed. "Considering the proximity—a distance of barely thirty paces,—bayonet work would be called for. The position is occupied by Pilsudsky's Polish brigade, and the Poles are sure to bolt as soon as our men come near the wire-fencing. Where you propose starting lies a dense marshy forest. To fix artillery there would be out of the

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question. Besides they have three rows of barb-wire supported by machine-guns, deep trenches, a part strongly cemented, and the position is held by dismounted Hungarian cavalry. We know them but too well: they know how to die. Then again there's a distance of about three miles to cover. How many are likely to survive? Here you are certain to lose twenty or thirty men, whereas there, by the time you reach the position, you are bound to lose several hundred."

"Your Excellency," replied the Commander of the infantry regiment, "it's a simple question of psychology. You say yourself that we are 'certain' to lose, and that certainty causes the difficulty. The first who leave the trenches are certain to be killed, that it to say, to commit suicide. And no one is particularly keen to look certain death in the face. We had intended to dislodge the Poles and straighten the front and I called for volunteers—with no result. One drunken Captain volunteered at first, but when he was sober again he thought better of it. Another officer, a lieutenant, who had more than once distinguished himself in various perilous ventures, had been wounded three times and had lost one eye, a cripple in other words, had first consented but at the very last moment he changed his mind, saying that committing suicide meant tempting God."

"We need fresh elements, Your Excellency," said Zinovieff, "who are not acquainted with all the particulars. If, for instance, on the eve of the attack, Alexander Nicolaievitch sent us some of his bold men I am quite certain that we could find desperate fellows, fatalists, among the Cossacks, who would dare it. I remember that in August 1914 in the Laboonsk forest my infantry wavered. We were in a thicket as dense as a jungle, when the Austrians fired without relaxing, when up came the Cossacks. They dismounted, crossed themselves and disappeared in the thicket, followed by my infantry. In two hours the enemy was overpowered, and we captured over six hundred prisoners. The same would happen in this case if we had fresh elements, free of the hypnosis of fear. Look at my fellows here. They've been sitting here the whole winter and not one

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single day has gone by but some one has been killed and always in the Eagle's Nest. Every month I put in a fresh company and every week five to ten men of the company are killed. The whole division knows the Eagle's Nest."

Sablin kept silent for a long while.

"I understand," he said at last, "that we send our men to commit a deed of daring, if there is but one single chance of their escaping death. When a squadron is sent to charge, we know that fifty per cent are likely to fall, but we do not know beforehand which of them are doomed, whereas in this case we sentence certain individuals to death. And yet it must be done."

"Help us, Alexander Nicolaievitch! I have entire confidence in your division," said Lossovsky. "Pick out some scoundrel who would in any case have been sentenced to death by court-martial, give him the St. George's cross beforehand and send 1,000 roubles to his widow. What do you say to that?"

"No, Your Excellency," Sablin replied seriously and musingly, slightly stuttering with excitement, "a sacred deed must lie in the hands of one worthy of committing it—and such a man I'll find. Only tell me when and allow me to examine the position personally."

"If you like, come and meet me in the wood-cutter's hut on the first moon-light night and we can go together. It's impossible to get through during the day without the risk of being shot. I'll ring you up," said Sonin.

"Very well! I'll examine the position and shall find the officer you require," said Sablin as he rose to take leave of the army corps Commander.

"Thank you, Alexander Nicolaievitch," said Lossovsky shaking Sablin's hand.

XIV

To Leda's great disgust Sablin rode back at a foot-pace, only now and then falling into a short trot. They reached headquarters between two and three.

Semionoff pointed with his riding-stick to the hussars and

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Cossacks already falling in along the fence of the priest's house, and at the brass band getting ready their instruments.

The house itself had been transformed. The door leading from the dining room into the sitting room had been flung wide open and a table had been stretched from one room to the other. Whatever crockery was available in the village had been collected and the table had been laid for twenty guests. Davydenko had ridden across to the Caucasian division, where, by some miracle, wine was always to be found, and had brought back small bottles of Caucasian cognac and several bottles of Caucasian claret and hock.

The orderlies had done their best to give the banquet a ceremonial character and the priest's wife fussed about in the kitchen, assisted by Semionoff and the motor-car driver's assistant Poliakoff.

All the officers of the staff, the Commanders of the hussar and Don regiments whose men were to be rewarded, the Commander of the artillery division, Captain Mikhailitchenko and Lieutenant Karpoff had been invited to the banquet. The priest, in a lilac cassock, paced to and fro by the table, rubbing his hands and placing the chairs.

"It's a close fit, but that won't interfere," he muttered smiling joyfully as he looked at the bottles. "A regular feast of Belshazzar in my house."

The band met Sablin with the march of the regiment in which he had served for twenty years and which was full of so many reminiscences both happy and sad. He had heard it on first joining. The same march had been played to him and to Vera Constantinovna when, after the wedding-ceremony, they left the church; and to the sounds of that march would he be carried to his last resting-place. Such was Sablin's conviction, for he could not represent to himself his funeral under other circumstances. With the sound of that march was associated the thundering hurrah and the sunlit image of the crowned Commander-in-Chief of the Russian army, His Majesty the Emperor. Whenever Sablin heard the strains of that march, his heart melted with excitement and his eyes grew dim. Now he

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dismounted, patted his horse and gave it some sugar, he made the round of the front and greeted the men, stolid fellows, mostly old friends, the heroes of Jeliesnitza.

"What splendid fellows!" thought Sablin. They haven't their match in the world."

"Heroes of Jeliesnitza!" he began, standing before the front, "in the name of His Majesty the Emperor I congratulate you on your nomination as knights of the cross of St. George."

A mighty shout: "We heartily thank Your Excellency," interrupted him.

"Wear these crosses and do honour to them," continued Sablin. "Remember that this cross of the martyr St. George binds you to behave on the battle-field as well as in time of peace, as it becomes a knight of St. George. You must serve as examples of courage and honest discipline to the rest of your comrades. And, once back in your respective villages, you will be looked upon as knights of the order and will have to behave soberly, honestly and work for the welfare of Russia and our great Tsar."

"We'll do our best, Your Excellency," replied the soldiers in unison.

Sablin passed over to the right flank. On the flank of the hussars stood the Commander of the regiment and by his side—the valiant Captain Mikhailitchenko who, at the head of his squadron, had broken through the ranks at Jeliesnitza. Captain Davydenko handed a small box with the decoration to Sablin.

"In the name of His Majesty the Emperor I confer on you, Captain, the order of St. Ann's military cross of the 2nd grade."

He passed the box to the Captain and stretched his hand to him.

"I thank you, Your Excellency," said the Captain. Their eyes met but for one second, but Sablin felt that this officer—an intelligent, highly educated man, married to an excellent musician and father of four children, would, without wavering, at that moment throw himself into the arms of death, of mutilation and torture for the sake of a piece of enamelled gold on a

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red ribbon. He knew that a gleeful telegram announcing the event would be sent that very day to Mikhailitchenko's plain wife and that she would shed tears of joy.

Sablin went on to where the soldiers stood and presented each one of them separately with the St. George's cross fixed to a ribbon, repeating to each of them the same words: "In the name of His Majesty the Emperor I decorate you with the St. George's cross!"

The soldiers took the cross awkwardly, the majority crossed themselves and kissed it.

On the right flank stood Colonel Protopopoff with Lieutenant Karpoff by his side. Hardly had Sablin looked at Karpoff's bright eyes, veiled by long eye-lashes, when he remembered the passage in Anna Karenina when on meeting Levin she exclaims: "I know thoroughbreds by their special brands, and enamoured youths by their eyes."

These honest eyes were full of rapture and unspeakable anguish at the same time. Such must have been Werther's gaze, such must be the expression of those who intend committing suicide.

Davydenko had fulfilled his promise. The elegant Caucasian silver and gold sabre which he brought to Sablin had actually been adorned with the small white cross, and a new St. George's sword-knot had been attached to the hilt. A simple narrow black Caucasian leather sword-belt was passed through the rings. The sabre rested on a dark red velvet cushion on which a dog was embroidered, and which did not exactly harmonize with the weapon it bore.

"In the name of His Imperial Majesty I have the pleasure, Lieutenant Karpoff, of presenting you with this weapon of the brave. May it be transmitted from generation to generation as a token of your valiant deed."

Karpoff's face, grown thin with the effects of his wound, flushed and he thanked Sablin with a tremulous voice.

"Do you wish me to send her a wire?" Sablin asked.

"To whom?" Karpoff inquired in a whisper.

"To Tatiana Nicholaievna," said Sablin in an undertone, so

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that only by the movement of his lips could Karpoff guess what the General was saying.

"Yes, if you think it possible!" muttered Karpoff blushing to the roots of his hair.

"Why, of course. And you should write her a letter."

The orderly, lancer von Dahl, proceeded to fasten on the new sabre, after having unfastened the old one, while Sablin went across to the right flank Cossack who stood erect with his head turned towards his General.

"That young Karpoff is ready to die at any moment and to commit the most daring deed. He would not shrink although it meant certain death. But dare I send him?" thought Sablin and his voice quavered as he repeated the stereotyped phrase to the soldier: "In the name of His Majesty the Emperor I reward you with the St. George's cross."

His hand trembled as it disposed of the bauble.

The dinner was a great success. The pie, triumphantly brought in by the priest's wife, was baked to perfection.

The band was playing outside, and the melodious strains of the "Life for the Tsar" reminded Sablin of the Petrograd Opera House, carrying his thoughts from the tiny rooms, where a canary tried to drown the brass band and the chatter of the guests, to the distant capital.

Toasts followed one another: to His Majesty, accompanied by a thunder of applause and the mighty strains of the Russian hymn, to the new knights, with the regimental music of the hussar and Don regiments by turns, to victory and fame, to the Commanders of the regiments, to the officers, soldiers and Cossacks, to the faithful comrades on the battlefield, and finally to the hostess.

The officers, having lost the habit of drink, became merry in no time. Protopopoff, the Commander of the Don regiment, who sat on Sablin's left, rose asking to be allowed to send for the Cossack singers.

"I must tell you, Your Excellency, that he's the best singer of our regiment," he said pointing at Karpoff. "He's got such

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a fine baritone voice that he could join the opera stage at any time. You've never heard him?"

"No, never," Sablin replied dryly.

"Then you must hear him. You'll be fascinated by him. He's his mother's only son."

"Listen, listen to him," said an inward voice tempting Sablin's conscience, "learn to value him, to love him with all your might, and then sacrifice him, for sacrifice is asked of you. You'll send him to certain death? When the fatal moment has come, you'll give the command in a firm voice because you are a soldier. Is it a sin? Wherein lies the greater sin: to sacrifice him whom you love above all, with pangs of anguish and sick at heart, or to send to certain death, with a feeling of spite, him whom you dislike, who morally and physically is obnoxious to you? When sacrifice is required, it must be made in all sincerity."

"The singers are so far away. It's hardly worth the while," said Sablin.

"Oh, it's no distance," Protopopoff insisted, longing to show off before the Commander of the division and to prove the order reigning in his regiment. "Barely seven miles. They'll ride over in the twinkling of an eye. I'll have them called by telephone."

"Well, I leave it to you."

"I'll give the instructions," Davydenko put in. "Which squadron is it to be?"

"Let's say the fourth," said Protopopoff carelessly, conscious that the chorus of the 4th squadron was the best of the regiment, that they were ready to start at any moment and that the horses were all saddled. He looked forward to surprising the Commander of the division and all the guests.

Davydenko went to the telephone.

At the other end of the table Semionoff, slightly the worse for liquor, had opened the window so as to enable the guests to hear the band better and, with a jolly smile on his face, was singing, and, as he sang, winking to the priest's wife.

The dinner had come to an end. Sablin had given permis-

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sion to smoke and retired to the window so as to avoid the constraint that his presence caused. Tea, pastry and sweets prepared by the hostess were served.

The short winter day was waning. The ruddy sun was sinking towards the dark outline of the distant forests, and the new moon showed her crescent on the pale sky, when the chorus turned up. The horses were steaming. The Cossacks had done their best and had taken but twenty minutes to ride across. A stout corporal led them into the yard and gave the command "attention." Sablin greeted them.

"May we begin?" asked the corporal.

"Go ahead."

They started by singing their old regimental field-song and when they had done, Protopopoff called on Karpoff, the young officer to sing. Karpoff who was yearning to show himself to his men in his new smart sabre with the St. George's sword-knot, hastened to obey and rushed into the yard without putting his overcoat on.

"If only she could see me now!" he thought, "it would be deuced fine to sing to her."

He felt her ring on his finger.

The Cossacks congratulated him and Sablin and many of the guests came out on the steps.

Karpoff took a whip out of the corporal's hand, to serve him as a baton, placed himself in position and, closing his eyes for a second, thought: "It's for you, for Your Imperial Highness that I am going to sing."

He sang a mournful Cossack ditty which harmonized with the sadness of the waning day and with the whole surroundings of the front, where one risked at any moment being called to the battle-field and to death. Each word of the song had a meaning, the sense of which was quite clear to all these men who had seen their comrades slain and wounded.

The song ended amid a general but appreciative silence.

"The battle charger," suggested Protopopoff with the air of an impresario, as he stood by Sablin's side.

And Karpoff sang of the ritual, which had existed from one

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generation to the other, when the Cossacks saw their next of kin off to the battle-field.

Sablin thought of the days of his youth, when he too had sung with his soldiers. Life had clutched him with its filthy claws and had carried him through torrents of insults and abjectness: Had he not done better had he died then, when he was able to sing with Lubovin and was an unstained youth, a thoroughly honest officer. Would it not be better for Karpoff to die now, when there was still so much warmth and sincerity in his voice, when he had not yet committed the slightest evil deed? Let him be a dead lion, rather than a living cur!

"Where have you learnt that song?" asked Sablin, when Karpoff had finished the long hymn of grateful love to the mother-country.

"In the Don Cadet corps of Alexander II," Karpoff replied.

"A fine song," said Sablin, musingly.

As in a dream, mechanically, and in the usual terms, he thanked the musicians and the singers, gave them the usual remuneration and dismissed them. The banquet had come to an end.

XV

ABOUT ten days later Sablin was called to the telephone. It was Sonin, the Commander of the infantry regiment, in whose sector lay the famous "Eagle's Nest." He reported that the moon was sufficiently bright to allow of examining the Kostioukhnovka position and that if his excellency had not changed his mind, would he kindly arrive on the following evening towards eight o'clock and they would proceed together to the Eagle's Nest.

"Very good, I'll come," Sablin answered.

Alone, except for his chauffeur and mechanic, and without having informed anyone of his intentions, Sablin drove in his motor-car in the dusk from the village of Ozery. He knew the way, as he had followed it in winter. But now he noticed many a change. The fine dense forest which he had admired from Rafaloffka had been nearly completely hewn down, while the

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dirty, marshy road had been carefully laid out on faggot-work. A town of dug-outs had been raised close by the river and the forest swarmed with infantry and seemed a human ant-hill. Sounds of rough but hearty laughter, of harmonicas became audible; soldiers passed along with rattling kettles attached to their knapsacks, bound for the field-kitchens. The trees were hewn at haphazard and the tree stumps, sometimes four to five feet high, stuck out like an uncouth hedge along the dug-outs. The bridge which Sablin's division had crossed with such effort existed no more. It had been replaced by a new, smartly built bridge, nearly a mile long, the work of the pontoon battalion. A second and a third pontoon-bridge were thrown across the river some way off. The whole bank of the river was dug out into timber lined trenches. This was the rear-guard of the army corps. A dense net of barbed wire sloped towards the water and was partly submerged by the swollen river.

The sentinel—a militia-man—stopped the motor-car as it neared the bridge, and let it pass after having assured himself that the inmate belonged to the "command." Sablin was surprised to notice that soldiers who passed at the same time, accompanied by Jews with bread-baskets, were not questioned by the sentinel.

"Evidently only the 'superiors' have to undergo scrutiny," Sablin decided.

The nearer Sablin approached the position, the fewer forces did he come across and the denser became the forest. The faggot-work across the marsh became narrower and was less carefully put together; the work had evidently been done in a hurry, maybe under the enemy's fire. The position beyond the forest was not yet visible but its presence was felt owing to the incessantly renewed shots.

Ta-poo, ta-poo, the Austrian shots sounded, and but seldom was the answer of our firing heard, when it echoed through the woods, seemingly close by—and followed again by the distant double ta-poo, ta-poo. To the left, close by the road, a battery was established, covered by fir branches and masked from the aeroplanes. Some distance further horses stood fastened to the

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trees in the wood, dug-outs appeared, lit by a small yellow light. The motor-car stopped and the mechanic went to inquire about the way.

"The first turning to the left," he reported. "There's a sign post."

At the corner of the first turning stood a post with a board, on which was written "To the wood-cutter's hut." Half a mile further they came upon a glade in the wood, likewise intersected with rows of dug-outs, where several transport-cars stood about. Lights shone from the windows of the half-dilapidated hut, a money-case stood by its side and a sentinel in an old overcoat paced up and down. At the sound of the motor-car Colonel Sonin appeared with a lantern in his hand.

"This way, Your Excellency," he said showing him to the entrance-door. "Look out, there's a step missing."

Sablin followed him through a narrow, dark passage to a small room, which served as dining room, study and bed-room. Three camp-beds stood along the walls and a third bed had been prepared on the naked floor; the centre of the room was taken up by a roughly carpentered table of unplanned boards and a bench. Besides there was the semblance of an arm-chair made from a log with a back and arms of twisted crooked branches. A small tin lamp stood on the table and its high flame lit up the small room, which was stuffy and hot. The inmates of the hut were having tea. A large, blue, enamelled tea-pot, old enamel jugs and slices of black bread lay scattered on the table. Three officers rose from their seats as Sablin came in.

"My adjutant, officer of the day, the quartermaster," Sonin introduced his inferiors, in an off-hand way.

The adjutant was a lanky fellow, in a summer tunic of pre-war cut covered with badges, and with warped khaki shoulder-straps and faded shoulder-knots. His face was thin, sharp and clean-shaven, with grey, melancholy eyes. His long figure kept the traces of pre-war drill and he answered Sablin's greeting with a certain graceful bow, tried to clink his spurs together and shook hands firmly.

Pyshkin, a young man with wide-open, sheepy eyes in a

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round ruddy beardless and browless face, looked at Sablin as a child would at a toy; he stretched out his soft, sweaty right hand awkwardly and did not know what to do with his left.

The quartermaster had risen from non-com. rank. He had a strict, soldier-like demeanour. His wan, sickly looking face with thin, pale lips was adorned with a reddish moustache.

"We'd better be going now while the moon is high, and we can have some supper and tea when we return," said Sonin. "Pyshkin will go with us."

Pyshkin began dressing with evident discontent.

The three of them stepped into the motor-car and drove for about two miles to where the road forked, when Sonin gave the order to stop.

"This is the Kostioukhovka road," said he. "We'll now have to go on foot. It's not far—about two miles."

They walked to the outskirts of the forest.

"You see the position," said Sonin, stopping Sablin.

A large and tall forest sloped like a dark wall and spread out to the right and left of the sandy road. Thirty paces off small fir trees, pine and juniper trees formed a slight thicket. Further a sandy field spread to some sandy mounds. It sparkled and glistened in the rays of the moon. Two miles off appeared a new row of small thickets above which bright white rockets were incessantly flung. Some miles to the right the position became visible and it was entirely covered with the bluish white lights of these rockets. Mysterious and awe-inspiring as was the enemy's position, it became the more mysterious and enigmatic owing to these lights.

At times artillery would boom in the distance and with a lightning-like sheaf of yellow light the firing was reflected in the blue sky.

"They keep firing the whole night and the Lord only knows what at," said Sonin.

The silver and treacherous moon-light enhanced the mysteriousness of the field.

"Come on," said Sablin.

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"Come on," Sonin repeated. Pyshkin fell back, so as not to increase the target for the enemy's fire.

A bullet whizzed by and hit the earth some distance off.

"They keep firing the whole night along the road. At hazard. . . . So far no one has been touched," said Sonin.

The shots never stopped, and the whizz and singing sound; and the smacking of the bullets increased as they neared the hills.

"What fools those Austrians and Poles are," said Sonin with irritation. "As if it were possible to hit at night-time."

A bullet smacked into the sand quite close by.

"We'd better take the side of the road and separate for a while," said Sablin. "There are barely six hundred paces left."

They were approaching a long sandy mound, which intersected the road, small dug-outs in the flanks and human shadows became visible and muffled voices were heard.

This was a dead expanse, inaccessible to the enemy's bullets and one hundred and fifty human beings had lived, slept, thought and talked for a fortnight at a time, from one relief to another, on this small piece of ground. On one side small mounds, the graves of the fallen, could be noticed.

The sandy hill rose like a wall and iron-shields stood like so many teeth at both ends.

"Here we are, in the Eagle's Nest," said Sonin.

The men, lying, sitting and walking about, looked at the newcomers as though they had fallen from the moon. Then they whispered one to the other: "The Commander of the regiment" and "one had better inform the Commander of the company." But the latter, evidently forewarned by telephone, was already appearing out of a tiny dug-out. He was quite a boy, about Karpoff's age, but without any martial go in him, without any passion for war. Fair-haired and thick-lipped, he was uncouthly attired in a wadded overcoat, which made him look stout and clumsy. His eyes expressed fear and anxiety and his face was pale.

He approached the Commander of the regiment with a report, but Sonin pointed to Sablin and the youth became utterly

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confused. Calling Sablin at times "Your Excellency," at other times "Colonel," the youth reported that fort N 14 was occupied by the 9th company of the 709th infantry regiment of Tmoutarakan, that the company consisted of one officer and 127 privates, that nothing special had happened, except that six men had been wounded half an hour before by a bomb and that one soldier had been killed on the spot by a bullet in the shield embrasure.

"They've been peeping through the shields again," said Sonin discontentedly. "How often have I told you not to allow them."

"What can I do, Colonel. I've told them over and over how dangerous it was. They seem to be attracted, as by a whirlpool. Even I feel drawn to do it," said the youth with tears in his voice.

"Who got killed?" Sonin asked.

"Ovetchkin."

"Which Ovetchkin?"

"The one who came with the October reinforcement."

"He was a bad lot, Your Honour," a sergeant said respectfully, as he came forward to his Commander's assistance.

The sergeant was a short, sinewy man of forty, with black moustache and eyebrows, a wide-awake, typical Russian soldier, bold and full of common sense.

"I'll peep through, I'll peep through," he repeated, imitating Ovetchkin, "and nothing will happen. And what was the result? There he lies, like carrion."

And he pointed at the body lying some way off.

Sonin went up to the fallen soldier, doffed his cap and crossed himself.

The soldier's body, still warm and limp, lay on its back in the sand. Someone had crossed its arms on its breast. The face was horribly mutilated, the skull fractured and one eye was missing, the whole covered with coagulated blood.

"Probably a dum-dum bullet," Sonin remarked.

Two soldiers on their knees were digging a grave in the sand.

"Are you going to bury him here," Sonin inquired.

"Yes, Your Honour. It's impossible to carry him any dis-

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tance, as they are shooting incessantly," said the sergeant. "As for the wounded I'm at a loss what to do? I'll wait until the moon sets. It will be easier in the dark. Let's hope they don't groan and scream. The enemy shoots in the direction the sounds come from."

"Mind you bury him deep," said Sonin.

It all seemed so clear and usual to Sonin, to the sergeant and to the soldiers who were digging the grave. To carry the dead meant risking the lives of the living. A corpse is no good to anyone, is only a burden for the company and must be got rid of without delay. Sablin looked at the Commander of the company who, evidently, was of a different opinion. His face was livid, a cold horror lay in his kind, childish goggle eyes and his chin trembled.

"You seem to be nervous, young man," said Sablin with fatherly kindness, as he took his arm and led him away.

This attention on the part of a perfect stranger touched the youth, who suddenly burst into tears, hardly able to restrain his sobs.

"I'm frightened," he stuttered. "I'm afraid of dead bodies. I'm afraid of death and yet I'm drawn to the shield the same as he was. I understand him. Why, it's so simple: you approach the shield, you unloosen the bolt, you have a peep and you meet death. It's dreadful. This is my sixth day here and that is the fourth. . . . I see them in my dreams."

"You must rest and get calmer," said Sablin. "Where were you brought up?"

"I graduated at the commercial school. Then they began attending the officers' courses and I followed suit, not wishing to be called to the front in the rank of a private."

"How long have you been at the front?"

"Somewhat over a month."

"Who are your parents?"

"They are merchants. We have a shop in Petrograd. Our family-name is Zaitchikoff, you may have heard of us," said the company Commander, feeling calmer.

"So this is the Eagle's Nest," said Sonin as he came up. "You

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see I was right in saying 'certain death.' Let's return to my hut."

But Sablin was not satisfied with what he had seen.

He crossed the sandy mound of the hill and approached the steel shields placed in an irregular row along the hill-side. A sentinel lay motionless, with his ear pressed to the ground, close by the shields. Undoubtedly one felt drawn towards them and Sablin became conscious that he likewise was under the fascination of opening the window that closed the embrasure and having a peep at death.

Sonin remained below.

Sablin, bending his body, walked slowly past the shields and suddenly noticed a chink between them. He lay down on the ground, crept to the chink and eagerly pressed his eye to it.

The moon shone brightly. An utter chaos met his eye. Two sandy parallel hills were divided by a narrow glade which was covered with "chevaux-de-frise" interwoven with barbed wire. Stakes carelessly driven into the ground, evidently during the few minutes in which the bayonet attack had taken place, were also entangled with wire. Two yellow, dried-up corpses with black eye-sockets lay there, seemingly since the autumn. Blood-stained black rags, fragments of overcoats, boots, tins and an un-exploded bomb lay scattered about. Right opposite, at a distance of barely twenty-five paces, big iron shields were perceptible, sticking out like teeth. A rocket rose from behind them with a hissing sound and illuminated the whole dreadful picture with a livid blue light as it exploded. And all the lifeless and hideous objects were lit up by the trembling light and impressed him as being a wild nightmare. It seemed as though the corpses began to move while uncanny shadows distorted yet more the distorted faces. Sablin's heart beat fast and he had the sensation as though, in unison with his heart, the strange, dreadful heart of the enemy beat on the other side of the glade. He felt inclined to spring to his feet and to rush away.

Instead he took stock of the facts. It was sufficient to cross that small space of ground to be in among the enemies. It was,

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however, quite possible to run across. Sablin, with the cold calculation of a soldier well-versed in military matters, began to realise that it was just in that spot that it was easiest to run across to the enemy. It would hardly be necessary to cut through the "chevaux-de-frise." By putting on leather sapper-gloves, such as are worn when barbed wire is being interwoven, it would be quite simple to throw back the "cheval-de-frise," flinging hand-bombs at the same time, and to knock off the shields with the butt-ends of the guns.

"Yes, that would be quite feasible," he thought.

The first man, whom those following would look upon with bold eyes, undimmed by awe, would fall, while the others would infallibly succeed in the attempt.

But for the first man it meant certain death.

"And Karpoff would be the victim?" he mentally asked himself. And without giving an answer to his thought he sighed deeply and crept slowly back.

It seemed to him as though he had not lain there for more than one second.

"You've been a long time over there," said Sonin, who was waiting for him. "Well, what is your impression?"

Sablin gave no reply. He was afraid of speaking lest his voice should betray his emotion. He pretended not to have heard the question and slowly walked towards the company-Commander's dug-out. Sonin, Zaitchikoff and the sergeant followed him.

"May I go inside your dug-out," he finally asked, having, by strength of will, mastered his emotion.

"Please," answered Zaitchikoff with confusion.

Five small steps led to the dug-out, which was as small and narrow as a grave, so that when occupied by one man there was no room for another. A bed stood by the wall, covered with fir-branches, and by its side a small table with a burning candle. The portrait of a woman, with a simple peasant face, in a black lace cap, some crumpled periodicals and a small gospel adorned the table.

Zaitchikoff stood at the entrance of the dug-out.

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"That's my mother," he said in a low melancholy voice, as Sablin's eye fell on the portrait. "This is the life we lead," he added.

The dug-out smelt of damp and fir,—the smell of a grave.

"It's no joke living under such conditions for a fortnight, especially with the feeling of being drawn to every shield, longing to peep at life to come."

Sablin bade farewell to Zaitchikoff and left the Eagle's Nest with Sonin. Now he hardly noticed the whizz of the bullets and only once, when a bullet hit the ground at his very feet, he exclaimed: "Damn the thing!"

The wood-cutter's hut had been tidied. The table was covered for two; clean glasses, a tin of sardines, some pickled salmon and a dish of biscuits were placed upon it. The quartermaster was busy behind the door and the smell of a roasted hen issued from that direction.

The sleepy adjutant with the withered, indifferent-looking face reported that a new casualty had taken place at the Eagle's Nest.

"I know," said the Commander, "Ovetchkin."

"No, Sir. A new one, since you left. The Company-Commander Zaitchikoff.

"How did it happen?" Sablin and Sonin exclaimed simultaneously.

"The usual way. He could not keep away from the shield, he opened the embrasure and looked through for two minutes, according to the sergeant's report."

"Good Lord! Poor fellow!" said Sonin crossing himself. "Whom shall I put in his place?"

"There's no one but Wertzinsky left," replied the adjutant.

"Come, come! Wertzinsky?" exclaimed Sonin with indignation.

"Take my word, Colonel, men of that sort are more likely to withstand the temptation. He, at least, won't give in to the feeling of fascination. Besides, there's no one else."

"Excuse me, Your Excellency," Sonin said, addressing

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Sablin. "Won't you have some food. Quartermaster," he cried, "is the hen ready?"

"In a moment, Sir," a voice answered from behind the door.

"He's a jack of all trades," Sonin explained. "But where's Pyshkin?" he remembered of a sudden.

"He has been back for half an hour," the adjutant replied.

"The devil he has! He's a spoilt child you know, and of no good to me. Take a seat, Your Excellency, and I'll fetch some 'Vodka.'"

But Sablin refused to stay. His nerves had given way and he longed for solitude.

As they were passing the battery, a tire blew out and the car stopped.

"I thought something would happen, after that damned hare crossed the road," Petroff grumbled. "One minute, Your Excellency, we'll put on a fresh tire."

"I'll take a stroll meanwhile," said Sablin as he left the motor-car.

The full-moon was setting. The small fir trees and juniper bushes took a mysterious aspect. Sablin could not forget Zaitchikoff with his round face and simple grey goggle eyes.

"A Company-Commander," thought Sablin. "The responsible leader of a hundred and fifty peasants turned into soldiers. That timid child at such a dangerous and important position, thirty paces from the enemy, where an attack could be expected at any moment, bringing with it, perchance, the forcing of the position and a break down of the entire front! The whole front depended on Ensign Zaitchikoff, afraid of corpses and of the enemy, who sobbed like a child and yet was drawn to have a look at death and to unveil the secrets of life to come."

"And who is no more," someone said by the road-side in a doleful, melancholy voice.

Sablin shuddered, lifted his head and looked about nervously. To the left of the road, amid the small fir trees and juniper bushes, lay a nameless soldier's grave. There were any amount of similar graves in that forest, where continual fights had taken place during the autumn. Sablin had noticed it on his way to

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the wood-cutter's hut. A small fir-wood cross, with a soldier's cap fixed to it, surmounted the grave. Now someone was sitting on it, embracing the cross and looking at Sablin with a blank gaze. The right side of the face was besmeared with something black. The setting moon looked straight in the face of the strange apparition and the small clouds, that floated in the sky, threw passing shadows on it. Sablin felt certain that Zaitchikoff had appeared to him. But how could that be Zaitchikoff? How could Zaitchikoff's body happen to be here, and could lifeless Zaitchikoff speak? This escaped Sablin's mind at the moment. However, even later on, Sablin's impression that the figure was really Zaitchikoff's and that he had spoken to him, did not vanish.

"You killed him and what for?"

"How could I have killed him?" Sablin thought.

"You were kind to him. You studied his soul. How could you do so in such a place," said that someone who seemed to be Zaitchikoff. "And the soul escaped the body. Sonin, in his rough way, knows better than you how to act, whereas you found nothing wiser to do, than to irritate an open wound and with what result? You looked at his mother's portrait. How could you remind him of his mother while he was standing on the edge of an abyss, ready to fling himself into it? And do you now intend sending Karpoff to his fate?"

"If necessary I'll do it," Sablin thought.

"Mind, if you send him, don't mention a word to him of death, of his mother, or of her. Though conscious yourself that certain death lies in store for him, pretend that it is not so, that he will have to commit a bold deed, as is usual in warfare, that the mission is a dangerous one, but leave him faith in a favourable result. Do you understand? Don't send him without faith. It would be cruel."

The voice grew more and more distant. Zaitchikoff moved slightly, as though intending to rise. Sablin was on the point of fainting.

The sound of the motor-car, not far off, brought him to his senses again. Sablin forced himself to look at the grave.

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An old soldier's cloak, black with age and damp, that he had not noticed before, hung on the cross and was now lit up by the bright light of the motor lamps.

"Step in, Your Excellency," said Poliakoff, as he opened the motor-car door.

"What a distance you've walked," Poliakoff went on, "we had begun to feel anxious. What an awful forest. And this nameless grave. An uncanny spot!"

"Don't talk rot," said Sablin, seating himself in the car.

He kept silent for the rest of the time. It was late at night when he got back home. The stars twinkled modestly above the lake. The ice cracked under the night-frost; cocks were heard crowing hoarsely.

Sablin felt sick and broken.

"My nerves are playing the devil with me," he thought as he turned up in the morning in the messroom, where Doctor Oospensky was having tea. "Hadn't I better ask Oospensky? Maybe I need bromide."

XVI

TOWARDS the end of April the Nth army corps underwent a new grouping for the attack. Sablin's division was transferred nearer to the river and was bivouacked in the woods. By the concentration of the reserves Sablin realized that it would be unnecessary to sacrifice Karpoff, that Zinovieff's point of view had triumphed, that Kostioukhovka would be left in peace and that an attempt at breaking the front was planned at Vulka-Galooriiskaja.

For three days and three nights the Russian heavy and light artillery bombarded the enemy's position, shelling the forests, smashing the branches and digging up acres of land. The enemy followed suit, and, collecting the last available reserves, sent them with feverish rapidity to the front in order to paralyze the Russian tactics. On the fourth day long columns of soldiers arose from the trenches and grey human beings crossed the mysterious boundary and proceeded to the enemy's trenches. They passed through a dense forest, making their way through

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thickets of young trees while invisible machine-guns and rifles mowed their ranks and the ranks grew thinner and thinner. Many of the men turned back in the forest and dispersed imperceptibly and, when the forces reached the barbed wire, their number was insufficient for risking an assault. The 170th and 180th divisions stopped and proceeded to entrench themselves. A break in the planned attack took place and the assault had to be postponed. The Hungarian dismounted cavalry and the German militia, rapidly forwarded from the Verdun front, repelled the Russian attack. On the fifth day orders were issued to return to the original position, so as to avoid useless bloodshed. The shattered divisions returned to those very trenches that they had occupied in winter, to those loathsome dug-outs whither they now carried the slain, and graveyards. The losses sustained by both divisions were very heavy and exceeded one half of the entire formation. The regimental Commanders had fallen, four were wounded and nearly all the officers were killed. The vacancies ought to have been filled, and the forces should have been sent to the rear, but this, for the time being, was impracticable. All the available troops had been forwarded to the front: the Russian army was saving Verdun, rescuing Paris. Russian officers and soldiers were perishing in the forests of Poliessie and Volhynia, so as to enable their French allies to hold out on the banks of the Rhine.

The dreadful summer of 1916 was nearing. In May Lossovsky's army corps was regrouped, and two Cossack divisions joined it. The supreme command insisted on the enemy's front being broken at all hazards. Lossovsky planned to carry through the attempt at Kostioukhnovka and informed Sablin that he counted on his placing an officer and ten men at his disposal to lead the infantry to the attack.

"You'll understand," he said to Sablin who had been called to the army corps headquarters, "that after our April failure the present attempt is of the greatest importance. Why didn't we listen to you then! What put us off was your being the only one who did not belong to the general-staff. So you'll send me someone to be relied upon?"

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"I'll do my duty," said Sablin and returned to his bivouac.

Sablin's dug-out was very small. It had been made in winter for the Commander of an infantry regiment. It had a deal floor and deal walls. A small window with four panes of glass, on a level with the ground, let in a dim light. It was furnished with a camp-bed, a table for Sablin's papers and a wooden case serving as a seat. The noise from the bivouacs, the singing and music of the camp was hardly audible in this subterranean dwelling, with its low roof covered by ten inches of earth, like a grave.

Sablin was seated on the wooden case, his back leaning against the table and looking at a small image of Christ hanging above his bed. That image, richly worked in gold and precious stones had served his grandparents to bless his father at the latter's wedding and had done the same service on the day of his marriage with Vera Constantinovna.

He had just dismissed Karpoff, and remembered every word that he had said to him and Karpoff's answers, delivered in a soldier-like, disciplined tone.

"Select ten bold Cossacks, ready for any emergency," Sablin had said. "The Commander of your regiment has been forewarned. Come with them to me tonight at eight p.m. Do you know, Kostioukhovka?"

"Yes, Your Excellency," Karpoff replied calmly and clearly.

"And the Eagle's Nest?"

"I know. I'll find it."

"I need a deed of valour, Lieutenant Karpoff."

"I'll do my duty," Karpoff replied still more calmly.

Sablin showed the disposition of the forces on the map.

Karpoff fetched his map out of his field-pouch and sketched the trenches on it.

"You'll have to carry away the infantry by your pluck. Have a look at the disposition. It's easy work. . . . Twenty-five paces only. . . . The 'chevaux-de-frise' are easy to push aside. . . . Provide yourselves with gloves from the sapper section. . . . Don't forget hand grenades. . . . Is it clear?"

"Yes, Your Excellency."

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"Don't look through the embrasures of the shields, they are a fixed mark for the enemy's machine-guns. However, on the left side you'll find a chink between the shields. Creep to it and study the disposition. Two corpses have been lying there ever since the autumn. I saw them in winter but now they are probably quite putrefied. Just above them stands a loose 'cheval-de-frise.' Knock it aside and shout 'hurrah.' The shields can easily be overturned with your rifle butts or can even be cleared. The infantry will follow you: the Tmootarakan regiment. You understand? A deed of valour and the St. George's cross as a reward."

"Your instructions will be accurately carried out, Your Excellency."

Sablin kept silent.

"May I go?" asked Karpoff.

"Yes, please."

One—two—and Karpoff turned on his right heel, clinked his spurs, opened the door and retired.

While the door was open the sounds of a waltz, played by the band some way off, were distinctly heard, followed by complete silence, as it closed behind the young man.

After what seemed a long while, someone knocked.

"Who's there?" Sablin exclaimed.

"Your orderly, Your Excellency. Lieutenant Karpoff is waiting outside with the Cossacks."

"Very good."

Sablin all of sudden felt certain that nothing was going to happen to Karpoff, that the Poles would bolt from the trenches and would miss him and that tomorrow they would all return safe and sound.

Sablin looked at Christ's image with thankful eyes as he left the dug-out. It was a clear evening. Sixteen mounted Cossacks and an officer stood twenty paces from the dug-out on the sandy road. The faces of the Cossacks were freshly washed and their hair curled in ringlets. They wore new tunics and wide trousers with red side-stripes, and their boots were brightly polished. They were consciously ready for their last review—a

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death review. And yet their demeanour was bold, sedate and joyful. As for Karpoff, he beamed with exultation and with the importance of his mission, as he sat erect on his elegant chestnut on the right flank.

"Welcome, my lads," said Sablin in a firm voice.

The Cossacks answered the greeting.

"You'll have to help the infantry. Go along and God speed you! Begin at eleven sharp," cried Sablin, as the Cossacks, to the cry of: "To your service, Your Excellency," rode past him, three in a row, on their fidgeting horses.

Karpoff rode up to Sablin, who shuddered as a vague presentiment of something mysteriously evil overcame him. He looked at the young officer with anxiety. But the latter wore an expression of calm determination, with that disciplined consciousness of the importance of every detail in the accomplishment of his duty, which years of training inculcate.

"Allow me to verify my watch by yours, Your Excellency," he said simply.

"Six minutes past eight," Sablin replied.

Karpoff looked at his wrist.

"That's what I make it too," he said; and, setting his horse at a canter, he overtook the head of his small detachment in three bounds.

Sablin turned back abruptly and went staggering to his dug-out. He banged the door and threw himself on his camp-bed. The dug-out was quiet and as dark as a grave.

Karpoff pressed his eye to the chink in the shield. Five minutes before, his favourite Cossack, Alpatoff, the best regimental singer, decorated with three grades of the St. George's cross, who had hoped in this action to obtain the fourth grade, a golden cross on a bow, had been killed, without the slightest use for the action.

When they had reached the Eagle's Nest they had asked the infantry to explain the disposition to them. The company Commander did not come forward.

"He's sitting in the dug-out and refuses to leave it. Ever since he arrived here, three days ago, he has buried himself in

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the dug-out and hasn't shown himself. He funks it," said a corporal.

The soldiers surrounded the Cossacks joyfully, as though this small detachment, destined to lead them to the assault, were bullet-proof. The Cossacks seemed in high spirits, were smartly equipped and made their dispositions knowingly and with great calm. They took off their sabres, for fear of their being in their way, and put them aside.

"We'll take them 'after the action.'"

They seemed quite confident of their success although they had prepared for certain death and had arrayed themselves in fresh tunics.

They distributed hand-grenades and decided the part that each of them would take upon himself; each of them had a peep through the chink and noted the direction that he would have to follow.

"Now, infantry, mind you, don't hold back; come to the rescue!"

And the infantry-men, who but an hour before had inwardly determined not to rise for the assault, answered gaily:

"No fear, we shan't leave you in the lurch! The Tmootra-kan regiment knows its duty. We have served our apprenticeship in the Masurian forests."

"That's right," said Karpoff. "I start first, then my men and you follow suit. Have you got it, you devils?"

"Devil yourself," said a gloomy-looking fellow of the reserves, with a laugh. "Don't you worry. We are likely to get ahead of you."

"That I call an officer! It's a pleasure to follow him to the assault!"

"A splendid chap."

"Who's your company Commander?" Karpoff inquired.

"Lieutenant Wertzinsky. He has been wounded. Absolutely no good," answered the soldier from the reserves, feeling very dignified by the side of the Cossacks.

"Wertzinsky! I remember him. Well, all right," thought Karpoff. "We'll have a talk with him later on. Let him see

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now what real pure love means and to what valiant deeds it urges one!"

"Look through the chink," the soldiers said to the Cossacks, "the enemy has not yet noticed it. Looking through the embrasure would mean certain death."

"Certain death!" exclaimed Alpatoff. "That's Tommy rot! I don't funk it: there's no risk."

And before Karpoff could say a word, Alpatoff had approached the shield.

"Alpatoff, don't tempt God! It's sinful," said Sergeant Zemskoff.

But Alpatoff was carried away by the desire of challenging death in the presence of the infantry. He opened the shield with a decisive gesture and shoved his face into the embrasure. At the same moment a shot was fired on the other side and Alpatoff fell back with a shattered head.

The Cossacks carried his body to one side and covered it with a soldier's cape.

"We'll take him along with us 'later on,'" they said, "and bury him in a respectable way."

The infantry gazed at them with surprise. These fellows were on the verge of certain death and never for one moment thought of death, so confident were they of 'later on.'

Karpoff lay down on the ground to examine the position. The night was dark. The moon's disk had only just begun to show on the horizon, but rockets were being shot very often. The enemy seemed conscious of the pending danger and shot them one after the other lighting up the space between the trenches with a dead blue quavering light, which made everything visible. The corpses that Sablin had mentioned had decayed and fallen to pieces, and their dark-brown skulls, their ribs and bones, covered here and there by half-mouldered rags, met his eye. The "cheval-de-frise" stood above them but it was fastened to a stake and did not seem easy to push back.

"It can be done," thought Karpoff, estimating the height. He pictured to himself the deed of daring through a prism of life and not of death. "The breaking through of the enemy's

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front succeeded owing to Lieutenant Karpoff's deed of daring, who was first to assault the enemy with a hand-grenade," was the report that he read with his mind's eye. And *she* would read it likewise.

He admitted that he might be wounded and even severely injured. So much the better: that would bring him back to the hospital and to her, but he never for one moment thought of the possibility of being killed. He prepared beforehand his every action. In his left hand the rifle, in his right hand—the bomb. The sabre attached behind his back. He could not make up his mind to part with it: he was confident that it would bring him luck. "I'll clear the 'cheval-de-frise,' then, after hurling the first shell, I shall detach a second shell from my belt and make it follow. The next move will be to get the rifle into my right hand . . . and trust in God." He did not pray, the words failing him and a chaos of thoughts not giving him time to recall them to his mind. She stood above all. He saw her vividly. He felt the softness of her tender lips on his eyelids. The Imperial daughter's farewell kiss made him languish and burned him through and through. Karpoff gave minute instructions to each of his Cossacks, talked the matter over with the infantry and lay, watch in hand, in excited expectation.

"How beautiful is the Almighty's creation," he thought with a sigh. "How glorious is life."

He felt the joy of living in his every muscle, in every fibre of his body. He looked up at the sky.

The sky was transcendent with its lace of silvery clouds, now slowly approaching, now suddenly withdrawing from the moon, amid the modest, slightly twinkling stars.

"How glorious," he repeated, and then suddenly looked again at his watch. The hands showed one minute to eleven. The Cossacks lay by his side in a state of tension. The company stood behind, ready for action, and a reserve battalion had approached and could be dimly descried in long even columns through the mist that covered the low-land.

Suddenly a feeling of unutterable awe overcame him. His body felt limp. The blood stopped in his veins and his muscles

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weakened. Karpoff had become conscious that death lay in watch on the other side. Death, a dirty skull and ribs on a crooked backbone.

He realized, that he would not go for anything in the world. That he could not advance.

What for?

He longed to pray, but he could not.

"Lord have mercy upon me," he whispered with trembling lips, and for a moment lost all consciousness.

"Your Honour! Time's up!" said Zemskoff in an undertone, but imperatively.

"Is it?" he asked with dry lips and rose to his feet.

But he could not move.

Then suddenly, with an impatient movement, he pulled her ring from his finger and flung it across towards the enemy with the thought, that he'd find it "later on." With a livid face and vacant eyes Karpoff rushed across the shields. He did not shout himself, but the Cossacks followed with a thundering "hurrah" which was echoed by the infantry and was distinctly heard miles off. And it announced to Sablin's division, anxiously awaiting in the camp, and to Lossoffsky in his armoured post of observation, that the enemy's position had been broken through and that the Tmootarakan regiment now occupied Kostioukhnovka.

"Get up, get up, lads! Saddle!" shouted the soldiers on duty in the three cavalry divisions of the camp.

That shout meant the victory of the infantry. The majority of the soldiers were not asleep, but lay under their overcoats and sheep-skins, only trying to keep themselves warm and to forget their anxious thoughts.

The squadrons and companies fell in, the machine-gun sections, with a rattle of wheels over the forest-mounds and roots, trotted up behind the ranks of the soldiers and Cossacks.

XVII

"YOUR Excellency," said Semionoff entering Sablin's dug-out, "the division is ready. Will you give orders to start?"

He was persuaded that Sablin was awake and that he was

FROM DOUBLE EAGLE

cognizant of the news that was known to the entire division, and was therefore surprised to hear Sablin's quiet and even breathing. Semionoff struck a match and lighted a candle. Sablin lay ready-dressed on his camp-bed and slept soundly. He did not even hear Semionoff's words.

"Awake, Your Excellency!" Semionoff cried urgently and raising his voice. "It's high time."

Sablin, opening his eyes, gradually came to his senses and sat up on his bed.

"What's happened?" he inquired.

"According to a telephone message from the army headquarters the front at Kostioukhnovka has been broken through. Kostioukhnovka is in our hands, any amount of prisoners and munitions have been seized and the enemy is fleeing. The cavalry has been ordered to charge into the gap. Our division has received orders to take the lead."

"How about Karpoff?" Sablin was on the point of inquiring, but he dared not.

"Which regiment do you wish to go first?" asked Semionoff.

Without replying, Sablin proceeded to put on his coat and accoutrements. An orderly, who had just come in, helped him.

"Give me my cigarettes and matches."

Semionoff looked at him with surprise.

"Pack up the things. Mind that tea's handy. Perhaps the brandy."

He lifted his face, looked Semionoff straight in the eyes and, noticing confusion in his gaze, pulled himself together and became the old Sablin again, such as Semionoff knew him.

"Let's go," he said, "the lancers will form the advance. Are the Commanders of the regiments assembled?"

"They are waiting. Your Excellency."

It was past two a.m. and the moon soared high above the forest when the lancers on their big bay horses filed past Sablin. The soldiers were silent and their faces looked pale by the light of the moon. Their khaki caps were drawn over their ears. The Commander of the regiment, Colonel Karpinsky, stood be-

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hind Sablin on a nervous thoroughbred, waiting until his regiment had filed past.

"Well, God speed you," said Sablin. "I'll follow you."

Karpinsky cantered to the head of his regiment while Sablin waited for a while and then placed himself at the head of the hussar regiment.

They rode calmly as far as the position. The battle-field was quite still: no firing was heard and no rockets were to be seen. Only in the far distance a booming of artillery became audible.

At the edge of the forest they dismounted and, after a short rest, resumed their way at a trot along the Kostioukhovka road that Sablin had taken the first time he had walked with Sonin to the Eagle's Nest. They overtook a long column of field-kitchens and a light battery.

The Eagle's Nest remained to the right, the Kostioukhovka road taking a turn to the left.

It was beginning to dawn. The hills of the enemy's position showed in the pale morning dusk. The barbed-wire appeared with gaps in between and the lancers were seen filling up the trenches to enable them to continue their way. The road sloped to a place marked on the plan as the "Kostioukhovka manor," which had been burned down the summer before. The bushes of the garden had grown and dark chimneys and the stone-walls stuck out from amid the green. A dressing-station had been established close by the road. Wounded soldiers, partly lying on the ground, partly sitting, were exchanging their experiences of the night. The killed lay to one side, covered by canvas.

Sablin had not the courage to inquire about Karpoff's fate. He looked at the canvas with uneasiness, as though he wished to ascertain what lay under it. He wished to believe that Karpoff was alive but feared to learn the truth. About half a mile off, beyond the trenches, a small town had been built by the enemy. The Russian infantry had concentrated beyond it. A crowd of Hungarians in dark-brown cavalry cloaks stood by, surrounded by the soldiers. It was the sixth Honved regiment, which had been captured together with its Commander and all

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its officers. Some way off stood captured Austrian guns, closely examined by an inquisitive crowd.

Sablin hurried his division. The whole work had been done by the infantry. As it was they had come late; and now Karpinsky with his lancers had come to a dead stop.

"Heaven knows what he's doing," said Sablin impatiently as he galloped forward. The lancers were standing in the middle of the road, talking gaily.

"Have you seen their big guns?"

"What a number of fallen enemies! The trenches are full of them!"

"Let the division Commander pass!"

"Room for the division Commander! Keep to your right!"

Sablin made his way to the bridge and waded through a small river overgrown with grass and rushes to an even space, where Karpinsky stood talking to an infantry officer. Now began again that awe-inspiring expanse between the two armies which it was so difficult to cross.

"What's up, Colonel Karpinsky," Sablin inquired endeavouring to be calm but conscious that his heart was beating fast and that his blood was rushing to his face.

Karpinsky, a lean fair-haired fellow, clean-shaven and with glasses on his nose, turned towards Sablin, and, saluting him, slowly and distinctly said that he was examining the disposition.

The infantry officer came up to Sablin and delivered his report. He was wet up to his chest and his trousers and tunic, black with water and mud, stuck to his body. He held a rifle in his hands and had a cartridge-pouch attached to his belt. His grey eyes looked attentively, though dismally and with indifference, at Sablin's well-groomed and well-fed horse, at its bright bridle and clean saddle, as though making a comparison with his own.

"The enemy, Your Excellency," the infantry Captain began, "is concentrating about two miles hence on the outskirts of a forest. It is German infantry," he emphasised with respect, "about a battalion at present, perhaps more. An enemy's battery of heavy artillery is disposed about one mile off, to the

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right of the village Letitchovka. They've evidently not yet had time to clear it. It is covered by the Germans in possession of the village. The battery is likewise a German one. I've just been remarking to the Colonel that he cannot advance any further: it's advisable to retire and wait."

"You mention a battery under cover," said Sablin nervously pulling at his moustache. "Are there any trenches and barbed wire?"

"No, the place is level. The battery lies behind the houses and the men are in the houses."

"You say there's about one battalion?"

"I think that's about all. I was told by a peasant that they'd come from the railway-station at a run."

"And what fences are there to the right and to the left?"

"That I cannot tell. According to the peasant, the Austrian troops are bolting and are being held back by the Germans. I expect them to proceed to a counter-attack within the next hour and have therefore sent for reinforcements. My company consists of sixty men only."

Sablin's face took an expression of firm determination.

"Lancers forward!" he exclaimed. Patrols at a field-gallop to right and left."

Karpinsky shrugged his shoulders and, backing his horse, gave room to the lancers who, obeying the orders of the division Commander, rushed at full speed down the steep bank of the river.

The rising sun appeared like a fiery red ball behind the neighbouring forest, throwing its scarlet rays through the dust raised by the foremost squadron. At the same moment a vivid light and a white cloud were seen above the squadron, followed by the dull detonation of a heavy gun which echoed along the valley. The firing of the battery continued, accompanied by that of the infantry and of the machine-guns, and bullets whizzed past the squadrons as they ascended the bank of the river.

Colonel Karpinsky overtook his squadrons. His face was livid and his eyes shone from under his glasses.

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Sablin waited below, letting the lancer squadrons go past him as they rushed on, excited by the engagement. He then rode behind them and surveyed the road.

Despite the hot fire of the battery and of the infantry, and, notwithstanding that several men and horses had been killed, Karpinsky continued leading his column at a trot, raising a cloud of dust, which saved him, as the enemy, aiming at the dust, missed the squadrons.

"Why the hell is he lagging," Sablin exclaimed, when the second and third squadrons abruptly turned towards the battery and dispersed along the ploughed field taking the direction of the village whence the battery fired unceasingly.

The remaining squadrons followed suit, ready for the charge, and the whole field was soon covered with galloping horses, the machine-gun section in the rearguard.

Sablin heaved a sigh of relief and pulled up his horse. He was accompanied by their Chief-of-Staff, and by his orderlies and buglers. The intensified infantry-fire in the direction taken by the lancers, the silence of the artillery, and the hurrah of his men made it evident to him that the charge had been successful and that the battery was taken. He was on the point of galloping towards the village when Semionoff's excited cry made him look back. From his left and from his rear, not far off, German soldiers were running towards him. He could distinctly see their low helmets, their knapsacks and short grey figures. Bullets began to crackle close by and it became evident that the Germans' intention was to cut off Sablin from the river and to attack the lancers from the rear. Just then Baron Weber's smart figure appeared close by on his broad gray mare. The Commander of the hussars was followed by two buglers and an adjutant.

"Hussars!" shouted Sablin. "Charge the infantry."

Weber looked back, pulled up his horse and, drawing his wide sabre out of its scabbard, waited for the first ranks.

"First squadron right turn," he commanded. "Form half-squadrons," he went on, pointing to the Germans.

The Germans stopped and opened a furious fire. Gray horses

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fell heavily to the ground, made efforts to rise falling back again, while their riders endeavoured to free their legs from under them but the bulk of the regiment galloped on with uplifted sabres which glistened in the sun.

"Surrender," cried the hussars. But the firing went on. The heavy sabres crashed against the enemies' skulls, the lances pierced their bodies through to the knapsacks, bringing them to the ground. The field gradually quieted down.

Sablin remained on the same spot, holding back Leda excited by the charge, and waiting for the final result.

A hussar ensign cantered up to him. His horse's chest was covered with blood and his sabre was besmeared with half-clotted blood mingled with sand. His face was pale as a sheet and his eyes burned like coals.

"I have cut down fourteen, Your Excellency," he exclaimed, saluting Sablin with his blood-besmeared sabre and pulling up his horse with a jerk.

"That's not your blood, I hope? You're not wounded?" Sablin inquired.

"No, Your Excellency. That's the enemy's blood," replied the ensign with pride. "My horse has been slightly grazed by a bayonet, but there's not much harm done," he went on with a grim expression, as his teeth showed under his moustache.

Sablin rode at a foot-pace across the field towards the village that had been besieged by the lancers. The field was empty. The village-road was entrenched on both sides by steep-banked ditches, along which lay numerous bodies of slain men and horses. The bodies of the men had not yet lost the beauty of life. There they lay, scattered about in their blue breeches with white stripe and shirts girdled with white belts. The big dark-bay horses lay motionless, protruding their bellies and with their black tails spread out behind. Sablin somehow felt a deep pity for the horses.

Semionoff was busy counting the bodies.

"How many have you counted?" asked Sablin wearily.

"Thirty-four horses and, so far, sixteen lancers," was the reply.

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Sablin cleared the ditches and rode beyond the village, where, four hundred paces off, dismounted lancers were crowding together; two squadrons stood in a reserve column and two were dispersing towards the forest.

Colonel Karpinsky, noticing Sablin, came up to him at a canter. His face beamed.

"Your Excellency," he reported, saluting Sablin with his drawn sabre, "the Nth lancers are happy to be able to present Your Excellency with four heavy guns, sixteen horses and forty German prisoners, seized in the cavalry charge. As you are aware, I led the charge myself," he added with importance.

Sablin collected the division at Letichovka with the view of giving it a further mission. He was surrounded by enthusiastic rejoicings. The regiments trotted up on the huge field still covered with fresh corpses, the horse-batteries rattled as they came up in the rear and all the troops were in the highest of spirits. The losses had been forgotten, for, had there been none, the victory would have lost its interest and would have seemed stale.

Shortly four squares—chestnut, bay, gray and light bay—formed up on the field. Sablin rode up to congratulate the division on the victory and trophies, and to thank the men. He called up the regimental Commanders and explained the next move consisting in following up the enemy, and proceeded to make inquiries about the casualties.

"We had no losses," said the Commander of the dragoon regiment, as though excusing himself. "The regiment did not join in the fray."

"Captain Molodkin and Lieutenant Sateplinsky—killed; ensigns Foofaïevsky and Lotoff—wounded. Eighteen lancers killed, nine wounded. Fifty-two horses killed," reported Colonel Karpinsky, making a display of the round sums. "All these casualties took place during the charge on the battery, which was led by me personally," and he backed his horse to make room for the Commander of the hussar regiment.

"Captain Kholen and Captain Spokoïsky, both of them squadron Commanders, Lieutenants Sientzoff and Joosephovitch, Ensigns Nicolsky and Rotoff—killed; Lieutenant Lensky and

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Ensign Lossieff wounded. Fifty-six hussars killed, eighty-six wounded. One hundred twelve horses killed, and over six hundred German infantry-men slain," reported Baron Weber.

After him Colonel Protopopoff advanced.

"The regiment took no active part in the charge," he said with dignity. "Lieutenant Karpoff and ten Cossacks were killed while storming on foot the enemy's position at the head of the Tmootarakan regiment," he added in a casual tone of voice.

"How? Killed?" Sablin exclaimed.

"Lieutenant Karpoff by five bullets, two in the head, one in the stomach and two in the legs, on the summit of our entrenchment, five Cossacks at the barbed-wire fencing and the others by bayonets in the enemy's trenches."

"God have mercy on their souls," murmured Sablin.

A shadow of sadness covered his features but there was no time to be lost on sentiment. The dragoon regiment had just started forward when the orderly of the army corps Commander came to fetch Sablin on the request of General Lossoffsky. He was close by in the small town of the Polish legionaries. Sablin obeyed unwillingly.

Motor-cars and saddled horses stood in readiness in front of a spacious barrack. The Commander of the army corps and his staff, the division Commander and the Commanders of the infantry regiments sat at a table covered with various dishes and food, the booty taken from the Poles, and were having tea.

Lossoffsky rose to greet Sablin.

"I congratulate you most heartily, dear Alexander Nicolaievitch," he exclaimed with a loud voice, embracing Sablin. "It's to you, my dear friend, that we are indebted for the breaking through of the enemy's position and for the brilliant victory! And with no losses, so to speak! Semeon Dmitritch, what were the casualties in the 177th division?" he asked turning to Zinovieff.

"Six officers and one hundred sixty-five soldiers killed and wounded."

"What do you say to that? That's what one can call a bril-

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liant action! Over eight thousand prisoners have already been counted. Where are your valiant men?"

"According to our plan they have been sent on by me to Manioorovka."

"Are they far off?"

"No, close by."

"Then have them stopped. I'll go and thank them. Fancy their having captured a heavy battery! Regular heroes, my friend!"

That evening Sablin, seated in the small but cosily furnished barracks of an Hungarian Colonel now occupied by him and his staff, wrote a letter to the Grand Duchess Tatiana Nicholaievna. He depicted in strong colors the complicated disposition of the battle, the inevitability of sacrifice, the importance and majesty of Lieutenant Karpoff's valiant deed, who had blindly gone to certain death, trying at the same time to make himself understood by a young girl, a child nearly:

"That youth, animated by a boundless devotion to your August Father and by a tender and grateful love of you, Your Imperial Highness, for the tender care full of self-denial shown by you towards him in her Majesty's hospital, decided to give up his life for your sake. Sent by me to assault the enemy's position, he requested me to inform you, Tatiana Nicholaievna, that he rejoiced at being able to die for you with your name on his lips. He was killed by five bullets as he led his men to the assault of the enemy's position."

After writing these words, Sablin threw his pen aside and fell to meditating.

Practically he was killed without having done anything special. Where does his heroic deed come in? And what is heroism?

"Is it a deed of heroism, for instance, to slaughter fourteen men in the heat and excitement of the battle as that blood-be-smearred ensign had done, who rode up to him after the charge of the hussars?"

"Was it a deed of heroism on the part of that beautiful youth, who rose to cross the awe-inspiring boundary and fell, struck

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by five bullets before having achieved anything? Did he feel the five wounds or was he killed by the first bullet, insensible to the others?

"Was it heroism on the part of Karpinsky, who boasts of his deed, to have, against his will, pale as he was and evidently in a state of mental depression, followed his squadrons to the battery? For that deed he will be rewarded with the St. George's cross!

"Or did heroism lie in those mental tortures undergone by himself in the sufferings caused him with regard to all those who had fallen that day by his will and order?"

XVIII

"A LETTER for you, Tatiana Nicholaievna," said Sister Valentine, to the Grand Duchess, in that very hospital reception-room where Tatiana Nicholaievna had, the previous autumn, slipped the ring on Karpoff's finger.

"From whom," she asked.

"From General Sablin. You hardly expected it?"

"Yes. He's a hero, Valentine Ivanovna. He has again distinguished himself in a cavalry charge and captured heavy artillery. What a pity that he avoids Papa and Mamma. And all owing to that accursed Grigori. Let us read the letter together."

They sat down by the wide-open window. The sun shone brilliantly and the summer-morning was warm and gay.

"Fancy," said the Grand Duchess, looking up at Sister Valentine, "General Sablin writes that Karpoff has been killed. You remember, Karpoff, who was in our hospital. It seems that he died the death of a hero for my sake. He used to give such good descriptions of Cossack-life and of the war.

"The Lord have mercy on his soul," said Sister Valentine, crossing herself. "Of course I remember him. I nursed him myself. . . . He had a small black moustache. He wrote you during Lent, that he had been rewarded with the St. George's sabre. Do you remember?"

"Why certainly! He was so bashful and good. I made him

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a present of a ring and Mamma of a Gospel. He was a bachelor, however, Valentine Ivanovna, and had no children."

"Yes, of course he was a bachelor. Quite a youth and as innocent as a child."

"It's better that he should have been killed, than someone who would have left a family behind, poor wretched children. Isn't it true, Valentine Ivanovna, that it's better for the Government when bachelors perish?"

"It's always sad when anyone is killed," said Sister Valentine with a stifled sigh. "Personally I always pity the young ones more than the others. Their whole life lay before them. He was so devoted to you and to the Emperor. Such men are specially to be valued at the present time."

Tatiana Nicholaievna looked with dread at Sister Valentine.

Of late there was an indefinable atmosphere of anxiety in the palace, at Supreme Headquarters and in the hospital itself.

"Do you remember his Christian name, Sister Valentine?" the Grand Duchess asked. "I want to make a note of it for my prayers for the dead."

"Alexis," Sister Valentine answered as she rose to her feet and left the room.

Tatiana Nicholaievna looked at her with surprise and then, suddenly, ran out of the reception-room. "I must show the letter to Mamma, to Olga, to Mary and to Nastia. It's after all very well that officers die so heroically. It's a proof that they are devoted to their monarch!" she thought, as she ran down the stairs to the dining room where the Empress and Sister Olga were always to be found at that time of the day.

XIX

IN October 1916 Sablin quite unexpectedly was appointed to command the Nth army corps. General Pestretzoff, writing to him about the promotion, had added: "We have faith in you, and are sure that you will communicate your bold cavalry dash to these new troops and will do wonders with them. Keep your eye on the officer's staff, however. There was a case in the 819th Zakholoostny infantry regiment, when the soldiers re-

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fused to go to the position on the instigation of ensigns. However, the 812th Morotchnensk regiment is under the command of Lieutenant-Colonel Kozloff, the hero of Novo-Georgieffsk who at the review showed me his regiment in perfect trim.

"Drop in to dinner any day, if possible on a Sunday, when the band plays and a concert or theatricals are usually organized in the evening. I expect you. God bless you. Pestretzoff." Sablin had not seen Pestretzoff for ten months and found him looking much older than he had expected, his former manly demeanour having giving place to bloated stoutness. His round, clean-shaven face showed any amount of wrinkles and bore a cunning and sly expression. After a talk with him Sablin was in a very depressed mood as he left the army headquarters on his way to his corps. What met his eyes on the way was by no means encouraging. The village streets were muddy and soldiers crowded the whole length of them. Their overcoats were old, shabby and dirty, either too wide or too tightfitting. They wore imitation-fur caps untidily kept and old shoes instead of the usual high shaft-boots, now very scarce. They looked with amazement at Sablin's car, abstained from saluting and if some of them deigned to, it was done in a most off-hand way. These men belonged to his corps. It struck Sablin that they were either very young—from twenty to twenty-three, or much older than thirty. Evidently the medium-aged contingent had already fallen; the efficient troops existed no more and only raw material, that required training, was left and such men as had served in the transport section owing to slight wounds or who had simply bolted from the battle-field. During the thirty-eight hours that Sablin was on his way, he never once, while crossing villages crammed with soldiers, noticed the slightest sign of drill or other similar training. He always saw the same picture: groups of soldiers dawdling near the village houses and crackling sunflower seeds or sitting on earth-mounds or benches looking glum.

At Zastavtze, the headquarters of the 205th division under command of that General who had spent thirty years of his life in a war-office section, and hardly knew the difference be-

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tween a regiment and a division, Sablin inspected the regiments in reserve and spoke with the Commanders. The regiments did not impress him as being real troops. There they stood in huge grey masses on the black field, without a band or banners. The closer he saw them, the more he noticed those signs, which, to an experienced eye, form a criterion of the fighting capacities and discipline of the men. Untidy equipment, irregularly worn caps, absence of drill, and indifferent, blunt faces were the features that struck him. A soldier of the first company, while presenting arms, held the barrel of his rifle the wrong way. Sablin made a sign to the commanding officer, a youth with a round face and small eyes, who, failing to understand what was required of him, fussed about, at a loss what to do. Finally the Colonel of the regiment came to the rescue. Similar incidents occurred in the other companies. The men seemed ignorant even of the manual of arms.

The singers and the officers of the 819th regiment appeared after dinner. Sablin came out to greet them on the front steps. The weather was clearing. A red streak of sunset glowed above the dense dark forest. The singers, mostly young fellows, had assembled in the court-yard. Several ensigns sang in the chorus, three of whom attracted Sablin's attention. One of these was a handsome, clean-shaven youth, with a well-shaped nose and fierce-looking black eyes. His sensual mouth showed strong white teeth, and a strong will, energy and audacity were bespoken by his movements. A lock of thick black hair protruded on his forehead from under his fur-cap. Though good-looking, the expression of his face was somewhat repulsive: his mouth was too sensual, his features were coarse and he made the impression of a cruel animal. Sablin asked the regimental Commander about that ensign.

"That's Osetroff. His father owns a cab stand, and, according to rumours, is suspected of manslaughter besides horse-stealing. He's a smart-looking chap, isn't he, and handsome. I should have promoted him to the rank of adjutant, if he hadn't been so stubborn and uneducated. He's a wonderful shot and an excellent horseman."

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The second ensign, who had turned up with a large accordion, was a youth with a round face, prominent cheek-bones and narrow Mongolian eyes. He smiled with a dull, meaningless expression.

"And who's the accordion-player?" asked Sablin.

"That's Gaiduk, a Lett. He's out of the commercial school and has since taken a fancy to the military career. He's a devil for drinking and very muscular."

The third ensign was standing by their side with passionate musing eyes. His thin, pale face with large blue eyes wore an expression full of melancholy. His slim taper fingers, were adorned with rings, and a golden bracelet encircled his wrist. He was smartly dressed and his movements were effeminate and cat-like.

"That fair-haired youth over there, who looks like a girl, is Schlossberg, the son of a Petrograd lawyer," said the regimental Commander. "In my opinion he's not quite normal. But his voice and musical talent are quite marvelous. He has studied singing and has often appeared on the stage. Those three are quite inseparable and we call them the three Musketeers. Schlossberg is an infant surrounded by devils. While his pals are devil-may-care scapegraces and are worshipped by the soldiers, he goes in for poetry, weeps over the slain and probably takes dope."

"A nice lot," said Sablin examining them, "if it weren't for their cockades and shoulder-flaps I'd never have taken them for officers."

"No more they are," said Pastoukhoff. "And would you believe it, the majority of the present officers are in the same style."

"Revolutionary officers," said the General-staff Colonel, regretting at the same moment that the words had escaped him, for Sablin gazed at him sharply.

Neither the corporal nor the sergeant-major had accompanied the singers. Despite the presence of their superiors and of the army corps Commander, they chatted and laughed and gave the impression of a crowd of undisciplined village-clowns, rather

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than of soldiers. Many of their overcoats lacked shoulder-flaps, as though they did not care a straw for the distinction.

Osetroff placed the soldiers according to their voices and stood up in front of them. Gaiduk with his accordion seated himself by their side on a big wooden block, while Schlossberg stood aside. Osetroff glanced at his chorus and began singing the first lines of a popular Russian song dealing with the exploits of Stenka Razin, a robber-chieftain. The chorus seconded him.

Sablin had often heard that song, which had become current in the regiments, but never had he heard it performed so coarsely. The chorus lacked harmony. The singers yelled more than they sang, and the voices were very deficient. Yet they seemed carried away by the wild significance of the words.

Sablin was disgusted and addressing the officers in a dry tone, requested them to follow him into the house. "Ensigns Osetroff, Gaiduk and Schlossberg please come this way," he said.

The singers kept silent. Sablin's tone of voice gave everyone to understand that the Commander of the army corps was displeased.

"Gentlemen," Sablin began and his voice rang with indignation. "I absolutely forbid such songs to be sung."

"What are they to sing in that case," muttered the General-staff Colonel with surprise.

"Don't pretend you don't know: 'The battle of Pultava,' 'Borodina' and all those other patriotic songs that you used to sing in the cadet-corps and in your military school! You'll be kind enough to do away with all this filthy trash, which can only have a depraving influence on the soldiers. As for you, Your Excellency, kindly attend to the selections of your singers and see that the songs sung are of a patriotic and elevated nature. Heaven knows what trash they've invented."

Sablin turned on his heel and left the room. As soon as the car had disappeared from sight, the Colonel of the regiment, to which the singers belonged, exclaimed aloud:

"What a fighting-cock. A regular reactionary General. I forbid this and I forbid that!"

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Meanwhile Sablin was riding along an endless road through a dense forest. He felt sick at heart.

The chief of the army corps staff, Davydoff, a short red-haired bandy-legged man, stopped the car-driver and informed Sablin that they could advance no further.

All around made it evident that they had neared that fatal zone where peaceful and unconcerned life gave place to the kingdom of death. The spot they had left but half an hour before was full of life and activity. Here all seemed dead. A village close by was deserted. A road, that had not been used for a long time extended westward beyond the village. Wind and rain had levelled its ruts and it was overgrown with high grass. Uncultivated and ungleaned fields, mounds of black earth and black funnels half filled with water stretched on both sides with, here and there, a small mound of earth and a cross made of two sticks, without any inscription.

"Traces of the August and September battles," said Davydoff. "It was pure madness to have begun the attack at that time. When we came up to this place a month later dead bodies were still lying scattered about. We buried them as best we could. This is a regular swamp, you know. It's quite impossible to dig trenches, owing to the damp. Just notice the number of funnels close by the road. Instinctively the men concentrated near the road and the enemy peppered them with heavy artillery."

The road led to a bridge thrown across a wide ditch, whence it gently ascended to sandy mounds.

Amid the sand, here and there overgrown with dry bushes, a post, with a board attached to it bearing a large inscription "Section of the 812th regiment," was perceptible. Close by, a ditch, gradually deepening into the sand, formed the passage to the trenches. Sablin and Davydoff entered it in the nick of time, for at that very moment a shell whistled past and exploded close by, and bullets whizzed above, ahead and to the rear.

"They've noticed us," said Davydoff. "A most unpleasant sensation to realise that, while you are crossing a deserted spot, someone is spying on you and following your movements. This passage is seen by them from the balloon."

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A captive, sausage-shaped, grey balloon hung in the air far away on the horizon. Sablin and Davydoff gradually disappeared under ground and were soon in a ditch far deeper than they were tall. They could see nothing but the dull grey autumnal sky above their heads. The ditch with its sandy banks shifted into a willow tress, and a smell of damp earth and human residue became noticeable.

They had already crossed half a mile of the passage which, from a straight line, often deviated to right and left, and finally ended in a transverse passage. Planks were nailed to the walls with printed inscriptions showing the way to "Fort Morthomme" and to "Fort Verdun."

"Which way do you wish to go? The 13th company is quartered in the 'Fort Morthomme.' You can see the Germans with your naked eye. Thence we can cross the river to our 'Place d'Armes.' It's a miserable place and yet occupies a whole brigade."

Sablin turned to the right. The passage branched off at smaller intervals. At one of these cross-passages a tall figure, clad in a soldier's overcoat, appeared. A slim Lieutenant-Colonel, with a narrow clean-shaven face, approached Sablin and saluted him. He was followed by a soldier with a rifle. The Lieutenant-Colonel was Kozloff, the Commander of the regiment.

He made his report to Sablin and said in a firm and polite tone:

"Your Excellency, I daren't let you go to the front line and must request you to wait until the gas-masks are brought. Jelieskin," said he addressing the soldier, "run to the military depot and bring two gas-masks."

Sablin blushed without saying a word and looked at Davydoff reproachfully.

"You are right, Colonel," he said, "I shall wait. Have you a sufficient supply?"

"Twenty per cent according to instructions. Our soldier is careless and neglectful. Until he has experienced it personally,

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he can't be made to understand that the gas-mask is just as important and indispensable as a spade or a rifle."

"Have you been long on active service?"

"I finished my military education in 1906."

"Where have you served?"

"In the Zaraisk regiment,"

"It's there also that you earned the St. George's cross?"

"Yes, Your Excellency. I was decorated for storming the fortified position at Novy-Kortchin."

"I have already heard of that exploit. It was very neatly done."

"The soldiers were different then, Your Excellency."

Jelieskin brought the gas-masks. They went forward. Through an embrasure Sablin could see the whole position. Thirty paces off eight rows of barbed wire were fixed to thick posts and a second similar fencing was established another sixty paces off. Nothing but sand, dug up by projectiles and covered here and there with dry grass, extended in front of our forts. Beyond the river the bank, on which several huts were erected, rose abruptly. Some distance beyond the village a two-story white manor showed amid the dark leafless trees of the park. Not a soul was to be seen on the other bank. It was hardly credible that a whole German infantry regiment was concentrated there.

"Who is at the head of this company," Sablin inquired.

"Captain Wertzinsky," Kozloff replied. It seemed to Sablin that he had heard the name before.

"What sort of a man is he?"

"He's mad, Your Excellency."

"How then is he allowed to serve?"

"For certain reasons I need him. When the Nth army corps took these forts from the Austrians a tragedy, unusual even in warfare, happened in this very fort. Two corpses were found in the elegantly furnished section of the company Commander. A young Hungarian officer and a young woman were found lying side by side on a bed evidently taken from the manor. To all appearance the officer had shot the woman and had then com-

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mitted suicide. Blood and the brains of their shattered skulls had besmeared the wooden lining of the walls. In wartime you get used to the sight of corpses. How often does it happen that you lie for days among dead bodies. But somehow these bodies made a deep impression and a legend was spread abroad that, at night, moaning sounds came from that trench, that sounds were heard as though someone were endeavouring to scrape the blood from the walls, but it reappeared again in yet brighter patches; that her portrait had been unhooked from the wall, and yet there it was again hanging in its place, and that someone walked in the trench at night. In fact the spot was said to be haunted. No one would agree to live in it, despite its luxury. What with the enemy to face and ghosts in the trenches, the company Commander lost all faith in the possibility of defending the stronghold. This was the moment when Wertzinsky proved to be of use. He does not believe either in God or the devil and lay down on that very bed, wrapped in the blood-stained blanket. Nothing happened and the soldiers regained confidence. He's a knight of St. George, though, some say, by mistake. The breaking through of the position at Kostioukhovka was done by his company and he was rewarded on that occasion. Sub-lieutenant Ermoloff, a splendid youth, is the actual Commander of his company."

"This Wertzinsky must be an interesting individual."

"By the bye here is his hole."

Four steps led to an open space facing the enemy. Four large beams supported a heavy ceiling covered with planks and six feet of earth. A door and two windows showed into the recess. The red light of a candle flickered through the windows. Sablin opened the door and a scene unusual in war-time met his eyes.

The room looked more like a cell. Hardly four yards high, it was about the same in width and length. The greater part of it was taken up by the bed, which stood in a recess and was untidily covered by a crumpled, motley and tattered blanket.

In front of the door stood a table with two ample arm-chairs at its sides. A middle-sized man in a crumpled, soldier's over-

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coat, which hung on him like a dressing-gown, slowly rose from his seat as they came in. His face lighted from beneath by the rays of the candle was sickly lean, covered with wrinkles and with a stubble-beard. His pale eyes reminded Sablin of Rasputin's eyes, but lacked their sharp look, for his eyelids blinked and he seemed at a loss what to do.

"Captain Wertzinsky," Kosloff said addressing him, "give your report. The new army corps Commander has come to visit us."

The figure staggered and moved slowly towards Sablin into the dim light of the open door. But, instead of reporting, Captain Wertzinsky muttered:

"Kazimir Kazimirovitch Wertzinsky," and stretched out his large limp hand.

Sablin shook it involuntarily and looked intently into Wertzinsky's sharp features. The grey hair, which hung in thin tufts down his shrivelled scull, and the dull and rancorous pale eyes seemed familiar to him.

"Haven't we met before?" asked Sablin.

"Certainly," answered Wertzinsky with a malicious smile, "about twenty years ago at the Martoffs. Don't you remember the flaxen-haired schoolboy who attacked you for your excess of militarism. You took no notice of me at that time and did not even trouble to inquire for my name. Your interest then was quite evident to me. I, on the contrary, studied you as belonging to a different world."

This individual had straight away placed himself on such a footing that all the exigencies of rank-etiquette disappeared and simply two men, tied by a mutual secret, stood face to face.

"The present war has probably cured you of your anti-military delusions," said Sablin, preparing to leave the room so as to put an end to the conversation.

"On the contrary. Every day I get more and more convinced of the equity of our opinions and of your delusions. It's exactly the war that has given the last finishing touch to our teaching."

"We'll discuss the subject some other day," said Sablin, hastening towards the door.

FROM DOUBLE EAGLE

"With the greatest pleasure. Please, visit me some evening. It's quiet here as in a grave. From time to time shells fly overhead, for the enemy has spotted us. It's as though a train rumbled above you and you ask yourself where it is likely to explode, which of the Russian idiots will be smashed to atoms for the sake of his faith, his Tsar and his mother-country. Come, please come."

He did not consider it his duty to accompany Sablin on his inspection of the fort. He was replaced by a sympathetic, gay-looking youth with a pink clean-shaven face, who reported in a firm voice: "Your Excellency, the fort of Morthomme is occupied by two officers and one hundred twelve soldiers of the 13th company of the 812th Morotchensk infantry regiment. Nothing special has been noticed on the enemy's side." Sablin shook his hand and the young officer bowed and introduced himself as Sub-lieutenant Ermoloff.

"What line of Ermoloffs do you belong to?" asked Sablin.

"My father is a landowner of the Stavropol Government."

"Have you been long at the front?"

"For the last three months."

He had already awakened the company and the men were standing in readiness, looking attentively at Sablin as though they understood the importance of the situation.

"Let's go on," he said to Kozloff. "I hope to see you soon again, my dear lieutenant, God bless you!"

"A very fine officer," said Kozloff. "The whole company depends on him.

"Then why do you need that madman?"

"It can't be helped. Ermoloff is too young. He's not got sufficient authority. At times, when the company wavers, he'll run into Wertzinsky's room, sit with him in silence for half an hour and come out again, saying: 'There's nothing to be done: the company Commander has given the order. He's in a state of wrath.' And the company quiets down. They can't make Wertzinsky out. He appears to them uncanny and inexplicable and they are afraid of him. The worst of it is that nowadays one can't do without policy. The soldiers are quite different to

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what they were and the officers are new and inexperienced. Here's the 14th company."

A thin black-bearded Captain came towards Sablin with his report.

Sablin felt attracted by Wertzinsky's awe-inspiring fort, full of blood-curdling reminiscences and ghosts, and that feeling overcame him mostly in the night. He fell into the craze of driving alone to the position at night-time, without Davydoff or his adjutant.

XX

THESE nocturnal alerts, the risk incurred from the enemy's shells, diverted Sablin. He felt that by dividing that risk with his soldiers he acquitted himself towards Karpoff and towards his own conscience. In so doing he justified in his own eyes his right of wearing a General's epaulets, of giving orders and of dictating his will to the men. Kozloff, the black-bearded Captain, Ermoloff and their soldiers had not got accustomed to Sablin and called him "our General." In their minds he had risen high above all the other Generals; they loved him and had faith in him. In the staff, however, he was found fault with. Davydoff and the Commanders of the divisions considered that he made himself a living rebuke to themselves. They felt no inclination to risk their lives in such nocturnal adventures nor did they care to part with their comfortable night-quarters. The result was that they taxed Sablin with the desire of making himself popular and of aspiring to fame.

The same solitary candle burned in the dug-out as in the daytime. Wertzinsky was seated in one of the deep arm-chairs, his pale eyes fixed on the bed and on the dark spots on the wall above which hung the large portrait of a handsome dark-haired woman in evening-dress. He was clad in the same old overcoat and by his side on the table stood an iron mug. He looked at Sablin without the slightest expression of surprise, rose from his seat and, instead of delivering his report, simply said:

"Will you have tea?"

Sablin rejected the offer and, without uttering a word, took a

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seat in the other arm-chair facing the door. He had only just taken leave of the regimental Commander and of the sub-lieutenant on the plea of wishing to judge for himself how far Wertzinsky's frame of mind was normal.

They both kept silent for a while. The light of the flame, which had flickered as the entrance-door opened, became motionless again and burned with an even, yellow-red glare. Sablin's eyes, accustomed to the dusk, noticed the dark blood-stains on the grey-silk counterpane and on the wall to the left of the portrait, which attracted his attention. It represented an elegantly-dressed Hungarian woman with bare shoulders and plump arms adorned with bracelets.

"Who was she, do you think?" inquired Wertzinsky as he caught Sablin's gaze. "A betrothed come to visit her bridegroom at the moment of the assault? his wife? his mistress or simply an adventuress on a visit to her lover?"

Sablin gave no answer.

"In any case," Wertzinsky continued, "she chose a very unpropitious moment. Our troops had broken through the front about ten miles to the left. The Hungarians knew nothing about it. The Zabaikal Cossacks attacked the breach, whereupon a panic arose. The Hungarians surrendered. He may have feared that the cossacks would torture him. Maybe he did not wish it to be known that she had come to see him."

"I understand his action," said Sablin.

"I quite believe you," said Wertzinsky with a cynical grin, which made Sablin shudder.

"What do you mean by saying that?" he inquired.

"On that question," the other answered, "I have always sided with you. You acted according to your right."

"What question are you hinting at?" asked Sablin.

"I am speaking of Marousia Lubovina," Wertzinsky answered coolly.

"What do you know about her," Sablin muttered in a seemingly off-hand tone.

"I am lucky in knowing all about love-adventures, maybe because I have no capacity myself in that line," Wertzinsky re-

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plied. "I know Korjikoff and all about it. I was likewise witness of Lieutenant Karpoff's drama. The silly boy fell in love at the hospital with the Grand Duchess Tatiana Nicholaievna and perished with her name on his lips. He fell, whereas I wear the St. George's cross which does not suit me and to which I really have no right. Such is life. Then again look at my Commander Kozloff, a most ideal man. He's doing his best to get on in his service, he's madly in love with his wife and I have every reason to believe that she is unfaithful to him and is betraying him with some sort of a blackguard. In love-affairs, mind you, the one who loves deeply is usually punished. It's a mistake to give way too seriously to that feeling. You, however, are not to blame, I once more repeat. You did not love. You gathered the fruit of enjoyment and you were right in so doing. In her case there lay a mistake of tactics and Lubovina was doomed to perish in any case. Had she not died she would have had to be done away with."

Wertzinski burst out laughing and his wrinkled face became distorted. His bad teeth showed through his open mouth.

His laughter filled Sablin with awe.

"Why do I go on sitting with this madman?" he asked himself. And yet that lunatic knew the secret that Marousia had taken with her to the grave and which he, Sablin, longed to know.

"Do you know what a faction is?" Wertzinsky exclaimed quite unexpectedly. "I don't belong to any faction: I consider myself above all that sort of thing; I am a Diogenes in the rank of a Captain. What do you say to that? 'His Honour Diogenes!' that sounds fine, doesn't it? You've probably heard something about the free-masons? All of you have a slight notion of them and you all fear them because of the mystery which surrounds their doings. In olden times the altar in the temple was screened by a curtain. The priests prayed and fell to their knees; crowds of believers flocked around and worshipped the invisible God because of the curtain that screened their idol. One night a daring individual, having drugged the sentinel, pulled back the curtain and, behold, there was nothing

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behind it, but dust, rubbish and cobwebs. And that was worshipped by the congregation! Humanity has since lived through twenty centuries and is none the wiser. The iron mask! How exciting! Free-masons! The Sionist protocols, Ahaspher, Lucifer, Bathomet, Adoniram! and what not! Huysmans, the Black Mass, the knights of Cadosh, the mysteries of initiation, the universal conspiracy, symbols, mysterious signs, and so on! Everyone is excited and anxious to get at the bottom of all these mysteries. And were they to succeed they would find nothing but dust, rubbish and cobwebs. Everyone knows the disillusion that awaits him, but is afraid of owning it."

It seemed to Sablin as though Wertzinsky had lost the thread of his conversation, and he recalled it to his mind.

"What has all that to do with Marousia Lubovina?"

"Hm! Yes. From the mathematical point of view it stands in the same proportion as does an infinitely large quantity to an infinitely small one. But it is indispensable to treat the large quantity so as to evaluate the small one."

The sound as of a railway train was just then audible. Wertzinsky turned pale. Fear could be read in his pale eyes as he tried, with open mouth and trembling limbs, to ascertain where the shell was likely to fall. The projectile exploded somewhere to the left, far off, and the metallic sound of its scattered fragments filled the air during several seconds.

"Oh! I hate those sounds," said Wertzinsky; and threatening the portrait with his finger he added: "It's all her doing."

"Now listen to me," said Sablin. "Either you know something of Marousia Lubovina which I am ignorant of, and in that case I insist on your imparting it to me, or else you know nothing. In the latter case I can go, for I have nothing to do here."

"It's gruesome here, eh? Now admit that it's uncanny and that yet you feel drawn to the place, what with the shells and all that's taken place in this dug-out! Mysticism! You are all of you mystics. Rasputin too has an attractive influence."

"What has Rasputin to do with it?"

"There you likewise hit upon an altar behind a curtain, which

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once drawn aside brings you delusion, vacancy, dust and stench, and nothing more."

"Well, go to the devil with your Rasputin and let me hear your tale."

"Gently, my friend! You'd better not mention the devil. This is not the place for it. Well listen. I'll begin with the larger quantity: The world is governed by seventy wise men, and the curious part of it is, that no one knows who they are. Woodrow Wilson, Poincaré, Lloyd George, Buchanan! No—those are but puppets in their hands. No one knows those seventy wise men and no one knows where they are. What do you say to that? Seventy Sionist mages!"

"Who are they? Jews?"

"As I said before: no one knows. And there they are, ruling the world and universal politics. This war was the work of their hands. They needed it."

"Come now, Kazimir Kazimirovitch, I must request you to drop all these yarns and to tell me straight away, why Marousia Lubovina perished," said Sablin.

"As if you didn't know! So there—you see that war is an insanity and yet you've been carrying it on for nearly three years with idiotic stubbornness: by the will of seventy wise men unknown to anyone. Now those wise men are hidden by a curtain and, maybe, if the curtain were drawn aside the wise men would turn out to be blackguards, speculators, thieves, bankers and scoundrels. . . . Ha! ha! ha!"

"Couldn't you hurry on with your tale?"

"Very well! It will be easier for me to go on. Now comes the faction and their members tied by faction discipline. A faction in opposition to the present state of things. Mind you, Korjikoff, Marousia Lubovina's friend belonged to a faction and that faction aimed at dissolving the army. Do you remember our anti-militarism? It had been decided to get you to enlist in the faction and Marousia Lubovina had received the mission to recruit you. Isn't that sufficiently clear?"

Sablin kept silent. How simple it all seemed and what a fool he had been, at the time.

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"However, you happened to be too strong. Love got the upperhand: Marousia Lubovina forgot all about her mission, the party discipline and the proposed plan, and only thought of you. If she had not died in childbirth, she would have been put to death. The faction is merciless with regard to renegades."

"And how about Rasputin?" asked Sablin wearily.

"That's a subject which will take a long time to deal with. There's a lot of mysticism about him. Well, I'll fulfil your wish. There's time enough until the day breaks. As it is I can't sleep at night, owing to my nerves."

"The whole civilized world is cemented together by the Christian faith," Wertzinsky began. "Faith, hope and charity. As long as charity existed among mankind the seventy wise men could take no hold over them. Ergo; the first motion was to replace charity by hatred, destroying faith for that purpose.

"That's where Rasputin comes in. And had he not existed, he would have been created. What is Christianity? Rasputin. What is the Tsar? Rasputin. What is the Russian nation? Rasputin. What do you say to this? And how about the seventy wise men and the curtain? You are not capable of manslaughter. Now tell me, warrior, hero, knight of the Cross of St. George—would you be capable of manslaughter? The amount of suffering, remorse and hysterical emotions anyone of you would have gone through, had you felled a foe or shot him with your revolver in the heat of the fray! Manslaughter is horrible. The likes of us would be capable of manslaughter but we would have no reason for killing Rasputin because we need him. We have risen to murder. You, fond as you are of butcher's meat, are capable of passing close by their shops and of calmly looking at the flesh exhibited. One step further and you would be as capable of calmly committing manslaughter. Place yourself close to your victim, stretch your arm and pull the trigger and there you are. A corpse. The corpse is clothed, maybe there's money in the pockets. Then again can't the corpse be utilized? Can't human flesh be tasted? Eh? You seem to wince at the thought? You wouldn't care to try? Well, then you could throw it to wild beasts or to dogs for food.

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Then again its skin, bones and hair could be used for some purpose or other."

"Drop it, Kazimir Kazimirovitch," Sablin objected.

"It makes you feel sick? Then how can you think of killing Rasputin? Once you've made up your mind, you must bear the consequences and must do away with five pounds of flesh. We would be capable of it. Have you read about that engineer who killed a man in the Leshtoukoff street with the purpose of robbing him and then cut up the body and forwarded it right and left in pound parcels? That man raised himself."

"He must have been a lunatic," said Sablin.

"He may be a lunatic in your eyes; we, however, consider him a strong-willed individual. Then again I remember last year, when I was getting over my wound, I saw in one of the Petrograd shops charming purses ticketed as 'made of human skin.' I doubt that they really were, for the police would probably have interfered. All the same the purses were soon sold out. And what do you say to the hangman's rope in connection with gamblers' luck? And the thief's candle made of human fat? Don't you feel that we are sliding down something very uncanny? A certain rich nobleman had fallen in love with a dancer, and when she died prematurely he put her in a coffin all covered with flowers and had her placed in the hall of his house, not allowing her to be carried to the grave. And there she remained. . . . Then again do you recollect the scene of the idiot and of Rogoshin by the side of the corpse? Eh? Ha, ha, ha!"

"But that's sheer sadism!"

"My dear friend, and what if the young generation were brought up to sadism! Eh? It would breed bold men. We'd become the equals of God, the red banner of the revolution and the inciting strains of the Marseillaise! But listen! God exists no more, the Gospel is no more read. Only a few of the old generation know it, and those are made a laughing stock. Man-slaughter is no crime any longer. Love is a bestial function without preliminaries. Property is a theft. Everything is allowed. Eh? What freedom!"

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"You're talking rot!"

"I? No, Your Excellency, there you are wrong. It's you, the intelligentsia, who talk rubbish. Then what can you expect of the mob? Fame, honor—that's rubbish. Down with the St. George's crosses. I have lain in hospital. The dear soldiers and sailors were looked upon as idols by elegant ladies. The noble deeds, the heroism of the soldiers! The officers were looked down upon and the Generals were ignored. The soldier is the hero of the war. The lower class are the heroes of the world. History is useless, science can go to the dogs, knowledge of reading and writing is quite unnecessary. Academicians and Professors are busy simplifying the Russian alphabet. Today you are: 'Your Excellency.' One step further and I'll call you 'General,' and the next time—Alexander Nicolaievitch,' and finish by addressing you as 'tovaristch.' The next step would end in my throttling you. Today I'd refuse to salute you and tomorrow, maybe, I'd thrash you in a dark alley. It's all so simple."

"You are forgetting yourself, my friend," said Sablin rising to his feet. Wertzinsky likewise got up and blew out the candle. A dim light fell through the narrow windows, the day having begun to dawn.

"What would be the result," said Sablin. "A herd of brutes? The return of the stone age?"

"Yes," Wertzinsky answered harshly, emphasizing each word, "yes a herd of brutes. A herd easily manageable for the seventy wise men, and their future slaves. They will kiss their feet and howl with delight on receiving the slightest alms from their masters. They will imagine that they are free because they will feel neither restraint nor elevation. They will be free of hope, faith, charity, honor, honesty, fame, and property. They will ignore their past and will not think of the future. They will live but from day to day.

"They'll perish."

"Probably. But there will be a new world quite different to the old one."

Sablin went to the door.

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"All that you have said to me is absolute insanity."

"No, absolute truth. Let us go. The day is breaking and I can show you more truth in all its crudeness. Our Commander has a wife, Zoïa, whom he calls Zorka. He's not received an answer from her to a single one of his letters for the last month. I have been informed that she is surrounded by individuals of the new formation and is on the verge of an abyss, if not perchance at the bottom of it. And he, poor devil, keeps praying for her. Every morning at day-break, before retiring into his dug-out to seek shelter against the aeroplanes, he leaves the trench, stands on the parapet and gazes at the rising sun. He prays God for a letter from her and beseeches Him to protect her. Hah, hah, hah!"

Sablin didn't listen to Wertzinsky any longer. He left the dug-out and went along the trench which was deserted. The sky was clear and frosty, aeroplanes were likely to make their appearance, and the men had taken shelter in the dug-outs. Wertzinsky followed Sablin.

"Don't see me off," said Sablin. He felt an aversion for Wertzinsky.

"I'm not seeing you off. I'm going on my own private business," the other answered.

"What a brute," Sablin said to himself, shrugging his shoulders.

"Now, just have a look, see whether I was not right!" whispered Wertzinsky, with a grin, as he pointed to the left.

Sablin involuntarily looked in that direction and saw a lonely slim figure standing motionless on the verge of the hill. It stood so near that Sablin distinctly saw its thin pale face, turned towards the east with an expression of love-sick suffering. It seemed to Sablin as though he heard the figure whisper: "Zorka, my Zorka! Where are you?"

"What do you say to that, eh?"

"Love," Sablin said to himself, looking admiringly at Kozloff, whereupon he quickened his pace as though anxious to rid himself of Wertzinsky and his ironical grin.

"Love," said Sablin, nearly aloud, and his heart beat faster.

FROM DOUBLE EAGLE

XXI

AFTER the war had been declared Zoïa Nicholaievna Kosloff left the town where her husband's regiment had been quartered and went to Petersburg. Her father and mother were dead, and she had no ties in that town except the faded reminiscences of her school-life and the hope of coming across one or an other of her school friends. A couple of months before the war her aunt had died, leaving her a small legacy in that town consisting of furniture for five rooms and five thousand roubles in cash. For the Kozloffs, who were restricted to the husband's humble pay, that had meant a fortune, and Zoïa Nicholaievna had instantly proceeded to prepare their town lodging. She had hoped, when the war was over—and she was sure that it would not last—to persuade her husband to join the Pay-master General's Office or some other military office of the capital and to lead a life of enjoyment, the more so as her little daughter Valia's future education depended on their living in the capital.

She succeeded in hiring a five-room flat on the Poushkin-skaja and was busy during the first months of the war fitting up her new lodging. She engaged a maid-servant, Tania, a pretty, frivolous girl, who soon became her mistress' confidential friend. She often received tender letters from her husband and wrote to him daily. Her day was amply taken up by her little daughter Valia and by shopping and dress-makers, and in the evening she would either go alone to the theater, or to cinemas in company of her faithful Tania. She grew passionately fond of cinemas and followed every new film.

And yet continual solitude became a burden to her. So as not to feel too dull she had, at her husband's advice, fixed certain hours of the day for various occupations, such as music and singing, drawing and reading, and took Valia out for a walk. But she felt lonely. It seemed to her as though she were growing old, as though her youth were gone and life were dull. She found that she had had no joy so far. She would sit before her looking-glass and scrutinize her face minutely, afraid of noticing wrinkles, or grey threads in her hair. The glass re-

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flected the young face of a woman, in the full bloom of her twenty-seven years, who was beginning to grow stout with inactivity. Her light-chestnut hair fell in natural curls on her pure white forehead, on her shoulders and would have covered her back in wide glossy waves had it been let. Her dark eyebrows overarched large, grey, eyes and her nose, though pretty, was somewhat quaintly shaped. Her pouting lips, slightly drooping at the corners, gave her a charmingly capricious and yet bashful expression, while her white teeth were so even, that they might have been mistaken for artificial ones. After a severe criticism of her appearance Zoïa Nicholaievna decided that, though not a regular beauty, she was certainly pretty. She was very feminine and had feminine tastes. She was fond of sweets, of sentimental, heart-rending novels, of melodramas and of dancing.

Her image in the mirror led her thoughts to her husband. Alexander Ivanovitch was twelve years the senior of his wife. He married her when she was twenty-three and afraid of remaining an old maid. Did she love him? It had been a love-marriage, but when she came, in her present solitude, to analyze her feelings, she arrived at the conclusion that she had an unlimited respect for her husband, was slightly afraid of him and only after these predominant feelings came love. He was physically strong, and his embraces always left her tired and bruised. His passion caused her a certain dread, and she felt small and insignificant in his presence and, had it not been for his absolute devotion to her and for his readiness to fulfil her slightest desire, she would have feared him. In his present correspondence he gave her fatherly advice, which made her respect him rather than love him passionately.

She was fond of her little Valia but could not make up her mind to devote her whole time to her as long as the child could not talk or understand her. And yet she had been a good mother, had fed her with her own breast and played with her as often as she could. Her husband had proved to be a hero as she had expected. He had been rewarded with the St. George's cross, had received a bayonet-thrust in the chest and had re-

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mained at the front. He had written nothing about it personally, but his regimental-chums had sent her enthusiastic letters, explaining how he had been wounded while defending a soldier at his own peril. The feeling of pride which had filled her on receipt of the news was poisoned by spite at his always wishing to sacrifice himself for the sake of others and for that of his service, without at that moment giving a thought to herself or to Valia.

She was pleased at her husband's promotion and in 1916 she had the satisfaction of being the wife of a Lieutenant-Colonel and regimental Commander.

"I wonder what the regiment and the officers are like," she repeated to herself. "There must probably be a band, an adjutant and an officers' mess." And she pictured to herself how she would show herself arm-in-arm with Alexander Ivanovitch while the band played a march of greeting and the officers stood up and received her with military honours, and longed to be amid all those joyful and gay ensigns and lieutenants.

Petrograd was full of war-workers—especially women war-workers. Zoïa Nicholaievna alone did nothing. She had once made an attempt to offer her services as sister of charity in a neighbouring hospital. An angry-looking surgeon in a white gown had looked at her with gloomy, tired eyes, had scrutinized her expensive seal-skin jacket and had inquired whether she had studied to become a nurse. On hearing her reply in the negative the doctor had turned his back on her. Heart-rending groans and a very noxious smell came from the corridor. Hot tears streamed from her eyes as she hurried out of the hospital. Returning home she wept bitterly and decided without asking for leave, to start for the front, to her husband, to abandon her child and everything.

The next day Zoïa Nicholaievna, after having returned from her walk with her little girl, went out for a stroll on the Newsky Prospect. It was a fine August day, and the sun shone brightly.

"Zoïa, is that you?" suddenly exclaimed a good-looking girl in the garb of a nurse, with a very short skirt that barely covered her knees, and in high yellow lace-boots.